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# The Voter

League of Women Voters of  
Central New Mexico  
December 2013

LWVCNM homepage: <http://www.lwvcnm.org>

## UNM Push to Increase International Students Is December Meeting Topic

The Luncheon Unit speaker for the Dec. 12 General Meeting will be Mary Ann Saunders, special assistant to University of New Mexico President Robert Frank. She leads the Global Education Initiative for the university and is working to develop new avenues for students from throughout the world to easily enroll at UNM and for New Mexico students to have study abroad experiences.



Mary Ann Saunders

She has already opened an office in Beijing, China to recruit Chinese students for UNM and currently is working to open an office in Mexico City. Her talk will be an interesting glimpse into the way foreign students enrich the community.

Saunders will provide insight into the way UNM is changing and expanding into a more international university.

Please make your reservation by Dec. 9 by calling the LWVCNM office at 884-8441 or by emailing [lunch@lwvcnm.org](mailto:lunch@lwvcnm.org). The meeting begins at 11:45 a.m. at the MCM Elegante (2020 Menaul N.E.), and the cost of lunch is \$15. This is LWVCNM's only meeting in December.

### Ida Humphrey Named Life Member



Peggy Howell, LWVCNM membership chair, (right) presents Ida Humphrey a life membership certificate to the League of Women Voters. In the middle is Joyce Greer, the new Luncheon Unit Leader. Ida has been a member of the League for 50 years.

(Photo by Cheryl Haaker)

### Celebrate the Season at Holiday Party

Frank & Andrea Targhetta invite all LWVCNM members to an open house Sunday, Dec. 8 from 3 to 6 p.m. at their home, 8101 Rancho Lindo CT NW. Copy this link <http://mapq.st/1b03Xqi> in your browser for directions. They are just south of Paseo del Norte and west of Coors Blvd.

Come enjoy an early holiday toast. The Targhettas are looking forward to seeing you there. If you get lost, call Andrea on her cell at 505-280-8892.

### December Calendar

Dec. 5	Voter deadline
Dec. 5	Board meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Dec. 7	Lobbying Workshop, 10 a.m.
Dec. 8	Holiday Party, 3 p.m.
Dec. 12	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  
***Mental Health Study***

Jan Bray & Shelly Shepherd

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 and can be accessed online at our website [www.lwvcnm.org](http://www.lwvcnm.org).

**Welcome New Members**

Milton Howell (Peggy Howell's husband)  
6300 Torreon Drive NE  
ABQ, 87109  
[phowell6300@comcast.net](mailto:phowell6300@comcast.net)

Ralph LaCanna (Brenda McKenna's husband)  
9216 Mabry Ave NE  
ABQ 87109  
[brenda.g.mckenna@comcast.net](mailto:brenda.g.mckenna@comcast.net)

Jennifer Dwyer (Also from Pay Pal)  
10112Guadalupe Trail NW  
Alameda, NM 87114  
[Scouty\\_d@yahoo.com](mailto:Scouty_d@yahoo.com)

Loretta Cantu Rothstein

Linda Trowbridge  
14200 Mocho Ave NE  
ABQ 87123

Jan Strand  
7617 Vista CedroCt  
ABQ 87109  
[Jan\\_str@man.com](mailto:Jan_str@man.com)

**President's Corner**

*By Andrea Taghetta*

December is a month of holiday parties, Christmas spirit, and feelings of good will. This is the season to enjoy the company of family and friends. It's also the season to truly enjoy our individual freedoms. After realizing Americans needed to limit the Federal government's powers in order to prevent misuse, our forefathers developed amendments to the United States Constitution which were adopted in December of 1791.

The states ratified the U. S. Constitution in March of 1789 and the amendments were added by the U. S. Congress to specifically protect our individual rights. The original Bill of Rights contained 17 amendments approved by the House. The Senate only approved of 12, and the states only accepted 10 of them. These ten amendments are still as relevant today as they were 222 years ago. So, enjoy the holidays and appreciate the genius of our founding fathers who had the sense to realize we needed to protect our individual rights.

Thinking of individual rights, I want to thank everyone who helped with the canvassing, phone banks, providing watchers at the polls and providing rides to the polls during the special election last month. Our League worked hard with the Respect ABQ Women campaign to prevent this ordinance from passing. Your efforts helped defeat this misleading ballot issue. Now it is up to us to be vigilant and prevent sliding back into the pre-1973 years.

Back to the holidays, I want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas. Don't forget our Open House, Sunday December 8 from 3-6 p.m. We live close to Eagle Ranch and Paseo del Norte, just West of Coors Boulevard (8101 Rancho Lindo Ct NW). Frank and I are looking forward to welcoming you.

**Holiday Office Hours**

The LWVCNM office will be closed for the holidays between Dec. 23 and Jan. 3.,

**Congratulations Peggy Howell**

With the words Congratulations! It is my pleasure to inform you that you received a score of 98 percent on the National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP) Membership Examination. Board member Peggy Howell passed her test with flying colors! She now is a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians. Congratulations! Well done!

## *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness*

ag 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.

*Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, by Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, 2008, Yale University Press, HC, 293 pages.

These two University of Chicago professors (in economics and law) provide an interesting take on libertarianism that many people may agree with. While they favor letting people make their own choices about most things, they also realize that many people make a lot of decisions and many of them very badly. They propose what they call libertarian paternalism (a label almost no one likes) to help people make better decisions. It helps people make better decisions by gently nudging them in the right direction. Who determines the right direction is critical, but for certain types of complex decisions they make a good case that there are experts who can help people make the right, or at least more appropriate decisions. They identify the types of decisions where nudges are appropriate, explain why nudges can improve decision making, give examples from a number of areas.

First, nudges are important when: (1) decisions are complex and people don't have enough information or expertise to really evaluate and select among the alternatives; (2) the decisions occur rarely some people can't build up any expertise; (3) people get little or very delayed feedback to help them evaluate the quality of their decisions; and (4) there are immediate benefits but delayed costs so people can't or won't really compare them. Nudges don't really change the alternatives people have, but the way the decisions are framed and presented can have a significant effect.

Studies have shown that in many cases people don't really decide, in which case they get the default option. For example, most people don't

save enough for their retirement. When companies first started 401K plans, people had to make an explicit decision to sign up and select how much to save. The default was that you were not enrolled and not saving anything, and as a result relative few people enrolled. An example of a nudge was changing the default to being enrolled with a small two or three percent savings rate. You still had the choice of enrolling or not, but the nudge pushed you in a better direction. Pure libertarians dislike such nudges and want people to always make an explicit choice. The authors oppose this in many cases because it results in poorer decisions, especially among the less well off. Other areas where the authors favor nudges are investment decisions for retirement money and decisions about how to withdraw your money during retirement – all complex decisions where some alternatives are clearly better than others. Another area where nudges help is in healthy food choices. They cite research from school cafeterias where simply changing the placement of food choices can dramatically improve the quality of students' selections, even when all of the unhealthy choices are still available. A final example is with organ donors. Given the shortage of organs for transplant, many people on waiting lists die every year. Most people are willing to be donors, but only about half of them actually select to be when the default is that you are not a donor. States and countries where the default is that you are a donor but can opt out have much higher donor rates and save more lives.

A critical issue is who does the nudging. These choice architects need to be someone with the people's (the decision maker's) interest in mind, not someone with a product to sell or an ideology to support. Obviously, ideology affects whether you think the nudgers should be the government, the market (i.e. private companies), or unbiased sources of information such as Consumer Reports. There are many other public policy areas where nudges could dramatically improve things.

# League Day at the Legislature

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

8:30 a.m. Hearings at the Roundhouse

**Educational Events are from 10:30AM to Noon**

**New Mexico Land Office**

**Morgan Hall**

**310 OLD SANTA FE TRAIL, SANTA FE**

**(just down the street from the Roundhouse)**

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**Legislative Reception**

**Monday, Jan. 27, 5:30 p.m.**

**Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe**

**Panel Discussion: The 2013 Omnibus Tax Bill**

Pros and Cons of the Omnibus Tax Bill passed in the closing hours of the 2013 session

**Bill Jordan, New Mexico Voices for Children**

**Legislator who supported the bill**

**LWVNM Speaker on the Legislative Process**

The 2014 Legislative Session will be dealing with many pieces of legislation that have been prioritized by the League of Women Voters. The 30-day session is limited to budget items and legislation that the Governor puts on her call. We expect that the Governor will put eliminating driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants on her call. The LWVNM opposes this piece of legislation. Key to this session will be opposing tax breaks that reduce New Mexico revenues and threaten funding for essential programs. The League will be supporting a number of tax proposals aimed at making New Mexico's tax structure more progressive.

Packets of materials for League Day will be available at the Reception the evening of January 27 or in the lobby of Garrett's Desert Inn, from 7 to 9 a.m.. On League Day call Dick Mason at 505-239-3804 if you have any questions.

Members are encouraged to attend sessions in the House and Senate and/or committee hearings before 10:15 a.m. when we will head a down few doors toward the Plaza to the Land Office to hear

**Viki Harrison, Executive Director of Common Cause NM:**

**Voting, Campaign, & Ethics Legislation**

**Linda Siegle, Lobbyist for the National Association of Social Workers-New Mexico:**

**The NM Behavioral Health Crisis**

Members may leave information at legislators' offices as well as attend hearings in the afternoon.

**We need your voice to make a difference on these issues. Please plan to attend.**

**Accommodations:** Garrett's Desert Inn, located across the street from the Land Office at 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, is offering us a special group rate of \$60 plus tax/\$10 additional person for any size room based on availability. The attached restaurant has a good variety of offerings for breakfast or lunch on Tuesday. There is no charge of \$8.00 for parking if you are staying overnight or when you are attending the League Reception. Call 1-800-888-2145 or 505-982-1851 to make a reservation. You must use the code "Swing Vote" to get the discounted rate, and you must reserve your room by **Dec. 27.**

Lunch will be on your own. There are a number of good, close-by restaurants.

The LWVNM Action Committee will be sending out email Action Alerts throughout the 2014 Legislative session. If you are not part of the LWVNM Action List please go to [www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org) and sign up. For further information on League Day, please call 505-884-8441, visit the state website at [www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org), or e-mail Dick Mason at [action@lwvnm.org](mailto:action@lwvnm.org). a



## Coffee and Conversation with your Elected Officials

By Judith Binder

Over the years and following intensive study and consensus, League of Women Voter members have the information to lobby our elected officials on scores of issues. League committee members have been approved to testify in formal meetings, written Op Eds, as well as letters of explanation to our leaders and for the readers of our newspapers.

Speaking as individuals, we have the information to lobby person to person. Please – tag along with a League colleague – contact your local legislator(s) and arrange a short meeting at a nearby coffee shop. Be prepared to discuss and put forward the positions formed by our League committees. Reaching out to your representative or senator is easy. Open your copy of *Who's Who* or *Voters Key* to find contact information, and read *La Palabra*

and your monthly *Voter* to catch up on the issues.

You won't regret it! And yes, as an individual, you can also spread the word with your City & County officials. After your "conversation," please write a brief summary and bring it to a Board or Action Committee member. We all deeply appreciate your help.

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### Voter Services

There has been very little Voter Services activity in November. The only event was a Naturalization Ceremony on Friday, Nov, 15 at the Albuquerque Convention Center East Complex, Upper Level from 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Jan Bray and Pam Harris handed out voter registration forms to 173 new citizens. -- Pam Harris



### LWVCNM Has High November Lunch

Nearly 40 people attended the LWVCNM November lunch unit. The speaker was Michael Puccetti from Catholic Charities' Center for Immigration and Citizenship Legal Assistance. Puccetti has been the director of the Center for Citizenship and Immigration Legal Assistance at Catholic Charities since 2011. Prior to his service at Catholic Charities, he served for more than 20 years in the State Department.

*(Photos by Cheryl Haaker)*



*Michael Puccetti*

## We Did It!

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico and fellow members of the NM Coalition for Choice and the Respect ABQ Women campaign scored a victory on Nov, 19. That was the day on which the proposed city ordinance restricting abortion services in Albuquerque was defeated. The members of LWVCNM were an important part of that victory. It affected our own community, and Leaguers rallied to the cause, attending an information meeting on the issue, hosting two daytime phone banks and participating in other phone banks, canvassing neighborhoods, addressing campaign literature, giving rides to the polls, getting friends and family out to vote and acting as representative inspectors on election day. Even members of the Santa Fe County League turned out to make phone calls for us. League members, along with the other supporters of this campaign, worked hard.

The end result was a 55 percent to 45 percent margin of victory, a dramatic shift from September polling that showed 54 percent of the electorate supporting restrictions on abortions. There were 35 to 40 League members who were involved with this campaign, some of you who responded to my calls for assistance, some of you who volunteered directly to the campaign. THANK YOU ALL and thank all of you who, even though unable to work on this issue, lent your support.

But as we savor this victory, we know that there will be continuing challenges to women's reproductive rights. As this is being written, the Valencia County Commission is considering a similar ordinance, and we know there will be further attempts at state restrictions through the legislative process. We need to remain vigilant and continue to follow and work against attempts to undermine these rights.

-- Diane Goldfarb

