

LWVNM homepage: <http://www.lwvnm.org>

## Dede Feldman to speak at December General Meeting

Former State Senator Dede Feldman will speak at the December General Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico. The meeting will be held Dec. 13 at 11:45 a.m. at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul NE.

Feldman will discuss the series of decisions that the New Mexico legislature will be asked to make

about how to implement the Affordable Health Care Act. She will also talk about the changing nature of the New Mexico Senate.



Dede Feldman

Governor Susanna Martinez has already indicated that New Mexico will set up a Health Exchange to be run by the state. But many decisions remain about how that Health Exchange, which will provide a mechanism for people who are not currently insured to buy insurance, will work. The legislature will have to figure out some of the big questions in the 2013 session.

The New Mexico Senate will have several new Republican members when the session opens, and the leadership of the Senate Democrats is in transition following the election defeat of Senator Tim Jennings of Roswell. Feldman will look at some of the problems created by the defeat of Jennings and possible coming changes in leadership in the New Mexico Senate and House.

Feldman holds a BA and an MA from the University of Pennsylvania. She served as a senator in the New Mexico State Senate starting in 1997. She chose not to run in the 2012 election. She is very active in the community, serving as former chair, Albuquerque Citizens Advisory Group; former chair,

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## Board decides to consolidate units

After a lengthy discussion, the board of directors for the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico has decided to consolidate the number of units. Currently there are four unit meetings in Albuquerque, but unusually poor attendance at the Midtown Unit, which meets at Manzano del Sol has forced a decision to close that unit.

Members who have worked to bring speakers to that unit have been discouraged by the low turnout of members and interested visitors. There has also been a relatively low turnout for the NE Heights unit, which meets at La Vida Llana, but that unit will continue to meet for the time being. Ida Humphrey is looking for ways to increase interest and attendance at the unit.

The board is also looking for ways to increase attendance at the Evening Unit meeting. Any suggestions should be directed to Andrea Targhetta at [atarghetta@comcast.net](mailto:atarghetta@comcast.net) and Shelly Shepherd at [shelly@shepdesigns.com](mailto:shelly@shepdesigns.com)

This is a difficult time for the League as some members become less active, and we look for new members to bring in new interests and concerns the League might address. The board will welcome any suggestions or ideas for ways to keep our organization vital and growing.  
-- Karen Wentworth

## December Calendar

Dec. 1	LWVNM Lobbying Workshop
Dec. 5.	Voter deadline
Dec. 6	Board meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Dec.13.	General Meeting, 11:45 a.m.

**League of Women Voters of  
Central New Mexico  
Board Meeting  
1st Thursday of each month  
Offices of Sutin, Thayer & Browne,  
6565 Americas Parkway NE**

Program Committees

***Fair Representation Committee***

Cheryl Haaker (298-7415)

***Drug Policy***

Jan Bray

***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.

**Meet and greet your legislators**

Please join fellow League members and interested partners guests for a legislative reception on Sunday, Dec.9, from 2-4 p.m. at the home of Carol Tucker Trelease. The address is 8234 Raintree Drive NE, ABQ 87122-1333. The telephone number is 275-1827.

Be sure to mark your calendar, as this is an opportunity to get acquainted with your newly-elected legislators, discuss their priorities for the coming legislative session and learn how the League can be effective in working with them. Remember, guests are welcome. The event will be the most fun if there is a large turnout

**Membership report**

**New Members**

**Lynne Uhring**, 1901 Amherst NE, 87106, 265-9622

**Arthur & Patricia Priebe**, 10225 Karen Ave NE, 87111, art.n5art@gmail.com

**Presidents' Corner**

*By Shelly Shepherd & Sandra Browne, Co-presidents*

As the year ends, the political ads are over with and the General Election concluded, the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico can be proud of contributions made in voter registration and education, particularly our *Voters' Guide* for the Nov. 6 general election.

There are many individuals to thank for making this publication possible. We want to thank the individuals who prepared, circulated and assisted in other ways to the publication. Kudos to LWVCNM Editors Judith Binder and Andrea Targhetta and LWVNM Editor Meredith Machen. Special thank you to Webmaster Cheryl Haaker, Spanish Page Translator Christine Nelson, bonds and ballot issues pages by Karen Wentworth, and distribution organizer Marilyn Fifield.. The assistance of Nadine Allen, Peggy Beaupre, Alice Brasfield, Jan Bray, Pati Brummett, Sallie Cervera, Linda Cotton, Sterling Fluharty, Janet Ford, Bob Ford, Lisa Franzen, Karen Gatlin, Diane Goldfarb, Joyce Greer, Elene Gusch, Pam Harris, Donna Hill, Peggy Howell, Ida Humphrey, Marilyn Hunter-Torburn, Leah Inghram, Janice Kondo, Margaret Krahenbuhl, Sonia Lersten, Richard Mason, Marilyn Morgan, Judy Orrell, Jane Peterson, Josephine Porter, Gayle Prinkey, Mary Smith, Virginia Stephens, Laura Stokes, Marjorie Swartz, Dee Trestor, Carol Tucker Trelease, Helen Wright, Bernard Zak and many volunteers who helped with distribution. Our apology if we left someone out.

Many information sources made the *Voters' Guide* possible, including Secretary of State Bureau of Elections; Bernalillo County Clerk's Office; Sandoval County Clerk's Office; New Mexico Legislative Council Services; Legislative Finance Committee; Clerk's Office of the Supreme Court; Clerk's Office of Court of Appeals; Bernalillo County and Sandoval Library administration; Bernalillo County Finance Office; Bernalillo County Public Information Office; Albuquerque City Council Services; AMAFCA staff; SCAFCA staff; Board of Finance Division of the NM Department of Finance and Administration.

We cannot thank our supporters who provide financial support to our Education Fund often enough. It is because of their generous donations that the publication of the *Voters' Guide* is possible. Our friends of the League who supported donations for this year's *Voters' Guide* include (in the order they were listed in the *Voters' Guide*) an anonymous member (you know who you are and we love you), Jan and Olin Bray, Judith Binder, Dorothy Gardner, Peggy Howell, USbank, Dorothy Walton, Karen

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## Book Review: Red Ink: Inside the High-stakes Politics of the Federal Budget

**Editor's Note: Book Review -- This review of an important public policy book is a regular feature in the *Voter*.**

By Olin Bray, Author of ebook, *Political Incompetence: What's Wrong With Our System and How To Fix It*

*Red Ink: Inside the High-stakes Politics of the Federal Budget*, by David Wessel, Crown Press, 2012, pp 204.

*Red Ink* is an excellent, and short, overview of federal budget issues that makes many important and surprising points. It explains the basic issues and provides some of the details to emphasize critical points. The book provides many interesting factoids that help frame the magnitude and complexity of the budget problems. Wessel has followed the budget for years as the *Wall Street Journal's* economic editor and former Washington bureau deputy chief.

The budget, deficit, and debt are major long-term issues and were the basis of much discussion and noise during the election. Unfortunately, in spite of the importance of these topics, most of the public is poorly informed and bombarded by a few facts and a lot of myths, misinformation, rumors and outright deception. Consider three examples. First, in a 2011 CNN poll the typical respondent thought about 10 percent of the federal budget went to foreign aid, whereas it is really only about 1 percent. Second, most people don't realize the benefits they get from the government, as shown in a 2008 Cornell University poll where 44 percent of social security recipients and 40 percent of Medicare/Medicaid recipients said they had not used any government social programs. Third, we hear a lot about the \$700 billion that Congress allocated for TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program). However, as of March 2012 the Treasury had only disbursed \$470 billion, 67 percent of which had been repaid, with much of the remaining amount expected to be repaid later. The total anticipated costs of TARP is not the \$700 billion frequently publicized but closer to \$32 to \$60 billion.

Any solutions to the budget, deficit, and debt problems will require serious, informed, and thoughtful decisions, most of which many people will probably dislike. However, they are more likely to be accepted if they seem informed and fair. More Americans seem concerned with the fairness of taxes rather than their amount. This should not be surprising

since according to Wessel, "For most Americans, federal taxes have not risen over the past couple of decades." Americans pay less taxes (federal, state, and local) than citizens in other developed countries. The percentage of income families pay in federal taxes has fallen for over three decades. In 1981 it was 19.2 percent, in 2007 it was 14.3 percent, and in 2011 it was 12.4 percent. Today about 47 percent of federal tax revenue comes from individual income taxes and 36 percent from payroll taxes. However, the share of tax revenue from corporate income taxes has dropped from 30 percent in the early 1950s to about 8 percent today -- not the number we hear from those who complain about the high US corporate tax rate.

The fact that different kinds of income are taxed differently is seen as a fairness issue by many, especially since wages are taxed at a much higher rate than capital gains. For most of the population about 72 percent of their income is from wages and only 5 percent is from capital gains, whereas for the top 400 taxpayers 60 percent of their income is from capital gains and only 8 percent from wages. Thus the source of income for the wealthiest is taxed at a much lower rate than the source for the middle and lower income taxpayers.

The cap on the payroll tax for social security (\$110,000) also has a fairness effect. It means that those earning up to the cap effectively pay the full payroll tax rate of 6.2 percent, but the effective rate rapidly declines for those earning more than the cap. For example, someone earning twice the cap would have an effective rate of half -- only 3.1 percent. However, the cap does not apply for the 2.9 percent payroll tax for Medicare.

Tax breaks, loopholes, tax credits and deductions also affect the perception of fairness. These "tax expenditures" or taxes not collected are almost as large as the taxes we do collect -- \$1.1 trillion in such tax expenditures versus \$1.3 trillion in revenue from individual and corporate income taxes. Two of the largest of these expenditures are the tax breaks companies get from providing health insurance for their employees and the mortgage interest deduction.

Employees also get a break since the health insurance premium the companies pay is not considered as taxable income to the employee, although above a minimal level life insurance premiums a com-

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## Presidents' Corner

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and Steve Wentworth, Diane and Donald Goldfarb, Cheryl and Richard Haaker, Judith Lackner, Susan McKinstry, Janice Micali, Shelly and Gary Shepherd, Roland Watkins, Margaret Wente, AQ Safety, Mary Callahan, Ann and Tom Fitzpatrick, Janet and Robert Ford, Donna and John Hill, Margaret Krahenbuhl, Carly Lindberg, Robert B. Loftfield, Marita Marshall, Mary Mulvany, Robert and Barry Ramo, Laura and Paul Stokes, Susan Walton, Norma Argo, Janice Bankrofchak, Joyce Ann Carden, Kathryn Colbert, Linda Cotton, Lani Desaulniers, Karen Douglas, Pauline Eisenstadt, Jennice Fishburn, Jane Flax, Lisa Franzen, Karen Gatlin, Monika Ghattas, Anne Gonzales, Susan and Jack Heide, Sandra Hoover, Christine Little, Ila Little, Myara Lynch, Richard Mason, Michelle Meaders, Anne Nokes, Peggy Olds, Carol Pierce and Chris Phillips, Josephine Porter, Gayle Thompson Prinkey, Louise Prowell, Therese Quinn, Lenore and John Reeve, Belle Roberts, Merri

Rudd, Janet Saiers, Mary H. Smith, Andrea and Frank Taghetta, Julie Tierney, Carol Tucker Trelease, Julia White, Helen Wright, Barbara Adkins, Milton Bock, Kari Brandenburg, Alice Brasfield, Frances Brummett, Susanne Burks, Carol Carpenter, Joan Chism, David Colton, Janet DuBois, Ebert Earnest, Edna Fowler, Larry Fox, Phyllis Fredericksen, Ellen Gailey, Ellin Hewes, Leah Ingraham, Nancy B. Jones, Christine Kamm, Shirley Kondo, Sonia Lerston, Sara Matthews, JoAnn Mercer, Marilyn Morgan, Sharon Moynahan, Ann Piper, Margaret Roberts, Shelley Roberts, Maryann Sabie, Margaret Schmidt, Aleatha Scholer, Karen Seitz, Vivian Skadron, David Slusher, Ruth Ann Small, Jennifer Smith, Mary Smith, Mary Ellen Smith, William Tallman, Sei Tokuda, Dee Trester, Monna Utter, Juan Vigil, Betty Vortman, Iris Weinstein, Elizabeth Whitefield, Ellen Whiatman, Clare Wilson and Mary Tonya Young.

We wish everyone a VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY!

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## Book review

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pany pays are considered taxable income.

In its simplest form, the 2011 federal budget spent about \$3.4 trillion, took in \$2.3 trillion in taxes, fees and other revenues, resulting in a deficit of \$1.1 trillion. The frequently heard easy answer is to cut waste, fraud and abuse. Unfortunately, these categories don't begin to address the size of the problem. For example, Wessel points out that if we fired every federal employee, we would only save \$435 billion or about one third of the deficit. In 2011 the budget consisted of five relatively equal parts -- defense (19.4 percent), social security (20.1 percent), Medicare/Medicaid (21 percent), other benefits (15.1 percent), and everything else (24.4 percent) of which interest on the national debt was 6.4 percent.

Basically, what Congress appropriates (when it actually does a budget) covers only about 37 percent of the budget -- defense and everything else minus the interest. This about one third of the budget is where the sequestered funds (about \$1.1 trillion over 10 years) will have to come from (assuming it actually occurs), with half coming from defense and half from domestic programs, but not entitlements.

The defense budget is \$700 billion and its

share of the sequestered funds would be about \$550 billion over ten years or \$55 billion a year -- about 8 percent of the defense budget. While that may seem like a lot, Wessel makes several interesting points. First, the U.S. spends more on defense than the next 17 countries combined -- and many of them are our allies not opponents. Second, our 11 carrier strategy gives us twice as many carriers as the rest of the world, most of them with our allies, and our carriers are larger and more capable than those of other countries. A carrier costs about \$11 billion, and a number of them are scheduled for replacement. It is true that our commitments are greater than other countries so we need a large force. However, adjusted for inflation our defense budget today is 30 percent larger than in the 1980s during Reagan's cold war peak. The base defense budget (without the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan) is higher than at any time since WWII. Like the civilian budget, the defense budget is seeing growing health care costs, which in 2011 was \$54 billion or almost 7.7 percent.

This book is an excellent introduction to a serious problem that must eventually be faced and about which the public is very poorly informed. It could be the basis for some serious League discussions and studies.

# League Voters' guides removed from early voting sites

The *Voters' Guide*, published by the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico, were removed from the Bernalillo County early voting locations in October. Citing an order from the Secretary of State's office, League President Shelly Shepherd concluded, "Our County Clerk, Maggie Toulouse Oliver had no choice but to comply with the Secretary of State's decision."

The League's *Voters' Guides* have been available at early voting locations and the clerk's office for many years. "We have always worked closely with the Bernalillo County Clerk to provide this reliable source of neutral voter information to the voters," Shelly said. "The League has never had

a complaint about the *Guides* from voters or from the Bernalillo County Clerk. They were always enthusiastically received by voters trying to find neutral, impartial information about the candidates and the ballot issues but, according to Shelly, the Secretary of State's office stated that the election code may prohibit their distribution within 100 feet of a polling place.

"We believe the *Voters' Guide* is neither 'campaigning' nor 'electioneering'" and is outside the prohibitions set forth in the statutes. The League's *Voters' Guide* advocates for nothing but an informed electorate."

The League published 50,000 copies of the *Voters' Guide* for the general election.

## Area high schools respond to the value of *Voters' Guides*

By Judith Binder

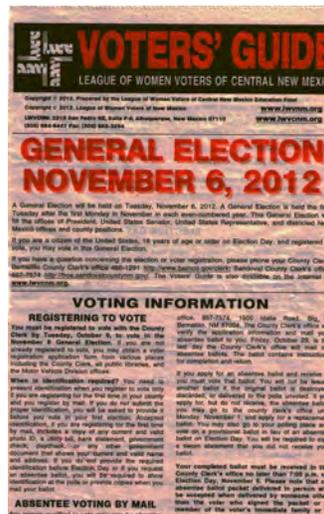
Fifty thousand copies of the LWV-CNM *Voters' Guide* were distributed prior to last month's general election. We thank non-League volunteers Linda Atkinson, Gail Basham, Alison Hills, Joan and David Sanchez and Jackie Wenner who assisted with distribution of over 5,000 to the Rio Rancho and Albuquerque high schools.

Feedback from teachers was phenomenal: Carrie Miller, government teacher at New Futures High School, indicated that not only were *Voters' Guides* distributed to staff and parents, they "were

used in classroom discussion and were helpful in illustrating the different levels and branches of government.

The 2012 LWV-CNM *Voters' Guides* was an important resource for discussion about the election process and the importance of an informed electorate."

Tom Gutierrez at Rio Rancho High School "used the *Voters' Guides* with success. We were able to discuss the qualifications of various candidates as well as analyze their responses to the four



basic questions in the *Guides*."

Delbert Carrillo of Valley High School wrote, "In our government, law, mock trial and AP U.S. history/U.S. history classes we went over the *Guides* page by page, pointing out specifics about how to register, where to vote, and compared responses to questions asked by the LWV. Discussion was animated when we discussed the issue of raising the minimum wage in Albuquerque, since most of our students often work part-time. All our classes felt the *Guides* were useful in helping to make informed choices."

## General Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

Albuquerque Community Advisory Group; councilor, Insure New Mexico Advisory Council; member, New Mexico Foundation for Open Government; former president, New Mexico Press Women, Albuquerque Chapter; member, New Mexico Public Relations Society; member, North Valley Neighborhood Coalition; and commissioner, Western Interstate Compact on Higher Education

The general meeting will be held at 11:45 a.m. at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul NE. Reservations for the lunch must be made by 10 a.m. on Dec. 10. The cost of lunch is \$15. To make a reservation, please call the LWV-CNM office at 884-8441 or email [lunch@lwvcnm.org](mailto:lunch@lwvcnm.org).

## Guides

(Continued from page 5)

Garrett Taylor from Rio Rancho used the *Voters' Guides* to “discuss qualifications of certain candidates with an emphasis on national elections. Students picked a national senate candidate, three national representative candidates (one for each district) and three local senate and representative candidates they would support using the *Guide* and write how the *Guide* was helpful in their decisions.”

Justin Daniels, also from Rio Rancho, had his students “profile the race” in their home district. After the election students were assigned to create a table noting party and office-from president to county level- and answer the following questions: Why is the structure of government and the system of electing people to run it so complicated? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a system such as this? How are the results of the election likely to affect your life?

In addition Daniels provided every 18 year old registered voter with a *Voters' Guide*. He also registered at least four students to vote.

December 2012

## League Day at the Legislature

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico will be holding its annual League Day at the Legislature in the first full week of February. Here are the basics:

Evening of Monday, Feb. 4 -- reception and educational forum at the Desert Inn in Santa Fe.

Tuesday, Feb. 5 -- League Day at the Legislature with lunch and speakers at the Desert Inn.

Full information will be in the Winter *La Palabra*.

## Lobbying workshop

LWVNM will present a Lobbying Workshop on Dec. 1 from 10 am-12 p.m. at the Montezuma Masonic Lodge, 431 Paseo de Peralta in Santa Fe.

The workshop is free and open to the public. Pre-registration is not required, but please arrive before 10 a.m. to sign up. Speakers will include Sen. Peter Wirth (SD 25), Rep. Jimmie Hall (HD 28), and Linda Siegle, registered lobbyist specializing in non-profits and health care associations.



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