



La Palabra

The Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico

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LEAGUE CONTACTS

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We Need Your Voice! Attend League Day at the Legislature!

Tuesday, January 30
New Mexico State Land Office, Morgan Hall
310 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe
(just down the street from the Round House)

SCHEDULE

8:00 a.m.	Coffee
8:30 - 9:00	Orientation – Review legislation being supported
9:00 - 10:30	Attend committee meetings and meet with legislators
10:45 - noon	Return to Land Office for Recap of Morning Visits; Speakers: Consuelo Bokum on water issues/legislation; Matt Brix on Election Reform/EDR
12 to 1 p.m.	Lunch; Report from LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson
Afternoon	Visit legislators and attend committee meetings

The 2007 Legislative Session will deal with many pieces of legislation that have been prioritized by the League of Women Voters. Legislation to be considered deals with areas such as: natural resources; water; climate change; expansion of Medicaid; the funding formula for public education; campaign finance and ethics reform; election reform; and drug courts. We need your voice to make a difference on these issues. Please plan to attend.

Although reservations are not required for League Day, we want to have an idea of the number of attendees. Please email either Dee Watkins – dwatkins2@earthlink.com or Dick Mason – polirich@aol.com; or call the office at 505-884-8441.

The LWVNM Action Committee will send e-mail Action Alerts throughout the 2007 Legislative session. If you are not now part of the LWVNM Topics List please go to www.lwvnm.org and sign up.

For further information please call 505-884-8441 or visit www.lwvnm.org

Lunch. Bring or buy a lunch. You may purchase a sack lunch to include a veggie or meat sandwich, chips, cookie, and drink for \$9.00. Reservations are required and must be made by 3:00 p.m. Thursday, January 25. Call in your choice of sandwich to the League office in Santa Fe, 1-505-982-9766, or e-mail Jane Gaziano jeg7@aol.com. Questions? Call Dee Watkins 1-505-823-2308.

Transportation. Each local League will arrange car-pooling for its area. Please contact your local League if you can drive or need a ride. Parking near the State House is hard to find during the session. The state does operate a shuttle from other parking lots. We will share that information when it becomes available.

Accommodations. We have reserved several rooms at the Old Santa Fe Inn, 310 Galisteo, for the night before League Day (January 29). The special LWVNM rate is \$84 plus tax. The inn is near the Capitol and the State Land Office and provides parking and breakfast. To get the special rate, you must make your own reservation before January 15 by calling 1-800-745-9910 and mentioning the League of Women Voters room block.

The Sage Inn at 725 Cerrillos Road, a former Budget Inn (150 rooms), has been remodeled. Its rate is \$49 plus tax. Call 1-800-982-5952 and ask the Reservations Manager for the special legislative rate (not the League rate). Sage Inn has on-site parking and an expanded continental breakfast. Public transportation is available to the Capitol.

President's Message

The 2007 New Mexico Legislature convenes in January. Are we ready? The answer is, "Oh yes, we've already begun." Our very successful December lobbying workshop in Santa Fe (over 50 enthusiastic attendees), told us "what, where, how," and now "League Day at the Legislature" on January 30 follows up with specific issues the League supports. Please read what the LWVNM Action Committee has planned for your lobbying education.

Our repeating lobbyists renewed their applications with the Secretary of State's Office by December 31, and they're ready to go for this sixty-day session. Talk to your local League president if you have an interest in becoming a lobbyist. Remember, you may always speak for yourself, and then you

don't need to be registered as a lobbyist, but you may not speak for the League without registering.

My thanks to the committee who made "A Lobbying Workshop" successful by contacting speakers, providing refreshments, setting up and putting the room back together.

And a huge "thank you" to all who responded to our request in the last *La Palabra* for financial support of our Education and Operating Funds. You should have received your acknowledgement letter from Shelly Shepherd and me before the end of the year. We appreciate your support.

Come to meet our LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson who will be with us for both days. I hope to see many of you there.
Marilyn B. Morgan

Board Meeting Summary

November 11 in Albuquerque

Business

• Liability insurance purchased to cover period of one year. • Thirteen boxes of archives sent to UNM Zimmerman Library's Southwest Collections. • Dick Mason to collect archives at Santa Fe and add to our archives at Zimmerman. • Storage unit contract completed as of November 22 and unit closed. • Filed Minutes of September 23 meeting, as corrected. • No Treasurer's Report submitted in absence of Treasurer. • No Auditor's Report made because Treasurer did not respond to request for information. • President instructed to write checks for two outstanding bills due her. • Secretary to send letter from Board requesting Treasurer's resignation. • Appointed an Assistant to the Treasurer, as set forth in LWVNM Bylaws. • Required two signatures on all future checks; added three names to approved signature list.

Announcements

• Local Leagues reported on activities and submitted them for *La Palabra*. • Committee reports: Fundraising: donations so far \$555 for Education Fund. \$270 for Operating Fund; Membership: renewal notices sent out to MALs; Action: lobbying workshop on December 2, League Day on January 30; Health: Finalizing position on December 2 after lobbying; workshop; Drug Policy report for *La Palabra*. • *La Palabra* deadline December 15. • Next meeting is January 6, in Albuquerque at Homes by Marilyn.

Membership Matters

Though it's too early to share any definitive numbers with you, I anticipate the totals of January 31 and proclaim LWVNM growth during the past year. As of 15 December, we have increased our membership state-wide by almost 100! If we consider the percentage of gain, so far the Albuquerque/ Bernalillo County League has the greatest increase, and Greater Las Cruces is not far behind. Every one of our four Leagues shows at least a bit of increase over last year. Good work, All!

Since New Mexico's population continues growing, it just makes sense that the newcomers include LWV members from various states. For LWV/ABC, the number of National members seems to have decreased, which means that League is bringing the National members into the local fold.

Let us not pat ourselves on the back too much. This was an election year when growth often happens. The League gets more exposure at candidate forums and voter registration events, etc. In 2007 we need to continue to sponsor educational activities, such as the recent Lobbying Workshop in Santa Fe, so people know that our "hands-on work to safeguard democracy" is a year-round effort. Remember the "each one recruit one" edict of organizational growth. Nothing is more effective in increasing membership than a personal invitation to meetings and activities.

Hoping to see you at League Day!

Jhnnie R. Aldrich, Director, LWVNM Membership

Drug Policy Report

Get ready to call your legislators about Drug Courts. Below is a summary of facts to remember.

The five-year plan of the New Mexico Supreme Court Advisory Committee which has oversight of the state's growing number of drug courts is to:

- ◆ Establish a drug court program in every county and expand existing programs where the need is greatest. Presently there are statewide: 9 Adult/Felony Drug Courts; 5 DWI Drug Courts; 4 Family Dependency Drug Courts; and 13 Juvenile Drug Courts
- ◆ Provide a reasonably stable and predictable level of funding requests to the legislature each legislative session.

Why should League support this effort?

- ◆ New Mexico drug court performance has been measured as excellent for retention in the program, graduation, and recidivism rates as compared to national averages.
- ◆ Other benefits are lower costs, drug-free babies, and higher wages and lower health costs for graduates.
- ◆ Fifteen counties do not have any drug courts.
- ◆ LWVNM position statements on DWI and Drug Policy support this action.

Dee Watkins, Chair, Drug Policy Study Committee

LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

Albuquerque/Bernalillo County

An October 14 forum on the pros and cons of a proposed Quality of Life Gross Receipts Tax went well. The proposal was defeated in the November 7 election.

The topic for our October units was "Solving the Health Care Crisis." Speakers included: NM Senator Dede Feldman; Steve Moffat, Vice-President of Health Action; Nandini Kuehn of Health Services Consulting; and League member Dick Mason, Chair of the LWVNM Health Care Committee. In November "Alleviating Pain and Reducing Substance Abuse" was the topic of the unit meetings which were arranged by our Drug Policy Study Committee. Dr. Walter Forman of the UNM School of Medicine spoke at our luncheon meeting. Justice Edward Chavez of the New Mexico Supreme Court was the speaker at our December general meeting. He spoke on "Judicial Independence: The Role of Our Courts in the Current Political Climate."

The office was extremely busy leading up to the election, with many phone calls. We distributed approximately 60,000 *Voters' Guides* in Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties. Overall, our member renewals have been made earlier than in past years. Our *2007 Member Handbook* was published in early December. The Program Planning meeting and holiday party took place on December 9.

Our "Meet the Legislators" event will be held on January 7. We are inviting legislators from Bernalillo, Sandoval and Valencia counties to meet our members.

Diane Goldfarb, President

Greater Las Cruces

As a League and as individual members Greater Las Cruces has had a productive and highly successful fall and early winter. Voter Service held candidate forums, a new membership brochure was designed, the Observer Corps was active and informed the membership each month (every issue of GLC's *The Voter* contains Observer Corps reports), and a *Voters Guide* was produced and distributed. Many League members participated in these activities.

A legislative breakfast was held on December 2. GLC tries to keep these breakfasts to less than two hours. The next Wednesday there was an informative presentation on Affordable Housing.

Christina Little is organizing the LWVNM Convention to be held at the Staybridge Suites on May 18-20.

Los Alamos

The LWVLA sponsored two candidate forums this fall. The first, for County Council candidates only was devoted to the current "hot topic" in town: proposals for the redevelopment of the "Trinity Site" consisting of about 42 acres of land currently owned by the county and the public schools. The second forum included all local candidates. At the last minute, Representative Tom Udall (NM Third

District, US House of Representatives) agreed to participate, so we were able to allow the audience to address questions to him and to his opponent, Ron Dolin of Los Alamos. We also heard from candidates for magistrate judge, sheriff, and the county council, as well as from several unopposed candidates who were allowed three minutes for statements with no questions. The LWVLA, together with LWVNM, also published a Los Alamos *Voters Guide* through the local newspaper as well as on our website.

In other public meetings, Dick Mason spoke to our fall membership meeting on October 19 about health care reform prospects in New Mexico and around the country. We also held a forum on ethics, lobbying and campaign finance reform November 28. Confirmed speakers include Matt Brix, the Executive Director of Common Cause New Mexico; John Carey, President and CEO of the Association of Commerce and Industry (Albuquerque), and Jim Noel, the Executive Director of the NM Judicial Standards Commission.

We've had some interesting "Lunch with a Leader" programs, including Charlie Kalogeros-Chattan, the manager of the County's library systems, on "Intellectual Freedom, Libraries and Legislation," and Rick Bohn, director of the County's Community Development Department, on downtown design standards.

A portfolio (job description) writing party was held in December, to which interested League members were invited as well as current board members.

Katherine Campbell, President

Santa Fe County

The topic of our October units was education. LWVSFC member and Santa Fe Public School Board President, Mary Ellen Gonzales, provided updates on recommendations made after year-long meetings of a strategic planning task force. At our general meeting/luncheon, held at the Santa Fe Community College, its new president and two board members made presentations on the school and some plans for its future. A study on career-technical education in Santa Fe County has drawn recent interest. Our resulting position, including support for the active pursuit of all avenues of funding for it, was mentioned in a joint resolution signed by the City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe Public Schools, and SFCC that will be submitted during the upcoming legislative session requesting funding to study the possibility for a regional facility.

The LWVSFC was represented during a recent three-day strategic planning conference for SFCC, as it was on the Santa Fe Public School Task Force that just concluded. In November our topic was sustainability, with guidance from Los Alamos League members.

We moderated an election forum, had a positive response to our *Voter Guide*, answered about 60 calls on November 7th, and had many hits on our new website during this busy election season. *Jane Gaziano*, President

Lobbying Basics

The LWVNM conducted a very successful Lobbying Workshop on December 2 in Santa Fe. It was attended by over 50 people and included many from outside the League. The speakers included legislators, lobbyists and a representative from the Secretary of State's office. Some of the points that were emphasized at the workshop were:

- ◆ It is best to contact legislators before the session begins.
- ◆ Legislators pay the most attention to their constituents or those who represent their constituents – always include your address in any phone message, letter or e-mail.
- ◆ Only registered lobbyists can speak for an organization – for the LWVNM you must get the approval of the LWVNM President to speak for the League on state issues. Local presidents can authorize people to speak for the LWV on

local issues. You can always speak to your legislator as an individual and constituent and are encouraged to do so.

- ◆ There is a hierarchy on communication with a legislator. The order of effectiveness is: personal visit; letter; phone call; and then email.
- ◆ Always be courteous. State your position and the reasons for it, but don't be argumentative.

When the LWVNM Action Committee sends out alerts during the 2007 Legislative session, please call your legislator(s) and let them know you want them to support/oppose the specified legislation. You can also keep up with the LWVNM prioritized legislation by checking the Action Committee link at www.lwvnm.org.

Dick Mason Action Committee Co-Chair

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