



# La Palabra

The newsletter of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico

Volume 59, No. 1 Summer 2011

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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.

**Inside: The New Mexico League has a new leadership structure!** Please see Page 3 for details.

## Fair representation: Redistricting New Mexico

By Cheryl Haaker

The Fair Representation Committee is active again and is focusing on the state-level redistricting taking place this summer. Upon request of the membership at Convention, the committee has sent letters to the Governor, co-chairs of the New Mexico Legislative Redistricting Committee and Legislative Services Council (LCS), urging more support for the redistricting process, to include posting video of each of the Committee's hearings on the Legislature's website.

Mary Wilson, League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico member, has been working with George Mason University's Public Mapping Project ([publicmapping.org](http://publicmapping.org)) and has arranged for New Mexico data to be posted online so New Mexicans can try their hands at producing districts using the new Census data. A press release giving more details was sent out on June 20.

League members representing the three Northern New Mexico Leagues attended the state's Redistricting Committee hearing on June 20. LWVNM offered our support and assistance in publicizing meetings; as a result, member Joseph Keefe is filming each of the committee's public hearings and providing the LCS with a DVD of the complete proceedings. These are to be posted on the Redistricting Committee's website: [www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/redcensus/](http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/redcensus/). The hearing schedule will be:

- August 3, Wednesday: Acoma Pueblo

- August 4, Thursday: Gallup
- August 5, Friday: Farmington
- August 15, Monday: Albuquerque
- August 16, Tuesday: Rio Rancho
- August 30, Tuesday: Las Vegas
- August 31, Wednesday: Santa Fe

Members from LWV Central New Mexico attended the Clovis and Roswell meetings, while LWV Greater Las Cruces covered the Las Cruces meeting. At each meeting, we distributed the League's redistricting flyer and made a public statement. You will be able to read these reports in their entirety in the local *Voters*, but here are some excerpts:

**Clovis:** Reported by Gayle Prinkey. "The meeting [at the Clovis Civic Center] was attended by 27 members and advisory members, plus about 20 or more observers from the public. Cheryl Haaker, Gayle Prinkey and Joe Keefe represented the LWVNM. Joe video-recorded the proceedings ... During the public comment period two people spoke. ... Jose Griego, a former Democratic candidate for District 63, said looking at why lines were drawn in the past is important in current redrawing of lines. He acknowledged that the east side of the state is most challenging. Clovis was historically segregated along party, social and economic lines, and we need to look closely when combining districts, especially in places like Clovis that may be currently represented by three or four seats."

**Roswell:** Reported by Gayle Prinkey.

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# Report from the 2011 State Convention

By Barbara Calef

**T**he 2011 LWVNM Convention was held in Los Alamos on May 14-15. Thanks to Kathy Campbell and the LWV Los Alamos board for organizing the event and to Kyle and Michael Wheeler for hosting the Friday evening reception at their lovely home.

In addition to the business meeting, attendees heard several interesting talks. Dick Mason spoke about the basic principles of deliberative democracy, suggesting that LWVNM participate with America Speaks, a national organization. Mary Wilson presented a workshop on the redistricting process and how LWVNM might be involved this year.

During the banquet, Albuquerque State Senator Tim Keller advocated for designing the built environment to create healthy communities. Also, League members were led on a bus tour of historic and scenic Los Alamos.

The convention was attended by 27 delegates representing the four local Leagues and the state's Members at Large, or MALs.

Also present were seven members of the state board. To open the first plenary session, Los Alamos County Councilor Mike Wismer welcomed League members and expressed his appreciation for the organization's contributions.

The Convention then heard committee reports and discussed the various program proposals. During the second plenary session, the delegates voted to adopt by concurrence a position on transparency based on the local position of the League of Santa Fe County. The new position is posted at [www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org). Also adopted were the three proposed studies. Members of the Santa Fe League will



Greater Las Cruces League members Al Kissling, Carol Jackson and Bonnie Burn with state Sen. Tim Keller (third from left), who spoke at the banquet for state delegates.



**During the May 14-15 state convention in Los Alamos, Santa Fe County League member Neva Van Peski spoke about the Public Regulation Commission study that was approved by delegates.**

lead a study of the Public Regulation Commission. Los Alamos will lead a study of land use, and members of the Central New Mexico League will lead a study of alcohol.

The slate of nominees was elected to serve as the new board. There were no nominees for president or vice president.

Finally, the Convention recognized outgoing president Kathy

Campbell for her outstanding service to the League.

Lacking a president and vice president, the new board met immediately following the convention and appointed former Vice President Linda Moscarella to be director of Election Issues.

They also voted to create a Leadership Team to serve in lieu of president and vice president.

# New structure for LWVNM: Leadership team

By Meredith Machen

**T**he League of Women Voters of New Mexico Board adopted a Leadership Team model in lieu of a president or vice president for 2011-2013. LWVNM's Leadership Team works with the elected and appointed officers, committee members, and other key individuals to carry out the League's nonpartisan political action and advocacy activities and voter education.

Through consensus-based decision-making, the Board determines policies that best reflect the League's mission and responds to political processes based on state and national positions. The Board's main focus is on legislative action and election issues at the state level.

The Board also focuses on maintaining critical year-round activities to increase community involvement, generate visibility, and build awareness of our organization to attract members and volunteers.

Actions taken on behalf of the members of LWVNM are undertaken carefully. When asked to act, the Board and the Leadership Team need to be provided with sufficient information to make a responsible decision.

If a letter or public statement is proposed, the person proposing the action should provide a draft of the proposed letter or statement to Action Co-Chairs Dick Mason (polirich@aol.com) and Barbara Calef (president@lwwlosalamos.org). Certain testimonies can be approved by the Action Committee while others may need approval by the Leadership Team or voting members of the Board.

As always, the League wants to make sure that our positions are used consistently and fairly and that the people who are most knowledgeable about issues are the ones out front.

## Leadership Team

Functions in lieu of a president or vice president and works to carry out the League's nonpartisan political action and advocacy activities and voter education.

### Functioning in lieu of LWVNM Co-Presidents:

Linda Moscarella and Dick Mason

### Functioning in lieu of LWVNM Co-Vice Presidents, Calendar, Program Planning for State Council & Convention:

Meredith Machen and Joe Keefe

### Treasurer, Budget Committee Chair, Contact for local League treasurers and Webmaster:

Cheryl Haaker

### Secretary:

Chris Burroughs

### Elected or Appointed Chairs – On and Off\* Board

Legislative Action — all legislative action and advocacy, League Day at the Legislature:

Dick Mason, Chair

Barbara Calef, Co-Chair

### Communications Committee

Liaison with local Leagues' Communications Chairs on Public Relations, Press Releases:

Joe Keefe, Chair

La Palabra Editor and Constant Contact Editor: Mona Blaber

Voters' Guide Editor: Meredith Machen

Voters' Key: Kathy Campbell\*

### Membership

Coordinator for LWVUS roster and local League Membership Directors, outreach to members at large and new leagues:

Lynn Jones, Chair

Mary Wilson\*

**Local League presidents**, rotating as LWVNM Board Meeting conveners and/or planners and agenda developers:

Shelly Shepherd and Sandra Browne, LWVCNM

Barbara Calef, LWVLA

Judy Williams, LWVSFC

Bonnie Burn, LWVGLC

**Committee Chairs/Issue Teams:** Coordinators with local League Committee Chairs

**Alcohol/Drug Policy:** Dee Watkins\*

**Education, Immigration, PAVP:** Meredith Machen\*

**Election Issues, PAVP:** Linda Moscarella

**Health Care:** Leah Ingraham\* and Lydia Pendley\*

**Natural Resources/Sustainability:** Lora Lucero

**Archivist/Historian:** Barbara Goedecke\*

### Nominating Committee

Mary Wilson,\* chair, Rebecca Shankland\* and Andrea Targhetta\*

\* Off-board positions/Non-voting members

# Studies adopted at the state convention

Delegates voted to approve three studies at the state convention May 14-15. Here are brief descriptions of each:

## PRC study

The study of the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) will focus primarily on two of the PRC's functions, regulation of utilities and insurance, as these are the areas in which the PRC has the most impact on the citizens of New Mexico.

In addition, the study will deal with the structure of the PRC (e.g., whether it makes sense to combine regulation of insurance and utilities in one agency) and how its regulatory board should be selected.

The aim of the study is to develop positions that will enable the League

to advocate for regulation that is impartial, free of political influence and accountable. Anyone interested in participating in the study should contact Neva Van Peski (nvanpeski@aol.com) or Karen Heldmeyer (kheld@earthlink.net).

— Neva Van Peski

## Alcohol study

Alcohol is a legal drug. It has a long history of regulation. New Mexico policy changes have reduced alcohol-related deaths caused by intoxicated drivers. Alcohol-related damage is not confined to the highway. Data also reports seven other causes of alcohol-related deaths. The highest number of New Mexico alcohol-related deaths are due to chronic liver disease.

Now is the time to join the LWVNM resource committee to help find the best ways to reduce alcohol damage in New Mexico.

Questions to guide the study are listed below. The LWVNM website, CD material and forums are planned so you can participate at home, at meetings and in phone conferences. Contact committee chair Dee Watkins (dwatkins2@earthlink.net or 505-823-2308) to receive updates on meetings and activities. Your feedback about what part of this issue concerns you the most is important now.

### QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE STUDY:

1. What is the impact of alcohol use and abuse on New Mexico communities? There are individual and societal costs, with data showing N.M.'s alcohol-related deaths have ranked 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in the U.S. for the last 24 years.
2. What are barriers to reducing this impact?
3. Are there policies and interventions that are ineffective? Harmful? Effective? Show promise? How is effectiveness determined? What are the costs?
4. What should be the priorities for reducing the human and economic costs?
5. Do our current positions support these priorities?

— Dee Watkins

## Land-Use study

In May the LWVNM Convention approved a two-year study of land use in New Mexico. Several League members have volunteered to participate on the research committee, but it is not too late to sign up! Committee members will communicate electronically, by teleconference and, occasionally, in meetings in Santa Fe. During the first year we will be gathering information and holding unit meetings to educate League members and the general public about the issues. We will also post resource materials on the LWVNM website. In the second year the committee will draft consensus questions and present them at unit meetings around the state. If you would like to join this effort, please contact Barbara Calef at bcalef@yahoo.com or 505-662-3825.

The Land Use Committee is planning to investigate the following questions:

1. Who controls land use in New Mexico today?
2. How did we get here? (History including Spanish and Native Americans and Law of the Indies)
3. How is land use connected to: energy; climate change; transportation; housing; jobs; food (agriculture); water; environmental justice; health (obesity, for example); people; waste; the environment/ecology?
4. How are decisions about land use made? (Legislation, administration, etc., at all levels of government)
5. What alternative approaches are possible?
  - Planning
  - Consistency: tie between planning and regulation
  - Connect land use/water/transportation/natural resources
  - Impact studies as part of the approval process (environmental, health, transportation, water, etc.)
  - Public participation
  - Monitoring
  - What reforms have other states undertaken?
6. What are the limits to growth?

— Barbara Calef

## News from Local Leagues

### Central New Mexico—Co-Presidents Shelly Shepherd & Sandra Browne

The LWVCNM Annual Meeting was held on May 7 at the Elegante. Jan and Olin Bray conducted an efficient meeting and were honored for their hard work during the past two years that they served as co-presidents. Helen Wright and Donna Hill were also honored at the meeting as two new members on the Roll of Honor. Their names will be engraved on a plaque in the League office along with others who have done outstanding work for the LWVCNM.

At the May Annual Meeting, LWVCNM approved a Transparency Study for Bernalillo County. Karen Wentworth will lead the study. She is looking for members who are interested in participating in this effort. She can be reached at [kwentworth17@comcast.net](mailto:kwentworth17@comcast.net).

Also approved at the May Annual Meeting was the Drug Policies Study Committee's study of alcohol. The study was also approved at the LWVNM State Convention. The study will seek the best ways to reduce alcohol-related deaths and damage in N.M. If you are interested in participating, contact Delores Watkins at [dwatkins2@earthlink.net](mailto:dwatkins2@earthlink.net).

The 2011-2012 LWVCNM Board met on July 7. The board consists of Shelly Shepherd and Sandra Browne (co-presidents), Andrea Targhetta (2nd vice president), Karen Wentworth (3rd vice president), Daniel Rudolph (4th vice president), Pati Brummett (secretary) and Richard Mason (treasurer). Additional members include Christine Burroughs (*Voter* editor), Cheryl Haaker (technology/Internet), Gayle Prinkey (voter services) Mary H. Smith (community education), and Carol Tucker Trelease (director).

On July 7 the Board voted and approved co-sponsoring a Global



**Central New Mexico League President Shelly Shepherd and member Cheryl Haaker at the July 2 state League board meeting.**

Warming and Climate Change Program with the Fulbright Association. Lora Lucero and Shelly Shepherd have been in contact with George Skardon, president of the Fulbright Association of New Mexico, in planning the event. Lora Lucero has been asked to be the League liaison for the event. If you are interested in participating, contact Lora at [Loralucero@aol.com](mailto:Loralucero@aol.com).

The Board also voted for LWVCNM to serve on the Advisory Board of a community-based journalism project that Quote Unquote Inc. is establishing. The mission of the NM Community Journalism Program is to strengthen an emerging state-wide rural and urban multilingual news network that represents unheard, marginalized and diverse voices, independent of government and corporate control, values and content. They will provide a multimedia outlet for the news that the local residents determine, produce and contribute, thus connecting them to the needs of the community. If you are interested in participating, contact Judy Binder ([bjudy@unm.edu](mailto:bjudy@unm.edu)) who has agreed to be the liaison for the

League.

Local League member Cheryl Haaker and the LWVNM Fair Representation Committee have been meeting and are hard at work. The committee is seeking individuals to attend and comment at statewide meetings held by New Mexico's Redistricting Committee. If you are interested in participating, contact Cheryl at [Cheryl@haaker.org](mailto:Cheryl@haaker.org).

The General Meetings this summer have had and will continue to have very interesting and dynamic speakers. Brian Sanderoff spoke at the June meeting. He is an expert in demographic services and will be working with the New Mexico Legislature to help redraw the congressional and legislative districts for the state.

The July speaker is Albuquerque Mayor R.J. Berry, who will speak on his vision for the future of Albuquerque. The August speaker will be Scott C. Miller, author of "Until It's Gone – Ending Poverty in our Nation, in our Lifetime."

## News from Local Leagues



**Santa Fe County League Voter Services Chair JoAnne Dutcher, second from left, and Marianne O'Shaughnessy, far left, register Capital High School seniors to vote this spring. Want to register voters? Send an e-mail to [president@lwvsfc.org](mailto:president@lwvsfc.org).**

### Santa Fe County—President Judy Williams

**S**anta Fe League members attended many county, city and school governance meetings and presented formal comments in six major issue areas. We have been active in redistricting.

*The Santa Fe New Mexican* published a League op-ed commentary on the local redistricting process and desired redistricting criteria, based on the LWVSFC transparency position and the LWVNM redistricting position. The League was invited to present remarks on criteria and public process in the Santa Fe County redistricting activity. Similarly, League members attended various City of Santa Fe meetings on redistricting and presented remarks at the meetings. The League also

sent letters to the city and county governments emphasizing the need for criteria and a public process. The League hosted a general meeting and luncheon on redistricting, featuring Mary Wilson as the primary speaker.

Santa Fe County has begun a series of meetings on the development of the code to enforce the Sustainable Growth Management Plan. League members are attending many of these meetings and urging the county to adopt a strong code.

A Santa Fe city councilor is proposing a city transparency resolution based on the League's study and position. In addition, League members are serving on ethics committees at the city and county levels

League members have been

following the developments with the county Indigent Care Fund and the local hospital, which enjoys a monopoly on hospital care and is building a monopoly in medical practices.

The hospital saw a cut in Indigent Care funding last year as the county switched to an actual claims-based system, to the hospital's dismay.

League members monitor school board and related meetings, and are increasingly concerned about the functioning and actions of the board, as well as of school administrators.

Although the appointment term of the League member serving on the Citizens Review Committee has ended, League members will continue to monitor the situation.

## News from Local Leagues

### Los Alamos—President Barbara Calef

**J**eannette Wallace, our New Mexico State Representative and long-time League member, passed away in April. House District 43 comprises all of Los Alamos County, as well as precincts in Sandoval and Santa Fe Counties.

All three counties were invited to submit nominations for a replacement to the Governor. Gov. Martinez chose Los Alamos County Councilor and League member Jim Hall to complete Wallace's term.

During the Annual Meeting, League members approved a new local study of land use and transportation and listened as John Arrowsmith, director of the County's Utilities Department (DPU), spoke about plans for increasing the county's renewable energy supply. Los Alamos has been developing sustainable energy since the 1980s, when the county built its first hydroelectric

plant. Currently, a smart-grid demonstration project is being planned by the DPU, working with a Japanese consortium, Los Alamos National Laboratory, and the Department of Energy. Smart grids are electrical power networks that control and balance the supply and demand of power through digital information that integrates small- and large-scale energy sources.

The project includes a 2-megawatt photovoltaic solar array, a large-scale battery storage system to stabilize intermittent photovoltaic output, and a "smart" house to demonstrate energy-efficient technology for residential use.

The Las Conchas Fire has burned about 157,000 acres. Our town was spared this time, but many of our favorite hiking, snow-shoeing, and skiing trails are toast. The charred hills are a sobering reminder that climate change is not an abstract threat to this fragile environment.

### Greater Las Cruces—President Bonnie Burn

**O**ur local education study is completed. Meetings leading to consensus will begin on July 11 at Lunch with a Leader when Superintendent Stan Rounds, as the keynote speaker, discusses the issues relevant to the Las Cruces Public Schools. Three unit meetings will follow. The study information has fallen into three broad categories: N.M. State and Local Government Regulations and How They Impact our Local School System, the Education Reform Movement and its Relevance to our Local School System, and It Takes a Community to Build Good Schools. Interviews with stakeholders in the community gave us a perspective about issues from their points of view. Core topic papers were researched: core curriculum, standardized testing, teacher performance, and charter schools. Two seminal books were reviewed—*The Flat World & Education* by Linda Darling-Hammond and *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* by Diane Ravitch. Copies of the papers are available on our web site, [www.lwvglc.org](http://www.lwvglc.org).

Redistricting started as soon as

2010 Census verified information was available for Doña Ana County. Through the efforts of Common Cause, supported by LWVGLC, citizens' committees were appointed by the City of Las Cruces Council and the Doña Ana County Commissioners.

Because of a scheduled municipal election in November wherein the Mayor and councilors are elected at large, the City of Las Cruces began its process early so that councilors could be elected from the new districts. An Ad Hoc Citizens' Committee of 14 people, including three League members, reviewed plans and made recommendations. Final decisions were made July 5.

Doña Ana County Commissioners are elected by party; therefore, the citizens' committee was made up of two representatives from each major party and one independent voter. The committee met without commissioner involvement. Also, it organized county-wide public input meetings. The committee presented recommendations at the commissioners' work session on July 6.

The goal of Common Cause, supported by LWVGLC, is to estab-

lish an ordinance in the city and a resolution in the county to establish independent citizens' committees to make future redistricting recommendations.

"The most important 20 minutes of your day—read to a child" is the message of the newly established Children's Reading Foundation in Doña Ana County. Initiated by N.M. State Senator Steve Fischmann, Las Cruces Public School Board Member Maria Flores and Terry Miller, Projects Director, Institute for Community Engagement, the program has three goals:

1. Encourage and educate families about their important role in raising a reader.
2. Support schools in assuring that students read at grade level by the end of the third grade.
3. Facilitate community involvement.

This program, begun in Kennewick, Wash., in 1995, has achieved success in other areas of the U.S., and we look forward to its success in Las Cruces.

# How well is N.M. complying with the Voter Registration Act?

By Meredith Machen

**T**he National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) requires all federal, state, and local governments to provide voter registration in offices that provide public assistance, including state-funded programs engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities, public health clinics, the motor vehicle department, and state or local government offices. That includes public libraries, public schools, offices of city and county clerks, fishing and hunting license bureaus, government taxation and revenue offices, and unemployment compensation offices.

The intent of the NVRA is to increase “the participation of eligible citizens as voters in elections for Federal office . . . [and] to ensure that accurate and current voter registration rolls are maintained.” It says that “discriminatory and unfair registration laws and procedures can have a direct and damaging effect on voter participation in elections for federal office and disproportionately harm voter participation by various groups, including racial minorities.”

Louisiana is being sued because it is not in compliance with the NVRA. The U.S. Department of Justice’s Thomas E. Perez explains, “The department is committed to enforcing the National Voter Registration Act so that neither income nor disability status stands in the way of equal voter registration opportunities for all citizens.”

Louisiana “failed to provide sufficient supplies of voter-registration applications at the designated agencies and failed to train and monitor employees to make sure they assist in processing voter registration forms.” Though Louisiana processed more

We will be asking the Secretary of State for data to determine how many voter registrations were received from Motor Vehicle and public-assistance offices from 2009 to 2010.

than 3.1 million Medicaid applications, renewals, and address changes from 2007 to 2011 as well as 2.4 million food-stamp applications, the agencies only registered 14,725 voters in that time.

Because of the Louisiana lawsuit, LWNM and other organizations dedicated to voter protection will now try to determine how many voter registrations were received from agencies that are required by New Mexico law to provide them.

We will be asking the Secretary of State for data to determine how many voter registrations were received from Motor Vehicle and public assistance offices from 2009 to 2010. We want to know how many voter-registration applications were received from these offices to determine what percentage of the total number of New Mexico residents registering to vote came from these sources.

With one in four New Mexico residents enrolled in Medicaid and one in five receiving food stamps, the overall percentage of voter registrations from these agencies should be relatively high, especially considering that people who are living in poverty have higher mobility rates. Because

of frequent changes of address, it is essential that they have easy access to voter-registration opportunities.

New Mexico was threatened with lawsuits a few years ago because the Motor Vehicle Department was not providing voter-registration opportunities. The League of Women Voters of New Mexico was part of that lawsuit. Hopefully, now when you go to renew your driver’s license or register a vehicle, you are asked if you are registered to vote. If your address has changed, your voter registration is supposed to be automatically updated with your new address and you receive a new registration card with all of the pertinent information.

We are asking all of our League members to please help us conduct an informal audit next time you go to MVD or if you go to any other state or federal assistance agency. First, OBSERVE. Are there any signs that indicate that voter registration is available on the premises? If you see signs, let us know. If not, ask for the person in charge and ask why there are no signs indicating that they provide voter registration.

Whether or not you see a sign, please ask a couple of assistants how many people they see each day and how many voter registrations they process each day. If there is any hesitation or lack of an accommodating attitude, please mention that the League of Women Voters is doing a compliance survey.

Please send your report via email to [mermachen@cybermesa.com](mailto:mermachen@cybermesa.com). Please include your name, the date, the agency, location, and summary of your inquiry. If you prefer, there is a report form on [www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org) under Voter Protection. Thank you for helping make democracy work in New Mexico.

# LWVNM wins \$5,000 grant for public advocacy for the voter

By Linda Moscarella

This year's Public Advocacy for Voter Protection grant, received from the LWVUS, will be focused largely on Santa Fe and the Central New Mexico area, so we are looking forward to working with these Leagues to be effective.

Our scope of work includes: opposing voter photo ID wherever it arises—in the upcoming special session of the Legislature, in the regular session and, in Rio Rancho, if the ballot initiative on photo ID in the municipal elections passes. Our scope also includes increasing compliance with the National Voter Registration Act (see article, Page 8); protecting voter rights, particularly in underserved communities; and improving polling management by monitoring and training election observers for the Albuquerque municipal election on Oct 4, 2011.

We also plan to do education on the new voting centers, which will be open for the first time for the municipal election.

Any projects that further the aims described above, excepting direct lobbying, will be eligible for funding. We are also working with Common Cause on all these issues.

This is LWVNM's second grant on the PAVP project, and there may be more funding next year, 2012, a very busy election year.

Interested? Contact Meredith Machen, mermachen@cybermesa.com, or Linda Moscarella, lmosc@taosnet.com.



A redistricting hearing in Roswell.

## Redistricting, continued from Page 1

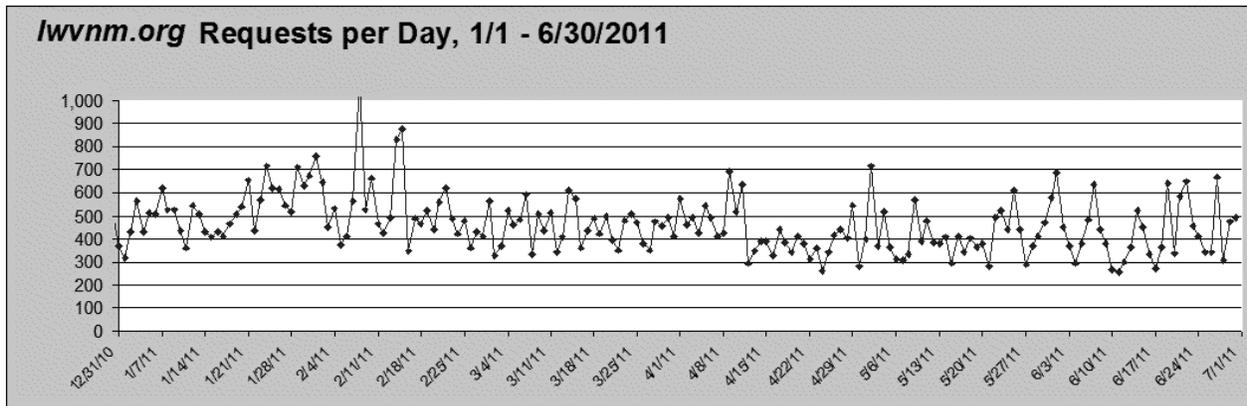
"The meeting took place in the Daniels Auditorium of the New Mexico Military Institute. There were 23 members and advisory members of the Legislative Redistricting Committee present, and a small number of observers ... During the public-comment section, the first speaker was attorney Frank Sanchez, with a family history in Roswell. He has represented cases since 1972 when 44 people, including Navajos, challenged the Legislature over redistricting. ... Sanchez said that since 2000 the process has improved—with public hearings and more transparency, yet a confusing variety of plans exists. He concluded that the Voting Rights Act needs support in order to avoid litigation."

**Las Cruces:** Reported by Bonnie Burn. "There were three League people present in addition to me: Barbara Goedecke, Charlotte Lipson, and Tom Schmugge. There were about 50 people in all. I believe some were from the major parties, and others were interested citizens. ... Most of the audience left when the legislators broke for lunch. Upon the completion of the formal presentation, only two of us spoke. ... I presented the LWVNM position. I ... asked about funding for these hearings. I was told that there was \$100,000 set aside for them and the legislators made up an additional \$100,000 from their

travel funds and other legislative allocations to ensure that the public hearings were made available across the state. ... I mentioned redistricting that occurred for the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County, and noted the fact that citizen committees were used in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. ... I commended them for making the NM Legislative committee so bipartisan. I mentioned that pamphlets on redistricting, available in English and Spanish, were located on the back table. (I handed these out to attendees who arrived early and then made them available to people by leaving a stack on the back table with other literature provided by the hearing staff. Many trees were killed, but the public did pick up copies.) I used the concluding comments on the statement to thank the legislative committee members for making these hearings possible."

**What You Can Do:** The redistricting pamphlets can be accessed at [www.lwvnm.org/representation.html](http://www.lwvnm.org/representation.html). You can distribute them to friends, neighbors and community groups that you attend. To join the listserv and find out what's happening, email [LWVNMFair-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:LWVNMFair-subscribe@yahoo.com). Plan to attend one or more of the planned redistricting hearings. Read up on the plans themselves. Remember, this is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to influence how you will be represented in Congress and the Legislature!

## The Web Monkey



**N**ew! Mona Blaber, Social Media chair, has set up a Twitter account. “We’re @LWVNewMexico, and you can find our Twitter page at [twitter.com/#!/LWVNewMexico](https://twitter.com/#!/LWVNewMexico). It’s set up so that when admins post on our Facebook page, the post will also show up as a Tweet.” Mona also has set up an LWVNM account on

Constant Contact, which may be how you received this issue of *La Palabra*. The membership decided at Convention to move rapidly toward electronic distribution as a means of saving money and permitting a more flexible, larger newsletter—in color.

**Improved!** Mona has also created a better Facebook page

for the state League, which can be accessed at [www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-New-Mexico/238069762887589](https://www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-New-Mexico/238069762887589), although it might be easier just to go to our website, [www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org), and click the link to Facebook at the top left of the page.

— Cheryl Haaker

## Term limits? A short explanation of the League’s position

By Linda Moscarella and Barbara Calef

**A**ccording to Impact on Issues 2000-2012, p. 26, “In 1991, the League announced its opposition to term limits for members of the U.S. Congress, basing its opposition on the grounds that such limits would adversely affect the accountability, representativeness and effective performance of Congress, and by decreasing the power of Congress, would upset the balance of power between Congress and an already powerful presidency.”

The 1992 LWVUS Convention reaffirmed opposition to term limits and authorized state and local Leagues to use national positions to take action on term limits for state and local offices. The U.S. Supreme Court subsequently ruled congressional term limits unconstitutional.

LWVNM’s position, adopted in 1992 and revised in 1995, states, “The League of Women Voters of New Mexico opposes term limitations for our state legislators.” There was no state study; apparently the position was adopted through concurrence. Discussion during the recent LWVNM board meeting focused on the restriction term limits place on voters’ ability to vote for whom they want.

An Internet search reveals that 21 states adopted legislative term limits, mostly through voter initiatives in the early 1990s. In four of those states the law was thrown out by the courts and in two others it has been repealed. Studies of the 15 legislatures still affected indicate that many of the changes

predicted by advocates have not come to pass. The occupational backgrounds of legislators have not changed, nor have the numbers of women and minority members. When their terms end, rather than returning to the private sector, many of the legislators seek other elective offices or appointed government positions. In legislatures with less-experienced members, policy innovation declines significantly.

[www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/lpbr/subpages/reviews/kousser605.htm](http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/lpbr/subpages/reviews/kousser605.htm)

[www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=10855](http://www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=10855)  
[www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=14849](http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=14849)

A recent discussion on the LWV leaders listserv revealed dissatisfaction with the results of term limits. The gist of the comments was expressed by Nell Matthews of Arkansas:

“Before term limits, there were people who held representative office for years that completely understood the funding formulas for school districts, that were aware of problems of maintaining roads and bridges in the small population districts, that would wheel and deal to find funding for health and human services.

“Now, we have single-issue candidates who want to restrict funding for abortion, kill the federal government’s health care plan, or are opposed to any tax increases. They submit bills that are worthless and have no chance of passage or will be struck down by the court.”

# LWVUS Council focuses on social media, planning

By Mona Blaber



**D**ick Mason, Action co-chair, and Mona Blaber, Social Media chair, attended the 2011 League of Women Voters of the United States National Council as delegates from New Mexico.

The focus of Council was on social media and effective planning to achieve our goals. Delegates were assigned an exercise to create a sample campaign and worked throughout the weekend on exercises to help develop resources and plans for the campaign.

The New Mexico delegates used a hypothetical campaign, explaining government budgets, a recent initiative supported by the state League, Common Cause and other groups.

AARP Director of Social Communications Tammy Gordon gave a presentation on how social media can help organizations increase their reach. While many League members may not be on Facebook and Twitter, these and other social-media outlets can be used to reach a new audience and extend knowledge, understanding and press coverage of the League's work.

The New Mexico League now has a Facebook page and Twitter account—to “like” our Facebook page (and there-

**Learning how to take advantage of social media like Twitter was a focus of the 2011 U.S. Council.**

fore get Facebook updates when we post to the page) or to “follow” us on Twitter, go to our website at [lwvnm.org](http://lwvnm.org) and click on the links in the upper left corner.

The Santa Fe County League has had a Facebook page for about a year and has 128 “likes.” That means our posts show up on the Facebook streams of those who “like” us. Twitter works in a similar way, and we have 41 followers on Twitter.

Both have been successful at drawing new members and interested people to events and at drawing attention to issues we advocate on. While social media are new and potentially very useful ways to communicate, they are not substitutes for traditional communication; phone calls, letters, newsletters and e-mails must always be employed to make personal connections, while social media can be a valuable way to develop those connections.

## Highlights from July 2 meeting of state board of directors

**A**t its July 2 meeting in Albuquerque, the LWVNM board:

- Heard a website report from webmaster Cheryl Haaker. She indicated that the website revamp is almost complete and updates from the convention are posted, including new officers, calendar and minutes. The Fair Representation website is up-to-date.

- Discussed ways to keep at-large members better informed, including possibly sending them periodic update letters.

- Discussed term limits because of directions to the board from Naishing Key and Lora Lucero at the LWVNM Convention May 15. The board voted to write an educational article about the reasons behind the League's opposition to term limits (delegates voted to continue to adopt this position at the state convention

in May). Linda Moscarella wrote an article explaining the history and reasoning behind the position; the article is on Page 10 of this edition of *La Palabra*.

- Agreed to donate to the United By Friendship charity organization in memory of Larry Campbell, husband of former state President Kathy Campbell. Board members were asked to send donations to Haaker, who would give the money to the charity. The charity has completed a water project for the small village of Los Regadillos located in the highlands of Guatemala.

- Discussed national League's ads in Massachusetts and Missouri supporting the Clean Air Act. Board members agreed the ads were powerful, but many felt they came too close to the line separating partisan and nonpartisan. The board agreed to send a letter to national about trans-

parency and how these ads appeared to be partisan. Lucero said she would write a draft letter about the ads to send to national.

- Heard Haaker's report on redistricting issues. League members will attend each of the nine public hearings in Clovis, Roswell, Las Cruces, Acoma Pueblo, Farmington, Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Las Vegas and Santa Fe.

- Agreed to discuss nonpartisan/coalition/advocacy policies at next meeting in Santa Fe.

- Discussed archives. LWVLA president Barbara Calef questioned what to do with old files. There is an archive at the Zimmerman Library at the University of New Mexico. It was agreed this issue will be included on the next agenda.

**Next Meeting:** September 17 in Santa Fe

—Christine Burroughs, Secretary

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## Calendar

**10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 17:**  
LWVNM Board Meeting in Santa Fe

**Friday, Sept. 30:**  
Deadline for Fall La Palabra—  
send your articles, photos, etc.,  
to [lapalabra@lwvnm.org](mailto:lapalabra@lwvnm.org).

**Saturday, Nov. 5:**  
Lobbying Workshop in Albuquerque.

**12:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 19:**  
LWVNM Board Meeting in Socorro

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### We're going electronic!

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