



# The VOTER

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

MAY-2012

## The League Celebrates 2012 Earth Day

On April 22, people came to celebrate nature and the earth's abundance with song, fun and food...and lots of food! The picnickers were many, and they may have broken a "Guinness World Record" for the most number of people picnicking in a 24 hour period around the world! Stay tuned. There was live music from the Jason Bailey Band, The Arc, and Blue Galaxy String Project. Over 50 artfully rendered picnic tables surrounded the area. And there were plenty of activities for the kids. Have you ever had to dodge a giant rolling Earth commanded by an 8-year-old? The children were totally fascinated by the many animals exhibited by Andy Schertz, Programs Dept. Supervisor at the Birmingham Zoo. They even got to pet some of them.



The LWVGB was represented among several groups who stand up for the preservation of Alabama's treasured natural environment and advocate for measures that will promote clean air and water purity. Joyce Lanning, LWVGB and LWVAL Environmental Chair, spoke with visitors who dropped by the League's table. She answered their questions and explained that the League of Women Voters "supports measures to promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection of natural resources in the public interest..." and "...believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of healthy ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these

resources, especially air and water, should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the environment and to protect public health."

Photos from the event are available at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lwvgb/sets/72157629892520589/>.

Thank you to the [Alabama Chapter of the Nature Conservancy](#), Railroad Park, the Birmingham Zoo, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham, and all others who contributed to this very fun day!

## From the Desk of our (New) President

Greetings!

The League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham is preparing for another remarkable year of advocacy and service to our area. I would first like to thank the League and its members for the opportunity to serve as President, and welcome our new Board members, Trisha Powell Crain (1<sup>st</sup> Vice President), Michael O'Donnell (Treasurer), Arlene Godwin (Director) and Jean Johnson (Director). The Board will meet for its Annual Planning retreat on June 16th, 2012. Voter Services, Programming and Board training are just a few items on the agenda.

What I am most excited about is the synergy created by the League's work over the past year. I've spoken with numerous people who have been "impressed with the dust you folks are kicking up!" Whether it is hosting a candidate's

## Join Us for the LWVUS 50th National Convention in Washington DC on June 8-12, 2012

If you are interested in attending the National Convention, please contact one of the LWVGB Directors. A great program will be presented, starting with a great pre-convention workshop entitled "Power Our Voice To Power the Vote" on Friday, June 8th at 2 PM and concluding with the final plenary on Tuesday, June 12th at noon.

More information is available at <http://www.lwv.org/member-resources/council-and-convention>.

The Convention workbook which contains –

- Convention Rules and Procedures
- Process For Election of LWVUS Officers, Directors and Nominating Committee
- Nominations 2012-2014
- Proposed 2012-2014 LWVUS Program
- Proposed LWVUS and LWVEF Budgets For The 2012-2014 Biennium
- Certificate Of Incorporation And Bylaw
- Proposed Bylaws Amendments
- Committee Reports

- is available at <http://www.lwv.org/content/convention-workbook-full>.

forum, or our "virtual" Sunshine on Government 2012 project, the LWVGB continues to carry out the work of this historical organization. On May 5th, 2012, delegates and members from Leagues throughout the state attended the LWVAL Council 2012 meeting in Montgomery, Alabama. The purpose of the Council meeting is to, "give guidance to the State Board on progress, methods of operation and budget." The meeting featured two informative workshops (Social Media and Fundraising,) as well as luncheon speaker, Dana Beyerle, columnist for the Gadsden Times and the Tuscaloosa News. The LWVGB had excellent representation, with Donald Marks, Trisha Powell Crain and myself serving as delegates, and members Nancy Ekberg (ACCR, Transportation), Joyce Lanning (Natural Resources), Yvonne Brakefield (Secretary) and Mary Lynn Bates (1<sup>st</sup> Vice President) were also in attendance. Attending for the first time, I came away inspired, invigorated and amazed at the hard work our sister League's are undertaking. It was also wonderful to finally meet fellow members and share ideas, as well as discuss possible collaborations.

The LWV's National Convention will take place June 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 2012, in Washington, DC, and preparations are already under way to attend. I am excited about the opportunity to meet other League leaders and members from across the nation, and share those experiences with each of you!

In League,

Cyrodys Jackson, President

### **Something to Sneeze At!**

*By Joyce Lanning*

At the LWVAL Council meeting in Montgomery May 5th, League members joined people all over the world connecting the dots between the changing climate and extreme weather events. At a break between the excellent presentations on social media and fundraising, we heard a little about the connection between increasing greenhouse gases, primarily from burning fossil fuels, a hotter planet, more pollen, allergies and asthma and the misery they cause and money they cost.

This is not only a quality of life problem, but also decreases productivity, affects business income and school performance, and increases health care costs – a result of our dependence on burning fossil fuels. It's a serious "something to sneeze at" - and we do. It impacts lives and livelihoods, causing suffering, increased expenditures and more sick days. Climate change is happening now. The price we pay for our fossil fuels doesn't reflect the hidden damages to our health and our environment.

We can begin the move to a clean energy economy now. Energy efficiency is getting



the same result but using less energy and money by making buildings more weathertight and appliances and lighting more efficient. Solar solutions are dropping in price and wind is a cost-effective option in many parts of the country. Let's connect the dots and look for wiser uses of energy through efficiency and renewables.

To view photos from [350.org](http://350.org) Connect the Dots event, go to [www.climatedots.org](http://www.climatedots.org).

## A Few Small Steps toward Constitutional Reform

By Nancy Ekberg

A bill in the Senate, SB 372, would bring reform because it would require more than one legislator to vote against a constitutional amendment in order to force it to a statewide vote. It would save the State money in election costs and would keep local issues, local. There will not be time this Session to pass this bill, but the League will keep track of it for next year.



In other news, revisions of the Banking Article and the Corporations Article passed both houses and will become law if the voters approve in November.

And of course, a bill passed last year proposes to remove unconstitutional language from the Constitution including racist language forbidding black and white children from attending school together; the poll tax; and restrictions on voting. Although these things have been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, they are still in our Alabama Constitution. This amendment proposed in the bill to remove this unconstitutional language will also be on the ballot in November.



## State Council Meeting

By Trish Crain

After attending my first state council meeting, I am even more energized and committed to the mission of the League. It was fabulous meeting women from across the state who are committed and engaged in their communities. After feeling rather alone in that mission over the years, I believe I have found a home in the League.

From the basic organization of the meeting, to the knowledge of the participants, to the work ahead, I was impressed with all of it. Mostly, though, I was impressed with the hope for the future that our members exhibit. A lot of folks don't engage because they don't believe they can make a difference. Each and every member holds the belief that they truly can make a difference by working steadily for change. That was inspiring and encouraging, as I hold that belief as well.

The breakout sessions on Fundraising and Social Media were very helpful to me personally and certainly to the League's efforts.

I look forward to working with the League in the coming years!



### Board of Directors, 2012-2013

Cyrodys Jackson	President
Trish Powell Crain	1st VP
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
Arlene Godwin	Director – Voter Service
Leonette Slay	Nominating Committee Chair
Donald Marks	Social Media (Off Board)
Diane Marks	Social Media (Off Board)

### QUOTABLE QUOTES

If you don't like the road you're walking, start paving another one.

~ Dolly Parton

People demand freedom of speech as a compensation for the freedom of thought which they seldom use.

~ Søren Kierkegaard

If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman.

~ Margaret Thatcher

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