

## **ABC's of Reston Politics**

By William Nicoson

Over the last twelve months, Reston's political landscape has been forever altered. I'm not talking about the birth of the Alliance for a Better Community (ABC). I'm talking about its rapid growth to maturity. Political alliances have come and gone during Reston's development. But I predict that ABC will last as a vital source of community policies and political candidates as long as there are policy-making boards of Reston institutions to which candidates are elected.

ABC is not aligned with any national political party, but offers membership to any Reston resident seeking to improve the community through the support of positive, open-minded candidates for the boards of Reston Association, Reston Community Center and Reston Citizens Association. What distinguishes ABC from previous political coalitions is that it raises funds year round and invests in long-term campaign assets. Its horizon is not bounded by the next election.

It's been a principle of ABC candidate selection to seek out new promising leaders from Reston's younger generation. A year ago, five candidates, new to Reston politics, were fielded in the RCA election, and all were elected. One of them, Jim Traylor, now acts as ABC's "convener" (in lieu of a president), and another, David Bobbitt, directs campaign planning. In the RCC preference poll last October, ABC ran four candidates, all of whom were also elected. A young RCC governor elected the previous year, Jan Bradshaw, serves as ABC treasurer.

In the recent RA election, the ABC at-large candidate, Bob Simon, won, while a member of ABC, Glenn Downing, who opposed the ABC-backed candidate, won the Hunters Woods seat. In the RCA election this Saturday for 9 board seats, only a single candidate has entered the list against the ABC slate. Little wonder: it's a powerful slate, including: John Lovaas, ABC's past president and former Vice President of RA, running for RCA president; Renee Grannis, Dorianne Jackson and David Lawrence for at-large seats; Elizabeth Mendelson (North Point); Shannon Stout (Lake Anne), Roger Lowen and Michael Taylor (Hunters Woods); and Michelle Ellison (South Lakes).

ABC is not the only organized force in Reston politics. Vera Hannigan, who chairs Reston's Republican Party, is a resourceful and effective leader of fiscal conservatives dubbed by ABC as "nay-sayers". She was elected last year to the RA board but lost her seat on the RCC board. She has given indefatigable service to the community, serving on the RCA board as treasurer for many years. She is a formidable political campaigner and advocate. Any candidate she supports against ABC will wage a take-no-prisoners battle.

The coalescence of two opposing political camps, one devoted above all to improving the community and the other above all to reducing public spending, must inevitably produce partisan strain. But leaders of good will may yet bridge this gap. My candidate for peacemaker is Glenn

Downing, newly elected RA director. Since winning, he's made an effort to consult his opponents on policy issues, indicating an intention to represent effectively all RA members of his district.

Somewhere, with help from peacemakers, meliorists and budget-slashers may find common ground, and, if not, they may at least find civility.

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