



THE VOICE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA CITIZENS FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

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ACCR recommends convention bill, calls to supporters for 2007 action

ACCR recommends that a bill be introduced in the General Session of the Alabama Legislature, which convenes on March 6, to "LET THE PEOPLE VOTE" at the same time as the Alabama Presidential Preference Primary in February, 2008, on whether to convene a Convention of Citizen Delegates to rewrite Alabama's fundamentally flawed, outdated, unjust, and immoral 1901 Constitution.

Within ACCR's recommendations are provisions to reduce the influence of special interest by 1) transparency in reporting, 2) limited and strict campaign financing requirements, and 3) prohibition on delegates accepting anything of value from a lobbyist.

These recommendations follow the bill passed last year by the 2006 Senate Constitution, Campaign Finance Ethics and Elections Committee.

Following are ACCR's recommended bill provisions:

Three votes by the people

- **February, 2008:** Vote Yes or No at same time as Presidential Preference Primary on the question to call a convention
- **June, 2008:** Election of delegates, during primary election, if approved by people
- **October, 2008:** Convention be-

gins, if approved

- **November, 2010:** Vote on approval /disapproval of the Convention's recommendations

Strict campaign finance reporting and limitations

- Delegate candidates can accept no more than \$100 from any *one source*, including in-kind
- No contributions after FCPA report due 5-10 days before election
- No post election contributions
- If individual receives \$1,000, or is received on his behalf, he is candidate

Restrictions on lobbyists

- Delegates prohibited from receiving a thing of value in association with duties as delegate
- Lobbyist shall report expenditures by him or relative for lobby activities every two weeks once delegates elected and the convention called

Convention would begin in October, 2008, and may meet for 60 days, but must end no later than July 1, 2009. Convention would decide how to present product to the people: either as a complete new constitution or in parts, or other recommendations for the people to consider.

See *CALL*, page 2

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SPECIAL REQUEST TO OUR READERS

With our low membership fees of \$15, we cannot send the VOICE via snail mail. For direct web delivery, please see "e-newsletter sign-up" at accr@constitutionalreform.org.

JOIN ACCR TODAY!



1901 constitution: We didn't vote for it then, either

This look at the history of the 1901 constitution is the first in a three-part series.

By Mark Berte

“White Supremacy! Honest Elections! And the New Constitution! One and Inseparable!”

Though that slogan does not roll off the tongue, it was used by the proponents of the 1901 Constitution as their rallying call. Understandably, the part that raises the ire of most contemporary Alabamians is the clear racist intent of the framers. However, the seemingly admirable call for “Honest Elections” further masks its fundamentally undemocratic history.

Late in the 19th century, to keep power in the hands of the landed gentry, voter fraud in Alabama had become commonplace. Tired of

stuffing ballot boxes to ensure outcomes, convention delegates wrote the 1901 Alabama Constitution to legally disfranchise African Americans. In this context, the undemocratic intent of the call for “Honest Elections” is thrown into relief. Elections could then be “honest” because African Americans would be prevented from voting.

Not only was the 1901 Constitution undemocratic in its disfranchisement of black voters, but it was also ratified under duress. A little-known fact is that 32 counties— from Jackson to Lauderdale to Geneva and in between—voted *against* ratification. More telling is that seven of the 34 counties that “ratified” the 1901 Constitution had populations where blacks were the majority. For example, Wilcox County voted in favor of the 1901 Constitution 4,652 to 178 even

though over 80 percent of the population was black. Does anybody really believe that an overwhelming majority of people in those counties voted to disfranchise themselves?

If you remove from the equation those 17 counties with “questionable” outcomes, the ratification of the 1901 Constitution would have failed because 55 percent of the electorate would have voted “against” it. If you factor in those counties with votes aligning along more logical racial lines, then the vote could reach as high as 60 percent opposed. In actuality, we are living under a document that has never been legitimately ratified by the people of Alabama.

This undemocratic ploy not only resulted in a fraudulent document, but also a poorly conceived one. Because of its fundamental flaws, the

Call to supporters: Contact these key legislators!

Continued from page 1

We urge supporters to contact the members of two key committees and express the need to “Let the People Vote!” If your legislator is a member of one of the two committees following, you are a critical player to impress on the legislator the importance to pass the bill out of the committee and on to the floor for debate.

The following two committees will decide if the bill will pass on to the floor of the legislature.

SENATE CONSTITUTION, CAMPAIGN FINANCE ETHICS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Pat Lindsey, D-Butler Chair

Lowell Barron, D-Fyffe
Roger Bedford, D-Russellville
Ben Brooks, R-Mobile
Parker Griffith, D-Huntsville
Arthur Orr, R-Decatur
Myron Penn, D-Union Springs
Quinton Ross, D-Montgomery
Hank Sanders, D-Selma

HOUSE CONSTITUTION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Randy Hinshaw, D-Meridianville
Chair
Tommy Sherer, D-Jasper Vice Chair
Jay Love, R-Montgomery, Ranking Minority
George Brandy, D-Opelika
Greg Canfield, R-Vestavia Hill
Randy Davis, R-Daphne

Chad Fincher, R-Semmes
James Gordon, D-Saraland
Ken Guin, D-Carbon Hill
Micky Hammon, R-Decatur
Barry Mask, R-Wetumpka
Joseph Mitchell, D-Mobile
Mary Moore, D-Birmingham
Jack Page, D-Gadsden
Patricia Todd, D-Birmingham

Find your legislators? Go to www.legislature.state.al.us/ and write in your zip code, or contact your local library, or call ACCR at 205 540-7501 and we will help you.



1901 Constitution has now been amended 794 times—each time at taxpayers' expense. And while the disfranchising portions of the docu-

Not only was the 1901 Constitution undemocratic in its disfranchisement of black voters, but it was also ratified under duress

ment have now been rendered illegal, the framework for governance that it sets out—one that centralizes power and rewards the few over the many—still exists.

Considering this history, the signatures of over 75,000 Alabamians on a petition last year asking the Legislature to “Let the People Vote” for a citizen’s convention takes on new meaning. This effort would be the first time in over a century that the people of Alabama have actually and honestly voted on their framework for governance. As the number of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents in favor of constitutional reform continues to grow, the question is no longer *if* we will write our seventh Constitution, but *when*.

To learn more about the issues of the 1901 Constitution, please consider watching our new movie, *It's a Thick Book*. This entertaining and powerful documentary, sponsored by ACCR Foundation and filmed by Lewis Lehe, is both creative and educational. It will premiere in theatres throughout Alabama the week of March 4th and will be available on DVD March 15th.

We need to re-conceive Alabama's constitution as belonging to the people rather than the special

interests that perpetuate its existence. As Chief Justice John Marshall said about the U.S. constitution, which is also applicable for our state constitution, “The people made the Constitution and they can unmake it. It is the Creature of their will, and lives only by their will.”

Together we, the people of Alabama, can write a new Constitution that reflects who we are today and what legacy we would like to leave the future.

Mark Berte is the Grassroots Education Director for the Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform Foundation, (205-266-3371) or

Mark@constitutionALreform.org. Following installments will include:

Part Two: Who benefits and who is hurt by the 1901 Constitution. (May 2007)

Part Three: What it takes to write a seventh Constitution. (August 2007)

Alabama Bar offers booklet on reform

Single copies of a 12-page booklet on constitutional reform prepared by the state bar association's Public Relations Committee are available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the words Constitutional Reform on the front to: Alabama State Bar, P.O. Box 671, Montgomery, AL, 36101. You also may download the document as a PDF at the bar's web site: www.alabar.org/Constitutional-Revision-for-web.pdf

ACCR Foundation gains spring intern

The ACCR Foundation is excited to introduce you to Matt Aston, our 2007 Spring Intern.

Matt, a native of Huntsville, currently lives in Tuscaloosa. He recently completed his B.A. degree at the University of Alabama and plans to attend graduate school for public administration.

While an undergraduate, Matt participated in numerous internships and selected coursework designed to promote knowledge about the workings of policy and public organizations. Specifically, he interned with the Alabama Center for the Arts and Humanities, the Alabama Prison Arts and Education Project and the Public Defender's Office of Tuscaloosa County.

"I first became interested in constitutional reform as a way of combating poverty in the state of Alabama," said Matt. "While working for the Center for Arts and Humanities in Auburn, I

was deeply affected by the ways that fundamental constitutional problems hold rural school systems to a perennial disadvantage."

A very impressive pool of candidates applied to be this semester's ACCR Foundation intern and several of those people are already helping with projects because of their dedication to the cause. Matt has already been assisting the Grassroots Education Director and ACCR Foundation Coordinator in numerous tasks.

The ACCR Foundation Board congratulates Matt and appreciates all of the statewide volunteer assistance people continue to provide to support our mission, which is to “educate the people of Alabama about our 1901 Constitution and the need and opportunities to reform it.”

Matt can be reached at Matt@constitutionALreform.org or by phone 205.292.9932



Let's take a look at who's against reform

By Robert M. Schaefer

According to the Alabama Constitution of 1901, "The state shall not engage in works of internal improvements."

What an amazing document. It clearly and unabashedly prohibits our state from improving itself.

Why does our constitution forbid improvement, when no other state constitution prohibits progress? The answer is simple: The framers of Alabama's infamous fundamental law did not want to benefit the citizens in any way, shape or form.

Many of the delegates at the 1901 constitutional convention in Montgomery were plantation owners who missed the "good old days" prior to the Civil War. They understood that "progress" might mean paying for roads. Or sewers. Or public education. And they very much believed that "education ruins a good field hand."

The other notable participants at the convention were the new industrial class from the recently founded city of Birmingham, who wanted to take advantage of the tremendous resources Alabama had to offer: uneducated and low-paid workers. The industrialists were either from, or tied to, banking interests in New York. The Northern capitalists understood a good thing when they saw it: Whip the Southerners in the Big War and then profit off of them in the decades to come. What the plantation owners and industrialists could not allow for, under any circumstances, was democracy.

Although many of today's critics of the 1901 Constitution tend to focus on its racist origins, what they overlook is the more fundamental goal of restricting blacks and whites from the political process. And why not? Citi-

zens might actually vote to build roads, promote economic development and do other things that a free people consider good.

The goal of the 1901 Constitution was then, and is now, to undermine democracy. Hence the mess we have today.

Consider the unfortunate case of Prichard. Two years ago, the Prichard City Council approved a "free trade zone" allowing for growth of local industrial property. The folks in Prichard voted overwhelmingly to support the zone.

Alas, any major issue allowing for economic prosperity ("internal im-

Constitutional reform is not about increasing taxes, as many of the demagogues falsely argue; it's about democracy

provements") requires special permission from the Legislature. Legislators granted approval, but regrettably the amendment failed when the voters in Mobile County turned it down. Mobilians apparently mistook the amendment for a tax increase.

The Alabama Foreign Trade Investment Zone amendment was approved again earlier this year by our masters in Montgomery. Unfortunately, Sen. Hank Erwin Jr. from Montevallo cast the only vote requiring that the amendment be voted upon statewide.

Ironically, it was approved by the voters in Mobile County, who in the interim had been educated about the benefits of free trade zones. But it was defeated statewide by a narrow margin. (Indeed, the margin was so narrow that every county in the state had to recount the votes.)

It makes no sense for people in Montevallo to decide how Prichard

rules itself. Yet if local communities want to build a fire department or promote the sale of cattle or create a free trade zone, they need special permission from Master Erwin and the other rulers in Montgomery.

Constitutional reform is not about increasing taxes, as many of the demagogues falsely argue; it's about democracy.

Who else is against reform? Well, some of the timber barons fear change. But their position is understandable considering that timberland—thanks to our constitution—is nominally taxed.

Equally significant, yet more difficult to grasp, is the fear of change that grips most Alabamians. Tradition is a big factor in the hearts and souls of Alabamians, and we are hesitant to do anything different.

The Alabama Legislature is also hesitant to allow for a new constitution. They dislike the idea of giving up power over local matters.

With the status quo, very important issues, such as prostitution in Jefferson County, can only be governed by the Wise Ones in Montgomery. (In case you are worried, Amendment 688 now outlaws prostitution—in Jefferson County.)

More good news for Jefferson County: It is blessed with the authority to "prohibit the overgrowth of weeds." Talk about progress.

What is truly remarkable is that our Legislature is not powerful. Yes, our lawmakers can fret about litter, bingo and hunting; but compared to the legislatures in the other 49 states (and Cuba, come to think of it), they have little power over important issues. Ninety percent of the Alabama's budget is earmarked. My teenage daughter has more authority over her bank account than the Legislature



does over its money.

My favorite anti-democracy group includes those who claim that a new constitution would "remove references to God." We ought not alter such a godly document, they argue.

Thus far, I've discovered only three references to God in the 1901 Constitution: once in the Preamble, where "the favor and guidance of Almighty God" is requested, and again in Section 279, where the standard oath of office is required for elected officials.

The third and most striking reference is in Section 186, which pertains to the board of registrars. The registrars were required to "test" potential voters and ensure that they were not "idiots," "sodomists," "tramps" or married to persons of color.

Sadly, the primary responsibility of the registrars was to disfranchise black voters. But before white supremacy could be accomplished the registrars needed to take an oath: "I solemnly

swear I will speak the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God."

God was part of the voting process. Blacks were not.

Let there be no confusion: Alabama can no longer discriminate against blacks, due to the Yankees who, yet again, came down to our state during the 1960s with their guns drawn and insisted that things change. But local democracy is still missing.

So, where do we go from here? The primary answer is twofold: education and politics.

Education is the most important key for change. Alabamians need to learn that a new constitution will benefit them in terms of economic development, better schools and zoning.

The strategy of Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform is to continue promoting a grass-roots organization of individuals, businesses, public organizations and non-profit groups to

develop a major lobbying effort in the 2007 legislative session to pass legislation calling for a constitutional convention.

Last year's reform bills, which called for a people's convention, included three separate votes by the people. First, there would be a vote as to whether or not a convention would occur, followed by a vote for the delegates to the convention, and a third vote allowing citizens to accept or reject the constitution proposed by the delegates.

Another goal is to put pressure on legislators and make them aware that a majority of Alabama citizens are unhappy with the current situation.

We in ACCR acknowledge that powerful interest groups, such as the Alabama Farmers' Federation, will spend massive amounts of money to undermine progress. But our legislators who are beholden to special interests need to understand that Alfa does not cast ballots at election time; the people of Alabama do.

An important new voice promoting change is the Alabama Constitution Convention Coalition, recently founded to educate the public about the need for reform. It consists of 29 diverse non-profit groups who appreciate the need to give up the ghosts of the Civil War and think about the 21st century. Also the Alabama State Bar recently released a report calling for reform (www.alabar.org).

The aspiration of these groups is to spur all of us to participate in this vital discussion. Things will not get better in our state unless we dedicate ourselves to learning more about democracy and other issues that are in our interest.

Our future depends upon it.

Robert Schaefer is a member of the ACCR Board. He wrote this column for The Mobile Register, where it first appeared.

Update on PROPONENTS: Constitution Convention Coalition

Organizations statewide continue to join the Constitution Convention Coalition. If you know organizations that should enlist, please contact Hill Carmichael (hill@gbm.org). Partner organizations presently include:

- Alabama Arise
- American Association of University Women (AAUW)
- Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform, Inc. (ACCRI)
- Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform Foundation (ACCRF)
- Alabama Civil Justice Foundation
- Alabama Parent Teacher Association (ALPTA)
- Alabama Rivers Alliance (ARA)
- Arise Citizens' Policy Project (ACPP)
- Alabama Poverty Project
- Bay Area Women's Coalition
- Catalyst 4 Birmingham
- Church Women United of Birmingham
- Community Affairs Committee of Operation New Birmingham (CAC)
- Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham
- College Council for Constitutional Reform
- The Democracy Project
- Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama (FOCAL)
- Gateway
- Greater Birmingham Ministries
- Jubilee Community Center
- Leading Edge Institute
- The League of Women Voters of Alabama
- Montgomery Transportation Coalition
- National Federation of the Blind (Montgomery Chapter)
- Quest for Social Justice
- Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative
- Tuscaloosa's One Place - A Family Resource Center
- The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham
- VOICES for Alabama's Children
- YouthServe
- YWCA of Central Alabama



Alabama constitution so bad it's almost funny

By Charlotte Ward

I am the newest member of the ACCR Foundation board, but I may be the oldest in terms of involvement with constitutional reform. When I arrived in Alabama nearly 50 years ago as a faculty wife with three pre-schoolers, I joined two organizations right away: Auburn First Baptist Church and the League of Women Voters of Auburn.

The Auburn League was brand-new and still had provisional status. It was required that newly formed Leagues make a thorough study of their communities and counties before achieving full local League status. As I participated in these studies, and as a few years later I began to visit public schools around the state as the elementary grades science teacher on Alabama Public Television, and then as a faculty member at Auburn University—I was reminded over and over again how much damage the 1901 Constitution did to Alabamians day by day. When in the early 1960s the League of Women Voters of Alabama began a serious study of the constitution, I was an enthusiastic participant. We still have the 1901 Constitution — and I am still enthusiastic about the possibility of replacing it.

I said enthusiastic, not hopeful. Oh, we do get our hopes up once in a while — in 1973, for instance, when the constitutional commission appointed by Governor James did its masterful work (the “yellow book”), but

only the judicial article, thanks to the leadership of Justice Howell Heflin, ever got adopted. That article became a model for other states needing to reform their judiciary — but even it left some room for improvement, as the expensive, partisan, and —well, ugly — judicial elections of recent years have shown. Near the end of his life, Heflin said he realized the need for merit selection of judges, but he wasn't willing to lose the other reforms by insisting on a measure he knew to be unacceptable to the legislature.

After several years' study, the Alabama League took a position in favor of constitutional reform by whatever

Our constitution is generally a laughing stock among all people concerned with good government

means possible, whether by convention or piecemeal through the legislature. A few years ago, we realized the legislature was never going to do the job, and we came out strongly for a convention. Last year we were heartened when Sen. Ted Little and Rep. Demetrius Newton introduced bills in their respective houses to allow the people of Alabama to vote on whether or not to call a convention to rewrite the constitution. Our hopes were short-lived. Powerful committee chairs and others kept both bills from a vote on the floor.

It is a new quadrennium and a partly new legislature. There is new leadership in the senate. Both Sen. Little and Rep. Newton have announced their intentions to reintroduce their bills.

Dare we hope for a better outcome? Why is this so hard?

When six of the nine legislators who represent bits and pieces of Lee County met with the Auburn League in a public meeting last month, we asked about their stand on constitutional reform. One (Rep. Vance) was flat out against a convention. Others made some weak acknowledgment that maybe some things needed changing — why not amend? (Sighs from the audience at that point!) Only Sen. Little stood by his guns. It appears most legislators do not trust the people who obviously had the wisdom and good judgment to send them to Montgomery to have those qualities in sufficient degree to choose good men and women to rewrite a constitution that hinders economic advancement, stifles local government, burdens the poorest citizens with an unfair system of taxation, and is generally a laughing stock among all people concerned with good government.

Our task remains what it has been these fifty years: to help people in all walks of life to understand the unnecessary burden we all bear, and to see through the false arguments of the few who benefit from the status quo and will do just about anything to foil our efforts. I wish I had a magic formula, but I don't.

I spoke to a civic club on CR a while back, using some of the more ridiculous amendments as illustrations of the need to change. One man told me afterward that he hadn't expected the subject to be so entertaining. Do you reckon we could laugh the 1901 constitution out of existence?

Charlotte Ward is associate professor of physics emerita, Auburn University, and editor of The Alabama Voter, published by the League of Women Voters of Alabama.



ACCR College Council **t-shirts** are available for \$10 each in sizes small, medium, large and x-large. Contact Hill Carmichael (hill@gbm.org) or Jeanne Cross (jkcross@samford.edu).



Democracy a good thing—gasp!—even in republic

Alabama's 1901 constitution is anti-democratic. Some reform opponents argue it should stay that way because democracy is somehow at odds with a republican form of government. Here's a primer explaining important terms..

By Bill Dixon

There is a formal definition of democracy and it isn't "mob rule." In fact, there is a word for "mob rule" and that word is ochlocracy.

In fact, democracy is one of the three classifications of states based on the residence of sovereignty. A state is a definite territory with a population and possessing sovereignty; government is the organization through which the functions of the state are performed. Sovereignty is the ability to make and enforce laws and to protect from outside interference.

The three classifications of states are: autocracy, aristocracy, and democracy.

In an autocracy, sovereignty resides in the hands of one person. In an aristocracy, sovereignty resides in the hands of a group. In a democracy, sovereignty resides in the hands of all the citizens.

Each of these classifications of states has a corrupt form, i.e., a form in which the sovereignty is exercised primarily for the benefit of the possessors of the sovereignty.

The corrupt form of an autocracy is a dictatorship.

The corrupt form of an aristocracy can take many shapes—plutocracy, theocracy, and other groups.

The corrupt form of democracy is ochlocracy—also called dictatorship of the majority or mob rule. In fact, we have a Senate because the small States were concerned about being overwhelmed by the larger States.

Beyond semantic burden is word count . . .

With apologies to the *National Review*, which reports that The Lord's Prayer has 66 words; the Gettysburg Address has 286 words; and the Declaration of Independence has 1,322 words—there are **433 words in the first 3 amendments** to the 1901 Alabama constitution, about one-third the number in the complete Declaration! Does anybody know how many words there are in the 1901 document? In 2000 it took 589 pages to print this document; of course, there have been additional amendments since 2000.—Barbara Nash, ACCR Board.

We also have the Electoral College rather than popular election of the president to lessen the possibility of ochlocracy.

Because, in a democracy, sovereignty resides in the hands of all of the people, the majority must consider the rights, needs, and even the wants of the minority. To continue to have a democracy instead of an ochlocracy, it is necessary to compromise - not on all things but on many.

A republic is a representative democracy, i.e., a democracy in which the people, collectively elect representatives to exercise sovereignty on their collective behalf. In Article IV Section 4 of the Constitution where it guarantees to all States "a Republican form of government," it is referring to a representative democracy. The words "form of government" can hardly be transformed into "rule of law" without taking great liberties with the words used.

The term, "republic," has, unfortu-

nately, been used, or rather misused, in any number of situations. A prime example is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - hardly any of those words applied to the actual status of the USSR.

The phrase, "our government is one of the rule of law rather than the rule of men," has confused many people and does not appear in the Constitution. Serious consideration of the functions of government would tell you that some person or persons must make, apply, and enforce laws. That person or those persons either exercise that sovereignty on behalf of themselves or on behalf of all the people in the state. Thus, the state is classified as either an autocracy, aristocracy, or democracy.

Below, inset: ACCR chair Lenora Pate drew a big crowd in Mobile late last year at a recent meeting of Envision Coastal Alabama.





IT'S A THICK BOOK: *Bad government, great film!*

The ACCR Foundation is pleased to announce the world premiere week of *It's a Thick Book*. Join others throughout Alabama to watch this creative, entertaining, and powerful documentary by Lewis Lehe on the 1901 constitution. This is an excellent education tool for people who know a lot, a little or nothing at all about our fundamentally-flawed Constitution. The film will be shown **free and open to the public** in the following communities:

- **Birmingham**, Sunday, March 4, 3 pm at [Workplay](#) (Contact: Amy Sedlis, Amy@constitutionALreform.org, 205-910-7801).
- **Mobile**, Monday, March 5, 7 pm at [Spring Hill College, Byrn Hall](#) (Contact Leigh Ann Litwiller Berte, litwiller@shc.edu, 251-380-4499).
- **Huntsville**, Monday, March 5, 7 pm at [Church of the Nativity](#) (Contact Bill Goodson, Whgoodson@aol.com, 256-536-7535).
- **Florence**, Tuesday, March 6, 6:30 pm at the Shoals Theater at the Corner of Seminary and Mobile Streets (Contact Barbara Nash, bn830@comcast.net, 256-764-5961).

- **Montevallo**, Wednesday, March 7, 7 pm at University of Montevallo, Harman Building, Room 201 (Contact Jennifer Phillips, jphillips6@umail.montevallo.edu, 205-665-6180).
- **Tuscaloosa**, Thursday, March 8, 7 pm University of Alabama, Ferg Theatre, (Contact Matthew Lewis, lewis132@bama.ua.edu, 334-462-5868)
- **Marion**, Friday, March 9, 1:30 am Judson College, Adams Armstrong Lecture Hall, (Contact Fightress Stallworth, Fightress@constitutionALreform.org, 205-393-5351).
- **Anniston**, Friday, March 9, 7:30 pm at Zannie Theater in the Buckner Center (Contact: Amy Sedlis, Amy@constitutionALreform.org, 205-910-7801).
- **Montgomery**, Saturday, March 10, 2 pm at [Capri Theatre](#) (Contact Rebecca Jackson, accrmontgomery@hotmail.com, 334-546-1549).

If you'd like to show this film in your community or request a copy of the DVD when it is available on March 15, contact Amy Sedlis, ACCR Foundation Coordinator: Amy@constitutionALreform.org or 205-910-7801.

**SHOWING EARLY MARCH
AT A THEATER NEAR YOU!**

Mobile Bridges takes constitution reform for 2007 table topic

By Leevones G. Dubose

Mobile Bridges is a newly formed group (January 2006) which is a partnership formed between Bay Area Women Coalition, Incorporated (grassroots-non-profit), and the Quest for Social Justice (non-profit).

Our goal

In an effort to promote genuine and substantive interaction across a broad spectrum of area citizens and to increase awareness and understanding of racial issues and to share personal stories, and to inspire action (individual and collective) on challenging and divisive issues we are sponsoring table conversation. In an effort to promote Constitutional Reform, during 2007, our table conversation will focus on Constitutional Reform. We will sponsor table conversation at the

following colleges and universities:

- Springhill College-January 18, 2007
- Bishop State Community College – April 26, 2007
- University of South Alabama- TBA
- Mobile University- TBA.

Trust and understanding

Bridges joins a national effort to increase understanding across racial and cultural lines. Individual by individual, Bridges hopes to help participants embrace the value of diversity and find the things they have in common. As we mark the anniversaries of landmark civil rights legislation and rejoice in the progress that has been made, we continue to be aware of a general lack of interracial social contact among area citizens. In order to bridge the gap between racial and ethnic groups within our communities we are com-

mitted to gathering persons of different backgrounds for a meal and facilitated table conversation four times this year.

History of Mobile Bridges

The first one was held January 19, 2006, at Central Presbyterian Church (predominately white), the second at Mount Hebron Baptist Church (predominately black), the third at Moffett Road Assembly of God (predominately white Church) and the latest at Trinity Lutheran Church (predominately black).

2007 focus

As our focus for this year is in on the State of Alabama Constitution and the need for REFORM, we solicit your support. Next table discussion April 26 (Thursday night)



Circuit Judges call for constitution convention

The State of Alabama Circuit Judges Association adopted a Resolution on January 19, 2007, which called upon the Governor and the Legislature to adopt legislation calling for a Constitution Convention to rewrite Alabama's 1901 Constitution.

The Resolution reads as follows:

Be it resolved by the State of Alabama Circuit Judges Association that said Circuit Judges Association calls upon the Governor and the Legislature of Alabama to adopt legislation which calls for a Constitutional Convention for the purpose of reforming our State Constitution. The Circuit Judges Association endorses and supports a Constitution which mandates fair and equal protection for all citizens under the law.

The Resolution was signed by Retired Judge Harold L. Crow, President of the Association.

"The Constitution of 1901 is a memorial of the time and place in which it was adopted," said Judge Scott Vowell, Presiding Judge of Jefferson County. "But in every aspect of our society, Alabama has moved beyond the attitudes which prevailed in 1901. In approving this Resolution, the Alabama Circuit Judges have recognized the need to restate the State's Constitution, our fundamental law, in order to meet the needs of our State in the 21st century."

The Circuit Judges Association joins several other organizations in endorsing a Constitution Convention. Last year, the Baldwin County, Shelby County and the City of Birmingham Bar Associations, as well as the Alabama State Bar Board of Commissioners signed Resolutions.

In total, 31 organizations throughout the State have joined the Constitution Convention Coalition which is working to bring a constitution convention to Alabama.

"The momentum for a citizens' Convention is growing at an amazing rate, as reflected by the recent endorsement of a Convention by the Alabama Circuit Judges Association's January Resolution," said Lenora Pate, Co-Chair of the statewide Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform.

"In the upcoming Legislative Session, Legislators will again sponsor bills to *Let the People Vote* for a Constitution Convention. ACCR, the Constitution Convention Coalition and citizen supporters urge all Legislators to make 2007 the year to trust the people and to *Let the People Vote!*"

Episcopal Diocese endorses constitution convention

A Resolution supporting action by the Alabama Legislature to allow the people of Alabama to vote on calling a Constitutional Convention to rewrite the Alabama Constitution.

Be it resolved that the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama, through its ordained and lay leaders and its members, be encouraged to actively support, work and pray for rewriting the Alabama Constitution by means of a Citizen's Constitutional Convention.

Further be it resolved, that this 176th Convention of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama strongly urges action by the members of the State Legislature, the Governor, and other elected officials of the State of Alabama to support and pass the bills that will be introduced in the House and Senate in the current session that will allow the people of Alabama to vote as to whether or not they want a convention to be called.

— Approved February 16, 2007



THE VOICE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA CITIZENS FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Published by Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform. We welcome submissions of articles, announcements, opinions, photographs, and suggestions related to Alabama constitutional reform. All submissions are subject to approval by the ACCR editorial board.

To submit:
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ACCR is a public interest group dedicated to helping Alabamians draft a new state constitution.

ACCR Foundation, Inc., grew out of a rally in Tuscaloosa on April 7, 2000, as part of a grass-roots movement for civic renewal and constitutional revision.

ACCR represents members across Alabama who believe in the power of citizens to create a better future for themselves and their state.

We are devoted to the idea that people deserve the best government they can design. Our mission is civic, rather than partisan. We seek to engage Alabamians in serious discussion about the future of our state.

We want a state constitution that unites, rather than divides our people. We want to create a civic atmosphere in which politics can function for the benefit of all citizens, rather than for a few powerful interests.

Our movement begins with the citizen, who holds the highest office in our democracy.

ACCR is about people's willingness to take control of their civic destiny and achieve the promise that our nation's founders held up for the world to admire and follow.

“LET THE PEOPLE VOTE!”

In 2006, we presented our legislators petitions signed by tens of thousands of citizens to “Let the People Vote” for a constitutional convention to replace the 6th Alabama constitution. Many legislators listened, but most were either non-committal or spoke against our bills. **We need YOU! In 2007 our legislators need to hear directly from YOU!**

*YES! I want to join the ACCR lobbying program to pass the **Let the People Vote!** House and Senate bills in 2007 by (check one or more):*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone call | <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face meetings locally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to face meetings in Montgomery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write letters | <input type="checkbox"/> Join local Legislative Action Team |

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UNITE TO RE-WRITE THE ALABAMA CONSTITUTION!

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