

# The VOTER



League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham

## Constitutional Amendment on September 18 Ballot

By Jean Johnson

### Special points of interest:

- \* Special Constitutional Amendment Election, September 18, 2012, Polls open from 7am-7pm
- \* Voter Registration Drive at Brown Mackie College, September 18 & 19
- \* Monthly Membership Meeting, September 20, 6-7:30pm, St. Paul United Methodist Church

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Alabama voters will go to the polls on September 18 to decide on a constitutional amendment that would transfer money from the Alabama Trust Fund to the ailing general fund. There is more to this amendment than is obvious on reading the referendum language. Whether the referendum passes or fails, there are many consequences for funding processes and for Alabama. If passed, the amendment would:

- \* Provide a new procedure for distributions made from the Alabama Trust Fund beginning with the 2012-2013 fiscal year
- \* Transfer \$145.8 million per year for the next

three years beginning with the 2012-2013 fiscal year from the Alabama Trust Fund (ATF) to the General Fund. These transfers will not be repaid to the ATF.

- \* Distribute funds from the County and Municipal Government Capital Improvement Trust Fund
- \* Remove the requirement for additional transfers to the County and Municipal Government Capital Improvement Trust Fund under certain circumstances
- \* Create an advisory committee for the County and Municipal Government Capital Improvement Trust Fund
- \* Provide funding for

the Forever Wild Land Trust until 2032.

The voters have a difficult decision to make. See a full discussion of the amendment referendum and its consequences at [www.lwval.org/election2012/](http://www.lwval.org/election2012/). The article also includes explanations of the various Trust Funds involved. This and more Election 2012 information can be found at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org), the League's voter education website.

Whatever your decision, be an informed voter on September 18. Polls will be open from 7am— 7pm.

## September Membership Meeting

By Joan Burroughs

Please join the League of Women Voters as we acknowledge Constitution Day at the September 20, 2012 membership meeting, 6:00-7:30 PM. The meeting will take place at Saint Paul United Methodist Church (1500 6th Ave-

nue North, across the street from the Civil Rights Institute on the corner of 15th Street). Two dynamic speakers, Carolyn McKinstry and Patricia Todd, are both members of the Alabama Constitution Revision Commission.

Join us in what promises to be a riveting and information packed experience. Bring family and friends to meet, greet and be captivated by two great women of substance. Refreshments will be served.

**VOTER PROTECTION**

Eligible citizens should be empowered and enabled to vote without needless barriers standing in their way. The LWVEF's Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Project has been created to ensure all eligible voters, particularly underserved populations, can exercise this right.

On August 30, 2012, there was great news for all Texas voters. A [U.S. Federal District Court](#) found that the Texas voter photo identification law violates Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. National League President Elisabeth MacNamara remarked, "The importance of this case cannot be overstated: It is a landmark decision for voting rights in America and helps ensure America's elections treat all citizens equally, and are free, fair and accessible."

## League Co-Sponsors Homewood and Hoover Council Candidate Forums Prior to Municipal Elections

by *Trish Crain*

The League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham co-sponsored two City Council candidate forums in August, allowing more than 200 citizens an opportunity to hear from those seeking election to their local governing bodies. Both forums were moderated by LWVGB President Cyrondys Jackson and forum coordinator Leonette Slay.

The Homewood City Council candidate forum, co-sponsored with the Homewood Primetime Organization, was held August 7 at the Homewood Senior Center. Seventeen candidates seeking election to city council and city council president offices were asked their thoughts on subjects ranging from government transparency to ward-specific projects to whether Homewood

needs a city manager. A meet-and-greet held immediately following the forum allowed the 100-plus residents to interact directly with candidates, providing even more opportunity for citizen engagement.

The Hoover City Council candidate forum, co-sponsored with the Bluff-ParkAl.org community web site, was held August 21 at Artists on the Bluff. Seven candidates seeking election to four contested Council seats participated. Around 100 residents attended, and many submitted questions to the candidates on subjects ranging from the enforcement of the immigration law to funding for schools to development of a comprehensive plan for Hoover. Candidates and residents were given the chance to

talk informally after the forum.

Many thanks to the members who volunteered to help at these forums and thanks to our co-sponsors as well! These candidate forums were a fine example of democracy in action!

Municipal elections were held across the greater Birmingham area on August 28. Two big voting dates are ahead, so mark your calendar and visit [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) for more election news and information:

September 18, 2012 - Special Constitutional Amendment Election

November 6, 2012 - General Election

For more on these forums, visit our web site at [www.lwvgb.org](http://www.lwvgb.org).

## A Word from Our President

By *Cyrondys Jackson*

Hello, League!

The League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham is gearing up for an increasingly active election year. Already, LWVGB has hosted two candidate forums in Metro Birmingham, and is preparing for two informative membership meetings concerning election issues, in September and October.

In addition to these programming activities, the LWVGB will host voter registration drives at Brown Mackie College on Tuesday, September 18, 2012, from 10:00 am - 11:30am and 5:15pm - 6:30 pm, and on Wednesday, September 19, 2012, from 10:00am - 11:30am. We are asking members to assist in this effort to register college-age voters. If you are available to volunteer, please contact Jean Johnson.

Please remember that September is membership month- don't forget to renew your membership, and encourage a friend, loved one or colleague to join the League!

I am looking forward to seeing each of you in September!

## Mark Your Calendars!

### Reminder:

**Sept. is LWV Membership Renewal Month!**

**Renew online or by mail.**

[www.lwvqb.org/about/page10/page10.html](http://www.lwvqb.org/about/page10/page10.html)

Special Constitutional Amendment Election  
Sept. 18, 2012, 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Vote Registration deadline is Sept. 7.

Amendment information at  
[www.lwval.org/election2012/](http://www.lwval.org/election2012/)

Brown Mackie College Constitution Day Celebration  
Voter Registration Drive  
105 Vulcan Rd, Birmingham 35209  
Tues., Sept. 18, 2012, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. & 5:15 - 6:30 p.m.  
& Wed. Sept. 19, 2012, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.  
LWVGB volunteers are needed for this and other voter service. No previous experience necessary. Contact Jean Johnson, [jjohnson@lwvqb.org](mailto:jjohnson@lwvqb.org).

LWVGB Monthly Membership Meeting  
Sept. 20, 2012, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.  
@ St. Paul United Methodist Church  
1500 Sixth Avenue North  
(across from the Civil Rights Institute)

LWVGB Board Meeting  
Sept. 25, 2012  
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
@ Community Foundation of B'ham

Interfaith Environmental Initiative of Alabama 2012 Forum

"Efficiency and Conservation - What Works"

Oct. 10, 2012, 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

@ Birmingham Botanical Gardens

See info at [www.interfaithenvironmental.org/?page\\_id=484](http://www.interfaithenvironmental.org/?page_id=484)

or contact Joyce Lanning [joyce.lanning@gmail.com](mailto:joyce.lanning@gmail.com)

**LWVAL is cosponsor**

United Nations Day Celebration

Oct. 11, 6:00 p.m.

@ The Club

1 Robert S. Smith Dr.

Birmingham, AL 35209

"The Arab Spring"

Keynote Speaker: Hon. Joseph Boohaker,

JeffCo. Circuit Judge

Contact Ilse Diazio for reservations, [IDiazio@aol.com](mailto:IDiazio@aol.com)

**LWVGB is cosponsor.**

Critical Thinking Forum

"Election Issues for Alabama Voters"

Sun., Oct. 28, 2012, 2-4 p.m.

@ Unitarian Universalist Church of Birmingham

4300 Hampton Heights Drive

Birmingham, AL 35209

Panelists: Nancy Ekberg, Anne Permaloff, Natalie Davis

**Co-sponsored by UUCB and LWVGB**

General Election

Tues., Nov. 6, 2012, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Visit [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org) or [www.lwval.org/learn-vote/election2012/](http://www.lwval.org/learn-vote/election2012/)

for important election information

The LWVGB welcomes Dr. Donald Marks to the board as Social Media Director. Donald will continue to keep the latest League information posted on Facebook and Twitter. Welcome Aboard, Donald!

## Alabama Energy Planning

by Joyce Lanning

A 3-year \$541,089 Stimulating Energy Efficiency Action in States grant from DOE to the Alabama Department of Community and Economic Affairs "will support efforts leading to utility investment in energy efficiency programs and encourage policies to support a lasting energy efficiency market. The project will develop incentives for investment in

energy efficiency and plans to broaden the base of stakeholder support and engagement for energy efficiency."

ADECA has also announced a state energy planning Request for Proposal for a one-year project for \$100,000 with 25% match. Only non-profits and colleges and universities are eligible.

(<http://>

[www.adeca.alabama.gov/about/Documents/FundingOps/RFP\\_StateEnergyPlan\\_FY13.pdf](http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/about/Documents/FundingOps/RFP_StateEnergyPlan_FY13.pdf)).

The proposal is due September 21 and the project is to start October 1, 2012 and be completed by August 31, 2013.



## Constitutional Reform and the League at Samford

By Nancy Ekberg

The Constitutional Revision Commission and reform in general was the theme of the Bailey Thomson ACCR Annual Meeting that almost filled the Moot Court Room of the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University on August 11th.

After a welcome by Dean John Carroll, Professor Wayne Flynt described reform efforts over the years. He said the current effort toward reform, a piecemeal approach that does not touch taxation, creates problems in ACCR, because people differ in how they see that reform should be achieved.

Bob McCurley, newly retired Executive Director of the Alabama Law Institute, who coordinates the Constitutional Revision Commission described the creation of the Commission, including his role with that of the Governor, Speaker Mike Hubbard and President Pro Tem Marsh.

He feels it will bring reform based on the people who are behind it. "Look at who's pushing it now, the number-one person in the Senate and the number-one person in the House."

The three amendments that begin the process are revisions of the Banking Article, revisions of the Corporations Article and

elimination of the racist (unconstitutional) language.

They will appear on the ballot as Statewide Amendment 4 (racist language), Statewide Amendment 9, revision of the Corporations Article and Statewide Amendment 10, revision of the Banking Article.

The Commission is now focused on Article IV, the Legislature, which could give home rule authority to counties.

Craig Baab, Appleseed's Home Rule Project Director, enumerated some options that the Commission could consider, including grant of authority to counties when the legislature is not in session, with the caveat that the legislature could nullify those decisions when they come into session the following year.

It is vital that the three Amendments that will be on the ballot this fall succeed, he said. "They are the easiest ones. If we can't make the case for them, we are going to have trouble down the road."

Throughout the program, the public was invited to speak or ask questions. Voicing the opinion of the LWVAL, which has supported constitutional reform for many years,

Charlotte Ward stated the League's support for constitutional reform and especially Home Rule.

"The League of Women Voters of Alabama has been concerned with constitutional reform for at least forty years. We are glad to see the Commission giving attention to the issue of local government. At this point, we consider granting home rule to counties and municipalities an essential step toward making government more efficient, since it would relieve the legislators of the necessity of spending so much time on purely local issues. This hampers their ability to deal with statewide problems, which should be their main concern," she said.

The League was instrumental in assisting Justice Howell Heflin reform the Judicial Article years ago, the only article that has been revised in 111 years.

The next meeting of the Commission will be September 28th at 9:30 a.m. in room 617 of the State House.

All Commission meetings are available at [www.ali.state.al.us](http://www.ali.state.al.us) and all are open to the public.

**"We consider granting home rule to counties and municipalities an essential step toward making government more efficient."**

**~ Charlotte Ward,  
LWVAL**

## Long-needed Alabama Water Management Plan to be developed

By Joyce Lanning

The Alabama Rivers Alliance and the Southern Environmental Law Center are informing citizen stakeholders about how to be involved in the state's effort to develop a water management plan by December 2013. The planning process is the result of a directive given to five state agencies by Governor Robert Bentley. An August 3 citizens meeting attended by board member Joyce Lanning focused

on protecting environmental flows in our rivers and waterways and the state's plans to involve stakeholders in the process.

Citizens asked for a clear timeline on meeting the December deadline as well as the need for transparency and information-sharing about the Alabama Water Agency Working Group's meetings and activities. For ARA comments, see Alabama

Comprehensive Water Management Plan--Mitch Reid, Alabama Rivers Alliance. Stream flow can be highly technical and ARA staff are working on their comments to the state agencies' document, Alabama Water Agencies Working Group Report. For more information, contact Alabama Rivers Alliance at <http://www.alabamarivers.org/contact-us> or 322-6395.



We are sad to report that on Monday, August 20, 2012, Jane S. Everest, President of the League of Women Voters of Mobile, passed away. Jane lived a full and vibrant life - always learning, teaching, writing and working in service to the League. Jane was the mother of five children and 23 grandchildren.

Jane Everest, forever an inspirational and beloved League icon, will be greatly missed.

## LWVGB Joins allies to protect Birmingham drinking water

By Joyce Lanning

LWVAL is part of a group opposing the Shepherd Bend strip mine just 800 feet upstream of the Birmingham Water Works intake for drinking water. The LWVGB Board has voted to send a letter to University of Alabama System officials asking them to announce that they will never lease or sell land or minerals for mining at Shepherd Bend rather than merely stating that they have no current plans to lease or sell the land. The Black Warrior Riverkeeper is encouraging citizens to send a letter to UA System Chancellor Witt. You can find instructions and a sample letter at <http://blackwarriorriver.org/news/help-protect-birmingham-s-drinking-water.html>.

**Reed Mineral No. 5:** Another proposed strip mine three miles upstream of the Shepherd Bend site is seeking a permit. The Alabama Surface Mining Commission (ASMC) is accepting public comments on Reed Mineral No. 5 until **September 10th**.

LWVGB is concerned about the river and Birmingham's tap water and plans to submit our comments to the Alabama Surface Mining Commission, PO Box 2390, Jasper, AL 35502-2390 or via e-mail to Dr. Randall Johnson, [Randall.Johnson@asmc.alabama.gov](mailto:Randall.Johnson@asmc.alabama.gov).

Any comment letter should:  
reference Reed No. 5

Mine, ASMC Permit No. P-3957; explain how you will be adversely affected; request the ASMC hold an informal conference for public input after the September 10th deadline

For more information, please visit the Black Warrior Riverkeeper website at <http://blackwarriorriver.org/news/reed-mine-proposal-on-mulberry-fork.html>



League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham

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### League of Women Voters Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

*Making Democracy Work!*

### League of Women Voters Education Fund Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters Education Fund works to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government and to increase understanding of major public policy issues.

## Don't forget to vote!

Special Constitutional Amendment Vote is scheduled for September 18, 2012. (Registration deadline Sept. 7).  
Amendment information at [www.lwval.org/learn-vote/election2012/](http://www.lwval.org/learn-vote/election2012/)



### In Memory of the Reverend Dr. Richard (Dick) Sales, LWVGB Member

The Reverend Doctor Richard (Dick) Winton Sales was born 16 September 1931 in Syracuse, N.Y., died 30th August, 2012. Son of Mark Bishop Sales Sr. and Evelyn Lillian Reichert, husband of Jane Magorian Sales (d. 1974); survived by brother Mark Bishop Sales Jr., wife Nancy M. Sales, children, and grand-daughters. He met and married Jane Claire Magorian in 1956. The couple were assigned to a South African mission in 1957 by the United Church Board of World

Ministries and worked there until 1971. Jane died in 1974. Richard married Nancy Anne Magorian in 1975, and the two spent the next decade working for the mission board in both Botswana and Zambia where Reverend Sales was instrumental in developing a theological education by extension programs in southern Africa. Dick and Nancy came back to the U.S. and Dick took a position with the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta in 1986 with interim pastoring in Bir-

mingham and Chattanooga churches. Dick was called to Pilgrim Church UCC in Birmingham in September 1988, where he served until September 1997. Following this retirement he remained active as a volunteer at Greater Birmingham Ministries and in part-time employment in theological education with the UCC Southeast Conference. Dick and Nancy continued to live in Birmingham until his death on 30 August 2012.

### **Board of Directors, 2012-2013**

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