



The VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM
<http://www.lwvgb.org>

April 2019

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

[Alabama Government Representatives at Your Fingertips](#) is one of LWVGB'S most widely accessed collection of voter services information.

Two volunteers are needed to review the current version for changes needed to bring contact information for local, state and federal officials up to date due to 2018 election results.

If you are interested in helping with this short-term project, contact [Leonette Slay](#).



UPCOMING LWVGB MEETINGS

April 16th

NATO/Cyber Security

[Pelham Public Library](#)

6:00 p.m.

May 23rd

LWVGB Annual Business Meeting

[Homewood Public Library](#)

6:00 p.m.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

Mark your calendar. See this issue or [LWVGB Online Calendar](#) for event details.

Apr 4: Voting Rights Restoration Workshop

Apr 16: LWVGB Membership Meeting

Apr 22: Earth Day

May 17-19: LWVAL Convention 2019

May 23: LWVGB Annual Business Meeting

Jun 15: LWVGB Cahaba River Walk

Jun 20-22: LWVUS Council 2019

VOTING RIGHTS RESTORATION WORKSHOP

Thursday, April 4th

1:30 p.m.

[Beloved Community Church](#)

131 41st St. S.

Contact: [Nancy Sales](#)

[CHECK OUT OUR BLOG POST!](#)

MARCH MEETING ON TRANSIT

Joi Travis, LWVGB Member

On Tuesday, March 26th, 2019, the League of Women Voters Birmingham hosted a meeting at the Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority. Our speaker, Mr. Frank Martin, currently serves as Interim Executive Director. Mr. Martin is a transit veteran possessing over 40 years of experience working with mass transit operations and their affiliates across the country.



Frank Martin

[See more event photos.](#)

The meeting was held in the Birmingham Intermodal Facility, which is celebrating one year of being open to the public. The three-block Birmingham Intermodal Facility is located in downtown Birmingham along Morris Avenue between 17th and 19th streets and houses the Amtrak station, the Greyhound station, the Megabus pick up, the Max transit downtown Central Station and Olivia's Transit Café. Mr. Martin came into the position in December of 2018 after having served as general manager at the BJCTA from 1981-1984. His message to our group shared how communities can play a role in shaping the mass transit efforts. Martin emphasized that communities must have champions to speak in favor of public transportation. These advocates are invaluable because they understand that transit means business. As advocates, we must also attend city council meetings, county commission meetings, and visit both our state and nation's capitals to advocate fervently for mass transit efforts. It is our duty to make our communities and political leaders understand how critical transportation is for economic growth and citizen mobility.

MARCH MEETING ON TRANSIT, continued

Mr. Martin explained that when businesses compare cities amongst one another to identify areas for relocation, they consider the education system, the viability of housing in the area, and the transit system within the area. The Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority is doing everything possible not to trim services. BJCTA is committed to maintaining service levels and working with the community to continue the development of a bus and rail company that serves as a catalyst to improving public access. With the anticipation of the World Games coming to Birmingham in 2021, BJCTA expects to create a BRT system allowing for access from the Woodlawn community to the Birmingham Crossplex.

Mr. Martin admits things that have been different since his return to the Transit system in Birmingham, such as ridership being less now than it was in 1984, but the BJCTA is committed to focusing on the internal attitude of the employees of the BJCTA, a customer centered approach to all they serve, and a strategic response to the anticipation for the growth that will occur in our city. Across the country we have seen a surge of disruptors in mass transit such as Uber and Lyft. While these ride sharing programs and other means for access provide options for residents and travelers, they pose challenges for mass transit. Mr. Martin said he thought that BJCTA would be a "mobility manager" in the future where residents could use transit buses, ride sharing services, and other transportation modes (bicycles, scooters) in the same trip.

ROAD TO RATIFICATION OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT

Leonette Slay, LWVGB President

Surprisingly our western frontier provided more opportunities for women's suffrage than the "old" states of the northeast and south. When Kansas entered the Union in 1861, its constitution provided for school suffrage (women could vote only on school-related initiatives). But it was in 1869 in Wyoming, in its organization as a Territory, where a major breakthrough happened, however accidentally. The president of the Legislative Council, at the urging of his wife, introduced a bill to enfranchise women. The bill passed a Democrat-controlled Council, with the goal of embarrassing the Republican governor. To their chagrin, he did not veto it and when they tried to repeal it in 1871, he vetoed the repeal.

So in 1889 an all-male convention met to form a Constitution for Statehood. With twenty years of universal suffrage experience, the men adopted unanimously as the Constitution's first clause "equal political rights for all male and female citizens." Ratified by over three fourths of Wyoming's voters, it went to Congress for approval.

"That body, always hostile to the enfranchisement of women, fought for three days to have this first clause eliminated and the Territorial Delegate telegraphed to Wyoming that it looked as if this would have to be done. The Legislature, which was in session, wired back: 'We will remain out of the Union a hundred years rather than come in without woman suffrage.'" A similar struggle unfolded in the Senate, with dire prophecies for the country if Wyoming were permitted to enter the Union with women voters. But the legislation passed and President Harrison signed the bill admitting Wyoming in June 1890.

NOTE: This history of Wyoming comes from the 1913 book [Woman Suffrage: History, Arguments, Results](#) published by the National American Woman Suffrage Association, which became The League of Women Voters. This book was meant to help suffrage speakers and debaters argue their cause. The direct quote above is from p. 18 and eloquently captures the struggle for suffrage.

SAVE THE DATE – JUNE 15

Field trip to the Cahaba River Walk in Birmingham

Our trip, to be led by Cindy Lowry, Executive Director of the [Alabama Rivers Alliance](#), will explore the beauty and the challenges surrounding Alabama's rivers as we walk and pi on the banks of one of our nation's most iconic river systems, the Cahaba River.



PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

Leonette Slay



Travis, Martin and Slay
[See more event photos.](#)

Thanks to Joi Travis for arranging an engrossing discussion of public transit with Interim Executive Director Frank Martin at the BJCTA headquarters on March 26th. It brought together diverse elements of our community and provided much-needed perspectives on our transit history, current challenges, and future trends (see Joi's article in this VOTER). As an added bonus, we enjoyed snacks from Wingout in Hueytown after the formal meeting concluded.

Our next meeting will focus on national security issues, specifically NATO and other global coalitions. Our guest speaker, Major General (Retired) James W.

Darden, has decades of military experience including with European Command in Stuttgart, Germany. This promises to be a provocative discussion you will want to hear. Our meeting, on Tuesday, April 16th, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., will occur at the new [Pelham Public Library](#) at the corner of Ballpark Road and Highway 31 (two miles south of Valleydale Rd and Hwy 31).

Our state convention will be May 17-19th in Tuscaloosa. You may register and/or see the full agenda [here](#). The convention's theme is Environmental Justice and one panel on Saturday will discuss the industrial pollution problems of North Birmingham. If you cannot attend the full convention, consider coming on Saturday for three different discussions of environmental concerns. Special convention hotel rate ends on April 26.

The LWVGB Annual Business Meeting will be held on May 23rd in the [Homewood Public Library](#) at 6:00 p.m. and will be a catered meal followed by election of officers, approval of the 2019-2020 budget, adoption of program, and members' guidance to the incoming leadership team. Watch *The VOTER* and social media for full details as RVSPs will be required for those wishing to eat dinner (vegetarian option will be offered).

Our last meeting of the fiscal year will be a fun departure from our norm. Cindy Lowry, LWVGB member and Executive Director, Alabama Rivers Alliance, will be our guide on a field trip to the Cahaba River on Saturday, June 15th. We envision a picnic on a river walk near Irondale so mark your calendars for this opportunity to see both the beauty and challenges facing our area waterways. Did you know that Alabama has 132,000 miles of rivers and streams?

We have had several new members join because a current member has invited them to attend a LWVGB event. Ask friends/work colleagues/family to come to a meeting, especially when the discussion is of particular interest to them. Our membership is higher than in two decades. A larger membership allows us to conduct more educational activities and conduct more advocacy outreach. It also gives us more voice in state and national League meetings. This is a perfect time to be a part of our nonpartisan organization!

VOTER PHOTO IDs – THANKS TO THE ALABAMA SOS FOR THINKING OF LWV!

Nancy Sales, LWVGB Director

The Alabama Secretary of State's (SOS) Office is again scheduling locations where they will have staff to make Voter Photo IDs for persons who have none of the photo ID's valid for voting. The interesting aspect is that the state and local units of the League of Women Voters, and apparently other groups, were invited to suggest places to hold these events. LWVGB has suggested the following: Urban Ministry, The Foundry, Lovelady Center, and TASC (Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime). Each agency was asked for the best day of the week and time when the largest number of people might participate. Urban Ministry and The Foundry chose the day and time when they have a community meal. We hope these places will be scheduled for Photo ID events before the end of the year. The dates, locations and times are listed on the [AL SOS website](#), currently through May.

Board of Directors, 2018-19

Leonette Slay	President (2019)
Vacant	Vice President (2019)
Yvonne Brakefield Knowles	Secretary (2019)
	VOTER Editor
Leslie O'Neil	Treasurer (2020)
Connie Arnwine	Director (2019)
Maria "Vet" Hawkins	Director (2019)
Nancy Sales	Director (2019)

Nominating Committee (2019)

Yvonne Brakefield Knowles, Chair
Jean Johnson
Nancy Sales, Board Appointee

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"I raise up my voice – not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard."

~ *Malala Yousafzai*

"You had the power all along, my dear."

~ *Glinda the Good Witch*

Let's grow the LWVGB Social Network!

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