



La Palabra

The newsletter of the 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

PORTLAND WELCOMES LEAGUE

The League of Women Voters is where hands on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement

Lora Lucero, Cheryl Haaker and Linda Moscarella represented the state League at the National Convention held in Portland June 13-17. Every Convention has its own mood, and Portland '08 was no exception. As always, the people we met and the ideas buzzing through the meeting rooms were compelling, and the pace fast and intense. Luckily the weather, the mountains and Portland itself were beautiful and provided some easy going moments. A convention listserv and email messages from Leagues around the country advancing their agendas helped prepare us for the struggles ahead.

Rule 10.1 was the first battle on the agenda. This rule was designed to govern the resolutions traditionally made by Leagues that their concerns are not reflected in the program and bylaws proposals on the agenda. In the recent past, Convention resolutions had brought to the fore issues that proved to be important and that had not been put on the agenda by LWVUS. For example, assuring a verifiable vote trail. Many delegates were concerned that this avenue of expression not be cut off or unnecessarily limited. After much discussion from pro and con microphones, a resolution was passed directing the 2009 Council to develop a rule about resolutions that would then be in place for the 2010 Convention so

this battle would not need to be repeated. A great deal of energy and time was expended on Rule 10.1, and it turned out, surprisingly, to be the only really fractious issue at the Convention. The "us and them" vibe softened when this was resolved.

All LWVUS program proposals passed. These included a project to bring League members up-to-date on health care legislative issues (our health care position was passed eleven years ago in 1993) and education and advocacy on global warming. All bylaws proposals from the national board were passed.

On the other hand, of non-recommended program items (study and concurrence) only the National Popular Vote was approved. This will be a new study, but it was not considered to be one requiring much work from Leagues or from the national office. It will examine a proposal to bring about the election of the president by popular vote through state-by-state legislation, in effect, doing an end run around the Electoral College. This study was adopted by a card vote (one of only three at the Convention): 543 yes and 273 no. Excellent information was available from the table run by the Saratoga Springs NY League and Common Cause.

(Continued on page 2)

Convention 2008 (Continued from page 1)

The concurrence on redistricting was defeated. Two state Leagues, Oregon and Virginia, had offered updated positions to the current LWVUS position (which is basically the same as the LWVNM position that the Fair Representation Study Group is seeking to update). At Convention, they combined their proposals into a single resolution, and spent literally days getting California to concur. After extensive discussion, which included objections to the effect that “nobody has studied redistricting yet” and “every State is different,” the resolution failed to get the 2/3 vote necessary for acceptance.

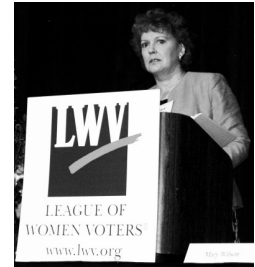
Both the bylaws amendment and the resolution to allow delegates at Convention to set action priorities for the national level failed. A resolution to establish a task force on Nuclear Arms Control and Disarmament was defeated. The resolution supporting advocacy of paper ballots, statistically valid audits after every election and an election listserv failed. All delegate-proposed bylaws amendments, except a procedural one, went down.

By the time budgetary questions came up, there had been a significant loss of wind from many sails. Both per member payment (PMP) raises, increasing our PMP from \$26.80 to \$29.20 in two increments of \$1.20 each, were passed on a voice vote with very little discussion. There had been a lot of resistance to the proposed PMP raises in New Mexico Leagues and on the Convention listserv, so this was surprising. The budget was also accepted with little activity at

the microphones, in contrast with the Q&A sessions on the budget.

Mary Wilson’s relaxed and skillful management style from the chair deserves credit for the smooth progress through a difficult agenda that characterized this Convention. The outside speakers were excellent as well. John Kitzhaber, MD, and former governor of Oregon, spoke on the future of health care (website: Archimedes.com), saying that he thought we could get to universal coverage but it would have to happen one step at a time. Dr. Ramanathan, the lead author of the report from the International Panel on Climate Change, made many good points including: when it comes to climate change “each one of us is someone else’s backyard.” The global energy demand is expected to grow by 44% in the next 25 years, and California has shown, by example, that the economy can grow while energy demand reduces at the same time if we successfully conserve energy. Heather Kaplan from Oxfam America reminded the delegates that climate change affects women in the third world first and most severely.

The Portland League provided helpers in green aprons everywhere to answer questions, give advice and rescue the lost and confused. The weather was practically flawless, the flowers everywhere and the moderately priced delicious food contributed as well to the generally uncontentious, upbeat mood of Convention 2008.



(L-R) Cheryl Haaker,
Wendee Brunish, and Jo Porter



New Mexico Delegation: (L-R) Don Goldfarb, Bonnie Burn, Olin Bray, Marilyn Morgan, Mary Wilson, Jose Mora, Lora Lucero, Jan Bray, Jo Porter, Linda Moscarella, and Diane Goldfarb

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

One of the duties of the LWVNM president, and the one to which I looked forward least, is to be the public face of the League on various occasions. However, I thoroughly enjoyed the day I spent at Girls' State at the beginning of June, perhaps because I have finally learned that I need to write out my public remarks, and never ever (well, hardly ever) *ad lib!*

Girls' State is a program about which I knew nothing, although I expect that some of you participated in it yourselves. It is sponsored by the American Legion, which is nonpartisan like the League. This year there were about 120 girls, to be high school seniors in the fall, from all over the state for the six-day event on the campus of Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) in Portales. (The following week the parallel Boys' State program was held there.)

For the purposes of the program, the girls are assigned randomly to two "parties" and to one of six "cities" in two "counties". During the week they hold elections for most of the municipal, county and state offices. Near the end of the week when the "legislature" meets they draft legislation that they sometimes present to the state Legislature in Santa Fe. (I suggested they might turn their attention to the redistricting process, but as I wasn't around that long, that probably didn't happen.) The "supreme court" also meets to conduct a mock trial. Two "senators" are chosen to attend "Girls' Nation" in Washington later in the summer.

My assignment was to tell them about their new responsibilities as voters. So I told them, of course, about the importance of being an informed voter and also that democracy is about more than voting. I offer some excerpts from my talk below. I was also able to register about a dozen new voters. Altogether it was thrilling to see so many young women willing to devote a week of their lives to learning more about representative government.

Excerpts from Girls' State talk

...Most important, vote your hopes, not your fears. Anyone can do fear. Anyone can do destruction, to which fear invariably leads. But building constructive solutions is possible only where there is hope, even when the basis for hope seems flimsy. One of the most inspiring things I have read recently is Jonathan Schell's description [*Unconquerable World*] of the role of non-violent resistance in bringing down the walls, literally and figuratively, in eastern Europe two decades ago. He describes how decades of what "looked like exercises in futility...every step without a chart or clear destination" led to a revolution that was peaceful, democratic and thorough, and that in the end overthrew an empire based on fear...

In my opinion--and here I am speaking less as the president of the League of Women Voters than as the daughter of a biologist--the genius of democracy is closely related to its nurturing of diversity. Diversity is sometimes celebrated as an end in itself. But I view it more as an indispensable means to creating resilience, whether in nature, society or economics. It deserves to be celebrated, certainly, but perhaps for different reasons than those usually given, reasons that should appeal across the political spectrum.

The value of diversity within a system is that it enables that system to withstand enormous shocks. This is what I mean by "resilience." We see this in nature, where life itself has several times survived major extinction events... The ability to adapt that arises from diversity is also the underlying strength of the western economic system...

But when it comes to human society, including our economic and political systems, we find that there are powerful tendencies to resist diversity. Diversity is so messy! So complex! Above all, so

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LWVNM HOLDS STATE COUNCIL- May 17, 2008 - Los Alamos



(L-R) Jody and Dave Larson, Margaret Prince, Barbara Calef, Kathy Campbell, George and Chris Chandler, Ann Nobile, Bonnie Burn

The 27th Biennial Council started with some fun and food on Friday night. Besides being a forum for decision-making, Council provides an opportunity for members to meet, talk, and exchange ideas.

Saturday morning everyone gathered at the First Methodist Church. The major business of Council is to adopt a budget. Dick Mason, chair, Budget Committee, proposed a \$17,745 budget that was adopted after discussion. Study Groups were interested in ensuring enough dollars to accommodate the busy schedule of activities involving unit meetings and consensus adoption. Revenue Sharing, \$4,300, will be distributed among local Leagues, in proportion to their membership census, to help with publication costs of the November General Election *Voters' Guide*.

The current state membership totals 657. The League again will be hosting a table at League Day at the Legislature during the 2009



(L-R) Kathy Campbell, Ann Nobile, and Johnnie Aldrich

Legislative Session. The table drew lots of attention during the 2008 Legislative Session, and members proposed expanding this activities to two days—perhaps on League Day on February 3 and again in March before the legislative session ends.

Ten delegates will be attending the LWVUS National Convention in Portland, Oregon, June 13-17: Cheryl Haaker, Lora Lucero, and Linda Moscarella (State Board), Wendee



(L-R) Barbara Calef, Diane Goldfarb, Cheryl Haaker, Dick Mason, and Chris Chandler

Brunish (Los Alamos), Jody Larson (Santa Fe), Bonnie Burn (Las Cruces) and Diane Goldfarb, Josephine Porter, Marilyn Morgan, and Jan Bray (CNM). Topics that will be raised at Convention include: Fair representation, health care, and increasing per member payment by \$1.20 for each of the next two years.

During directions to the Board, agreement was reached that the State League will support the domestic partnership bill that will come up in the 2009 Legislative Session. The position used for this support is the LWVUS Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action position that opposed the “Federal Marriage Amendment.”

Lunch, followed by a keynote address by Chick Keller on Climate Change, concluded the Council.

Excerpts from Girl's Talk *(Continued from page 3)*

uncontrollable! It's so much easier and more elegant to create monocultures and put everything into its own box so we know where everything is and can delude ourselves that we understand everything that's going on: in our agriculture—these acres for corn, those for soybeans; in our religions—here is the truth, the only truth. And most especially in our nation-states, where so much of politics seems to be about gaining power in order to shape political systems in ways that will bring yet more benefits to those in power.

The only problem with non-diversity is, it doesn't work. The centrally controlled economic model as implemented in the Soviet Union could not survive, even though it was backed by one of the most powerful state police systems yet devised... But when we turn our eyes to the supposed capitalist victor, we begin to wonder if we have learned the most important lesson of its collapse, as we find our large corporations growing more powerful by the day, setting out not merely to win on a level playing field but if possible to eliminate competition on that field by fair means or foul.

So I hope that as you elect your representatives and construct your platforms this week, you will see that democracy is working in your groups. I hope you will speak up if you observe a tendency toward conformity and suppression of dissenting views within your cities and parties. Yes, you need cohesion and unity of purpose to move forward, but not too soon, and never to the point of completely silencing dissent within your ranks. I hope you will begin to internalize what democracy means within a community. And above all, I hope you'll have a great time and stay engaged!

Kathy Campbell, President

STATE BOARD NOTES

May 17, 2008 - Post Council, Los Alamos

- Approved an annual review of financial records for 2007-2008.
- Approved an annual calendar of activities.
- Approved a memorandum of understanding for services rendered to LWVNM by LWV of Central New Mexico (CNM).
- Discussed activities related to the voting process during the months between the Primary and General Election.
- Considered a suggestion that the State League hold a forum for state candidates running for U.S. Senate.
- Encouraged delegates to LWVUS National Convention to advocate for LWVUS to resume holding debates for candidates running for the Office of President.

July 13-19 2008 - Electronic Meeting

- Approved signing a coalition letter to NM Bureau of Finance regarding Tax Increment Development Districts.
- Approved questions for U.S. Senate, Supreme Court Judges and Appellate Court Judges that will appear in *Voters' Guide*
- Approved a resolution about updating regional water plans that will be presented during the 2009 Legislative Session.

Next Meeting

October 18, 2008, 12:30-5:00 p.m.
New Mexico Mining & Technology University
Skeen Library, Don Trip Room
Socorro

STUDY COMMITTEE REPORTS



FAIR REPRESENTATION

Cheryl Haacker, Chair

LWVUS Convention Update: Two study group members, Josephine Porter and Cheryl Haacker, attended the LWVUS Convention in Portland in June. As noted in the “Report From Convention” article, (p. 3), the attempt to update the LWVUS position on reapportionment to define goals and criteria for redistricting failed. The study group is continuing its plans to seek consensus and establish a new LWVNM position on redistricting and will be hosting Unit meetings in November for this purpose.

Several of the workshops and caucuses at Convention related to the Fair Representation study. “Ranked Choice Voting” discussed (and promoted) the Instant Runoff Voting method. “Citizen Assemblies: Breaking the Logjam” described an effort by Arizona League members to get a citizen group for redistricting established—its successes, things that could have worked out better, and where it stands now. “Effective Advocacy” was an extremely worthwhile session led by Tim O’Brien of The Praxis Project (www.thepraxisproject.com) which laid out the ABCs of advocacy, from defining your issue to evaluating your success, with a detailed guide and worksheets as part of the workshop materials.

The study group will meet on August 26, September 23, and October 28; you are welcome to attend either live or via teleconference. Join the mailing list, LWVNMFair AT yahoo groups .com and view the web page, www.lwvnm.org/fair/ where articles, reports, resources, and other information are maintained.

CENSUS VOLUNTEERS

The Bureau of the Census is seeking volunteers for the 2010 Census and possibly for the 2008 “dress rehearsal”. Call Polly Nuñez, Albuquerque Census Bureau at (505) 306-7184 for more information.



STUDY OF WATER SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Barbara Calef, Chair

On June 19 in Los Alamos, LWVLA held a forum on water supply and demand. The speakers were Angela Bordegaray, State and Regional Water Planner for the Interstate Stream Commission; Tim Glasco, Water Manager for Los Alamos County; Steve Harris, the founder and Executive Director of Rio Grande Restoration, a non-profit stream-flow and watershed advocacy group; and Janice Varela, an organizer with the New Mexico Acequia Association.

The speakers all expressed concern about the over-allocation of water permits for the limited supply of water, especially in the Rio Grande Basin. The status of many of the water rights is unclear because they have not been adjudicated, or proven in court. The increasing demand for water by the growing population threatens the viability of agriculture in the state. The in-stream flow mandated for the silvery minnow and the southwest willow flycatcher is currently satisfied by water from the San Juan-Chama Project. However, in the near future that source will be diverted for municipal consumption. Conservation and new legislation linking water to land use may provide some relief, but continued growth will ultimately need to be addressed.

The forum was taped. The study committee will write up background material and send that together with the tapes to the other Leagues. The committee has decided not to submit consensus questions for the state study until October. It will first focus on writing up the definitions and explanations that members will need to understand to be able to follow the controversial issues related to water supply and demand as discussed at the June 19 forum.

Members of the committee are attending meetings of the Legislative Committee on Water and participating in meetings of the Land and Water Committee organized by Conci Bokum.

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Water Study *(Continued from page 6)*

The latter group is trying to find ways to close the jurisdictional gap by supporting helpful legislation.

Simultaneously with the state study, LWVLA is conducting its own water study. The LWVLA study committee has approved the following consensus questions to be posed at a Los Alamos unit meeting in the fall. Versions of some of them might be appropriate at the state level.

1. What role should the sustainability of the water supply play in setting goals for economic development in the County? This question will be followed by a list of development and water issues currently facing the County.
2. How do we feel about County plans to divert San Juan- Chama water? This question will be followed by a description of the current plans as well as information about how the diversion will affect the river.
3. What methods of conservation do we support? We will provide a list of the methods and information about how effective each is as well as possible incentives. For instance, should developers be required to participate as they are in Santa Fe?
4. How do we define “public welfare”? What are some of the elements of public welfare? We will provide background on public welfare statements in state and regional water plans and their use and non-use by decision makers.

ON MEMBERSHIP - *Johnnie Aldrich, Director*

As you read this issue of *La Palabra*, you who are League leaders are probably gearing up for either a membership dues renewal drive or perhaps for a new member orientation or both. 'Tis the “busy-ness” season in every League and even more so in this important presidential election year.

Leaders, have a look at the new Board members you elected at your annual meeting. I hope that at least one of them is a relatively new member of your group. Bringing in new members loses much of its impact if we cannot hold onto the members we have. And one key to membership retention is membership **INVOLVEMENT**.

I think it probably helps to have sign-up sheets at your new member orientation so that incoming members have ample opportunity for that involvement, whether it be helping with voter registration, proofreading your *Voters' Guide*, serving on any one of our multiple committees, signing up with a study group: the opportunities for activity in the League are very nearly countless, and the same members shouldn't have

to do everything every time.

We, LWVNM Board members and local leaders as well, receive a weekly communication from our organization's Washington office. The "Membership" section of this "Leader's Update" mentions, at least once a month, the importance of personal invitations in increasing membership. Many of us remember the worldwide literacy techniques developed and propagated by Master Teacher Frank Laubach in the 1960's. His motto was "Each One Teach One," and his success was huge, especially in so-called "developing countries."

It's a motto we could adopt: ***Each One Ask One***. If each member (and I do not mean Board members exclusively, of course) invited enough people to join every year so that even one of them came into the fold, our membership would continue to grow apace.

Much of the “busy-ness” of the coming season will be our efforts to get into public

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LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENTS



Central New Mexico - *Diane Goldfarb*

LWV/ABC had a year of membership growth—We numbered 337 at the time of our Annual Meeting on May 3—and lots of activity.

Our office fielded an especially high number of calls during the October municipal election and the February Democratic Presidential Caucus. We had a training for third party agents to register voters, registered voters at several sites around the county, had a few speaking engagements, and moderated several candidate forums. We were asked by the Albuquerque Public Schools Board to assist with conducting public forums for prospective superintendent candidates.

As part of our Community Education Series, we held a lobbying workshop in December. We published a *Voters' Guide* for the October 2007 Albuquerque Municipal Election and our annual edition of *Who's Who*, Directory of Elected Officials.

The four units meetings per month continued with good attendance and covered a variety of topics. Consensus on immigration took place over two months in the fall. The Drug Policy Study and the Public School Governance Study both continue.

Our Sandoval County unit has found a good home in Corrales and has some active members there. There has been interest expressed in Valencia County for a potential unit, and Board members have spoken to a group there.

And a significant milestone took place at the LWV/ABC Annual Meeting when the membership voted unanimously to change the name of our organization to the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico (LWVCNM).

Greater Las Cruces - *Cathy Mathews*

LWVGLC has had a busy summer. The Election Process/Voter Turnout Committee conducted a

Voter Satisfaction Survey during the Primary Election (June 3). Surveys (368) were collected from 25 precincts: 341 of the surveys indicated voter satisfaction with their voting experience, and 27 registered complaints about voting at the correct precincts, traveling to more than one precinct to vote and having to vote on a provisional ballot.

Metropolitan Court for Doña Ana County committee members are making presentations to city and county officials and seeking legislative sponsorship to establish a metro court and to allow cities of less than 15,000 population to opt out of a metro court system. An appropriation for an implementation study is also being sought.

The League is represented at meetings such as Vision 2040, a project to create a regional plan for Doña Ana County; South Central Solid Waste Authority Board that is bringing an expanded recycling program to Doña Ana County, and Joint Meetings of the City Council and County Commission to resolve issues that affect both areas.

Most recently, I joined other community groups and spoke at a rally and press conference opposing HR 6300 sponsored by Congressman Steve Pearce. This bill subjects more public land to disposal and development in eight designated Wilderness Study Areas of Doña Ana County.

The League, using a long-time position on the Branigan Library, delivered a statement before the Las Cruces City Council in support of building branch libraries.

Finally, a representative from the Southwest Environmental Center spoke at our June lunch meeting about the new border fence being built between Mexico and the U.S. highlighting its impact on the environment and animal migration.

Los Alamos - *Executive Committee Report*

In April, LWVLA cosponsored a pre-primary debate between the two Republican candidates for

U.S. Senate, Congresswoman Heather Wilson and Congressman Steve Pearce. The main sponsor was the Los Alamos Monitor newspaper. The Monitor, the League and KRQE Channel 13 were represented on the panel, and each organization wrote its own questions. There was also a segment for questions from the audience. In addition to the panelist (Anne Nobile), the League provided a moderator (Kathy Campbell), a timekeeper (Rebecca Shankland), and helped with screening written questions from the audience (Barbara Calef).

In June, we held a forum on water issues, which is discussed in a separate report in this issue (p. 6-7). Also in June, members of the LWVLA Election Reform committee met with NM Representative Jeanette Wallace over breakfast to discuss redistricting in New Mexico. We heard from her many of the things that the Fair Representation study committee heard from Brian Sanderoff, including the observation that if we want anything to change, we will have to get involved in the public meetings in 2011 and also educate the public about the implications of redistricting for New Mexico.

Our lunch with a Leader program has had several guests, including the Los Alamos County Clerk, the publisher of the Monitor, and the member services coordinator of the Chamber of Commerce.

Santa Fe - *Jody Larson*

The Santa Fe County League is working on its Transparency Project with Santa Fe County government. So far, the advisory committee the County has asked us to lead has three members, two from LWVSFC and one from the New Mexico Foundation for Open Government, William Winter. We have had several in-League meetings to examine suggestions from other Leagues about how to conduct transparency audits and to discuss other related issues. We have also met with an attorney from the NM Association of Counties to learn about legal requirements for open government, including restrictions on *ex parte* communications.

We are registering voters most Saturdays at our local Farmers' Market, and will schedule more locations in the fall before the polls close. Many other local groups, organized and otherwise, are also registering voters, so we will assess how we can do the most good. We are focusing on two very interesting local races, for the third congressional district (Rep. Tom Udall's current seat) and for the Public Regulation Commission (Ben Ray Luján's seat). We hope to hold forums for these contested races, both of which include candidates other than the usual Democrats and Republicans.

I attended the LWVUS Convention in Portland, OR, and returned with some ideas for local use. We are concerned about a report at one workshop that New Mexico's law governing third-party voter registration agents, like ourselves, is currently the most oppressive in the country. With help from LWVUS, a more-restrictive Florida statute was recently overturned, and the speakers at the workshop said they are looking for a way to challenge New Mexico's law.

At our calendar planning meeting on July 19, we scheduled the LWVNM Fair Representation report and consensus for November, and we also chose topics for other months based on feedback from our members and from our Annual Meeting. We will screen *Iron Jawed Angels*, an HBO movie about the struggle to pass the 19th amendment, in September on Constitution Day, September 17. Check our web site, www.lwvsfc.org, for further information on our upcoming activities.

ON MEMBERSHIP *(Continued from page 7)*

places and register new voters or help already registered voters update their information. Don't forget to have League brochures and membership applications available at those tables. And don't be shy about "chatting up" potential members. These "public" events are ideal opportunities for us as well as for the voters!



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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LWVNM BOARD CALENDAR

2008

October 18 Board Meeting - Socorro
La Palabra Deadline

December 10 *La Palabra* Deadline

2009

January 10 Board Meeting - Albuquerque

February 3 League Day at the Legislature

March 21 Board Meeting - Socorro
La Palabra Deadline

May 16-17 LWVNM Convention
Albuquerque

SAVE

VOTER SERVICES CALENDAR

September

25 Candidates Forum (Los Alamos)

October

2 Candidates' Forum (Los Alamos)

5 *Voters' Guide* Distribution (Los Alamos)

7 *Voters' Guide* Distribution (CNM)

10 *Voters' Guide* Distribution (Las Cruces)

14 Candidates 'Forum (Las Cruces)

22 Judicial Candidates' Forum (CNM)

26 Candidates 'Forum (Las Cruces)

November

4 Election Day

**Check local League newsletters and
web sites (p. 1) for final details**