

## LWVGT Quarterly Calendar

### **APRIL**

*April 1*

#### **Luncheon Meeting**

Initiative and Referendum

Noon

Ruby Tuesday's, Northport

*April 22*

#### **Board Meeting**

All Are Welcome

5:00 p.m.

United Way Building

*April 29*

#### **Annual Meeting**

Time TBA

Covenant Presbyterian Church

*April 30*

#### **Called Board Meeting**

Time, Date, Location TBA

### **MAY**

*May 3*

#### **LWVAL Council**

Birmingham

*May 6*

#### **Luncheon Meeting**

Noon

Location TBA

*May 20*

#### **Board Meeting**

5:00 p.m.

United Way Building

### **JUNE**

*June 3*

#### **State and Local Primary Elections**

#### **Luncheon Meeting**

Noon

Location TBA

*June 13-17*

#### **LWV National Convention**

Portland, Ore.

#### **Board Meeting and Orientation**

Time, Date, Location TBA

*League of Women Voters of Greater Tuscaloosa*  
will hold its

### **ANNUAL MEETING**

on Thursday, April 29, 2008 at the  
Covenant Presbyterian Church

## **From the Coordinator**

*Susanne Nasir*

As I gathered the articles that are included in this issue of the Voter, I was reminded once again that our local League is truly an active organization. You will find conformation of that in this Voter, which has a survey of the last several months' luncheon programs, reports on other League activities, a calendar of coming events, and material pertaining to the upcoming Annual Meeting.

As you read through this *Voter* you will come across an article about Local Program; for new members this requires a bit of explanation. At each month's luncheon we have program, usually a speaker on a topic concerning some aspect of either National, State, or Local League Program (notice the capital P). Other times one of us presents a program on an aspect of League Program such as our study last fall about immigration on which we struggled to reach "consensus" and reported such to the National League so that it could be melded with the consensus of Local Leagues from all the states to become a part of the National League Program. Currently we are involved in a study on Initiative and Referendum, a study of the League of Alabama. Summing up, League Program consists of selected governmental issues chosen by members at either Local, State, or National level for study and action; at our Annual Meeting we will select the issues for local study this coming year.

The definition for Program mentions action, League action may take the form of lobbying at the state or national levels or, locally, holding forums to inform the public. Currently our local League is helping with voter registration, more on that in another article.

LWVUS and LWVAL, is shorthand used for League of Women Voters of the United States and League of Women Voters of Alabama. Conventions, Councils, and Annual Meetings are another facet of League structure. Each even-numbered

*Coordinator continued on next page*

## Coordinator *continued*

year the LWVUS holds a convention, odd-numbered years LWVUS holds Council. State leagues do the same in reverse order. This year LWVUS Convention will be held in Portland, Oregon, and LWVAL Council will meet in Birmingham; our League is entitled to send delegates to both. Local leagues hold an Annual Meeting each year; we will meet April 29. League business is conducted in conventions and Annual Meetings, thus you will find much material in this Voter pertinent to our Annual Meeting. Council usually has workshops and takes care of any business that cannot wait another year.

## Report of By-law Review Committee

*Anna Singer  
Susanne Nasir*

Recommended amendments to the bylaws are as follows:

NOTE: Additions are in italic and deletions are in brackets.

Article V Board of Directors

Sec. 3 *Term of Office*

- a. *Elected directors shall serve a term of two years.*
- b. *Appointed directors shall serve a term of one year.*

Current sections 3 through 7 shall be renumbered 4 through 8.

[Sec 6.] *Sec. 7. The [president] spokesperson may call....*

Article VI Financial Administration

Sec. 3. Budget A Budget for the ensuing year...before the annual meeting[s].

Article VIII Nominations and Elections

Sec. 2l Suggestions for Nominations

- a. The chairperson of the Nominating Committee...
- b. *The Board of Directors may direct the Nominating Committee to seek members to serve as quarterly coordinators.*

## 2008 Nominating Committee Report

The following slate of officers will be presented for election at the annual meeting on April 29, 2008:

### *Quarterly coordinators 2008–2009*

May–July	Annette Dudgeon
August–October	Shari Augins
November–January	Catherine Davies
February–April	Jean Melton
<i>Secretary</i>	Kay Ellis
<i>Treasurer</i>	Lynne Richardson
<i>Spokesperson</i>	Kathy Byrd
<i>Special Events Chair</i>	Pat Goff
<i>Membership Chair</i>	Toby Whitman

### *Nominating Committee 2009*

Anna Singer, Chair  
Joan Comas

### *Elected directors 2007–2009*

Kay Ellis  
Shari Augins  
Helena Bain

### *Elected Directors 2008–2010*

Hattie Kaufman  
Betty Simonetti  
Juanita Watson

### **Nominating Committee 2008**

*Charlotte Gattozzi, Chair  
Helena Bain  
Celeste Burnum  
Anne Bell*

## April 1 Luncheon Topic

*Hattie Kaufman*

When (I am being optimistic here) Alabama finally gets ready to re-write its cumbersome and outdated constitution, the state League needs to be prepared to promote the inclusion or argue for the exclusion of a host of possible provisions. In preparation for that day, LWV of Alabama is asking local leagues to help reach consensus on the issues of Initiative and Referendum.

On March 4, we reviewed the voluminous materials compiled by LWVAL. Our lunch meeting was devoted to exploring the different types of initiative and

*Luncheon continued on next page*

## Luncheon *continued*

referendum provisions and the benefits and problems associated with each. During our April 1 lunch meeting, we will go through the consensus questions provided by LWVAL. If you have not yet had a chance to review the study materials, please let me know, at [hkaufman@law.ua.edu](mailto:hkaufman@law.ua.edu) or 205-333-9052, and I will get the materials to you. Please look over the materials carefully and be prepared to work on our consensus statement.

## Membership Report

*Lynne Richardson*

We are very fortunate as an organization to not only retain membership, but to expand. Granted, the expansion might be considered slow (almost snail-like) but still we're growing. We welcome a new member, Natalie Adams, which brings our single members number to 65. We currently have seven household memberships.

The one sure-fire way to induce people to join our or any group is to talk to them on a personal level. We've mailed invitations by the dozens for our October membership drive and the new attendees invariably say they came because someone they knew invited them.

Especially because it's an election year, League has much to offer. Please think of anyone you know who has evidenced interest in the political process and speak to him/her/them of our forums, registration drives, observation corps, action alerts, etc.

As with most groups, our membership is aging. We need to pass the torch so that the ideas and ideals of League can continue and thrive. I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting. With any luck, we'll be able to introduce ourselves to more than a handful of new members.

## Membership Update

*Toby Whitman*

We are very fortunate as an organization to not only retain membership, but to expand. Granted, the expansion might be considered slow (almost snail-like) but still we're growing. We welcome a new member, **Natalie Adams**, which brings our single members number to 65. We currently have seven household memberships.

The one sure-fire way to induce people to join our or any group is to talk to them on a personal level. We've mailed invitations by the dozens for our October membership drive and the new attendees invariably say they came because someone they knew invited them.

Especially because it's an election year, League has much to offer. Please think of anyone you know who has evidenced interest in the political process and speak to him/her/them of our forums, registration drives, observation corps, action alerts, etc.

As with most groups, our membership is aging. We need to pass the torch so that the ideas and ideals of League can continue and thrive. I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting. With any luck, we'll be able to introduce ourselves to more than a handful of new members.

## 2008 Legislative Forum

*Pat Goff*

Our 2008 Legislative Forum was a success. We adopted a new format this year and with the kind assistance of Major Ragsdale, principal of Tuscaloosa Central High School, we were able to accommodate 125 voters and students for an informative and lively discussion of issues by members of our local legislative delegation.

According to our spokesperson Dr. Kathy

*Forum continued on next page*

## Forum *continued*

Byrd, "This forum served the important purpose of facilitating communication between our local representatives and their constituents. . . . To share their respective views on key issues that may be considered in this years coming session."

Thanks are due to all who contributed to our success with special thanks to Senator Phil Poole, and Representatives Gerald Allen, Robert Bentley, Chris England, and William Thigpen.

## Special Luncheon Meeting

*Pat Goff*

On March 11th Jeanette VanderMeer presented a thought-provoking talk concerning the American system of health care. Dr. VanderMeer who is a Registered Nurse with a doctorate in her field is the RN Mobility Coordinator at the University of Alabama's Capstone College of Nursing.

Dr. VanderMeer discussed the economics of health care delivery, challenges to our health care system, inequity in the system, and proposals for solutions. The meeting was attended by 25 League members and guests and informed us in regard to this central issue for America's future. Thanks to Dr. VanderMeer for her membership and continuing support of the League as well as her stimulating presentation.

## Alabama Constitutional Reform: What's Up?

*Kathryn Byrd*

"So what is wrong with the Alabama Constitution?" asks the current home page of the Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform (ACCR) website.

The website provides these answers:

It restricts local democracy

It locks in an unfair tax system  
It hinders economic development  
It limits budget flexibility  
It is the longest known constitution in the world  
It has undemocratic origins

The League of Women Voters of Alabama has supported constitutional reform for 50 years! During the 2007 legislative session, the companion bills to "Let the People Vote" stalled. Good news! Thirty-five Alabama legislators have joined together to sponsor or co-sponsor companion bills, HB 308 and SB 243, to call a Constitutional Convention. Tuscaloosa's Representative Chris England is among that group.

What should we do? Write your representative and senator, urging them to support the bill. (In case of Rep. England, tell him you support his efforts and thank him.)

The following are some arguments listed on the ACCR website:

[The Current Constitution} Restricts Local Democracy

It concentrates power in Montgomery by restricting local democracy

Alabama is the only state in the southeast that deprives counties of local control, forcing county governments to seek legislative approval for even the most mundane of matters, including rodent control, weed control, bingo, prostitution, and burying dead farm animals, among others.

Our state legislature spends nearly 50% of its time debating local issues, and over 70% of our constitutional amendments apply to a single city or county.

Doesn't it make more sense to let local governments deal with local problems?

How can we as members keep abreast of the issues regarding Constitutional Referendum?

Read the information provided on the LWVAL website on constitutional

*Reform continued on next page*

## Reform *continued*

reform.

If you haven't had a chance to see the DVD *It's a Thick Book* (available on a single DVD in both the 45 and 27 minute versions), you can order it for a voluntary donation. Go to [www.constitutionalreform.org](http://www.constitutionalreform.org) or contact Kathy Byrd (758-2137) to borrow her copy.

Join ACCR, the grassroots organization devoted to "Let the People Vote" regarding whether or not they want to replace "the racist, the restrictive, and the regressive Alabama Constitution of 1901" (ACCR newsletter).

Keep abreast of support and educational efforts, such as the proposed Mock Constitutional Convention, rallies, and other events.

Plan ahead to attend the second annual Bailey Thomson Awards Luncheon, which will take place on Thursday, August 28, in Mobile's Convention Center with a telecast back to the Harbert Center in Birmingham.

## Immigration Study Results

*Kathryn Byrd  
Immigration Study Chair*

After an in-depth study of the complicated and emotionally charged immigration study, the LWVGT participated in December and January in the LWVUS immigration consensus. Kathy Byrd tallied the results, prepared a color-coded spread sheet, and reported the results to Board members at the January board meeting for approval to send them off. The board agreed, and Kathy entered the results onto a secure LWVUS website for that purpose before the February 1 deadline.

Members expressed frustration with the format of the consensus questionnaire, but felt it was important to have input to the national League committee about our thoughts. Here is a summary of the findings. Though the list is long (as was the consensus, and indeed the scope of the whole study), looking at how our League stands is interesting and worth looking over:

### **Question 1: Which criteria federal law should take into consideration:**

*High Priority/Agree (top criteria designated by asterisk):*

- Economic, business and service employment needs\*
- Family Reunification of authorized immigrants and citizens with spouses and minor children\*
- History of criminal activity
- Humanitarian crises/political persecution in home countries\*
- Rights of families to remain together
- Rights of all individuals in US to fair treatment under the law (fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal, and humane treatment)\*

Vote was divided between "High Priority/Agree" and "Lower Priority/Agree," so that "no consensus" could be reported:

- Ethnic and cultural diversity
- Environmental impact/sustainability
- Immigrant characteristics (health and age)
- Rights of all workers to safe working conditions and livable wage

*No Consensus:*

- Education and training

*Immigration continued on next page*

## **Immigration** *continued*

**Question 2: Unauthorized immigrants currently in the US should be treated as follows:**

*High Priority/Agree:*

All allowed to earn legal adjustment of status by doing things such as paying taxes, learning English, studying civics, etc.

*Lower Priority/Agree:*

Some deported/some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on length of residence in US

*Disagree:*

If deported, assess fines before possible re-entry

Assess fines before allowed to earn legal adjustment of status

*No Consensus:*

Deport unauthorized immigrants

Some deported/some allowed to earn legal adjustment of status based on needs of US employers

**Question 3: Federal immigration law should provide an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal backlogs) for legal entry into the US for immigrants who are:**

*High Priority:*

Immediate family members joining family member already admitted for legal permanent residence in the US

*Lower Priority:*

Entering US as students

*No Consensus:*

Entering US to meet labor needs

Entering US because of persecution in home country

**Question 4a: In order to deal more effectively with unauthorized immigrants, Federal immigration law should include: Social Security card or other national identification card with secure identifiers for All persons residing in the US:**

*Result: No Consensus*

(This vote was truly split among "high priority," "lower priority," and "disagree.")

**Question 4b: Federal immigration law dealing with unauthorized immigrants should be enforced by including:**

*Disagree:*

Physical barriers (such as fences) and surveillance at borders. (Comments were that members opposed fences but approved of improved surveillance at borders. This questions should have been split)

*High Priority:*

Increased personnel at land, air, and sea entry points

More effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country

Verification documents, such as Green Cards and work permits with secure identifiers

## **Immigration** *continued*

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee visa status
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies
- A program to allow immigrant workers to go in and out of the US to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs
- Significant fines proportionate to revenue for employers who fail to take adequate steps to verify work authorization of employees

**Question 5: Federal immigration law should address and balance the long-term federal financial benefit from immigrants with the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.**

*Consensus: Agreed*

**Questions 6: Federal immigration law should be coordinated with US foreign policy to proactively help improve economies, education and job opportunities, and living conditions of nations with large emigrating populations.**

*Consensus: Agreed*

### **Question 7: Add your brief comments**

We reiterated that we approved surveillance, not fences, that the current situation is not fair to border states, that we are a nation of immigrants, and that we need better ways of following foreign students.

We complained that for items under Question 1 were clearly priorities, but because they were split between “high priority” and “lower priority” we had to say we did not have a consensus. We felt this did not accurately express the fact that we supported these measures.

We did our part. Let’s see what our sister Leagues together concluded and what the LWVUS position will be. Thanks to all the many people who helped arrange for programs, procured materials, arranged for speakers, serve as recorders, and all who read through the materials, etc.

## **LWVGT Program Report**

*Annette Dudgeon*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER TUSCALOOSA  
LOCAL PROGRAM POSITIONS  
REPORT OF THE 2008 REVIEW COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 2008

### **I. EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND DECISIONS**

The League of Women Voters of Greater Tuscaloosa supports increasing funding for local public schools, including such locally generated sources as grants and supports by the private sector and city councils. (Adopted 2004)

The League of women Voters of Greater Tuscaloosa believes it is very important that taxpayers have access to proceedings of its local public school entities, the Tuscaloosa City School System and the Tuscaloosa County School System, consistent with but not limited to current Open Meetings Law requirements. Access to information includes, but is not restricted to

- board decisions
- committee reports

*Program Report continued on next page*



## **Program** *continued*

- public records
- school “report cards” as mandated by law

Reports should be presented in formats that are easily understood by the general public. Taxpayers should have well-publicized opportunities for having input into school system policy making. The school systems should explore means for increasing public awareness concerning school systems proceedings and issues through a variety of means, such as

- public service announcements
- flyers
- working with local churches
- televising board meetings etc.

The 2008 local program review committee recommends continued support for this item with emphasis on monitoring adequate public notice and opportunity for input.

### **II. LIBRARY SYSTEM SUPPORT**

*(Position taken 1964, 1990, and re-approved every year since)*

Support adequate funding of the Tuscaloosa Public Library, which should be primarily in the form of increased property tax, severance taxes and income from an endowment.

Term limitations for members of the board of directors and officers

The 2008 program committee recommends dropping the words “which should be primarily in the form of increased property tax, severance taxes and income from an endowment” from the first support statement. This deletion will give us more flexibility in lobbying.

The committee further recommends a 2009 update study concentrating on funding and space issues.

### **III. PLANNING AND ZONING**

*(Position taken 1978 and re-approved each year since.)*

Planning and zoning for Tuscaloosa County to be effected by a board that is representative of the general public.

Publicize proposed rezoning or zoning changes more effectively

Joint city-county action to make either minimum standards for subdivisions and /or regulations applicable outside the city limits

Opposition to spot zoning and strip zoning

Support for securing open space land

The 2008 program committee recommends rewording of the first portion of this position to read: “Planning and zoning in Tuscaloosa County to be effected by boards that are representative of the general public.” The committee also recommends action to ensure membership diversity on the existing planning and zoning boards in our county.

## **Program** *continued*

### IV. RACE RELATIONS

*(Position taken 1992–1993 and re-approved every year since.)*

Racism and racial discrimination are as serious a problem as any other health, social, educational, environmental, or economic problem in our community, including problems of drugs and crime, literacy and adequate schools, protection of the environment and solid waste disposal, and housing and jobs.

Our local governments and governmental agencies should identify the extent of the problem in our community and adopt appropriate means to address it

The 2008 local program review committee recommends further study of this item with emphasis on access to all governmental services and agencies.

*Local Program Review Committee 2008*

*Annette Dudgeon, chair*

*Juanita Watson*

*Linda Albritton*

## **Alabama Legislature: Contact and Info FAQs**

*Kathryn Byrd*

*LWVGT Spokesperson*

Lost your copy of the Alabama Legislative Directory? Can't remember which of our three State Senators and seven House Representatives represents your district? Want to contact him ASAP, but it is the middle of the night so you want to e-mail him? There are solutions.

First, to get the name of your legislator, go to [www.legislature.state.al.us](http://www.legislature.state.al.us). Then, write your zip code, including the "+ 4" additional digits. The last four digits are especially important because three legislators serve the "35401" zip code. The names of your senator and representative will immediately pop up, with a link to the website of each. From the website of each senator/representative, you can get contact information plus the names of committees on which he serves.

If you prefer e-mail, there is a formula that applies to all legislators:

Type the legislator's first name

Type a period

Type the legislators last name

Type @

Type [alhouse.org](http://alhouse.org) or [alsenate.org](http://alsenate.org) as appropriate.

Example: [john.doe@alhouse.org](mailto:john.doe@alhouse.org)

(Note: Do not leave any spaces between the elements of the e-mail address.)

To find out about the status of a specific bill, go to [www.legislature.state.al.us](http://www.legislature.state.al.us) again.

This time type in the name of the bill, joint resolution, etc., in the appropriate space on the left side of the home page, and hit "enter." You will go to the page describing the actions taken so far.

Now that you know how to reach your legislators or find out about a bill or resolution, there is no excuse for not letting your elected representatives know how you feel about the issues!

# Treasurer's Report and Proposed Budget

Lynne Richardson

	Budget 05-06	Budget 06-07	Budget 07-08	Actual 5/07-2/5/08	Proposed 08-09
<b>INCOME</b>					
150 Annual Meeting	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 600		\$650
160 Legislative Breakfast Forum	\$ 150	\$ 100	\$ 150	\$500	\$150
170 Luncheons	\$1000	\$1300	\$ 1375	\$ 868.75	\$1500
600 Educational Publications	\$ 10	\$ 10	\$ 10		\$10
610 Ed. Fund Pass-Thru	-0-	-0-	-0-	\$500	\$500
899 Miscellaneous	-0-	-0-	\$ 50		\$10
900 Dues*	\$3100	\$3385	\$ 3100	\$ 3200	\$3300
912 Contributions	\$ 100	\$ 230	\$ 125		\$150
925 Finance Drive	\$100	-0-	\$ 100		\$100
935 Savings Interest	-0-	-0-	-0-		\$2.00
950 Transfer From Savings	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 600		\$800
	<u>\$5560</u>	<u>\$6225</u>	<u>\$ 6400</u>	<u>\$ 4568.75</u>	<u>\$7172</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
130 Phone	\$ 265	\$ 265	\$ 275	\$ 210.02	\$272
140 Member directory	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 50		\$25
150 Annual Meeting	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 600		\$650
160 Legislative Breakfast Forum	\$ 150	\$ 100	\$ 150	\$310.15	\$650
170 Luncheons	\$1000	\$1350	\$ 1375	\$ 871.87	\$1500
242 Resale		\$50	-0-	-0-	TBD
250 Membership	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100		\$100
260 Publicity	\$ 25	\$ 50	\$ 50		\$50
270 Action	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ 25		\$25
280 Board Expenses	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 62.80 <sup>1</sup>	\$100
300 Convention/Workshop	\$ 600	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 1209.22	\$1000
330 Affiliations	\$ 75	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ 50 <sup>2</sup>	\$50
400 LWVAL PMP	\$ 585	\$ 695	\$ 700	\$ 465 <sup>3</sup>	\$700
410 LWVUS PMP	\$1345	\$1654	\$ 1800	\$ 1236 <sup>4</sup>	\$1800
500 Voter	\$ 100	\$ 50	\$ 50		\$50
600 Educational Publications	\$ 10	-0-	-0-		-0-
610 Political Directory	\$ 100	\$ 100	-0-		-0-
615 LWV Program	\$ 25	\$ 50	\$ 50	\$ 47.85 <sup>5</sup>	\$100
690 Voter Service	\$ 100	\$100	\$ 100		\$50
850 Contingency	\$ 100	\$111	\$ 150	\$25 <sup>6</sup>	-0-
899 Miscellaneous				\$25 <sup>6</sup>	\$50
	<u>\$ 5560</u>	<u>\$ 6225</u>	<u>\$ 6400</u>		<u>\$7172</u>

<sup>1</sup> Orientation

<sup>2</sup> ACCR

<sup>3</sup> (\$620)

<sup>4</sup> (\$1646.60)

<sup>5</sup> Immigration

<sup>6</sup> Memorial

\* NOTE:

Dues \$50 full member; \$25 household

LWVAL Single \$10.00; HH \$ 5.00

LWVUS " \$ 26.80 HH \$13.40

(increased from \$26.30/13.15 2006-07)

We currently have 65 full members and

7 household members.

**THE  
VOTER**

March 2008