



# La Palabra

The newsletter of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico

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The League of Women Voters of New Mexico, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy

## League Day at the Legislature

**Tuesday - February 3, 2009 - 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**  
**NEW MEXICO STATE LAND OFFICE**  
**Morgan Hall - 310 Old Santa Fe Trail - Santa Fe**  
**(just down the street from the Round House)**

**Accommodations:** Garrett's Desert Inn, located across the street from the Land Office at 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, offers a legislative rate of \$59 plus tax. That doesn't include breakfast, but a restaurant is attached. There may be a charge of \$8 for parking if you check out the morning of League Day. Reservations: 1-800-888-2145, mention LWVNM and ask for the legislative rate.

**Transportation:** Parking near the State House is hard to find during the session. Car pooling is recommended. The state does operate a shuttle from other parking lots—<http://nmshtd.state.nm.us/upload/images/Schedule 2009.pdf>.

**Lunch:** Bring or buy a sack lunch for \$10 that will include veggie or meat sandwich, chips, cookie, and drink. Reservations must be made by 3 p.m., Thursday, January 29. Call LWV-Santa Fe at 1-505-982-9766, or email Jane Gaziano at [jeg7\(at\)aol.com](mailto:jeg7(at)aol.com).

Questions: Call Dick Mason, 1-505-994-0685.

### League Day Schedule

8:00 a.m.	Morgan Hall	Coffee; pick up packets
8:30 -9 a.m.	Morgan Hall	Orientation and review of priority legislation
9-10:40 a.m.	Round House	Meet with legislators and attend committee meetings
10:50 – Noon	Morgan Hall	Speakers: Diane Wood and Maggie Toulouse-Oliver
Noon - 1 p.m.	Morgan Hall	Lunch
1 p.m. - 5 p.m.	Round House	Visit legislators and attend committee meetings

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: LWVNM Legislative Priorities for 2009**

This issue of La Palabra contains a wealth of information about the bills and issues of interest to the League that will come up in the 2009 Legislative Session.

This year two general priority areas have been selected: health care and election/ethics reform. We also expect to support individual bills in other areas, including repeal of the death penalty, education, drug policy, freedom of choice, domestic partnerships, and some water and natural resource issues.

LWVNM selects its priorities based on several factors, including the potential for making progress in a given area, the availability and interest of League lobbyists, and support for the issue in existing League positions. All three factors must be present. This year we know that there will be strong efforts by multiple groups to improve health care in New Mexico, to move forward with same-day registration, and to repeal the death penalty, and so we hope to see some progress in these areas. Education is of course a perennial subject, as it accounts for a large fraction of state expenditures.

There are other issues in which many League members are interested, especially in the area of natural resources, but which we do not have positions to address as the League. Keep this in mind for the state convention next year: what additional positions do we need to develop through our study and consensus process?

Some of the issues will be addressed by our two League Day speakers. Diane Wood of the ACLU will speak on domestic partnership legislation, freedom of choice, and the repeal of the death penalty. Maggie Toulouse-Oliver, Bernalillo County Clerk, will speak about same-day voter registration.

So join us for League Day on February 3 and ensure that the League of Women Voters is a real presence as we move forward with these important issues during the 2009 legislative session.

**Kathy Campbell, President**

### **Election Reform in the 2009 Legislative Session - Kathy Campbell**

The election problems of 2008 revolved around voter registration issues. From states like Colorado attempting to purge their lists of registered voters within 60 days of an election to accusations against ACORN in New Mexico among other states, the pre-election stories demonstrated how far we have to go in this country to achieve the basic ideal that every American of voting age should be able to cast a vote. Our opt-in-well-in-advance registration systems must take at least some of the blame.

One national effort to fix the system was the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993. In New Mexico, the NVRA provisions have been written into NM statute. However, it is reported that many Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) offices are not equipped to register voters, and do not routinely offer

that service to an applicant who comes in to change his or her address.

Better implementation of the state statute is certainly a desirable option. At the national level, automatic universal registration may be considered, that is, the automatic registration of all American citizens when they turn 18, much like the Selective Service. A third alternative will be considered in the 2009 NM legislative session: same-day registration (SDR).

Voter registration is meant to ensure that only eligible citizens vote, and to provide election officials with lists of voters both for distributing information and for authenticating voters who present themselves at the polls, both valid goals. But the process imposes significant costs on voters, requiring them to take action well in advance of elections and

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## **Election Reform** *(Continued from page 2)*

to seek out information about how and where to register. Historically, indeed, the increase in pre-election registration requirements that followed the Civil War was in some cases part of a deliberate campaign to discourage segments of the potential electorate.

In New Mexico, only about three-quarters of eligible citizens were registered to vote in 2004. A DEMOS study estimates that SDR would increase voter turnout by more than five percent, with the greatest impact being among low-income citizens, persons without college degrees, the young (under 25), and Latinos.

SDR legislation introduced in 2007 was opposed by NM county clerks. This year, the clerks, led by Maggie Toulouse-Oliver and former NM Bureau of Elections chief Daniel Ivey-Soto (who has a contract with the NM clerks' affiliate), are actively involved in drafting the bill and at least some of them look more favorably on the idea. A survey of election officials in SDR states concluded

that while many found the system more difficult, there were compensations including the reduction of the pre-deadline surge in registrations. Expense and confusion were not increased, and none of the surveyed officials felt that voter fraud was a big problem with or without SDR. Indeed, SDR in New Mexico will mean that individuals desiring to register and vote on the same day must come prepared with physical identification that meets the existing registration requirements (essentially those specified by HAVA), while pre-registered voters do not need to present physical ID when voting.

Other election and ethics reform legislation in 2009 is expected to include some bills being proposed by the NM Attorney General. These will almost certainly include a bill to establish an independent state ethics commission, and another to impose meaningful campaign contribution caps. One thing that will probably not be on anyone's agenda in this budget-constrained year is the expansion of public financing of campaigns.

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## **Health Care Issues: Talking With Your Legislators** - *Gayle Prinkey*

The LWVNM supports a health care system that provides a comprehensive level of health care for all New Mexico residents and recognizes the need for efficient management of health care costs. The League favors a national health insurance plan, but until one is in place, the League supports expansion of state and federal plans and current reform efforts at the state level.

In 2009, bills will be introduced for obtaining full funding of Medicaid and increasing Medicaid eligibility for children, both as part of the General Appropriations Bill. The League supports these as well as simplification of Medicaid eligibility and enrollment, and the Electronic Record Act—so long as patient privacy issues are addressed.

The Health Security Act will be introduced again, and this year its chance of passage is better than ever. There have been some changes in membership in both houses of

the New Mexico State Legislature, and it behooves League members to meet with their legislators—new or returning—and to ask them to follow up on some of the serious concerns they voiced when surveyed for the LWV's *Woters' Guides*.

The Health Security Act (HSA) would both establish a system of comprehensive health care and contain costs. Under HSA, New Mexico would set up its own health plan that would guarantee health care coverage to all New Mexico residents regardless of age or health status, with a comprehensive benefit package similar in the range of services now offered to state employees. The plan would be run by a citizen's board, like a cooperative. It would be funded by combining existing public monies, such as Medicare and Medicaid, with individual premiums based on income and employer contributions. The private delivery system would be maintained, so individuals would

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## Health Care Issues *(Continued from page 3)*

have a choice of health care providers, pharmacies, clinics and hospitals, even across state lines.

A few years ago, the Governor's Health Coverage for New Mexicans Committee studied three plans and contracted with Mathematica to make a comparative study. The Health Security Plan was determined to be more cost effective than either Health Choices or the Governor's plan. The Health Security Plan was the only one to actually reduce health care costs; the other plans would cost more than the current system. The plan has been endorsed by 30 municipalities and counties, including Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and many rural areas around the state. It could be grandfathered in should a national plan ever be established.

The Health Security Act to be introduced in 2009 would enable the Legislative Finance Committee, with expert assistance and broad public input from around the state, to calculate the actual cost and financing of the plan. If, and only if, the plan looks financially feasible, there would be an additional two-year phase when the details of the plan will be worked out with public input before it can be put in operation. Thus, a vote for the Health Security Act is not a broad "go ahead." It is simply a needed careful step toward ensuring that everyone in New Mexico has health care coverage, and that the cost is contained.

Note: The Health Care Committee is co-chaired by Vicki Simons (Las Cruces; 575-522-4813 or [vrsimons\(at\)comcast.net](mailto:vrsimons(at)comcast.net).) and Gayle Prinkey (Albuquerque; 505-872-3933 or [gayle333\(at\)aol.com](mailto:gayle333(at)aol.com)). If you have an interest in health care,

**VOLUNTEER**

**LEAGUE DAY TABLE**  
(See p. 12 for details.)

## Education - Jane Gaziano

Some of the legislation proposed for the 2009 session will be carryovers from 2008. These bills were ruled "not germane" to last year's short, budgetary session. The list includes bills that cover data warehousing, educator quality, special education services, and post-secondary reporting back to high schools. From the interim session of the Legislative Education Study Committee will come other bills regarding a dual credit textbook fund, educator quality, and regional education cooperatives. Additional legislation is yet to be determined.

After passing the House in 2008 and failing in the Senate, legislation to amend the public school funding formula will again take center stage. The interim committee has garnered input from school districts throughout the state, and efforts will now be made to have this legislation pass with a different source of funding than that which was proposed last year.

The new phased-in formula will incorporate four measures of student need that account for increased district expenses, including poverty, English language learners, special education, and mobility; recognize the costs associated with school district size; and be based on the concept of educational sufficiency that enables school districts to provide a comprehensive instructional program designed to meet the needs of all students. It is conditional on the enactment of a 1.0 percent increase in the gross receipts tax (GRT).

A recent Legislative Finance Committee analysis points out that the shift that would result in funding illustrates that some districts are receiving more funds proportionately than their population must have to cover required costs. Other districts are insufficiently funded. Although most superintendents agree that moving additional resources to schools with higher need is the logical approach, they are unwilling to

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## It Is Time To Repeal the Death Penalty in New Mexico - Dick Mason

In the 2009 Legislative session, Representative Gail Chasey (D-Albuquerque) will introduce a bill that will repeal the death penalty in New Mexico and replace it with life without the possibility of parole. The bill will be similar to H190 that Representative Chasey submitted in 2007. That bill passed the House (41-28) and died in the Senate Judiciary Committee. With the new progressive legislators that were elected in 2008, there is real hope that we can follow New Jersey and abolish the death penalty. For the full text of the 2007 bill and its history, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/5px7vr>.

The legislation to repeal the death penalty is being supported by the New Coalition to Repeal the Death Penalty (NMRepeal). NMRepeal is a broad coalition of religious, legal and advocacy groups that the League of Women Voters of New Mexico joined in 2008. For more information on NMRepeal, go to: <http://nmrepeal.org>.

In 2006, the League of Women Voters of New Mexico reached consensus on a position that supported repeal of the death penalty. The position reached is, in part, "The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports the repeal of the death penalty and the institution of a sentence of life in prison without parole as an alternative." At the LWVUS Convention in 2006 a similar position was adopted. For the full LWVNM position go to [www.lwvnm.org/positions.html](http://www.lwvnm.org/positions.html) and scroll down to "Death Penalty".

Let your Representative and Senator know that you support repeal of the death penalty and **replacing it with life without the possibility of parole**. It is important to always add the last part of that statement. Public opinion, and many legislators, only support repeal of the death penalty if they are assured that convicted murders will not have the possibility of being released. That is also the position of the LWVNM.

Remember that when you talk to your legislator you are speaking as a constituent. The President of the LWVNM, or her

designee, is the only one who can speak for the LWV on state issues.

Some talking points to support repeal of the death penalty:

**Innocence** – There have been 130 people who were sentenced to death who were later exonerated. The number of those exonerated has escalated considerably since the institution of DNA testing.

**Cost** – By some estimates, over the last 30 years New Mexico has spent about \$140 million dollars on the death penalty and executed one person. Those funds could be used in so many other ways. The costs of incarcerating convicted murderers for life, even in a separate maximum security facility, amounts to less than one-third the cost of carrying out the death penalty.

**Deterrence** – There is no clear evidence that the death penalty acts as a deterrent. We do know that states with the death penalty have consistently had higher murder rates than states without the death penalty. If the death penalty was acting as a deterrent to murder, one might expect that the gap between these two groups would lessen over a long period of time as states using the death penalty obtained an advantage in reducing murders. However, the gap has grown larger over the past 18 years. In 2007, states with the death penalty had a 42% higher murder rate than states without the death penalty. In 1990, the gap was only four percent.

**International prestige** – Almost every developed country and many underdeveloped countries have abolished the death penalty. The United States is in the company of countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia and China. Note that a country can not enter the European Union if it has the death penalty.

## What is the Domestic Partnership Rights and Responsibilities Act?

Marilyn Morgan

Some couples and families across the state do not have any guarantee that in times of crisis and need they will be able to care for their loved ones. Domestic partnership legislation will provide basic health security and legal protections to committed couples and families, protecting same sex couples, who may not marry, and opposite sex couples, who may be seniors and individuals with disabilities, who choose not to marry for financial and other reasons.

Many pension plans terminate benefits when widows and widowers remarry. Similarly, the military terminates health insurance coverage when spouses of deceased military personnel remarry. Wills, powers of attorney, and medical proxies are all expensive and require the aid of an attorney to draft correctly. The domestic partnership law would make it easier for seniors to deal with the complicated issues of illness and death.

Basic protections include hospital visitation rights, health care benefits, family leave, and the right to make difficult medical decisions in times of crisis.

This bill is about fairness, and it is essentially a civil rights issue. The League of Women

Voters of New Mexico is supporting its passage based on the Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Sections of our LWVUS policy.

Diane Wood, who chaired the coalition, will be one of our League Day at the Legislature speakers on February 3, 2009.

LWVUS positions that apply include: "The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons in the United States regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability." (Page 61 of *Impact on Issues*)

In the spring of 2004, the League joined with other members of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) to oppose the "Federal Marriage Amendment" because it would permanently write discrimination into the United States Constitution by limiting fundamental protections such as health care benefits for same-sex partners whether conveyed through marriage or other legally recognized relationships." (*Impact on Issues*, p. 59.)

Pay equity is covered above with the inclusion of equality of opportunity for employment.

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## Education: 2009 Legislative Session *(Continued from page 4)*

support any plan that does not provide more money for their districts. With the economic downturn and revenue shortfalls, the fate of the new funding formula is precarious. Many legislators are sure to question the imposition of an increased GRT in these economic times.

The LWVNM position on public school finance distribution in a 1993 revision "supports the goals of the NM Funding Formula as an effort to achieve equality as an attempt to provide fair funding for every child, based on need, regardless of location. There should be periodic review and modification to assure that the formula is faithful to its original intention." With an increased emphasis on need-based distribution, regardless of location and the League's stance regarding the need for review and for modification of the formula to assure it is meeting its intention, LWVNM support seems warranted. Conditioning League support on whether some districts benefit while others do not is in conflict with "the regardless of location" phrasing in our position. This is significant as it is the intention of the formula to provide educational sufficiency for all children statewide, which is constitutionally mandated - Article XII, Section 1, [Free public schools.] "A uniform system of free public schools sufficient for the education of and open to all the children of school age in the state shall be established and maintained."

## **Public Advocacy Training** - *Linda Moscarella*

The weekend of Dec. 5-7 I together with representatives from ten states participated in public advocacy training offered by LWWUS that was held at the National Conference Center near Washington, D.C. The grant-funded Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) program started with six states, adding states as funding allowed. New Mexico was new this year. The focus was to give us new tools to improve advocacy, and using these tools, specifically to advocate for the voter. We heard some excellent speakers, but the real value was hearing from each other. How different each state's challenges are, because of differing political make up and, especially, differing election laws, is eye-opening. For instance, New Mexico and Arizona are both losing a governor to President-elect Obama's cabinet. The result for New Mexico will be the lieutenant governor, of the same party, will become the governor. In Arizona the Secretary of State, of the opposing party which also controls the state legislature, will take the office.

We had sessions to learn what the software Capwiz could do for our e-mail action outreach. The National League already uses Capwiz so if you have answered an action alert from national, you know that you can do with Capwiz what advocacy organizations like Move On, Common Cause, True Majority and virtually every other nongovernmental organization which has outreach to the online public can do. You can create petitions and action alerts, help people communicate with their elected representatives at any level, and, of course, donate.

And what can you do with all this technological capacity? We had a session from the New Organizing Institute (NOI) to learn how to run a good online campaign, which is participatory, transparent, accountable and always asks for buy-in. We learned not to "mumble" online. Don't waste the time of the e-mail reader, which, being one yourself, you know is limited. We learned from the Spitfire Strategies how to make smarter communications choices.

And what were we to do with all this guidance? The goal of the program is to help Leagues increase voter turnout, particularly among under represented populations. Although we had a higher voter turnout this year, one in three eligible voters did not vote. PAVP's five main concerns are: 1) opposing voter ID and proof of citizenship requirements; 2) assisting third party registration; 3) data base issues; 4) poll worker training ;and 5) polling place management. All participants created a goal and objectives for their state using one or more of these issues. Since New Mexico already has a goal, "Be the go-to Organization on Election Issues," I selected, under the sub-goal, Increasing Voter Participation, tentative objectives of poll worker training and data base issues and opposing any effort to institute more restrictive voter requirements. We wound up the weekend by sharing these goals and objectives with each other.

*Note: For additional information about PAVP logon to [www.lww.org](http://www.lww.org).*

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## **TIDDS: New Mexico Legislators Urged to be Cautious** - *Lora Lucero*

Tax increment development districts (TIDDs) are the best thing since sliced bread. At least that's the story SunCal Development Company and others are telling legislators in Santa Fe this year.

A TIDD is a financing tool which redirects new state and local tax revenues created as a result of the new development (also called the "increment") out of the general fund and back into the new development. In most states, tax increment financing is used as an incentive to stimulate development in blighted areas where development would not otherwise occur. However, the New Mexico TIDD law was significantly revamped in 2006 and disconnected from its original purpose, ostensibly to encourage economic development and bring new jobs to the state. Since that change in 2006, we have seen the two largest TIDD projects in the country approved in Albuquerque – Mesa del Sol and SunCal.

*(Continued on page 9)*

## 10th Circuit Rules Against League and For Photo Voter ID - *Josephine Porter*

On November 17, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the City of Albuquerque and against the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico and the other plaintiffs in the Voter ID case. The 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit reversed the 2007 decision of Judge Armijo of the U.S. District Court of New Mexico. Judge Armijo had found that the City's photo ID requirements for in-person voting violated the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution "because it imposes a significant burden on the fundamental right to vote and because that burden is not narrowly tailored to meet the City's interest in preventing voter impersonation at the polls." The City appealed the district court's decision to the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals.

The 10th Circuit delayed the appeal until the U.S. Supreme Court case of Crawford v. Marion County Election Board (2008) was decided. Crawford was the first time that the Supreme Court had addressed the constitutionality of a photo ID requirement. In the Crawford decision, the U.S. Supreme Court found that Indiana's law requiring photo identification at a polling place was only a "limited burden on voters' rights." The Court determined that the justifications for Indiana's law, very general allegations of voter fraud without specific proof of fraud, were sufficiently strong to uphold the law. Although somewhat factually and legally distinguishable, the Supreme Court's decision in Crawford, without question, made our arguments opposing the photo ID requirement very difficult.

Our counsel, Andy Schultz, presented compelling legal arguments to the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit supporting the district court's decision that the Albuquerque photo ID law was unconstitutional. Citing extensively from the Crawford decision, the very conservative three judge 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit panel found otherwise and reversed the lower court. The court rejected our argument that the City had failed to justify the burden photo ID placed on the voter with any evidence of voting fraud and stated "[j]ust as the Supreme Court did not require Indiana to present specific

instances of past conduct to justify its photo identification requirement, we do not require Albuquerque to make such a showing." A key part of the district court's decision was that it is unconstitutional to treat in-person voters differently than absentee voters. The 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit summarily dismissed this argument concluding that they were "unpersuaded by plaintiffs' argument that the law treats absentee voters who ultimately cast their ballot in-person differently than nonabsentee in-person voters." Finding "that states have wide latitude in determining how to manage election procedures" the court made the distinction that "[t]he Albuquerque law is intended to target in-person voters and not all voters, and because there are clear differences between the two types of voting procedures, the law's distinction is proper."

It is difficult to summarize this complicated case in a short article and frankly much of the decision is difficult to understand even for those of us in the "business." But the long and the short of it is that we lost. After reviewing the decision and consulting with our counsel, the board has determined that in light of the precedent of Crawford and the current make-up of the Court, it is not advisable to appeal this case to the U.S. Supreme Court. And so, regrettably, the case will end with the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit's decision reinstating Albuquerque's photo ID requirement for in-person voting.

It will be of little avail to the public that the laws are made by man of their own choice if the laws be so voluminous that they cannot be read or so incoherent that they cannot be understood.

James Madison



## TIDDS *(Continued from page 7)*

On December 8, a number of groups sent a letter to Governor Richardson and the Board of Finance. In part, the letter stated:

*...we urge the Board to ensure that the TIDD proposals meet not just regional or local public policy goals but also statewide goals... We urge the Board to seriously analyze whether the proposed TIDDs are creating growth or just capturing expected growth trends. Both applications show that between 75 and 87.5 percent of TIDD revenues are expected to be shifted from elsewhere in the state to the TIDD. This is a strong indication that while the TIDDs may be generating some growth on the margin, for the large part, the TIDDs will be capturing expected growth.*

Thus the TIDD law now creates a favored status among developers and communities. Those that have TIDDs will be siphoning jobs and funds away from communities that do not have TIDDs. But every community needs libraries, community centers, fire and police stations, and other public services that will suffer as state and local budgets decline.

Reform of the TIDD law is needed. And reform legislation will be the topic of the day in Santa Fe if a coalition of groups gets its way. This is a coalition which LWVNM is looking at, but it is not clear that we have state- or national-level positions to support it. Stay tuned!

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### **Water Study** - Barbara Calef

Last year the LWV supported legislation to provide recurrent funding to update the regional water plans. The bill died in committee, but will be heard again in 2009, and we will again support it. We also will support an appropriation to fund aquifer mapping as part of the on-going effort to gauge water supply in the state.

Judging from discussions during the final meeting of the Interim Legislative Committee on Water and Natural Resources (WNRC) in

November, the upcoming session will provide some controversial legislation related to adjudication. Adjudication in New Mexico is an adversarial process used to determine who has senior water rights in a given basin. After performing a hydrographic survey of the basin, the State Engineer (SE) files a lawsuit seeking to establish the date of first use, the quantity of water involved, the source of the water, the ownership of the land where the water is used, and proof of "beneficial use." The putative water rights owners in the basin have 30 days to respond. It can be difficult for small farmers to prove that their fields were irrigated in the past, nor can they prove usage since the ditches were rarely metered. The process is complicated by the need to take into account laws and regulations from pre-U.S. governments, the thousands of defendants involved, and the need to protect the integrity of existing interstate water compacts. So far only about 20% of the state has been adjudicated.

Two different approaches have been proposed to speed up the process. The SE supports a licensing bill that he says would clarify the status of the licenses his office issues and enable him to issue permits of marketability without waiting for adjudication. After hearing from numerous representatives of farmers and ranchers who argued that the licensing process was already depriving their clients of their rights and that the draft bill would make the situation worse, the WNRC tabled the bill and directed the SE to meet with those representatives.

The second approach was presented by Judge Gerald Valentine, who has been overseeing an investigation of ways to improve and expedite the adjudication process in the state. He recommended establishing an ombudsman program to educate the claimants and give them the responsibility to initiate adjudication. He suggested a public dialogue for all stakeholders prior to the introduction of legislation in 2010. The WNRC encouraged the judge to propose legislation during the 2009 session rather than waiting another two years.

## LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENTS

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### **Central New Mexico** - *Josephine Porter and Diane Goldfarb*

As the November 4 election neared, our office fielded hundreds of calls from voters with the usual questions regarding registration and where to vote. The most frequent question was where the *Voters' Guide* could be found. Almost all of the 75,000 copies we printed were distributed, and our website had thousands of "hits" in the weeks leading up to the election.

We received quite a bit of news coverage prior to the election from both the print and electronic media. While we were unable to arrange a forum for our candidates from the 1st Congressional District, we moderated, kept time and assisted with several other forums. Some of our Board members had speaking engagements. All in all, an exceptionally busy time!

The LWVNM Fair Representation Committee presented the redistricting consensus questions for the November units where the discussion was lively and educational. Our December general meeting featured Winthrop Quigley, noted Albuquerque Journal business reporter, discussing the current economic situation.

In early December we held our annual program planning and worked to update our current program to accurately reflect our expanded service area. On Sunday, December 7, we held a "Meet Your Legislators" reception and it was a resounding success with members filling the lovely home of member Myra Lynch. Eight current and soon-to-be legislators came to the event and spoke about their thoughts for the coming session.

Our Advocacy Committee is keeping a close eye on the City of Albuquerque's Charter Review Task Force (three League members are on the Task Force) with particular interest in campaign finance and ethics proposals.

The committee is also keeping tabs on local government proposals for Tax Increment Development Districts (TIDDs).

On November 17, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the City of Albuquerque and against the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico and the other plaintiffs in the Voter ID case and reinstated Albuquerque's photo ID requirement for in-person voting. For more information of this decision please see the article on page 8.

### **Greater Las Cruces** - *Cathy Mathews*

Voter services activities occupied everyone's schedule before the General Election. Two candidates forums were held: one for state and the other for local positions. The forums were televised and rebroadcast. The weekend before the General Election, the forums were rebroadcast continuously on our local government cable channel, a service that was appreciated by the League and the voters. The League had several opportunities to address radio audiences about election issues, including two programs in Spanish. A *Voters' Guide* was produced by a dedicated committee and distributed in *The Las Cruces Bulletin*, a weekly newspaper. All 5,000 copies were gobbled up.

In follow-up, we had the opportunity to meet with seven of our 12 member legislative delegation during our Annual Legislative Delegation Breakfast the first Saturday in December. We caught the legislators before the session began and had a good discussion about many of the issues the League is following.

We appreciated that Cheryl Haaker and Dee Watkins traveled to Las Cruces to lead the lively discussion on fair representation. We look forward to learning the final consensus.

## Los Alamos - Executive Committee

The Los Alamos Water Study Committee has prepared consensus questions and background study materials as part of our effort to develop a local position on water supply and demand. The Board is presently considering the questions and expects to hold a unit meeting on the issue on February 19, 2009.

In November, the state League held its Los Alamos unit meeting on fair representation. Cheryl Haaker, Jo Porter and Lisa Franzen, representing the state League, did an excellent job of summarizing the background information and drawing members to consensus on the questions presented.

We are presently organizing a forum for candidates running for the Los Alamos School Board and the University of New Mexico Advisory Board. Speakers addressing the local school bond election also will be invited. The forum is set for January 8, 2009. We also are co-hosting a Legislative preview with the America Association of University Women on January 14, 2009 to which our local representative and three senators will be invited. In addition to our local legislators, we are expecting to have a speaker on election day registration and a representative from Environment New Mexico. Both forums will be held at Fuller Lodge with refreshments at 6:30 p.m. and program starting at 7:00 p.m.

Our Lunch with A Leader program continues to sponsor speakers on topics of local interest.

## Santa Fe - Jody Larson

Our holiday luncheon was a great success with high attendance and a productive silent auction. Our speaker, political reporter Steve Terrell, regaled us with "Tales from the Campaign Trail," drawing much laughter but also providing thoughtful analyses of the current political scene in northern New Mexico. We also got an insider tip on a possible candidate for Lt. Governor, but we aren't talking!

We submitted comments on the county's proposed oil and gas drilling ordinance, including a cautionary advisement against using the exceptions process too leniently, as variances can soon undermine the substance of the ordinance which was submitted to extensive public review. One of our study committees is now on hiatus as its chair has found it necessary to resign. At our program planning meeting, we will decide whether to continue the study. Our Transparency Project proceeds apace, although behind schedule.

Our membership drive is nearly finished, and our early optimism has not proved out. We have apparently lost about 30 members, and our membership committee is trying to discern the reasons. The committee also is planning some events to try to attract new members, aiming at recent retirees as the LWVUS project recommends.

We look forward to League Day at the Legislature as well as the lobbying workshop. Our local program for January is Ethics in Government, and we expect several speakers who can address this important issue at the state and local level.

Check out future events at our web site, [www.lwvsfc.org](http://www.lwvsfc.org)!

### LOBBYING WORKSHOP

Date: Saturday, January 24, 2009

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Place: Santa Fe

State Legislative Speakers  
Representative Peter Wirth  
Representative Jimmie Hall

Other Speakers - Lobbyist  
Natasha Ning, Same Day Registration  
Leanne Leith, Conservation Voters Alliance

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**LWVNM BOARD CALENDAR - 2009**

- January 10** Board Meeting -  
Albuquerque
- February 3** League Day at the  
Legislature
- March 21** Board Meeting - Socorro  
*La Palabra* Deadline
- May 16-17** LWVNM Convention  
Albuquerque

***WE NEED YOUR HELP*** - *Johnnie Aldrich*

On League Day at the Legislature (February 3), Action Committee Chair Dick Mason, has made arrangements for the League to have a table in the foyer of the Round House from 8-5. The table, we discovered last year, is a wonderful tool for both recruiting and education. Additionally, it serves as a "way station" for the members who are visiting legislators or attending committee meetings pertinent to our advocacy efforts on that day.

I plan to be at the table during most of that day. It's always helpful to have at least one other person there to answer questions, distribute the position statements prepared by the Action Committee, and actively recruit new members. I'd like to schedule two-hour stints for table-sitting partners.

If you plan to attend League Day and can spend even an hour at our Round House station, please let me know ([jraldrich\(at\)earthlink.net](mailto:jraldrich@earthlink.net) or 575-522-1544) and I'll try to fit your schedule on that day!