



November 2009

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Greater Birmingham
205 583-5000
admin@lwvgb.org

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November Meeting Reminder

Remember to join us at our November 19 meeting at **6:00 p.m.** at the Homewood Library, Room 116. We'll be discussing Education Issues with Dr. Scott Snyder - Associate Dean for Research, Scholarship, and Graduate Education; Director, Center for Educational Accountability; Associate Professor of Human Studies, School of Education, UAB.

Holiday Luncheon

Please join us on Saturday December 12 at 11:30 a.m. at The Club for our Holiday luncheon.

Carol Nunnelley will be talking about the Fourth Estate.

The phrase "fourth estate" was originally used as a synonym for newspapers. But with the advent of radio, television, news magazines, etc., its meaning has been broadened to include all of what is known as the mass media. This is an especially relevant subject in these days of Internet and other mass media channels.

The luncheon will begin at 11:30 and will consist of Caesar salad, Penne Pasta with Chicken or Vegetarian Pasta Primavera, Orange Rolls, and coffee or tea. Cost is \$20.00 and reservations are required. This year for your convenience, you can use your credit card on our League website, or mail a check to Amanda McGriff, LWVGB, P.O. Box 320847, Birmingham, AL 35232. Please join us for this annual event.



Your League Board hard at work!





DUES, DUES, DUES!!!

To continue your membership in the League, send a check for \$45.00 (\$65.00 for two in a household) to:

Amanda McGriff
LWVGB Treasurer
PO Box 320847
Birmingham, AL 35232

OR

You can go to our website and pay online. <http://www.lwvgb.org/>



ACCR Workshop

Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform (ACCR) is sponsoring a **FREE** workshop about the Alabama Constitution on Saturday, November 14th in Birmingham. League members are invited to attend. Sarah McDonald will present the Constitutional Convention and reform story from the League's history.

Bring the Constitution Back Home

Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail
Oxmoor Valley Golf Course Clubhouse
100 Sunbelt Parkway, Birmingham, AL 35211

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and the workshops begin at 9:00 a.m.

More information is available online at <http://www.constitutionalreform.org/BringItBackHome.shtml>.

McDonald's Musings

We have had two excellent meetings on Health Care Reform. Dr. Gerald Glandon of UAB discussed many of the aspects of improving health care delivery, as well as ways of lowering costs. Both of these meetings have been at lunchtime, a departure from our calendars of the past few years. So we need to hear from you. Would you prefer lunchtime meetings to evening meetings? Does it depend on the location? This fall all of the general meetings have been at Homewood Library – not so convenient for people who work downtown or in distant suburbs. After the holidays several lunchtime gatherings will be at the Alabama Power building downtown. So let me know what you think. You can phone (967-2829) or email (smcdonald3357@charter.net) with your opinions.

Our November meeting will be on the 19th at 6:30 pm at Homewood Library. Dr. Scott Snyder will discuss current trends in education. This will help us prepare to discuss the possible re-study of our local education position, which is quite old and in need of at least some updating. Such a restudy would have to be authorized by members at our Annual Business Meeting in April.

Our Holiday Luncheon on Dec. 5th at The Club will feature Carol Nunnolley, an editor and journalism trainer. She has developed a national online journalism credibility project in collaboration with the Reynolds Journalism Institute at Missouri School of Journalism. Some of you may remember her from her days as managing editor of *The Birmingham News*. Details of the luncheon are found elsewhere in this *Voter*.



Environmental Update

An October 24th 350 Climate Rally was organized by college students to raise awareness of what scientists are saying is the maximum long-term atmospheric parts per million concentration of carbon dioxide which will help avoid destructive planetary warming and climate changes. (We are now at about 390 ppm). The League of Women Voters of the United States has a position to limit the construction of coal fired power plants for at least ten years and to pass strong climate legislation limiting the emission of greenhouse gases.

The 350 rally was held on Birmingham-Southern Campus with the participation of enAct (BSC Students Engaged Actively in Environmental Issues), the University of Alabama at Birmingham Green Initiative and Samford University's Restoring Eden. The event included information on Grow Alabama, community agriculture, the Alabama Environmental Council and The Climate Project. Climate Project presenter Michael Churchman, Executive Director of Alabama Environmental Council, gave a brief introduction to the rationale behind 350, and after the group picture (with each person holding an organically-grown pumpkin) we saw the Sisters on the Planet film created by Oxfam America. The national League has partnered with Oxfam in this educational effort, which not only stresses the need to responsibly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also the need for Congress to be cognizant of and to provide funding for climate change adaptation projects to assist the poor, who are the least responsible for - but the most severely impacted by - climate change.

The Interfaith Environmental Initiative of Alabama hosted a very successful **Energy Forum 2009: Challenges and Possibilities for Alabama**, with a dinner on October 13 at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens featuring Stan Meiburg, acting director of Region 4 EPA, and an all-day workshop on the 14th with over 90 people working together to learn about energy issues and develop ideas for energy efficiency in our state. The League of Women Voters of Alabama and of Greater Birmingham helped advertise the event, which was supported by Natural Resources chair Joyce Lanning.

After the IEIA planning team meets in mid November to determine next steps, there will be opportunities for community members to join in spin-off activities or some of the potential workgroups, such as: benchmarking to identify, support and measure opportunities for energy efficiency improvements; energy and water efficiency in business and industry; support of high school energy education and action; and transmitting efficiency options and opportunities to churches and homes.

From the start this was a collaborative endeavor, convening leadership of groups such as Alabama Environmental Council, Alabama Faith Council, Alabama Power, Alabama Rivers Alliance, Alagasco, Birmingham Southern College, Cahaba River Society, Episcopal Diocese of Alabama, McWane, Inc., Protective Life and the Public Service Commission, among others, to develop a conference around energy challenges and opportunities in a format that facilitates creative conversation while producing practical solutions. (See www.interfaithenvironmental.org for *Energy Forum 2009* Partners.)

The board is evaluating the recently-released document **Clean Air for the Birmingham Area** by the Southern Environmental Law Center. The report finds that abnormally high concentrations of particulate matter or soot, ozone and mercury pose threats to our health and our economy and suggest seven solutions (below). If there are actions recommended and supported by LWVGB or other league positions, the board will make recommendations to the membership.

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BIRMINGHAM MAYORAL ELECTION

A special election for Birmingham City Mayor will be held on December 8, 2009. The new mayor will serve the remaining two years of Larry Langford's term.

Citizens of the City of Birmingham are strongly encouraged to express their opinions through voting in this important election!





DECEMBER SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY

Carol Nunnelley is an editor and journalism trainer who focuses on the relationship between the public and journalists, news credibility and helping editors work effectively in print and digital media. As projects director for Associated Press Managing Editors from 2001 until March of this year, she developed and led NewsTrain, a traveling training program for editors that has worked with more than 4,000 journalists across the country. She also developed a national online journalism credibility project in collaboration with Reynolds Journalism Institute at Missouri School of Journalism. That project began this year. From 2001-2006, Nunnelley led APME's National Credibility Roundtables Project, which worked with 195 news organizations to build the public's trust in journalism. Nunnelley is the author of *Building Trust in the News: 101+ Good Ideas for Editors from Editors*. In 2008, she received APME's top award for working for the betterment of journalism.

In her new Alabama-based work, she will teach beginning in January a graduate course at the University of Alabama on contemporary issues in journalism. She also moderated a discussion between state newspaper editors and University of Alabama journalism faculty about an effective curriculum for a transformed news industry.

She is writing a biography of Janie Shores, Alabama's first woman Supreme Court Justice, as part of the Alabama Roots Biography Series for young readers. Nunnelley previously was managing editor of *The Birmingham (Alabama) News*, co-chaired the Alabama Center for Open Government, was an Alabama Journalist of the Year and served on APME's national Board of Directors.

Environmental Update – continued

Recommendations from SELC's *Clean Air for the Birmingham Area*:

1. Place stringent limits on nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide at Alabama Power's Gorgas, Gaston, and Miller power plants, and make sure that the company follows through on installing and operating control devices to maximize emissions reductions throughout the year.
2. Require concrete reductions in the mercury emissions of the Miller, Gaston, and Gorgas plants, along with other coal-fired power plants in the state.
3. Expand ADEM's proposed boundary for nonattainment of the new ozone standard from Jefferson and Shelby Counties to include Bibb, Blount, Chilton, Cullman, St. Clair, and Walker Counties. Generally, counties should be excluded only if ADEM can clearly show that they are not contributing to the Birmingham area's ozone pollution.
4. Pass legislation mandating cuts in power plant emissions as other states have done.
5. Create a long-range transportation plan that boosts mass transit and recognizes the link between land use and transportation.
6. Reduce particle pollution from heavy-duty diesel engines and reduce the economic and public health burden of diesel pollution.
7. Make energy efficiency and renewable energy higher priorities.

(http://www.southernenvironment.org/uploads/publications/BAR_0909_Final.pdf, pp. 13-16.

WOMEN OF WILL

Women of Will is hosting a forum on Friday November 13, 2009 at Southern Progress. A reception is scheduled from 5-6pm and the forum is scheduled from 6-8pm. Dr. Susan Parker of the Public Service Commission is the keynote speaker. Judge Helen Shores, Civil Rights Activist Rose Sanders, and Executive Director of The Women's Fund Virginia Sweet are scheduled to attend. RSVP to Megan Glenn at mdglennx@yahoo.com.

Political training (covering the nuts & bolts of campaigning) will be offered on Saturday November 14, 2009 at the YWCA, 309 N 23rd St, Birmingham from 8:30am-3:30pm. Topics covered include campaign planning, raising money, and delivering your message. Limited seating is available for \$25. For more information, contact Catrena Carter via email at catrena@womenofwill.org or Megan Glenn at mdglennx@yahoo.com. Check out the website at <http://www.womenofwill.org>.



LWVGB Calendar

Month	Day	Time	Event
November	19	6:00pm	<i>General Membership Meeting, Location: Homewood Library</i>
December	1	11:30am	<i>League Board Meeting, Location: Community Foundation Building</i>
December	12	11:30am	<i>Christmas Luncheon, Location: The Club</i>

Quotable Quotes:

Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.

- John F. Kennedy

Politics is supposed to be the second oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first.

- Ronald Reagan



The League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham wishes all its members a safe and happy Thanksgiving Holiday!