



August 2009

The Voter

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League of Women Voters of
Greater Birmingham
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September 24 General Meeting: Health Care Reform

Dr. Michael Morrissey, professor of health economics and health insurance at UAB, is the guest speaker of the League of Women Voters' (Greater Birmingham) September 24, 2009 meeting. The public is invited to the 11:30AM 'Bring Your Own Bag' luncheon meeting that will take place at Homewood Public Library; 1721 Oxmoor Rd., Homewood, AL.

Dr. Morrissey's interactive presentation will address basic concepts, ideas and terminology that underlie current issues and discussions about health care and health care reform. Bring your lunch as well as questions and join the League of Women Voters in what promises to be an exciting and informative event.



Dues are due!

September is the beginning of school and the League's calendar year. That means dues are due. Please send a check for \$45.00 to LWVGB and mail it to:

LWVGB
P.O. Box 320847
Birmingham, AL 35232

You will want to remain active in the League since 2009-2010 year will be a very interesting year in local city and school board elections.

Quick Facts on Health Care Costs

- Total health spending in the U.S. reached \$2.1 trillion in 2007 – or \$7,026 per capita.
- By 2016, total health spending is projected to rise to \$4.2 trillion.
- Between 2005 – 2006, total health spending increased 6.7 percent, more than double the rate of the 2.9 percent increase in overall economic growth.
- Between 2006 and 2007, premiums for health coverage offered by employers increased 6.1 percent, the fourth straight year of declines in the rate of premium growth, from a peak of 13.9 percent in 2003. Even so, this was more than twice the rate of growth in the Consumer Price Index.

Women's Equality Day

August 26 of each year is designated in the United States as Women's Equality Day. Instituted by Rep. Bella Abzug and first established in 1971, the date commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment, the Woman Suffrage Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave U.S. women full voting rights in 1920.

Using humor as a response to those arguing against Woman Suffrage, writer Alice Duer Miller wrote "Why We Don't Want Men to Vote" in 1915:

- *Because man's place is in the army.*
- *Because no really manly man wants to settle any question otherwise than by fighting about it.*
- *Because if men should adopt peaceable methods women will no longer look up to them.*
- *Because men will lose their charm if they step out of their natural sphere and interest themselves in other matters than feats of arms, uniforms, and drums.*
- *Because men are too emotional to vote. Their conduct at baseball games and political conventions shows this, while their innate tendency to appeal to force renders them unfit for government.*



New League Member

Welcome to new member Catrena Norris Carter from Birmingham. Catrena has started a new organization called WOW, Women Of Will, to encourage women to run for public office and get more involved in their government.

McDonald's Musings:

A Word from President Sarah McDonald

The board met for its first regular meeting last week in the Community Room of the Community Foundation of Birmingham offices. The Foundation has very graciously agreed to let us meet there on a monthly basis. It's a wonderful venue and extremely convenient to most of us. (The building is across from the old Commerce Building where the League used to have a small office.)

We have several good topics for our general meetings this fall. We are trying something old again - several of our general meetings will be held at lunchtime. Bring your brown bags and join us on September 24th at the Homewood Library for a discussion of the Health Care debate. You may be aware that the League does have a national position on Health Care, developed in the 1980's. You read more online at <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8635>.

The League's collaboration with the local chapter of the NAACP on a candidates' forum for Birmingham City Council and School Board will have occurred by the time you read this. Hopefully we can work together in the future on educational projects.

ELECTION FORUM

The LWVGB is collaborating with the NAACP to hold three forums for Birmingham City elections:

Tuesday August 11	City Council Districts 1- 5
Wednesday August 12	Board of Education Districts 1-9
Thursday August 13	City Council Districts 6-9



The Forum will be held in the Auditorium of the Birmingham Library at 2100 Park Place from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. each evening.

The Birmingham City Election will be held Tuesday August 25th and registered voters should check on their voting location/precinct.

BWWB LAND SALE UPDATE

At a regular meeting of the Birmingham Water Works Board on March 19, 2009, it was announced that the real estate committee, composed of Chairman Anthony Barnes and Jim Lowery, had decided to sell 3200 acres of land in Blount County on the Black Warrior River. At the June 30th regular board meeting Mr. Barnes announced that the land had been appraised at \$3.2M dollars and that offers to buy would be accepted for 30 days.

Groups and individuals began work immediately after hearing of the land sale to find a way to place this property into a land trust for preservation and protection from development and mining. A nomination was submitted to the Alabama Forever Wild Program, a part of the State Land Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Appraisal results would be presented at the board's quarterly meeting in Birmingham on Sept 17.

On August 4, Water Works officials opened offers from bidders. The highest bid was from an individual, Todd Palmer, at \$3.75M. His attorney described the intended use as "investment property". Palmer's name has appeared in connection with residential developments in the past. According to a BWWB spokesperson, at least 7 other bids under \$3.75M were received. Among those was a bid from Travis Creek Energy LLC, which had already filed a permit application for a surface mine even though it did not yet own the land.

BWWB says that they will consider the bids and the terms of the contracts, starting with the highest and working down. The board will vote at an unknown future date on the sale.



HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Mark your calendar now to save **December 5th** for the Annual Luncheon for LWVGB.

This year the speaker will be Carol Nunnolley discussing the Fourth Estate and Its Future.

As we transition to new digital media, some newspapers have gone bankrupt, some have been absorbed by another newspaper, and existing newspapers seem to be becoming skimpier. More people are seeking news solely from the television or on-line, and the question arises as to the fate of the traditional newspaper.

We will be meeting for lunch at 11:30 a.m.

LWVGB Calendar

Month	Day	Time	Event
August	11-13	6:00pm	<i>Birmingham City Council & School Board Debate Forum, Downtown Birmingham Public Library Auditorium</i>
September	1	11:30am	<i>Board Meeting, 2100 1st Ave N</i>
September	24	11:30am	<i>General Membership Meeting, Location: Homewood Library</i>

Need your Help!

Jean Johnson, our dedicated webmaster and Technical guru, is seeking someone to assist her with her numerous duties. She will train whoever volunteers so you can look forward to learning a lot. Contact Jean if you are interested and/or need more information. Jean can be reached at jjohnson@lwvgb.org.



Thanks to Carol St. Lewis and Joan Burroughs for assisting with the Observer Corps!