



League of Women Voters of New Mexico

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The League of Women Voters of New Mexico, 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.

Call to Council April 25, 2020 IHM Conference Center 50 Mount Carmel Road, Santa Fe

In even years the state League holds a council meeting. In odd years we hold a convention. This year, the meeting will be in Santa Fe. Each local League is allowed two delegates – the president or alternate plus one additional member. Also serving as delegates will be all LWVNM board members, including officers and on-board directors, plus one delegate representing the members at large. All other League members are invited to attend as observers. Registration for the meeting will be from 11:30 to 11:45 a.m., followed by lunch and a speaker at noon. Registration, which includes lunch, is \$30.00.

(The board is considering possibilities for a virtual meeting in case it is still be unwise to meet in person at the end of April. Until you hear otherwise, please assume the meeting will take place in Santa Fe.)

Please send in the registration form in this newsletter with your check by April 20. Please see page 3 for the registration form and agenda information.

The guest speaker will be Santa Fe County League member Irene Epp. After 17 years at Santa Fe Prep as a teacher and administrator, Epp took a year-long sabbatical in Asia. She discovered the system of international schools and taught in Bangladesh, and then worked as a high school administrator in Egypt. She took similar jobs in several African countries, but it was in Mali that she discovered her calling creating an integrated, inclusive learning environment for students, staff and families. She is currently active in the League’s Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) group. Her talk will focus on what her experience has brought to this League initiative.

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The President's Corner

By Hannah Burling

LWVNM President president@lwvnm.org

Congratulations are due to Meredith Machen for the very successful February 6th event at the Roundhouse celebrating the centennial of women's suffrage and the League's 100th birthday. It was a great occasion. We were lucky to have Virginia Kase, the Chief Executive Officer of the League of Women Voters of the US, as our speaker both in the rotunda and at the legislative reception the night before.

Fair Districts New Mexico, our redistricting project, continues to move along well. The coalition has attracted many organizations and momentum is building.

Thank you to our State Action Committee and the members who show up faithfully to speak with legislators and testify in legislative committees to advance the League's priorities. Please see Dick's report for more.

2020 promises to be a very unusual year. On top of a very intense presidential election, concerns about COVID-19 have already caused Georgia and Louisiana to delay their primary elections and there may be more postponements. As long as there are restrictions in place, voter registration will be affected. The 2020 census, which is another League priority, will also face issues. Meetings will be canceled or will take place online. We're looking into using Zoom as a back-up in case we are unable to gather for Council.

We'll be using VOTE411 for the first time this year. It's an on-line electronic voter guide developed by LWVUS that we hope will make the voter guides accessible throughout the state.

Our recently formed JEDI team (Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) has been hard at work. They made their first public appearance at the Women's Day celebration in Las Vegas on March 8th and are working on their core mission of registering voters from all sectors of the population. Their goals include outreach to Native American and working-class people, and active, visible involvement by young women from Hispanic, Native, and other minority NM cultures as well as specific outreach to other NM organizations with similar interests. The JEDI team is also looking for more members from all over the state.



Meredith Machen at the podium during ceremonies at the Roundhouse, celebrating the centennials of women's suffrage and the League of Women Voters. Photo by Janet Blair

League of Women Voters Council Agenda April 25, 2020

11:30 a.m.	Registration
11:45	Call to Order
12:00	Luncheon with Irene Epps
1:00 – 2:30	LWVNM Council
	President’s Report
	Membership Report and Official 2020 Numbers
	Treasurer’s Report
	Presentation and Adoption of FY 2019 Budget
	Committee Reports:
	Judicial Selection Study
	Spent Nuclear Fuel Advocacy Group
	Voter Guide, Election Calendar, and Candidate Forums
	Local League Reports— Sharing of Programs, Studies, Activities
	Planning and Directions to the Board
	Adjourn Council

Registration Form

**Please send mail form and a check by April 20 for \$30 payable to
LWVSFC
1925 Camino Lumbre, Santa Fe, NM 87505**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

I will attend as (Please check one)

Local League delegate from LWV _____

Member at Large delegate*

LWVNM Board Member*

Non-delegate member/observer/guest (circle one)

The registration Fee includes materials and a catered buffet lunch.

*LWVNM Board members, who are not local League presidents or delegates, and the Member at Large delegate should NOT send a check with their registration. Instead, please contact LWVNM Treasurer, Suzanne Ronneau at 505-699-7781 or sronneau@bellsouth.net. She will pay the registration fee.

The IHM Conference Center is located at 50 Mount Carmel Road in Santa Fe, off Monte del Sol near Old Santa Fe Trail.

League's 100th Anniversary and the Women's Vote Centennial Celebration at the Roundhouse

Photo collage by Janet Blair



Judicial Selection Study Committee Report

By Suzanne Ronneau, Chair

Judicial Study Committee

The Judicial Study Committee consists of five League members, several of whom are very involved in Voter Services. Accordingly, the committee has acknowledged that 2020 will be a year of somewhat low-key effort on the study and we will be able to put more effort into it in 2021.

However, on March 18 three of our five members met with Magistrate Judge Pat Casados of Los Alamos, who is President of the Magistrate Judges Association. Adelaide Jacobson arranged the meeting; Suzanne Ronneau and Jo Galvin Nash were present by phone.

Judge Casados says the lower courts serve well as “People’s Courts” for New Mexico, and she does not believe the magistrate judges need to be attorneys. Three counties do not have even one resident who is an attorney. Many of the litigants are pro se (they represent themselves); in cases where one party is pro se and the other is represented, the judge must attempt to “level the playing field.” Their jurisdiction is tort, contract, landlord/tenant under \$10,000, felony preliminary hearings, misdemeanors, DWI/DUI and other traffic violations. About half of the cases settle and the terms agreed on are the judgement. Litigants can appeal a judgment; appeals are de novo. (This means the case is heard without any reference to whether the judge made errors of law or fact.)

Three NM counties do not have even one resident who is an attorney.

The magistrate judges, elected to four-year terms in partisan elections in the same year as the governor, are required to immediately attend a two-week training session; they are then assigned a mentor -- an experienced magistrate judge -- who sits with them in the court until the mentor is satisfied the new judge is able to adequately do the job. The mentor thereafter remains available to answer any questions. After serving on the bench for six months, the new judge must attend an additional week of training. More training is offered when funding is available. Judge Casados said there is adequate training and ongoing support for these judges.

Also, in the event of a problem with a judge, the system provides ample remedies. A judge can be removed or suspended without pay for violation of ethics rules or inappropriate conduct. And, she said, the voters make good decisions about re-electing (or not) the lower court judges.

Judge Casados indicated the major problem of the lower courts is the lack of funding for adequate staff; pretrial services in particular lack funding. The compliance officers are not paid a salary, but depend on what they can collect in fees. No security is provided -- there are no bailiffs. Some courts operate in unsuitable quarters -- the court in Mora was in a single-wide trailer with a hole in the floor, which the judge covered with his desk. Mandatory sentence services such as domestic violence programs may require a defendant to travel long distances for 52 weeks -- she said they are thus “set up to fail.”

Judge Casados is somewhat equivocal regarding the elections being partisan -- the party may help the candidate by providing campaign funding and getting required signatures, but since the judicial candidates cannot support other party candidates, they are sometimes put in an uncomfortable situation. She explained that judicial candidates are subject to special campaign financing rules and are barred from knowing which individuals or organizations contribute to their campaigns.

The study committee members have assumed specific assignments for gathering further information, but the study will be somewhat “on the back burner” during the upcoming election season.

The LWVNM's Fair Districts for New Mexico Project

By Richard Mason, Action Chair

The League-initiated Fair Districts for New Mexico Project (FDNM) is advocating for a fairer and more transparent redistricting process in 2021. The project is now supported by more than 20 organizations.

Although we were unable to pass legislation to create a Redistricting Task Force, we are continuing to advocate for one. The FDNM is requesting that the Legislative Council create a Redistricting Task Force that would include legislators, representatives from the Governor's office, the office of the Secretary of State and members of the public. The Legislative Council is the interim committee made up of the leadership of the two chambers, plus some other key legislators. The task force would start to meet in late spring of 2020 and would report to the relevant interim committee and the 2021 session of the Legislature.

The Fair Districts for New Mexico Project will be conducting a number of public events starting in late spring. Please check the FDNM for information about further activities. www.fairdistrictsnm.org or contact the project leader, Dick Mason at act@lwvnm.org

Program Report

By Chris Furlanetto, Program Chair

No changes to LWVNM positions have been approved by the Board since our 2019 Convention.

In preparation for the 2020 LWVUS Convention, LWVNM has proposed three new national program items:

LWVUS Concurrence with LWVNM Position on Transfer of Federal Public Lands,
Immigration Reform, and
Climate Emergency.

Please go to <https://www.lwvnm.org/positions.html> for our current positions document. You can search and review the positions online or download a Word or pdf copy.

Reminder: The LWVNM Action List has moved

By Akkana Peck, Webmaster

The state League has a mailing list called Action for discussing current topics of interest: projects the Action committee is working on, and other activities where members can get involved in making a difference.

In the past, the Action list was a Yahoo group, but Yahoo drastically changed their Groups at the end of 2019, so we've moved Action to a new mailing list hosted by SouthWest CyberPort, who has been hosting our website for many years.

If you were on the old Yahoo Group but haven't yet joined the new Action list, consider joining. It's a great way to get involved and keep track of projects the League is working on.

To join the Action list, visit

<https://lwvnm.org/maillinglists.html>

or just go to lwvnm.org and click on Mailing Lists in the sidebar.

Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage Research and Advocacy

Group 2020 Program

By Karen M. Douglas, Chair

The draft LWVNM Advocacy Statement, which was approved by the LWVNM Board in November, was submitted to LWVUS in December. The LWVUS response directed the Committee to consider LWVTX concerns. Karen Douglas coordinated a Skype Televideo conference with Susybelle Gosslee (Dallas, TX) and Tonya Kleuskens (Amarillo, TX) on February 1. Seven LWVNM members participated in Albuquerque, one LWVNM member in Las Cruces, three LWVTX members in Amarillo, and one LWVTX member in Dallas.

The outcome was that the Texas League members asked LWVNM to organize a caucus to take place during the LWVUS Convention in June. Karen Douglas provided Hannah Burling with the contact information for the LWV participants from other states who had been discussing Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage (IL, IA, MI, DC, TX) so that she could ask for their support in getting approval for the caucus, but was unsuccessful prior to the March 1 deadline.



Spent fuel pool. Courtesy of RADēCO.

Ms. Bobbi Merryman, UNM PhD Candidate in Nuclear Engineering and Public Outreach Officer for the American Nuclear Society, presented “Safety of Spent Fuel Storage in NM and TX” to the LWVCNM January Luncheon Unit. Merriman has joined LWVCNM and both the LWVSFC and LWVLA local leagues have invited her to address one of their monthly meetings later in 2020.

Senator Steinborn (D, Doña Ana) introduced SB95 during the 2020 Legislature, amending the responsibilities of the NM Radioactive Waste Consultation Task Force and expanding the Task Force’s authority to include privately-owned facilities (i.e., NM/HOLTEC & TX/ISP). LWVNM supported this bill, which passed the Senate Conservation Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee

but not the Senate floor vote. LWVNM representatives (Barbara Calef, Karen Douglas, and Laura Atkins) plan to meet with Senator Steinborn later in 2020 to discuss a strategy for passing the bill during the 2021 60-day legislative session. A 1-page advocacy brief has now been composed as directed by the LWVNM Board during the March 7 meeting.

The next meeting of the Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage Research and Advocacy Group was scheduled for Saturday, March 21 and featured a presentation by two nuclear experts (NMSU Professor Emeritus Lokesh Chaturvedi and George Anastas), both with experience on the NMED task force (Environmental Evaluation Group) responsible for NM oversight of TRU waste at LANL and WIPP. The March presentation topic was “Radiation Exposure to Workers and the Public from Spent Nuclear Fuel Transport and Storage at NM/HOLTEC & TX/ISP.” However, the meeting has been postponed due to COVID-19 precautions. The presentation will be rescheduled when NM precautions are lowered.

The April SNF Advocacy Group meeting will be scheduled when current health concerns are adequately controlled. The presentation will be held in Santa Fe and feature the NMED Resource Protection Division Director discussing NMED Oversight of HOLTEC & ISP activities and funding sources.

National Votes for Women Trail in Las Cruces, New Mexico

By Eileen VanWie

Three Las Cruces women have been added to the National Votes for Women Trail (<https://ncwhs.org/votes-for-women-trail/>), to honor their contributions to quality of life and democracy in New Mexico. Laura Frenger (April 5, 1873 – November 14, 1961), Clara Belle Williams (October 29, 1885 - July 3, 1994), and María Gutiérrez Spencer (December 17, 1919 – August 1992) influenced the lives of Las Cruces area residents during their lifetimes.

The Woman's Improvement Association (WIA) began in 1894 with five women purchasing a hearse to bring respect to funerals for their loved ones. Through personal donations and fundraisers, they bought land for a park to be used "by all classes of citizens," which is now Pioneer Women's Park. In 1897, when Laura Frenger moved to Las Cruces, she immediately became a leader of the WIA, and in 1910 organized the State General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC). The Legislative Department they created advocated for women's suffrage and better laws for women and children. The New Mexico GFWC members were responsible for getting women's suffrage for school elections into the New Mexico Constitution during the statehood process in 1910. The right was tenuous, however, as any man in a town or county could rescind it. Frenger received national recognition for her accomplishments, including her work with the Red Cross, New Mexico's child welfare program, and the Pan American Round Table.



Clara Belle Williams. Courtesy, NMSU Library

Clara Belle Williams, born near La Grange Texas, was the first African-American to graduate from what is now New Mexico State University (NMSU) with a BA in English in 1937. She was not allowed into the classrooms and sat outside the door to hear the lectures. Williams taught at Booker T. Washington Elementary School in Las Cruces for over twenty years. In 1961 NMSU named a street on its campus after her; in 2005 the English Department building was renamed Clara Belle Williams Hall.

María Gutiérrez Spencer, born in Las Cruces, was punished in school for not understanding English. This experience led to a lifetime mission to make sure Hispanic and Native American students received culturally and linguistically relevant learning experiences. Gutiérrez Spencer graduated from Berkeley with a degree in Spanish and Latin American History in 1941. In 1963 she moved to Silver City and got a job as a traveling Spanish teacher. She received a federal grant in 1967 to write a Bicultural Orientation and Language Development (BOLD) program. The program was so successful that she won numerous awards for it throughout her life. The recognition made her a target for prejudice in Silver City. In 1973, Gutierrez Spencer moved the program to Deming, where she found a more receptive school system and community. There is a New Mexico Historic Women Marker for her on the NMSU Campus.



María Gutiérrez Spencer. NMSU Photo courtesy of Laura Gutiérrez-Spencer

The countless stories of these and many other women of all ethnicities extend well beyond passage of the 19th Amendment. The online National Votes for Women Trail helps to make women's contributions to history visible.

Here Comes Vote411!

By Diane Goldfarb, Voter Services Chair

Voter Services chairs from all our Leagues have a special challenge this year. The LWVNM Board voted to participate in Vote411, the LWVUS online voter guide, in 2020. That means the primary as well as the general election. It will be New Mexico's first year as part of this project, and it is quite the learning experience for all of us who are involved.

Central New Mexico did a Vote411 trial run for the Rio Rancho municipal election in March, and will cover contested races in the upcoming primary. Southern New Mexico will also cover the primary online. Los Alamos and Santa Fe County are even more ambitious and will have printed Voter Guides for the primary as well as being online. Not only will we be covering federal, statewide and races in our individual League districts, we are going to cover all New Mexico legislative races. A huge push to publicize the Vote411.org website will be a key element as well. And then we'll do it all over again for the general election!

This does involve a steep learning curve, and there are bound to be bumps along the way, but it is an exciting opportunity for our Leagues to work together as we encourage an informed and active electorate in New Mexico.

Local League News

Southern New Mexico

By Kathy Brook, Co-President

Celebrations of the League's birthday and the 19th amendment anniversary dominated the past two months. At a High Tea on February 8 members convened to send Valentine's cards to local public officials and on February 22 we joined other members of the Southern New Mexico Suffrage Alliance on the Plaza de Las Cruces to commemorate New Mexico's ratification of the 19th amendment. Marjorie Burr, a founding member of our local League, regaled the tea participants with stories about our history. Bobbie Green, president of the Las Cruces chapter of the NAACP, emceed the event on the plaza, which featured presentation of the colors by local Girl Scouts as well as remarks by former history and women's studies faculty member Joan Jensen, LWVSNM co-president Eileen VanWie, and NM Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver. The festivities concluded with a walk around the downtown area with numerous signs celebrating votes for women.



Suffrage celebration. Photo by Bob Burns

Later in the month Eileen VanWie and Kathy Brook spoke to the NMSU Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha honor society about suffrage, the League, and voter issues. We also supplied materials to our public library for a Women's History Month display focusing on votes for women. Meanwhile, Eileen has continued to monitor progress on getting a marker to recognize local activities related to passage of the 19th amendment.

VanWie has presented three excellent sessions on suffrage to the community's Academy of Learning in Retire-

ment (ALR). Unfortunately, coronavirus concerns on the part of ALR have resulted in the postponement of the final session on the Equal Rights Amendment.



Sheriff Kim Stewart. Photo by Bob Burns

In keeping with Women’s History Month, our March dinner speaker was Kim Stewart. She is the first woman sheriff of Doña Ana County and previously was the first woman to serve in various law enforcement roles in California.

Our program planning meeting on February 15 identified program priorities for the coming year. No new studies were recommended, but there was support for advocacy on immigration, affordable housing, the census count, and Making Democracy Work.

Our Youth Engagement Committee collaborated with the City of Las Cruces on a project called “Know Your Local Government,” giving local high school students an opportunity to learn more about their local government and to provide input on related issues. For a community event LWVSNM members have picked a case study presentation titled “James Madison, the ‘Federal Negative,’ and the Making of the U.S. Constitution (1787).”

At least five students have joined the League as a result of our activities.

Central New Mexico

By Karen Douglas, Co-President

The February 15, 2020 LWVCNM 100th Birthday Party recognized the varied and outstanding achievements of ten LWVCNM Lifetime members, each with more than 50 years membership. Multiple members of the LWVCNM Suffrage Committee, chaired by Dr. Jeanne Logsdon, dedicated long hours to prepare a suitable ceremony. More than 90 LWVCNM members assembled to celebrate the accomplishments of these lifetime contributors. Mary Wilson, LWVCNM 1st Vice President and past President of LWVUS, served as Mistress of Ceremonies for the event, introducing each speaker and offering a discussion of each LWV Lifetime member’s involvement in LWV.



Photos by Janet Blair

LWV Lifetime members recognized included: Judith Binder, Jan Bray, Nora (Nan) Clayton, Judith Deutsch, Donna Hill, Ida Humphrey, Margaret Olson (not present), Julia Seligman, Vivian Skadron, and Dorothy (Tooker) Walton. Megan Holcomb, Mayor Keller’s Constituent Services Representative, read Mayor Tim Keller’s Proclamation of the 100th Birthday of the League of Women Voters during the event. Cynthia Borrego, Albuquerque City Councilor representing District 5, attended the celebration and presented the City Council Proclamation of the 100th Birthday of the LWV during the City Council meeting February 19th. The NM Secretary of State and former Bernalillo County Clerk, Maggie Toulouse Oliver, also addressed LWVCNM, presenting “Election Security during the 2020 Elections.” In addition to

the well-deserved honors and recognition bestowed, many LWVCNM members had an opportunity to reacquaint themselves with others they had met during participation in League initiatives decades ago.

Mary Wilson has evaluated the new LWV Vote411 on-line tools and user techniques for providing the electorate with an unbiased view of each candidate's perspectives. LWVCNM will perform the trial run of the new Vote411 software for the primary election to be held in June and is coordinating committees for the work of preparing questions for candidates, verifying candidate responses, and distributing information. Vote 411 will contain on-line information for all four counties in our service area: Bernalillo, Sandoval, Tarrant and Valencia. League members are currently exploring the possibility of a printed guide.

The League will also compile a Voter Guide for the November election. This guide will be both online and available in print. Committees for the November Voter Guide will commence activity mid-September. New members who would like to be involved in one of LWVCNM's most important projects should contact Wilson.

Candidate Forums will also again be provided by LWVCNM and Mary Henrie Smith has initiated efforts to moderate forums this election year. She is also coordinating volunteers to serve as timekeeper and coordinate questions for each of these Candidate Forums.

Mr. Rick Allen, Deputy Chief Counsel for the Office of NM State Engineer, addressed the February 24, 2020 NE Heights Unit. He discussed the history of water adjudication with emphasis on "Use it or Lose It" criteria. He explained the concept of "beneficial use" and also described the personnel and assignments within the NM State Engineer's Office, which is staffed equally by attorneys and engineers, but always managed by a Licensed Professional Engineer.

Santa Fe County

By Laura Atkins. Liaison

VOTER SERVICES

The Harvard Case Study Workshop will be offered again in 2020. Leagues are invited to nominate teachers to participate. All expenses are paid by the Workshop, but attendees are encouraged to pay their own travel costs. Kelly Davis will work with Anne Culp, Randi Lowenthal and Robert Sobel to identify teachers who would be good candidates to nominate.

The Harvard Case Study Grant requires at least one community discussion event organized by LWVSFC. The event will be held on April 24 and run by our participating teacher, Robert Sobel and his students.

Voter Guides for the Primaries

LWVSFC will prepare a printed Voter Guide for the Primary. We will have VOTE 411 up on our website and offer the Santa Fe New Mexican the pdf so they can print it. We are coordinating questions with Los Alamos for the races we share, and with LWVNM for the state-wide races.

ACTION AND ADVOCACY

LWVSFC is continuing to work with the Santa Fe County Complete Count Committee. We will need volunteers to be at senior centers in the city and the county to help people fill out census forms on paper and online. We will also need op-eds and letters to the editor for the three newspapers in Santa Fe County. The effort will begin at the end of March.

PROGRAMS

The Program Planning Meeting was held on January 28. We recommended changing our Natural Resources positions by creating a separate category for Land Use and Development. Positions related to air, water, and energy

would remain under Natural Resources.

We reviewed the proposed LWVUS position on Voter Representation / Election Process and established LWVUS principles on representation. The meeting attendees voted to recommend the concurrence with the changes approved by the LWVMN board. Both of these were approved by the LWVSFC board at the February 18 meeting.

Lunch with a Leader with Daniel Hernandez

Daniel Hernandez is the project manager for the City of Santa Fe's Mid-town Campus project. He explained that the list of possible master developers has been narrowed to three finalists. He cannot disclose the finalists because the companies bidding are engaged in a competitive bidding process and disclosure would violate the rules of the process. He did explain the criteria they are using, including green/sustainable development. They have received input from local businesses that want to locate in the development, and also potential tenants. The city prefers to sell the land but they will consider leasing it.

This meeting was attended by several people who are not members of the League, most of whom learned about it on Facebook.

The City of Santa Fe's Good Governance Initiative

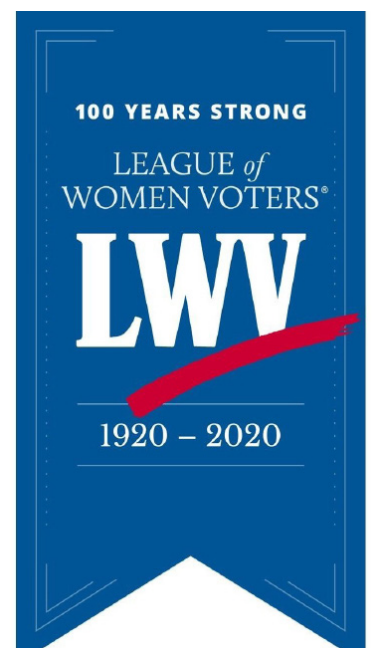
Mayor Alan Webber, City Councilor Roman "Tiger" Abeyta, and Council Liaison Jennifer Faubian, presented the results of this initiative at a League members-only meeting on March 4. It is a plan to improve the way the City Council and the City function in order to modernize Santa Fe's government and to create solutions to systemic problems. It identifies five problem areas of City government where the current system is draining time and energy from the governing body and staff that would better be spent discussing complex issues and making big, important decisions.

General Meeting March 11

Maggie Toulouse Oliver gave a wonderful talk about her experiences as a woman in a political office and about the steps the Office of the SOS has taken to ensure security in the upcoming election. She talked about how she became fascinated by politics at a very young age, her excitement when she wrote to then Senator Jeff Bingaman and received a reply, and working on his campaign at the age of eighteen. She highlighted some of the obstacles she and other female politicians encounter, including trying to raise children while holding office and being held to a higher standard than men. On the election security side, New Mexico has one of the most secure systems in the U.S. but even ours isn't totally safe from things like Russian interference. It is particularly difficult to counter misinformation about polling places and voting dates that are created on social media and the internet to keep certain classes of people from voting. Toulouse Oliver encouraged everyone to get their voting information from her office or from a reputable source like the League. One new development is that all New Mexicans can request an absentee ballot online and mail the completed ballot, postage pre-paid.

MEMBERSHIP

We have 137 members, including three who joined within the last month



Los Alamos

By Barbara Calef and Becky Shankland, Co-Presidents

At the December board meeting the Los Alamos League voted to compile a voter guide every year after hearing that many voters had requested a guide prior to the November election. We also plan to publish a voter guide for the 2020 primary election since there are so many candidates. Seven Democrats and five Republicans have filed to run for Congressional District 3, the seat vacated by Ben Ray Lujan.

We held our legislative preview on January 8. The speakers were Representative Christine Chandler, Senator Richard Martinez, newly appointed Senator Roberto Gonzales, and Amber Wallin, Deputy Director of NM Voices for Children.

Wallin showed how tax policy and legislative funding influence New Mexico children. It's important to be aware that NM is still ranked 50th of the states in child well-being. Our tax policy is not helping us to dig our way out: She listed the regressive tax cuts and austerity measures that have hurt our children and families. Some progress was made last year, but more is needed. Wallin recommended a full repeal of capital gains deductions, raising tax rates on the highest incomes, increasing the Working Families Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

Rep. Chandler urged the audience members to attend the committee hearings during the session and to speak out in favor of raising taxes to diversify the revenue stream, as they were doing at the forum. She expressed frustration that the Senate had so weakened HB 6 during the last session, cutting proposed tax increases.

On February 4 the Los Alamos County Council proclaimed the year 2020 as the 100th year of women's right to vote, the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters, and the 73rd anniversary of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos. League members showed up at the meeting dressed in white and donned suffrage sashes for the photo with Councilor Katrina Martin as she handed us the be-ribboned proclamation.



LWVLA Table Feb. 6 at the NM Roundhouse: l to r: Vicky the Voter, Barbara Calef, Karyl Ann Armbruster, Joyce Zaugg, State Representative Christine Chandler, Rebecca Chaiken, Becky Shankland, Lynn Jones, Joyce Nickols, Addie Jacobson. Photo by Dody Richardson.

Over the next two days Los Alamos League members came out in force to attend the LWVNM legislative reception, where we had the opportunity to meet Virginia Kase and to greet the public at our table in the West Gallery of the Roundhouse. We also were able to lead new members to the offices of our legislators and to sit in on a Senate Conservation Committee hearing.

At our program planning meeting we heard two proposals for new studies, one on landfill alternatives and one on digital privacy. The LWVLA board recommended the studies for consideration at the Annual Meeting on April 21. Our League supports continuing the Campaign for Making Democracy Work, but we also support making Climate Emergency an additional program item. We agree with the state board about the proposed concurrence on Election Process and also hope that LWVUS will concur with the new state position on Transfer of Federal Public Lands.

The League conducted an essay contest to raise awareness of the suffrage centennial among high school students. The winning essay, submitted by Philippa Fung, has been published in the Los Alamos Daily Post and the student, a freshman, was awarded the prize of \$400 by the board.



Above: Philippa Fung with (back row) Karyl Ann Armbruster, Addie Jacobson, Julie Williams-Hill, (front row) Jody Benson, Philippa Fung, Becky Shankland, Barbara Calef, Lynn Jones. Photo by Elizabeth-Sharon Fung.

We continue to work on a local library exhibit on women's suffrage. Much work in various archives is underway. We have also scheduled Deborah Blanche from the NM Humanities Council to perform a Chautauqua as Nina Otero-Warren during the June 13 Community Day celebration in Los Alamos.



Right: Proclamation photo Feb. 4: l to r: Jody Benson, Addie Jacobson, Karyl Ann Armbruster, Ellen Mills, Barbara Calef, County Councilor Katrina Martin, Wendy Swanson, Becky Shankland, Lynn Jones. Photo by Mark Jones.



Alice Paul unfurling the ratification banner from Suffrage headquarters on Aug 18, 1920. Courtesy, the National Archives.



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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that helps the public play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Anyone 16 years of age or older, male or female, may become a member. The League of Women Voters never endorses candidates for office or supports political parties.