

# The Mississippi Voter League of Women Voters of Mississippi

Kay Brodbeck, Co-President  
Gene Everitt, Co-President

August 2011

Dierdre Payne, Editor

*"The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement."*



I am delighted to begin serving as co-president of LWVMS with Kay Brodbeck, who continues from the previous term. A great debt is owed to Fran Leber for her many years of service to League in various roles. I have already called her for help, and I'm sure that won't be the only time. Thanks to Kay who recently hosted a board meeting and orientation at her home. Much was shared about our experiences with League and what motivates us to continue in the organization. As I reflected on why I'm involved, the short answer is that I was invited by a friend. This continues to be the best way for us as members to grow the League. A longer answer is that I want to help make things better, especially here in Mississippi. We have such a troubled history, and the story is difficult to tell. But there is so much energy to make things better! I'm sure that League will continue to be part of that positive change. I appreciate my own parents, who had a sense of justice and fairness, and who wanted to be part of making the world better. They took the privileges and responsibilities of being citizens very seriously.

*Gene Everitt, co-president LWVMS*

The Mississippi Voter is on our website, [www.lwv-ms.org](http://www.lwv-ms.org), and can be printed at your convenience. The 2011-2012 Elections calendar can also be accessed from our website. Join our group on Facebook at [League of Women Voters of Mississippi](#). Invite someone to join League. Together, we can make a difference

**ELECTION: Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. The last day to vote absentee is Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. The deadline is 12:00PM (noon). Absentee voting must be done in the circuit clerk's office by noon on November 5<sup>th</sup>.**

Candidates will include Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, State Auditor, State Treasurer, Commissioner of Insurance, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, state senators, state representatives' Supreme Court district officers, Transportation Commissioner, Public Service Commissioner, State District officers, District Attorneys, County offices, sheriff's, Chancery Clerks, County Court judges, Tax Assessors, Tax Collectors, Coroners, Superintendents of Education, County Attorneys, Surveyors, County District offices, Supervisors, Justice Court judges, and constables. The special election runoff (if applicable) is November 29th.

## Ballot Initiatives

The November ballot will include three proposed constitutional amendments:

- **Initiative 26**: would amend the state Constitution to define the word "person" or "persons," to include "every human being from the moment of fertilization, cloning, or the functional equivalent thereof."
- **Initiative 27**: would require voters to show identification at the polls.
- **Initiative 31**: would restrict the use of eminent domain for private development.

For more information, go to [www.sos.ms.gov](http://www.sos.ms.gov), click on "Elections", then click on "Initiatives".

## Jackson Area League Report

Our Annual Meeting was held at the Municipal Art Gallery in Jackson on Saturday, April 16th. The guest speaker, Nancy Loomer, executive director of The Parents Campaign, spoke on the impact of the 2011 Legislative session on public schools.

The new officers elected at the Annual Meeting were: Fran Leber, 1st Vice President/Administration; Gene Everitt, 2nd Vice President/Program; Margaret Wodetzki, Treasurer; Carolyn Townes, National Items Director; and Marcia Weaver, Nominating Committee. The members whose term expires in 2012 are: Barbara Powell, President; Judy Lacy and Harriet Tanzman, Co-Vice Presidents/Voter Service; Minta Uzodinma, Membership Director; and Janet Crawford, *Voter* Editor.

Two amendments were made to the bylaws. One removed the requirement that the person performing an annual audit of the treasurer's books be a certified public accountant. The other amendment conforms to the LWVUS bylaws stating that persons who have been members of League for 50 years or more shall be life members excused from the payment of dues.

Members enjoyed participating in a fund-raising silent auction, as well as a potluck salad lunch.

The new board of directors met June 28th for an orientation and planning session. They made two appointments to the board, Keri Friedley as secretary and Krista Buckhalter as Public Relations Director. We have an active schedule for this fall which includes voter service activities related to state elections and participation in Leagues' national study of public education.

*Barbara Powell, LWVJA president*

## Mississippi Gulf Coast Chapter Report

The Board of the MS Gulf Coast LWV held their annual meeting in May at St John's Episcopal Church in Ocean Springs with guest speaker Rev. Dr. Harold Roberts.

The FY EOY Financial Report was presented and showed an ending balance of \$2,078.74 in our checking account with 2010-11 state and national dues paid and \$100 in our new Education Fund at National. Our income for the March 22 Fundraiser and "Transparency in Government" luncheon was \$3,861 less expenses of \$3,013, leaving a net income from that event of \$848. We hope the next event will be both easier and more productive financially. In terms of attendance, approval and visibility, we deemed it a great success and appreciated Fran and Kay for representing the State LWV. We approved a 2011-12 Budget of \$8425 in income and \$8400 in expenditures. This may be optimistic, but a busy year is planned.

We also presented and approved an extensive re-write of the by-laws, including a name change. We are now the "Mississippi Gulf Coast League of Women Voters. We approved a quorum for board action of one third of the members, and described dues as covering a calendar year and payable by January 25. Our Fiscal Year was kept in conformity with state and national practice and is May 1 – April 30. We followed the Jackson LWV's lead and stated that the "books of the Treasurer shall be reviewed annually prior to the annual meeting," eliminating the requirement that this be done by a CPA.

The annual election was held. The First Vice President for Program position and the Treasurer's position were up for election. David Stephens was reelected First VP and Bruno Schroeder was reelected Treasurer. They have each served only one year partial terms and will be eligible for reelection for an additional term beginning 2013. Secretary Margene Minor is moving to New Orleans and resigned her position. Julia O'Neal was elected Secretary. She is a native Mississippian whose career in NYC began in publishing and grew to journalism for publications covering the major financial institutions. Her recent relocation to Ocean Springs is a real gift to our League.

At the Board's Executive Committee meeting on May 27, the following people were appointed to a one year term:

[MSGCLWV report continued]

Jacqueline Washington (re-appointed) – Community Organizer; Princella Graham (re-appointed) – Health Care Consultant; Judy Oehler Fountain – retired Public School Psychologist; Milton Grishman – Realtor, Property Mgr, Community Activist. Jackie, Judy and Milton are residents of Biloxi, Harrison County, and Princella lives in Gulf Hills/Ocean Springs, Jackson County. We are pleased to be strengthening our membership outside of Jackson County.

Program Priorities for the coming year and the calendar through December 2011 were approved, including our intent to participate in the national LWV Education Study Project.

We welcome Stacy Callender as our new official state liaison. Finally, I want to express again my thanks for the 2011 Katherine Rea Membership Award.

*Karlyn Stephens, MSGCLWV president*



## **NATIONAL ISSUES**

### **CLEAN AIR DEFENSE AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

For over 40 years the League has been a powerful advocate of strong public health and environmental protections. Congress is now seeking to weaken two effective elements of these protections, the Clean Air Act and the Environmental Protection Agency. Both of these have been bulwarks against the polluting of our air and water. The campaigns are being financed by companies and interests which are making millions in profits while polluting our air, water and natural resources. Think of BP and the recent Exxon pipeline break and the pollution of the

water and land of large parts of our most valued and treasured land areas.

The League is committed to lobbying for the need for maintaining strong oversight and regulation concerning smog standards, clean air and water, particularly for the most vulnerable among us, children, the elderly and those with limited resources. This entails keeping both the Clean Air Act and the EPC strong and active.

Write a letter to President Obama or go to “[www.LWV.org](http://www.LWV.org)”, click on “Take Action”, then “Clean Air Defense”, then “Tell the President...”, then follow the directions on how to send your letter.

### **HEALTH CARE DEFENSE**

League President, Elisabeth McNamara has sent a letter to all members of the U.S. Senate. In it she points out that the 2012 Budget Resolution passed by the House in April “Ignores the need for increased revenue and well-thought-out cuts in a number of programs”. Instead it makes 2/3 of the cuts in programs that impact low income Americans; those who can least afford it. It ignores the need to rescind the ten-year excess tax cuts for the wealthy “which have decimated the federal budget”. This includes “cuts in taxes on capital gains and dividends and the scaling back of estate taxes”.

It would further, turn Medicaid into a block grant program and cut it by \$1.4 trillion over 10 years. And turn Medicare into a voucher program providing only a predetermined set amount toward the cost of private health care which as we have experienced would rise to the highest possible level of profit taking by the private companies, and just leave all additional costs to retirees. It would in essence, simply shift our resources by reducing funding programs serving middle and low income Americans in order to provide tax benefits to the wealthiest citizens and corporations.

## ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

The LWV opposes HR 672 which would terminate the Elections Assistance Commission and transfer some of its functions to the Federal Election Commission (FEC). League of Women Voters President McNamara said “This is a remarkably bad idea. The FEC is a dysfunctional agency”. It is “starkly divided on partisan lines making it particularly inappropriate for election administration responsibilities. The League strongly urges the House of Representatives to strengthen the Election Assistance Commission instead of terminating it”.

*Dick Johnson, National Issues*

### **Report from LWV Council 2011**

It was a privilege to attend the 2011 LWVUS council meeting from July 17-July20 at the National Conference Center in the rolling hills of Leesburg, VA. One of the first topics for discussion after League president Elizabeth McNamara’s welcome speech was the recent ads produced by the League in April. The impetus for this advocacy measure was the effort to amend the Clean Air Act. (See details under NATIONAL ISSUES.) The ads named two senators from Missouri and Massachusetts who voted to weaken the Act. The naming of the individuals was the controversial part of this advocacy. Technically the ads were not for or against a candidate’s campaign, however some Leagues were concerned that the ads do not convey Leagues non-partisan stance. There was not a formal vote, but there was a lively and civil discussion. The board confirmed to those in attendance that all the comments would be taken seriously as League follows this issue.

The ads can be viewed on YouTube and also at National’s website under Members/News.

An interesting development on the national level of League is the move toward a series of regional Council meetings rather than one national meeting during council years. This will involve a 2-year budget cycle instead of one. The hope is for a larger number of League members to be able to attend meetings in their region of the country.

The biannual national Convention would continue. It was announced that Convention 2012 will be held at the Washington (DC) Hilton.

*Gene Everitt, LWVMS co-president*

### **Report from LWVMS Convention**

LWVMS convention 2011 was again held at the MSU School of Architecture in downtown Jackson. This was our 4<sup>th</sup> year in such a beautiful, art-filled space. An exhibit by local folk artist Charles Smith was in place at the time. We were pleased that Mr. Smith donated an art piece to sell at our silent auction.

Our keynote speaker was national board member Peggy Hill, who focused on education and how to conduct the national study. (See page 3)

Another feature of the day was the “Tell Our Story” recordings coordinated by Stacy Callender, who also presented a leadership workshop.

Ed Sivak of the Mississippi Economic Policy Center received the Fran Leber Citizenship award and was the luncheon speaker. Judy and Rims Barber received the Thelma Workman award based on their years of service to League. Karlyn Stephens and the Gulf Coast League received The Katherine Rea Membership Award for their excellent campaign in attracting new members. Stacy and Jassen Callender were gifted for having made the Architecture School available to us for the convention. A lovely gift was also presented to Fran Leber from the state board in honor of so many contributions to League.

Board elections were held for the upcoming year.

*Gene Everitt, co-president LWVMS*

## LWVMS Asked to Provide Poll Watchers

Included in the statewide elections calendar for this year is the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' election of a new chief. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, Phyllis Anderson won the run-off against Miko Beasley Denson, but those results were thrown out by the Tribal Council which cited voting irregularities. At issue were the irregular closing times at the polls: some boxes closed at 8:00 p.m., while others remained open. A second election will be held on Tuesday, September 6, 2011.

A representative of the Bureau of Indian Affairs contacted the League and requested LWVMS provide poll watchers at each polling location during the second election. Arrangements have been made through Miko Beasley Denson for this to be done. This is unique to League and we look forward to the opportunity.

Poll watcher training is being provided by the Choctaw Election Committee, and covers the tribal ordinances regarding elections, the poll worker's manual, and information on their challenge and absentee ballot process. The Choctaw Nation, which is not under state or local election laws, compiles its own ordinances to manage the election process.

*Kay Brodbeck, LWVMS Co-president*

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## 2011-2012 League Education Study

The deadline for local Leagues to submit consensus is November 30, 2011. A webinar, "The ABCs of Doing a National Study," was held April 21st and is available online. Leaders should check the national website for more information.

The Education Study scope is broad and includes the following areas under the role of the federal government in public education (preK through grade 12): the history, funding and equity issues which are addressed under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the common core standards/assessments which are required for many federal grant programs but are national, not federal. The culminating position will address only those issues delineated in the scope.

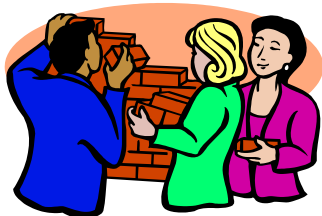
On July 13<sup>th</sup>, the League and coalition partners sent a letter to Congress urging them to oppose any balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution. A balanced budget amendment should not be used as a substitute for real leadership on fiscal policy. Read the letter at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).



*KNOW THE ABC's OF THE ISSUES*

**Studies** are part of League Program and, in League parlance, League Program includes all of the positions the League uses to affect public policy as well as the procedure for adopting these programs. Program is such an integral part of the League that, according to *League Basics*, the League publication formerly titled *In League*, "Program is the League's reason for being."

**Program** has three parts: 1) selection of an issue, 2) study of that issue, consensus and formulating a position, and 3) use of that position to influence public policy. All LWVUS positions are included in the League publication, *Impact on Issues, 2010-2012: A Guide to Public Policy Positions*. ([www.lwv.org/members](http://www.lwv.org/members))



### From the Editor

I want to congratulate the League of Women Voters of Mississippi's elected board members for 2011-2012. The board is composed of very talented members who have started off in this busy election year, not only with activities which we are known for but with new activities that serve Mississippi citizens. Of course this is all possible because of you who are members volunteering and giving support.

The League has been a very important part of my life since I joined in 1969. I soon became aware of the League's belief that we must be engaged at all levels of government. Over the years, I have held many positions of responsibility as president and most recently as co-president. I want to thank everyone for the support you have given me in helping to fulfill the League's mission, which also fulfilled my personal need to make my new home a better place to live for my family and other Mississippi citizens. As I learned about the workings of government, I also developed friendships in League that continue to this day.

A recent, independent national survey shows that the League is the most-trusted non-governmental organization in the United States. Our information is correct, factual and unbiased. Being a member of this organization and working with you, the members, has always been such a gratifying honor for me.

As I step down, I feel like I did when my last son entered college: a peace of mind that part of my life has been accomplished. There is also a great feeling of satisfaction that the future of the LWVMS is in such good hands and that it will be brighter than ever.

Affectionately yours  
**Fran Leber**, immediate past co-president

Those elected to represent us in Congress take the oath of office to "support and defend the Constitution" and to "bear true faith and allegiance to the same." (www.uspolitics.com) All US citizens should be committed to that pledge. All citizens should learn the history of our founding documents, and the history of how they have been applied for the general welfare of our country over the centuries. We must know and understand the triumphs as well as the defeats, the noble victories as well as the less-than noble causes. Just as the liberty bell hanging in Philadelphia, PA will always have a crack in it, democracy will always have its imperfections because of human nature, but the unity the bell symbolizes is tangible and real when we commit to preserving what it represents.

The practice of democracy should be a family heirloom, passed with care from generation to generation in the actions we take to sustain it. We teach by example and we preserve the lessons taught by our example. The right of every citizen to vote is fundamental to a healthy democracy. It is a right that should be taught to our children at an early age, and it should be preserved through our actions as we age.

Membership in the League of Women Voters should also be a family heirloom. Membership and active participation keeps the tradition of preserving democracy alive through the non-partisan education of voters across the country. League's history is that of working to advance the cause of equality and justice through the democratic process for all people, without labels or profiles.

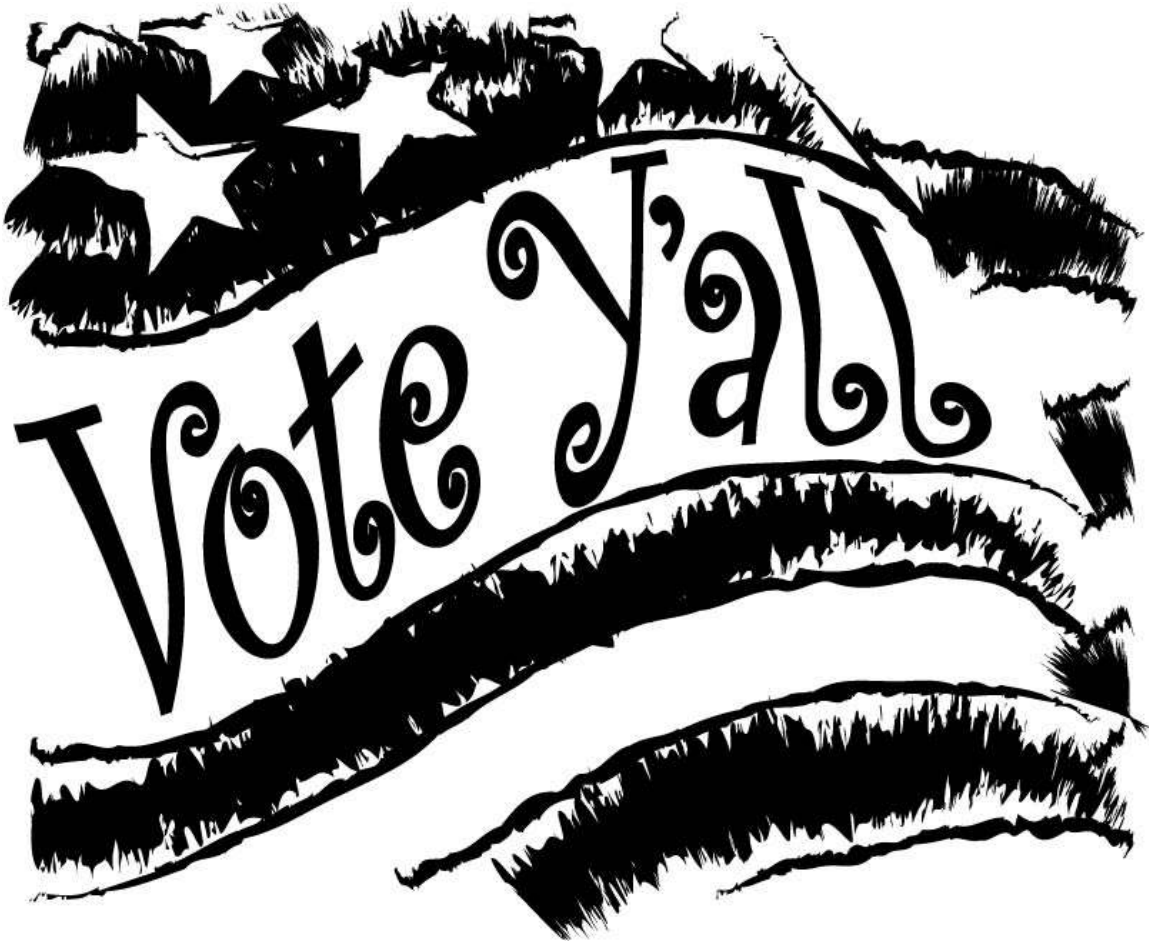
**Dierdre Payne**, editor

From "Voter Fraud" by Michael Slater, *The National Voter*, October 2007: **Buyer Beware**

Americans can be forgiven for believing that voter fraud is threatening the integrity of our elections...they're the victims of an organized effort to persuade them of just that. Americans are twice as likely to be hit by lightning than to have their vote cancelled out by a fraudulently cast ballot. Still, there's a well-funded, well-organized campaign underway to make Americans believe that voter fraud is a serious problem.

When it comes to claims of voter fraud and the accompanying solutions to this "problem," Americans need to adopt some good advice from the marketplace: buyer beware. Purveyors of voter fraud allegations deserve all the suspicion Americans normally reserve for used car salesmen. Tough questions are in order: What's the evidence? Who's making the claim or proposal? What's their agenda?

Closer scrutiny might well reveal that the real perpetrators of voter fraud are the ones making the claims. Read more at [www.lwv.org/TakeAction/Voter Registration](http://www.lwv.org/TakeAction/VoterRegistration)



To get your new League tee, see order form on next page!

**T-Shirt Order Form**

Tees are navy blue, Hanes, 100% cotton, preshrunk & tagless for extra comfort  
 Front: "Vote Y'all" design across the front (red, white, and royal blue)

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Qty	Description	Price	Size	Amount Enclosed
	LWV T-shirt (small, medium, large, XL)			\$15.00
	LWV T-shirt (XXL, XXXL)			\$15.00
	<b>SHIPPING &amp; HANDLING</b>			\$3.00
	<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED</b>	-----		-----

Place your order with Gene Everitt at [everittg@bellsouth.net](mailto:everittg@bellsouth.net) or at 601-910-4106.



## Renew your dues or sign up as a new member



### LWVMS MAL (Member at Large) Membership Coupon

This coupon is for those wishing to join the State League because they are not near a local League. Your dues cover memberships in the state and national Leagues. MALs are welcome to attend any local, state, or national League meeting.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are \$36. Members at the same address pay \$36. for the first member and half price (\$18.) for each additional member at that household. Students pay \$20.

**Make your check out to: LWVMS** and return to **LWVMS, Attn. Amy Griggs, Treasurer**, PO Box 55505, Jackson, MS 39296-5505

### LWV Jackson Area Membership Coupon

(Hinds, Madison and Rankin Counties)

Your dues cover membership in the local, state and national Leagues.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are \$50. For multiple, non-student, members, at the same address, the first one pays \$50 and any additional ones pay half price (\$25.00). Student dues are \$20.

**Make your check out to: LWV-Jackson** and mail to **LWV-Jackson, Attn: Margaret Wodetzki, Treasurer**, PO Box 68214, Jackson, MS 39286-8214.

### LWV Gulf Coast Membership Coupon

(Jackson, Harrison and Hancock Counties)

Your dues cover membership in the local, state and national Leagues.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are \$50. Members at the same address pay \$50. for the first member and half price (\$25.) for each additional member at that household. Students are \$20.

**Make your check out to: LWV-Gulf Coast** and return to **Bruno D. Schroeder, Treasurer**, 504 General Pershing Avenue, Ocean Springs, MS 39564.

**And bring a friend.**





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Phone: 601-352-4616  
Web address: [www.lwv-ms.org](http://www.lwv-ms.org)**

***Mission:***

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

**LWVMS 2011 – 2012 Calendar**

<b>November 8</b>	<b>State GENERAL ELECTION</b>
<b>November 29</b>	<b>Special Election runoff, if applicable</b>
<b>Through November</b>	<b>Local Leagues will study the “Role of the Federal Government in Public Education” and come to consensus</b>
<b>November 30</b>	<b>Consensus reports due to LWVUS</b>
<b>January 3, 2012</b>	<b>Legislature convenes (MS Const, article 4, section 36)</b>
<b>March 2012:</b>	<b>LWVUS Board of Directors reviews the consensus results for comment and approval of the position</b>
<b>March 13, 2012</b>	<b>Presidential primary (<a href="http://www.sos.ms.gov/ed_pubs/Elections">www.sos.ms.gov/ed_pubs/Elections</a>)</b>
<b>April 3</b>	<b>Primary run-off (<a href="http://www.sos.ms.gov/ed_pubs/Elections">www.sos.ms.gov/ed_pubs/Elections</a>)</b>