



# League of Women Voters of New Mexico

## *La Palabra*

Vol. 71 No. 1

[www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org)

Summer 2024

### League Contacts

#### **LWVNM**

Hannah Burling & Kathy Brook  
Co-Presidents  
[president@lwvnm.org](mailto:president@lwvnm.org)

#### **Central New Mexico**

Academy Office Park, Suites 124,126  
6739 Academy Blvd NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87109-3352  
505-884-8441  
President Starlyn Brown  
[office@lwvnm.org](mailto:office@lwvnm.org)

#### **Southern New Mexico**

P.O. Box 15142  
Las Cruces, NM 88004  
Jo Galvan Nash, Co-President  
[jogalvan.nash@gmail.com](mailto:jogalvan.nash@gmail.com)  
Kathe Kanim, Co-President  
[katherinekanim@gmail.com](mailto:katherinekanim@gmail.com)

#### **Los Alamos**

P.O. Box 158  
Los Alamos, NM 87544  
Felicia Orth, President  
[president@lwvlosalamos.org](mailto:president@lwvlosalamos.org)

#### **Santa Fe County**

P.O. Box 31547  
Santa Fe, NM 87594  
Jody Larson, Liaison  
[lwvsfc@gmail.com](mailto:lwvsfc@gmail.com)

#### **La Palabra Editor**

Barbara Calef  
[bfcalef@gmail.com](mailto:bfcalef@gmail.com)

#### **La Palabra Publisher**

Janet Blair  
505-259-0203  
[jtblair@swcp.com](mailto:jtblair@swcp.com)

*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.*



### **The Co-Presidents' Corner**

*By Kathy Brook and Hannah Burling  
LWVNM Co-Presidents*

[president@lwvnm.org](mailto:president@lwvnm.org)

I attended the LWVUS convention in person, an experience I can highly recommend. It was an opportunity to have conversations with people facing the same issues, to share experiences and solutions, and to interact with the national staff. I always come back invigorated and inspired.

Our new CEO, Celina Stewart, was announced at the convention. Celina was formerly the head of litigation at LWVUS and we have worked with her for several years. I am very happy with her appointment and I have taken to heart her words, "We have no time for fear or hesitation."

At the Saturday night convention gala, our speaker was Kimberly Teehee, the Cherokee tribal government liaison. The Treaty of New Echota in 1835, which led to the forced removal of the Cherokee Nation from their homelands, also included a provision promising the Cherokee a delegate to the House of Representatives. This promise has never been honored. The League now supports enacting that provision.

The Democracy Project, a loose coalition of organizations and businesses including the League, is at work to have videos created last year distributed again on TV, radio, and streaming services. The videos seek to reassure voters of the security of elections and the privacy of their votes. We're also working on a reprise of the 2022 Stephanie Garcia Richard/Jefferson Byrd video with younger candidates.

*Hannah Burling*

Since the last *La Palabra* publication, there has been considerable activity – most notably the LWVNM Council meeting and the LWVUS Convention.

Continued on page 5

### Table of Contents

Co-Presidents' Report.....	1
Invite Women's Equality Day.....	2
Asplund Trail Marker Dedication...	3
Voter Services.....	4
NA Voter Guides.....	4
Making Democracy Work Award...	6
Program Report.....	6
Independent Redistricting Report..	8
Consent-Based Siting SNF.....	9
Local League News.....	11

**The League of Women Voters New Mexico Education Fund,  
League of Women Voters Central New Mexico,  
UNM Board of Regents Historic Preservation Committee &  
UNM College of University Libraries & Learning Services  
are hosting a Special Celebration. You are invited to attend**

## **WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY**

**Monday, AUGUST 26, 2024**

**HODGIN HALL on the UNM CAMPUS**

**~ In Conjunction with the National Collaborative for Women's  
History Sites & the William G. Pomeroy Foundation ~**

**Dedication of the TRAIL MARKER at 3:30 pm  
To Honor**

**JULIA BROWN ASPLUND  
New Mexico Women's Suffrage Leader**

**PROGRAM & REFRESHMENTS, 4 to 6 pm**

**Speakers:**

**Dr. Cathleen D. Cahill, Pennsylvania State University  
Lisa K. Curtis, Esq., Chair, NM Commission on the  
Status of Women**

***Space is limited. RSVP at 505-884-8441  
or lwvcnmoffice@gmail.com***

## **Brief Bio of Julia Brown Asplund**

By Jeanne Logsdon

Julia Brown Asplund was a leader in New Mexico's fight for women's suffrage between 1911 and 1920. In February 1916, she was instrumental in forming the New Mexico chapter of the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage and served as a vice chairman. This organization was pivotal in lobbying for ratification of the 19th Amendment by the New Mexico legislature in 1920. She was nominated to run for governor by the New Mexico Women's Party (successor of the Congressional Union) in 1920, but declined the nomination.

Asplund moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1903 to work as the first trained librarian at the University of New Mexico. Later she served as the first woman Regent of the University from 1921-23. She devoted the rest of her professional life to expanding library services throughout the state. She lobbied for state financial support and served in many leadership positions to improve library access and quality, including appointment as the first chair of the State Library Commission from 1941-54. She was particularly committed to providing books to children in both English and Spanish.

## **Speaker Bios**

**Cathleen D. Cahill** is the Walter L. Ferree and Helen P. Ferree Professor in Middle-American History at Pennsylvania State University. She earned her PhD at the University of Chicago. Dr. Cahill's work examines questions of race, gender, and place in women's working and political lives in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century United States. Her focus is on the everyday experiences of ordinary people, primarily women. She has published multiple articles and two books, *Federal Fathers & Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933* (2011) and *Recasting the Vote: How Women of Color Transformed the Suffrage Movement* (2020). She is currently collaborating on a graphic history of the life of suffragist Dr. Mabel Ping-Hua Lee.

**Lisa K. Curtis** is the Chair of the New Mexico Commission on the Status of Women. A graduate of the UNM Law School, she has been a practicing trial attorney representing patients for the past 30 years. She is the managing partner for the 20-person law firm Curtis & Co., owns other local businesses, and is the Trustee for the LK Curtis Children's Fund. She is also the past president of the New Mexico Trial Lawyers Association and was a New Mexico State Senator.



## **Voter Services Report**

*By Edwina Jaramillo, Voter Services Chair*

### **Voter Services (VS) Committee Meetings**

The VS Committee, comprised of representatives from the four local Leagues and chaired by the LWVNM VS Director, has been meeting monthly since February 2024 to plan the primary and general elections for Vote411. The June 10 meeting was a debrief of the primary and a summary debrief report was produced. Vote411 system issues/concerns from the summary were provided to Megan Brown, LWVUS Vote411 Senior Manager, at the LWVUS Convention in Washington, D.C.

Megan Brown provided a special training session on the Vote411 system for the VS Committee on July 24, with a focus on filtering operations for candidates or races. She was thorough, thoughtful, and very generous with her time when responding to questions. It was an excellent training session that will help VS Committee members.

### **Vote411 General Election Schedule and Plans**

Candidate invitation letters are currently being sent to general election candidates by LWVNM and the local Leagues. This year candidates were given the choice to respond to the League's questions in English, Spanish, and/or Navajo. Candidates who responded during the primary have an opportunity to revise their responses. Candidates who did not respond to the questionnaire during the primary are being sent invitation letters to participate for the general election. With the help of local League volunteers, we also plan to call all LWVNM-assigned candidates who did not respond during the primary; local Leagues are following up with their candidates as well. Additionally, LWVSNM is doing a special outreach to ask candidates in counties they are responsible for to translate their responses into Spanish due to the large Spanish-speaking population in southern Doña Ana County. Our hope is to get a near 100% response rate from candidates. We plan to publish the online Voter Guide by October 4 (early in-person voting begins October 8), whereas local League printing deadlines will vary depending on printer requirements.

In an effort to increase the response rate, letters were sent to state party chairs prior to the primary asking them to encourage their party's candidates to participate in the VOTE411 Voter Guide. We plan to send the same request to the party chairs for the general election.

Finally, provided funds are available, we plan to publish eight Native American Voter Guides for the following counties: Cibola, Luna, McKinley, Otero (Mescalero), Rio Arriba, San Juan, Socorro, and Taos.

## **The Native American Voter Guides**

*By Judy Williams and Hannah Burling*

In 2018, the Secretary of State's office discussed with us the possibility of publishing a Voter Guide tailored to the Native American population, based not only on the League's expertise in publishing Voter Guides, but also on the League's impartial platform. This initiative was originally led by the Native American Voting Task Force, a group charged with creating ways to increase voter participation among the Native American electorate. The Task Force had found that inadequate internet coverage, language barriers and lack of sufficient election information continue to be major deterrents to voting.

The League decided to take on this project for the 2018 General Election; separate guides would be published for each of 12 counties with significant Native American populations. The Native American Voting Task Force



would distribute the guides. We have continued to create these guides. During later elections we used volunteers to help us distribute them.

While the Secretary of State and her staff wanted us to prepare and print the guides, they had no funds to support the effort. Consequently, we also took on the task of raising funds to print the guides. Our volunteers prepared the text.

Due to funding issues, these guides do not have candidate answers to questions or candidate photos.

While it has been difficult for us to assess their impact, we have been told by Native American Election Information Program Liaisons at the Secretary of State's office that they are well received and we believe that they have enabled us to work more closely with the sovereign nations in New Mexico.

## **Co-Presidents' Corner....**from page 1

In May, League members received reminders through Constant Contact about the role of interim legislative committees and information about committee calendars. Also, members were invited to attend a webinar, titled "Who Are the Downwinders and Why Do We Care?" The presentation, by Jeanne Gassman, offered an overview of the impact of atomic testing and uranium mining on populations in NM and beyond in the face of the sunset of the Radiation Exposure and Compensation Act (RECA) in June 2024.



Edwina Jaramillo, LWVNM Voter Services Director and SNM Secretary, stood in line to comment on immigration at the LWVUS convention. Photo courtesy of LWVSNM.

In late June about a dozen members of the state and local Leagues participated in the LWVUS Convention either in person in Washington, DC or virtually. There were numerous breakout sessions. To share information and experiences from the convention, we will be holding a Zoom session for interested members in August. Please watch for a Constant Contact with the details. In the meantime, you can find some information on the convention at <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/content-library>. Scroll down to "2024 Convention Daily Briefing."

Recently, LWVNM joined other state organizations, including NM Voices for Children, to request that New Mexico implement a free tool for submitting income tax returns. This can provide more equitable access to tax credits such as those supported by LWVNM. New Mexico is reportedly moving ahead with this.

To assist with providing voter information, the state League has received a Making Democracy Work grant in the amount of \$12,000 from the LWVUS Ed Fund.

In closing, special thanks to all League members, including Voter Service Chair Edwina Jaramillo, who worked to assist voters during the primary season, and to those at work as we approach the general election.

*Kathy Brook*

## **2024 Making Democracy Work Award to be presented in November to Raúl Burciaga, Retiring Executive Director of Legislative Council Service**

*By Dick Mason*

In November the LWVNM will have a luncheon to present the 2024 Making Democracy Work award to Raúl Burciaga, who is retiring as Executive Director of the Legislative Council Service (LCS). The LCS does the nonpartisan work behind the scenes for the Legislature. Burciaga has provided excellent leadership of the LCS for the last 14 years – see his bio below. We will be sending out the details of the luncheon as plans progress.

The New Mexico Legislative Council appointed Raúl Burciaga as the Director of the Legislative Council Service (LCS) in 2010. As director, he has had primary responsibility for administration of the LCS, the nonpartisan bill drafting and legal research agency of the New Mexico Legislature, and has been responsible for the control, custody and maintenance of the State Capitol, including the grounds and other legislative buildings.



Raúl Burciaga, photo courtesy of NMLCS.

Burciaga is a member of the New Mexico Compilation Commission, which oversees the compilation and publishing of New Mexico laws. He is also a member of the national Uniform Law Commission, which recommends laws for states to consider enacting. He is active with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and has served for five years on the Executive Committee. He completed the NCSL's Legislative Staff Management Institute Program at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota in 2004 and the Council of State Government's (CSG) Henry Toll Fellowship Program in Lexington, Kentucky in 2012. He currently serves as the Chair of the Legislative Service Agency and Research Directors group at CSG West.

Burciaga joined the LCS in July 2000 after graduating from the University of New Mexico School of Law. Before attending law school, he worked for 15 years in the administration of federal health care programs. He has been lead staff for numerous legislative interim committees, task forces and other work groups. He has worked as staff on impeachment investigation committees and legislative ethics committees. He served as the LCS assistant director for drafting services from 2004 until 2010, when he became director. He is a licensed attorney in New Mexico.

### **Program Report**

*By Judy Williams, Program Chair*

The LWVNM positions as revised at Council 2024 are now posted on the website at <https://www.lwvnm.org/positions.html>. The changes can be found in the Campaign Financing and Ethics position and the Transparency in State and Local Governments position.

### **LWVUS Convention 2024 Resolutions, Positions and Study**

**This is what the delegates approved.**

1. Retain all current LWVUS Positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy.
2. Re-adopt the campaign for Making Democracy Work® (MDW) as recommended program for 2024-

2026, which includes redistricting reform, voting rights protection, improving elections, money in politics, and direct election of the President by popular vote.

3. Adopt a concurrence with the LWV of Washington's position on Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy. <https://groups.io/g/LWVUS2024ConventionProgramPlanning/wiki/36160>

4. Strongly support legislation that will establish statehood for the people of the District of Columbia.

5. Recognize the importance of ethics in government policies that:

- apply broadly to elected and appointed officials, employees, and lobbyists at all levels of government (federal/state/local) and for all branches (executive/legislative/judicial);
- prohibit conflicts of interest, use of position for personal gain, corruption, nepotism, and favoritism;
- foster transparency through financial disclosure by elected and appointed officials;
- support effective enforcement mechanisms; and encourage ethical conduct through transparency

6. LWVUS commits continuing support for the CEDAW [Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women] framework at the local, state, and national levels to protect and promote the fundamental and inalienable human rights of women and girls.

7. LWVUS reaffirms its long-standing position calling for fair and humane immigration reform, including safe, orderly, and legal pathways to admission that promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the U.S.; and are responsive to those facing human rights abuses or humanitarian crises; and also reaffirms the call for due process for all persons, including the right to a fair, timely hearing and counsel.

8. Public libraries are essential institutions for strong, viable, and sustainable democracies and access to materials, resources, and programming provided by public libraries is a civil right, which should be enjoyed by all and distributed equitably in our communities.

9. Approved an LWVUS study on the federal judiciary (see below).

## **Study of the Judiciary**

**LWVUS approved a one-year study of the Federal Judiciary.** The study will:

1. engage legal and academic experts to help clarify judicial accountability, the role of rule of law, and safeguarding judicial independence,
2. gain grassroots input from Leagues, and
3. formulate a position around the Federal Judiciary for Leagues to use to carry out the mission of empowering voters and defending democracy.

The study will also serve as a pilot for ways to streamline the process and procedures for effectuating a study within the League. Timeline: July 2024 – June 2025.

### **Background**

Over the last decade, there have been growing concerns about the U.S. Supreme Court. Specifically, concerns related to financial impropriety and ethical compromises of the Court justices have triggered conversations about money in politics or campaign finance rules. Campaign finance rules have been more readily applied to candidates running for office; the federal judiciary is distinct because federal judges and justices are appointed. Because of this wrinkle, the LWVUS Advocacy and Litigation committee (ALC) reviewed each state League's positions to discover whether there was an existing state or local position addressing the issues surrounding U.S. Supreme Court judicial independence, ethics compliance, and transparency.

The ALC established a subcommittee in December 2022. The subcommittee members surveyed state policy po-

sitions related to the Judiciary and learned that there was no state or local position that, if concurred with, would achieve more precise guidance and policy application for a national position.

The committee was unanimous in their agreement that the time it takes to conduct a two-year national study was too long considering the urgency of addressing US Supreme Court ethics and related federal judiciary challenges. The committee noted that because LWV is a trusted organization nationwide, League advocacy could be critical for the organization to weigh in when warranted. Therefore, without a Federal Judiciary position, the committee expressed concern that the League could lose the opportunity to maintain itself as a relevant voice in the country about judicial ethics and transparency issues. The ALC requested the LWVUS board approve a study pilot process of one year using the Federal Judiciary as the topic.

## ***New Mexico Independent Redistricting Commission Report***

*By Dick Mason, Voting and Elections Chair*

Fair Districts for New Mexico (FDNM), a coalition of over 40 organizations led by LWVNM, has drawn up a new joint resolution to be introduced in the 2025 legislative session. If passed by both legislative chambers, the resolution will go on the ballot in the 2026 election. New Mexico does not have an initiative process to place issues on the ballot.

One of the key developments during the 2024 session was to reduce the 12-page joint resolution to three pages. We knew that we could not pass a 12-page constitutional amendment, but we believed it was important to lay out exactly what we wanted in the original bill. Our goal was to get the major principles in the shorter version. The new three-page joint resolution will require enabling legislation.

We were especially pleased by the endorsement of the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission under the direction of Leonard Gorman, which we received this year in support of the 2024 Joint Resolution. We are working to set up a meeting with the All Pueblo Council of Governors to gain the support of the 19 New Mexico Pueblos.

Our House sponsor of the Joint Resolution, Representative Natalie Figueroa, is running for the Senate, so we are in the process of selecting a new House sponsor. We have a number of good prospects.

FDNM conducted a survey of primary election candidates to determine their positions on an independent redistricting commission. We had a good response to the survey. FDNM is participating in a joint survey of general election candidates and has picked up a number of new supporters.

Working with our FDNM partners, you will see us continue this work as we venture forth for even stronger ties with all of New Mexico's communities of interest. We will be presenting to the interim legislative committees for Indian Affairs and for Courts, Corrections and Justice in preparation for the 2025 legislative session.

**What you can do:** If you attend candidate forums or meet with candidates, please ask them to support an independent redistricting commission. If you are interested in helping us with our work, please contact us at [fairdistricts@lwvnm.org](mailto:fairdistricts@lwvnm.org)

### **LWVNM presented at the LWVUS Convention**

Hannah Burling and Dick Mason presented a workshop on state, county and municipal redistricting at the 2024 LWVUS Convention. We had great participation from other state Leagues both during the workshop and after. As a result of the workshop, we will be working with the LWV of Washington to develop a list serve for states working on fair redistricting.



## County Redistricting Project – LWVNM

During the LWVUS Convention, we learned that Colorado had passed legislation to address county redistricting. Representative Kathleen Cates has submitted the Colorado legislation to the Legislative Council Services to adapt for the New Mexico Legislature.

As in state redistricting, there is an inherent conflict of interest for sitting county commissioners drawing their own districts.

The Navajo Nation settled their lawsuit with San Juan County, giving the Navajo Nation greater representation on the County Commission. The Sandoval County lawsuit against the County Commission is moving along. If successful, it will give the pueblos an opportunity for better representation.

## **Consent-Based Siting for a Federal Consolidated Interim Storage Facility, July Status Report**

*By Karen M. Douglas, Nuclear Issues Chair*

The DOE has held four stakeholder engagement meetings on 7/25/23, 11/2/23, 2/15/24, and 5/22/24. Recordings are available at Consent-Based Siting | Department of Energy. <https://www.energy.gov/ne/consent-based-siting>

In June, 2023 the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) issued grants of approximately \$2M each to 12 Consortia members. The consortia are groups of organizations that support the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) efforts to engage communities and gather public feedback on consent-based siting. The grants were awarded to: the American Nuclear Society (ANS), Arizona State University, Boise State University, Clemson University, the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), Good Energy Collective, Holtec International, Keystone Policy Center, Missouri University of Science and Technology, North Carolina State University, Rensselaer Polytechnic University, and Vanderbilt University.

Following the exhaustive 2017-21 LWVNM study resulting in approval of the SNF Storage Safety Position, the NM League issued a letter of support to the DOE in December, 2022 for ANS involvement in Consent-Based Siting of Federal CISF. ANS is partnering with four minority serving institutions of higher learning:

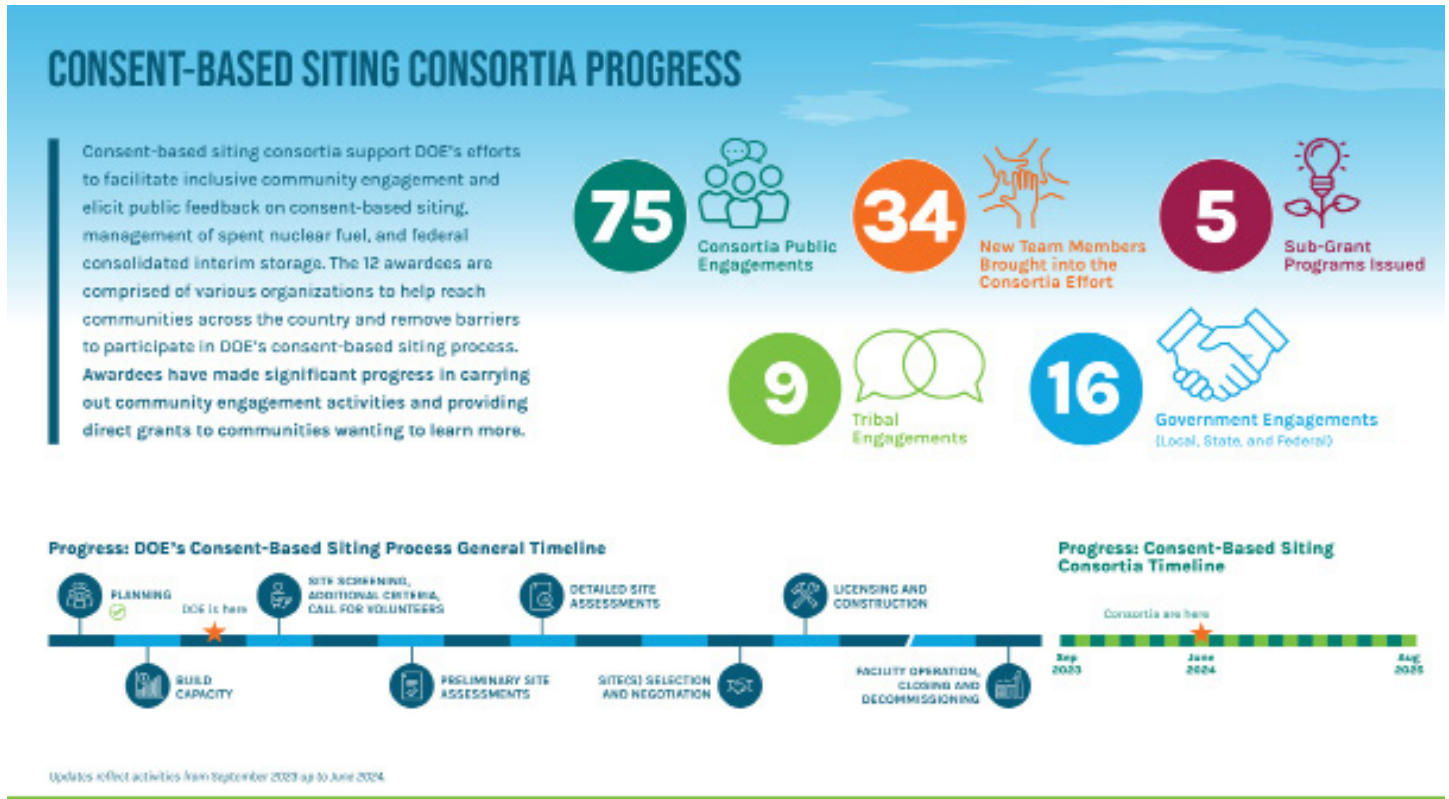
- South Carolina State University (HBCU);
- Northern Arizona University (Native American-serving);
- UNM (majority Hispanic student body); and
- City College of NY (CCNY holds both a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and Minority-Serving Institution designations from the U.S. Department of Education).

ANS is conducting select activities related to stakeholder involvement through the UNM Nuclear Engineering Department. The UNM Nuclear Engineering program is ranked #14 in the U.S. and is the only Nuclear Engineering department in a predominantly Hispanic-serving institution. I met with the UNM Nuclear Engineering Department Chair, Hyung (Hank) Lee, on June 10 to discuss stakeholder involvement and he indicated that UNM would involve Nuclear Engineering students in stakeholder outreach.

ECA is the only non-profit, membership organization of local governments adjacent to or impacted by DOE activities. These communities currently host DOE sites with a dedicated and trained workforce and are reaping economic benefits, so they may be more receptive to hosting an interim storage facility for Spent Nuclear Fuel. New Mexico includes three of those energy communities: Sandia National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, and WIPP.

DOE issued a request for information (RFI) on July 10 to identify industry partners interested in contributing

to the development of federal consolidated interim storage facilities for the management of spent nuclear fuel. DOE is now expanding Consent-Based Siting efforts by seeking information from parties interested in providing engineering design, project management, integration, and other services needed to build and manage consolidated interim storage facilities (RFI due 9/5/24).



To learn more about consent-based siting, please visit [energy.gov/consentbasedsiting](https://energy.gov/consentbasedsiting) or send an email to [consentbasedsiting@hq.doe.gov](mailto:consentbasedsiting@hq.doe.gov)



# *Local League News*

## **Santa Fe County**

*By Debbie Helper, SFC Liaison*

We currently have 145 members with at least 3 additional “part-time” members who are members of Leagues elsewhere, but who wish to participate in our local League activities when they are in town – usually for several months at a time.

We held our Annual Meeting on May 10th with Mayor Alan Webber as our speaker. A new Board was elected from the slate proposed by the Nominating Committee. Our Board does not have a President, rather the traditional president’s duties are spread across the VPs on the Board. We elected two new Board members. Our current Board is VP Administration – Debbie Helper, Treasurer – Ellen Stelling, Secretary – Cathy Harvey, VP Program – Marcy Litzenberg, VP PR/Comms – Stephanie Schlanger, VP Voter Services – Kelly Davis, Co-Directors Action & Advocacy – Carol Parker (new) and Judy Williams, Director of Development and Fundraising – Hannah Burling, Director of Events – Gail Bass (new). In addition, our off – Board Leadership Team includes Membership Chair – Joann Volinski (new; also Chair of Nominating Committee), Arrangements Chair – Danis Kelly, High School Registration Chair – Anne McDonald Culp, Candidate Forums Chair – Andrea Slade. Going off the Board was Jody Larson, whom we thanked for her invaluable expertise in “everything League” as well as her active involvement as Co-Chair of Action & Advocacy. Andrea Slade and Sally Sabo also left the Board but remain active in the League.

At our June Board meeting we elected our Executive Committee, appointed two Board members to the Nominating Committee, and approved members of the Finance and Budget Committee.

Our new website [lwvsfc.org](http://lwvsfc.org) will go live on August 1st. We had a Zoom preview presentation of the website last week. Leadership Team members will have an opportunity to be trained on how to update their respective web pages. Through the efforts of Kelly Davis and Stephanie Schlanger, we received a grant from the Santa Fe Community Foundation to expand our social media presence in advance of the General Election. We are hoping to partner with faculty and students at the Santa Fe Community College to maintain and continue to expand that presence.

We held a Calendar Planning Meeting last week with brainstorming of ideas to increase participation in our events. Joann Volinski and new member Joanna Ruppel are preparing a membership survey to determine how best to involve our members. To better understand how to increase young adult civics involvement, student Focus Groups led by Anne McDonald Culp will be held at the Santa Fe Community College.

Candidate Forums are being planned for late September/early October for two local races and the U.S. Senate race, which will be co-sponsored by LWVNM. We’re hoping once again to partner with the New Mexican for maximum exposure and participation by voters. Active tabling, voter registration, Vote411 and Voter Guide prep are ongoing. GOTV activities are planned for early Fall.

The Action & Advocacy Committee continues to track progress on the Midtown Campus, the city audits, city and county education, as well as land use and development. They are adding a new focus on wastewater treatment.

The Community Health Study Committee has been meeting monthly and conducting interviews as well as col-

lecting city and county reports. It is currently in its second year with presentations to the membership planned for February and March.

Three of our Board members attended the LWV National Convention in late June as virtual delegates. Summary reports of various workshops and caucuses attended are available at [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kmZBmiuFsDvO6Pw6a5r1IXJ\\_E-aaFtWs?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kmZBmiuFsDvO6Pw6a5r1IXJ_E-aaFtWs?usp=sharing).

## Southern New Mexico

*By Jo Galván Nash, President*

**Board Business:** SNM celebrated the end of the previous fiscal year with its April Annual Meeting. Elected and appointed to the Board: Jo Nash, President; Beth Bardwell, VP; Kathe Kanim, Voter Services Dir.; Edwina Jaramillo, Secretary; Kathy Brook, Treasurer; Kate Mangelsdorf and Rebecca Courtney, Nominating Comm.; Nancy Stanton, Development Dir.; Ruth Jaure, Historian; and Tom Krajci, Otero County Unit Liaison. The Annual Meeting was followed by the June Visioning Lab where our members focused on our program and goals for the coming year. In 2024/25 SNM our program includes an update for the Library Policy and implementing strategies to get-out-the-vote.

In July, SNM proudly received a \$1,500 grant from the El Paso Electric Charitable Foundation to help pay for printed Voter Guides in English and Spanish. We estimate our costs will exceed \$8,000 to distribute more than 20,000 copies.



SNM's newest member, Sue Barsom, talked with prospective voters during the 4th of July event in Silver City. For a "chile pepper poll" visitors were asked to put a stamp on their top voting issues. Photo courtesy of LWVSNM.

**Board and Committee Activities:** There's been no summer break for the Voter Services Committee. The League continues to encourage members to sign up as poll watchers, register voters, and prepare for the online Vote411 and printed Voter Guide publications. A huge challenge for the General Election will be to get Doña Ana County candidates to also answer all Vote411 questions in Spanish. Meanwhile, Development Director Nancy Stanton organized a voter registration table in Silver City during that city's 4th of July celebrations. Several Grant County residents are working with SNM to organize another League unit. OCU, the other unit under the SNM umbrella, is hoping to stage a candidate forum for the Alamogordo area.

**General Meetings and the LWV Convention:** In August, our members will learn more about an effort to create a new national monument — the Mimbres Peaks — over one-quarter of a million acres in the Luna County/Deming area. Our group has been approached to advocate for this project as we did 10 years ago when the Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument in the Las Cruces area was designated by President Obama.

Finally, three of our members attended the LWV convention in July. Secretary Edwina Jaramillo attended in person while Jo Galván Nash and Kathy Brook attended virtually. Summaries of our sessions are available with other League reports here:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kmZBmiuFsDvO6Pw6a5r1IXJ\\_E-aaFtWs](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kmZBmiuFsDvO6Pw6a5r1IXJ_E-aaFtWs).



## Los Alamos County

By Felicia Orth, President

**Membership:** In a community of fewer than 20,000 residents, we have approximately 140 members at various levels, including one student membership. We also have more than two dozen friends of the League, who wish to stay involved and make donations without being members.

**Fundraising:** A big push this year with an energetic fundraising committee led by Ellen Mills has meant more than \$5,000 in donations from members and friends, and an additional \$1,400 for paid sponsorships/ads in the Voter Guide.

**Voter Guide:** The monies raised meant we could publish the Voter Guide for the primary election and distribute it to every household in the County, along with extra copies at the libraries and polling places, for a total of 9,600 copies in all.

**Candidate Forum:** Our primary election candidate forum on May 9 in Fuller Lodge was well attended. Although many races were not contested in the primary, the race for District Attorney was fierce, and the feedback we received indicated that the forum had helped many in their choice on the ballot.

**ChamberFest:** We joined the Chamber of Commerce for the first time this year, and tabled at ChamberFest on June 1. During that one event, we gained at least three new memberships, distributed dozens of Voter Guides to those who had not voted yet, informed all adult visitors that there were just two days left to vote, gave directions to the Municipal Building polling place, quizzed children about the legal voting age and when they would reach that milestone, distributed sweet treats and small oranges, and accepted thanks from several folks who appreciate the work we do in voter education. We even had a young man who challenged us to “prove him wrong” that his vote didn’t count. At the end of a brief explanation as to why it did matter, he said “you convinced me,” grabbed a Voter Guide, and headed toward the vote center two blocks away.

**New Database:** Bob Williams has worked hard to update our Member/Friend Database, and it is a wealth of information that those working with membership, fundraising, and other committees can use.

**Lunch with a Leader:** Karyl Ann Armbruster continues to arrange for fascinating speakers on a wide variety of topics. We heard from the Los Alamos County Energy and Conservation Manager Abbey Hayward in July; Los Alamos County Clerk Naomi Maestas in May; and Rachel Mohr-Richards, Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, in April.

**National Convention:** Two League members attended the LWVUS convention in person in Washington D.C. at the end of June, Leslie Wallstrom and Felicia Orth. They both found it inspiring and exhausting. Two weeks after returning, moved by learning about the national collaboration between the League and the Scouts, and the heroic “Voter Girl,” Felicia contacted the Regional Director for the Girl Scouts in Northern New Mexico. We hope to collaborate with them on their Democracy Day in August and on a subsequent Democracy Project.

**Looking forward:** We are planning a general membership event and donor thank you on Sunday September 8, and a candidate forum for the general election on Monday October 7.



Cardboard cutouts for the Voter Girl Project, a collaboration between the League and Girl Scouts. Photo by Felicia Orth.

## Central New Mexico

By Starlyn Brown, President

Due to her position as Director of Finance and Administrative Services for the City of Albuquerque, and having been elected Treasurer Elect by the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) national governing board, Donna Sandoval resigned as Co-President of LWVCNM in late April.

LWVNM and LWVCNM are hosting a dedication ceremony of the trail marker to honor Julia Brown Asplund, New Mexico Women's Suffrage Leader on Monday August 26th, Women's Equality Day on the UNM campus at Hodgin Hall.

Our 2024 annual meeting was held on April 20th at the Marriott Uptown in Albuquerque. Our keynote speaker was Paula Tackett, JD. She retired after 28 years at the New Mexico Legislative Council Service, where she served as Director for the last 22 plus years. She also spoke about her work with the New Mexico Historic Women Markers program to honor women in New Mexico history. The purpose of the program is to install roadside markers to share the knowledge and impact of notable women of New Mexico, including representatives from every county as well as New Mexico's tribes, pueblos and the Navajo nation. More information <http://nmhistoricwomen.org>.

Monthly educational meetings – You can view the recordings at Zoom Monthly Program Recordings ([lwvcnm.org](http://lwvcnm.org))

- May – Environmental Justice in Bernalillo County
- June - Democracy in Danger, Part One: LGBTQ+ Community and Rights Under Fire
- July - Democracy in Danger, Part 2: A Deep Dive into the Challenges to Democracy

Four members of CNM attended the LWVUS National Convention – In Person: Starlyn Brown and Liz Shields; remote: Anne Galer and Karen Douglas. A google drive folder has been created and populated with reports from League members across New Mexico. The link to read the reports and other documents collected is [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kmZBmiuFsDvQ6Pw6a5r1IXJ\\_E-aaFtWs?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kmZBmiuFsDvQ6Pw6a5r1IXJ_E-aaFtWs?usp=sharing)

Our Voter Guide Committee successfully completed their primary election work. There were 167 candidates. We had a 69% response rate overall, but 100% of the candidates for Bernalillo County races participated. Voter participation in the four counties we serve was Torrance 24.4%, Bernalillo 22.7%, Valencia 21.7%, and Sandoval 21.1%. Work for the General Election in November is well underway. As agreed, the committee will evaluate the cost/benefit of the primary effort for LWVCNM. They are waiting until after the general election to complete their analysis and determine how or if their primary work affected their general election workload.

We launched a new fundraising initiative on July 8th to help with the printing costs for the Voter Guide for the general election. Our estimated cost to print is \$25,000. We had to find a new graphic designer and a new printer this year. We are trying crowdfunding using Zeffy.com. Preparations are also in progress to send a donation request letter to all our members by the end of July.

We have completed two voter registration events, one at UNM for incoming residents at UNMH and a second at CNM. We are scheduled for voter registration events at the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church on two consecutive weekends in August, and National Voter Registration Day September 17th.

We were awarded \$15,000 in training dollars by the CNM Job Training Albuquerque program. Training could begin in September. We will be evaluating which offerings best fit our needs.

The book club continues to be active and meets in person every other month. The May title was *Why We're Polarized* by Ezra Klein. The July title is *Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by author Robin Wall Kimmerer.

An updated Who's Who was published and distributed in late May.

LWVCNM currently has 190 members.



League of Women Voters of NM  
6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124  
Albuquerque, NM 87109-3352

Please consider helping your local League or LWVNM to pay for our voter guides and candidate forums. You can send a tax-deductible gift by check to your local League or to LWVNM. See [www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org) for more information and links to our local Leagues. Thank you for making democracy work!

*The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that helps the public play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Anyone 16 years of age or older, male or female, may become a member. The League of Women Voters never endorses candidates for office or supports political parties.*