

# THE VOTER

JULY 2013 EDITION



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## SPECIAL EVENTS TO REMEMBER:

- ACCR Meetings on August 8 & 22, Montgomery.
- Bailey Thomson Award Dinner, August 15, 2013, Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham
- LWVAL Board Meeting, August 24, 2013, Montgomery
- Women's Equality Day-19th Amendment Ratification, August 26, 2013

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK BY SCARLETT GADDY & LEONETTE SLAY

We are indeed fortunate to be leading the League in Alabama and are honored to have been elected as co-presidents at our April state convention. We had a productive, creative board orientation in Montgomery on June 29. Your state board consists of a good combination of returning and new members and all local Leagues have a member on the board.

At our orientation, led by former LWVAL president Sarah McDonald, the board agreed to focus our efforts on the following priorities:

1. Educating and preparing Alabama voters for voter photo ID in 2014. With both Congressional and the gubernatorial races, we think this should be our top priority. Shirley Ann Rawls will oversee this area, with help from Hattie Kaufman. We are hoping that all our Leagues will bring creative ideas to the table that will help insure all voters know how to register and vote in the upcoming 2014 elections.
2. Membership development continues to be a priority and Jeanine Normand, with assistance from Bar-

bara Caddell, will develop ideas for membership growth and retention.

3. Our ongoing participation in the Public Service Commission meetings, which began under the previous Board's guidance, will come to a conclusion this fall, but is a pressing priority right now. As the PSC utilities reviews conclude, this will recede in our priorities list, as other priorities ascend in importance. LWVAL is committed to urging greater transparency and public participation in the Public Service Commission's regu-

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## PAINLESS SUPPORT FOR LWVAL ED FUND - JUST SHOP! BY JEAN JOHNSON

While you're shopping online, why not raise a little money for the LWVAL Education Fund? It costs you nothing. Just shop online at your favorite stores through iGive.com. The stores contribute a small percentage of the cost of your items to the LWVAL Education Fund. How easy is that? Your items cost

the same price regardless. Here's how to do it. Go online to [www.igive.com/LWVALEF](http://www.igive.com/LWVALEF) Just start your online shopping at this website, and the LWVAL Ed Fund will be designated as your preferred charity to receive a portion of the sales revenue. (By the way, you may see

"Auburn" noted as the location of the LWVAL Ed Fund. This is just the physical location of the state League's current address. All proceeds go to the state LWVAL Ed Fund.) There are even deals and coupons to save you money.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*(Continued from page 1)*

latory process. The state board has directed Joyce Lanning to be our representative to ongoing PSC informal hearings, with Mary Lynn Bates as her backup. (For more on our activities with PSC oversight, see Joyce's article on p.--.) Joyce Lanning has been our primary "voice at the table," but several Leagues have participated. Those taking the lead in this have been Gina Finnegan, Barbara Caddell, and Myra Evans of Mobile, LWVAL 1st Vice-President Kathy Byrd, Mary Lynn Bates of LWVGB, and your LWVAL Presidents.

4. We will conclude the

state study of health care and send consensus questions to local Leagues for your input this fall. Anne Permaloff will lead us in this important study.

5. Nationally, all Leagues will be studying wide-ranging aspects of agriculture and food production in 2013 (materials to be available this fall) with consensus reached by April 2014. Kathy Byrd will oversee this study, with help from Gina Finnegan.

6. We want to develop our financial resources so that we can publicize our efforts, educate our members and citizens, and send current and emerging LWVAL leaders to training opportunities. Gina

Finnegan will help us develop and implement fundraising strategies.

We are excited about the energy, experience, and commitment evidenced by your state League board and look forward to working with them and local League leaders over the next two years. We expect to visit all local Leagues During the coming year, getting to know you and especially learning of your successes firsthand.



*Leonette Slay and Scarlett Gaddy are serving as Co-Presidents of the LWVAL this year.*

### Q and A From LWVUS

**If our League wants to take action on federal legislation, that is not the subject of a LWVUS action alert, what is the process that we should use?**

*Leagues are asked to coordinate any action on federal legislation that is not the subject of a LWVUS action alert with the LWVUS Advocacy team by using the online request form for state and local Leagues. This helps to ensure that the organization is always speaking with one voice and strategically working on our priority issues. Leagues are asked to use this online form to make inquiries or to directly contact Grassroots Advocacy Manager Jessica Jones at [jjones@lww.org](mailto:jjones@lww.org).*

*Send your question to [kmcfarland@lww.org](mailto:kmcfarland@lww.org) with "Glad You Asked" in the subject line.*

**VIEW CONVENTION PHOTOS @ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/95329932@N05/sets/>**

## SUPPORT FOR LWVAL ED FUND

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At this writing, there are 1300 stores and include the very well-known stores that you probably already patronize. These stores donate up to 26% of your purchase to the LWVAL Ed Fund. Most donate approximately 1%-4% of your purchase amount. LWVAL Ed Fund gets \$5 just

for your registration!

Here's a sampling of the stores in which you can shop: Amazon, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Dell, Brookstone, Bed Bath & Beyond, Fingerhut, Gap, Lands' End, Kohl's, Nordstrom, Office Depot, Overstock.com, PetSmart, Sears, Tavelocity, Walgreen, etc. If you have a favorite store or service, chances are

it's an iGive.com participant.

There's no finding a parking place, no trudging the mall with all your bags, and no waiting in line, and it's secure.

So, please go to [iGive.com/LWVALEF](http://iGive.com/LWVALEF) to do your online shopping, and thanks so much for supporting the LWVAL Education Fund!



## CHARLOTTE WARD - VOTER EDITOR, MOVES TO OFF-BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

Charlotte Ward, long-time LWVAL Board member and Voter editor, has exchanged her Board position and "printer's apron" for an off-Board position with the Legislative Committee and with the Education Fund, approving Ed Fund requests from

our Local Leagues.

Charlotte and our other life members of the LWVAL, are the heart of our League and we appreciate their hard work and wealth of experience.

Charlotte has served in most

every capacity at both the local and state level of League, including the

Presidency of LWVAL. Charlotte's continuing dedication to our League, our community, our state, and our nation is an exemplary example of citizen engagement.



Charlotte Ward

VIEW A 2013 CONVENTION VIDEO at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csU9wJn0oJg>

## LWV COUNCIL 2013 BY LEONETTE SLAY

Laura Hill and I were pleased to be able to attend National Council 2013, June 14-17, near Washington DC, as delegates from LWVAL. Council, held every two years, is a smaller meeting than Convention. It concentrates on "nuts and bolts" issues such as membership development, fundraising, logo usage and branding, and leadership development. We look forward to sharing information from the various workshops

and general sessions through the Voter, social media, and in direct communications with local League leaders. You can see the complete agenda posted on the LWV web site.

Even though Council usually deals more with development and mechanics, we had the excitement of being in our last plenary session on Monday, June 19, when the Supreme Court handed down the decision in Arizona vs.

ITCA (affirming Congressional power under the Elections Clause, ruling that AZ overstepped its authority by imposing restrictions on voter registration).

Elisabeth MacNamara, our president, was speaking when a staff member gave her the news. LWV immediately posted a Tweet: Voters won today! (See Laura's article on page 11 on use of social media by Leagues at all levels.)

We also received a "call to convention" in Dallas from June 6-10, 2014. We look forward to sending a strong delegation from Leagues throughout Alabama to an issue-packed, fun-filled four days. Be sure to look in this and future VOTERs and the LWVAL web site/FB page for helpful information from Council 2013 and more information on Convention 2014.

## ACCR ACTIVITIES BY NANCY EKBERG

The Bailey Thomson Award Dinner will be held the evening of Thursday, August 15th at the Wynfrey Hotel Grand Ball Room at the Riverchase Galleria in Birmingham. (On Highway 31 just off of Highway 459)

Go to [www.constitutionalreform.org](http://www.constitutionalreform.org) to order tickets.

Be sure to reserve your seat at this event that is held in memory of our founder, Bailey Thomson and will honor the Constitutional Revision Commission this year. Former Governor Albert Brewer, Chair of the Commission will bring us up to date on what the Commission is doing and plans

to do.

The Commission will hold full meetings on Thursday, August 8th and Thursday August 22nd in room 617 of the State House on Union Street in Montgomery from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

The public is welcome and invited to attend.



## LWVAL PARTICIPATES IN PSC MEETINGS BY JOYCE LANNING

Our electric and gas utilities – Alabama Power, Alabama Gas and Mobile Gas – are private investor-owned utilities and are monopolies regulated by the Alabama Public Service Commission (PSC). In 2013, all three have had or will have a series of ‘informal’ meetings to review their operations and rates.

At issue are the transparency with which decisions are made, the accountability of the PSC to the utility and to its customers, and the balance between what the utility is allowed to earn and what is just and reasonable to charge customers.

The League of Women Voters in Alabama has taken the opportunity to seek standing to participate in these informal meetings. Mobile interim co-presidents Gina Finnegan and Barbara Caddell took part in the Mobile Gas meetings. LWVAL Co-Presidents Scarlett Gaddy and Leonette Slay have designated Joyce Lanning as League representative for this activity with Mary Lynn Bates as alternate for Alabama Power and Alabama Gas hearings.

This LWVAL action is based on the following LWVAL Program position and League Principle:

LWVAL Ethics in Government, May, 1991 (Updated 1995, 2003)

“Public meetings should be open to all citizens except during discussion of a person’s character or good name. Public officials should be diligent in following the Open Meetings Law (Sunshine Law). The Open Meetings Law (Sunshine Law) should be maintained and applied to the state legislature and its committees; state boards, commissions and committees; and regional, city and county commissions, councils and boards. Timely public notification of these meetings should be required. The state Open Meetings Law (Sunshine Law) should include a provision to nullify decisions made in illegally conducted meetings.”

League principles regarding representative government:

- Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.
- Citizen’s Right to Know/ Citizen Participation. Protect the citizen’s right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making. <http://www.lwv.org/content/public-policy-positions>

Alabama is one of a handful of utility regulatory bodies, including Mississippi and Louisiana, which determine rates for the energy monopolies they regulate by using a formula to stabilize rate fluctuation. This formula, called Rate Stabilization and Equalization (RSE) in Alabama, is designed to balance the appropriate profit for the utility and lowest rates for the consumers. Unlike the other two states, in Alabama the formula has been applied without opportunity for the paying customers to observe or participate in the decisions which determine their rates.

After several news articles suggesting that this formula had gotten out of balance in favor of the utilities in the thirty years since it was put in place, Commissioner Terry Dunn called for a formal rate review to allow for investigation of the appropriateness of the return on equity (ROE) – that is, the profits allowed the utilities. Commissioners Twinkle Cavanaugh and Jeremy Oden countered with a suggestion for a novel ‘informal’ process of public proceedings, which they felt would be less cumbersome and costly.

Mobile Gas meetings were held in May and June. Gina Finnegan and Barbara Caddell represented the Mobile League and spoke at an evening public hearing in Mobile and at the April 25, 2013 meeting in Montgomery. The outcome of those proceedings was decided in an off-agenda item at the July 2, 2013 regular PSC meeting. Mobile Gas was given a four-year term for their RSE contract, after which it will be reviewed – whether with participation by paying customers is unclear.

The range of allowable rate of return on equity (profit) was changed from 13.35 to 13.85% to the lower range of 10.45 to 10.95% with a setpoint of 10.8%. The company is allowed to increase its equity cap up to a maximum of 56%. This would allow it to recoup some of the loss from a lower ROE. This important adjustment is estimated by the PSC to save Mobile Gas customers around \$2.7 million annually or \$31 per customer per year for the next four years.

The first meeting for Alabama Power Company (APCO) was held in Montgomery on May 8 and covered the history of the company, its devotion to customer service and the history and mechanics of the RSE formula. Joyce Lanning, representing the LWVAL was told that the company’s range of allowable returns hadn’t been adjusted since 1982 except for a minor decrease in 1990 because it wasn’t necessary. Her question about the term for APCO’s RSE contract was deflected. Unlike the other two regulated utilities, they evidently have no term – that is, a time at which their RSE contract will be more fully reviewed than at the annual checkpoints.

The June meeting covered the company’s ‘three-legged stool’ of generation, transmission and distribution of electricity and customer service. Although this stool sits on a long range plan called the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) that guides the decisions about how to serve customers in the least-cost way, reference by Lanning to planning for meeting future energy demand was ruled off limits. Alabama doesn’t allow stakeholders to participate in planning for their energy future as is done in other states, such as for APCO’s sister company in Georgia.

There were touching stories and a video of the important company efforts to assist the community after the April 2011 tornados and some interesting details about managing critters’ interference with the distribution lines. Linemen were honored for their service and several area mayors spoke about the role of APCO in economic develop-

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## PSC MEETINGS

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ment, providing grant funds for community projects and, in general, being an excellent community partner.

Others had concerns that Alabama Power customers were paying higher rates and bills than electric utility customers in other southeastern states. LWVAL Co-President Scarlett Gaddy read a League statement encouraging citizen participation and transparency. League members Barbara Caddell and Myra Evans from Mobile each made statements about the impact of energy bills on low income customers while Kathryn Byrd, Vice President of LWVAL supported in the audience.

For a reporter's account of the meeting, see [Praise, scorn for Alabama Power Co. during second PSC informal hearing ...](http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2013/06/post_39.html)  
[http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2013/06/post\\_39.html](http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2013/06/post_39.html)

The final meeting is July 17 (and possibly 18) in Montgomery and covers the company's economic overview, issues regarding their RSE formula and their capital structure, risk profile, competitive posture and return on capital devoted to public service. The Montgomery League will be represented by Shirley Rawls and perhaps one or two colleagues.

[Informal meetings for Alabama Gas Company will be held September 5<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, October 9 and November 13 at the RSA Union Building, Room 900, 100 North Union Street, Montgomery.](#)

Thanks in part to LWVAL's requests for a public record of the meetings for those who couldn't attend, videos of all the informal public proceedings can be viewed online at [http://www.psc.state.al.us/administrative/pub\\_proc\\_video.htm](http://www.psc.state.al.us/administrative/pub_proc_video.htm).

## CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM UPDATE BY NANCY EKBERG

The Constitutional Revision Commission, chaired by former Governor Albert Brewer, and its various subcommittees have been addressing several of the Alabama Constitution's articles.

### Article I - Declaration of Rights

All sections of the proposal of the Declaration of Rights Subcommittee were approved except Sec. 1, 14, and 24, which dealt with adding an equal protection clause, the State of Alabama being made a defendant in a court of law or equity, and navigable waters, respectively. The sections that were approved involved little or no change, and the sections that were not approved will be considered further at the next meeting. The Collaborative's Declaration of Rights Working Group continues to work on recommended changes to the wording of this article.

### Article V - Executive Department

The Commission has yet to adopt the

Subcommittee's proposal for this article. The Subcommittee has recommended that many sections of the article not be changed or be revised with little to no substantive change. Proposed revisions include adding gender neutral language, adding a requirement that the State Attorney General must have practiced law for at least five years before taking office, and deleting a current residency requirement that calls for the State of Alabama's top officials, with the exception of the Governor, to reside in Montgomery. The Commission also considered the Subcommittee's revisions to Sec. 125, which would have increased the override threshold from a simple majority of the whole number of legislators to a three-fifths majority of the whole number of legislators. This proposal was supported by Governor Bentley, who wanted to see it enacted in 2019; but the proposal was not adopted by the full commission.

### Article XIV—Education

The Education Article Subcommittee's proposal was adopted by the Commission, with the exception of the Subcommittee's revision of Sec. 256. The Education Article Subcommittee proposed that Sec. 256 read: "The legis-

lature shall establish, organize, and maintain a broad and comprehensive system of public schools throughout the state for the benefit of children thereof." After concerns were raised by the Commission about the use of the modifier, "broad and comprehensive," the Subcommittee chair proposed to the Commission that these words be stricken. This then raised concerns from other Commission members who believed that the state's constitution should set a standard for public education.

Chair Albert Brewer then postponed a vote on Sec. 256 and called for the formation of an additional subcommittee to solely address Sec. 256. This subcommittee will submit a proposal to the full commission at the next meeting. The Collaborative's Education Workgroup will be meeting beforehand to determine suggested language for this section.



## CONVENTION FEATURES TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP BY SCARLETT GADDY

Convention 2013 featured a Pre-Convention Technology Workshop on Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. Each local League sent at least one representative to the workshop that featured web site design and social media tools to reach out and engage both members and potential members.

One of our greatest challenges is membership development, particularly of younger men and women who are frequent users of all things technological. Facebook gives us a way to extend our reach into areas frequented by these potential members. For example, if we have 300 "likes" on our Facebook page, our extended reach is as high as 166,000 people. These are friends of those who have "liked" the page who see our posted content. It's also a great way for LWVAL to reach out to other state Leagues and the LWVUS which also have a Facebook pages. Twitter is the "in the moment" messaging service. It's a great way to keep members updated during

events and to call them to action on both LWVUS and LWVAL issues. Twitter is quickly becoming the chosen method of communication for young people. It's a great way to engage these potential members. Following one of our Leagues will insure our members and others can keep up with our great work.

Our web sites are critical to our work. They provide a means of communicating with both our members and visitors. It may be the one thing visitors remember about your League. This means that our sites need to be interesting and up to date. Our recent events should be prominently displayed and links to information on how to join our Leagues and other contact information should be easily accessed. Workshop participants learned how to manage their web sites to their best advantage.

As a bonus, some time was spent learning about other technological

tools that can be used to promote our



Leagues. Among the tools discussed were QR codes and video and photo slide shows.

If your League has questions about technology and how it can be utilized to have the greatest impact for your League, contact either Jean Johnson or Scarlett Gaddy for more information. The link below will take you to files with helpful instructions on Facebook, Twitter, and Dropbox as well as the materials from the workshop.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/q4r3xvk7dqpmo1k/IZUR-Npx2f>

## SCOTUS REPORT BY HATTI KAUFMAN

Two new cases from the Supreme Court this session have a significant impact on voting rights in the United States.

The first of these to have been decided was *Arizona v. InterTribal Council of Arizona, Inc.* In 1993, Congress passed the National Voter Registration Act, which, among other provisions, required states to "accept and use" a uniform simple postcard form of voter registration for federal elections. Included on this form is a statement in which the registrant has to affirm his or her citizenship. A false affirmation is considered perjury punishable by law. Arizona, on the other

hand, passed legislation requiring all those registering to vote to present documents proving citizenship. Thus, postcard registrations with only the statement of affirmation, but without accompanying documentation, were rejected by the board of registrars in the state. The Supreme Court found that the National Voter Registration Act preempted the state requirement, and it ruled that the state had to accept the postcard registrations without further documentation. The ruling was based on the Constitutional provision that Congress has the power to regulate the "time, place and manner" of federal

elections, and that this power necessarily included voter registration.

In the final week of the session, the Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, arising out of Shelby County in Alabama. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 had created a formula under which the Justice Department could determine which states and counties required extra oversight to protect the rights of minority voters. The formula originally looked at data

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## SCOTUS

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as of November 1964. The Justice Department was to see whether there was a "test or device" restricting the opportunity to register and vote. It also looked at whether fewer than 50% of the persons of voting age in the state or county were registered or had voted in the 1964 presidential election. Using this formula, it was determined that Alabama, Alaska, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia, and select counties in

Arizona, Hawaii, Idaho and North Carolina were to be carefully scrutinized.

This meant that any changes in election procedures, such as voting district lines, poll locations, or election hours, had to be "precleared" by the Justice Department as non-discriminatory before they could be effectuated. Later amendments looked at the data as of 1968 and 1972 and made some changes in the states and counties requiring oversight. In *Shelby County*, the Court held that the data from the 1960's and 1972 are no longer rele-

vant and cannot be used as the basis for determining whether there is a need for preclearance. It left the door open for Congress to further amend the law and revise the applicable formula, although most commentators believe that is extremely unlikely to happen. Until and unless there is further action by Congress, the need to preclear changes is suspended. Changes that are enacted can still be challenged as discriminatory, but that is a far more difficult procedure.



## TECH TALK BY SCARLETT GADDY

Let's talk about technology. Not just any technology, but technology tools you can use in your League-work. In the future, look for an article on a new technology tool that can be used for your League work in each Voter.



<http://dropbox.com>

Increasingly new tools are created that make what we do in League easier. Dropbox is a good example. Dropbox enables you to save files to your computers, phones, and the Dropbox site all at once. The storage size is 2GB (free) and with referrals or accepted invitations to share your file, you can build the storage capacity to 18GB. It's a secure site and works with Windows,

Mac, Linux, iPad, iPhone, Android, and Blackberry. One of the wonderful features is you can access your files, even if there is no Internet connection available. You always have access to your files. Another great feature is when you make changes to a file, it transfers just the changes to the stored file and it updates to all the computers sharing the same file. That means I can make changes to a LWVAL file in Dropbox and all the Board members' files on their computers are updated as well. It saves as if I made changes on all of their computers. These changes are viewable instantly. **Take the Dropbox tour [HERE](#).**

So how can we use this tool? First, it makes working on studies and other

projects much easier. When constructing documents each person can edit the document and save their changes on their computer and everyone else's computers at the same time. Second, storage of presentations and resource materials is efficient and reduces the amount of materials that have to be copied. You can store a variety of file types in Dropbox. Finally, you can also store photos and videos in the Dropbox folder. For Voter editors at both the state and local levels this is a lifesaver. LWV Mobile can load their photos in a single file that their Voter editor and that of the state social media and Voter editor may also

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## TECH TALK

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access.

This is also a great advantage to you personally. Family photos can be saved to the Dropbox and all members of the family have a copy. Each person can add photos and the family albums are complete. Virtually any files you wish to access remotely can be

stored there.

So how do you obtain Dropbox and how do you get started? To download Dropbox, go to <https://www.dropbox.com/install2>. Install the program and then start saving your files you wish to share in Dropbox, which should now be a "save as" option on your computer. To share you may either send a link for instant access to the file or you can send an

invitation to join the Dropbox folder which will enable them to have the same privileges as yourself. Happy sharing and if you have questions, contact Scarlett Gaddy – [sbgaddy@yahoo.com](mailto:sbgaddy@yahoo.com) !

## ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA BY TRISH POWELL CRAIN

A few weeks ago, two board members of the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham (LWVGB) embarked on a simple campaign to improve the visibility of the local League Facebook page. "In two weeks we more than doubled the 'likes' on our Facebook page," Trisha Powell Crain, President of the LWVGB said. Each simply asked their current Facebook friends to "like" the [LWVGB's Facebook page](#).

Jean Johnson, Communications Director for LWVGB said, "Each league member who is on Facebook can bring much needed attention to our League activities and projects and even generate membership."

Here are a few different ways to ask your friends and contacts to "like" your League's Facebook page.

On your Facebook page, post a status update similar to this: "I highly recommend the League of Women Voters of [your local League]. I hope all my friends will go to [http://www.facebook.com/\[your local League's address\]](http://www.facebook.com/[your local League's address]) and check them out. Please "like" the [LWVXX](#) Facebook page. They are working hard to make democracy work!"

This will generate a live link to your local League's Facebook page and include a nice colorful graphic to catch attention. The main thing is to include the local League's Facebook web address, add a short note about your local League and invite your friends to "like" the page.

Many of your Facebook friends could have settings that keep them from seeing your status update on their page, though, so another way to reach them on Facebook will be to invite them directly from your local League's Facebook page.

Visit your local League's Facebook page. In the lower right-hand corner of the picture (indicated by the red arrow in the image), you see "Invite Your Friends to Like This Page". Click on the empty box and your friends will pop up and all you have to do is click on each

one you wish to invite. Your friends will get a notice that you have asked them to like this page.

Then again, you can do it the old-fashioned way: email. Send an email to friends with a quick message about your local League and add "If you are on Facebook, please be sure to 'like' our page."

"It doesn't hurt to ask directly," Crain said. "And it's very easy to do."

Don't forget to ask them to "like" the [League of Women Voters of Alabama's Facebook page](#), too!

The screenshot shows the Facebook page for the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Update Page Info', 'Liked', and 'Message'. Below that, the page name and statistics are displayed. The main content area includes an 'About' section, a 'Photos' section with a photo of two women, a 'Likes' section showing 80 likes, and an 'Events' section. A red arrow points to the 'Invite Your Friends to Like this Page' button in the lower right corner of the page content area.

## ENERGY & WATER PANEL BY JOYCE LANNING

Water and energy are intimately connected, since most thermal electricity heats water to make steam to run turbines, as well as uses water for cooling the process. And River Network estimates that it takes the equivalent of 13% of our nation's electricity to move, heat and treat our water supply.

Participants in a lively panel presentation on Energy and Water in Alabama were Michael Churchman, Executive Director of the Ala. Environmental Council (AEC); Cole Walker, President of Redstone Energy Group in Huntsville; Heather Elliott, JD, Assoc. Professor of Law at UA and author of a 2012 Alabama Review article on Alabama's Water Crisis, and Vaughn McWilliams, JD, involved in the Alabama Water planning process and former Assistant Attorney General in the Natural Resources Section in Colorado and Water Resource Specialist at the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

Mr. Churchman began with a brief taste of our state's rich natural resources and their importance not only to our economy and enjoyment, but also to coming generations. AEC promotes recycling as an alternative to our overuse of landfills, as well as a proactive approach to energy efficiency, conservation and renewables for our cleaner energy future. He pointed out that properly compensating energy producers for efficiency can improve the life and health of people, support the sustainability of the planet and promote prosperity for the energy firm and its customers. Hot, humid Alabama influences the consumption of a lot of energy but we've been paying rates and bills that are higher than most south-east states while allowing Alabama Power a higher profit than almost all other electric utilities. More points from Mr. Churchman:

What we pay for energy doesn't include the full costs from extraction to disposal

These 'externalities' include damages to health and the economy from pollution

We lack a state energy plan, which could help guide program choices and, unlike some neighboring states, customers have no way of participating in planning for our energy future

Acting now to invest in cleaner energy technologies could save money and future damages

Cole Walker's inspirational overview of the potential for solar energy that firms and households can generate for themselves was as educational as it was entertaining. He emphasized that this is an exciting time to be involved in energy. His Redstone Energy Group is focusing on microgrids – the decentralization of energy generation through localized use of solar panels. He walked us through the decentralization and miniaturization of the computing industry – from the big mainframe to our cellphones – and the World Wide Web. Mr. Walker pointed out that this tipping point for decentralization is happening now with energy technology as it did with information technology as the cost of solar generation comes down to around ten cents per kilowatt hour. The US Army has created an Energy Initiatives Task Force to get 25% of their energy from renewables by 2025 through a public-private partnership. Some of his points:

The Department of Defense recognizes that our security will depend in part on distributed generation of energy and storage due to extreme weather and increasing hacker attacks

Army is putting in \$7 billion for a public-private partnership to put renewable energy on bases all over the country that can island from the aging and vulnerable grid whenever necessary

The renewable energy technology shift could create 40 trillion jobs globally and the US can and should help drive that

Dire predictions about decentralizing telecommunications did not materialize and protests about decentralized energy won't either

Heather Elliott showed Alabama's seal and reminded us of our position as a rich water state, with much biodiversity. However, due to population growth, development, and climate change there is a combination of pressures on our water resources along with serious disputes over water with Georgia and Florida. Water law now gives rights to those who own land that touches the water (riparian doctrine), allowing them and not others to withdraw water for use but only in the watershed of its origin. This has to be 'reasonable' but this old fashioned doc-

trine of resolving water disputes doesn't take current policy values into account, including environmental values, and is often decided by the courts or government bodies which can stop some uses in favor of others. Ms. Elliot says this approach to scarcity and our water allocation crisis is insufficient, unpredictable, cumbersome, wasteful, and will only get worse.

Surface and underground water are plentiful – but under our law, whoever can get the water out first has the right to it and disputes are managed in court, including – rarely - the Supreme Court

Alabama could follow the lead of other states to adopt a more modern set of factors to resolve riparian disputes administered by agencies, and this law, based on torts (harm) is more proactive in reconciling many competing interests and can help manage the resource sustainably

Alabama's effort to develop a State Water Policy is an effort to drag us from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup>

Vaughn McWilliams reviewed the water planning and policy issues we should have on our radar as Alabama works to develop a state water management plan. In Colorado, Mr. Walker assisted with a recommended planning process that has also been followed by Georgia and Oklahoma, which is data-intensive and time consuming, but is designed to provide essential information and buy-in. The goal of a state water plan is to address water quantity by allocating the waters of the state in a way that best meets the needs of water users and the natural environment – to both develop and conserve. (The Federal government primarily covers water quality.) In 2007 and 2008 the very severe drought spurred Georgia to address their water management plan, but not Alabama. However, in 2012 Governor Bentley requested five state agencies to present an action plan and timeline for a statewide water management plan by December 2013.

Some important aspects of planning:

Science – water assessment to measure the natural flows in streams, and both consumptive

## CONVENTION 2013 HOSTED BY LWV GREATER TUSCALOOSA BY SCARLETT GADDY

Convention 2013 was held on April 26-28 in Tuscaloosa at the Capstone Hotel. Friday's pre-Convention event was a technology workshop facilitated by Jean Johnson and Scarlett Gaddy. The event was held in the Paul W. Bryant Museum conference room. Leagues were requested to send at least one member to be trained on web site management and social media tools. Technology proficiency is a growing need in the League and we recognize that our web sites and social media sites are important to both our work and membership recruitment. Any League that wishes to continue expanding their knowledge of technology tools may contact either of the facilitators for a possible workshop.

A special trip to tour the new Federal Courthouse was hosted by Hatti Kaufman and LWVGT in the afternoon after the Technology Workshop. The Courthouse contains a historical mural charting the history of Tuscaloosa from its founding to the present. The impressive mural features a section on the April 27<sup>th</sup> tornado that devastated Tuscaloosa.

Following the trip downtown, LWVGT hosted a wine, cheese and buffet dinner at University Lutheran Church.

On Saturday, as the Convention began, we remembered with great fondness and appreciation the life of Jane Everest, who



was serving as President of the Mobile League at the time of her death on August 20, 2012. She was described as

"always learning, teaching, writing, and working in service to the League." She will be greatly missed by not only LWV Mobile, but by all of us.

After the morning Plenary Session, League members listened as our Luncheon

Speaker, Dr. Leigh Ann Poole, professor in the University of Alabama School of Nursing, discussed the status of health care in Alabama. Dr. Poole's discussion was timely and coincided with our work on the Health Care Facts and Issues. We also presented the Phyllis Rea Membership Award to LWV Mobile in recognition of their outstanding gains in membership over the past year.



Following lunch, we were fortunate to have Mary Klenz (LWVUS Vice-President), present to answer questions and discuss membership recruitment and retention. She emphasized the importance of growing our Leagues. She also discussed the direction and priorities of LWVUS. Mary also presented President Kathy Byrd with a certificate of recognition from LWVUS for her outstanding work.

Our afternoon panel discussion concerned natural resources and is discussed in greater detail here in the Voter.

The evening reception was held at Temple Emanuel, nearby the Hotel. Our guest speaker was Robert McCurley, Jr., former Director of the Alabama Law Institute. He is currently involved in drafting legislation for the Alabama Legislature, providing orientation to new and returning legislators prior on the legislative process, and reporting on legislative sessions. Most recently he has been actively involved with the Alabama Constitutional Revision Commission. He provided some insight on the Commission's work revis-

ing the Alabama Constitution as well as the political process in Alabama.

The Sunday morning Plenary session included recognition of the LWV Board members Mary Lynn Bates and Yvonne Brakefield who were leaving the Board or in President Kathy Byrd's case, stepping down as President of LWV. The session concluded with the election of the new LWV Board and the call for directions from the membership to the new Board by incoming Co-President Leonette Slay. These directions included:

- Leverage league support of public education and government transparency as a membership recruiting mechanism
- Continue focus on energy rates in Alabama
- Consider a focus on predatory lending laws
- Consider avenues for breaking political gridlock in the Alabama legislature
- Express support of the Equal Rights Amendment
- Ensure LWV non-partisan position is not blurred when partnering with other organizations

The 2013 General Fund Plenary Meeting was then adjourned by incoming LWV Co-President Leonette Slay.

Following the conclusion of the General Fund Meeting the Education Fund Plenary Meeting was called to order by President Kathy Byrd. The Credentials Committee Report and the proposed Education Fund Budget were approved and the proposed 2013-15 Board members were elected. Incoming Co-President Scarlett Gaddy called for direc-

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## CONVENTION

*(Continued from page 10)*

tions for the new Board.

The following directions were provided by the membership:

- Revise the Treasurer's report to show both income and expenditure items for Local League account balances

- Ensure Local League Treasurer is informed when the State Treasurer receives Ed Fund donation intended for the Local League
- Participate in Project 2014
- Revisit the possibility of voting by email
- Revise bylaws
- Locate Articles of Incorporation

- Expand work done with Vote 411 tool to facilitate increased public awareness and membership recruitment

At the conclusion of the directions to the Board the Convention was gavelled closed by incoming Co-President Scarlett Gaddy and the first Board meeting of the new Board of Directors was held.

## TWEET, LIKE, AND SHARE BY LAURA N. HILL

Social networks: the Montgomery Bus Boycott gained its remarkable momentum so quickly after Rosa Parks' arrest because English professor, and Women's Political Council president, Jo Ann Robinson knew how to utilize them. Within a day of the arrest, Robinson was distributing 50,000 mimeographed flyers promoting a one-day boycott of city buses. Phones were ringing. People were talking. Parks was arrested on the evening of December 1, a Thursday; Robinson's flyer announced a boycott for the following Monday, December 5. The rest is, as they say, history.

Robinson's effective use of networks came to mind as I reflected upon the LWVUS Council 2013 social media workshop. She succeeded in disseminating important information quickly because a half-page flyer is easy to pass along to other people. The outlets available to us today—Facebook and Twitter, especially—make sharing information even easier. They are as useful as phone trees for alerting people to upcoming events. They provide opportunities to share information in ways that are similar to clipping newspaper and magazine articles for friends, opinion leaders, and organizational partners. They are also, increasingly, the best way to catch the attention of media.

"Facebook and Twitter are great ways to engage with the public and our members." That sentiment was repeated multiple times at the workshop. And the best way to engage people is to share information they can use. Recommendations on things to share through social media include:

- statistics from factsheets on priority issues
- links to articles and research related to issues
- events that League representatives are attending
- articles that mention the League and its work
- news from other Leagues and partner organizations
- photos of activities (registering voters, people who have been presented awards, guest speakers, etc.)

One point that was especially emphasized in the workshop is the reality that Twitter currently is the most effective way to reach journalists and bloggers. Most have their own Twitter accounts that they use to share their work and thoughts with their followers. They also use Twitter for story ideas, sources for quotes, and to learn more about what is go-

ing on in the community. And that is where our own posts come into play. We can share a press statement, action, or new resource on Twitter. We can build relationships with reporters by providing the credible information they expect from us, in a format that works best for them. The cold reality is that if we are not sharing information via Twitter, odds are that reporters aren't seeing what we are doing and our voice isn't part of the stories they tell.

There was also discussion about social media as a means of reaching potential new members and increasing LWVUS visibility. Because social media makes it easy to share information, posting League-related items increases the likelihood it will be shared with people beyond your usual network. More people see our work and become interested in participating in what we do.

This is only a brief overview of the workshop. More information about LWVUS guidelines and tips related to Facebook and Twitter postings can be found under "member resources" on the national web site— <http://>

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**TWITTER**

(Continued from page 11)

[www.lwv.org/member-resources/technology-and-social-media-tools](http://www.lwv.org/member-resources/technology-and-social-media-tools)

I would like to encourage those of you who are not on Facebook or Twitter to start playing with one of them. Use one to keep up with League news, follow some of

your favorite publications, observe your elected officials who are using it. You don't have to post anything, you can just watch. (Sounds like being part of the Observer Corp, doesn't it?) I went into the world of Twitter kicking and screaming and still have issues, but its benefits do outweigh the reservations I have.

Sharing information with as many people as possible is at the heart of the LWV's work; our mission statements include the phrases "informed and active participation" and "through education and advocacy." Social media outlets are now tools we must use to do this job well.

**Dr. Kathryn Bryd, Outgoing State President, Recognized by Members and Board at LWVAL State Convention in Tuscaloosa, AL, April 30, 2013**



Dr. Kathryn Byrd (right), outgoing state president, receives gifts from board member Mary Lynn Bates (left). Gifts included a sizable donation to the Ed Fund by the board members in Kathy's name, and a pendant designed, hand-crafted, and engraved with LWVAL for Kathy, by award-winning jeweler and Pat Laraway, of the Baldwin County LWV.

**THE 10 most IMPORTANT THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT POLITICS**

① **ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL**

② **The issue is  not the ISSUE**

③ **CHANGE comes from being RESULTS ORIENTED**

④ **IDEAS without urgency are only IDEAS**

⑤ **Keep in SIGHT WHAT IS IMPORTANT**

⑥ **CELEBRATE & FIND A WAY FOR OTHERS small VICTORIES NOT TO LOSE**

⑦ **TAKE A LITTLE MORE OF THE BLAME, A LITTLE LESS OF THE CREDIT.**

⑧ **IT'S ABOUT DOING SOMETHING important NOT ABOUT BEING IMPORTANT**

⑨ **Silence is a "NO" answer**

⑩ **IN POLITICS NOTHING is an accident**

## ENERGY & WATER PANEL

to present an action plan and timeline for a statewide water management plan by December 2013.

<http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/owr/awawg/Pages/default.aspx>

Some important aspects of planning:

Science – water assessment to measure the natural flows in streams, and both consumptive and non-consumptive uses (including recreation and hydropower) and in wet and dry periods, new supply and storage, including groundwater

Population and climate modeling - 50 years out, to determine potential problems (Denver metro area may run out of water by 2020)

Basin Roundtables - involve all stakeholders to give user input to legislature and governor responsible for the plan

Alabama Permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Water Policy and Management created in 2008, suffers some from legislative turnover, but an important group

Alabama Water Agencies Working Group to guide the process (see

We were fortunate to have as our guest hydrogeologist Marlon Cook, Director, Groundwater assessment program, Geological Survey of Alabama (GSA). The GSA is responsible for the scientific water assessment component of the water plan. He recognizes that the \$1 million his agency has to do the job is a fraction of the amounts used in Colorado and Georgia, but says they plan to do more with less. Mr. Cook reminded us that 15 % of surface water flowing through US flows through our basins and that the best time to develop water policy is when you have water.

He applauded the wonderful team from the agencies working together on this project and thanked the League for our interest, asking that we share with our legislators the importance of water management planning.



## LWVAL PORTFOLIOS & ASSIGNMENTS

Portfolios List (in Priority Order for 2013-2014)	
Voter Services	Hatti Kaufman and Shirley Rawls
Membership	Jeanine Normand and Barbara Caddell
Public Service Commission (Transparency in Government) [Temporary position]	Joyce Lanning, Anne Permaloff (as a reader), Mary Lynn Bates (off-Board) and Kathy Byrd
Studies - Health Care (LWVAL - Fall), Agriculture (LWVUS-Spring), Energy Facts and Issues	Anne Permaloff- Chair, Kathy Byrd - heading LWVUS Agriculture Study with help from Gina Finnegan, Energy Facts and Issues - Joyce Lanning
Fundraising and Grant Writing	Gina Finnegan
Legislative Committee (Advocacy)	Anne Permaloff – monitoring, (readers – Charlotte Ward and Ruth Wright (off Board), Hatti Kaufman, Mary Lynn Bates (off Board), Barbara Caddell, and Joyce Lanning



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS OF ALABAMA**

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**ABOUT THE LEAGUE**

The League of Women Voters is a citizens' organization that has fought since 1920 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. We operate at national, state and local levels through more than 800 state and local Leagues, in all 50 states as well in DC, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong.

**M A K I N G   D E M O C R A C Y   W O R K !**

**Officers 2013-2015:**

Scarlett Gaddy & Leonette Slay, Co-Presidents

Kathy Byrd, 1st Vice President

Laura Hill, Secretary

Shelly Murray, Treasurer

Barbara Caddell, Director

Gina Finnegan, Director

Hattie Kaufman, Director

Joyce Lanning, Director

Anne Permaloff, Director

Jeanine Normand, Director

Shirley Ann Rawls, Director



**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.*



**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.*