

January 2013 Edition



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
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The VOTER



League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham
<http://www.lwvgb.org>

January Membership Meeting

By Cyron dys Jackson Springer

Special points of interest:

- * January Membership Meeting on Jan 29, see page 1
- * Alabama Constitutional Reform Commission Meeting on Feb 1, see page 7
- * Alabama Energy Plan Meeting on Feb 6, see page 6

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Who: Ann Dawson-August
Where: The Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA Board Room) 1735 Morris Ave Birmingham, Al (Copper-domed transit hub on Morris Avenue)
When: Tuesday, January 29, 2013 at 6pm

Ann Dawson-August cares-she really does. In fact, August cares so much that it has become a motto she is encouraging her employees to adopt. August rode into her new role as the Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority's executive director January 1, bringing with her more than three decades of transportation experience, and a mantra that may just catch on. "I C-A-R-E," and according to August it stands for "Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect/Responsibility and Efficiency/Effectiveness."

Before coming to Birmingham, August led South Carolina's Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority, with a stint in Pennsylvania.

Ann Dawson-August is also a longtime League of Women Voters member, according to LWV Sumter County President Jeanette Roveri. "Ann is a valuable League member who will bring so much to the Birmingham area and the local League," said Roveri. Ann Dawson-August will be featured at LWVGB's first membership meeting of the New Year. She will share her experiences in transportation and as a League member. For more information, please contact

Jean Johnson, Communications Director, at jjohnson@brooknet.com.



Ann Dawson-August, BJCTA Executive Director



LWVGB 2012 Review

By Cyron dys Jackson Springer

Hello, members!

The League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham is asking for your continued support as we embark on fundraising activities to bolster the education and advocacy efforts the organization undertakes. The Board plans to identify fundraising goals and efforts in the upcoming months, and we would like your suggestions. Please email Jean Johnson or myself with ideas and prospective contacts. Perhaps you have an event idea, or would like to host an activity benefiting the League. Jean Johnson may be reached at jjohnson@brooknet.com. Cyron dys Jackson Springer may be reached at cyron dysjackson@gmail.com.

Please take a look below at this years activities:

LWVGB has supported and kept public informed about efforts to improve public transit Partici-



pants: LWVGB board member Nancy Ekberg represents the LWV on the Steering Committee of the Alabama Transit Coalition. Nancy has provided many updates on this ongoing advocacy effort which have been published for League members and the public in the LWVGB Voter.

LWVGB has supported and kept public informed about efforts to reform Alabama's outdated, racist and inequitable 1901 constitution. Participants: LWVGB board member Nancy Ekberg is co-chair of the Birmingham Region of the AL Citizens for Constitutional Reform. Nancy gives regular reports on the progress of the Alabama Constitutional Reform Commission to League members and the public.

LWVGB has supported conservation and efficient use of energy in Alabama and supported efforts to promote this. Participants: Joyce Lanning, LWVGB and LWVAL Natural Resources Director. She is a member of the Climate Change Task Force of the national League. Joyce is also a Board Member of the AL Environmental Council.

LWVGB participated in consensus taking to establish the League position on Charter Schools (2/21/12) NOTE: The LWVAL position on Charter Schools that resulted from this statewide study and consensus is listed in the LWVAL issue positions at <http://www.lwval.org/takeaction/positions/index.html#human-resources-education> under Education, Section VII. Characteristics of Charter School Enabling Legislation. It was adopted March 31, 2013.)

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Because I am a woman, I must make unusual efforts to succeed. If I fail, no one will say, "She doesn't have what it takes"; They will say, "Women don't have what it takes".

~ Clare Boothe Luce



LWVGB 2012 Review (continued)

LWVGB presented a Judicial Candidates Forum to inform the public about their candidates (3/13/12)

LWVGB shed light on openness, accessibility of government in the Gr.

B'ham area (published 4/2013 – ongoing)

Participants: Virginia Randolph (chairman), Connie Arnwine, Joan Burroughs, Amanda McGriff, Anne Mitchell, Jean Johnson, Yvonne Brakefield and LWVGB President Ida Tyree-Hyche

Note: This project drew attention of the national League and the LWVGB virtual meeting is noted as possible piece of the Virtual League process. The Virtual League prototype is under development.

LWVGB participated in Earth Day 2013 and "Picnic for the Planet" Birmingham (4/22/12) Photos at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lwvgb/sets/72157629892520589/> Partici-

pants: Joyce Lanning, Natalie Johnson (photographer)

LWVGB Board Planning and Orientation. Kudos and many thanks to Leonette Slay and Virginia Bennett for conducting an excellent LWVGB Board Orientation and moderating Board Planning on Sat., June 16, 2013. And many thanks to Past President Ida Tyree-Hyche for her gracious hospitality in her home and providing the board with a lovely lunch and refreshments throughout the day.

LWVGB provided help and direction to disenfranchised voters on how to get ex-felon voting rights restored (ongoing, major update 6/16/12)

Participants: Ida Tyree-Hyche, Jean Johnson The LWVGB maintains information to assist ex-felons in restoring their voting rights on our website. Former LWVGB president Ida Tyree-Hyche provided a major update to this information

and included a Power Point

available for presentation to Leagues and other civic groups. Thanks also to the ACLU for providing valuable information for this project.



LWVGB encouraged League member and public participation in development of the Birmingham comprehensive plan

Participants: Joyce Lanning

This comprehensive plan for Birmingham will set out a 20-year policy and strategic framework for the City of Birmingham.

Read an article penned by LWV President Elisabeth McNamara about Voting Administration at <http://www.lwv.org/blog/election-administration-needs-more-data-modernization>

LWVGB helped Homewood Residents get to know their candidates through a council forum (8/7/12) Photos at <http://>



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LWVGB 2012 Review (continued)

www.flickr.com/photos/lwvgb/sets/72157631130909464/

Participants: Homewood Primetime Organization point person and coordinator Barbara Pilato; LWVGB moderators and organizers Cyrondys Jackson Springer and Leonette Slay; other LWVGB volunteers Trish Crain, Jean Johnson, Arlene Godwin, Diane Marks, Dr. Donald Marks, Nancy Ekberg, and Joan Burroughs; photographer Natalie Johnson; junior assistant Rebecca Feldman. Natalie and Rebecca are honor students at Homewood High School.

LWVGB co-sponsored Hoover city council candidate forum (8/21/12) Photos at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lwvgb/sets/72157631326812390>

Participants: From BluffParkAL.org, Robin Schultz and Heather Skaggs; From LWVGB, Cyrondys Jackson Springer and Leonette Slay, modera-

tors and organizers, Trish Crain, Michael O'Donnell, Mary Lynn Bates, Jesse Bates, Donald Marks, Diane Marks, Rita Wynkates, and Jean Johnson.

LWVGB helped Brown Mackie College celebrate Constitution Day with Voter Registration Drive (9/19/12) Photos at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lwvgb/sets/72157631653007871>

Participants: Joan Burroughs, Shaina Hamby, Leonette Slay, Ann Smith, Rita Winkates, Michael O'Donnell, and Jean Johnson

LWVGB hosted public update on ACRC (9/20/12) Photos at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lwvgb/sets/72157631625741052/>

Participants: AL Constitutional Reform Commission Members Carolyn McKinstry and Rep. Patricia Todd; LWVGB coordinator Nancy Ek-

berg. Other LWVGB contributors (refreshments) included Joan Burroughs, Donald and Diane Marks, Joyce Lanning, and Jean Johnson.

LWVGB assisted LWVAL in publicizing



Read how LWV is pressing President Obama to act on climate change at

<http://www.lwv.org/press-releases/league-pushes-obama-climate-change>

Vote411.org, appellate court and amendments voter guide in the Greater B'ham area (2/7/12 – 11/6/12) Participants: Jean Johnson, Donald Marks, Diane Marks. Through website postings, Facebook, Twitter and other

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LWVGB 2012 Review (continued)

public venues, LWVGB informed the public about state-wide candidates, LWVGB analysis of the Sept. 18 and Nov. 6 amendments, and extensively publicized state election information available at Vote411.org and LWVGB.org websites.

LWVGB provided election posters and display stands to each public library in the JeffCo Library Cooperative (9/24/12). LWVGB provided full-color registration posters and voter information posters (40 of each) and acrylic display stands to the 40 public libraries in the JeffCo Library Cooperative. This effort was very important in getting registration and election information to the public, especially to those who do not have internet access at home or at work. Participants: Joyce Lanning and Nancy Ekberg (who together initiated, underwrote (100%!)), and carried out this effort), LWV Mobile's Mary McGinnis who provided original posters, Jean Johnson who updated posters. LWVGB also returned to LWV Mobile updated/corrected posters customized for their League. Pat Ryan, Executive Director, Jefferson County Library Cooperative and Pat Rumore, President of Friends of the Birmingham Library, were instrumental in this effort.

LWVGB expanded social networking to better connect with members and the public (2013 – ongoing) Participants: Donald Marks, Diane

Marks, Jean Johnson. Created a more publicly accessible Facebook page, created Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, LinkedIn, Birmingham365.org, and al.com to spread the word about LWVGB projects and activities. Also, instituted a new phone system with message capability that allows public to get timely information (useful for those with or without internet access).

LWVGB co-sponsored United Nations Day Celebration (10/11/12) Oct. 11, 6:00 p.m. @ The Club 1 Robert S. Smith Dr., Birmingham, AL 35209 "The Arab Spring" Keynote Speaker: Hon. Joseph Boohaker, JeffCo. Circuit Judge LWVGB is cosponsor.

Note: LWVGB member Dot Baker is usually a lead organizer of this event. She is LWVGB member and former LWVGB board member and former president of UNA-USA Greater Birmingham Chapter.

LWVGB members worked with Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program to check local polling places for compliance with accessibility requirements. During the 2013 primary and general elections, LWVGB members evaluated polling places to evaluate access and independence for all voters, including those with disabilities.

LWVGB distributed Electoral College educational posters to public and private high schools in Jefferson and North Shelby Counties (11/2013) Participants: Cyrondis Jackson Springer, Trish Crain.

As you can see, it was a BUSY YEAR!!!



If you are interested in public service, please register to attend the Women's Summit on Government Leadership The 2014 Project Alabama

Hosted by the University of Alabama at Birmingham Saturday, January 19, 2013, 9:00 am – 12 noon

http://www.the2014projectal.org/your_invited/

Participate in Developing Alabama's State Energy Plan

By Joyce Lanning

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) Energy Division is currently managing the completion of a comprehensive energy plan for the state of Alabama. They will be working with the Permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Energy Policy, Alabama utilities and other key stakeholders in the state to define clear achievable energy goals, and develop strategies and an action plan to guide the state in the development of energy programs, projects and policy priorities.

You can be a key stakeholder and contributor to the Alabama Energy Plan. In order to lay the groundwork and strategic direction for the Alabama Energy Plan, ADECA would appreciate your feedback via a survey and also welcome you to participate in one of their three initial stakeholder meetings to be held in early February. Your participation is integral to creating alignment between high-level policy statements and specific action plans and initiatives to better Alabama's energy future. ADECA asks that you complete an [online survey](#) regarding your views on energy programs and policies in the state. Your contributions are crucial to this process.

Please complete the survey no later than January 18th.

Responses to the survey will be helpful in structuring the stakeholder meetings to be held in February.

You are invited to participate in the stakeholder meetings to be held February 5 - 7 in Decatur, Birmingham and Montgomery. Please [register](#) for the stakeholder meetings and indicate which meeting you prefer to attend. Registration will close on **January 28th** so be sure to register soon!

Decatur – **Feb. 5, 2013. 8:30 am - Noon:** Calhoun Community College – **Decatur Campus**, Lecture Hall of the ATC Building, 6250 Highway 31 North, Tanner, Alabama

Birmingham – **Feb. 6, 2013. 8:30 am - Noon:** Lawson State Community College – **Bessemer Campus**, Auditorium of the Ethel Hall Center for Automotive Excellence, 1100 9th Avenue SW, Bessemer, AL 35022.

Montgomery – **Feb. 7, 2013. 8:30 am - Noon:** Location TBD, Montgomery, AL.

Review the POWER-UP Forum Report for a perspective on energy issues in Alabama:

The Alabama Environmental Council (AEC) hosted an open, public forum about energy in our state on December 5, 2012. Conversations centered on electric energy efficiency and conservation, alternatives, renewables, and a transparent process for stakeholders to have input in choosing our energy future.

To view a 4 page summary of the Forum, please visit the link below.

Presentations from the day and additional information, including a brief review of several states' energy plans, can be found at <http://www.aeonline.org/energy/powerup>.

Being an American is about
having the right to be who
you are. Sometimes that
doesn't happen. .

~ Herb Ritts



League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham

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Making Democracy Work!

League of Women Voters Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League of Women Voters Education Fund Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters Education Fund works to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government and to increase understanding of major public policy issues.



Constitutional Reform

By Nancy Ekberg

The Constitutional Reform Commission has brought forth many recommendations for the full Commission to consider and approve for legislation in 2013.

Here is a very brief description of the recommendations that will be of interest to the general public:

Maintain current requirement that Senators be at least 25 years of age and Representatives be at least 21.

Maintain the current 105 calendar days of the general session.

No recommendation on term limits

Keep introduction of revenue bills in the House

Delete the budget isolation resolution that requires any bill that affects revenue, offered before both budgets have

passed, will require a super majority before the bill can be offered.

Allow the State to engage in economic development without requiring a constitutional amendment in order to do so

Keep the need to advertise local laws

Maintain the list of 21 categories of items on which the legislature shall not pass local laws

Prevent one legislator's "no" vote on a county's constitutional amendment from sending it to a statewide vote. Recommend that it will take more legislators voting "no" to send a county's constitutional amendment statewide

Prevent legislators from passing laws that affect budgets of counties without the approval of those counties' commission-

ers.

Keep provision that counties shall provide for maintenance of the poor.

All proposals are listed in their entirety at www.ali.state.al.us Also at that site, are minutes of meetings and official transcripts of the Commission meetings. The funding for these transcripts is being provided by ACCR Inc.

The next meeting of the Commission will be February 1, at 10:00 a.m. in room 617 of the State House in Montgomery.

The public is always invited and welcome at the meetings. Another meeting may be called prior to submitting legislation and we will let you know if that is going to happen. When the legislation is created, we will get that out to our membership ASAP.

Board of Directors, 2013

Cyrodys Jackson Springer	President
Trish Powell Crain	1st Vice President
Michael O'Donnell	Treasurer
Nancy Ekberg	Director – Constitution Reform
Karen Threlkeld	Director - VOTER Editor
Wanda Godfrey	Director - Education
Joyce Lanning	Director - Environment
Jean Johnson	Director - Technical
Joan Burroughs	Secretary
Leonette Slay	Nominating Committee Chair
Donald Marks	Social Media (Off Board)
Diane Marks	Social Media (Off Board)



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