



# The VOTER

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

SEPTEMBER-2011



## SEPTEMBER IS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL MONTH!

Dues are \$45 per individual, \$65 for a family membership, and \$20 for student membership. Consider using PayPal for a secure, paperless, stampless payment method.

You can renew on the LWVGB website – <http://www.lwvgb.org>.



## Dues are Due!

September is the month for renewal in LWVGB - renewal of dues as well as commitment to doing the work of the League. As a reminder, here is a breakdown of how your dues are used:

Membership Type	Amount	\$ to LWVUS	\$ to LWVAL	\$ to Local League
Individual	\$45	\$29.70	\$10.00	\$5.30
Family	\$65	\$44.55	\$15.00	\$5.45
Student	\$20	\$14.85	\$5.00	\$0.15

Renewing members can use the convenient link on our web site or send a check to P O Box 530522, Birmingham, AL 35253.

In LWV, September is the traditional time to invite potential members to our general meeting and encourage all members who are able to attend to do so. This allows board members to hear from the general membership and those interested in the LWV to visit with the many interesting women and men who comprise our local League. Kathy Johnson, our guest speaker and local attorney, will discuss her experiences observing the election process in countries as diverse as Afghanistan and Albania.

Our membership meeting will occur at the Southside Library, 1814 11th Street South, on September 27th. It will begin with a social time with light food and drinks from 6:30 to 7:00 with the meeting beginning promptly at 7. Ida has invited our state president, Kathy Byrd, and members of the Tuscaloosa LWV to join us for an informative and lively evening. Don't miss out -- plan to be there!

*The Board of the League of Women of Greater Birmingham is pleased to announce that Miss Cyrondys Jackson is appointed Vice - President and President-Elect. She will complete her Understudy under the current president as Leonette Slay continues to provide Mentorship to the new President and President-Elect.*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**September 27, 2011:** LWVGB Monthly Membership Meeting, 7:00pm, Southside Library, 1814 11<sup>th</sup> Street South. Our speaker is Kathy Johnson, Esq., International Lawyer, who will speak about international elections observations in Bosnia and Croatia.

**September 27, 2011:** Bessemer city election to vote on renewal of 4.7 mill property tax that expires in Oct. this tax funds about 4% of the school's budget.

**October 4, 2011:** LWVGB Board Meeting, The Community Foundation Building, 2100 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North, 11:30am.

## LWVGB Moderates District 2 Community Forum

League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham President, Ida Tyree-Hyche and board member, Cyron dys Jackson, served as co-moderators for the District 2 Community Involvement Forum on August 25<sup>th</sup>. The forum, held at Ruffner Mountain Nature Center in Birmingham and sponsored by Jefferson County Commissioner Sandra Little Brown, presented residents and neighborhood leaders with the opportunity to learn more about the sewer debt crisis, talks with creditors, possible bankruptcy filing and rate increases. Attendants were also updated on the general fund shortfall, created by the loss of the county's occupational tax, which pushed some 70 million dollars annually into county coffers. Commissioner Brown said, "Each commissioner is committed to making the best decision for the citizens of Jefferson County."

League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham President Ida Tyree-Hyche said, "As Jefferson County faces its toughest financial struggle to date, it is imperative that citizens are informed and involved in the decisions of elected officials- the League supports and encourages this." Commissioner Brown and her staff commended the LWVGB for its participation and dedication to public issues. Jefferson County Commissioners set a September 16<sup>th</sup> deadline for making a decision on an agreed settlement with creditors or filing Chapter 9 Bankruptcy.

## Why Celebrate Women's Equality Day

*By Shade' A. Hyche, Cumberland School of Law Student*

The right to vote in the United States - what does it mean? Unfortunately, in 2011 that right doesn't mean much to some people. Why? Because many young people, like me, were born into a time when the right to vote for women and African-Americans is the norm. However, the same right that we take for granted, women before us fought hard to attain.

On August 26, 1920, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was adopted into the United States Constitution. The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment states that the right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex.<sup>i</sup> The passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was a culmination of a 70-year battle that is documented as beginning at an 1848 women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York.<sup>ii</sup>

To commemorate the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, we celebrate *Women's Equality Day*. In 1971, at the request of New York Democratic Representative Bella Abzug, August 26 was designated as Women's Equality Day.<sup>iii</sup> The observance of Women's Equality Day not only commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment, but also calls attention to women's continuing efforts toward full equality.

Whatever the original reasons for women being denied the right to vote, or the right to do things men were allowed to do, today in

*Did you know...*

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government.

The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.

### WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY



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America, we live in a much different world. No, we haven't fully "arrived." There are new barriers waiting to be broken. Women's Equality Day is the time to remember that we are standing on the promises of trailblazing women – some who made history through the Women's Suffrage movement. There are women who quietly broke barriers in our workplaces, communities, law schools, courts, churches, and society. Let's take the time to remember them and learn from their lessons, which we graciously benefit daily.

<sup>1</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, United States Constitution

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.history.com/topics/19th-amendment>

<sup>1</sup> National Women's History Project. <http://www.nwhp.org/resourcecenter/equalityday.php>

## The President Speaks

*By League President Ida Tyree-Hyche*

I want to talk about League governance, with a "tidbit" on governance for the next three issues of The Voter.

Governance Part I. The year 2011 has presented lost of issues of interest and opportunities for the League to consider. Much of the League's outstanding credibility and reputation comes from the fact that we follow specific protocols. These protocols include determining:

- Who should speak for the League in the public arena
  - Whether certain positions addressed in legislation or in public events (such as rallies/coalitions, etc.) align properly with the League positions before we attach our name to them
  - Whether we should ally with other groups on selected issues (in rallies, position letters, comments to the media, etc.), and
  - Whether all levels of the League are speaking with one voice, unless choosing collectively to remain silent
  - Who should decide whether certain positions addressed in legislation or in public events (such as rallies/coalitions, etc.) align (or oppose) so closely with League positions that we can offer our support/opposition (in the case of legislation) or participation/sponsorship (in the event of rallies, coalitions, etc.)?
1. First of all, such activities should be approved in advance by the LWGB Board appropriate League board. What determines who the appropriate board would be? If the action is based on a local position (i.e., support of the public library, local zoning ordinances, membership on the local school system's master plan committee), then the local League board.
  2. If the action is based on state positions, then the state President should be contacted in advance, who in turn may consult and poll the State Board, if needed. While this usually will not be a lengthy process, it is important if both the State Board and the Local League(s) plan to sign their organization's names as official participants. It can be very awkward if a local league signs on board for an activity, then the state board declines. We need to have a unified voice. Note: This does not refer to action alerts have been issued by the State League.



3. If the action is based on LWVUS positions, the LWVUS guidelines should be followed. At the LWVUS convention in 2010, there was considerable discussion about whether local or states leagues independently can contact congressmen/US Senators or participate in activities based on national positions without advanced permission. It was decided such advanced permission must be sought. Examples would be rallying with other groups on the Immigration issue. **Note:** This does not refer to contacting Members of Congress when a LWVUS Action Alert has been sent out.

Permission from LWVUS is obtained by completing the “**State and Local League Form for Federal Issues,**” located in the “Take Action” section of the LWVUS website ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)).

Watch for **Governance Part II** in next month's issue of *The Voter*.



## Dates to Remember

Date	Event
August 26	<b>Women’s Equality Day</b>
September	<b>Voter Registration Month</b>
September 17	<b>Constitution Day/Citizenship Day (observed on the 16<sup>th</sup>)</b>
October	<b>Voter Education Month</b>
October 24	<b>United Nations Day</b>
December 15	<b>Bill of Rights Day</b>

## IEIA Energy Forum 2011- Building Forward: Sustainable Communities through Collaboration

Thursday, October 13, 2011

8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens

with special guest speaker

**EPA Region 4 Regional Administrator  
Gwen Keyes Fleming**

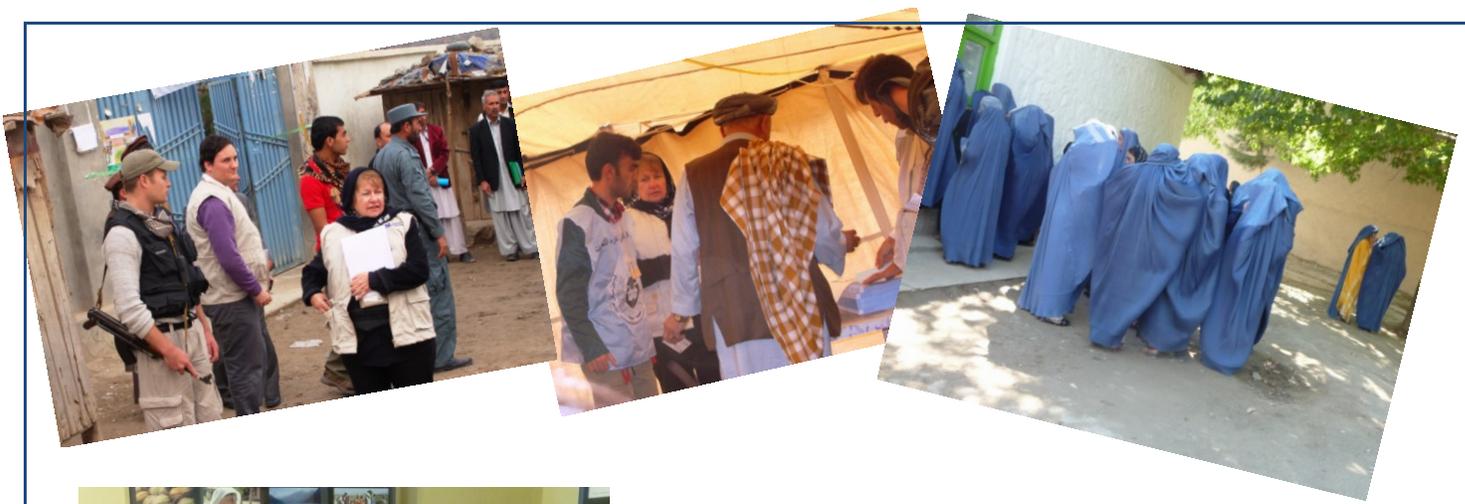
You are invited to the 3rd annual IEIA Forum to learn, share and explore new conversations around energy and water conservation and efficiency that rethink the way we work, live, play and worship. IEIA Forum 2011 offers an opportunity to engage in more effective collaborations, to build forward from the April 2011 storms with energy and water efficiency, and to collaborate and expand IEIA Working Groups.

IEIA Forum 2011 is hosted by the Interfaith Environmental Initiative of Alabama

“Engaging faith and science to sustain and enhance the life of Earth”  
[www.InterfaithEnvironmental.org](http://www.InterfaithEnvironmental.org)

\$30 cost includes lunch and refreshments.

Register online at  
[www.bbgardens.org/](http://www.bbgardens.org/)  
or by phone at (205) 414-3900.



***Come to our Membership Meeting and Hear Attorney Kathy Johnson shares knowledge about her experiences as an International Lawyer for international elections. You don't want to miss this exceptional opportunity! Invite your friends!***

## **Social Justice Training Seminar supported by League Members**

The United Methodist Women held their National Social Justice Training Seminar at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel on August 13-17. Every four years over 200 UMW members from all over the U.S. gather to study and make action plans to address social justice issues. This year the participants addressed immigration, domestic violence, human trafficking and climate change.

League members Mary Lynn Bates and Joyce Lanning served as resource people for the trafficking and climate issues for the 5-day conference. Each learned from the intense experience and appreciated the UMW leadership for addressing these difficult issues and coming to our city for this work.



*Joyce Lanning, Sung-ok Lee, UMW National Seminar Chair, and Mary Lynn Bates at the United Methodist Women National Social Justice Training Seminar at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel on August 13-17.*

## Meet the Board: Nancy Ekberg

Nancy Ekberg is a LWVGB Director, with responsibility for constitutional reform and public transportation, and is an off-Board member of the State Board with the same portfolios.

She has a degree in Journalism from the University of Minnesota and worked as a reporter several years, contributing articles to the Chicago Tribune, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Pittsburgh Press, Cleveland Edition, Crain's Cleveland Business and Michigan's Consumers Power publications while raising three sons. She has been in Leagues in Chicago Illinois and Youngstown Ohio before coming to Alabama 20 years ago with her late husband. Her first job in Birmingham was as the Executive Director of Magic Moments, Alabama's wish organization for children with life threatening or severe life altering conditions.



She also serves as Vice Chair of Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform, Inc., and represents the League on a Steering Committee of Alabama Transit Coalition.

## Second Rally to Protest New Alabama Immigration Law



*Photos show 2nd rally against the new Alabama Immigration Law held at Linn Park in Birmingham in August*



This rally, like the first, was organized by the faith community in this area. Speakers included religious leaders and heads of Hispanic organizations. Protestors wore white tops and numbered around 1,000. Several League members participated again, including President Ida Tyree-Hyche, Joan Burroughs, Katy Erdreich Breman, Cyron dys Jackson, Helen Rivas and Nancy Ekberg.



## Successful Sustain Our State Rally in Linn Park August 16



*SOS Rally participants decorate a Dart trolley with signs calling for clean air, water and real public transportation.*

The League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham joined the League of Women Voters of Alabama and environmental and civic groups in a rally in Linn Park to Sustain Our State. In addition to the LWV, organizations hosting the rally included the Alabama Environmental Council, Alabama Rivers Alliance, GASP, Coalition of Alabama Students for the Environment (CASE), Greater Birmingham Ministries, and Metro Birmingham Branch NAACP.

## International Day of Peace

*By Wanda Godfrey, Director, Education*

“Peace Day should be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples. This day will serve as a reminder to all peoples that our organization with all its limitations is a living instrument in the service of peace and should serve all of us here within the organization as a constantly pealing bell reminding us that our permanent commitment above all interests or differences of any kind is to peace.”<sup>1</sup>

Egypt, Libya, Somalia, Pakistan and Afghanistan are just a few global sites that have seen turmoil and instability during this year alone. There have been gains and losses as people seek freedoms and chart new paths toward self determination. Bloodied battles are a part of every newscast on every network. It seems as if we are moving farther away from the concept of peace. We cannot risk our planet’s future as a result of differences that have solutions. We only need to look for them and embrace them to make our world better for all nations and people.

As we commemorate the International Day of Peace on September 21, 2011, let us in a united moment of silence pray for peace all over the world. It must begin with each of us for the well being of future generations. We pray for peace!

*1. Quote form UN resolution about International Day of Peace*



## Recognize Patriot Day

President George W. Bush signed into law on September 18, 2001 that September 11 would become Patriot Day in honor of those who lost their lives on that day as a result of terrorism.

In 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act - a National Day of Service and Remembrance asking all to serve their community and nation as a memorial to the tragedy.

### Board of Directors, 2011-2012

Ida Tyree-Hyche	President
Cyrodys Jackson	1st VP
Angelyn Simmons	Secretary
Amanda McGriff	Treasurer
Nancy Ekberg	Director, Constitution Reform
Karen Threlkeld	Director, The VOTER
Wanda Godfrey	Director, Education
Joyce Lanning	Director, Environment
Cyrodys Jackson	Director, PR/Communication
Joan Burroughs	Director, Health
Leonette Slay	Director, Membership
Michael O'Donnell	Chair, Nominating Committee
Jean Johnson	Technical Director (Off Board)
Donald Marks	Social Media (Off Board)
Diane Marks	Social Media (Off Board)

### QUOTABLE QUOTES

No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck.  
~**Frederick Douglass, speech, Civil Rights Mass Meeting, Washington, D.C., 1883**

It has become a sarcastic proverb that a thing must be true if you saw it in a newspaper. That is the opinion intelligent people have of that lying vehicle in a nutshell. But the trouble is that the stupid people -- who constitute the grand overwhelming majority of this and all other nations -- do believe and are moulded and convinced by what they get out of a newspaper, and there is where the harm lies.

-**Samuel Clemens, "License of the Press," speech, 31 March 1873**

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