



October 2006

The Voter

League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham

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September Meeting

Dot Baker (left) and Beverly Nelson (center) greet Carol Balch (right) at our September Membership Meeting at the Cantina.

A Note from the President

We were privileged to have Carol Balch, Kathryn McDonald, Ashleigh Timmerman, Karen Timmerman and Jennifer Clammer as guests at LWVGB's September Membership meeting at the Cantina. We enjoyed good food, good company and stimulating conversation.

Mark your calendar to attend a Jefferson County Town Hall meeting, hosted by Rep. Artur Davis, on October 19th at the Birmingham City Council Chambers. The topic of discussion will be mass transit issues. Our October Membership Meeting, on Sunday, October 22nd, will be held at Beis Ariel Chabad House for the Hadassah's Candidate Forum. Additional information on each of these events can be found inside this issue of THE VOTER.

Many thanks to our members who have sent in their 2006-07 dues payment. If you have not yet had a chance to renew your membership, please take a moment to fill out and mail in the enclosed form.

---Yvonne

Dues Are Due!

Dues are \$40 for individuals, \$20 for students and \$60 for a family.
Please complete this form and send it with your check, payable to LWVGB.
Mail to: Sarah McDonald, Treasurer; 3357 Cherokee Road 35223.

Name(s) _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____

Questions? Call Nancy Ekberg at 967-2897 or e-mail her at nanekberg@aol.com

Hadassah's Candidates Forum Sunday, October 22

4:00-6:00 pm

Beis Ariel Chabad House
3040 Overton Road, Mountain Brook

Co-Sponsored by LWVGB,
Jewish Community Relations
Committee and the Overton
Group

Voters Service

Submitted by Virginia Randolph

Thanks to Volunteers

Kathryn Kerchof and Ida Hyché registered voters at the O'Neal Steel Company on October 3. Betty Warnock will register voters and assist with applications for absentee ballots at Episcopal Place. League members will help the Registrar's Office on Election Day, November 7. Look for an email in your inbox soon to sign up for Election Day duty. (It's fun AND educational!)

Would You Like a Project with the League?

After the November 7 election, the League will begin updating *Government at Your Fingertips*. This handy flier incorporates elected officials who are responsible to the Jefferson County and Shelby County residents. We could use some help. Basically it requires checking to see who won the races and contacting them to obtain mailing addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and web sites. It is an easy task, but essential that we get it right. Send an email to Virginia Randolph vrandolph517@alltel.net or call 699.5582 to volunteer.

Public Service Announcements

The LWVGB is sending PSAs to local radio and television stations encouraging people to register in time to vote (by October 26), to apply for absentee ballots and return in time (November 6) and to bring appropriate identification when going to the polls on November 7.

Candidate Forum on APTV October 30 at 7 p.m.

APTV will air a live candidate forum on October 30 that will feature candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General. Plan to tune in to the broadcast and call in questions.

October League Event: Campaign Forum

This month's LWVGB event offers a rare opportunity to hear opposing candidates interact with an audience. The League is co-sponsoring a campaign forum with Hadassah on Sunday October 22 from 4-6 pm. The event will take place at the Chabad House, 3040 Overton Road, Mountain Brook. Participants include candidates for Secretary of State, Beth Chapman and Nancy Worley; candidates for Probate Judge Place 1, Mark Gaines and Alan King; candidates for Probate Judge Place 2, Sherri Friday and Sunny Smallwood; and candidates for Circuit Court 15 Judge, John Calhoun and Suzanne Childers. Don't miss it!

Congressman Artur Davis to Hold Meeting on Mass Transit

Thursday, October 19, 6-8 pm at Birmingham City Hall

U.S. Representative Artur Davis (D-Birmingham) will host a **Jefferson County Town Hall Meeting** in the City Council Chambers on October 19. The meeting will focus on the issue of mass transit. A panel of elected officials, business and community leaders are scheduled to discuss the future of transit in our region. Attendees will have opportunities to ask questions and get responses about the challenges and possibilities of developing an efficient transit system for Jefferson County. For more information, contact Darryl Perkins or Corey Ealons (press) at 205 254-1960.

ACCR Annual Meeting Outlines Strategy for Constitutional Reform

Submitted by Nancy Ekberg

Representative Linda Coleman looked out on more than 100 attendees as she addressed the ACCR Annual Meeting in the State Capitol Building on October 5. She expressed pleasure to see such a diverse, grassroots group working for state constitutional reform. Panels of legislators, county commission executives, the media and students shared their ideas with members. Speakers recommended that ACCR enlist leadership from the Legislature and the Governor's office to help the effort, send out a voters' guide, encourage letters to the editor, create activities that have visual appeal for media attention and get students at all colleges in the state involved. Plans for the fall include efforts to get voters to sign participation cards promising to contact their legislators and ask support of citizens' convention legislation in 2007. High school and college students throughout the state plan to read the 1901 Constitution all day on October 24th.

Celebrating the 61st Anniversary of the United Nations

Submitted by Dot Baker

Later this month, a local group will gather to celebrate the good works of the United Nations. The United Nations Association of the USA, Greater Birmingham Chapter, is the primary sponsor of the event, the "UN Day Dinner", which will be held on October 24, 6 p.m., at The Club. The League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham is one of the co-sponsors.

The United Nations was founded 61 years ago when representatives of 51 nations gathered in San Francisco to draw up the UN Charter. It was a time of high hope as the world's worst war was ending. The U.S. was represented by seven officials, including Dr. Virginia C. Gildersleeve. Dr. Gildersleeve, president of Bernard College and a well known supporter of world peace, was the only woman representative.

Representatives from many non-governmental organizations were also on hand to provide input, including those from the League of Women Voters. The League had been involved in a post card writing campaign supporting formation of the UN in months leading up to this conference. The UN Charter was signed by 51 nations at the San Francisco Civic Opera House on June 26, 1945. The official designated founding date was October 24, 1945.

Today the UN has 192 member countries and two headquarters – one in New York City and the other in Geneva, Switzerland. The 18-acre New York site was secured in 1946 with an \$8.5 million donation from John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

The UN boasts many accomplishments through its agencies, from feeding the hungry through the World Food Program to helping poor children through UNICEF. Other ongoing UN initiatives include involvement in health issues, refugee problems, environmental concerns and monitoring nuclear weapons treaties. The UN also monitors governmental elections of newly formed nations.

Member nations bankroll operating expenses and the organization's peace keeping missions. Dues are based on each country's Gross National Product (GNP). As the member nation with the largest GNP, the United States is the largest contributor to the UN's budget.

Throughout its history, the United States has been a key player in helping the UN accomplish its goals and fulfill missions. While the U.S. has not always been willing to give this leadership, many specialists in international affairs believe that the U.S. needs the UN as much as the UN needs the U.S.

To learn more about the UN's accomplishments and goals, plan to attend this important celebration on October 24th. You'll not only be representing yourself, but also the LWVGB. Reserve your place today.

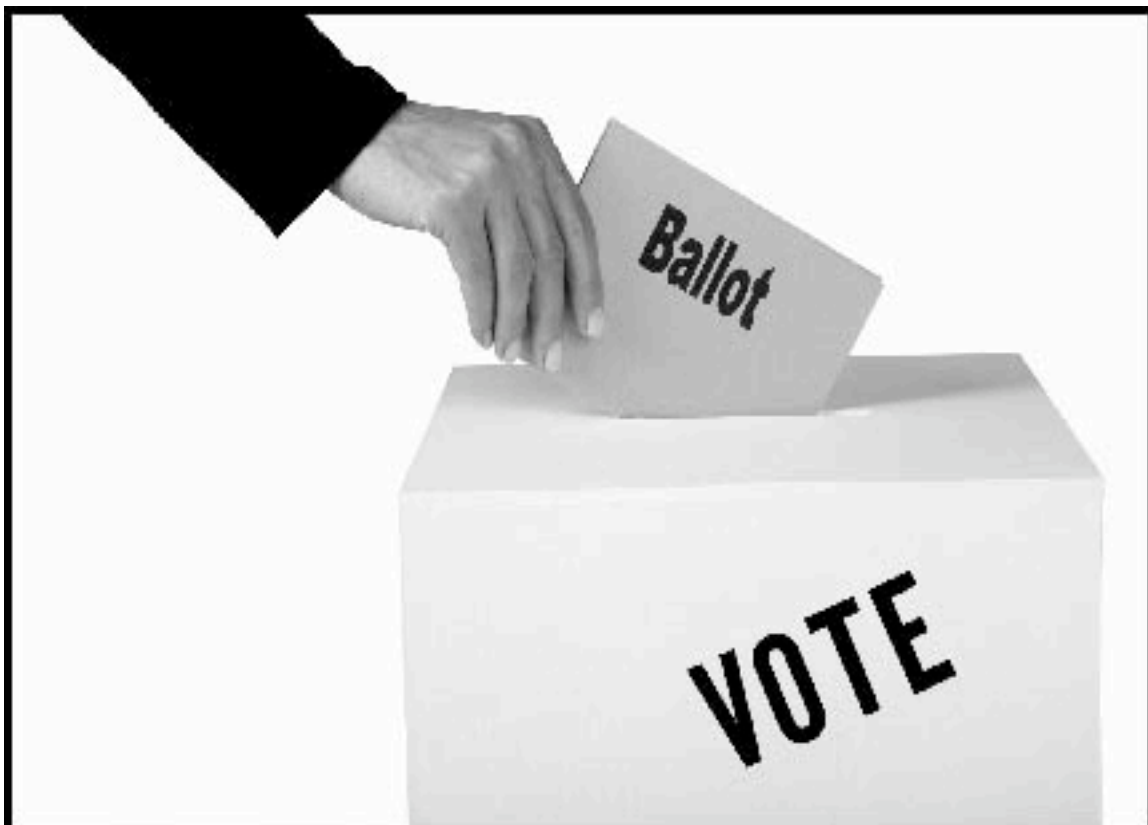
**Reservation for U.N. Day Dinner
Tuesday, October 24th, 2006
Social Hour, 6:00 p.m. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.
The Club, Staterooms 1, 2 and 3
Jeff Laurenti, Senior Fellow of the Century Foundation
"The Mideast Conflict – Is the U.N. Relevant?"**

Name(s) _____ Telephone _____

Address _____
Street City State Zip

Reservations (\$35 per person) _____ Indicate # vegetarians _____ Total: \$ _____

Make check payable to Greater Birmingham UNA-USA.
Mail to Dot Baker, 2512 Glendmere Place 35216.
For information call Dot at 822-0855.
Reservation deadline is Saturday, October 14, 2006.



PLEASE JOIN US FOR
HADASSAH'S CANDIDATES FORUM
OCTOBER 22, 2006 ♦ 4:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.

BEIS ARIEL CHABAD HOUSE
3040 OVERTON RD, MOUNTAIN BROOK, AL

CO-SPONSORED BY:
JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE,
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM, AND THE OVERTON GROUP

Secretary of State: Nancy Worley and Beth Chapman
Jefferson County Probate Judge Place #1: Judge Mark Gaines and Judge Alan King
Jefferson County Probate Judge Place #2: Sherri Friday and Sunny Smallwood
Jefferson County Circuit Court Place #15: Judge Suzanne Childers and Judge John Calhoun

**COME HEAR THE ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOU
AND MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION ON ELECTION DAY.**

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

Observer Corps

Birmingham Water Works Board (Submitted by Ann Smith)

At the regular board of directors meeting Sept. 28, 2006, the BWWB heard presentations by four speakers urging the board to consider landscaping the area surrounding the Shades Mountain Filter Plant when current construction work is complete. A new access road, new plant entrance, and rehabilitation of the South dam are underway.

A request to approve a contract for development of a Watershed Protection Policy and Best Management Practices/Policies for Lake Purdy and Inland Lake was tabled to allow for additional study by the board. Michael Vann, a 30-year employee of the BWWB, most recently Director of Water Resources and External Affairs (previously CFO and General Manager) is retiring Oct. 1. No replacement was mentioned at this meeting,

Jefferson County Commission (Submitted by Beverly Nelson)

Former Jefferson County sewer chief Jack Swann was found guilty by a federal jury on October 2 of one count conspiracy, 6 counts bribery and 11 counts mail fraud. Additional guilty verdicts were returned on charges against F.W. Dougherty Engineering. Rast Construction, Roland Pugh Construction and individuals associated with the companies, Bobby Rast, Eddie Yessick and Pat Dougherty. Jefferson County residents were excluded from the jury pool after defense attorneys argued that citizens might perceive themselves as victims in this case. Swann is the second county official to be found guilty of accepting bribes in connection with sewer contracts. Former Commissioner Chris McNair was convicted of bribery and conspiracy earlier this year. All the defendants except Swann were also convicted in that case. They remain free on bond pending sentencing.

Jefferson County's Finance Department is attempting to correct errors in its 2005 financial statements before an October 13 deadline set by state examiners. County Commission president Larry Langford maintained that the errors are minor and do not affect the overall financial position of the County. He was incensed that *The Birmingham News* had a copy of the letter from state examiners before he did and called for an investigation into the source of the newspaper's information. County finance director Steve Saylor said he was not aware of the specific errors in the financial statements until they were pointed out by *The Birmingham News*. According to The News' document, some of the discrepancies include total net assets shown as \$11.7 billion on one financial statement, but reported as \$320 million on another. Total net assets for the county nursing home was reported as \$1.7 million on one statement, but as \$10.1 million on another. The enterprise fund was shown as \$2.5 million in one report, but as \$23.2 million on another. Saylor told The News that most of the problems were mathematical and the next draft will be more accurate. Birmingham accounting firm Banks, Finley, White and Company assisted the county with the financial statements. BFW & Co was paid \$250,000 for its work.

The Jefferson County Commission is considering \$3 million incentive to help U.S. Pipe build a new pipe mill. The company is considering Birmingham, Bessemer and other areas in the nation for the site. A company spokesman said the incentive package will weigh heavily in the decision-making process. Some citizens questioned the package after commissioners failed to approve incentives to keep Red Diamond from leaving the county. In that instance, the county would have had to relocate its motor fleet facility to provide Red Diamond room for expansion

See the Action Up Close!

Volunteers Needed to Observe the Jefferson County Commission in November

November will be an interesting month for Jefferson County watchers. Two incumbents will leave the commission and two new commissioners will take their seats. Insiders speculate that Betty Fine Collins will replace Larry Langford as commission president. We need Observer Corps coverage for the JCC meetings during November. The meetings are each Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. in the Commission Chambers on the second floor of the Jefferson County Courthouse. Meetings last from five to 45 minutes.

Contact Ann Smith (wlyons2525@charter.net or 205 823-4749) to volunteer for November Jefferson County Commission meetings.

LWVGB Calendar of Events		
Thursday, October 19 th	Jefferson County Town Hall Meeting Birmingham City Council Chambers Mass Transit Issues	6:00 PM
Sunday, October 22 nd	Hadassah Candidates Forum Beis Ariel Chabad House 3040 Overton Road	4:00 PM
Tuesday, October 24 th	UN Day Dinner, Greater Birmingham Chapter The Club, Staterooms 1, 2 & 3	6:00 PM Social Hour 7:00 PM Dinner
Friday, October 27 th	Registration Deadline for November General Election	
Monday, October 30 th	Statewide Candidates Debate Shakespeare Festival Broadcast on Alabama Public Television	7:00 PM
Wednesday, November 1 st	LWVGB Board of Directors Meeting Samford University Chapman Burns Hall Auxiliary Room	6:00 PM
Tuesday, November 7 th	Election Day	7:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Saturday, December 2 nd	LWVGB Holiday Luncheon Location: TDB Speaker: Congressman Artur Davis	11:30 AM

LWVGB
3451 Cliff Road South
Birmingham, AL 35205

