



May, 2008

Board of Directors
League of Women Voters of
Greater Birmingham
205 583-5000
admin@lwvqb.org

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Nancy Ekberg, 1st Vice President
Cissy Bennett, Secretary
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Paulette Rowe,
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Nominating Committee Chair
Jean Johnson,
Off-Board Technical Director
Ann Smith,
Off-Board Observer Corps Water
Works
Karen Threlkeld
Off-Board Voters Service

Coming on Board! – A Note from our President

LWVGB had a good annual business meeting. Thanks to Cissy Bennett for making the arrangements, and thanks to all the members who attended and participated. Bylaw changes were made and budget and program for 2008-2009 recommendations were passed. Dues were raised by \$5.00 to \$45.00. See the article regarding this change and the rationale. New Board members were elected. We want to thank Leonette Slay, Beverly Nelson and Kaydee Erdreich-Breman who are leaving the board. They provided invaluable assistance and leadership respectively, in budgetary and environmental issues, *Voter* publication and Observer Corps, and transit issues and Observer Corps. Each always had creative ideas and good questions to keep us on our toes. We hope to see them back again.

The State Council was hosted by the Birmingham League, and thanks to Sarah McDonald for making the arrangements and securing excellent speakers. There are pictures and an article about the meeting in this *Voter*. Additionally we presented the first Pattie Ruffner Jacobs award. Again, see the article and photograph. Birmingham was well represented at the meeting and participated in a discussion for League development.

The LWVGB transitional Board of Directors meeting was held May 6 with returning and new board members and officers plus the board members who are leaving the board. A good discussion of our role in Voters' Service was held and will continue at the Planning Meeting on July 19th. Any member may attend the Board Planning meeting, just give me a call (583.5000) or send me an email (vrandolph@lwvqb.org). Some of our discussion also revolved around generating interest in the League with younger adults.

If you have not visited the LWVAL web site recently, it has election information and a new voters' guide on appellate judicial races. A good place to help you stay informed and to let your friends know about the issues of the elections.
www.lwval.org/election2008/voterguide/

June 3rd is Election Day!



Ginny

May, 2008

Pattie Ruffner Jacobs Award

In 1910 in the young town of Birmingham, Pattie Ruffner Jacobs a local socialite began the Birmingham Equal Suffrage Association, and a year later she helped start the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association. She became an officer in the National Equal Suffrage Association and worked tirelessly from 1910 to 1920 for the vote for women in Alabama. After the amendment was passed at the national level Mrs. Jacobs helped turn the Alabama Suffrage Association into the League of Women Voters. She served as secretary of the national League of Women Voters in 1920 when the first board of the League of Women Voters was established. For her innovative work this woman now is listed in the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame

The LWVGB board voted to name an award for outstanding member after Ms. Jacobs. The award will be given at times when the board wishes to honor a member who exceeds expectations, is especially innovative in furthering democracy through the League of Women Voters

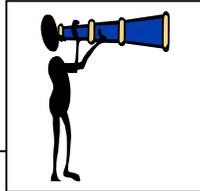
Criteria:

- Member of the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham
- Selfless participation in the League beyond the expected role of an officer or volunteer.
- Innovative in the achievement of the goals of the LWVGB

The first award was presented to Jean Johnson. Since the rest of the State also shares in the rewards offered by Jean the presentation was made at the LWVAL Council meeting. Jean has served in a number of roles in the League at the local and State level including Co-President of LWVAL. She has been innovative in our presence on the Web as well as encouraging use of technological advances for discussions through our new Dialogue feature. Jean uses the Web to keep us posted on meetings, advocacy issues, citizen-education and voter service information. She works with the LWVGB on voter service, always serving at the Registrar's office around election day, program arrangements, *Voter* publication on the Web. At the State level she keeps us aware of legislation and its status, especially in the areas of priority for the LWVAL. This project alone is one that would make most of us have nightmares. For her entire body of work we thank and honor Jean Johnson.



Jean Johnson, First Recipient of Patti Ruffner Jacobs Award



Observer Corps Focuses on Water Works

Birmingham Water Works Board Report:

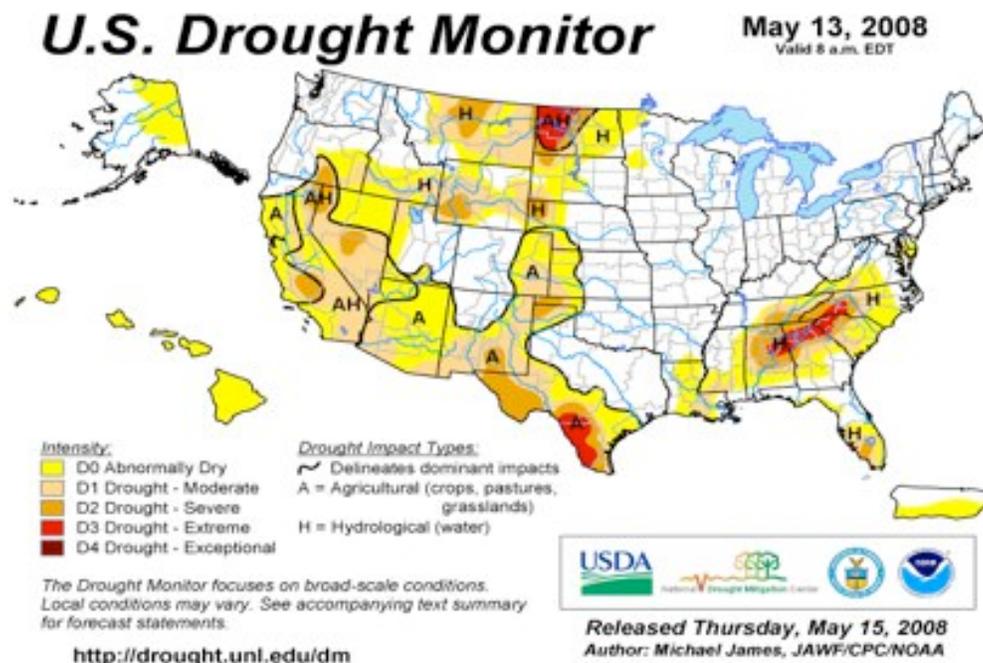
A revised version of the **Watershed Protection Policy** for Lake Purdy and the Upper Cahaba was approved by the board in April. According to the general manager, the policy strengthens the requirements for developers to perform studies and tests that will show the effects that proposed developments may have on water quality. The BWWB has more than 15,000 acres of watershed around the Cahaba, Lake Purdy and Inland Lake. A separate policy will soon be completed which will cover the Inland Lake watershed.

In November, 2007, a lawsuit by Attorney General Troy King, which would have forced the state Public Service Commission to regulate the Birmingham Water Works Board, was thrown out by a Montgomery County circuit judge. King's appeal to the Alabama Supreme Court was filed January 8, 2008. In late April, the court dismissed the suit, saying that it had been filed too late. All 3 PSC commissioners opposed King's attempt to force them to regulate the BWWB.

The BWWB recently received an award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which recognizes systems that comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Birmingham won in a category for large systems in 8 southeastern states.

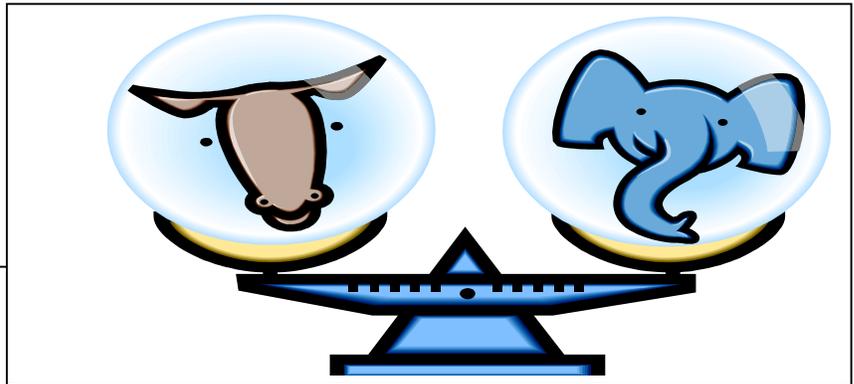
Inland Lake, our largest reservoir, reached full pool for the first time in 2 years in late April and pumping from that source has resumed. The U.S. Drought Monitor still classifies parts of Jefferson and Shelby Counties to be in "extreme" drought and other parts to be in "severe". It will take years to fully recover from the drought if we continue to have only average rainfall.

Ann Smith, Observer Corps



The Voter

May, 2008



LWVAL-EF Releases AL Appellate Courts Voter Guide

The LWVAL Education Fund has released online a nonpartisan Voter Guide about candidates running for the Court of Criminal Appeals in the June 3, 2008 primary election. To view it, go to www.lwval.org/election2008/voterguide/ The Voter Guide also provides information about the Alabama appellate courts. All twelve candidates responded to the League's questions. They were asked about the attributes of a judge, judicial philosophy and independence, needs of the criminal justice system, and the role of public opinion and personal beliefs in decision-making. In addition candidates were asked to provide biographical and campaign contact information. Answers are posted verbatim.

Jean Johnson



LWVGB Opposes Personnel Board Bill

A bad bill has just passed both Houses and now goes to the Governor for his signature.

Both Houses of the Alabama Legislature passed the Jefferson Personnel Board bill HB492 that will remove the existing three-Board non-partisan panel with a 7 member Board of elected members. These new members will make final decisions on the problems ordinary citizens bring to their Personnel Board (Merit System.)The new members are decidedly partisan. They will include the Mayor of Birmingham, the Chairman of the County Commission and several elected mayors and others. It now goes to the Governor for his signature or veto. This bill will turn a non-partisan system into a very political one. It risks the chance of going back to the political selections and cronyism of the past. We can only hope the Governor recognizes this and vetoes it.

Nancy Ekberg

May, 2008

State Council a Zoo Happening

The LWVAL meeting was held on May 3rd at the Birmingham Zoo. Delegates and state board members from across the state gathered on a rainy morning. Mark White, president-elect of the Alabama State Bar Association was the luncheon speaker. Dr. Mona Fouad, of UAB's Minority Health Disparity Center spoke at an afternoon workshop about her work in Black Belt counties. The disparities there can serve as background as the state League reviews its health care position.



Sarah McDonald, Dr. Mona Fouad and Mary Lynn Bates



Welcome 4 New Members!

Welcome to new members **Patricia Horn** of Birmingham, **Loretta Brown** of Hoover, **Stephanie Melonis** of Hoover and **Maureen Pezzementi** of Birmingham. We look forward to your participation in this exciting election year.



Constitution Reform Update: Legislators Disappoint

The 2008 Legislative Session took our movement further than ever been before. **HB 308**, that would have allowed the people to vote on holding a constitutional convention, came to the floor of the House under the very capable leadership of Speaker Pro Tem, Demetrius Newton. Because the budgets for the State had not been passed in both houses, a budget isolation resolution (BIR) was required before the bill could be debated. Although a majority of those voting that day, voted IN FAVOR of the BIR for the bill, it fell a few votes short of the super majority required for a BIR to pass.

We applaud the following Representatives for voting in favor of allowing the bill to be debated and the potential of allowing the people's voices to be heard.

Thanks go to Representatives:

Locy "Sonny" Baker (D) District 85 Abbeville
Mike Ball (R) District 10 Madison
George "Tootie" Bandy (D) District 83 Opelika
Robert Bentley ((R) District 63 Tuscaloosa
Marcel Black (D) District 3 Tuscumbia
Barbara Bigsby Boyd (D) District 32 Anniston
Greg Canfield (R) District 48 Vestavia Hills
Merika Coleman (D) District 57 Midfield
Mike Curtis (D) District 2 Florence
Paul DeMarco (R) District 46 Homewood
Priscilla Dunn (D) District 56 Bessemer
Chris England (D) District 70 Tuscaloosa
James Fields, Jr. (D) District 12 Cullman
Craig Ford (D) District 28 Gadsden
Betty Carol Graham (D) District 81 Alexander City
Ronald Grantland (D) District 9 Hartselle
Ken Guin (D) District 14 Carbon Hill
Alan Harper (D) District 61 Aliceville
Earl Hilliard, Jr. (D) District 60 Birmingham
Ralph Howard (D) District 72 Greensboro
Tammy Irons (D) District 1 Florence
Thomas Jackson (D) District 68 Thomasville
Marc Keahey (D) District 65 Grove Hill
Yvonne Kennedy (D) District 97 Mobile
John Knight, Jr. (D) District 77 Montgomery
Richard Lindsey (D) District 39 Centre
James "Jimmy" Martin (D) District 42 Clanton
Mac McCutcheon (R) District 25 Capshaw
Frank McDaniel (D) District 26 Albertville
Jeff McLaughlin (D) District 27 Guntersville
Mary Moore (D) District 59 Birmingham
Speaker Pro Tem Demetrius Newton (D) District 53 Birmingham
John Robinson (D) District 23 Scottsboro
John Rogers (D) District 52 Birmingham
Yusuf Salaam (D) District 67 Selma
Howard Sanderford (R) District 20 Huntsville
Sue Schmitz (D) District 6 Toney
Rod Scott (D) District 55 Fairfield
Tommy Sherer (D) District 13 Jasper
Butch Taylor (D) District 22 New Hope
James Buskey (D) District 99 Mobile
Steve Clouse (R) District 93 Ozark
Spencer "Jack" Collier (R) District 105 Irvington
Randy Davis (R) District 96 Daphne
Owen Drake (R) District 45 Leeds
Bill Dukes (D) District 8 Decatur
Teddy "Joe" Faust (R) District 94 Fairhope
Chad Fincher (R) District 102 Semmes
Lea Fite (D) District 40 Jacksonville
Victor Gaston (R) District 100 Mobile

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Constitutional Reform Update

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We are sorry that the following voted against allowing debate on HB 308:

Mac Gipson (R) District 88 Prattville
Tpdd Greeson (R) District 24 Ider
Micky Hammon (R) District 4 Decatur
Mike Hubbard (R) District 79 Auburn
Steve Hurst (D) District 35 Munford
Jamie Ison, (R) District 101 Mobile
Ronald Johnson (R) District 33 Sylacauga
Richard Laird (D) District 37 Roanoke
John "Jody" Letson (D) District 7 Hillsboro
Benjamin Lewis (R) District 86 Dothan
Jay Love (R) District 74 Montgomery
Barry Mast (R) District 31 Wetumpka
Mary Sue McClurkin (R) District 43 Pelham
Steve McMillan (R) District 95 Bay Minette
Mike Millican (D) District 17 Hamilton
Pat Moore (R) District 15 Pleasant Grove
Johnny Mack Morrow (D) District 18 Red Bay
Charles Newton (D) District 90 Greenville
Jeremy Oden (R) District 11 Vinemont
Arthur Payne (R) District 44 Trussville
Harry Shiver (R) District 64, Bay Minette
Terry Spicer (D) District 91 Elba
Henry White, (D) District 5, Athens
Jack Williams, (R) District 47, Birmingham
Randy Wood, (R) District 36, Anniston
Greg Wren, (R) District 75, Montgomery.

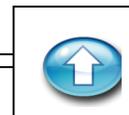
We are sorry that James Gordon chose to abstain and that Blaine Galliher, Artis "A.J." McCampbell, Oliver Robinson and Lesley Vance chose to not vote.

And we are sorry that Billy Beasley, David Grimes, Laura Hall, Mike Hill, Randy Hinshaw, Alvin Holmes, Thad McClammy, Jim McClendon, Joseph Mitchell and Jack Page, III, were absent and thus did not vote.

So now, ACCR members and supporters, contact your representative and let him or her know you applaud their vote if it was in favor of HB 308, but are sorry they did not trust you if they voted against the bill.

Find contact information at www.legislature.state.al.us We are encouraged by the members of the Legislature that see the need to put this issue in the voters' hands. They recognize the need to trust those who elected them to make the right decision for the State. We look forward to next year when we fully expect bills to succeed in the House and the Senate. Our effort the rest of this year is to get the message out to the voters throughout Alabama. They will know what is best for this great State and will get that message to their legislators.

Nancy Ekberg



Dues Are Rising

The members voted to raise the dues \$5.00 to a total of **\$45.00** beginning with the September dues period. For decades our dues have been \$40.00. Actually we have the lowest in the State and are among the lowest in the nation. The dues for Leagues in Montgomery, Tuscaloosa and Baldwin County are \$50. The rationale for LWVGB raising the dues was that currently of our \$40 dues we send \$26.80 to National and \$12.00 to State Leagues. That leaves us with \$1.20 per member on which to operate, enough to pay for our telephone for two months. For members who join at the National level (send their dues to National rather than directly to us) we do not see a penny. We have been doing pretty well with some investment interest and with donations. LWV is proposing a raise to \$28.00 for the per member payment that we make. That would leave us with no income, a difficult position to be in when we do have **Voters** to mail, a telephone, our brochure **Alabama Government at Your Fingertips** and our projects. The Board has operated with minimal copy charges as most of the business is done with email of agendas, proposals etc. and Jean Johnson has placed all our documents on the Web site. Some of our board members do not turn in expenses and that is really not appropriate. The members at our Annual Business meeting felt the increase was warranted.



LWVGB Upcoming Events

June	13-17		LWV Convention	Portland OR
July	19	9:00 – 3:00	Planning Session	Randolph Compound

LWVGB
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