



The VOTER

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

Earth Day at the Botanical Gardens

LWVGB's participation in the Birmingham Botanical Garden's Earth Day celebration on May 1 proved a great success--kudos to our Natural Resources chair, Joyce Lanning, for suggesting our participation and acting as liaison with BBG. We had two hands-on activities for children,



one that provided paper grocery bags for decoration and re-use and another that allowed children to "make" carbon dioxide by combining baking soda and vinegar, then using the carbon dioxide to snuff out a candle, to catch their attention while we talked about the implications of excess CO2 in our atmosphere. Parents and their children were given Climate Action Checklists to take home and many posted their action commitments on our pledge wall.



We also handed out about 15 LWV membership brochures. The League's booth proved a popular spot for boys and girls and a Girl Scout leader whose entire troop visited the booth said that we "had great activities". THANKS to Joyce for returning early from the LWVAL convention to oversee the event and to the following LWVGB members for

helping to staff the booth: Amanda McGriff, Jean Johnson, Michael O'Donnell, Nancy Sales, Angelyn Simmons, and Leonette Slay.

League of Women Voters of Alabama Convention

Over fifty LWVAL members and several others took part in our educational and enjoyable convention held in Mobile April 30-May 1, only days after the deadly tornados hit the northern part of the state. We were thankful that our Tuscaloosa and Birmingham members were safe, but mindful of those who were affected.

More than twenty of us were guests of the Mobile League Friday night at a progressive dinner in three homes within walking distance in an historic neighborhood. The menu was outstanding and delicious, and the night perfect for indoor-outdoor enjoyment.

The program on Saturday included numerous presentations and discussions about the effects of the Gulf Oil Spill of 2010 as well as a discussion of the League's support of EPA's Clean Air Defense, which includes the Toolkit for Climate Action. There was discussion about the need for a state water management policy, and you can follow developments on water policy and management on the Alabama Rivers Alliance website at <http://www.alabamairivers.org/>.

Saturday evening we moved to the original Oyster House on the causeway for our banquet. Some stayed ashore for the no-host cocktail party and others donated to take a short wine and cheese cruise on the river. After an excellent dinner, Jim



1Mrs. Hassel halverson of Grand Forks, ND at the LWV 1958 Convention in Atlantic City

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 11, 2011: 9am-3pm, Board Orientation & Planning Meeting, 320 Albemarle Drive, Hoover.

ENJOY THE SUMMER!!

Sumner, Director of the Alabama Ethics Commission, told us that the recently-passed ethics legislation had achieved seven of the ten items on the wish list he presented to us at our convention in Birmingham two years ago, and he thanked the League for our assistance.

Our business session on Sunday morning we received the reports of the local Leagues and adopted the budgets for the general fund and educational fund as circulated. Officers and Directors were elected, with a nomination from the floor of Stacey Steiner to serve as chair of the nominating committee with Ginnie Bennett and Karen Threlkeld. The officers are: President, Kathy Byrd; 1st Vice-President, Mary Lynn Bates; 2nd Vice-President Scarlett Gaddy; Secretary, Yvonne Brakefield; Treasurer, Shelly Murray. Directors are Charlotte Ward, Laura Hill, Anne

Permaloff, Hattie Kaufman, Joyce Lanning and Jeanine Normand.

The program changes were approved: all existing positions were readopted, and we concurred with the national statement on health care with a few minor clarifications.

The Hampton Inn went out of their way to be helpful and is due our appreciation for their friendly and helpful support. The Mobile experience was southern hospitality at its finest, and we thank our Mobile members and our co-presidents and their team for an excellent convention.

Member Profile



Leonette Slay is a returning board member who joined the LWV in 1975 in Austin, Texas. She helped form a new League in Elizabethtown, Kentucky while stationed nearby and has served on the board of LWVAL as well as president of the Tuscaloosa LWV. Her interests include natural resources, transparency in government, and developing League leaders for the next 90 years.

Reform is Alive and Well in the Alabama Legislature

Many legislators are focusing on constitutional reform this year.

President Pro Tem, Senator Del Marsh offered SJR82 which sets up a Constitutional Revision Commission comprised of the Governor, Speaker of the House, President Pro Tem of the Senate and three persons appointed by each of them. It will be guided by the Alabama Law Institute. The bill requires that the Commission reflect the diversity of this State. It has passed both Houses and will be signed by the Governor.

Former Speaker Pro Tem, Demetrius Newton has sponsored HJR 34 in the House, a Resolution which calls for a constitutional convention. Senator Roger Bedford has sponsored SJR 27, in the Senate, a Resolution that calls for a constitutional convention. Both Resolutions are in their respective Rules Committees.

Senator Arthur Orr sponsored SB 112, a constitutional amendment which



will eliminate the racist language from our Constitution. It has passed in the Senate and now is in the House Judiciary Committee under Rep. Paul DeMarco.

Rep. Mike Hill has sponsored HB 181, a constitutional amendment which will allow limited home rule to counties that vote to accept it. Note this bill does not provide any taxing authority. Hill's bill, HB 181 is in the County and Municipal Government Committee. **This has a chance of passing but only with your help. Please call the Committee Members (especially Rep. Randy Wood of Anniston who is holding up the bill in his sub-committee) and ask them to support HB 181.**

The members are:

- Rep. Steve McMillan Chair of Bay Minette 251-948-5575
- Rep. Randy Wood Vice Chair of Anniston 256-820-6700
- Rep. Demetrius Newton of Birmingham 205-324-6053
- Rep. George Bandy of Opelika 334-749-0051
- Rep. Alan Boothe of Troy 334-566-5742
- Rep. Napoleon Bracy of Prichard 251-622-8118
- Rep. Owen Drake of Leeds 205-699-6655
- Rep. Allen Farley of McCalla 205-960-7526
- Rep. Jeremy Oden of Vinemont 256-736-6026
- Rep. Patricia Todd of Birmingham 205-567-9410
- Rep. Dan Williams of Athens 256-232-8993



Rep. Patricia Todd has sponsored HB207, a constitutional amendment that will allow a small portion of money from gasoline and motor vehicle funds to be used for public transit. It is in the Ways and Means General Fund of the House.

Rep. Paul DeMarco has sponsored HB20, a constitutional amendment which will modernize the banking Article and eliminate outdated sections of the Article. DeMarco has also sponsored HB21, a constitutional amendment which will update the corporate Articles. Both bills made it through the House and are now in the Senate.



Annual Meeting Summary

Eighteen members of the LWVGB convened for the 2011 annual meeting which surpassed the number needed for a quorum. Attendees approved the proposed budget, which includes a modest advertising budget, to support the membership initiatives planned for the coming year. Attendees also approved Bylaws changes, after a thoughtful discussion of the pros and cons. With approval of the Bylaws, recommendations of the Nominating Committee were then approved. Beginning with our new president, Ida Tyree-Hyche, the President's term

will be one year rather than two. An understudy will be mentored by the president and move into the President's position in the subsequent year. The understudy's position was the only one that was not filled for the current year, and the board will continue its search. The Bylaws allow the board to make appointments for all positions except the president. Ida concluded the meeting by asking for guidance from the membership to the board, and several constructive suggestions were made by the members. She also emphasized that

additional suggestions may be emailed to her or any board member prior to the planning meeting on June 11.

April 9, 2011

Dear Ms. McDonald,

First I want to tell you how much I have enjoyed your brochure of "Alabama Government at your fingertips". I have used it numerous times to write these different elected members on different subjects. Other wise I could not have known how to reach them.

Would you send me an "update" copy of your brochure? (The one I have is dated February 2009) Many of these elected officials on this brochure are no longer there.

I understand that there is no charge for this.

Thank you sincerely,

Nettie Jo Knight
748 Salter's Drive
Hueytown, Alabama
35023

*Letter from a
League
Friend*



THE VOTER - May 2011

Board of Directors, 2010-2011

Leonette Slay, President
Nancy Ekberg, 1st Vice President
Angelyn Simmons, Secretary
Amanda McGriff, Treasurer
Joyce Lanning, Director
Leonette Slay, Director
Ida Tyree-Hyche, Director
Joan Burroughs, Public Relations
Ginny Randolph, Voter Services
Karen Threlkeld, Editor - *The Voter*
Connie Arnwine, Nominating Committee Chair
Jean Johnson, Off-Board Technical Director

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Do you not know I am a
woman? when I think, I
must speak.

~William Shakespeare, *As
You Like It*

Above all, we must realize
that no arsenal or no weapon
in the arsenals of the world
is so formidable as the will
and moral courage of free
men and women.

~ Ronald Reagan

League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham
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