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The Voter

League of Women Voters of
Central New Mexico
February 2015

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

U.S. Attorney Damon Martinez to Speak at Luncheon Unit

Damon P. Martinez, United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, will be the speaker for the Feb. 12 Luncheon Unit of the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico. The meeting will be held at 11:45 a.m. at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul N.E.

He will discuss "The Priorities of the New U.S. Attorney and the District of New Mexico." His

presentation will include an overview of the U.S. Attorney's Office and its mission. The overview will be followed by a discussion of the work the office currently is pursuing, including in the areas of civil rights, affirmative civil enforcement and border security, and new initiatives launched by U.S. Attorney Martinez since he was sworn into office in May 2014.



Damon P. Martinez,

In 2000 Martinez began his career in the Las Cruces Branch Office of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Mexico as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney and became an Assistant U.S. Attorney in 2001. Since transferring to the main office in Albuquerque in 2005, he has served as First Assistant U.S. Attorney, and Supervisor of the Organized Crime and Gangs Section.

(Continued on page 3)

League Day at the Legislature

All LWVCNM League members are invited to attend the League of Women Voters of New Mexico-sponsored League Day at the Legislature.

The two-day activity begins Monday, Feb. 9, with a Legislative Reception from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Garrett's Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail in Santa Fe. There will be a panel discussion on education funding and priorities with Sen. Mimi Stewart, former chair of the House Education Committee; Rep. Dennis Roch, member of the Legislative Education Study Committee; Dr. Veronica Garcia, executive director, New Mexico Voices for Children; and Don Moya, chief financial officer for the Albuquerque Public Schools.

On Tuesday, Feb. 10 League members can attend hearings at the Roundhouse starting at 8 a.m. A League Information Event is planned from 10:30 a.m. to noon in the New Mexico Land Office, Morgan Hall, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail

(Continued on page 3)

February Calendar

Feb. 5	Voter deadline
Feb. 5	Board meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Feb. 9-10	Reception/League Day at the Legislature
Feb. 10	Evening Unit, 6 p.m.
Feb 12	Luncheon Unit, 11:45 a.m.
Feb. 14	League's 95th birthday
Feb. 18	Westside Unit, 5 p.m.
Feb. 23	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

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.

**Save the Date and a Call for
Convention Volunteers**

CNM is hosting the 2015 New Mexico State Convention in Albuquerque May 15-17. We are planning an informal evening reception on Friday, May 15 at Carol Tucker Trelease's home. The Crowne Plaza on University Boulevard will be the convention location. Plans are starting to unfold and we need volunteers to assist in many short-term tasks. Call the LWV office and place your name on a list of volunteers. We need members to:

* Assist with hotel accommodations, coordination of banquet, lunch event, possible exhibitors and equipment needs (3).

* Assist Peggy Howell with membership credentials, delegates, and observers. (2).

* Volunteers needed to assist Jo Porter with the Friday evening reception (food, beverages, etc.) (2).

* Help Brenda McKenna with public relations and signage for convention (2).

* Assist Margaret McGee with the silent auction.

President's Corner

By Andrea Targhetta

The League of Women Voters all over the country will be celebrating its 95th birthday on Feb.14. Our local League here in Albuquerque organized around 1924, possibly earlier. As is our tradition, we will commemorate the occasion by attending a Landmark musical at the Rodey Theater on the UNM campus in March. *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* is a classic Broadway show which has music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. Tickets go on sale this month and further information will be coming. We gather after the show and toast the organization which we are proud to say was born from the women's suffrage movement.

In the 1900's women were marching for the right to vote. They weren't just interested in cooking, ironing and educating their children. Women were interested in the everyday issues that surrounded their lives – issues which touched all aspects of community. The right to vote came in 1920 after a hard-fought campaign to get state legislators to ratify the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America. Most men were against women having the vote. After all, the vote would destroy “womanhood, motherhood, the family.” Woman's proper place was in the home.

Now that women are among the electorate, we have focused on obtaining equal rights for all citizens. This organization consists of both men and women, members from both political parties, and non-aligned individuals alike. Social and economic justice is also our goal. The League of Women Voters name has now become synonymous with the issues of voting, government participation, elections, and transparency. Over the years, the League's mission has helped to improve government and close the distance between voters and elected officials.

We must protect our organizational name whenever we hear or see it aligned with any political party or candidate for office. Yes, we will moderate forums for both political parties if asked. The League of Women Voters garners high praise for being nonpartisan and fair in our process. No, we will not support any candidate for office, but we will give that candidate a fair opportunity to voice his/her views no matter their party affiliation. These are very valuable, free of charge public services.

We have many opportunities to involve ourselves with local and state government. This League previously has had a Natural Resources Committee, a Transportation Committee, an Observer Corps, a Drug Policy Study, a Pain

(Continued on page 3)

January Unit Meetings

(Continued from page 1)

He has worked in both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. Between 1993 and 1996, he worked as a Legislative Assistant for Senator Jeff Bingaman. In 1999, he worked as the Legislative Director for Congressman Tom Udall. In 2002,

Martinez joined the U.S. Army Reserve as a Judge Advocate. In 2008, he was mobilized to the Washington D.C. area where he worked on a special project that became the U.S. Army Reserve Legal Command. In 2012, he was deployed to Sinai, Egypt, as part of the 1st Battalion of the 200th Infantry Regiment of the New Mexico National Guard in support of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. He currently holds the rank of Major in the New Mexico National Guard.

A native of New Mexico, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in both Economics and Political Science in 1989, a Juris Doctor in 1992, and a Master of Business Administration in 1993, all from the University of New Mexico.

The meeting will be held at 11:45 a.m. at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul N.E. Reservations for the lunch must be made by 10 a.m. on Feb. 9. Please specify if you want a vegetarian meal.

Evening Unit – Tuesday, Feb. 10, 6 p.m. at the Erna Ferguson Library (San Mateo and Comanche),

Westside Unit – Feb. 18, 5 p.m. at the Loma Colorado Main Library, 1755 Loma Colorado Blvd NE, Rio Rancho.

The speaker for both the Evening and the Westside units will be Joel Elena Hagaman, an immigration attorney, speaking on immigration issues, including the Artesia relocation center and her efforts to provide assistance to the women and children who pass through that center.

Northeast Heights Unit - Monday Feb. 23 at 10 a.m. at La Vida Llena (10501 Lagrima de Oro NE). The speaker will be Dr. Christine Sierra, professor emerita of political science at UNM. She also served as the director of UNM's Southwest Hispanic Research Institute. Sierra will discuss immigration issues and policies, where we are today and what we can expect in the future.

League Day at the Legislature

(Continued from page 1)

Panelists will include Fred Nathan Esq., on the Hospital Pricing Transparency Initiative and Dr. Gabriel Sanchez on Voter Photo ID and Voter Disenfranchisement

Packets of materials for League Day will be available at the reception Feb. 9 and in the lobby of Garrett's Desert Inn from 7-9 a.m. on Feb. 10.

Members may wish to attend committee hearings and/or sessions in the House and Senate before 10:15 a.m. when the League members will head down a few doors toward the Plaza to the Land Office to listen to the panelists.

For those who reserved a room at the Garrett's Desert Inn room rates are \$59.99 plus tax for single occupancy and \$69.99 for double occupancy. This will also waive the \$8 a day parking fee. After the Jan. 25 cut-off date, rooms will cost \$99 for a single room if space is available. Call 1-800-888-2145 to make a reservation with a credit card or advance deposit. Be sure to mention the code "Swing Vote."

President's Corner

(Continued from page 1)

Study, and a committee on affordable housing to name a few. At present we only have an Education Group. Let's start this 95th year out by gathering fellow members and initiating a committee of your interest. There are local issues we should be concerned about – the Lackland jet fuel spill, interest in clean water and our water rights, transportation concerns, alternate energy sources, college costs, hazardous waste, health, or climate change. Let me know what you want to examine and we can find experts to educate and enlighten us.

Book Report: *The Organized Mind*

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

The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information Overload by Daniel J. Levitin, 2014, Dutton, Hardcover, 496 pages.

This book is more general than those usually reviewed, but effective organization and decision-making are important in politics and public policy and to League members.

Levitin is a professor of psychology and neuroscience at McGill University. The first part of the book describes organizing behaviors (what psychologists look at) and the neuroscience (the chemical processes and neural pathways) that cause those behaviors. The rest of the book describes what these research findings mean for better organizing our lives, work, and education, and how to organize information to make better decisions. He interviewed many "highly successful people" to determine their organizing approaches and shows how they relate to and are supported by the research.

Neuroscientists have found four distinct types of mental activity: concentrated, focused activity; daydreaming; a switching function that moves the mind between focused and daydreaming and an attention filter that works in the background to identify important or dangerous things and interrupting us and shifting our focus to deal with them. The attention filter is why it is so hard to concentrate on something in a noisy room with a lot of other activities.

Furthermore, every time we shift from one activity or focus to another requires some of our limited neurochemicals and tires us out. Attention is a limited resource and the brain consumes a lot of energy doing it. (The brain is only about two percent of body mass, but consumes 20 percent of our energy. As examples, an hour of relaxing and daydream takes about 11 calories, while an hour of using our central executive reading takes about 44 calories, and sitting in a lecture takes about 65 calories.) He specifically mentions multi-tasking and says it is not simply another way of thinking. It is impossible since the brain can only focus on one thing at a time. What people think is multi-tasking is really frequently shifting our focus among multiple tasks – and each shift needlessly uses energy that could be better spent focusing and solving one problem before shifting to

the next one. Unfortunately, these interruptions and shifting our attention to something new activates the pleasure centers in the brain creating more of a willingness to be interrupted.

Since our mental resources are limited and fallible, a key organizing strategy is to off-load as much as possible. Once something is written down, you don't have to waste your limited neurochemicals trying to remember it. Also memory is very fallible. Every time you recall a memory you have to store it back and during that restoring process, it is vulnerable. Emotions, words or the situation when you restore the memory can affect it and change the memory without us realizing it was changed. Campaigns (and marketing) use that process to change what we think and create a distorted view of reality.

Something the brain does very well and automatically is create and use categories. (However, the categories our brain automatic generates are not as useful as the ones we consciously develop and use.) In most cases, especially if we aren't paying attention, we don't store all of the details about an event or a person we fit them into a category (actually a lot of different categories) and much of what we "remember" about the individual instance is really information about the category. One consequence of this shows up when researchers asked people how someone else would behave. People see members of their own groups as individuals with very complex behaviors that depend on the situation, whereas members of other groups (outsiders) are seen more as stereotypes who usually behave in a specific way. Consider what this means for getting compromises on policy issues with different interest groups or political parties that talk primarily to their own members and not to others. Levitin says one good organizational tactic is for us to consciously make categories and supplement what the brain also does automatically. Sometimes things fit into only one category, but often they fit into multiple

(Continued on page 5)

Our Loss

LWVCNM member Rebecca Browne, whose bright shining face always had a smile, passed away recently after a brief illness. Our most sincere condolences go out to her mother Sandra Browne and her sister Anne Browne and family.

The Organized Mind

(Continued from page 4)

categories as we learn and understand more about them. Also important, categories usually have fuzzy rather than clear boundaries. This conscious categorization builds on our brain's strength and makes our mental processes such as memory and decision making easier and use less resources.

He has a chapter on making hard, complex decisions and uses health care examples of what tests really mean and the effectiveness of treatments. Many of them require at least some basic statistical reasoning, which is something the brain is not good at. He describes a simple method using 2 by 2 tables to understand the probabilities and modify them as additional information becomes available. (For the statistically knowledgeable he is talking about Bayesian statistics, which anyone can easily learn and quickly improve their decision making skills.) We usually have to make decisions with incomplete information, but we should not waste more time and resources getting more information than the decision is worth.

Finally, he talks about the Internet and information overload. The Internet is the source of a lot of good information, but also of a lot of worthless garbage. The problem is how do you determine which is which. He provides some ways to evaluate them. It's not where it is on the Google search results, which simply tells you how many people have links to the site or who has paid to get their site high on the list. Consider the source of the information (i.e. the site) and who is using it. He specifically mentions Wikipedia and says that while it has some advantages, it has a real problem with its lack of respect for expertise. Anyone can write or change an entry on Wikipedia, whether the person knows anything about the topic or not. Entries by experts are often changed by people based on what they read somewhere or learned in school, which may be outdated or overly simplified. Since information (especially facts) is so readily available but of questionable quality, he says the nature of what education is should change. Teachers no longer need to primarily focus on providing facts to students, but should teach them how to find data and evaluate it. Is the source credible? Does the data make sense and pass a simple sanity check?

The book is very interesting. It has a lot of good suggestions for organizing things and this review has only scratched the surface. However, it is not just somebody's ideas of what to do. It is based on the latest neuroscience research, which gives it far more credibility than most of the "how to books."

Looking for State Delegates to Convention

Here is a great opportunity to be a part of the League in action. As you know, our LWVNM State Convention will be held here in Albuquerque this May 16-17. During the plenary sessions where all members discuss matters of interest, only assigned delegates may vote. According to the number of our membership, Central New Mexico may have 10 delegates. Each delegate is tasked to vote independently.

Please call Andrea Targhetta (280-8892) and volunteer to be a delegate at the state convention. It's fun! And LWVNM will pay your registration (but not banquet fee).

For members Save the Dates LWVNM Convention

Friday May 15

Reception @ Carol Trelease's Home

Saturday May 16

9 a.m. to noon Registration & Silent
Auction Items Turned In

12 p.m. Luncheon

1 –5 pm General Session

6—7 p.m. Open Bar Reception

7 p.m. Dinner

Martha Burk, Keynote Speaker
Political psychologist & syndicated
columnist

Sunday May 17

8 a.m. Registration

8:30 a.m. – noon General Session

Crowne Plaza Hotel
1901 University Boulevard Northeast
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102
(505) 884-2500

League Seeking Office Volunteers

Our wonderful office volunteers consistently work to keep our office open and running smoothly. I am grateful for their dedication. 2014 was quite a challenge as there were/are illnesses that sidelined several staff members and family commitments that required time away. When you combine that with the wanderlust that overtakes several of our volunteers on a regular basis, scheduling was a challenge.

I am asking each member to consider volunteering in the office in 2015. Our volunteers usually work only once or twice a month, and the schedule is set in advance. The hours are from 9:30 a.m. to noon. We have a manual with step-by-step instructions on how to handle the office procedures and we will make sure that you spend time with a mentor volunteer before leaving you on your own at the office. The building is secure with a doorbell to let you know when someone is at the door and there are now several other businesses in the building.

Our office volunteers can tell you about the rewards of working in the office and assisting voters. They are: Alice Brasfield, Carol Steeves, Diane Goldfarb, Helen Wright, Josephine Porter, Judith Binder, Leah Ingraham, Margaret Krahenbuhl, Meg

Membership Leadership Development (MLD) Report

The Board Members of League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico set a goal for 2015. We want: 20-25 new members. We need to make an impact on our community by becoming a larger organization.

We can accomplish this goal by inviting potential members to monthly League events and all larger events. We can ASK potential members to join the League. Who can you invite? Invite neighbors, friends, family, anyone who wants to contribute time and talent to their community! Don't be afraid to ASK!

Did you know that 6,000 new members joined LWV nationally in 2014?

--Marilyn Fifield MLD Chairman..

Wente, Peggy Howell, Sharon Monahan, Shelly Shepherd, Susan McKinstry and Terry Quinn. Please take a moment to thank them for the work they do and ask them about their experiences working in the office.

Please contact me by email or text if you are interested in volunteering. I do better when I have an electronic trail to follow (if you call and leave a voice mail message I might misplace your name and number). office@lwvcnm.org or 505.450.1122. *-- Margaret Guinn Magee*

**Donation to the Operating Fund
In Memory of Monna Utter
from
Frank & Andrea Targhetta**

**Donation to the Education Fund
In Memory of Pat Howell
from
Laura & Paul Stokes**

Voter Services Report

On Jan 13 Trish Lopez did a presentation for the senior group noon pot luck at Grace Church, 6901 San Antonio NE. The talk was in preparation for the January Legislative Session in Santa Fe. Trish discussed how the legislative session works and how to work with it. The contact person was Adelle Merville, 299-6586.

The Albuquerque Public Schools had their candidate forum for districts 1, 2, and 4 on Jan. 20 at the APS Administration Building, 6400 Uptown Blvd. The contact person was Christy Albright, Board of Education Constituent Services Specialist, 880-3729. Josephine Porter was moderator for the forum; Cheryl Haker was timekeeper; Diane Goldfarb and Helen Wright sorted questions; Judy Binder, Lindsey Ritscher and Andrea Targhetta collected questions from the audience. The school board election will be Tuesday, Feb. 3.

The first Naturalization Ceremony of 2015 was held on Jan. 23 at the Albuquerque Convention Center from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. There were 179 new citizens from 48 countries. Sharon Moynahan and Pam Harris welcomed the new citizens and gave them voter registration forms. *-- Pam Harris*