



VOTER

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Susannah Scott

By now, you should have received your membership renewal letter. If you haven't already, we strongly encourage you to take the opportunity to continue to support the League in its important work for the coming year. We also hope you take a few minutes to fill out the member interest form. This form not only helps us determine what type of programs you would like to have in the coming year, but it also helps us determine how you can help us educate the citizens of DeKalb County about candidates and issues that are important to those of us who live in the county. Putting together voter guides, candidate forums, our monthly Brunch 'n' Learns, voter registration drives and our Community Luncheon is worthwhile work, but it requires participation not just from the 13 members of the Board of Directors, but also from the membership. To do the job adequately, the League needs its membership now more than ever.

The LWV was organized as a response to Suffragists gaining the vote for women. The founders believed that a committed group of citizens could work together to educate each other on the issues of the day and to find consensus in addressing those issues. Those principles are as important today as they were 88 years ago. In what often seems like a very partisan and cynical society, the LWV is an organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and that enables members to increase their understanding of major public policy issues. The spirit of consensus building that was a cornerstone of the organization at its inception still guides us as we find common ground on confronting the issues of the day.

To be most effective, the LWV needs you, not just as members on paper, but as partners offering your skills and knowledge to advance the goals of the LWV. Whether you're good with computers, editing, or fundraising, or have free time during the week to help man voter registration drives and sit in on BOE, Commission and Legislative sessions, the LWV can benefit from your time and energy. Please consider donating your time to strengthen your league this coming year. In the end, it will benefit not just the LWV and the county, it will also benefit you.

EARLY VOTER TURNOUT IN GEORGIA

As of October 17, 2008, a record number of Georgia Voters have cast their ballots for the 2008 General Election. A total of 635,798 ballots have been cast. Almost 86,500 voters mailed in their ballots, while 549,310 people voted in person. Those voting during the Early Voter period represent approximately 11% of the nearly 5.6 million total registered voters in Georgia. DeKalb County's early voter turnout is the biggest in the state. Thus far DeKalb County voters have accounted for more than 10% of all early votes with a total of 63,788 ballots being cast. The turnout for the 2008 General Election has already surpassed the total early voter turnout of 387,596 for the 2004 General Election.

GEORGIA VOTER LIST PURGE CHALLENGED IN FEDERAL LAWSUIT

Voting rights coalition urges U.S. District Court to halt last-minute eligibility hearings

(Reprinted with permission)

On October 9th, a coalition of voting rights groups filed a lawsuit on behalf of Cherokee County resident Jose Morales against Georgia Secretary of State Karen Handel, asking a federal court in Atlanta to halt the use of database matching procedures that flag some United States citizens as non-citizens, and jeopardizing their attempts to register and vote. Coalition leaders argue that that these practices violate key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. If they continue to be applied, they could threaten the rights of thousands of eligible Georgia voters.

“Eligible citizens should not be required to jump through impossible hoops to perform the basic right of voting,” said Jon Greenbaum, director of Voting Rights Project for the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. “These requirements are in clear violation of election law and present a systematic bias against naturalized citizens.” The lawsuit was filed by the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Voting Rights Project, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and attorney Brian Spears. The coalition of voting rights groups argues that Secretary Handel is violating two federal election laws. First, the Secretary of State failed to obtain “preclearance” to implement citizenship record-checks for the State’s voter registration rolls, as is required under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Second, the complaint contends that by using the results of these record-checks to have voters challenged within 90 days of the upcoming election, the Secretary of State is also violating the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, popularly known as the “Motor Voter” Act. The plaintiff in the lawsuit, Jose Morales, is a naturalized citizen and student at Kennesaw State University.

Georgia’s record-check process relies on the State’s Department of Driver’s Services (“DDS”) database. Unfortunately, no procedure is in place to update the DDS database to reflect subsequent naturalization by persons who were legal residents when they obtained their DDS license. This system jeopardizes naturalized citizens’ voter registration status and potentially burdens their right to vote. Over 100,000 people became naturalized citizens in just the past 10 years in Georgia, according to the Department of Homeland Security, so the potential for harm is significant.

The ACLU also weighed in: “The Voting Rights Act and the National Voter Registration Act were intended to protect voters from “October surprises,” the last minute purging of registered voters on questionable data,” said Neil Bradley, Associate Director of the ACLU Voting Rights Project. “Georgia’s Secretary of State, whose job it is to maintain accurate voting lists, has changed the rules out of the public eye, avoiding scrutiny of the new voter purge efforts. If the state continues these practices, thousands of eligible voters could be wrongfully removed from the voter rolls and unable to vote in November.”

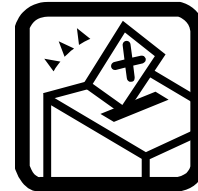


VOTING OPTIONS IN GEORGIA

Since September 22nd, when Early Voting began, voters have been casting their “absentee” ballots, in person, at County Registrar’s Offices. A new Georgia law now allows for absentee voting in person for 45 days prior to the General Election without providing a reason. You can find Absentee Ballot’s online at: <https://dklbweb.dekalbga.org/voter/pdf/absentee.pdf>. Absentee ballots may also be obtained and returned by mail or dropped off in person to the County Registrar’s Office up to the closing of the polls on Election Day. During Advance Voting week, October 27th through October 31st, DeKalb voters can vote in any of the Advanced Voting locations provided below. Voters casting ballots in person will still need to bring one of the approved forms of identification for Georgia voters: any valid state or federal government issued photo ID, including a free Voter ID Card issued by the county registrar’s office or the Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS); a Georgia Driver’s License, even if expired; a valid employee photo ID from any branch, department, agency, or entity of the U.S. Government, Georgia, or any county, municipality, board, authority or other entity of this state; a valid U.S. passport ID; a valid U.S. military photo ID; or a valid tribal photo ID.

For additional information on Voting in Georgia, please see the following website: http://www.sos.ga.gov/elections/advanced_voting.htm or call the DeKalb County Election Supervisor at: (404) 298-4020.

EARLY AND ADVANCED VOTING LOCATIONS IN DEKALB COUNTY



Phone Number: 404-298-4020

Early Voting September 22nd - October 24th

Information: M-F 8:00am-7:00pm
Memorial Drive Complex,
Suite 300
4380 Memorial Drive
Decatur, GA 30032

Advanced Voting October 27th -31st
Information: M-F 7:00am-7:00pm
Memorial Drive Complex,
Suite 300
4380 Memorial Drive
Decatur, GA 30032

October 27th -31st
M-F 7:00am-7:00pm
Decatur, Room A
330 West Ponce de Leon
Avenue
Decatur, GA 30030

October 27th -31st
M-F 7:00am-7:00pm
Lithonia Middle School
2451 Randall Avenue
Lithonia, GA 30058

October 27th -31st
M-F 7:00am-7:00pm
DeKalb County Fire
Headquarters
1950 West Exchange Place
Tucker, GA

October 27th -31st
M-F 7:00am-7:00pm
Brook Run
4770 North Peachtree Road
Dunwoody, GA 30338

October 27th -31st
M-F 7:00am-7:00pm
South DeKalb Senior Center
1931 Candler Road
Decatur, GA 30030

ELIZABETH ANDREWS - LEAGUE MEMBER AND FRIEND

by *Bebe Joyner*

At this point I think everyone knows Elizabeth Andrews passed away suddenly on August 27th. Elizabeth was a long time League member and she also served 29 years on the DeKalb County Board of Education. During those 29 years, Elizabeth was the first woman elected Chair of the Board. At the time of her death she was completing her term as President of the Board of the National Federation of Urban & Suburban School Districts.

Elizabeth was also an ordained ruling elder at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church and served on the Board of Visitors for Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC, the public education work group of the National Council of Churches, and was moderator of the Year with the Education Team for the 1998 mission initiative of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Additionally, she served on numerous local, state and national education committees, task forces and boards.

Elizabeth was preceded in death by her husband of 43 years, Rev. James Andrews. She is survived by her daughter, Charis Hanberry, son, Brian Andrews, their spouses and four grandchildren.

I felt honored when I was asked to write an article about Elizabeth for the Voter because she was my mentor in both the League and in public service. When I first joined the League in 1988 it was because my PTA Board wanted to conduct an election forum and I needed to learn how to conduct a non-partisan event. Eventually, I ended up joining the League's Education Committee and meeting Elizabeth Andrews. During the late 1980's the DeKalb Board of Education was actively involved in the desegregation suit and Board members were very busy people. Somehow Elizabeth found time to attend our committee meetings – generally at Kay Cherry's home – and contribute a valuable perspective to our discussions.

Time went by and I decided to run for election to the District 4 seat on the Board of Education. Elizabeth was my role model for how to get elected. She knew everybody, always had a positive attitude, wrote congratulatory letters to every student who received a Board honor and attended every event or meeting possible. Indeed, Elizabeth's positive attitude and grace under pressure are her legacies to those of us in public service. Elizabeth will be missed by all.

LWVDK BOARD MEETINGS 2008-2009

Board Meetings are now on the 4th Wednesday of every month. They continue to take place at 2100 Clairmont Place.

October 22nd
November 24th
January 7th
January 28th
February 25th
March 25th
April 22nd

F.Y.I.

The LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF DEKALB COUNTY 2008-2009

Board of Directors

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Vice President, Program, Donata Renfrow
Vice President, Membership, Jacquie Scott
Vice President, Fundraising, Tracey-Ann Nelson
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Director, Leng Leng Chancey
Director, Anita Darden
Director, Allison Richards
Director, Sally Byers
Director, Francesca Kerpel
Director, Anne Wilson

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

By Belinda Pedroso, President Elect

“Global warming is the defining challenge of our time. The latest climate science tells us that the United States must reduce its emissions of global warming pollutants quickly and dramatically if we hope to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of global warming.” Global Warming Solutions That Work: Cutting-Edge Efforts to Curb Global Warming Pollution, 09/07/2008

These are strong words. But what does it all mean? And what is the League of Women Voters doing about Global Warming and Environmental Climatic change legislation?

According to the organization Environment Georgia, more and more Georgians are concerned about global warming's effect on the health and well-being of future generations. This advocacy group is working in Georgia and at the federal level by urging Congress to reduce global warming pollution from power plants, cars, and other sources by at least 15% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 - a science-based calculation of the reductions needed to protect future generations. While these are very “big” goals to achieve, they are not insurmountable with significant adjustments in our behavior.

The League of Women Voters is also leading this important work. The LWV Global Climate Change platform promotes the reduction of global warming pollution by advocating for the following: the use of current technology to create efficiencies in existing power plants and factories; reduced use of fossil fuels; the increased production of energy efficient vehicles; and shifting to cleaner technologies. In September 2008, the National LWV called upon all local Leagues and LWV members to contact their legislators to support the "Principles for Global Warming Legislation" developed by Representatives Waxman, Markey and Inslee. This legislation contains four key goals for global warming:

1. Reduce emissions to avoid dangerous global warming;
2. Transition America to a clean energy economy;
3. Recognize and minimize any economic impacts from global warming legislation; and
4. Aid communities and ecosystems vulnerable to harm from global warming.

We can achieve these goals individually and collectively. On an individual basis, we can work towards reducing our “carbon footprint”, the “measure of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases we produce, measured in units of carbon dioxide”. It is a conceptual framework to help us to understand our personal impact in contributing to global warming, waste and energy inefficiency. Our carbon footprint is part of our daily activity, i.e. commuting, eating, disposing of trash, etc. You can calculate your carbon footprint by using the Nature Conservancy carbon footprint calculator at:

<http://www.nature.org/initiatives/climatechange/calculator>. Each of us can do simple things to reduce our carbon footprint and to improve our environmental quality, such as:

- Recycle - Reduce the use of plastics, purchase recyclable products;
- Commute - Combine errands, carpool, take public transportation;
- Compost - Reduce trash and waste products; and
- Conserve - Water, Energy

Collectively, LWV members should do what we do best – Advocate! There are many opportunities to advocate for environmental legislation and/or to support organizations that encourage environmental legislation. For example we can: write our legislators in support of Global Climate Change legislation; join the LWV Natural Resources Sub-Committee to study this issue; research information promoted by the Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy, Georgia Environment; and learn about the issues and become involved in organizing a conversation program for local Leagues.

For more information contact: Belinda Pedroso, bpedroso@ascensionfinancial.net

RECENT LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' EVENTS

During the months of September and October, the LWVDK has been fortunate enough to enjoy presentations closely entwined with the upcoming General Election. On September 13th, Dawn Jones of Election Protection and Garland Favorito of Voter GA provided information on Voting in Georgia. Both presented views on advocacy, with Ms. Jones focusing on "Election Protection" through the non-partisan organization's national efforts "to guide voters through the voting process and help ensure that all eligible voters have the opportunity to cast a meaningful ballot and have their vote counted." During this election cycle, Election Protection efforts will occur in approximately 25 states in November, including GA. The local efforts will include 2-hour training sessions throughout October for hotline workers, poll monitors and mobile legal volunteers to serve voters on Election Day throughout several metro-Atlanta counties. Individuals can volunteer by contacting Election Protection at <http://www.866ourvote.org/> or call 1-866-OUR-VOTE and press "3" to leave a message about volunteering. Mr. Favorito's efforts are focused on the methods used for voting in Georgia. His organization, Voter GA, filed suit against the State in July of 2006, due to the type of voting machines employed by the State, and the ability or lack thereof to ensure machine accuracy, recount ability, ballots, and ballot secrecy, which Voter GA claims is unconstitutional. To learn more about the organization or assist in its efforts please go to <http://www.voterga.org/> or call (770) 993-3622.

October 11th brought State Representative Stephanie Stuckey Benfield of the 85th District to the League of Women Voters of DeKalb County, where the discussion was focused on an Overview of Ballot Questions. There Rep. Stuckey discussed the upcoming General Election, focusing on the three proposed Amendments to the Georgia Constitution, the Atlanta Special Election, and various referenda throughout DeKalb County including the DeKalb County and town referendums. For additional information on the various referenda please see the LWVDK General Election Voter Guide. To contact Rep. Stuckey please go to: <http://www.stephaniestuckeybenfield.org/> or call (404) 656-7859.

The League also co-sponsored two DeKalb County Board of Education Candidate Forums, for Districts 4 & 8, and Districts 2 & 9. To view footage of the forums, please see the League of Women Voters of DeKalb's website. For information on the candidates please see the LWVDK General Election Voter Guide.



Dawn Jones of Election Protection and Garland Favorito of Voter GA speak at the LWVDK's September Brunch-n-Learn on Voting in Georgia.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

by Jacquie Scott

All memberships expired September 1, 2008. This includes those members who joined since January 1, 2008 and paid half of the yearly dues. The dues for the full year that runs from September 1, 2008 through August 31, 2009 have not increased. They remain \$25 for students, \$60 for individual members, and \$90 for households.

Thank you to those who have recently become new members and to all who have already renewed their membership. To those who haven't yet renewed their membership, PLEASE do so today. You have helped make the LWVDK successful and relevant in the past and we need you to stay active and involved.

The Membership Directory will be printed and distributed soon. A new Citizen's Guide with the contact information of DeKalb County local, state, and federal officials will be compiled and sent to all members following the November 4th General Election.

Remember, by being a member of the League of Women Voters of DeKalb County you are automatically a member of the state and national Leagues and the local League retains some of the dues for local education and advocacy.

Renew today and invite your family, friends, and neighbors to join also!



The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF DEKALB COUNTY

MEMBERSHIP and/or DONATION

Student \$25

Individual \$60

Household \$90

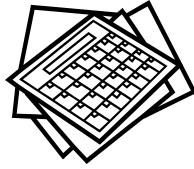
NAME(s) _____

FULL ADDRESS _____

PHONE(s) _____
Home Work Cell

E-MAIL _____

<http://www.lwvdk.org/joinus.html>



TAKE NOTE!

November

Nov. 4 Election Day

Nov. 8 Brunch 'n' Learn, Carpe Diem, 10:30 am

Nov. 25 Briarcliff Unit Meeting, Clairmont Place, 11:00 am

Nov. 24 LWVDK Board Meeting, Clairmont Place, 7:00 pm

December

Holiday Legislative Mix & Mingle/Fundraiser – details TBA

January

Jan. 7 LWVDK Board Meeting, Clairmont Place, 7:00 pm

Jan. 10 Program Planning Meeting, Carpe Diem, 10:30 pm

Jan. 27 Briarcliff Unit Meeting, Clairmont Place, 11:00 am

Jan. 28 LWVDK Board Meeting, Clairmont Place, 7:00 pm



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

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