



La Palabra

The Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico

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LEAGUE CONTACTS

LWVNM

2403 San Mateo NE W-16C
Albuquerque, NM 87110
505-884-8441
lwvnm.org
Katherine Campbell, President
505-662-3913

Albuquerque/ Bernalillo County

2403 San Mateo NE, W-16C
Albuquerque, NM 87110
505-884-8441
lwwabc.org
Diane Goldfarb, President

Greater Las Cruces

505-649-8761
zianet.com/lww/
Cathy Mathews, President

Los Alamos

505-670-7046
lwvlosalamos.org
Christine Chandler, President

Santa Fe County

1472 St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-982-9766
SANTAFECO.NM.LWVNET.ORG
Jody Larson, President

La Palabra Editor

Elaine Jacobs
505-662-6404

WHAT IS LEAGUE PROGRAM?

“Program is the League’s reason for being, the basis for both education and action efforts. League program consists of those governmental issues that League members choose for concerted study and action.” **In League**, 2002 edition, p. 53

Prioritization: Program originates during “program planning”, a process that is carried out in various ways by different Leagues. For example, LWVUS has a (continually evolving!) program planning process based on questionnaires filled out by local Leagues. Many local Leagues do program planning in discussion meetings or by polling their members. In deciding what to recommend to the annual meeting or convention, the board must consider the potential of government to act effectively to address the issue and of the League to make an impact, as well as the level of member interest. But ultimately, it is up to the members or their delegates to adopt a program for the upcoming period.

Position development: Study and discussion follow. Generally, a resource committee is responsible for pulling information together to present balanced and objective information to members. The committee also arranges for meetings and other activities to spark member and community interest in the issue.

Before the League can take action, members must agree in broad terms on what they think about various aspects of a policy issue. There are various methods for arriving at member agreement. The board analyzes member agreement reports from unit meetings or local Leagues and develops a position statement. The new position is then available immediately to be used as the basis for action.

Advocacy: The third part of League program is advocacy based on adopted positions. Leagues may act on national program only in conformity with positions taken by the LWVUS. Similarly, state Leagues are responsible for determining action policies and strategies on state issues. Local Leagues may use state or national positions for lobbying at the local level, but local positions may not be used at the broader levels.

Local Leagues and members are critical elements of state League lobbying efforts, which in New Mexico are coordinated by the state Action Committee. There are also many avenues for participation in national advocacy efforts.

Thus League boards and individual members shape and implement League program together. Next time you are asked to participate in program planning, remember that this is where all League study and action begin, and join in!

Kathy Campbell

LWVUS COUNCIL, JUNE 9-11, 2007

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico was represented at the LWVUS Council meeting by President Kathy Campbell and election issues program chair Cheryl Haaker. Diane Goldfarb, president of LWVABC, also attended as a non-voting representative of a Big City League.

The first morning was devoted to a workshop on building a visible, active League. This began with a report on the ongoing Membership Recruitment Initiative, which involved five pilot local Leagues the first year and will expand to include five state Leagues in the upcoming year. Leagues need to make every activity a recruitment opportunity and deliver a consistent message about the organization's vision, mission, principles and uniqueness.

During the three plenary sessions, delegates heard reports from President Mary Wilson, from the treasurer and the LWVEF, from the budget and advocacy committees. Short reports from many other committees were included in our handouts.

Outside speakers included D.C. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and Ray Suarez of the PBS News Hour. The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed a bill that would grant voting representation in the House to the District of Columbia, a move strongly supported by the League. Suarez spoke about the tightening relationship between politics and religion in America, as well as about the immigration bill then being debated in Congress.

Delegates also heard an interesting panel discussion about immigration with three speakers: Donald Kerwin of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Doris Meissner of the Migration Policy Institute, and Frank Sharry of the National Immigration Forum. Each speaker brought a different perspective. Donald Kerwin suggested that welcoming immigrants benefits us all, while denying them education, health care, etc. hurts us all. Dr. Meissner discussed immigration in the past and how it's changed, as well as our aging demographic, increasing levels of education, and the potential impacts on US wages. Frank Sharry presented a blow-by-blow discussion of the political aspects. A pod cast of the panel discussion can be found on the lwv.org website.

Cheryl attended two additional workshops on the final afternoon of the meeting. "Safeguarding US

Democracy: Promoting an Independent Judiciary by Defending the US Constitution" came with a 12-minute video on DVD that we are encouraged to distribute widely. Another workshop, "Next Steps in Election Reform," discussed problems in election administration and some possible solutions. We can also look forward to the results of LWVUS's new study of why people don't vote, an update of an earlier study.

One of the most interesting parts of the plenary sessions was a dialog between the national board and Council delegates on the subject of resolutions at national Convention. The LWVUS Convention rules currently have no place for resolutions, but at the last two national conventions, delegates have voted to amend the rules to allow resolutions to be proposed from the floor. This was the process that was used in 2004 and 2006 to reverse the board's original interpretation of existing positions to oppose voter-verifiable paper ballots. At Council 2007, the board solicited input on the role of the resolution process in the League and how it might be structured.

To find out more about LWVUS Council and obtain some of the reports presented, go to <http://www.lwv.org>, log in, and go to "For Members" (top navigation bar). Select "Council&Convention", "Council 2007". Then select from the navigation items on the right side.

Kathy Campbell and Cheryl Haaker

FAIR REPRESENTATION STUDY

The Fair Representation Study Committee is currently dividing up areas to research. We will plan a series of informational articles for La Palabra and schedule unit meeting presentation with the local Leagues. We also plan to set up a listserv for intra-committee communications. If you would be interested in learning more or joining the committee, please contact Cheryl Haaker at 298.7415 or cheryl@haaker.org.

LWVNM CONVENTION



LWV of Greater Las Cruces members Johnnie Aldrich as Harry Burn, Win Jacobs narrating, and Marnie Leverett as Febb Ensminger Burn in “Harry and His Mother”.

The 2007 LWVNM Convention was hosted by the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces on May 18-20. Thanks to the entire Las Cruces League, and especially to Christina Little and her committee, for all the arrangements, from the opening reception on Friday evening to the post-convention lunch requested by the new president, who required the new board to remain two hours after adjournment. In between, Las Cruces League members guided us on tours of their city and entertained us with a dramatic reading of “Harry and His Mother”, a play by Lois Kimbrell of Albuquerque that was written to mark the 85th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment.

The convention was attended by 29 delegates representing all four local Leagues, plus a MAL representative and three officers and four directors from the state board. Carolie Mullan, the New Mexico Leagues’ liaison to the LWVUS board of directors, also participated with an update on LWVUS

development work as well as an afternoon workshop on immigration reform. In addition there were several observers, including our tireless hosts and an efficient parliamentarian.

The business of the convention was accomplished in two morning plenary sessions, including modification of the bylaws, adoption of a budget for 2007-2008, and the election of new officers and directors. In the area of program, the delegates modified the LWVNM positions on Health Care, Drug Policy, Public School Finance, and Campaign Finance Reform and adopted two new state studies, one on Fair Representation, chaired by Cheryl Haaker, and one on Water Demand and Supply, chaired by Barbara Calef.

The revised bylaws and positions can be found at our web pages, www.lwvnm.org. There are also pages for the two new studies at this site, as well as a link to the LWVUS immigration study in which local Leagues will be participating this fall.

STATE BOARD NOTES

May 20, 2007, Las Cruces

- Approved Memorandum of Understanding with LWVABC to continue the use of their office.
- Set a tentative schedule for board meetings and La Palabra due dates for 2007-2008.
- Appointed Shelly Shepard as director for Children, Youth and Family.
- Adopted a Nonpartisan and Conflict of Interest policy for the board.

July 14, 2007, Albuquerque

- Adopted policies on Board Responsibilities and Coalitions
- Budgeted for some expenses for state delegates to LWVNM convention

- Approved purchase of QuickBooks and transfer of bank accounts
- Approved handout for health care
- Reviewed proposed electronic meeting procedure and agreed to try it out for our September meeting.

After lunch, vice president Linda Moscarella led the state board through a strategic planning discussion. A couple of priorities emerged:

- The League should be a leader in election reform in New Mexico.
- The League needs to be more visible at both the local and state levels.

LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

Albuquerque/Bernalillo County

We had a good turnout for our Annual Meeting in May, and we added two individuals to the LWV/ABC Roll of Honor. The Roll of Honor recognizes members for their contributions to the Albuquerque League. Those honored this year were Marilynn Cooper and Christina Little, now of Las Cruces. Our speaker at that event was James Scarantino, lead attorney in the Albuquerque photo ID case. His speech, "Voter ID: The Inside Story" gave background into how the case developed.

LWV/ABC does not shut down for the summer, but we do cut back from four unit meetings to only one general meeting each month. Our June speaker was retired New Mexico Chief Justice Gene E. Franchini. Judge Franchini delivered an impassioned address on "The Status of Civil Liberties in New Mexico and the United States." In July Dr. Pauline Rindone, Director of the Legislative Education Study Committee, spoke on "Emerging Issues in New Mexico's K-12 Public Education System".

June was once again time for Calendar Planning, when the 2007-2008 calendar was set. Members have an opportunity to contribute suggestions for the year to come and to participate in deciding where and when programs will take place. We skipped the July board meeting but work on the Voters' Guide for the upcoming municipal election is in progress.

Diane Goldfarb, President

Greater Las Cruces

The May LWVNM Convention, held in Las Cruces, was enormously successful. Christina Little, with invaluable assistance from William Little and many others, pulled together an enjoyable and smooth running convention. All attendees seemed to benefit, not just from the business conducted, but also from the camaraderie enjoyed among all who were present.

Brian Denmark, Facilities Department Director for the City of Las Cruces, spoke at our July breakfast meeting. Mr. Denmark clarified the City processes for selecting contractors for design and construction of capital improvement projects. Projects he specifically addressed included the City Hall, the Aquatic and Recreation Center and the neighborhood pools already under construction. Our June breakfast meeting was addressed by Jack Soules, Ph.D., who

spoke on the topic of energy. Dr. Soules stressed the importance of taking every opportunity to reduce carbon-based energy by promoting alternative energy. He suggested that with appropriate effort and funding the US could be carbon-free within 25 years. At the LWV-GLC Annual meeting in April, Karen Perez, Chair, Doña Ana County Board of Commissioner, and League member addressed the members emphasizing growth, solid waste, and infrastructure issues facing the county in her talk.

GLC is preparing to form consensus on the issue of a Metro Court system for Doña Ana County and we're gearing up for at least one forum this fall for candidates in the local elections.

Cathy Mathews, President

Los Alamos

The Los Alamos League's study on water supply and demand is going strong. The study participants, led by Barbara Calef and Kelly Gallagher, are presently collecting information on the many facets of Los Alamos County water system. The group has hosted talks by several local and state water experts.

A well-known Los Alamos National Laboratory hydrologist briefed the group on the aquifer that provides the sole source of the community's water. Also, the group heard from an official from the Office of the State Engineer on topics such as the State's water policies, programs, and laws. County experts have briefed the group on the Los Alamos County Water Plan, a County policy that describes the infrastructure of the water supply system, identifies concerns such as the risk of contamination, models future needs based on planned population growth, and makes recommendations for actions to meet those needs. The recommendations include implementation of a conservation program as well as the diversion of the County's share of water from the San Juan-Chama Project.

The Los Alamos League is working with the Los Alamos Community Health Care Round Table and Health Care for All to plan a forum for September 20. Local health care challenges will be described, together with the results of the New Mexico Health Care Reform Study that was commissioned by the Health Coverage for New Mexicans Committee.

Christine Chandler, President

Santa Fe County

At our Annual Meeting April 28, we received an update on the Santa Fe Railyard project. The CEO of the Railyard Corporation described the project itself, as well as the various authorities and responsibilities involved in this public-private partnership.

Our Board orientation in May began with identification of hopes and fears for the year, and review of League's structure, functions, and processes. We then broke into small groups for discussion of related portfolios with facilitation and input from mentors (past LWV-SFC presidents and other senior members.) We identified our products and services, directions, resources, gaps, and other issues, then reported out to the large group for further discussion and identification of broader issues. A summary of the afternoon's work was provided to all Board members to guide our work.

At our calendar planning meeting in June we identified topics for units and general meetings and other events based on feedback from members and directions to the Board from the annual meeting. Attendance was good and the discussion was spirited.

The Voter Services committee is gearing up for the Santa Fe Community College bond election in September. The Education Committee is analyzing the bond issue proposal in light of our position, and will conduct interviews with key SFCC officials and board members to determine whether the League should support, oppose, or remain neutral on this issue.

Our Membership Committee is planning a membership potluck picnic and member recruitment reception at the Governor's mansion. New membership brochures are being printed. In addition, an updated Who's Who should be ready to be published by next month. Our study committees are planning activities for the coming year, including questions on alternative energy and presentations on Santa Fe County services, local immigration issues, and access to information from local governments.

We have provided a representative to a PNM Citizens' Advisory Board, and are preparing to provide a representative to the DOE-chartered Northern New Mexico Citizens' Advisory Board.

This Board was also informed about LWVNM and LWVLA, which may be contacted about future representation.

We lack an Action Chair and committee. A task force of Board and senior members will meet this month to determine how to approach our advocacy responsibilities for the coming year. We face a budget shortfall, and are stepping up our fundraising efforts.
Jody Larson, President

HEALTH CARE REFORM

In July, 2006 the Governor and the Legislature agreed to create the Health Coverage for New Mexicans Committee (HCNMC). The Committee has 23 members and 6 advisory members. The HCNMC was charged with hiring a national expert to provide fiscal analysis for three universal health care models. In December, 2006 the HCNMC hired Mathematica Policy Research to provide this analysis. Mathematica delivered their report June 21, 2007. The HCNMC reviewed the Mathematica report and provided recommendations to the Legislative Interim Health and Human Services Committee on August 1, 2007. These reports are available via the internet at insurenwemexico.state.nm.us/HCNMC.html.

The three models studied by Mathematica were (1) the Health Security Act¹, a consolidated health care financing system, (2) New Mexico Health Choices, a market-based proposal for achieving universal health care, and (3) the New Mexico Health Coverage Plan, an expansion of Medicaid with an individual mandate.

Below is a summary of the Mathematica findings:

- We can cover all people living in New Mexico for less than we are spending now;
- The Health Security Plan is the most cost-effective plan;
- The impact on the state economy will be small, but positive, most positive in rural areas.

The next steps are up to the Governor and the Legislative Interim Health and Human Services Committee. The League of Women Voters will be submitting testimony to Committee meetings and communicating our views to the Governor.

Dick Mason

¹ LWVNM is part of the Health Security Campaign.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

At its June 28th meeting, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) reviewed all legislation from the 2007 session. In contrast to past practice, the 2007 Interim Session meetings of the LESL will not focus on presentations meant to influence future legislation. Rather, staff will be asked to answer the questions: What results are being derived from current appropriations? What are newly initiated programs intended to produce and how will they fit into established programs?

The Funding Formula Task Force met on June 26th to hear a progress report from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) commissioned to conduct a comprehensive study on the current New Mexico public school funding formula. Thus far public input has been gathered through a series of town hall meetings to develop a goal statement: New Mexico Public Schools, in partnership with families, should prepare all students to be responsible citizens and family members, for educational success, and to obtain and maintain gainful employment. Phase 2, now underway, will cost out educational instruction programs and resources needed to meet goals. Yet to be completed, is the development of a funding formula and revenue analysis. More information is available at www.nmschoolfunding.org.

The Public School Capital Outlay Oversight Task Force met on June 5, 2007. Created by law, the PSCOOTF serves as the permanent entity overseeing the implementation of the work of the public school outlay council and public school facilities authority as they implement the state's standards-based public school outlay funding mechanism. In the 2006 funding cycle, the PSCOC provided \$259.2 million in assistance to 139 construction and facilities projects throughout New Mexico. The 2007 work plan of the Task Force will include monitoring the progress of programs administered by the PSCO Act and the Public School Capital Improvement Act, monitoring the existing permanent revenue streams, and monitoring the overall progress in bringing all facilities up to the statewide adequacy standards.

Jane Gaziano

WHEN THE LEAGUE CONDUCTS AN ELECTION

In early May, 2006 the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County League (LWVABC) was contacted by the City of Albuquerque's Labor Relations Board and asked to conduct an election to determine which union would be the exclusive bargaining representative for the City's bus drivers. The Labor Board was seeking an impartial group to set up and run the election scheduled only a week later.

LWVABC had conducted elections in the past but this time we were asked to go beyond overseeing the collection and counting of ballots. In one week we wrote extensive rules governing the election, coordinating with the City Attorney's office and the competing Union Representatives. It had already been a contentious campaign between the two unions and we were warned that trouble might arise. The rules were a three page "soup to nuts" list covering in detail campaigning parameters, who could be present at the voting site, observer conduct, ballot box protocol, and exhaustive voting and counting processes, including provisional and spoiled ballot procedures.

LWVABC also designed and produced ballots, tally sheets, verification and certification documents and official badges to clearly designate League Election workers and Union Observers. We sought to provide the transportation workers with an election that met the League's SARA criteria: "secure, accurate, recountable, and accessible."

The election day was a long one. Former LWVABC President, Sandra Browne, served as the Presiding Judge and was at the City Council Chambers from 7 am for set-up to past 8 pm with the final securing of the ballots in a vault on the 11th Floor. At least 8 League election workers assisted throughout the 10 hours allocated for voting.

Because of the extensive planning and the dedication of the League volunteers the election proceeded without incident. In fact, the only real problem arose when we tried to collect our payment. The entire process had been a hurried one and we neglected to insist on a written contract. It was almost 6 months later when we finally received our well-earned \$1,500 for our operating fund.

Josephine Porter, LWVABC

LWVNM BOARD 2007-2009

The LWVNM elects officers and up to six directors at its biennial convention. The board may appoint an additional six directors, and additional portfolios are filled off-board. In May 2007, four officers and five directors were elected

OFFICERS

President Katherine Campbell
Vice President Linda Moscarella
Secretary Bonnie Burn
Treasurer Diane Albert

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Action Co-Chair and Health Care Chair
Richard Mason
Children, Youth and Natural Resources Shelly
Shepard
Education Jane Gaziano
Election Issues and LWVNM webmaster
Cheryl Haaker
Membership Johnnie Aldrich
Natural Resources Lora Lucero

OFF-BOARD CHAIRS AND COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Action Co-Chair Barbara Calef
Drug Policy Delores Watkins
La Palabra editor Elaine Jacobs

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

(two members to be appointed from the board):
Chair Marnie Leverett
Members
Jan Bray
Rebecca Shankland

Still being sought are a state coordinator for the 2008 Voters Guides and a public relations chair. If you are interested, please contact Kathy Campbell.



CALENDAR 2007-2008

	2007		2008
July 14, 2007	Board Meeting , Albuquerque	early January, 2008	Board Meeting , currently planned to be electronic, with telephone conference call January 12 if needed
July 14, 2007	Deadline Summer <i>La Palabra</i>		
mid-September 2007	Board Meeting , electronic, with telephone conference call September 15 if needed	March 8, 2008	Board Meeting , currently planned for Albuquerque
September 15, 2007	Deadline Fall <i>La Palabra</i>	March 8, 2008	Deadline Spring <i>La Palabra</i>
November 17, 2007	Board Meeting , Socorro	May 17, 2008	LWVNM Council , Los Alamos, followed by May board meeting
December 8, 2007	Deadline Winter <i>La Palabra</i>		

Note: All state board meetings are open to all members. Please contact your local League president or Kathy Campbell for details. Information about how to join our electronic meetings will be posted on the LWVNMTopics listserv. This listserv is open to all League members. Directions for joining are found on the "Links" page of our web site.

TAKE ACTION!

If you are interested in helping the League become more visible and effective at the state level, there are many avenues open to you. First, of course, you can join the state Action Committee. During the legislative interim, the Action Committee meets monthly, generally on a Friday near the end of the month, by conference call. Please contact your local president for information on how to join this call in your city, or contact the Action co-chairs, Richard Mason and Barbara Calef.

We need a publicity coordinator for the state League. This could be an on board or off board position, depending on the interest of the person who takes the job. Again if you are interested, please contact Kathy Campbell.

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
NEW MEXICO
2403 SAN MATEO NE W-16-C
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110

