



The Voter

November 2011

League of Women Voters
of Central New Mexico
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Bill Jordan to speak at December Luncheon Unit

In January 2012 the New Mexico Legislature will work with the governor to develop the FY 2013 budget. The League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico will devote its December meetings to looking at the potential budget. LWVCNM will study projected revenues, need for new revenues, need for new programs, enhancement of existing programs, and possible elimination of existing programs.



Bill Jordan

The luncheon unit speaker will be Bill Jordan, policy director for New Mexico Voices for Children, who will discuss an advocate's view of the New Mexico state budget. The luncheon will be held on Nov. 10 at 11:45 a.m. at the Hotel Elegante, 2020 Menaul N.E.

Founded in 1987 by a group of pediatricians, New Mexico Voices for Children (NM Voices) is a progressive, nonpartisan, statewide advocacy organization. The organization works to create systems-level sustainable change that will improve the lives of New Mexico's children. To accomplish their mission, it works with state and national lawmakers and officials to shape and implement public policies that are supportive of children and working families.

The cost of the luncheon is \$15, payable at the door. Reservations must be either called in to the League office at 884-8441 or emailed to lunch@lwvcnm.org by 10 a.m. Monday, Nov. 7. Be sure to specify if you prefer the vegetarian

option.

Other November speakers will include:

* Evening Unit, Nov 8, 6 p.m., Towers Apartment community room, 5404 Montgomery -- State Representative Mimi Stewart, who represents District 21 Bernalillo County. The former teacher will discuss the education budget.

* Midtown Unit Nov. 21, 1:30 p.m., Manzano del Sol Hobby Room -- Tom Pollard, staff member with the Legislative Council Service, will discuss bonds, including what kinds of bonds exist, how they are funded, what part they play in the budget and what they are used for.

* Northeast Heights Unit, Nov. 28, 10 a.m., La Vida Llena Card Room, 10501 Lagrima de Oro NE. -- State Senator Tim Keller of District 17 will discuss what are tax expenditures and how they affect the budget.

November Calendar

Oct. 30	Meet the Councilors, 3 p.m.
Nov. 3	Board meeting, 5:30 p.m. (All members welcome.)
Nov. 5	Lobbying Workshop, 9 a.m.
Nov. 5	<i>Voter Deadline</i>
Nov. 8	Evening Unit, 6 p.m.
Nov. 10	Luncheon Unit, 11:45 a.m.
Nov. 17	Drug Policy Study Committee, 1 p.m.
Nov. 19	LWVNM Board meeting in Santa Fe, 10:30 a.m.
Nov. 21	Midtown Unit, 1:30 p.m.
Nov. 28	Northeast Heights Unit, 10 a.m.

**League of Women Voters of
Central New Mexico
Board Meeting**

**1st Thursday of each month
Offices of Satin, Thayer & Browne,
6565 Americas Parkway NE**

Program Committees

Fair Representation Committee

Cheryl Haaker

Drug Policy

Delores Watkins

Natural Resources

Includes transportation, land use, air quality, water, and energy.

All League members are invited to all unit meetings, committee and board meetings.

The *Voter* is published on partially-recycled paper each month by the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico. It is also distributed via email.

Presidents' Corner

Residents of New Mexico have already begun having functions to begin celebrating the 100th Anniversary of New Mexico statehood, which was obtained after a 64-year struggle. Constitutional conventions were held in 1848 and 1849, in which New Mexico failed to obtain statehood. New Mexico was granted Territorial Status, not statehood, on Sept. 9, 1850.

The Civil War interrupted attempts at statehood. The Civil War had little effect on New Mexico, other than the exodus of United States military troops when Confederate forces were defeated in August 1861. The Native Americans, seeing an opportunity to regain their land, embarked on a series of depredations that came to a climax in the 1870s. The Native American population was unable to the break through the lightening web of white power. After the unsuccessful uprising of the Mescalero Apaches in 1879 and under Geronimo in 1885, Native Americans had to become resigned to reservation existence.

The introduction of the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe Railroad to Santa Fe in 1880 was a significant event leading to New Mexico statehood. Rail transport led to a great boom in cattleraising and mining. Soon after the mining boom, agriculture moved into the foreground. From 1906 the drive to win statehood moved to a climax. On Jan. 6, 1912, New Mexico became the 47th state of the Union. It is easy for me to romanticize this period of time, thinking about the boom caused by the Santa Fe Railroad, the "pleasure domes of the Super Chief" and the memorable dining at the many Fred Harvey Restaurants. One admires the Harvey Girls who took the opportunity to work in the Fred Harvey Restaurants, seeking new opportunities, to develop independence and travel to interesting places of their choice. The Harvey Girl could take her time choosing a spouse, there being no shortage of suitors, well beyond the advanced age of 30.

However, the last 100 years of New Mexico has its bright sides and dark sides, as does all history. The 1910 New Mexico Constitution did not grant women the right to vote. One delegate of the Constitutional Convention stated "The very nature of New Mexico's background was against giving women the voting privilege with men." Members of the Constitutional Convention compromised on women's suffrage. The 1910 Constitution gave women the right to vote in school district elections and made them eligible to hold public office as superintendent, director or member of a local board of education. However, Article VII restricted the right of women to vote for these officials if enough men

LWVCNM to host reception for city councilors, county commissioners

The LWVCNM congratulates incumbents Debbie O'Malley, Brad Winter, Rey Garduno and Trudy Jones on their re-election to Albuquerque City Council. In celebration, the LWVCNM is holding a reception for Albuquerque City Councilors and Bernalillo County Commissioners Oct. 30, 2011 at 3 p.m. at the home of Carol Tucker Trelease, 8234 Raintree Dr., N.E.

Be sure to mark your calendar and come to this event. It is a great opportunity to get better acquainted with your City Councilors and County Commissioners, discuss their priorities and plans and learn how the League can be effective in working with them.

-- Shelly Shepherd

Member Handbook

Your dues deadline was Oct. 30. All your current information for the handbook is being proofed and printed. You should receive your 2012 handbook around the end of the month or the first of next month. Please send in your dues to the office if you have not done so already.

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Drug Policy Study Committee

The Drug Policy Study Committee is acting as the leader for the LWVNM study of Best Ways to Reduce Death and Damage of Alcohol. The November meeting will be Thursday, Nov. 17 from 1-3 p.m. The location will be announced. Call 823-2308 for more information.

Drug Policy Study Committee 1996-2000

The following is the first part of a history of the Drug Policy study Committee written by Dee Watkins, chair of the committee, with help from Isobel Davis, Marilyn Morgan and Jan Bray.

Part 1: The Beginning

1996: A small group led by Isobel Davis, began a study called Decriminalization of Drugs. Drug sales and users were causing crime and violence in Albuquerque neighborhoods.

After a year of studying drugs, drug usage, and treatments and drug abuse as a health problem

rather than a crime, the committee came to the conclusion that the “war-on-drugs” federal policy needed to be changed. This “war” created laws and conditions which had done little to reduce the use of drugs and much to change the enforcement of laws, court procedures, and the administration of justice. Mandatory sentences for drug crimes were filling prisons to overflowing so that prisons had become one of America’s biggest businesses. The Committee was then renamed the LWV/ABC Drug Policy Study Committee.

1998: A motion was made at the LWVUS Convention in San Diego, Calif. for a national drug policy study. Although this motion failed, it received a lot of support from other leagues across the U.S. Information was then sent to other interested Leagues about how to conduct a local study.

1999: Committee findings were presented to Leagues throughout the state. A local consensus and state concurrence was taken with positions developed in support of drug courts, drug treatment for drug dependent prisoners and syringe exchange programs.

2000: The LWVUS Convention was petitioned for a drug policy study again. This effort met with success with votes of over 800 convention delegates. However, by 2001 no contacts with the funding sources had been made, and the LWVUS Board then recommended dropping the study because a lack of staff and money for the study while continuing the work they were already committed to do. In 2001 LWVUS Council of 70 members, including 15 board members, voted to drop the study,

To be reported in the next Voter will be a history of the League’s Drug Policy Committee’s work from 2000-2011. There are repeated attempts to deter and reduce the positive results of enacted legislation. The impact of drug policy has spread to pain management. Progress has been made in discouraging the use of the drug alcohol. Thus new studies and education of members and the public have kept this committee active.

Presidents’ Corner

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objected. New Mexico women were not granted the right to vote until the 19th Amendment of the United States Constitution was ratified August 18, 1920.

It is hard to believe that Native Americans did not have the right to vote until after World War II. Native American soldiers and heroes, such as the Navajo “Code Talkers” returned from WWII, to learn they could not vote in the following national election. The following Congress rectified this.

New Mexico, now known as a leader in technology since the Los Alamos Manhattan Project in 1945, has become known for its research and developments conducted at Los Alamos and Sandia Laboratories in many scientific areas. One wonders what lies ahead for the next 100 years in New Mexico, and what stories will that history have to tell?

The LWVNM Board voted to support a “Salute to New Mexico First 100 Years” fundraising dinner sponsored by the LWVCNM to be held on April 21, 2012. Mark your 2012 calendar now, as you don’t want to miss this exciting event. The planning committee has many fun and creative ideas in mind for the event. Additional information will be forthcoming. -- Shelly Shepherd, Co-President

Tempers flare at LWVCNM-sponsored panel on climate change

By Lora Lucero

Tempers got hot Oct. 16 during a panel discussion on climate change at the Albuquerque Jewish Community Center. An estimated 150-175 people attended the “Perspectives on Climate Change” presentation organized by the New Mexico Chapter of the Fulbright Association. The University of New Mexico’s Chapter of Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society and the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico co-sponsored the event.

Sen. Jeff Bingaman opened with pre-recorded remarks about the seriousness of the climate change threat.

Retired PNM CEO Jeff Sterba shared the business perspective with his considerable experience working on the U.S. Climate Action Partnership, a national group of businesses and environmental organizations that unsuccessfully lobbied Congress to pass climate change legislation in 2009.

(<http://www.us-cap.org>)

Sterba was followed by UNM Professor David Gutzler who can aptly be described as New Mexico’s resident science expert on climate change. He shared the science behind global warming with lots of charts and graphs. Although scientists acknowledge that any single data set might be limited and have flaws or errors, Gutzler made the point that all of the data sets, taken together, point in the same direction. The Earth is heating up and humans are a contributing factor to the steep rise we see in all of the data sets since about the 1950s.

Many scientists don’t know how to translate their field of science for public consumption, and the gulf between what the scientists believe and what the policy makers understand appears to be growing. Professor Gutzler is an excellent bridge between the two. His take-away messages were (1) the “increased CO₂ concentration is human-caused, no doubt about it,” and (2) we are “long past the time to question the science.”

Mark Boslough, a physicist with Sandia National Laboratories, discussed the potential consequences of climate change. His presentation raised my blood pressure and I think added a palpable tension to the room. Sandia does a lot of risk assessment work, and Boslough spoke about climate change in terms of the risks we’re facing, using the phrase “global catastrophe.”

He noted there is a range of opinions between those who deny climate change on one end and climate alarmists at the other. He effectively used the analogy of the game of Russian roulette when he talked about the risks versus the consequences, and said that “nobody can say there is NO chance of global catastrophe.” All climate risk assessment models point to some risk.

Boslough went through several global warming predictions made by scientists as far back as the late 1800s up to the current work of James Hansen from NASA who believes that it’s “game over” if the Keystone XL Pipeline is built to open up the Alberta Tar Sands. The point is that this climate change discussion is not new, but it may be more urgent now than ever before; it certainly is more controversial today.

Sterba, representing the business perspective, said it was “far better to believe there is a problem and address it now, and be wrong; than do nothing and be wrong.”

He blamed the climate naysayers, the “extreme” environmentalists, the public distrust of financial markets and even President Obama for Congress’s failure in 2009 to pass the American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES). The legislation might not have been “perfect,” he admitted, but at least set us in the right direction. Sterba predicts that no progress will be made in DC before 2014 or beyond, but he encouraged the audience not to wait for Congress to act. He wants to see a price on carbon, but climate change is off the public’s radar now. We shouldn’t wait for Congress to act. Individuals’ demand and patterns of consumption are what drives business, he noted. We can make a big difference by our individual purchasing decisions.

All three speakers shared a sense of urgency about addressing climate change. The audience appeared to be in agreement, with the exception of one outspoken critic. I didn’t expect tempers to fly, but at one point during the Q & A, a shuffling match ensued and security was called into the room. No doubt, climate change provokes passion on all sides, as it should when we’re talking about the risks of a global catastrophe.

As Natural Resources Director for the League of Women Voters of New Mexico, I asked

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Climate Change

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Sterba to respond to the fact that PNM is fighting against a carbon cap in New Mexico, while he advocated in DC two years ago for a carbon cap. Full disclosure: the LWVNM is actively supporting the carbon cap rule adopted by the Environmental Improvement Board in late 2010. The newly-appointed members of the EIB will consider overturning that rule in December 2011.

Sterba's response was a disappointment but predictable. He believes a state wide cap on carbon emissions will "disadvantage" New Mexico when other states do not have a similar regulation. The League's opinion? New Mexico's carbon cap may not be "perfect" but at least it sets us in the right direction.



LWVSFC members Neva Van Peske, left, and Karen Heldmeyer give a presentation on their study of the PRC at an Oct. 10 Unit LWVCNM meeting. *(Photo by Cheryl Haaker)*

Lobbying Workshop set for Nov. 5

On Nov. 5, LWVCNM will present a Lobbying Workshop, open to the general public. The workshop is intended to inform and educate League members and interested others about lobbying do's and don'ts. The workshop will include panel presentations: "Lobbying from a Professional's Perspective" -- two professional lobbyists share their experiences and tips; "Effective Lobbying" -- state and local legislators let us know what lobbying efforts public officials like and do not like; "Roundtable of Citizen Lobbyists" -- panelists describe how they try to persuade public

officials to support causes near and dear to their hearts

The workshop will be Nov. 5 from 9 a.m.-noon at the Sandia Prep School, Building 100, 532 Osuna Road NE, Albuquerque.

Anyone and everyone is encouraged to attend. League members may attend the Lobbying Workshop for free. Non-League members may attend for \$5.

For information, contact Community Education Chair Mary H. Smith at maryhenrie@aol.com. Get updated information at www.lwvcnm.org.

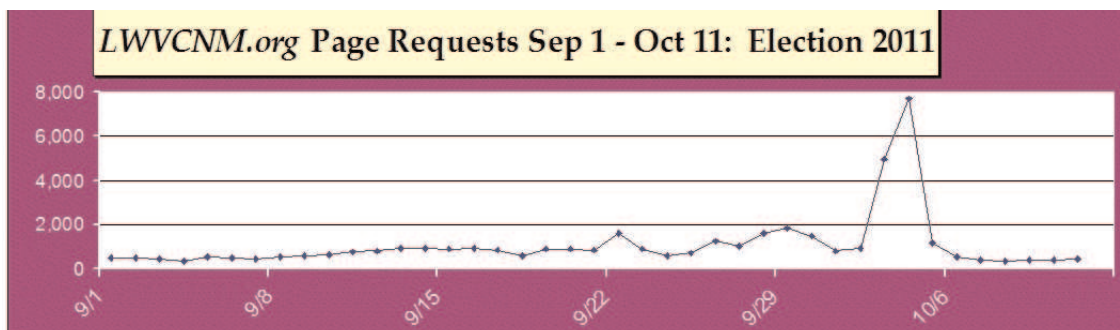
Election web page most requested

The month of September and the first week of October was "all election, all the time." As the month went on, there were increasing numbers of page requests per day, peaking at nearly 8,000 on election day -- and dropping off rapidly thereafter.

Which pages were requested? Between Sept. 1 and Oct. 6, the Elections Page was requested more than the Home Page (3,500 to 3,040), pos-

sibly due to all the election flyers which referenced it directly: www.lwvcnm.org/elections/. Next was Bonds (1,350), followed by the *Voters' Guide* PDF (600), then Candidates (560), Propositions (440), and oddly, History of the Vote (270). Non-election pages were way down the list in popularity.

-- Cheryl Haaker, Web Monkey



Voter Services Report

On Aug. 28 several League members received training from a staff member of the Bernalillo County Clerk's Office to become third party registrars. They included Barbara Adkins, Shelly Shepherd, Jane and Bob Stuart, Pat Belletto, Pam Harris and Carol Tucker Trelease. In autumn Jo Porter, Diane Goldfarb, Michelle Meaders, Bill and Gayle Prinkey took Voter Protection training at Common Cause and participated as volunteer poll observers in the Count Every Vote program. On Oct. 4, after a summer of record drought, we had the opportunity to drive in teeming rain from one of our five voting sites to another. The experience was a good introduction as we approach a big election year of 2012.

We are in conversation with Maralie BeLonger of the Osher Institute at UNM's Continuing Education regarding candidate forums to be held for the primaries and final election of

U.S. Senator and Representative. The venue will be the auditorium of Continuing Education, and publicity will be handled by Osher Institute. The League will make invitations to candidates and conduct the forums.

On Aug. 31, I participated in a citizens' forum on the Electoral College sponsored by UNM's Center for the Study of Voting, Elections and Democracy. I presented the League's national position in favor of the popular vote in presidential elections. Opinions varied; some expressed concern that New Mexico would not get the currently enjoyed small-state attention from both candidates and ultimately, the president.

This year and next, we hope to register lots of voters in preparation for the 2012 election. I thank all of you who participate in Voter Services.

-- Gayle Prinkey



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