



# 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  
www.lwvnm.org

Marilyn Morgan, President  
505-266-5131

### Albuquerque/Bernalillo County

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

### Greater Las Cruces

505-527-1764  
www.zianet.com/lwv/  
Connie Lee, President

### Los Alamos

505-662-3913  
www.lwvlosalamos.org  
Katherine Campbell, President

### Santa Fe County

1472 St Francis Drive  
Santa Fe NM 87505  
505-982-9766  
Jane Gaziano, President

### La Palabra Editor

Pat Freeman  
505-254-1304

## 2006 LEAGUE DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE, SANTA FE

### Tuesday, January 31, 2006

New Mexico Land Office Building 310 Old Santa Fe Trail  
Morgan Hall (In the basement--the same location as in 2005)

9:00 a.m. coffee, tea and conversation

9:30 a.m. - noon

League Day Orientation, League updates

Two Speakers on key issues followed by questions and comments

Watch your local January newsletters for late information on proposed bills in this 30-day financial session. Probable League action expected in Energy, Conservation, Election Reform, Health Care

12:30 - 2 p.m. Luncheon at The Inn and Spa at Loretto, 211 Old Santa Fe Trail

Address by Kay J. Maxwell, LWVUS President

2:00 p.m. Spend the rest of your day at the Roundhouse: Appointments with legislators

and staff; Committee observations; Distribution of League Day materials on issues

### ENRICHING YOUR DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE: New Activity for Lobbyists

We are encouraging lobbyists to extend their contacts at the 2006 Legislative Session by working two consecutive days. It's a first step in "firing up" for a TWO DAY LEGISLATIVE DAY IN 2007, which was recommended during the LWVNM Convention. The goal is to make LWVNM lobbyists and members more visible as reliable, informed and clear speakers about our LWVNM positions.

Some lobbyists plan to stay overnight on Monday, January 30, to attend committee meetings. We have arranged for a block of rooms at The Old Santa Fe Inn, 310 Galisteo, at a special rate of \$79, plus tax (currently at 14.563%), for a single or double room. The Inn has a cozy atmosphere, provides parking and a hot Continental breakfast, and is across from the Bataan Building--just a short walk to the Roundhouse. At [www.oldsantafeinn.com](http://www.oldsantafeinn.com) you can see the accommodations. LWVNM can offer some financial support to lobbyists on a first come/first served basis. To be eligible for this, the reservation must be made by December 31.

Kay Maxwell will be staying at the Inn with us.

The Women's Forum is sponsoring a reception for women legislators from 6 to 8 p.m. on that Monday evening after the session ends. Reservations are not necessary. There may be a \$10 fee at the door.

### LUNCHEON WITH A LEADER: Introducing Your Special Guests to Your League

The Tuesday luncheon, featuring an address by LWVUS President Kay J. Maxwell, is an excellent opportunity to reach out to local leaders. LWVNM has invited eight or nine special guests to attend at our expense. Would you also like to invite a guest or two at your expense to introduce them to the League?

Perhaps your League could send special invitations for this unique occasion to interested members of the community. This is a fine opportunity to converse about issues close to your heart with those who could make it happen. Please think about bringing a guest.

The luncheon is \$20, including tax and tip. The Inn and Spa at Loretto has offered us a delicious-sounding menu that includes salad, entree, and dessert. Reservations are required by January 24, a week before the luncheon. Reservation forms will be in your local January newsletters.

Get your reservations in early. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet League President Kay Maxwell and your League friends at this great 2006 event.

*Dee Watkins, Action Committee Co-Chair*

## *President's Message*

**Come out, come out, wherever you are, to meet our National League President face-to-face.** Kay J. Maxwell, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States, will be our special guest in Santa Fe at League Day at the Legislature, on Tuesday, January 31. Let me tell you a little bit about her.

Kay Maxwell is the 16th president of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and is also chair of the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF), the nonprofit arm which funds our Voters Key and other League educational publications and events.

A longtime resident of Greenwich, Connecticut, Kay Maxwell has been a member of LWV since 1976. She attended Smith College and earned a B.A. in International Relations from the University of Pennsylvania. She is married to Steve Maxwell and has a son.

During her 29 years of service with the League she has held

many posts at different levels with the National League. Her professional background provides her with the international expertise to lead LWVUS in the Citizen Connect Program under auspices of the U.S. State Department. Her recent trip to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia and Seoul, Korea, is inspiring. (See [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). Choose Projects, then Global Democracy, and at the bottom of the page choose Project Resources, Citizen Connect Mongolia and Korean Trip Report.)

Her commitment to strengthening Democracy worldwide has earned her many honors. Her leadership of the LWVUS Democracy Agenda spearheads the forward actions of our League of Women Voters' core issues.

At the 2006 League Day at the Legislature, we look forward to gaining new information, tips on lobbying, and inspiration for the League's work. Kay has never been to New Mexico. Please join us on January 31 for the 2006 League Day

*Marilyn Morgan*

## **SUMMARIES OF BOARD MEETINGS**

### **September 2005 Board Meeting**

#### ***Business***

- Nominating Committee Chair Helen Wright (A/BC) requested two Board volunteers to complete the Nominating Committee, as required by our Bylaws. Board members Johnnie Aldrich (Las Cruces) and Dee Watkins (A/BC) volunteered to join elected members Joyce Williams (Santa Fe), Becky Shankland (Los Alamos) and the Chair
- Because LWVNM was unable to staff their State Fair table, LWV/ABC agreed to allow State Voters Key to be handed out at their table on their assigned day
- Postponed until November the meeting of the Budget Challenge Subcommittee Report
- Discussed offering Parliamentarian training to League members in 2006
- Assigned two members to research need and cost of Board liability insurance
- Appointed George Best (LA) to perform financial review of 2004-2005 records
- Requested reports from attendees at Election Reform Task Force
- Voted to participate with E-06 coalition on energy
- Formed committee to plan Kay Maxwell's visit to League Day at the Legislature

#### ***Announcements***

- A letter and copy of *Voters Key* sent to all state libraries, recommending check our web site for free downloading of extra copies
- "By the People" forums to be held in Las Cruces and Albuquerque
- Information on two new studies to be printed in La Palabra
- Death Penalty study presentations scheduled for September
- Sustainability study presentations to begin in October
- November meeting to be in the Clubhouse at Courtyards by Cutler in Albuquerque

### **November 2005 Board Meeting**

#### ***Business***

- Voted to publish 1000 *Voters Key 2005* to carry us through 2006
- Voted to accept financial review of 2004-2005 records and recommendations
- Voted to accept Budget Challenge Subcommittee Report and recommendations
- Voted to accept Memorandum of Understanding between LWVNM and LWVA/BC to share office in Albuquerque
- Appointed Election Reform Task Force group to summarize Task Force results for January Board meeting
- Assigned Action Committee to develop one-page statement re Task Force report for League Day use
- Discussed progress of Death Penalty and Sustainability Studies presentations
- Discussed report on liability insurance and appointed subcommittee to recommend decision at January meeting

#### ***Announcements***

- League Day to be at Morgan Hall in State Land Office Building, January 31, 2006
- Kay J. Maxwell, LWVUS President, to be luncheon speaker at League Day
- Albuquerque and Santa Fe Leagues to support Sunshine Week March 12-18, 2006
- State Council to be in Santa Fe on May 13, 2006
- National Convention to be in Minneapolis, MN, June 9-13, 2006

## LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

**Albuquerque/Bernalillo County.** The League celebrated success with the passage of The Open and Ethical Elections Code on October 4. This charter amendment, which provides for public financing of mayoral and city council campaigns, passed overwhelmingly with 70% of the vote. Albuquerque is only the second municipality in the country to pass such a measure. LWV/ABC was part of the coalition working on this project and was quoted in campaign literature that was widely distributed. We also had a number of well-attended candidate forums prior to the election for mayoral and city council candidates.

Our public forums--one on alternative energy, the other on health care (part of the "By The People" project)-- went very well. The Board has concurred on our Action Steering Committee recommendation that LWV/ABC focus on campaign finance reform and health care as our priorities for the coming year. Program Planning was held December 3. Our December 8 general meeting featured Michael Weinstein, who has filed a lawsuit against the Air Force on the grounds of fostering an environment of religious intolerance at the Air Force Academy. He spoke on "The Separation of Church and State: What I Am Fighting For and Why."

Fund raising is an ongoing project. We held a garage sale to support our operating fund, and plans are underway for winter and spring events. In October the Director of Major and Planned Gifts for the Presbyterian Healthcare Foundation spoke to our board about how people give and why. She shared a few ideas about how we might work to increase donations from individuals.

*Diane Goldfarb, President*

**Greater Las Cruces.** Our League has been very busy and productive. Marjorie Burr and her committee were awarded funding for a "By the People" forum addressing health care. The program was titled, "Whatever Happened to Health Care Reform?" KRWG-TV filmed and broadcast the forum on the local station.

Janet Stevens, Christina Little and Vicki Simons did a wonderful job of editing and producing the *Voter's Guide* for 2005, which was printed and inserted into our local weekly newspaper. Terrence Moore, City Manager of Las Cruces, spoke at one of our meetings on the strategic plan for the city. On December 2 we hosted the local legislators at breakfast and had the opportunity to question them on current issues and what they anticipate in the legislative session.

Win Jacobs has undertaken fund raising for the League. My thanks to all of the hardworking members of our League. We look forward to a busy and productive 2006.

*Connie Lee, President*

**Los Alamos.** This League has been working on the two current state studies, holding one unit meeting on the death penalty, another on a potential sustainability position. Results from these meetings helped us prepare for unit meetings with the other New Mexico Leagues.

Barbara Calef and Becky Shankland attended three of the four Albuquerque unit meetings to discuss the death penalty. They led the discussions in Santa Fe and will lead them in Las Cruces in January. It is hoped that a consensus position can be formulated

for state board consideration in March, prior to the 2006 Council meeting in May.

Gale Zander Barlow and Kathy Campbell presented the first phase of the sustainability position study at Albuquerque meetings and will present it in Santa Fe in January and in Las Cruces in March. Since this was approved as a two-year study, consensus on a position is not being sought this year. Rather, the questions under consideration are whether the state needs a sustainability position or principle, and how such a position might strengthen League education, advocacy and programs. Based on the results, the board will be asked to decide whether the study should continue towards the formulation of a position in May, 2006.

The Los Alamos League has also had a full program of local events. Lunch with a Leader hosts a local leader each month. In September we sponsored an evening forum on Building Human Resources Capacity in the Iraq Government featuring one of our County Councilors who spent three months in Iraq this summer.

We are planning a forum on the history of the Los Alamos County government structure as a prelude to a second forum or town hall to discuss possible County Charter revisions.

*Katherine Campbell, President*

**Santa Fe County.** Several Santa Fe League members who are serving on the planning committee for the League Day at the Legislature luncheon for Kay Maxwell have begun plans for this event. Locally, plans for the showing of *Iron Jawed Angels* on February 13th at the Cinema Cafe have been confirmed. Sponsors to cover the facility rental and cost of printing a program will be sought. Although no admission may be charged, other opportunities to raise money for the League will be investigated.

Prompted by a personal incident, an editorial was submitted and printed in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* regarding the League's positions on support for youth and on gun control. As was suggested by the LWVNM membership chair, appearance on the Op Ed page is a good way to make the League's presence known in a community. Members have recently represented the League by appearing before the Santa Fe County Board of Commissioners and on the City of Santa Fe Ethics Committee and monitoring school board meetings.

In October at our general meeting Valerie Espinoza, Santa Fe County Clerk, spoke on New Mexico election reform and changes in procedures for registering new voters. Following this certification workshop, she recruited members to become registrars. At our unit meetings, Becky Frenkel provided an update on the Santa Fe County Indigent Fund.

Barb Calef and Becky Shankland from Los Alamos led our November unit meetings on the death penalty. Consensus was reached in support of a position to repeal the death penalty and institution of a sentence of life in prison without parole as an alternative.

Information is being gathered for the Immigration Study being led by Becky Frenkel. Albuquerque and Los Alamos members interested in participating should contact her.

*Jane Gaziano, President*

# WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES (WNR)

## REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The WNR Interim Committee will have met six times before the 2006 legislative session. This report sets out some of the issues addressed at the first three meetings. The final meetings were held November 3rd and 4th in Santa Fe.

### **June 30-July 1, 2005, Santa Rosa**

**STATUS OF GOVERNOR'S WATER INNOVATION PROJECTS.** The 2004 Legislature appropriated \$10 million for the Governor's Water Innovation Fund. 115 proposals were submitted, 25 projects selected. Estimated water savings from these 32 projects: 32 billion gallons of water annually. Projects ranged from water-recycling projects, water-producing projects, water-conservation projects and communities in crisis. The second phase of the Governor's Water Innovation fund was initiated. Deadline for proposals was July 11, 2005.

**FORMATION AND GOALS OF THE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT TEAM (WIIT) CREATED BY THE GOVERNOR'S E.O. 2005-024.** Membership of the WIIT is comprised of the Governor's Chief of Staff, four state agency heads, the Chairman of the Board of the NM Finance Authority and one individual from the Board of Finance. The WIIT's eight goals include prioritization of water and wastewater projects, and development of a 20-year water and wastewater infrastructure investment plan. A uniform funding application for water projects will be developed across state funding sources for water including Department of Finance, NM Finance Authority, NM Department of Environment, and the USDA/RUS.

**OFFICE OF THE STATE ENGINEER'S WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM.** There was discussion regarding the OSE's review of adequate water supplies for subdivision requests. OSE reviews 90 to 120 subdivision requests per year with an average water budget per lot of .66 AFY (236 gpcd).

Programs planned for FY06: *Water use accounting pilot project; Development of a 40-year water development plan guide for public water suppliers; Sponsor and participate in Municipal Conservation Planning Workshops and K-12 Education Outreach*

**CLEAN ENERGY INITIATIVES.** The State Dept. of Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources defines clean energy as renewable energy (solar, wind, biomass fuels), energy efficiency in building, appliances and vehicles, and clean fuels (ethanol, biodiesel, compressed natural gas and hydrogen). New Mexico ranks second in the nation for solar resources. Clean energy development in New Mexico should benefit New Mexico's economy by resulting in economic development and diversifying the existing energy economy which is based on a finite amount of fossil fuels. 2006 legislation will include a "net metering" bill.

### **Other presentations:**

**WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT STATUS REPORT ON UTE RESERVOIR PROJECT.** Existing aquifer supplies will run out in 20 to 25 years. Ute Reservoir would be constructed to provide water for 75,000 people across nine communities in three counties at a cost of \$296,000,000 (\$4000 per person). The project's federal collaborator is the Bureau of Reclamation. The communities hope to secure 80% of project costs from the federal government and 20% from a combination of state and local funds. The project will have to address impacts to the river south of the reservoir which have been designated as critical habitat for the Arkansas River shiner. **SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT**

### **September 1-2, 2005, Albuquerque**

**EMERGING ISSUES IN WATER ACCOUNTING AND MANAGEMENT:** (Expect to see some of these ideas become requirements in the State's proposed uniform funding application for water projects (see June WNR Interim Committee notes) and/or be introduced as stand-alone legislation during the 2006 session. It appears that all have been vetted by the Governor's WIIT.)

**WATER USE BUDGETING AND ACCOUNTING:** Rural Water Users Association advocates that all public water suppliers adopt a uniform water budget and accounting program to, among other things, help identify the source of "real losses" and target them for efficiency measures and for conservation programs for the largest users. Discussions with the audience indicated that legislation may be introduced that would appropriate money to NMED for RFP's to private industry to prepare the Water Budgets for public water suppliers.

**WATER SYSTEM ASSET MANAGEMENT:** Requiring public water suppliers to prepare an asset management plan as a tool for (1) deciding when to repair, rehabilitate or replace infrastructure and (2) recommending rate increases.

**WATER SYSTEM FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND RATE SETTING.** Requiring public water suppliers to prepare 3-5 year financial plan and budget-setting adequate water rate structures to cover full operating costs of the system and reserve funds for debt service, capital improvement, operating expenses, and emergencies.

**WATER RATES AND AFFORDABILITY.** New Mexico communities spend less than 1% of their income on water. Far less income is spent on water than other necessary expenditures. The average monthly bill for water statewide is \$23 per month (6000 gallons of water). Increases in water rates could reduce demand. Low-income households would need to be assured access to basic water needs.

**ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION PRIORITIES 2006: (THESE BILLS WERE IDENTIFIED AS PRIORITY BILLS BY AN AD HOC COALITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS STATEWIDE KNOWN AS E'06.)**

**CONSERVATION FUNDING.** This is an initiative to create a statewide permanent and dedicated revenue stream for open space, farmland preservation and wildlife habitat, as well as funding for Game and Fish staff and research. No funding mechanism has been identified as yet.

**SOLAR ENERGY INCENTIVES.** (Governor Richardson has announced he will place this legislation on his call.). Although exact incentive levels and caps have yet to be determined, the Coalition for Clean and Affordable Energy is proposing a tax credit up to 30% of the system cost. The State will adopt quality assurance provisions to ensure tax credits provided for only worthwhile products and installations.

**SURFACE OWNER'S PROTECTION ACT (HB 1015 IN THE 2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION).** Establishes the requirements to which oil and gas producers and surface land owners must adhere to negotiated surface access agreements and determine compensation for property damages from oil and gas operations. New Mexico law does not currently require prior notice of operations to the surface owner, or require any security from the operator for damages that may accrue to the surface owner. Under common law, an owner or lessee of minerals (including oil and gas) has a right to use so much of the surface of the land overlying its minerals as may be necessary to explore for and produce the minerals. The surface owner, absent a contrary agreement, is not entitled to any compensation for loss of use of the portion of surface reasonably necessary for mineral operations, nor for any

diminution in the value of the surface due to such operations. This bill could redress some of the inequities suffered by surface property owners under common law.

**Other presentations:**

**\_ ALBUQUERQUE-BERNALILLO COUNTY WATER UTILITY AUTHORITY \_ PUBLIC/PRIVATE WATER SYSTEM FINANCING PARTNERSHIPS \_ DESALINATION PROSPECTS**

**September 28-29, 2005, Las Cruces**

**\_ STATE PRIMACY FOR THE NATIONAL POLLUTION DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM.** The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System was created under the federal Clean Water Act to control surface water pollution. It regulates point sources that discharge pollutants into U.S. waters. New Mexico NMED is seeking authorization under EPA to administer its own permitting/pollutant discharge control program in lieu of the federally-administered NPDES permit program with federal oversight. Only five states in the U.S. are currently not authorized to administer their own NPDES permit program.

In New Mexico about 120 individual NPDES permits exist and 2500 facilities under general permits for CAFO, multi-sector general permit, storm water construction permits. NMED is proposing to fund the state's program through a combination of permit fees, corrective action funds, and general funds. NMED's goal is to not exceed \$1000/year in fees for any one permittee. Currently, EPA does not assess fees for permits.

NMED's stated purposes for seeking primacy include preventing a reduction in protection of New Mexico's surface waters from point source discharge because of anticipated decline in federal enforcement and EPA staffing. The State may also elect to regulate more water bodies than are currently regulated by EPA. EPA removed playas from the list of protected waters of the U.S. in response to a recent Supreme Court ruling interpreting the definition of waters of the U.S.

Industry groups opposing primacy legislation this upcoming session include NM Cattle Growers, NM Farm and Livestock Bureau, Dairy Producers of New Mexico, Dairy Farmers of New Mexico, Associated Builders and Contractors, NM Home Builders Association, Associated General Contractors of New Mexico Building Branch, National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, and New Mexico Mining Association.

**Other presentations:**

**\_ WATER PLANNING USING GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION \_ DONA ANA COUNTY FARM AND LIVESTOCK BUREAU \_ ACTIVE WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT EFFECTS IN LOWER RIO GRANDE \_ LAS CRUCES WATER ISSUES STATUS REPORT \_ NEW MEXICO FARM AND LIVESTOCK BUREAU ISSUES.**

*Beth Bardwell*, Chair, LWVNM Natural Resources

## Goal: Increase Membership (and how it can be done!)

*In the previous issue of La Palabra, I stressed that VISIBILITY is essential. I asked these questions:*

- ✓ **Why not designate two or three members who will write letters with League sponsorship so that our name is on the editorial pages at least once a month?**
- ✓ **Why not ask each League's membership chair to head a committee that will organize volunteers and staff League tables at public events, such as the State Fair and at local happenings, such as a "farmers' market"?**

*And, since PUBLICITY INCREASES VISIBILITY,*

- ✓ **Why not designate funds for more extensive publicity than in the past, to cover, for example, PAID ads to announce meetings on issues of local importance? (I gave details on how the LWV in Baton Rouge did just that, made their "Lunch with Leader" the "in" thing to do in Baton Rouge, and in just a few years quintupled membership.)**

I ended with a promise to discuss the importance of individual members in the growth of our local units.

**Involvement is the key.** It's easy to fall into a pattern of letting a few members do most of the work in our units. Granted, these same people usually are in the forefront of many of our efforts, projects, and publications. They are often comfortable writing letters to the editor and visiting business leaders to solicit funds. Often they have had previous experience in what they undertake.

**Our newest members, though, need to become involved in some way right away.** In assigning responsibility for our projects, Boards and committee chairs should keep membership lists readily available and actively seek the participation of those newer members. The newest members should be personally welcomed to units by a call from a committee chair who needs help and has a specific task to suggest for that person.

Of course, some join (and/or donate) only to express gratitude for the work we do but do not plan to get "into the trenches." So be it -- and we thank them! Nonetheless, these persons should be identified early on and their wishes known. Too often, we welcome them at the first gathering they attend, then they merely receive notices of events and publications-- and we never know of their talents or wishes.

**Aggressively seeking new members is paramount.** We need to talk about our local League projects and positions at every opportunity -- at church, in the neighborhood, at whatever gathering we may attend. We must "blow our own horn" and let the hearers know that the League happily receives new members.

**One NM local League president provides a LWV Info Kit for every Board member to carry at all times.** Two or three membership invitation/application forms plus brochures describing the League's work are easy to carry with us so that when we meet potential new members we have the essentials in hand. I intend to go to the next Greater Las Cruces Board meeting with prepared packets for those attending.

Presidents, these materials are available on-line at the LWVUS web site.

*Johnnie R. Aldrich*, LWVNM Membership

## Sustainable Democracies

The economic paradigm shift outlined in the third article in this series is necessary but is not sufficient to bring about the transition to a sustainable world. Major changes in the organization of society will also be needed. We hinted at some of this in the last article, mentioning in particular government's role in steering market forces through taxation and subsidization policies. In this article we consider the relationship between government and sustainability.

✓ Internationally, the Kyoto Protocol contains many of the elements that will be required to deal with the most pressing international ecological problem, global climate change.<sup>1</sup> It addresses the problem of scale by setting international goals, which translate into a cap on world-wide emissions. It distributes corresponding emission "rights" in the form of quotas to be met by signatory nations. And it sets up mechanisms whereby markets can reallocate these rights through trading. A carbon emissions trading program for power plants and fuel-intensive manufacturers has been established in Europe as a way to meet the Kyoto goals.<sup>2</sup>

Much work has also been done on trade within countries, a good example being the tradable "Personal Carbon Allowances" that have been designed to help Great Britain meet its Kyoto objectives.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. has refused to participate in the Kyoto Protocol, but there are many local and citizen initiatives within the U.S., from the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement<sup>4</sup> to a Peoples Ratification of the Kyoto Global Warming Treaty.<sup>5</sup>

✓ At the other end of spectrum are locally designed solutions to the problems of water scarcity. While water scarcity now affects almost every country around the globe, both developed and underdeveloped, solutions are intrinsically more local than solutions to the climate change problem. Privatization, the one-size-fits-all "solution" proposed by neoliberal economists, has failed to deliver promised efficiency and access in third-world countries from Brazil to Bangladesh, as described in *Reclaiming Public Water*.<sup>6</sup> It is being replaced by increased public participation and democratic control. In the U.S., the Pacific Institute favors relying on decentralized systems to supply water, replacing the wasteful once-through consumptive use of current systems. Community participation and direction is a critical component of this vision.<sup>7</sup>

The structural impediments to promoting sustainability through government action must be addressed. In the U.S. these are largely the result of a political system that has become increasingly unrepresentative, captured by wealthy corporate entities.

The League works around the edges of this problem, notably in its attempts to promote campaign finance reform, but has so far failed to address more basic issues. For example, it lacks positions on corporate personhood<sup>8</sup> and media consolidation under corporate control, two structural issues that are at the heart of the current deficit in democracy in this country.

And in considering legislative apportionment, the League must think beyond the single-member, winner-take-all system that leads to more than half of all elections being noncompetitive and disenfranchises a substantial proportion of the electorate. See, for example, "Full Representation Voting Systems" at [www.fairvote.org/?page=378](http://www.fairvote.org/?page=378) for a discussion of alternatives.

The League has positions on democracy, on the role of government, on international relations and in other areas that bear on the issues that we will be considering in the state sustainability position study. But we need to re-evaluate these positions carefully in the light of 21st century realities. By and large, the existing positions reflect the optimism of the 20th century, when energy from fossil fuels and carbon-based technological advances seemed endless and when our two-party system had not yet converged to an unrepresentative "center" that today severely limits the range of public discourse.

Now that we understand that this path is not sustainable, many of these positions need rethinking; otherwise the League is in peril of becoming irrelevant. Can we put the League's reputation and contributions to civil society back on track by adopting a new and overriding criterion of sustainability?

### Questions:

- ✓ What should the League advocate beyond its (poorly advertised) support for the U.S. signing the Kyoto Treaty?
- ✓ Should we be observing the NM Citizen's Climate Advisory Group deliberations?
- ✓ Are we prepared to take a position on any resulting legislative proposals in 2007?
- ✓ Should LWVABC positions on sprawl and transportation be adopted by consensus by the state so that we can lobby for (or against) legislation at the state level as appropriate?
- ✓ Should the League augment its support for representative democracy to encourage voting systems that produce more representative results?
- ✓ Should we be more aggressive in promoting opportunities for participatory democracy, particularly as we face the state's water problems?
- ✓ Internally, should the League continue to rely on "experts" to tell us what to think (or at least prescribe the scope of the debate) about topics such as economic development, apportionment, and trade?

*Katherine Campbell, Chair*

1 [unfccc.int/essential\\_background/kyoto\\_protocol/items/2830.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php)

2 [www.climateark.org/articles/reader.asp?linkid=38806](http://www.climateark.org/articles/reader.asp?linkid=38806)

3 [www.fcnp.com/519/peakoil.htm](http://www.fcnp.com/519/peakoil.htm)

4 [www.ci.seattle.wa.us/mayor/climate](http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/mayor/climate)

5 [www.climatecrisiscoalition.org](http://www.climatecrisiscoalition.org)

6 [www.tni.org/books/publicwater.htm](http://www.tni.org/books/publicwater.htm)

7 [www.pacinst.org/publications/worlds\\_water/worlds\\_water\\_2002\\_chapter1.pdf](http://www.pacinst.org/publications/worlds_water/worlds_water_2002_chapter1.pdf)

8 [www.ratical.org/corporations](http://www.ratical.org/corporations)

## LWV of Greater Las Cruces Health Care Reform Forum

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces received a small grant from the LWVUS Education Fund and MacNeil/Lehrer Productions to participate in National Deliberation Week in October sponsored by the Public Broadcasting Service. We produced a health care forum, in collaboration with KRWG-TV, the local PBS station, "Whatever Happened to Health Care Reform?" The program was presented in front of an audience of community members in the television studio on October 24 and taped for local broadcast on November 11.

A panel of members of three prominent organizations involved in health care reform presented background information for the discussion. Professor Michael Ellis, chair of the Department of Economics and International Business of New Mexico State University, was the moderator. Panel members were Joel Miller, senior vice president for operations of the National Coalition on Health Care, Dr. John Ameriks, retired physician and member of the Physicians for a National Health Program, and Mary Feldblum, executive director of Health Security for New Mexicans.

The panelists discussed problems with the health care system in the U.S. that have produced a rapidly worsening crisis: soaring costs for medical attention and health insurance; a huge and growing number of people living without health insurance, about 46 million now; an epidemic of substandard care including the deaths last year of over 100,000 patients because of medical mistakes; and suppression of wage increases and slow job growth due to the cost of health insurance to employers. The National Coalition has put forth four options to achieve universal health care, including a single payer system, and these were discussed by the panelists and members of the audience.

League members were pleased with the size of the audience, local media participation and will continue to encourage community discussion on the need for health care reform and universal health care.

*Vicki Simons/Marjorie Burr, Las Cruces*

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## Death Penalty Update

We are sure that the Illinois League and others will request our support from the 2006 Convention attendees representing us in D.C. in June. Our LWVNM study committee will complete their presentations to our local Leagues in January. If you did not attend one of these meetings, please look at the written material that has appeared in issues of *La Palabra* during this past year and on our website. Your local League has copies of the study guides. Let your local League know your feelings by filling out the questionnaire you received. Thank you to the study committee and to you for participating in discussions on the death penalty.

*Marilyn Morgan*

## LWVNM Education Committee Report

I live in Los Alamos and have found it difficult to attend legislative Education Committee meetings, which meet at eight each morning during the winter sessions. Therefore, I recruited Ernestine Hagman, of the Santa Fe LWV Education Committee, to serve as the LWVNM registered lobbyist for education. She is also a lobbyist for the NM Association of Educational Retirees.

Ernestine taught in the Santa Fe Vocational High School until it became part of Santa Fe High School in 1995 and continued to teach there. She is a native of Las Vegas, New Mexico, and received a baccalaureate degree from Highlands University and a Masters degree in psychology and developmental learning from the University of Wisconsin. She was a recipient of the Nora Rodriguez Outstanding Teacher in Santa Fe award. She is also a lobbyist for the New Mexico Association of Educational Retirees.

I attended (at my own expense) a two-day workshop, Better Together: Developing Community School Leadership. It was sponsored by the Center for Relational Learning, of which Dr. George Otero is the director. The Santa Fe meeting was one of three held in different regions of the state. Among those attending in Santa Fe were several educators and community leaders from the Jemez Mountain School District, who spoke about collaboration going on there; Jim Gilroy, Dean of UNM Taos; Therese Moulton, principal of Cesar Chavez Community School in Santa Fe; and the presenter, John West-Burnham, Educational Consultant for the University of London.

The workshop explored how schools and communities can collaborate in building social capital. Social capital was defined as "relationships matter. By making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty. People connect through a series of networks and they tend to share values with other members of these networks and we can conclude with some confidence that there is a close relationship between people's social networks and their educational performance."

At their meeting on November 9, members of the Santa Fe education committee suggested that I continue working with the NM Education Coalition. A meeting of the coalition steering committee will be held soon to see what project(s) to propose to the coalition and when and where it should meet next.

*Elizabeth Best, LWVNM Education Director*

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## National League Report

"The League continues to be the No.1 provider of voter information online. The Online Voters Guides Project features 90 Voters' Guides from around the country, including one in Chinese and several in Spanish... With 2005 completed, the 2006 midterm elections are less than a year away, and the League is preparing to play a national role."

*Kay J. Maxwell, LWVUS President*

