



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.

The President's Corner

By Hannah Burling

LWVNM President: president@lwvnm.org



First of all, congratulations and thanks to Judy Williams and the crew of volunteers who produced Vote411, the printed Voter Guides, and the Native American Voter Guides. It was an enormous amount of work and covered the entire state. We hired a social media contractor and moved into new areas to publicize Vote411 and encourage voting. In addition, our public service announcements went out in English, Spanish and Navajo. Great work!

The November General Election went smoothly in New Mexico in spite of the current distrust of the process, polarization and hostility. There were no reported instances of voter intimidation, no election workers or officials were harmed, and the election results were certified. For those of us who grew up in this country, it's horrifying that this is good news.

The New Mexico League was a part of the Democracy Project spearheaded by New Mexico First and funded by the Carter Foundation. We worked on the Election Integrity Awareness campaign and our videos on the election process as well as our PSAs gained a wider audience because of our participation. Here's the link to the Democracy Project webpage about our efforts:

<https://nmfirst.org/initiatives/new-mexico-democracy-project/>

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico, along with every other state League and LWVUS, has joined an amicus brief the case of Moore v Harper to keep our elections free from the effects of the Independent State Legislature Theory. This case was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court on December 7. We continue our efforts to defend democracy.

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Advocacy Workshop: Prepare for the 2023 Legislative Session

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico Presents

**Effective Citizen Advocacy at the Legislature
Special Focus on the Budget and Taxes**

**Saturday, January 7, 2023, 10 a.m. to Noon
Webinar on Zoom**

The public is invited

Learn tips from legislators and an experienced lobbyist about how to interact with legislators, speak at hearings, and advocate for your cause.

Speakers:

**Senator Mark Moores (R-Albuquerque) – Member of Senate Rules &
Judiciary Committee**

**Representative Kristina Ortez (D-Taos) – Member House Government, Elections
& Indian Affairs and House Energy, Environment &
Natural Resources Committees**

Linda Siegle – Long time lobbyist

Ms. Siegle is president of a consulting company focused on lobbying the legislature for non-profit agencies and strategic planning. She is a former member of the Santa Fe County Health Policy Commission and has served as chair of various state councils and committees. She is also an elected member of the Board of Trustees for Santa Fe Community College.

Note: This is training on the legislative process. Questions about positions on specific issues will not be permitted.

Register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_siaT_ZL3Q8SAVXLQgme8f-w?_x_zm_rtaid=4Z-ceAqRTuaXFW3-oCnHeQ.1672590465024.2720f2da44d820d1afd09484e-b76e451&_x_zm_rhtaid=978

The President's Corner...from page 1

Please join us for League Day at the Legislature. We haven't held this event since our centennial celebration in 2020 and it would be wonderful to have everyone back again. Details of the program are here on pages 7 and 8. It's a great opportunity to meet League members from across the state, to speak with your legislators, to watch them at work in committee and on the floor, and to see your League lobbyists in action.

Opportunities abound in the state League. Are you interested in working with membership, voter services, fundraising, social media, or communications? Please contact me at president@lwvnm.org. I'll be happy to answer your questions.

Save the Dates for League Days at the Legislature

February 15 and 16, 2023

Legislative reception, Rio Chama Steakhouse, 414 Old Santa Fe Trail, Wednesday, February 15, 2023 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Senator Jeff Bingaman will be the speaker.

League Day at the Legislature Thursday, February 16.

League table at the Roundhouse all day Feb. 15
NEED VOLUNTEERS!

Please contact Hannah Burling at
President@lwvnm.org.

Program (see League Day Detail on pages 7- 8) 10:00 - Noon,
Morgan Hall, State Land Office, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail.

Report of the LWVNM Action Committee

By Akkana Peck, Action Committee Co-Chair

Legislative Priorities from the November 9 Action Committee meeting

Three top priorities will be chosen from the following list in early in January.

Voting/Election Issues

We expect to see bills covering restoration of felon voting rights, protection of election workers, redistricting (calling for an independent redistricting commission), and a general bill or bills to fix inconsistencies in our election laws. The League has funding specifically allocated for redistricting and voting issues.

Reproductive rights

There is currently no agreement about whether to introduce a constitutional amendment supporting abortion rights, but we will support one if it's proposed.

Taxes and Revenue Policy

There has been discussion about changing the personal income tax to better separate different levels of income. We should guard against permanent changes to taxes that we might regret later. A lot of what we'll be doing is defensive, to guard against changes we oppose.

Voices for Children has asked us to help advocate for the child tax credit, which we support.

There may be a bill to raise taxes on alcohol. The League position on the subject is that, "Research has shown increasing taxes is the single most effective way to reduce death, harm, and costs associated with alcohol abuse." We can support taxes that will achieve a socially desirable objective.

Modernizing the Legislature

This topic includes providing salaries to legislators, lengthening the legislative sessions, and providing a budget to pay for year-round professional staff. Legislation will be introduced to achieve these objectives. The first two will require constitutional amendments. The legislature has the power to fund the staff.

Ethics Legislation

We expect to see several ethics bills we can support, including the Campaign Reporting Act, the Government Conduct Act and the especially important Disclosure Act.

Environment

Nothing is clear yet, but we need to be on guard for the "blue hydrogen hub" coming back.

Other Issues

We can support or oppose bills even if they're not top priority. Areas of interest to the League include nuclear waste, violent crime, and gun control.

Action/Legislative Calendar

January 3	Legislation can be early filed
January 7	10 a.m. to noon – Advocacy Workshop – Zoom
January 11	Action Committee meeting, Zoom – 6 p.m.
January 12	LWVNM Legislative Prep – 6:30 p.m. – Zoom
January 17	Legislature convenes at noon
January 21	Board meeting, ABQ & Zoom
February 15	Legislative Reception at Rio Chama Steakhouse, 5:30 p.m.
February 16	League Day at the Legislature – Roundhouse and State Land Office
March 4	Board meeting, Santa Fe & Zoom
March 18	Legislature adjourns at noon

January 13-March 19: There will be an Action Zoom every Friday at 6 p.m.

Redistricting Report

By Dick Mason

House Joint Resolution on Independent Redistricting Commission will be filed.

Representative Natalie Figueroa was reelected. She was our lead sponsor for the 2022 House Joint Resolution, which would have put the question of creating an Independent Redistricting Commission on the 2024 ballot. Representative Figueroa has enthusiastically agreed to be the lead again in the 2023 session. We had an impressive team working to rewrite the House Joint Resolution. It will be filed on January 3rd.

We have compiled the legislators' past positions on redistricting reform and will soon be resending the Fair Districts for New Mexico (FDNM) survey on support for an independent redistricting commission. We will be seeking your help in urging legislators and statewide office holders to respond to the survey.

FDNM has engaged Maia Pugh to help with social media. One of her first projects will be to share photos of New Mexicans stating why they want an Independent Redistricting Commission. More details on how you can participate will follow.

Maia Pugh and Kathleen Burke will be working on memes that can be sent out over various social media platforms. If you have ideas for memes, please send them along.

Fair Districts for New Mexico now has accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Please check them out on our website: www.fairdistrictsnm.org and follow them.

First Call to LWVNM Convention


By Hannah Burling

The 2023 Convention of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico will be held April 29 and 30 in Los Alamos, New Mexico. The Convention will adopt a program, elect a board of directors, adopt a budget for the next two years, and consider revising the bylaws. If you are interested in serving on the LWVNM board, please contact the Nominating Committee at Nominations@lwvnm.org.

Each League is entitled to a number of delegates proportional to its membership (details can be found in the LWVNM bylaws available at <https://www.lwvnm.org/bylaws.html>). In addition, all LWVNM board members except the local League presidents are automatically delegates. Finally, there is a slot for one delegate to represent LWVNM's members-at-large. Additional attendees are always welcome.

There will be a reception for delegates on the evening of Friday, April 28. The business meetings will be conducted in the mornings on April 29 and 30. A range of activities will be offered for Saturday afternoon. On Saturday evening there will be a banquet, open to all.

Please let your League board know if you would like to attend. Mark the date on your calendar! Complete details will be published in the spring issue of *La Palabra*.



LWVNM
Convention
April 29 and 30, 2023
Los Alamos, NM



During a forum on December 1 titled “Ethics, Money, Politics, Influence” and hosted by New Mexico In Depth, a panel moderated by Phill Casaus, editor of the Santa Fe New Mexican (on the left), discussed modernizing the legislature. The panelists were Sen. Katy Duhigg, Rep. Joy Garrett, LWVNM Past President Judy Williams, and UNM Professor of Political Science Michael Rocca. Photo by Barbara Calef

Report on Observer Experience at COP27

By Kathleen Burke

My participation as an official observer at the COP27 Egypt was compressed into a one-week period due to unfortunately having fallen ill and being hospitalized upon arrival (international travel is rarely uneventful). During the second week of COP I took advantage of the opportunity to have instructive conversations with various delegates, leaders, and other observers, whose professions ranged widely. They included students, journalists, professors, scientists from various fields, cabinet heads, and department ministers.

The Stop Ecocide Foundation and Stop Ecocide International are critically important among initiatives presented at the COP. The work of these organizations consists primarily of a panel of lawyers from around the globe proposing to amend the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to extend protections from serious environmental harms already recognized to be a matter of international concern. From their website: “Ecocide is a word to describe what is happening to our planet; the mass damage and destruction of the natural living world. It literally means ‘killing one’s home. And right now, in most of the world, no-one is held responsible.” I encourage LWVNM and LWVUS and their members to endorse post haste the Stop Ecocide Foundation position paper with regard to the revised EU directive on Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law, which can be accessed here: <https://www.stopecocide.earth/eu-crime-directive-position-paper>

I engaged the following people in conversations centered on emerging environmental concerns, specifically biodiversity loss: the Kenyan Minister of the Environment; the Israeli Ministry of Education’s Director of Science and Mathematics; Turkey’s Deputy Directorate General for Environment, Climate Change and Transboundary Waters; Chief Executive Officer for the World Federation for Animals; the Indian Joint Secretary for Ministry of

“Ecocide is a word to describe what is happening to our planet; the mass damage and destruction of the natural living world. It literally means ‘killing one’s home. And right now, in most of the world, no-one is held responsible.’”

Environment, Forest and Climate Change; President Elect of the American Geophysical Union; Rev. Melanie Mullen, Director of Reconciliation, Justice, and Creation Care Office of the Episcopal Church U.S.; and American journalist Amy Goodman of Democracy Now. I also had the opportunity to share ideas with League member Dr. Susana Hancock, a transdisciplinary Arctic climate researcher who is the Science Coordinator for Arctic Basecamp. She and Toni Larsen, former LWV Colorado President, were my housemates at COP27.

I observed demonstrations, visited numerous delegate offices and generally, to my great privilege, immersed myself in the COP happenings. I have provided feedback about the COP processes (currently under vigorous scrutiny by attendees) to the United Nations COP administration. LWVUS observers are currently engaged in discussions about improving their effectiveness at future COPs. I wish to express my gratitude to the League of Women Voters U.S. for having provided me with the opportunity to observe and participate and to Robin Tokmakien for her organizing.

League Days at the Legislature, February 15-16, 2023

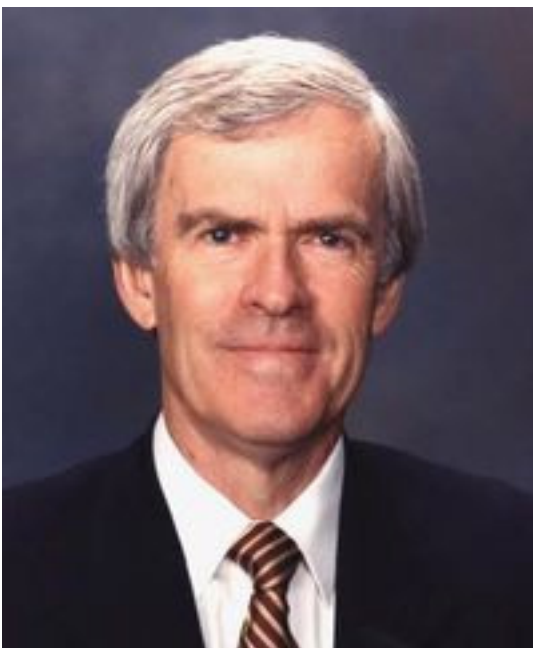
El Sendero Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, is two blocks from the Roundhouse and reasonably priced. Restaurants open for lunch nearby include Saveur Bistro, Luminaria, and Upper Crust Pizza. Kaune’s grocery store, just across the Paseo de Peralta, has sandwiches and salads to go. There is also a cafeteria on the ground floor of the Roundhouse.

Legislative Reception, Wednesday, February 15

5:30 to 7:30

Presidents’ Room

Rio Chama Steakhouse 414 Old Santa Fe Trail



Former United States Senator Jeff Bingaman will speak on his book *Breakdown: Lessons for a Congress in Crisis*

Jeff Bingaman served as a U.S. Senator from New Mexico from 1983 to 2013. His book traces the development of congressional dysfunction over the decades and the impediments he believes Congress must overcome to avoid breakdowns and to begin again to succeed.

Program details continued on page 8

League Day, Thursday, February 16

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 8 - 8:30 a.m.** Pick up information packets from the League table in the Hall of History, ground floor of the state capitol (Roundhouse)
- 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.** Attend committee hearings or visit with legislators
- 10 a.m.- noon** **Program at New Mexico State Land Office 310 Old Santa Fe Trail
Just down the street from the Roundhouse**
- 10 – 10:15 a.m.** Welcome from Stephanie Garcia Richard, State Land Commissioner
- 10:15 -10:30 a.m.** Explanation of packet contents, answer questions from League members
- 10:30– 11:15 a.m.** **Ethics Legislation and Independent Redistricting Commission: Jeremy Farris
Executive Director of the New Mexico State Ethics Commission**
Mr. Farris is the first Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission. He previously served as General Counsel to New Mexico’s Department of Finance and Administration and practiced law at litigation firms in Atlanta, Georgia and Albuquerque, New Mexico. He clerked for the Honorable Julia S. Gibbons on the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit; the Honorable Judith K. Nakamura on the New Mexico Supreme Court; and the Honorable James O. Browning on the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico. He holds a law degree from Harvard Law School, a doctorate from the University of Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and a Bachelor of Science degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology.
- 11:15 a.m. – noon** **Taxes and Funding for Essential Services: Amber Wallin MPA, Executive Director, New Mexico Voices for Children**
Ms. Wallin oversees New Mexico Voices for Children’s research and policy work. She joined NM Voices in 2012 as a Fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, after which she was a research and policy analyst and later the Director of KIDS COUNT. In 2021 Ms. Wallin was made Executive Director. She has worked in the public sector at the municipal, state, and federal levels, working in the government department at New Mexico State University and the budget department at the city of Las Cruces prior to joining the Voices team. She received her MPA from NMSU.
- Noon– 1:00 p.m.** **Lunch with fellow League members.**
- 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.** **Meet with legislators as individuals or in groups and attend Committee hearings or House & Senate sessions.**

LWVNM Action Committee is interested in your day’s experience and welcomes comments on League issues, priorities, and actions.

Please provide comments by e-mail to: act@lwnm.org

Local League News

Central New Mexico

By Karen Douglas, CNM Co-President

Election Activities

30,000 Voter Guides were delivered to over 100 sites in Bernalillo and Sandoval County. Valencia County printed and distributed 20,000 Voter Guides prepared by LWVCNM. Although there were repeated attempts to obtain responses from all candidates, twelve (3 Democratic and 9 Republican) candidates for the NM House did not respond, nor did some candidates for statewide races, thereby providing voters with an incomplete view of the choices available.

LWVUS Readiness Alert

Following November LWVUS Local League Media Training, Karen Douglas contacted the LWVCNM office to ensure any press inquiries would be directed to her and contacted the Voter Services Chair to discuss any reports of questionable practices during early voting. No violence was noted among CNM polling places on Election Day. However, resources were prepared to respond, if necessary.

Poll workers and Election Officials available for media requests also included LWVCNM member and Presiding Judge Betsy Carlson, who agreed to respond to any press inquiries regarding vote tampering, polling place irregularities, voter fraud, provisional ballots, or voter suppression; however, no press inquiries were received by LWVCNM. The LWVCNM office did receive three calls from voters on Election Day, each requesting polling place locations.

Unit Meetings

The October LWVCNM general meeting featured Mr. Trip Jennings, Executive Director of NM In Depth, discussing mis- and disinformation with tips to alert the general public and filters to better differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources of information.

The November LWVCNM general meeting featured Mr. Kerry Bass, Executive Director of the Center for Electoral Quality and Integrity, discussing the International Standards Organization (ISO) and its “Quality management systems” — the particular requirements for the application of the standards for electoral organizations at all levels of government. Governmental bodies in several foreign countries have adopted and applied the standard and basic premise of ISO Certification, including the process for qualification and recognition.

The December LWVCNM general meeting will offer Mr. Peter Madalena, Senior Voting Rights Coordinator for the Sandoval County Tribal Liaison Program, and Mr. Martin Aguilar, Native American Election Information Program Liaison for the Office of the Secretary of State. They will discuss Native American Voter Education and Outreach in New Mexico.

APD Forward

At a federal hearing on October 5, the External Force Investigation Team (EFIT) considered the fourth quarterly status report. EFIT was initiated in response to the Department of Justice (DOJ) stipulated order due to dissatisfaction with both the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) Training Academy and the APD Internal Affairs investigations regarding police officer excessive Use of Force (UOF). Improvements to both conduct and timeliness of Internal Affairs investigations were apparent.

Southern New Mexico

By Kathy Brook and Eileen VanWie, Co-Presidents

Election Activities

In advance of the November election, members monitored the meetings of the Doña Ana County Board of Commissioners – in particular, the public comment portions of the meeting, which often included negative statements about election administration in the County. League members responded during the public input and member Johnnie Aldrich wrote an op-ed about election administration, which was published in *Las Cruces Sun-News* the Sunday before the election. The League also provided election information at two of the Sunland Park Farmers' Markets in October and at La Clinica de Familia Trick or Treat event on October 29. Printed voter guides in Spanish and English were distributed in a variety of locations throughout the county. Several members served as election officials or election watchers. A report on the experiences of election watchers is being submitted to the relevant county clerks and the Secretary of State's Office.

Affordable Housing

Members of the League participated in the Las Cruces Coalition for Attainable Housing, which was created to persuade the City Council to include an affordable housing general obligation bond on the November ballot. The group then worked to increase public awareness of the need for such housing. Involvement of the League in this issue dates back at least ten years. The bond for \$6 million for affordable housing received over 60% of the vote. The next step is to seek greater public input to the Las Cruces Affordable Housing Land Bank and Trust Fund Advisory Committee. The committee is largely composed of mortgage lenders, builders, and members of the business community.

Otero County League Members

In late November, members of the LWVSNM Board, joined by Hannah Burling, met with a group of new members from Otero County. The main topic was how best to incorporate this group into the League. We are exploring the options for the group to function as a unit of the Southern New Mexico League, at least in the near term.

Legislative Conversation

Our December annual meeting with legislators from the area was combined this year with a social event and was very well attended by League members and their guests. Newly elected State Representative Tara Jaramillo drove from the Socorro area to be with us in person while Senator Bill Soules, Representative Angelica Rubio, and Representative Micaela Lara Cadena joined via Zoom.

Other Activities

General meetings have focused on affordable housing and on missing and murdered indigenous people. Op-eds in the local media addressed election integrity and meanings of the terms "republic" and "democracy." League members have also participated in interviews relating to the New Mexico Listens project, distributed voter information at the November naturalization ceremony, and scored submissions of artwork by LCPS students depicting Democracy Heroes.

Los Alamos

By Barbara Calef, Co-President

The Los Alamos League received many accolades for our Voter Guides, which were distributed to every household by mail and were available at the libraries, senior centers, and at the polls. The televised public service announcements were well-received, too. During early voting there were rarely lines at the polls, but late on Election Day there was a last-minute rush to register and vote before the polls closed. In the final tally 65.68% of the County's registered voters had cast a ballot.

The speaker for Lunch with a Leader in October was Los Alamos County Emergency Manager Beverley Simpson. Assisted by 50 volunteers, Simpson conducted 37 vaccine clinics during the pandemic and collaborated with our fire chief to guide the County response to the Cerro Pelado Fire last spring. Between emergencies, she makes plans for responding to potential crises and trains staff at the schools and in the County.

In November LANL Director Thom Mason argued that the need to keep the threat of nuclear deterrence credible justifies the creation of a plutonium pit factory at the Lab, as directed by Congress. Additional plutonium will not be needed, Mason said, because the material in the old weapons can be recycled. Updating and expanding the facilities for that purpose requires expanding the Lab's workforce, which has risen to 15,000 and will continue to grow over the next few years. He told the League that 60% of the new hires are from New Mexico.

Mason explained that in addition to weapons production, the Lab is engaged in pursuing fundamental science, nuclear non-proliferation, exploration of Mars, and clean energy alternatives including hydrogen fuel cells and nuclear energy. The Lab has a goal to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. They plan to electrify the vehicle fleet and are taking steps to make the facilities more energy efficient.

In response to questions, Mason said that the issue of commercial interim storage facilities for spent nuclear fuel is a social and political problem, not a scientific and engineering problem. His focus is on WIPP, where LANL sends its transuranic defense waste. In the last three years LANL shipped more waste than it produced.

LWVLA recently held a retreat for board and off-board members to plan for continuity. We will welcome a new president for the first time in over a decade and need to assure continuity in all our endeavors. We drew up a list of slots we must fill and have begun searching for replacements for the board.

We have also scheduled our first in-person forum in three years, to be co-sponsored by AAUW. Our legislative preview will be held at Fuller Lodge on January 5 with all three legislators in attendance as well as Kristina Fisher. Fisher has been asked to discuss the education reform package Think New Mexico will be advocating for during the 2023 Legislative Session.

Santa Fe County

By Jody Larson

Our membership has grown to 164, including eleven Diversity Fund/Rising Leaders, and four Life Members. Our finances are strong, thanks to some notable fund drives by our Fundraising Chair, Hannah Burling. Our student intern, Julius Frank, is a member of the LGBTQ+ community, and recently gave our board a very informative presentation about this segment of society and the barriers to its participation in voting. They (preferred pronoun) also educated us on what helps these young people, especially, to feel engaged in the political sphere.

Our Action and Advocacy Committee continues to monitor several activities in our local governments, including the city's CHART (Culture, History, Art, Reconciliation and Truth) project, the final report of which is very controversial and may result soon in a resolution regarding the disposition of the Soldier's Monument on the Santa Fe Plaza, torn down a few years ago. We are also following the progress of the Midtown development, with several components of its proposed plans flowing through the committee approval process, and the update to the city's Growth Management Plan. We discuss these issues and more at a recently-initiated monthly meeting with the City Manager.

The big news is the terrific performance of our many Voter Services folks during the recent midterm election. At three sites, our 30 volunteers registered 67 voters, distributed materials to 337 folks, and responded to 252 questions and comments. In addition, we completed four canvassing projects with volunteers from our local NAACP

and distributed nonpartisan election materials to over 350 households in neighborhoods that usually experience low voter turnout. Two candidate forums had totals of 350 and 475 viewings. Our Help Line received 58 calls between the end of September and November 8.

Our High School Voter Engagement Project resulted in 300 student registrations. A “Why Vote” presentation was provided to Santa Fe Prep and Capital High School seniors, with a focus on our Voter Guide and Vote411; several teachers had not known about Vote411 and now plan to integrate it into their curriculum. Next steps will focus on Voter Registration Agent recruitment, training, and involvement in LWVSFC’s youth program.

We have held two successful events on Climate Change already in October and November, with a third planned for November 30, on plastics and their effects on wildlife. We are looking into a fourth that would focus on the pros and cons of nuclear energy as an alternative to fossil fuels.

We are also considering a proposed cleanup of our Bylaws and preparing for our Program Planning meeting, which will not occur until February, but we are looking at ways to get more members engaged in this process.



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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.