

# The Mississippi Voter

League of Women Voters of Mississippi

*Fran Leber, President: 601-956-2507--Aug. 2006--Ellen Russak, Voter Editor: 662-324-1800*



## President's Corner

We here in Mississippi are living in a time of turmoil dealing with issues on the local, state, and national levels. When I first arrived in Mississippi in the 1960s, it was also a time of turmoil and I decided for my own wellbeing as well as my family's, that I had to get involved in some small way to try to make a difference. The League and my church provided me the opportunities and values to move forward in a positive way by providing opportunities and methods for involvement.

**LWV Mississippi Council** exceeded my expectations in many ways. **Secretary of State, Eric Clark's** speech on Mississippi's implementation of HAVA (Help America Vote Act) was a relevant, timely report on an issue that is of foremost interest to us. It turns out that Mississippi is well ahead of many states in compliance with HAVA. The Secretary of State asked us to audit the voting machine votes recorded during the time the department demonstrated the new machines. The voting machines were a lot more accurate than our individual human counts!

The number of members attending Council was more than we expected and there was representation from all around the State. We also had visitors and some joined. I want to thank those of you who attended and those who brought raffle items for our fundraiser; you helped make the meeting such a success.

After MS Council, I attended the **LWV United States Convention** in

Minneapolis. As always, I came home proud to be a League member and will be energized for the remaining year. We are an organization of 130,000 grassroots members and we do an amazing amount of educating and action in our communities, our states, and the world. Let me mention that there are many issue areas, such as our Judicial Study, where grant money from the National League can be requested. A more thorough report on Convention follows farther on in the "Voter."

All League members are welcome to attend our LWVMS board meetings. Our next meeting is **August 19** in Jackson. We will discuss Local League requirements, membership growth, and program. Our goal is to increase membership by 5%.

This year our legislative agenda will be able to achieve more success because it is the year before state elections. You can help by attending our Legislative Visit Day and responding to calls to Action during 2007. Our legislative agenda will appear in the next "Voter."

In May of 2007, at our Mississippi League Convention, new officers will be elected and study items for the following two years will be voted on. Local Leagues should have February meetings on possible suggestions for study items to present to the state league. The primary purpose of a study is to reach member agreement on a SOLUTION to an issue and prepare the League to take ACTION to remedy the problem.

With Peace and Love!

*Fran Leber*

## **Coal-Generated Power Vs Wind Power**

### **Coal:**

A 60 watt incandescent light burning non-stop for one year requires 427 pounds of coal. Converting that coal to energy produces: 3 lbs. of sulfur dioxide (acid rain base), 3 lbs. of nitrogen oxide (smog and acid rain base), and 1,112 lb of carbon dioxide (greenhouse gas)

### **Wind:**

A single 600 kW wind turbine would only have to spin for 2.94 hours to power that light bulb for a year.

## ***Incandescent versus Compact Fluorescent Bulbs***

A single 600 kW wind turbine would have a spin for .64 hours to power an equivalent size compact fluorescent bulb for a year

Source: [www.geo.oregonstate.edu](http://www.geo.oregonstate.edu)

## **Convention Diversity Workshop**

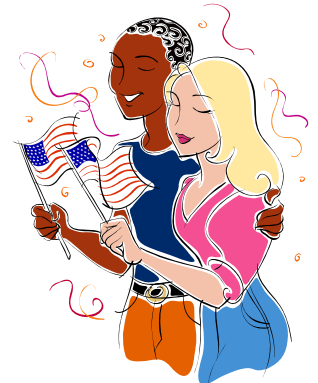
**Ellen Russak, Editor**

I was lucky enough to be chosen to be a delegate to the 47<sup>th</sup> LWVUS National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I went a day early in order to attend the pre-convention workshop entitled **Cross Cultural Conversations & Community Transformation**, led by **Vivian Jenkins Nelsen**. I've been to a lot of diversity workshops in the past and none were really very practical but this one was the exception. Ms Nelson divided us up into small groups and then gave us a list of case studies of real-life diversity problems that cropped up in leagues and then asked us to come up with solutions. With all our collective League experience it should have been a piece of cake, right?! Wrong. Some of the situations didn't seem to have any happy solutions

so we had to come up with "make the best of a bad situation" decisions.

Our group worked on the following problem: At a state League board meeting, the nominating committee was planning to introduce their choice for the position of next state president. The nominee was a Hispanic woman who was very active in the community and with her local league for the last 12 years and had served in several positions on their board including president. She was energetic, personable, organized, and knowledgeable. Before the meeting started, the state president was talking to the candidate and behind them, two other board members were talking together and the candidate overheard one of them say that she was worried that the candidate's accent would be a detriment to the League's mission. The candidate was very upset and worried that they might be right and said perhaps she should withdraw her name.

What should the president say to the candidate? What should she say to the two board members? Should the incident be brought to the attention of the whole board? Should a diversity training session be scheduled for the board? Should the board as a whole and/or the two women apologize to the candidate and if so, should it be in writing or verbally or both? Hmmmm. It was a lot to think about. We were all concerned that this highly qualified League member could quite possibly be lost to the League altogether if it was not handled well. What do you think you would do if you were in the state president's position? (and this was one of the easier situations we discussed)!



## Diversity workshop Continued

We also discussed what the word diversity meant to us. Was it only about race? What about politics, sex, age, religion, economic status, sexual orientation, disabilities, and education? We then shared our own experiences in trying to increase diversity within our Local Leagues.

I haven't lived in Mississippi long enough to know what works here and what doesn't but I shared what I had experienced as president of a regional League in Connecticut that included a large, stressed, inner city and a small, affluent, rural town. We had good luck attracting men because we started recruiting the politicians and soon we had enough men that other men felt comfortable joining. We had less luck with the African-American, Hispanic and low income Asian communities because no matter how hospitable we were, we never could acquire that critical number to allow a comfort level to form for them. What we did find, however, was that if we reached out to participate in their church and other organization activities, they learned to trust us and would in turn help us with get-out-the-vote efforts and would ask for League speakers. We also produced voting information in Spanish and Polish (Polish being another one of our large ethnic groups).

We tried to plan our meetings to accommodate working members; we made sure the buildings we used were handicap accessible and we got a microphone to allow the hard of hearing to participate. We picked up those who no longer liked to drive or had vision problems, and we made sure that no one sat alone. At debates, our question sorters were members from both the Republican and Democratic parties and we tried to have that kind of diversity on our board as well. Religion and sexual

orientation were not issues in our area but we did make prospective members aware that the League is a pro-choice organization in order to forestall future problems. Other Leagues provided baby sitting during meetings.

Once we looked at diversity more broadly, we could see that although we might not be so good in a few areas, we were great in others. I found the workshop an excellent reality check for me and was glad I made the extra time to attend.



***Our foremothers: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony***



## Voting Information

**League Voter Registration Site:** The general election is just a few months away. Make sure you, and your friends and family are registered to vote. Register at [www.lwv.org/registertovote](http://www.lwv.org/registertovote)

## **New Mississippi League Position!**

At our 5-13-06 LWVMS Council meeting at the Edison Walthall Hotel in Jackson, delegates passed the following position:

### **Accountability and Independence in the Judiciary:**

The League of Women Voters of Mississippi supports Merit Selection/Election

Retention as the means of selecting justices for the Mississippi Supreme Court and judges for the Mississippi Court of Appeals. This mode of selection involves:

- Nomination of justices and judges by a diverse, representative, nonpartisan commission whose members serve staggered terms.
- Staggered appointments for a specific term.
- Retention elections to be held periodically.



## **National League Messages**

### **Voting Rights Act Reauthorized – hooray!**

Nationwide, the League achieved the goal of reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act (VRA) before the congressional recess in August! This victory was the result of tremendous League activity throughout the country and on the Hill in support of the bicameral bill to renew the VRA (*“The Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006”*). President Bush signed the bill into law on July 27.



This success was celebrated by the large and diverse coalition of groups who worked for more than a year to reauthorize the VRA. League members can be proud of the extraordinary contributions of our local, state, and national Leagues as we advocated together for the renewal of the landmark civil rights law.

**Opposing Barriers to Citizen Participation in Voting:** The LWVUS sent a letter to the U.S. House of Representatives opposing a bill that would create new barriers to voting by eligible citizens by requiring a photo ID at the polling place and proof of citizenship in the voter registration process.

On Aug. 3rd, our new League President, **Mary Wilson**, testified against the photo ID bill before the U.S. House of Representative’s Committee on House Administration on “Securing the Vote.” It was excellent testimony and can be read in its entirety at: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) under “taking action”

### **Pushing for Passage of the Meehan-Shays Presidential Public Financing Legislation:**

The LWVUS joined with other organizations in a letter to U.S. Representatives urging them to co-sponsor and support the Meehan-Shays bill that would make a series of important reforms to the presidential public financing system.

### **League urges the U.S. House to Support a Ban on Leadership PACs:**

The LWVUS joined with other organizations in a letter to U.S. representatives urging them to publicly support legislative efforts to ban leadership PACs.

### **Providing Outreach to Overseas Citizens and Military Voters:**

The League has become an alliance partner

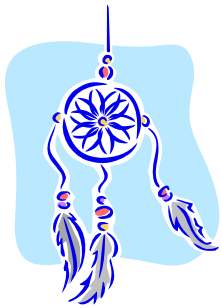
with the Overseas Vote Foundation, an organization dedicated to providing voter services to overseas voters. 2006 marks the first time the League will have an effective way to reach overseas voters who may need our voter services.

**Traveling in Kenya as part of the “Kenyans Working Together for Good Governance” Program:**

Two League members, accompanied by the LWVEF Director of Global Democracy Programs, are currently traveling in Kenya as part of the League's global democracy program, **“Kenyans Working Together for Good Governance: Civil Society, Government, and Members of Parliament.”** This program aims to strengthen accountability and openness in Kenyan governmental institutions through an exchange program with Kenyan women and League members.



**Betsy Love and the Mississippi Married Women’s Property Act of 1839**



Mississippi Chickasaw Indian, Betsy Love, won a court battle that set the stage in establishing the principle that married women could own their own property and that it could not be seized by their husbands or their husbands' creditors. The landmark **Married Women's Property Act of 1839** in Mississippi can be traced directly to her and the lawsuit, ***Fisher v. Allen***, in which her rights to keep her property after marriage were defended.

Betsy Love married a white man, James Allen, in a Chickasaw ceremony. She was his second wife, and the mother of eleven

children. They all resided on the Love family's Chickasaw land. A lawyer named John Fisher sued her husband in March 1831 in Monroe County Circuit Court for two hundred dollars in a default judgment. The sheriff seized Betsy's slave, Toney, to satisfy that debt. This was a slave Betsy owned prior to her marriage.

The attorney for the Allens argued in the appeal that, contrary to American and Mississippi law, the customs of the Chickasaw Indians were such that a husband and wife held property separately and that each contracted debts on their own. The Allens prevailed on appeal in 1837.

Mississippi Senator T.B. J. Hadley, introduced a bill for the protection and preservation of the rights and property of married women. It was voted down several times before it was finally passed on Feb. 15, 1839, and signed into law by Governor Alexander G. McNutt.

Senator Hadley, as well as the other state legislators, would have known about the *Fisher v. Allen* case and the precedent it established. Any Mississippi lawmaker would have reasoned that if an Indian woman could circumvent her husband's creditors by claiming that property belonging to the wife under Indian customs is not liable to the debts of her husband, white women ought to be able to do the same. Following Mississippi's example, many other states passed their own version of the Married Women's Property Act.

It is interesting that sometimes good things can come about out of rather ignoble situations.

*Information based on an article by LeAnn Howe from the Mississippi Historical Society's website.*

## LWV Mississippi Council

Council was held on 5-13-06 at the Edison Walthall Hotel in Jackson. 31% of our membership attended. **Secretary of State Erik Clark**, spoke on how MS is doing with implementation of HAVA.

Along with election of officers, members voted to defer 2006-2007 state dues for the Gulf Coast local League due to the serious disruption of their League by Hurricane Katrina.

### **Three awards were presented:**

**1. The Thelma Workman Award** was presented to **Stacy Callender** for her excellent work on the Early Education Study and our annual "*Citizen Handbook & Calendar*," for the last three years.

**2. The Fran Leber Leadership Award** was presented to **Barbara Powell** for her continued active support to the League at State and Local Levels.

**3. The Appreciation Award** went to **Doris Barwick** for her efforts to integrate the MS League in the 1970s. Doris has been in the MS League longer than anybody else – bless her heart!

### Meet Mississippi League's State Board

- **President:** Fran Leber
- **1st Vice President Membership:** Mildred Halley
- **2nd Vice President Voter Service:** Neva Greenwald & Judy Lacy
- **Treasurer:** Dr. Bill Hawley
- **Secretary:** Minta Uzodinma
- **Early Education:** Stacy Callender
- **Health Issues –** Minta Uzodinma
- **Early Education:** Stacy Callender
- **Chip Program:** Dr. Bill Hawley
- **Voter (News Letter) & Publicity** EllenRussak
- **Judicial Study:** Mary Margaret Bollinger

- **Open Records & Meetings:** Neva Greenwald
- **Judicial Study:** Mary Margaret Bollinger
- **Citizen's Guide/Calendar:** Stacy Callender
- **Development:** Judy Lacy
- **Web Master:** Kirt & Kelly Bush
- **National Items:** Deloris Lee
- **Health Issues:** Minta Uzodinma
- **Civil Liberties:** Jane Lindsey
- **Voter (News Letter) & Publicity** Ellen Russak



**UNIT:** A unit is a state-recognized group of members-at-large in an area where there is no Local League. Units operate under the direction of the LWVMS.

- **Chairperson:** Dr. Bill Hawley  
Phone – 601-799-3549
- **Secretary:** Linda Hanberry

## National League Elections

At the LWVUS Convention in Minneapolis, a new board was elected. **Our new National League President is Mary G. Wilson** from Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is a 20 year member of the League with experience at the local, state, and national levels. She has been an attorney for the last 30 years. She stated in her campaign that, ***“Together we can take the League to new heights, promoting citizen involvement, safeguarding voting processes, preserving individual liberties and protecting our representative government*”**

## LWV National Convention

Over 1000 delegates to the LWVUS's 47<sup>th</sup> biennial national convention met June

10-13, in the beautiful city of Minneapolis, Minnesota to set the direction the League will take for the next two years. Although the elections, budget, and bylaw changes were all important, the most hotly debated items were the National Programs and which ones would get priority. In the end, the LWVUS **Democracy Agenda** was elevated to the highest priority with an emphasis on advocacy and education of all citizens about the vital importance of the American system of Checks and Balances and Separation of Powers.

The National League recommended three program items: all of which passed.

1. A convention concurrence to adopt a death penalty position that read: ***“The LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty.”***
2. A three year study of immigration policies (*If this is of interest to you, we are looking for a study committee!*)
3. To retain all other League positions.

Many non-recommended items were moved for consideration: the ones that passed were:

**1. Voting Machine Ballot Verification:**  
A resolution stating: Whereas: Some LWVs have had difficulty applying the SARA Resolution (Secure, Accurate, Recountable, and Accessible) passed last Convention, and Whereas: Paperless electronic voting systems are not inherently secure, can malfunction, and do not provide a recountable audit trail, Therefore be it resolved that:

The position on the *Citizens’ Right to Vote*, be interpreted to affirm that LWVUS supports only voting systems that are designed so that:

- a) they employ a voter-verifiable paper ballot or other paper record,

said paper being the official record of the voter’s intent; and

- b) the voter can verify, either by eye or with the aid of suitable devices for those who have impaired vision, that the paper ballot/record accurately reflects his or her intent; and
- c) such verification takes place while the voter is still in the process of voting; and
- d) the paper ballot/record is used for audits and recounts; and
- e) the vote totals can be verified by an independent hand count of the paper ballot/record; and
- f) routine audits of the paper ballot/record in randomly selected precincts can be conducted in every election and the results published by the jurisdiction.

**2. Balance of Powers:** Resolved that the LWV:

- a) Elevate the restoration of our System of Checks and Balances and Separation of Powers to a top priority by specifically adding it to our Democracy Agenda for advocacy and education.
- b) Denouncing the erosion of our System of Checks and Balances and Separation of Powers and the resulting damage to our constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties.
- c) Call upon Congress to assume its vital role for oversight and as a co-equal branch of government responsive to the citizens its members represent.

**3. Internet Neutrality:**

Resolved, that the LWV of the US support the concept of Internet neutrality by calling upon Congress to protect equal access to the Internet.



## National Women's History Quiz

[http://www.nwhp.org/tlp/quiz/quiz\\_answers.html](http://www.nwhp.org/tlp/quiz/quiz_answers.html)

**1. Which mother led a 125-mile march of child workers all the way from the mills of Pennsylvania to President Theodore Roosevelt's vacation home on Long Island?**

The feisty labor organizer, Mary Harris Jones (1830–1930), did just that in 1903. Called "Mother" Jones by everyone, her goal for the march was to bring the evils of child labor to the attention of the president and the national press.

**2. One of the most important Union spies and scouts during the Civil War was a Black woman who had escaped from slavery. Can you name her?**

Harriet Tubman (1820–1913), who also led over 300 people in their escape from slavery via the system of safe-houses known as the Underground Railroad.

**3. Before the 1960s, farm workers in the U.S. were not paid even the minimum wage, and had no influential representatives to fight for their rights. What part did Dolores Huerta play in changing this situation?**

Dolores Huerta (b. 1930), a long-time Chicana labor activist, co-founded the United Farm Workers union in 1962. She served for over two decades as the union's vice president and chief lobbyist, savvy labor contract negotiator, and nationwide speaker.

**4. The line of beauty products she created for African-American people made her the first Black woman millionaire in the United States. Who was she, and when did she do this?**

In 1905, Madam C.J. Walker (1867–1919) began developing an effective hair lotion, and then a special comb to straighten curly hair. She eventually employed 3,000 people, mostly Black women, to work in her factories and sell her line of products.

**5. She came to the U.S. when she was a teenager to study science and stayed to become "the world's foremost female experimental physicist." Her most famous experiment disproved what had been thought to be a fundamental scientific law. Who is this outstanding Asian-American scientist?**

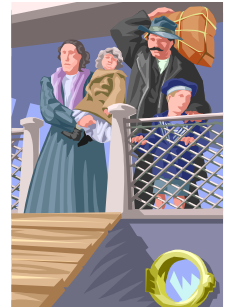
Chien-Shiung Wu (1912 – 1997) received both the National Science Medal and the internationally respected Wolf prize for her scientific research. Her most famous experiment showed that conservation of parity could be violated in nature.

**6. She took her job as "First Lady" seriously, traveling the country and the world to gather information about the problems and concerns of workers, children, minorities, and the poor. She wrote a daily newspaper column and made frequent radio broadcasts. Who was this active wife of a president?**

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962) was America's First Lady for 12 years. Later, she served as U.S. delegate to the United Nations where she was instrumental in securing passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## National League Raises Dues

The delegates at convention voted to support the LWVUS' proposed dues increase to \$26.30 for FY 2006-2007 and to \$26.80 for FY 2007-2008 (this increase is to support the three year Immigration study). As you can see, this leaves very little from our dues for State and Local projects. This is why our fund-raisers are so important



### Save the League Money – Use E-Mail!

The State League can save postage costs by sending your "**Voter**" via E-mail, if you choose to do that. Send Ellen Russak your E-address and she will set it up for you. **erussak@aol.com**

### **Updated 2006 "VOTE!" Brochure**

This newly revised tri-fold brochure is a succinct, step-by-step guide to voting and Election Day designed to reach out to new voters. To order, email **pubsales@lwv.org** and ask for **Pub. 2062**.



### "Thank you," Kay Maxwell

On a personal note, I would like to thank outgoing LWVUS President, **Kay Maxwell** for her four years of dedicated service. I had the pleasure of watching her in action when she was the CT State League President. - *Editor*

# It's time to join or renew your dues!!!

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## 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 or those MALs who wish to renew their membership for the July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007 FY; **this includes MAL Unit members.**

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

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

Make your check out to: **LWVMS, for \$35 and return to Dr. Bill Hawley, Treasurer, PO Box 188, Picayune, MS 39466-1188.** If more than one person at the same address wishes to join, the dues drop to half price for them (\$52.50 for two at the same address).



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## Gulf Coast Local League Membership Coupon

\*The LWVMS is waiving its portion of your dues this year so the Gulf Coast League will retain all \$ except the \$26.30 taken out for the National League.

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

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

Make your check out to: **LWV-Gulf Coast, for \$40 and return to Bill Lindsey, 12195 Oaklawn Rd., Biloxi, MS 39532-8165.** If more than one person at the same address wishes to join, the dues drop to half price for them (\$60 for two).

## LWVMS Calendar for 2006 ~ 2007

**August 19, 2006** (Saturday) – **Board Meeting** - Jackson. **Will include workshops for Local Leagues and MAL Unit.** Call Fran Leber at 601-956-2507 for directions.

**November 5, 2006** (Sunday) – **Candidates Voter Guide** in *“The Clarion Ledger.”*

**November 7, 2006** (Tuesday) – **Election Day.** Polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. If you are in line at 7:00 p.m. you can vote.

**November 18, 2006** (Saturday) – **Board Meeting** – Jackson - All Welcome to attend.

**November 21,** (Tuesday) – **General Election Runoff** - Polls open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

**December** – Happy Holidays!!

**February 13, 2007** (Tuesday)–**Legislative Visit Day**–Capitol Building, Jackson. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. -All members encouraged to attend (tomorrow is the League’s 87<sup>th</sup> birthday)!

**March 10, 2007** (Saturday) - **Board Meeting** – Jackson - All Welcome to attend.

**May 19, 2007** (Saturday) - **LWVMS Convention.**

**June 2007** – **LWVUS** Council in Washington, D.C.



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**Mission:**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization that 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.