



October, 2008

**Board of Directors  
League of Women Voters of  
Greater Birmingham**

205 583-5000

[admin@lwvgb.org](mailto:admin@lwvgb.org)

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### Register This! -- A Note from the President

This election season is in full swing with the League participating in voter registration activities, and assisting with both the Jefferson County and Shelby County Boards of Registrar. This is our first time to assist with Shelby County, and they have been very appreciative. Along with the coalition of national (LWV) and Head Start we are registering parents as they pick up children from several Head Start locations in the Greater Birmingham area. We also have registered people at a number of other locations.

Many members have volunteered for all these activities. When working at the Boards of Registrar we are finding a tremendous volume of newly registering citizens. We hope this activity leads to people experiencing a relatively easy time at the polls, as well as an interest in continuing to be engaged, and to vote in the future years.

A reminder to everyone our web site [www.lwvgb.org](http://www.lwvgb.org) is a source of wonderful information on the League specifically and our political process in general. Jean Johnson our Technical Director will be the featured speaker at our October meeting, and will have some wonderful things to share with us. Do not fail to miss this program. See article in this newsletter.

Our September meeting at the Cantina was a success. We again had delightful weather to sit outside. New members joined us there, and several are already involved in the voters' service!

**Ginny**

### Help Needed for the Boards of Registrar

Volunteers are needed to help at the Board of Registrars in Jefferson County and Shelby County. You may volunteer 3 or more hours at a time on Monday through Friday. The work is rewarding, and so important to help them, with this unprecedented number of registrants. To volunteer, call our telephone: **205.583.5000** and please leave your name, day you would like to volunteer and your telephone number.

**VOTER REGISTRATION**





## Have You Paid Your Dues?

***Just a reminder that dues are past due.***

Please make out your checks for **\$45.00** payable to the **LWVGB** and mail them to:

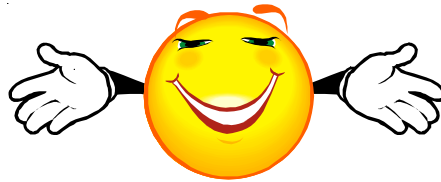
**LWVGB  
P.O. Box 530522  
Birmingham, AL  
35253**

Call Nancy at 967-2897 or Amanda at 326-6651 if you would like a membership brochure sent to a friend  
Thanks and look forward to working with you this year!

## Member Dinner

New (and Old) Member Dinner  
Tuesday, October 14 at 6:00 pm  
Ruby Tuesday Restaurant  
Highway 31 in Vestavia

Join us for dinner to welcome our new members and to learn about ways that you can get involved in both the League and your community. Everyone is invited to attend. Ordering and paying for dinner will be on an individual basis. Please give either Nancy (967-2897) or Amanda (326-6651) a call with any questions. Hope to see you there!

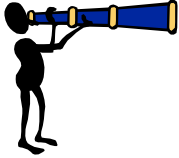


**Welcome!**

Welcome to new members:

- Will McGriff, Birmingham
- Cassandra Carter, Midfield
- Rita Winkates who transferred to Birmingham from the Montgomery League

October, 2008



## Upcoming Members Meetings Are Great Mark Your Calendars Now!

Mark your calendar for **November 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30** for the Member meeting. The Observer Corps will be featured. Plan to hear some of the behind the scenes views of our governmental committees.

**December 6 at 11:30** we will meet for the League's Holiday Luncheon at the Ronald McDonald House. Representative Paul DeMarco will be speaking on a County Manager bill for the State Legislature.



## Let's Get Digital! October Member Meeting

Zoom into the digital age with the tools the League has available for us to use. Jean Johnson our Technical Director will present information on the tools we have available to help us communicate with each other and with our legislators. She will also explain the ALISON (Alabama Legislative Information System On Line) which is a handy tool for looking up the status of a bill in our State Legislature. This promises to be a fascinating program that helps us put the computer more efficiently and effectively at our beck and call. So drop everything and make plans to attend! You will be glad you did.

Thursday October 23<sup>rd</sup>  
6:30 p.m.  
Homewood Library  
Room 116

# The Voter

October, 2008



## United Nations Day

United Nations Day is October 24<sup>th</sup> and this year the Greater Birmingham Chapter of the UN Association is hosting the annual dinner at The Club. LWVGB is a co-host for this event. Jane Roberts will be presenting "34 Million Friends of the United Nations Population Fund". She is attempting to raise \$34 million, \$1.00 at a time from 34 million women to supplant the money blocked by the United States for family planning in other countries.

Deadline for reservations is October 15. You may call 822.0855 or complete and mail the following reservation with your check.

**United Nations Day Banquet  
At The Club, Staterooms 1,2,3**

\_\_\_\_ Dinner (\$45 each) \_\_\_\_ chicken \_\_\_\_ vegetarian \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Table of 8 (\$360) \_\_\_\_ chicken \_\_\_\_ vegetarian \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Donation: Emily Hammood Memorial Youth Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total Enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please remember the Emily Hammood Memorial Youth Fund. Your Contributions support student memberships and UNA-USA Youth Activities throughout the year.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Organization, if applicable \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to UNA-USA Greater Birmingham Chapter  
Mail to: 2512 Glendmere Place, Birmingham, AL 35216

Deadline for reservations: **October 15, 2008**  
For Information call 205.822.0855



## Voters' Service

We have been busy all over the area registering people to vote and assisting at the Board of Registrars' Offices in Jefferson and Shelby County. One event was the Women's Exchange, an organization of business women in Birmingham. Ida Tyree-Hyche, on month's leave from her army service (she has been in Kuwait) volunteered for many of our projects and registered or helped women change their registration address at the Women's Exchange. Later the Women's Exchange newsletter exclaimed "Kudos to Ida and the League of Women Voters for this service".

We have so far registered people at the Ensley High School Reunion of all their classes, 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church, Women's Exchange, UAB along with the VoteSmart bus, Literacy Exchange, JCCEO Head Start programs and at both the Jefferson County and Shelby County Board of Registrars. We will be registering people at St. Martin's in the Pines and the UAB Homecoming football game. The last day to register voters in Alabama is October 24<sup>th</sup>. The last day to request an absentee ballot is October 30<sup>th</sup>.

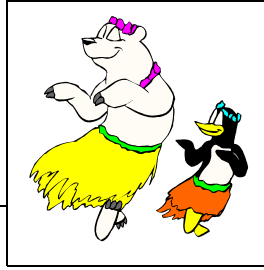
## Verin Gets the News Out!



Linda Verin has been the LWVGB contact to media and continues to assist us in getting our messages to the public. She has sent the LWV video clips with Virginia Madsen to the television stations and has developed PSAs for the local radio and television stations. She has included important voting information, registration, etc. plus some clever clips:

- No Vote, No Voice. The League of Women Voters encourages you to exercise your rights – Vote! November 4th
- I can't hear you! If you don't vote, you won't be heard. Remember to vote November 4th. Help pick our next President.
- When you're 18 you're an adult. Act like one; Vote!
- You have the power. Use it. Vote

There were others but these give you an idea of her creativity. For the visual media she had video and pictures. We appreciate Linda's service to the League and the citizens of Greater Birmingham.



## Festive September Meeting

A very festive first membership meeting of the League's 2008-2009 year was held on Cantina's restaurant patio in downtown Birmingham on September 26th. Attending with many League members, were three guests, Angelyn Simmons, Cassandra Carter and Joan Hamby Burroughs. League members presented the upcoming year's schedule and heard from Voters Service Chair, Karen Threlkeld, who outlined a very busy fall, the need for volunteers to help out at the County Registrar's Office, some voting problems and upcoming voter registration opportunities. In addition Dot Baker encouraged all to attend the UNUSA Dinner to be held October 24th, an event co-sponsored by the League. Presented were environmental plans/events, Observer Corps needs, constitutional convention plans for the new year, electronic media/technical possibilities as well as membership, volunteer opportunities and public transportation plans. The only problem of the evening was peripheral noise. The League is not the only group that knows the Cantina is fun for an evening meeting.

**In Memoriam** Our heartfelt sympathy goes to long time member Jo Dobbins who recently lost William Ellis Dobbins, her husband of many years.

## Lanning Serves on Energy Committee

Joyce Lanning will be serving on the Environmental Issues Sub-Committee of the Permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Energy. The Chairman is Senator Wendell Mitchell and Vice-Chairman is Representative Gregory D. Wren. The committee submitted 13 bills in the last session, but only two were passed and one of those was vetoed by the Governor. The Alabama League of Women Voters has said that they would like me to represent the League, and I'm honored to do so.

If any others would like to serve, I believe it is still possible to sign up. The seven subcommittees are: Bio-fuels and Alternative Fuels; Renewable Power and Electric Generation; Efficiency and Conservation; Technology and Communications; Infrastructure and Expansion; Environmental Issues; and Research and Development. A sign-up form is attached and it can be emailed to Kristen Rector [repgregwren@yahoo.com].

The leadership's philosophy is outlined on the next page in a statement from Rep. Greg Wren. It should be interesting, especially since the group is comprised of industry and government representatives except for a few who focus on the environment.

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## Alabama Works On An Energy Strategy

(Continued From Page 6)

### Release-Rep. Greg Wren Comments on Alabama's Energy Strategy

June 4, 2008

For Further Information Contact:

Kristen Stillwell

(334) 395-0123

Gas prices in Alabama will soon soar over \$4 per gallon and our citizens are concerned each time their gas tank runs dry or their farm equipment needs to be filled with fuel. We can waste our time pointing fingers and finding someone else to blame, but the fact is we cannot meet our own energy demands. When it comes to energy production, we're stuck in the 1970s while our global competitors are going after 21st century technologies. We haven't built a refinery in the United States in 30 years, and 70 percent of our energy needs are supplied by other countries. We have to stop this dependence on foreign energy; we must begin to meet our own needs.

Without question, Congress has failed in developing a series of reasonable short-term approaches to our energy dilemma much less attacking our energy issues from a long term perspective. Congressional leadership is a misnomer---they are mired in constant political battles over who controls their favorite earmarks and pork projects, leaving Americans wondering if any political party has the sheer will to do something, anything, to address America's energy and economic challenges. I am not holding my breath for Congressional action---but I will join my legislative colleagues in providing leadership for our energy future.

During the 2008 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature, the Joint Legislative Energy Committee placed a comprehensive package of 13 bills before the Legislature. Of those bills, 10 passed the House and 7 passed the Senate with 2 bills approved by both chambers and sent to the Governor for his signature. Unfortunately, as has been widely reported by the Alabama media, the Governor vetoed 1 of the bills which would have created a research and development grant program to approve grants which would expand opportunities for various technologies related to alternative and renewable fuels. The veto was a disappointment and yet his action galvanized those in the Legislature who will fight to move Alabama forward on energy issues.

Alabama citizens must demand their elected officials enact cutting-edge policies to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and remove the threat of blackmail from foreign dictators who control our energy supplies. At the same time, we will be creating jobs here at home and growing our economy. This is a win-win for everyone, and our citizens expect us to aggressively seek solutions to the challenges we face.

There are a few immediate steps we must take to begin developing a responsible and comprehensive energy initiative for Alabama. First, we must seek ways to increase the production of American-made energy in an environmentally responsible way. This includes the exploration of next generation oil, natural gas and coal, as well as the production of advanced alternative fuels like cellulosic and clean coal-to-liquids all the while protecting our natural resources.

Second, we will promote clean and reliable energy sources like advanced nuclear and next generation coal, while encouraging clean power from renewable energy such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric power. Nuclear energy has proven itself as a safe, carbon-free and environmentally-friendly

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alternative. France relies on nuclear power for 80 percent of its electricity needs, while here in America it meets just 19 percent of our need. Clearly, we must do better to utilize this energy resource.

We use an estimated 20 million barrels of oil each day, and we haven't been able to meet our own demand since 1970. As I mentioned previously, we haven't built a refinery in more than 30 years and there are thousands of capped wells that, while some may have run dry, could help supply us with oil. A recent report from the U.S. Department of the Interior notes that an incredible 62 percent of oil on federal land is inaccessible for development and another 30 percent is restricted. This leaves just 8 percent of America's 31 billion barrels of on-shore oil available for use. The report also states that of our nation's 231 billion cubic feet of on-shore natural gas, only 10 percent is accessible. Is it any wonder we're paying such steep gasoline and energy costs when the vast majority of our domestic supply is tied up by extreme regulations that prohibit us from going after them?

Our national government must put down their sabers and get to work. Congress and the President must cut red tape and increase the supply of American-made fuel and energy to lower prices. Heavy-handed bureaucratic regulations and limitations on the construction of new oil refineries have decreased energy supplies and increased prices.

Finally, we must encourage greater efficiency by offering conservation tax credits to Americans who make their homes, cars, and businesses more energy efficient. This will give more families and businesses the chance to take advantage of the newest, most efficient energy technologies available. Legislation will again be introduced in upcoming sessions to provide "Energy Star" tax credits as a means to benefit the average homeowner.

All we've seen from Washington lately are more of the same failed approaches that caused the long gas lines and rationing we had in the 1970s. Alabama families are feeling the pain of these failed policies. It is inconceivable that we would continue down that same path again, especially when we have the technology, the know-how and the desire to make a change that will give us the energy independence we deserve.

The Alabama Legislature's Joint Energy Committee will aggressively pursue the establishment of a comprehensive energy initiative and will ask others to join our efforts, help us lead the upcoming legislative and political battles, or simply move aside and let others take the lead. There is no time for summer soldiers to become impediments to responsible and meaningful energy policies for every person and business in Alabama. Lead, follow, or get out of the way.

I look forward to continuing our combined efforts through the Joint Energy Committee as we engage the 7 subcommittees in further tasks which will strengthen our positions, embolden our commitment, and move Alabama as a leader in reducing our dependence on foreign oil. Our best days remain ahead and I ask for you to join us as we blend our canopy of energy knowledge, experiences, and time into Alabama's energy strategy.



## How We Fill Our Courts

The Leagues of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham and Alabama were partners with the Civil Courts Procedures Committee of the Birmingham Bar Association of the forum titled "Is Change Needed in How We Fill Our Courts" on October 7 at Cumberland School of Law.

The panel discussion moderated by Governor Albert Brewer featured Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb, attorney Ed Haden, Alabama Representative and Speaker Pro Tempore Demetrius Newton, attorney William Clark and Justice Harold See, Jr. The presentations included the spectrum of judicial selection from partisan election to non-partisan election to merit selection. Following presentations of pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages each panelist answered questions from the audience.





## Mock Convention To Convene In Spring

As all League members know, the League supports the effort to hold a constitutional convention to write a new constitution. In fact the organization working for this end, Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform (ACCR) has many Leaguers among its members.

To educate the people of Alabama about a constitution convention process as well as engage new people in the growing Constitutional Reform Movement, a **mock constitution convention** will convene in the spring and summer of 2009. The Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform (ACCR) Foundation, a non-partisan 501(c)3 organization, will work with several partner groups to support this education initiative. While the constitution that the 2009 Mock Convention creates will have no legal status, it will help educate Alabamians about the injustices and inefficiencies embedded in our sixth constitution and, more importantly, show the type of modernized contract that people gathered today could create.

**Delegate Selection Process:** From now through the fall of 2008, community leaders from Alabama's 105 state house districts will assist in the process of identifying someone from their area to serve as a delegate to the 2009 Mock Convention. The Mock Convention Steering Committee will tap a chair or co-chairs for each house district with the following two duties: 1) to invite individuals to serve on the District's Local Selection Committee (LSC) of three or more people and, to 2) to organize at least two meetings of the LSC between now and October 2008. HOWEVER deadlines have been extended for all aspects of this effort.

During their meetings, the LSC will encourage people in their district to complete a "2009 Mock Convention Delegate Application Form." From the potential applications, the LSC will select the person who will serve as their delegate by November 11, 2008 which is the date in 1901 when voters supposedly "ratified" Alabama's current constitution. If a house district is unable to select a delegate by that time, the Mock Convention Steering Committee will form a Statewide Selection Committee to fulfill that duty.

**Qualifications to serve as a delegate:** To be a 2009 Mock Convention delegate, you must—

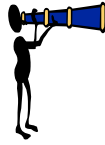
- Complete, sign, and submit the 2009 [Mock Convention Delegate Application Form](#) by the following deadline: October 15, 2008 HOWEVER: This deadline has been extended so any League member interested should apply now.
- Have lived in the state house district that you would like to represent for more than three years and continue to live in that same district in 2009

### **Mock Convention Delegate Responsibilities:**

- Promote the mock convention in your state house district before, during and following this education initiative to engage people into the Constitution Reform Movement
- Read materials and respond to emails in a timely manner
- Participate in the entire convention process from the reading materials which will be sent via email in December 2008 through the unveiling of the final product of the Mock Convention which will be unveiled on August 27, 2009.
- Approach the convention with an open mind and pledge to treat fellow delegates with respect and courtesy during the process

**Nancy Ekberg**

## Upcoming Meetings You Will Not Want to Miss!



Mark your calendar for November 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 for the Member meeting. The Observer Corps will be featured. The meeting will take place at Homewood Public Library in Room 116. Plan to hear some of the behind the scenes views of our governmental committees.



**December 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 we will meet for the League's Holiday Luncheon at the Ronald McDonald House. Representative Paul DeMarco will be speaking on a County Manager bill for the State Legislature.**



## LWVGB Upcoming Events

<b>Month</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
October	14	6:00 pm	Member Dinner	Ruby Tuesday, Hwy 31
October	23	6:30 pm	Member Meeting The Internet League Jean Johnson	Homewood Library, Room 116
November	5	5:45 pm	Board Meeting	Room 112 University Center Annex Samford
November	4	7 TO 7	Election	Be sure to Vote
November	20	6:30	Member Meeting Observer Corps gives behind the scenes views of our governmental committees	Homewood Library, Room 116
December	6	11:30 am	Member Holiday Luncheon – Paul DeMarco Guest Speaker	Ronald McDonald House

LWVGB  
P.O. Box 530522  
Mountain Brook, AL 35253