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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.

President's Corner

Hannah Burling
LWVNM President president@lwvnm.org



Our 54th National Convention will be held in Washington, DC June 25-June 28, 2020. It's an invigorating, empowering event and I encourage you to attend. This is a great opportunity for connecting with other activists, finding resources and developing skills. Please check here: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/manage-your-league/council-convention> for details.

The 2020 New Mexico legislative session opens at noon on January 21. Our legislative reception is on Wednesday, February 5th from 5:30 to 7:30 at the Rio Chama and League Day at the Legislature is February 6th. We'll be celebrating the centennial of both women's suffrage and the founding of the League. The CEO of the League of Women Voters of the U.S., Virginia Kase, will be speaking at the reception and in the rotunda the next day. We will also hear from Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham. Thanks to Meredith Machen, there will be memorials in both the New Mexico House of Representatives and the New Mexico Senate honoring the League's centennial.

The census, on which so much depends for this state, begins officially on April 1. County efforts at public education, a League specialty, will begin earlier. Local Leagues can make a material difference to the census count in their areas. Get involved!

At the state level, we are looking for a volunteer with evaluator experience to be on several telephone conference calls in 2020. These meetings are generally once a month and are a part of the Data Ambassadors program from LWVUS.

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LWVCNM Co-President Karen Douglas Receives UNM School of Engineering Alumni Award

By Karen Wentworth

On November 7 Karen Douglas was recognized as an outstanding graduate of the UNM School of Engineering for her long career in the nuclear industry. She was the only woman among the alumni to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award.

When she retired, Douglas was a nuclear engineer with the National Nuclear Security Administration. From 1993 to 2003 she was the American Society for Quality certification chair, something she considers as one of the highlights of her career.

When Douglas attended UNM, she was one of the only women in the chemical and nuclear engineering department. In her work with the League of Women Voters of New Mexico she continues to lead a committee working to examine the applications from two companies that propose to import Spent Nuclear Fuel to eastern New Mexico and West Texas.



Karen Douglas (r) with Eva Chi, Associate Professor in the School of Engineering. Photo by Karen Wentworth

President's Message

from page 1

Please contact me at president @ lwvnm.org, if you have questions or could possibly be on at least one of these calls.

Congratulations to the Spent Nuclear Fuel Committee and Chair Karen Douglas for the advocacy plan, which has gone to LWVUS for review after an enormous amount of work.



Save the dates:

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

Reception at the Rio Chama,
Santa Fe

5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 6, 2020

New Mexico Legislature

Public Program: 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in
the Rotunda

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of
The League of Women Voters and
Women's Suffrage

Full details in this issue of La Palabra

League Days at the Legislature 2020

Wednesday, February 5, 5:30-7:30 pm

LWVNM Legislative Reception

Rio Chama Restaurant, 414 Old Santa Fe Trail
(two doors north of the Roundhouse)

Honored Guest

Virginia Kase, CEO, League of Women Voters of the United States
(see accompanying bio)

Network with fellow members, legislators, and some invited guests!

Packets of materials for League Day will be available at the Reception on February 5 and at the LWVNM table in the West Hall of History at the NM Capitol after 8 am on February 6. Members may wish to attend committee hearings in the morning of the 6th before the celebrations begin.

Accommodations: The Desert Inn (formerly Garrett's Desert Inn) is the most convenient, most affordable place to stay since it is on the same block as the State Capitol and the Rio Chama Restaurant. The hotel is offering a special rate of \$59 plus tax per room for one queen bed or \$69 for two queen beds. Parts of the hotel are still under renovation, but the rooms we have blocked have been completely renovated. If we fill 10 rooms, the hotel will waive the \$8 parking fee. Non-guests pay \$10 a day. Mention League of Women Voters to take advantage of this rate. Call 505 982-1851 to make a reservation. They will hold your room with a credit card number. Their new website is not up yet. Visit <https://santafe.org/>, Santa Fe's official tourism website for lots of other information.

For further information on League Day, please contact Meredith Machen at 505-577-6337 or projects@lwvnm.org.

Thursday, February 6

League's 100th Anniversary and Women's Vote Centennial

Displays in the West Hall, Roundhouse, 8am-3pm
Legislative Committee Hearings, 8 am -10:30
Special legislative memorials in House and Senate late morning
(See <https://www.nmlegis.gov/> for schedule)
Program, Entertainment, and Refreshments, 12:30-2pm

Please see accompanying article in this issue of La Palabra and www.lwvnm.org

League's 100th Anniversary and the Women's Vote Centennial Celebration, Thursday, February 6, 2020!

By Meredith Machen

Get ready to celebrate the 100th anniversary of LWVNM and LWVUS and NM's ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. Please consider wearing purple, white, and green/or yellow for the occasion and impersonating one of your favorite suffragists or women leaders. Wear a placard with your name and a few words or quotation. Hats and Votes for Women sashes are perfect of the occasion. Men might want to impersonate Frederick Douglass, Senator A.A. Jones, President Wilson, or Governor Larrazolo. The theme is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion-Our Shared Commitment.

Women worked collaboratively with supportive males for more than seven decades to obtain the vote. We are carrying that spirit into our celebration as well as our commitment to expand democracy so that it is truly inclusive and representative. Along with the tables we have reserved in the West Hall for state and local Leagues and our Fair Districts NM Project, we've invited some of our closest non-partisan partners to display information about shared priorities and history. Among them are AAUW, ACLU, Common Cause, General Federation of Women's Clubs, NAACP, NOW, NM Secretary of State's Office, Planned Parenthood, and Southwest Women's Law Center.

Late morning both chambers are expected to hear legislative memorials addressing the League's 100th Anniversary and the Suffrage Centennial. Some of our League leaders will be seated behind the rostrum in the Senate. Senator Nancy Rodriguez and Representative Joanne Ferrary, League members from Santa Fe and Las Cruces respectively, are sponsoring legislative memorials recognizing the League's history and accomplishments. Senator Liz Stefanics, League member from Santa Fe, and Representative Gail Chasey will also present the legislative memorials on the suffrage centennial in their respective chambers that day. From 12:30-2 pm, we'll gather in the rotunda for entertainment, speakers, and refreshments. Governor Lujan Grisham will deliver proclamations about the dual occasion. SOS Maggie Toulouse Oliver will discuss some of the historical artifacts and elections improvements. LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase will talk about the League's history and current priorities for democracy reform. Our legislative sponsors, other legislators, and leaders from our partner organizations will also speak.

For further information on League Day, suffrage in NM, or the League's history, please contact Meredith Machen at 505-577-6337 or projects@lwnm.org. Thank you!

Bio of Virginia Case, LWVUS CEO

By Meredith Machen

Virginia Kase, head of the League of Women Voters of the United States, is coming to Santa Fe to help us celebrate LWVNM's 100th Anniversary and the Suffrage Centennial. Kase served on the committee for the National Archives exhibit about American women and the vote, called [Rightfully Hers](#). (At the link, you can view the 19th Amendment, famous suffrage leaders, including League founder Carrie Chapman Catt and our own Nina Otero Warren, as well as historical documents and artifacts of the suffrage movement.) Kase has participated in seminars about the centennial and writes frequently about democracy reform and the expansion of leadership roles for women. In October she was honored by the Hispanic Heritage Foundation at the Kennedy Center. Before coming to the League, where she focuses on advocacy, legislation, and litigation related to voting rights, Kase served as COO of CASA, an immigrant rights organization, and as National Technical Assistance and Training Manager at the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE) in Washington, DC. In her early 20's she co-founded a youth-led, non-profit helping at-risk youth develop educational, leadership and career skills in Hartford, CT.



Virginia Case, LWVUS CEO

Legislative Advocacy Workshop, December 7

By Barbara Calef

The League's Advocacy Workshop focuses on the legislative process, not issues. Ruth Hoffman, Retired Director of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry, began her explanation of how the legislature develops the budget by saying, "The process is arcane." For further information, she recommended the guides published by Voices for Children (<https://www.nmvoices.org/?s=guide>)

She explained what can be considered during the 2020 "short" (30-day) session:

1. The major focus of the legislature will be on appropriations and revenue bills.
2. "There is no such thing as a call," Hoffman announced. Rather, the governor will issue special messages for the bills she supports. A special message allows any bill related to the topic to be considered germane.
3. Vetoed bills can also be submitted. (NM does not often override vetoes, but the 2019 so-called rocket docket, where many vetoed bills were passed rapidly, was an exception.)
4. In the House, the Rules Committee determines which bills are germane. In the Senate, the Committees' Committee has that role.
5. Constitutional amendments (joint resolutions) and memorials are always germane.

How much revenue is available? The Consensus Revenue Tax Team, composed of the economists in the Tax Analysis, Research and Statistics Office, meets four times a year to track revenue. "New money" is revenue above what was appropriated in the previous year. (Because the fiscal year runs from July 1-June 30, we are now in FY 2020. The next session will deal with FY 2021.)

The General Appropriation Act, HB2, includes both recurring and non-recurring appropriations and revenues. Appropriations must be included in HB 2 even when they start as separate bills. One must look for the line item to see if an appropriation has been included. Specific items are difficult to find; a member of the public needs to ask someone on the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) or a legislator for help in locating an appropriation.

HB 2 must pass the House by mid-session; it then goes to the Senate, which may add amendments. Then it goes to the Con-



Action Chair Richard Mason and NM League President Hannah Burling. Photos by Barbara Calef.



Senator Sander Rue, Retired Lobbyist Ruth Hoffman, Representative Christine Chandler.

ference Committee, where differences between the two chambers are resolved.

Both the legislative and the executive branches propose budgets. Agencies must submit their budgets by September 1 and the LFC holds hearings for every agency. The LFC will produce a general outline later in December. The governor's budget will be announced in January.

How can the public influence the legislature? Advocates need to know which department administers a

program and then identify the legislators who are willing to be champions. It's important to follow the interim committees, which meet between sessions.

Christine Chandler represents District 43 in the House (Los Alamos and parts of Sandoval, Santa Fe, and Rio Arriba Counties). She was elected in 2018 and sits on the House Taxation and Revenue (HTRC) and House Judiciary (HJC) Committees. She stated that Taxation and Revenue is similar to the Appropriations Committee in that both need to make sure there is sufficient revenue to operate the government. They pay close attention to the projections. She chose to be on the former rather than the latter committee because she wanted to make policy, not "count beans."

The HTRC is responsible for the capital outlay process. Each representative received \$2.1 million to spend in their district in the last session. Chandler believes the expenditures should be published so that the process is fully transparent. The legislator must determine what are the critical needs and be prepared to explain those decisions to constituents.

The legislature is using the oil boom to shore up its fiscal positions. Oil revenues were once a quarter of the state's revenue; they now comprise one-third. Chandler supports the effort to diversify the revenue stream. One way to increase revenue is to terminate some of the tax credits and deductions. Many of them are out of date. Another way is to make the personal income tax more progressive. But the legislative process is a series of compromises. During the last session the Senate pared down the tax increases that the House had approved in HB 6.

The governor has recently appointed a Tax Policy Advisory Committee to analyze the state's tax code and prepare a report for the governor. Chandler wants to see what they say and to do a "true review of the whole tax code." Currently, even for members of the HTRC, it's not as easy as she would like, and it is very hard for the public to follow the development of the budget. She wants to find ways to make it more transparent and less driven by lobbyists.

Chandler noted that during the session she is rarely in her office. Advocates can catch her in the committee room before a hearing begins or on the floor before the meeting. She does read her email regularly, even between legislative sessions.

Senator Sander Rue, who represents District 23 (in Albuquerque) and sits on the Senate Finance Committee, remarked that 2020 will be his 12th session and that during the intervening years, much has changed. The actions of the legislature are much more open due to the introduction of video and archiving of the meetings.

He noted that the legislature is careful not to overspend because the government is not allowed to have a deficit. If the predictions are wrong, a special session is required to correct spending. Much of the state revenue comes from the federal government, but more diversification is needed. He supports broadening the base, making the system fair, and making people pay their taxes.



Representative Christine Chandler. Photo by Barbara Calef.

LWVNM Legislative Priorities for the 2020 Legislative Session

By Richard Mason, Action Chair

This is a 30-day session: It goes from January 21 to February 20. This short session is limited to the following:

- legislation directly related to the budget;
- issues the governor includes in a message to the legislature;
- vetoed bills;
- joint resolutions (constitutional amendments and memorials).

Tax Reform & Funding – Making our tax system fairer and generating revenue

Last session the Senate Finance Committee (SFC) gutted much of HB6, which had generated much needed additional revenue and started to make the tax system more progressive. We expect that the House will attempt to restore the parts of HB6 removed in the SFC. We need to advocate for the Senate to support the proposed changes. In addition, we need to assure that any other changes to the tax code make the system more progressive. League lobbyists Rennie Ashleman and Susan Haase have been attending the Interim Revenue Stabilization & Tax Policy and Legislative Finance Committee meetings. That means the League will be in a better position to anticipate what is going to happen in the regular session.

Solar Tax Credit

New Mexico's solar tax credit expired in 2016. During the 2019 legislative session the League supported SB 518, the New Solar Market Development Tax Credit. The bill would have provided an income tax credit for 10% of solar installation costs (both thermal and photovoltaic) at a home or business with a maximum annual allowance of \$5 million for the program. SB 518 was supported by the governor. It passed in the Senate, but died on the House floor.

Redistricting: Reform New Mexico's redistricting process

We are pushing to make the 2021 process fairer and more transparent. See the separate article.

Other issues we will consider as they arise:

- funding for Early Childhood Programs;
- voting issues; and
- reproductive rights.

Subscribe to the New LWVNM Action List!

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. As of the end of 2019, Yahoo announced with little warning that they were cutting back support for Yahoo Groups, and that new people would no longer be able to join. So we've moved the Action discussions to a new mailing list hosted by SouthWest CyberPort, who has been hosting our website for many years.

To join the new Action list, visit <https://lwvnm.org/maillinglists.html> or just go to lwvnm.org and click on Mailing Lists in the sidebar.

Even if you were on the old Yahoo Group, you still need to take action to join the new list. We aren't able to migrate people automatically. If you weren't on the Yahoo Group, consider giving the new list a try. New people are welcome, and it's a great way to feel more "plugged in" and keep track of what's happening and how you can help.

Akkana Peck, Webmaster webmaster@lwvnm.org

Update on the LWVNM Fair Districts for New Mexico (FDNM) Project

by Dick Mason, Action Chair

For the Fair Districts for New Mexico Project, funded by the Thornburg Foundation, LWVNM members, assisted by Project Consultant Kathleen Burke, have been working to build support for action in the legislature during the next session. We are approaching New Mexico policymakers with a proposal to initiate a discussion of how we can make the 2021 redistricting process fairer and more transparent. At this point we aren't being prescriptive.

Here are some possible alternatives. Some would require Governor Lujan Grisham to include redistricting in a message to the 2020 Legislature:

- Introduce a revised Iowa model bill being drafted (SB416 in last session).
- Create a Temporary Redistricting Commission to advise on the 2021 redistricting.
- Put in statute standards for redistricting over and above the federal standards. The League is working with the Brennan Center on these standards.
- Pass a Joint Memorial requesting the Legislative Council to 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.
- Create an Independent Redistricting Commission by statute (New Hampshire model).
- Introduce a Joint Resolution to put an Independent Redistricting Commission on the ballot – This is the LWVNM preference, but least likely to succeed.

Also, Burke has developed Facebook and Twitter accounts for Fair Districts for New Mexico. They can be accessed through the Fair Districts web page.

As part of their commitment to redistricting reform, the Thornburg Foundation funded the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) to study the redistricting process in New Mexico and six other states. Thornburg also provided funds to NCSL to cover travel expenses for New Mexico legislators to attend NCSL's trainings on redistricting.

In addition, Thornburg contracted with New Mexico In Depth to do an extensive history of redistricting in New Mexico. The report <http://nmindepth.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Redistricting-NM-2021.pdf> was written by Gwyneth Doland, who presented to the Interim Courts, Corrections and Justice Committee on October 10 along with the League and NCSL. Doland also presented her findings on New Mexico In Focus <http://nmindepth.com/2019/11/25/redistricting-in-nm-explained-in-14-minutes/>.

On December 11 the LWVNM facilitated a meeting of key organizations supporting the Fair Districts for New Mexico project to develop an ongoing strategy. The group agreed to push for a memorial asking the Legislative Council to set up a task force. Heather Balas, the Thornburg Policy Officer, announced that Thornburg has funded Gabe Sanchez, Professor of Political Science at UNM, to do a poll of likely voters on redistricting reform. All thought it would be good to file the Iowa bill even if we don't get a message from the Governor.

Organizations supporting Fair Districts for New Mexico:

League of Women Voters of New Mexico; Common Cause New Mexico; New Mexico Ethics Watch; New Mexico Money Out of Politics; New Mexico Open Elections; Progressive Democrats of America Central New Mexico; Indivisible Corrales; The Brennan Center for Justice; Election Reformers Network; Princeton Gerrymandering Project; New Mexico First; Indivisible, Nob Hill; ACLU-NM.



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Judicial Selection Study Committee

By Suzanne Ronneau



Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court in Albuquerque. Photo by Janet Blair

The Judicial Selection Study Committee met on November 14, with Suzanne Ronneau, Mary Wilson, Mary Smith, Janet Blair, Adelaide Jacobson, and Jo Galvan Nash present. Each member accepted several assignments for going forward with the study. The committee plans to send a letter to all sitting judges of the Probate, Municipal, and Magistrate Courts telling them of the study and asking for their assistance.

Following up on the letter, committee members will contact the judges in the several counties they have agreed to survey, and set up times to meet with them and discuss several issues, such as whether the sitting judges feel the current judicial selection process (i.e., partisan elections) is working well, whether specific qualifications should be required for their positions, and how they would seek to improve the administration of justice in their courts.

The committee members plan to ask permission to observe some court procedures and to do additional study via internet resources. Also, we hope to gain access to some of the studies already done under the direction of Chief Justice Nakamura. In addition, members will research judicial selection processes in states with large rural areas, such as Wyoming, Idaho, Arizona, Montana, Colorado, Utah, and Nevada.

The committee would welcome additional members, and plans to meet again on February 5 or 6 in Santa Fe in conjunction with the Legislative Reception and League Day at the Legislature. Please contact Suzanne Ronneau, ronneau@bellsouth.net, if you would be interested.

Fair Districting Report from page 8

We need League members to talk to their legislators and let them know that fair & transparent redistricting is important to them. (See suggested themes on the Fair Districts for New Mexico website: <http://www.fairdistrictsnm.org>.) Please let us know their response at: act@lwvnm.org.

Fair Districts for NM Contacts:

Project Leader Dick Mason: act@lwvnm.org; 505-239-3804

Project Consultant Kathleen Burke; fairdistricts@lwvnm.org; 505-907-5355

Website: <http://www.fairdistrictsnm.org/>

Program Report

By Chris Furlanetto

Two items related to our positions were on the agenda at the November LWVNM Board meeting.

Election Procedures

A coalition of fourteen state/local Leagues is asking other state/local Leagues to concur with a proposed position titled “Voter Representation/Election Process.” The coalition states that because LWVUS does not have a comprehensive position on how we elect our leaders; they have composed a position using language from the 14 Leagues and LWVUS. The intention is to present the position at the 2020 Convention with broad support by concurrence as well as advocacy at Convention by state/local Leagues.



LWV NM Board meeting held in Las Cruces, November 2019. Photo by Janet Blair

Chris Furlanetto, Program Chair, will review the proposed position and compare it to existing LWVUS language and to our LWVNM position and present her findings to the Board at its January meeting. The Board will then vote on whether or not to concur with the proposed position; following the Board meeting, the decision will be communicated to local NM Leagues for discussion at their program planning meetings.

The Leagues proposing the concurrence note that states currently have a range of positions on Voter Representation/Election Process. LWVNM does have an Election Procedures position. Options include concurrence with the entire proposed position or modifying existing positions.

During the discussion at the November meeting the Board voted to add the words ‘verifiable and auditable’ to bullet #2 in our Election Procedures position. The bullet now reads: The League of Women Voters...supports...
2. verifiable and auditable procedures to guarantee the integrity of all statutory methods of voting in New Mexico.

Reproductive Health and Justice

Barbara Calef and Meredith Machen proposed concurrence with LWVFL’s position with some wording revisions/deletions. The Board voted to adopt by concurrence, with a few changes, this new Social Policy position.

Please take a look at: <https://www.lwvnm.org/positions.html#reproductivehealth>.

LWVNM SNF Storage Study Progresses to Advocacy

By Karen Douglas

LWVNM has been studying the proposal to store the Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) from the 99 domestic commercial nuclear reactors in two Consolidated Interim Storage Facilities (CISFs) in southeast New Mexico and the Texas/New Mexico border since 2017. This SNF is currently stored in spent fuel pools at reactor sites or in Interim Spent Fuel Storage Installations (ISFSIs) in 34 states. The two proposed CISF applications pending before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) are the HOLTEC/ELEA site midway between Carlsbad and Hobbs, NM and the Interim Storage Partners [ORANO(formerly AREVA)/Waste Control Specialists/NAC] located on the NM/TX border 5 miles from Eunice, NM. Both of the NRC license applications for SNF Consolidated Interim Storage Facilities (CISF) include an environment report, nuclear safety analysis report, and emergency response plan. Limited LWVNM resources permitted review of only a fraction of these extensive documents.

The NSF Research and Advocacy Committee and the LWVNM Board recognized that both of the license applications were rapidly progressing toward Construction and Operating License approval by the NRC and any relevant LWV advocacy would need to be timely to ensure LWV interests were adequately considered. Committee consideration of recent developments continues; however, a final Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage Advocacy Statement (<https://www.lwvnm.org/studies/2017/nuclearwaste/SpentNuclearFuelAdvocacy.html>) was approved by both the committee and the LWVNM Board in November. Because the proposed advocacy is based on a national position, the advocacy statement was submitted to LWVUS for approval in December.

The LWVNM SNF Storage Advocacy Statement focuses on LWVNM concerns resulting from the possibility of reduced regulation and/or oversight due to privatization. All prior national SNF storage and disposal projects have been conducted by the government or the utilities.

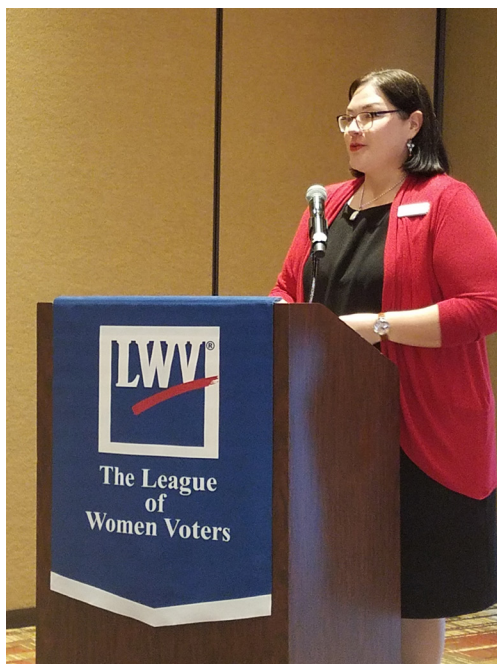
Local League News

Central New Mexico

By Karen Douglas, Co-President

The November 5 Municipal Election dominated recent LWVNM activities. Three LWVNM City Council District candidate forums were supported by League volunteers. On election day calls started coming in to the CNM office at 7:00 a.m. when the polls opened and continued until they closed at 7:00 p.m. Voters arrived at the CNM office at 6:30 p.m. expecting to cast their ballots (routine every election day)! A post-mortem was held on November 20 to improve planning, coordination, efficiency, and expansion of Voter Guide coverage for the 2020 General Election.

On October 22 LWVNM Co-Presidents Wentworth and Douglas were invited to participate when Albuquerque Mayor Keller and City Clerk Duhigg signed the Albuquerque City Ethics Reform Ordinance.



NM Census Project Manager Marisa Santistevan address the CNM luncheon. Photo by Janet Blair.

The October 10 Luncheon Unit speaker, Marisa Santistevan, NM Census Project Specialist, addressed aspects of numerous tasks involved with an accurate 2020 Census.

Mary Henrie Smith organized the Judicial Selection Panel for the November 14 Luncheon Unit. It featured Sergio Perea, Dean of the UNM Law School; current Appellate Court Chief Judge Monica Zamora; and NM Bar Association President Jerry Dixon. The panel discussion included candidate qualifications and challenges involved with identifying, recruiting, and appointing judicial nominees who meet the minimum qualifications.

At the October 21 Albuquerque Police Department (APD) Forward meeting with the APD Compliance Bureau the participants discussed APD progress toward measures defined in the court approved settlement agreement. U.S. Assistant Attorney Elizabeth Martinez distributed the 10th Quarterly Independent Monitor's Report in November.

It was the first rating period achieving 100% compliance for APD policies.

LWVCNM has a new Voter Services Chair, Mary Ellen Smith, who is a long-time League voter registrar. Gege Polertzky accepted the position of 4th Vice President/Development of CNM previously held by George Richmond. Polertzky has a long business career; a subsequent meeting with Karen Wentworth and Karen Douglas prompted fresh ideas for approaching new and existing donors and many new considerations for financing and fundraising for the League's 2020 Suffrage Anniversary observances.

Jeanne Logsdon has been holding planning meetings for the Suffrage Anniversary. The Guild Theater in Albuquerque has been reserved for the January 19 and 26 showings of Equal Means Equal, which promotes ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. All theater proceeds will benefit the next state scheduled to ratify the ERA.

The Suffrage Anniversary Banquet Subcommittee has met to discuss progress and planning of the banquet. The League has received confirmation that Roberta Cooper Ramo, former President of the American Bar Association, will serve as the keynote speaker. The banquet will be held on August 29, 2020 at the Sheraton Uptown Hotel. CNM is hosting a separate celebration of the League's 100th birthday on Saturday, February 15 with a luncheon at the Embassy Suites hotel. LWV Lifetime members will be honored at that event. Subcommittee members will contact prior active members to join the party with hopes of renewed interest and membership.

Los Alamos

By Barbara Calef

League members registered voters at the Pajarito Environmental Education Center and in front of Starbucks on National Voter Registration Day. County Clerk Naomi Maestas later announced that, "We had a total of 60 voter registrations received on NVRD; 38 hard copy throughout all locations with 22 registrations at the high school alone... Throughout the month we received 314 total...it was a great month for registrations for Los Alamos County!"



Vicky the Voter posed on Central Avenue in Los Alamos (along with other scarecrows celebrating Halloween), offering sample ballots and encouraging residents to vote. Photo by Barbara Calef

The League threw a party on October 1 to celebrate our 72-year history. Following a meal of hearty hors d'oeuvres and libations, we enjoyed hearing about our local League's history from former board members. Two members of the new high school group called iVote joined in the celebration.

On October 3 we held a forum for candidates for school board and UNMLA Advisory Board. Attendance was very high for an off-year election; extra chairs were carried in to accommodate the crowd of 80. About 30% of Los Alamos County's registered voters participated in the election. Subsequently we learned that many of them had requested a voter guide, so LWVLA has decided to compile voter guides every year.

On October 29 the County Council appointed seven residents to the Complete Count Committee for the 2020 Census. Ann LePage, one of the appointees, is a League member. She sent a report of the first committee meeting, which took place on November 6, saying they spent much of the time discussing how to reach the populations that are historically underrepresented. They will be contacting agencies and individuals involved with those groups to encourage participation.

Board member Jody Benson has been keeping us informed about the prog-

gress of the zero-waste effort in the county. The Green Schools Task Force has organized Green Teams in every elementary school. The cafeterias are increasing the use of reusable trays and utensils. The Zero-Waste Non-profits Team, with the help of local nonprofits, is creating a handout with the list of all the available help in the community and their schedules of services. The Zero-Waste Restaurants Team has proposed a Green Restaurants Certification. Grants could be used to help local restaurants move from inexpensive Styrofoam to more expensive non-plastic items. Restaurants could also ask customers to Bring-Their-Own (mugs, straws, take-home/take-out boxes).

At the November Lunch with a Leader, Liz Martineau, Executive Director of the Los Alamos Historical Society (LAHS) and Leslie Linke, the chair of the Los Alamos Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPB) explained the roles of their organizations. Linke summed it up, “LAHS tells stories, the HPB focuses on buildings.” Martineau has invited the League to participate with LAHS in a celebration of the Suffrage Centennial. We have agreed to join them in planning a Community Day on June 13. Among other preparations, we will write educational presentations for us to recite dressed in suffragist garb.

Christine Chandler, our state representative, spoke at Lunch with a Leader in December. “I think it’s going to be a tough session - lots of people vying for the money,” she told the crowd. She listed the issues that she thinks will be on the governor’s call: the Early Childhood Trust Fund, the NM Opportunity Scholarship, higher education, community solar, and cannabis. She does not expect a very long list from the governor; so many bills were passed during the last session that the departments are still working to catch up. There is still a 20-30% vacancy rate in the various state agencies even though the new administration has been working hard to fill the gaps.

Southern New Mexico

By Kathy Brook, Co-President

SNM’s newly formed Coffee and Action Committee is meeting monthly to pursue action items. In November the group wrote to legislators about fair districting and in December about our priorities for the legislative session. The legislative priorities will also be the focus of the December general meeting, which is expected to be attended by eight members of the legislative delegation.

The Immigration Committee also has an action orientation. A recent speaker was Crystal Massey, Volunteer Coordinator for the American Immigration Council, which works with volunteer lawyers offering legal aid pro bono for migrants in 15 different detention centers across the nation. Previously Massey had formed the Southwest

Immigration Institute to help asylum seekers and migrants at the detention center in Dilley, TX. Earlier the Immigration Committee had arranged a day-long visit to El Paso. After hearing from Border Patrol officers, participants shared lunch with a migrant family that had entered the US legally, overstayed their visas, found work, and raised children. The day concluded with a meeting with Ruben Garcia of Annunciation House, which provides sanctuary to migrants.

Working with KRWG-TV, the NAACP, and PFLAG in October, we participated in three televised forums covering the races for mayor of Las Cruces, City Council members, and the Las Cruces school board. Voter Guides were widely distributed as well and SNM joined in the “Celebrating Democracy in Dona Ana County” event, sponsored primarily this year by our county clerk. This was the third such annual event and included opportunities to learn about ranked choice voting, to meet the candidates, and to hear from a panel of five elected officials discussing their offices and their motivations in running for office.

Our general meetings have included presentations by Angela Merket on state



public banks and by Julie Wojtko, our nominee to the Harvard workshop on civics education. We have also been pleased to hear from Dick Mason concerning the League's work toward a fair districting process following the 2020 Census and from Karen Douglas on the topic of storage of spent nuclear fuel.

Plans for the 19th amendment and League 100th anniversary celebration continue. We have been collaborating with other groups locally to honor the work of Laura Frenger in supporting the 19th amendment. Included in this activity is an effort to place a marker in Pioneer Women's Park located near downtown. The proposal was recently tabled by the City Council. As co-president Eileen VanWie has noted, "Like the suffragists, we will need to persist." In this case there were concerns on the part of councilors about lack of input to the proposal from the neighborhood association in the area and the failure of the 19th amendment to ensure the rights of minority women. The goal is to address these concerns in time for the next meeting of the Council.

Administratively, we have been redesigning our web page and developing our social media skills. We have also formed ad hoc committees on development, bylaws, and policies.

Santa Fe County

By Laura Atkins



Candidate Forum: Santa Fe City Council, LWV State President Hannah Burling moderating.



Candidate Forum, Santa Fe Community College, with students in attendance. Photos by Stephanie Schlanger.

Santa Fe County held several candidate forums prior to the election in November.

Domestic Violence Day:

The SFC League provided voter registration on October 5th during Domestic Violence Day at Warehouse 21. There were approximately fifty people attending. As one of the sponsors, we were asked to give a brief presentation about the League and some of its activities. The League's presentation focused on its endorsement of the Violence Against Women Act signed into law in 1994 and its reauthorization as a stand-alone bill in 2010.

Also mentioned was the importance of voting as being one of the most effective ways to assure that you elect representatives who support your issues. The event included a variety of activities, presentations by service providers, tabling and an announcement by Mayor Webber, who presented a proclamation that October was Domestic Violence month for the city of Santa Fe.

High School Civics Projects:

Robert Sobel, The Masters Program (a charter school) history teacher who went to the training at Harvard, is currently working on the Harvard Reconstruction Case Study with his students. Since Sobel is still in the early stages of implementing his Case Study curriculum, it was decided to postpone the planned ERA community discussion event with the League board members until early next year.

Seven new student Voter Registration Assistants (VRAs) have been trained at Santa Fe Prep and The Masters Program (TMP). The new Prep and TMP VRAs are the students who worked the Climate Strike event, where they registered 25 voters. Student VRAs registered ten students at Santa Fe Prep and five students from The Masters Program between October 1 and October 14.

Programs:

Lisa Randall, Sustainability Program Coordinator for Santa Fe Public Schools, spoke at our October Lunch with a Leader meeting. Under her leadership, from 2010 through 2019 water usage was reduced from 55.4 million gallons to 26.8 million gallons, resulting in a 50% reduction in water costs. The schools have installed 2.2 megawatts of solar generating capacity. They've installed ground source heat pumps combined with solar at three schools, which use half the energy of a typical K-12 school. The program is ongoing, with new initiatives such as a pilot program for six propane-powered school buses and electric buses in the near future



The Voter Registration Table at Domestic Violence Day

Membership:

LWVSFC has 165 members as of 10/10/2019, with three new members coming on board in October. We have 8 students and 2 adults sponsored by the Diversity Fund with the potential for 5 more students who have not yet filled out their membership forms (but are certified registrars and actively registering voters) along with one adult who is participating in the civics project. One student and one adult will not be renewed as they are no longer actively participating in League activities. We have four life members.



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Please consider helping your local League or LWVNM to pay for our voter guides and candidate forums. You can send a tax-deductible gift by check to your local League or to LWVNM. See www.lwvnm.org for more information and links to our local Leagues. Thank you for making democracy work!

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.