

# THE VOTER

AUGUST 2008

2403 San Mateo NE, W-16C  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
Telephone and FAX  
505-884-8441  
www.lwvabc.org

Diane Goldfarb  
President

Aileen Gatterman  
Voter Editor

**GENERAL MEETING LUNCHEON**  
**THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2008**  
**Albuquerque Grand Airport Hotel**  
**2910 Yale SE**  
**Reservations \***

**Speaker: Mary G. Wilson, LWVUS President**

**Topic: "Update on LWVUS Internal and External Affairs"**

Mary G. Wilson is the 17<sup>th</sup> President of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS)--having first been elected in June 2006 and reelected in June 2008. During her tenure as President, Mary has helped bring openness and better communication among and between the three levels of the League.

A member of the League since about 1984, her first League job was as Secretary to the League of Women Voters of Albuquerque/Bernalillo County (LWV/ABC). Mary served as President of the League of Women Voters New Mexico (LWVNM) from 1999 to 2001 and was Advocacy Chair of the LWVUS while serving on the National Board from 2004-2006.

A partner in the law firm of Aungier & Wilson, P. C., Albuquerque, Mary has been a practicing attorney for 32 years. She currently practices primarily in the area of estate planning. Mary is a 1975 graduate of the University of Denver College of Law (now Sturm College of Law), Denver, Colorado. She is licensed to practice law in New Mexico and Colorado.

When not at her law office in Albuquerque, her League office in Washington, D.C., or traveling for the League, Mary lives on a ranch near Abo, New Mexico, with her partner of thirty-five years, José A. Mora, her 92-year old mother, four horses, and two donkeys.

\*Cost of the luncheon is \$16, payable at the door. Reservations are required. Call the office at 884-8441 by 10:00 a.m. on Monday, August 11. If you prefer a fruit plate rather than the menu item, please let us know at the time you make your reservations.



LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson presiding at the June 2008 national League Convention in Portland, Oregon. New Mexico League members are delighted that Mary was elected to serve a second term.

PHOTO BY DIANE GOLDFARB

## COMING EVENTS

September 13: LWVCMN Salad Luncheon  
Immanuel Presbyterian Church  
(See page 3)

October 7: **Voters' Guide** Publication Event  
(See Page 7)

October: LWVCMN Judicial Forum  
Date TBA (See page 7)

November 15: New Mexico Legislative Workshop

**LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS  
ALBUQUERQUE/  
BERNALILLO COUNTY**

**Board Meeting**

1st Thursday of each month  
5:30 p.m.  
Offices of  
Sutin, Thayer & Browne  
6565 Americas Parkway NE

**Program Committees**

Check with the following  
League members about  
community activities:

**Advocacy**

Delores Watkins  
823-2308

**Drug Policy**

Delores Watkins  
823-2308

**Natural Resources**

JoAnne Ramponi  
298-2716  
Includes transportation,  
land use, air quality,  
water and energy

All League members  
are welcome at all  
unit meetings, committee,  
and board meetings.

The *VOTER* is published  
each month by the  
League of Women Voters  
of Albuquerque/Bernalillo  
County.

**President's Corner**

Josephine Porter, Marilyn Morgan, Jan Bray and I attended the LWVUS Convention in Portland, Oregon last month. It went well—the weather was beautiful and the convention itself, attended by over 700 delegates, went very smoothly. LWVUS President Mary Wilson ran the plenary sessions superbly and made her fellow New Mexicans very proud.

As expected, delegates overwhelmingly and with little discussion approved an increase in the per member payment to the national organization of \$1.20 for the 2008-2009 fiscal year and an additional increase of \$1.20 for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. That means that \$28.00 of each LWVCNM member's \$50 dues goes to LWVUS this year, and next year it will be \$29.20. (\$12 goes to our state organization, currently leaving LWVCNM with only \$10.00 from each membership).

The budget, program, and several bylaws changes were adopted, as were some resolutions and a study on the national popular vote compact as a method of electing the U.S. President. One resolution that narrowly passed directed LWVUS to redesign its fundraising requests so they cannot be misconstrued as membership recruitment or dues notices. It further directed national to enlist the help of state and local Leagues in doing this. Since these letters have been the cause of some problems for us locally, I was especially pleased to see this resolution pass.

As always, there were numerous caucuses and workshops—far too many for everyone to attend. As a local board member I'm responsible for seeing that our League is managed well, so I concentrated on the workshops dealing with management topics. The one on writing effective fundraising letters was well done. I participated in others on money matters and fundraising from individuals, as well as sessions for presidents and Leagues with over 100 members. I have returned home with many handouts and notes.

A convention such as this one is most useful for the exchange of ideas among the delegates, and I believe that all of us from New Mexico came home with some new ideas. It is also apparent, however, that there are Leagues out there that are struggling. Between January 2005 and January 2008 national membership declined by 7,200. In fact, there has been a gradual decline over many years. Membership in most states has gone down, yet there has been a slow but steady increase in New Mexico (we are now #9 in per capita membership). Our own local League has not only increased during the past few years but has had a surge in membership since January. Kathy Altobelli of the Membership Committee reports that we now have 350 members. While we have some of the same problems as other Leagues, we can take satisfaction in knowing that we are growing, our attendance at unit meetings is stable and that we have many good projects going on.

Diane Goldfarb

**IN MEMORIAM**

Our condolences to LWVCNM member Mary Ellen Smith on the recent death of her husband, Judson Ford, Jr., who was also a League member.

**MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

Gifts to the League of Women Voters of Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Education Fund have been received from Marilyn Morgan in memory of Doris Johnston and Elsie Hampleman.

Reported by Betty Burnett

**LWVCNM SALAD LUNCHEON**

Our second annual Salad Luncheon will be held on Saturday, September 13, 2008, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., at Immanuel Presbyterian Church. This is the same location that we had last year. It is an opportunity for us to invite anyone we feel might be interested in joining League to come and find out what we have planned for the coming year.

All League members are invited to bring a salad that serves eight and to join in the fun. There will be more information in the September *Voter* and on the website. Please save time that Saturday to get together with League friends and with those who are interested in what we do. Remember that you can bring your friends to this event and share your enthusiasm with them.

Call JoAnne at 884-8441 if you can help with this event. We need help with setup, serving and cleanup.

**REPORT FROM CONVENTION 2008: Vote18****I was elected President of the United States!**

It was the culmination of the Vote18 workshop, a project to get young people signed up for – and interested in – voting. Walt Townes from the Vote18 Project ran us through the Vote18 lesson plan, going back to mid-1700's America, when only the King (he put on a crown) had a vote, and discussing the addition of each new group of voters: white male property owners, black men, women, and finally 18 year olds. As each new group gained the franchise, the workshop participants in that category joined "King Walt" on the voting side of the room. Then, two volunteers competed for the Presidency, myself and Laura Hill from the Alabama League, and most of the workshop participants finally got to exercise their franchise – excepting those who had been arbitrarily excluded. These represented the voters who exclude themselves by not voting.

The Vote18 project is aimed largely at high school students and younger. Vote18 is touring the U.S. before the fall election, and will be in New Mexico on September 1-2, looking for volunteers, training people to conduct the workshop, and holding workshops for students. The League ought to get involved!

For more information, see their website, [vote18.org](http://vote18.org).  
Cheryl Haaker, LWVNM Delegate

*Note: More 2008 Convention reports begin on page 5. — Ed.*

**DRUG POLICY COMMITTEE**

The Drug Policy Committee meeting previously scheduled for August 28 has been cancelled. Instead of the regular meeting, the Committee will be preparing for a presentation at the New Mexico Conference on Aging. On Wednesday, August 27 the Committee will join the Pain Initiative Group to present a workshop and discussion on pain in the older person. Information on the Conference appears at the end of this article.

The next regular meeting will be on Friday, September 26 at Manzano del Sol, 6th Floor Lounge. The agenda for the September meeting will include a report on the activities of the New Mexico Legislative Interim Committee on Courts, Corrections and Justice. In addition, the report will present information on probable legislation related to the Drug Policy positions. We will also plan how to move ahead in the study of addiction. Four helpful contacts for this study have been established.

You are always welcome to attend any of our meetings as an observer or a participant. Call Dee Watkins at 884-8441 for more information.

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**THE 2008 NEW MEXICO CONFERENCE ON AGING  
A DIVERSE COMMUNITY: EXPLORING OPTIONS,  
EXPANDING HORIZONS**

August 26-29, 2008

Sandia Resort and Casino

Albuquerque, NM

**Activities:**

Morning session with speakers and workshops — Entertainment — Reception — Door prizes — Keynote Speaker — Awards — Health Fair Exhibits — Sports & Wellness Fair — 70 Workshops — 40 Roundtables — Friday Fiesta

One day registration for Seniors, 55 and older, is \$10  
Friday, August 29 is a free day with many activities  
Details of the schedule can be found on the website:  
[www.nmaging.state.nm.us/](http://www.nmaging.state.nm.us/). Also, a copy of the details  
will be in the League office.

**A Bit of History**

On May 3, 1948, Albuquerque and Los Alamos were granted League status by the National Board.

League of Women Voters New Mexico

State and Local Leagues, History and Program, 1982, p.17

By: Mariette Cunico, LWVNM Historian

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**ADVOCACY CORNER**

The next meeting of the Advocacy Steering Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, August 6, 1:00 –3:00 p.m. at the League office. The agenda will include:

- A. Reports on NM Legislative Interim Committee meetings, the Federal Real ID ACT (RIDA), options for the New Mexico Observer Corp program, and other items as available;
- B. Review of Steering Committee objectives; and
- C. Planning for future meetings.

Members are always welcome to observe or participate. Call Dee Watkins, 884-8441, for information .

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**EFFORT ON PAY EQUITY FOR WOMEN CONTINUES  
Advocacy Committee Report  
June 28, 2008**

This report is a follow-up on the Call to Action printed in the May 2008 *LWV/ABC Voter*. The Call gave League background information and referenced the Supreme Court decision in Ledbetter v. Goodyear which prompted the introduction of the Fair Pay Restoration Act. The following report traces the circumstances behind the lawsuit, explains the basis for the Supreme Court decision, and informs League members of the actions of Congress on the issue.

Following her 1979 hire at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Alabama, Lilly Ledbetter served for 19 years until a co-worker alerted her to the fact that her salary was substantially lower than that of all her male counterparts with similar responsibilities. During March of 1998, Ledbetter inquired at Goodyear regarding the pay disparity, and absent any relief, sought recourse by filing an Equal Employment Opportunity charge in July of 1998. Ms. Ledbetter then retired early from Goodyear in November, 1998, and following Equal Employment Opportunity Commission denial, sought judicial relief in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Discrimination in Employment) and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. The appeal reached the U.S. Supreme Court seeking \$223,776 in back pay and \$3 Million in punitive damages. The Supreme Court, on May 29, 2007, denied the appeal in a 5 to 4 decision quoting the statutory limitations period indicating that the claim was untimely as charges should have been filed 18 years earlier (Ledbetter was unaware of the discriminatory act until

recently) within the 180 day filing period of the initial pay action. Justice Alito (joined by Justices Roberts, Scalia, Kennedy and Thomas) prepared the Majority Opinion maintaining that the statutory time period prevailed. Justice Ginsberg (joined by Justices Stevens, Souter and Breyer) prepared the Dissenting Opinion holding that the discriminatory act was ongoing with each subsequent pay event.

On March 6, 2007, bills addressing the pay equity issue were introduced into both houses of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. These bills amended the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of wage discrimination. Representative R. DeLauro (with 220 co-sponsors) introduced a bill stipulating that each individual paycheck constituted a discriminatory action. This measure passed the House of Representatives, 225 to 199, on July 31, 2007. The Senate measure did not achieve similar success. Senator H. Clinton (with 22 cosponsors) introduced a Fair Pay Restoration Act, but it lacked six votes needed for successful passage. The measure was also under threat of a veto by President Bush. Current plans are to reintroduce the bill to a future, more receptive Congress with no threat of a subsequent veto.

Karen M. Douglas

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**NEW MEMBERS' EVENT**

Special thanks to Diane and Don Goldfarb for opening their home on Saturday, June 28 to host our third New Members' Social Event. This event is sponsored by the Board of Directors as an opportunity for all members who have joined in the last year to meet the Board and learn more about the work of the different officers of the Board. Members of the Board, in turn, learn from the new members what their interests are and what areas of League they might want to become involved with. Guests who attend may also be interested in what the League does and have the opportunity to join if they wish.

There were forty-two people who attended this year's event. Nineteen of those attending were new members, ten were Board members and thirteen were spouses or guests. One person was welcomed as a guest and then as a new member.

We are already planning for the next New Members' Social Event which will take place in July, 2009.

JoAnne Ramponi  
Membership Chair

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## REPORTS FROM THE LWVUS CONVENTION

Several delegates to the June 2008 LWVUS Convention in Portland, Oregon sent reports for this *Voter*. It is regrettable that space does not permit publication of these reports in their entirety. While only certain sections of the reports are printed here, it should be noted that the delegates had a great deal of praise for LWVUS President Mary Wilson and for the way she conducted the Convention.

The delegates also gave high marks to speakers at the plenary sessions: Oregon's first woman governor, Barbara Roberts, who encouraged women to become leaders in politics; another former Oregon governor, John Kitzhaber, M.D., who discussed problems in health care in the 21st century and some possible solutions; and Dr. V. Ramanathan, a scientist on the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), who spoke about changing attitudes in order to deal with the problems presented by this global challenge.

The banquet speaker, former Colorado Supreme Court Justice, Rebecca Love Kourlis, who is now the Executive Director of the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, was inspiring in her commitment to the goal of the Institute which is to educate and advocate for accountability and independence of the judiciary.

The delegates' reports included favorable comments on the wide variety in the "marketplace" where different Leagues offered items for sale or staffed booths which presented information on issues. The delegates, in addition, commented on the great number of choices of workshops and caucuses which one could attend.

The 2008 national Convention was, evidently, one of League's best.

— Ed.

### The Reports

I was particularly interested and impressed by the health care discussions. I went to a caucus sponsored by the Massachusetts League on Health Care Reform in Massachusetts: Miracle or Myth. They discussed how the reforms adopted have been working out both practically and financially.

Chapter 58, the Massachusetts health care law, included an individual mandate to purchase coverage (with fines for noncompliance) and an employer mandate to contribute a sum per employee, was an attempt to get to 100 % coverage. Subsidies to those under 300% of poverty were included. The state's existing costly, complex public/private program was left intact and a new layer of public/private plans was developed by a new bureaucracy: the Health Care Connector Board. These plans were assigned by income level. The subsidy was on a sliding scale. The employer contribution was a modest \$295 per employee (for employers who don't offer health care plan). This is not even close to the actual cost of an individual plan which is estimated to be \$5000 a year.

There were far larger numbers of uninsured than expected and the cost is now \$400 million over budget. There is no mechanism to control medical or administrative cost.

What happened with the individual mandate? The Massachusetts Connector Board will give 62 thousand waivers to families this year. This plan is not universal. The application for subsidy is eleven pages long and must be completed again each year. Workers must take their employer's plan. This is true even if it is a poorer plan than one the state offers. The Massachusetts Miracle is a myth: over budget, not universal, not efficient, not even effective in cutting costs, and only tangentially related to health.

Jan Bray, LWVCNM Delegate

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From early morning until late at night, workshops and caucuses were filled to standing room only. Some of my favorites were:

- A presentation from the RAND Corporation on "Analyzing Strategies for a Secure World, An Effective Methodology for Analyzing Conflicting Public Policies," which described a workshop in which the League participated;

(Continued on page 6)

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(Continued from page 5)

2008 LWVUS Convention Reports

- “Creation of a Department of Peace and Nonviolence,” presented by the LWV Wheaton, IL, which echoed a proposal recently presented to the Albuquerque City Council. (It failed as a non-recommended item to the League, but I participated in a meeting afterward to find alternate ways it might be presented again to the League);
- Reports from various states about Making Your Vote Count and Ranked Choice Voting (Instant Runoff Voting);
- “Campaign Finance Reform and Full Public Financing: The Strongest Law in the Nation” featured reports from states on their successes to achieve public financing of elections. New Mexico reported on its successes with the Albuquerque Clean Elections campaign (ACE) for mayoral and council elections, for statewide election of Public Regulation Commissioners, for elections of Supreme Court Justices and Appellate Court Judges, and the hope for this same success in all statewide elections. This proved to be an exciting question-and-answer exchange of ideas.

I think the 2008 Convention was a stimulating, kickoff for the next two years of hard work for the League of Women Voters of the United States. We have an opportunity to make a difference and we have the leadership to do well.

Marilyn B. Morgan, LWVCNM Delegate

I attended several caucuses relating to Fair Representation:

Concurrence on Redistricting. As reported last month, the Virginia and Oregon Leagues wanted to change the generic LWVUS position on apportionment to a more detailed one which spelled out goals for forming electoral districts. California objected that it would derail their lobbying efforts. A joint statement acceptable to all three was worked out at the Convention (I even caucused with part of the California delegation at Subway), but it was ultimately, after revisions and much debate, rejected by the membership. Concerns included the idea that every state was so different and unique that no criteria could be applicable to all, and that there ought to be some kind of *study* of redistricting first (!) [See the *Fair Representation* web page, [www.lwvcnm.org/fair/](http://www.lwvcnm.org/fair/), for references to several.]



Citizen Assemblies: Breaking the Logjam: The Arizona League talked about how they had organized a redistricting initiative which had resulted in a governor-appointed, independent group of multi-partisan citizens doing the redistricting for the state, instead of the legislature. It was both exhilarating and depressing. “Better” districts were drawn than the legislature had done – but they turned out to be even less competitive. The redistricting group continues to meet — in court, due to lawsuits that are still ongoing against them — years later. And the legislature is working to politicize the independent commission by changing its members from appointed to *elected* from the Congressional districts they had set up.

Effective Advocacy: Tim O’Brien of the Praxis Project ([www.thepraxisproject.org](http://www.thepraxisproject.org)) went through the steps, from defining your issue to evaluating your success. Materials included worksheets and sample plans. Overall, magnificent. I expect it to be very useful next year, when the Legislature goes into session.

Cheryl Haaker, LWVNM Delegate

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Audrey Bell  
348 Rome Lane  
Corrales 87048

Ellin and Jonathan Hewes  
3813 La Hacienda NE 87110

Jane E. Peterson  
6426 Dona Linda Pl. NW 87120

Grace Brown  
6129 Katson NE 87109

Marilyn C. Oatway  
2600 Bosque Entrada Tr NW 87120

Address and Phone Changes  
Joan Chism:  
5201 Roma NE, Apt 417 87108-1387  
Mary Ellen Smith

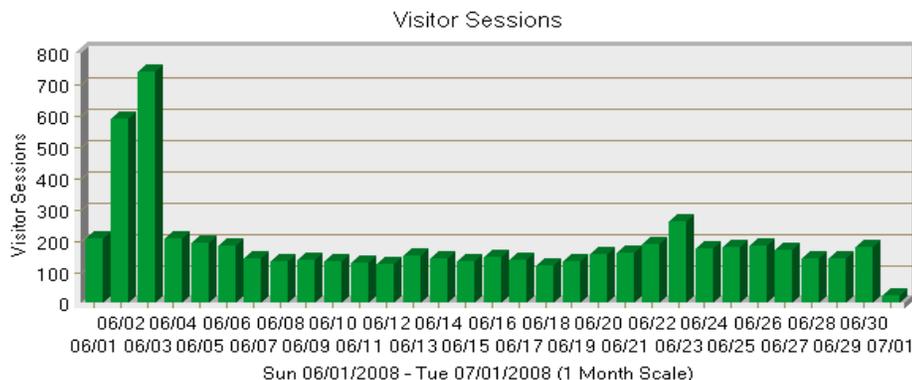
Jane Blair Darnell  
P.O. Box 1239  
Corrales 87048

Carol Paxton-Hippe  
4824 Skyline Ridge Ct NE 87111

Email Addresses available from office  
or JoAnne Ramponi for Audrey Bell,  
Grace Brown, Jane Blair Darnell, Ellin  
and Jonathan Hewes, Marilyn C.  
Oatway, Jane E. Peterson

Submitted by Kathleen Kimler Altobelli, July 3, 2008

**WEBSITE REPORT**



The graph at left shows that after the June 3, 2008 primary election access to our website dropped off dramatically, as was expected.

See all the statistics at [www.aqsafety.com/stats/](http://www.aqsafety.com/stats/).  
Cheryl Haaker  
Technology Chair

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/NOTICES**

**DUES NOTICES**

Just a little advance notice: the annual dues notices will be sent out to members in September.

JoAnne Ramponi  
Membership Chair

**PROGRESS REPORT**

Progress has been made toward the name change to the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico (LWVCNM) on the page headers and the address in issues of the *Voter*. We are eagerly anticipating the final approval.  
— Ed.

**OCTOBER EVENTS**

The October 7 *Voters' Guide* publication event will be a new and exciting way for LWVCNM to announce to the voters that the 2008 *Guide* has been printed and will be readily available at a number of locations.

The LWVCNM Judicial Forum is planned for the week of October 20. The date and location will be announced as soon as the reservations for the meeting place are confirmed.

Look for more information on these events in the next *Voter* and, of course, all the details in the October issue.

**August Calendar**

- 6 Advocacy Committee, 1:00 p.m.
- 7 LWVCNM Board, 5:30 p.m,
- 7 Deadline for September Voter
- 14 General Meeting Luncheon  
11:45 a.m., Albuquerque Grand Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale SE\*
- 26 Women's Equity Day
- 26 Fair Representation Study Group, 1:00 p.m.

\* Luncheon Unit reservations: call the League office (884-8441) by 10:00 a.m. the preceding Monday. If you do not attend and have not cancelled by the deadline, you will be billed for the cost.

Note:

Information on the times, locations and contacts for our Luncheon, Midtown, Evening and Sandoval County Units is omitted from this Voter because these Units will not meet in August.

Membership:

You can join LWV anytime of the year. Contact JoAnne Ramponi at 884-8441

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 Organization  
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 Albuquerque, NM  
 Permit No. 443

League of Women Voters  
 Albuquerque/Bernalillo County  
 2403 San Mateo NE, W-16C  
 Albuquerque, NM 87110  
 Return service requested



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