



The Voter

May 2012

League of Women Voters
of Central New Mexico
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Bernalillo County Clerk to speak at Annual Meeting brunch

Maggie Toulouse Oliver, Bernalillo County Clerk since January 2007, will speak at the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico Annual Meeting May 5. Her talk will culminate the meeting to be conducted at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul NE.



Maggie Toulouse Oliver

Registration for the Annual Meeting will be from 9-9:30 a.m., followed by the business meeting from 9:30-11 a.m. and brunch at 11 a.m. Toulouse Oliver will give her talk during the brunch.

During her talk, Toulouse Oliver will review the voter fraud investigation conducted by the New Mexico Secretary of State and the implication for Bernalillo County. She will also discuss current issues of interest to the clerk's office.

Before becoming County Clerk, Toulouse Oliver was a political consultant and a campaign organizer and the state director for the League of Conservation Voters. While in office, her priority has been to improve the election process and the means voters use to interact with her office. She has modernized poll worker training and expanded

early voting. Toulouse Oliver also established voting procedures that can be audited, modernized the land records system and created electronic access to records.

She has worked with clerks across the state to support legislation to pave the way for voting centers. She also conducted the first post election audit and initiated the process that is now required for conducting election audits in New Mexico.

Toulouse Oliver was raised in Albuquerque and attended Albuquerque Public Schools. She has a BA in political science and Spanish and an MA in political science, both from the University of New Mexico. She lives in Albuquerque with her husband Allan and their two sons.

Reservations for the brunch must be made no later than April 30 at 10 a.m. by emailing lunch@lwvcnm.org or calling 884-8441. Cost for the brunch is \$20 payable at the door.

Annual Meeting May 5

Be sure to bring the April Voter to the Annual Meeting

Registration	9-9:30 a.m.
Business Meeting	9:30-11 a.m.
Brunch	11 a.m.

MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul NE

May Calendar

May 3	LWVCNM Board meeting, 5:30 p.m.
May 5	<i>Voter</i> deadline
May 5	Annual Meeting
May 12	LWVNM Council
June 8	LWVUS Convention, Washington D.C.

June meeting to be held with Press Women

The June 14 meeting of the LWVCNM will be held jointly with Albuquerque Press Women. Speaker will be Dr. Richard Melzer, a history professor at the University of New Mexico Valencia Campus. He will speak on "New Mexico's Journey toward Statehood." League reservations will be done through the League office as usual.

**League of Women Voters of
Central New Mexico
Board Meeting
1st Thursday of each month
Offices of Sutin, Thayer & Browne,
6565 Americas Parkway NE**

Program Committees

Fair Representation Committee

Cheryl Haaker (298-7415)

Drug Policy

Natural Resources

Includes transportation, land use, air quality, water, and energy.

All League members are invited to all unit meetings, committee and board meetings.

The *Voter* is published on partially-recycled paper each month by the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico. It is also distributed via email.

Political Mythbusting & Political Competence -- Special Meeting

Olin Bray will be presenting a caucus session at the LWV National Convention on the topic of "Political Mythbusting and Political Competence." At a meeting Tuesday, May 8 at 6 p.m. at the Erna Fergusson Library (the usual time and place for the evening meeting) Olin will make the presentation for anyone who is interested, but who may not be going to the convention. This description is from the convention program.

"Myths and rigid ideology, untouched by real data, are driving much of our political debate and campaigns. Political competence approaches policy issues as problems to be identified, analyzed and solved using logical, data-driven methods. This caucus will describe what political competence is, the skills it requires and how to develop them, some of the myths that need to be challenged, and finally explore how LWV can help increase political competence in the electorate.

Presidents' Corner

Spring Greetings! Spring is a busy time for all levels of the League of Women Voters -- local, state and national. LWVCNM began the season with a 92nd birthday party for the League of Women Voters following a theatre fundraising event at Rodey Theatre. A fun time was had by all. The *Anything Goes* musical was very entertaining. Sixty people were in attendance and a profit of \$864 was raised for the LWVCNM Operating Fund. We want to thank Andrea Targhetta and Jo Porter for their help organizing the event, and thanks to everyone who contributed food and beverage. It was lovely and delicious.

By now you should have received our festive Non-Event letter packet. We are beginning a fundraising drive to raise money to print the *Voters' Guide* for the upcoming General Election. We want to thank Mary Smith, Jo Porter, Andrea Targhetta, Terry Quinn, Diane Goldfarb, Judith Binder, Cheryl Haaker and others for composing and printing the letter, preparing, addressing, stuffing and mailing the packets. We know that as always we can count on your generous contributions to make this important publication possible. With the current economy, decrease in business sponsorships and pleas from numerous non-profit organizations for contributions, we rely more than ever on the contributions from our membership. All seats in the Legislature, 42 in the Senate and 70 in the House, are up for election this year. That hasn't happened since 2008, because representatives are elected for two-year terms and senators for four-year terms. A large number of state legislators decided against seeking re-election or are running for other public offices. This election is possibly one of the most important elections in some time, because the election may change how the Legislature votes on particular issues, such as Voter Photo ID and drivers' licenses for illegal immigrants. The presidential election will also have an impact on what parties will take control of the New Mexico House and Senate.

We urge you to attend the Annual Meeting Saturday, May 5 at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul N.E. Registration begins at 9 a.m. Bernalillo County Clerk Maggie Toulouse Oliver will be the speaker for the brunch. Her topic will be "A Review of the Voter Fraud Investigation Conducted by the Secretary of State. Reservations must be called in to the office (884-8441) or emailed to lunch@lwvcnm.org by Monday, April 30. Specify if you want a vegetarian lunch. The cost of the brunch is \$20 to be paid at the door. There is not a registration form for the Annual Meeting.

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LWVNM Council set for May 12

Peggy Hill, the LWVUS liaison to the League of Women Voters of New Mexico, will be the luncheon speaker during the biennial League of Women Voters of New Mexico Council meeting set for May 12 from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul N.E. in Albuquerque. Speaker Hill is a member of a League of Women Voters of the United States Education Study Committee, consisting of seven members from Leagues across the country. The study is titled "The Role of Federal Government in Public Education."

Each League will have two delegates -- the president or an alternate and one additional member. Also serving as delegates will be all state board members, including officers and on-

board directors, plus one delegate representing the members-at-large. All other League members are invited to attend as observers and stay for the lunch and speaker at noon.

Registration for the Council will extend from 9:30-10 a.m., followed by the business meeting which will start at 10 a.m.

Cost of the luncheon is \$20. Reservations for the Council meeting and lunch must be made by Monday, May 7. Please send in the registration form below and your check for \$20 to:

League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico
2315 San Pedro NE, F-6
Albuquerque, NM 87110

Council Registration Form -- May 12, 2012

Please send this Council registration form and a check for \$20 payable to LWVCNM by May 7.
Mail to: LWVCNM, 2315 San Pedro NE, F-6, Albuquerque, NM 87110

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

I am attending as (Please check one)

_____ Local League delegate from _____

_____ MAL delegate*

_____ LWVNM Board Member*

_____ Non-delegate member/observer/guest (circle one)

*LWVNM Board members and MAL delegates should NOT send a check with their registration. Instead, contact State Treasurer Cheryl Haaker, who will be paying your registration fee. Phone 505-298-7415 or email cheryl@haaker.org.

Call 505-884-8441 with questions.

Keep the public in Public Access: How the League can expand its expertise

The First Amendment: The Right to Free Speech was incorporated into the U.S. Constitution after the establishment of the U.S. Post Office with reduced rates for newspapers and magazine because the framers believed informed citizens were necessary to maintain a democratic republic.

Whether it is by Internet, newspapers or even free access to radio and television, citizens should have the ability to produce their own programs. The Cable Board in Albuquerque is the franchising authority that was mandated for local governments (the people) to cooperate with the cable industry, and there are rules to provide training and free access.

Each month in Albuquerque, Comcast Cable turns five percent of gross revenue plus 44 cents of each home subscriber's bill to the City Fathers to operate Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access Channels. Bernalillo County population in 2010 was about 665,000, and if there are 120,000 homes receiving Comcast Cable, that is \$5,000,000 to \$6,000,000 a year given to the city to operate four channels: Government, Quote-Unquote, Encantata and an educational access channel that continues to be dark. Actually there should be nine channels in this market.

The public must have access to information that is not sponsored by commercial entities-whose agenda may be questioned. Today, there is a national campaign to rid the country of easily obtained information.

Non-partisan television is on the chopping block, and well over 100 channels have already been darkened or sold off to the highest bidder.

Here is where the League can step in.

Many knowledgeable individuals are invited to speak to our study groups and Unit Meetings. They could reach a larger audience when members volunteer and are trained to video, and sometimes edit, these presentations. We give our guests a platform, and with Public Access TV, we can reach the greater community. As a non-partisan organization, the League can provide a public vehicle for First Amendment discussion of issues and options. In fact, we could even name our program LWV-CNM -- Issues and Options.

The Internet is ubiquitous, but the age of TV not yet dead! It will be through Public Access -- the ability to educate, address and debate local and general interest issues-that will encourage greater participation in voting as well as in the policy-making process.

Public Access programming revolves primarily around community interest developed by individuals and nonprofit (501C) organizations. Any Bernalillo County citizen may produce a program. The League can and should showcase public discussion of important issues usually glossed over by commercial media.

Please contact a LWVCNM board member or the League Office 884-8441 for scholarships in production training. *-- Judith Binder*

Presidents' Corner

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The following Saturday, May 12th LWV-CNM is hosting LWVNM Council, also at the MCM Elegante Hotel. Sandra Browne and Karen Wentworth will be the delegates for LWVCNM. Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m. The speaker will be Peggy Hill, the liaison to LWVUS for New Mexico. The Council Registration Form (in this *Voter* or the Spring *La Palabra*) must be completed including a check for \$20 payable to LWVCNM. The form must be received by May 7 at the LWCNM office, 2315 San Pedro NE, F-6, Albuquerque, NM 87110.

LWVCNM has three delegates to the

LWVUS Convention which will be held in Washington D.C. June 8-12. The delegates are Andrea Targhetta, Carol Tucker Trelease and Judith Binder. Olin Bray will be a presenter at the convention. Jan and Olin Bray are alternate delegates to the convention. Olin will present "Political Mythbusting and Political Competence" at a caucus session. We look forward to a report when they return.

Mark your calendar for Program Planning Saturday, June 2 beginning at 9 a.m. The location is yet to be determined.

Have a pleasant spring and we hope to see you at many of the spring events.

*-- Shelly Shepherd & Sandra Browne,
Co-Presidents*

***Winner-Take-All Politics* book review**

Editor's Note: Book Review -- This review of an important public policy book is a regular feature in the Voter.

Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class by Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, 2010, Simon and Schuster, pp 357.

The authors make a number of related points and provide a lot of data and analysis to support their positions. First, they show that since the late 1970s income inequality in the U.S. has escalated massively. From 1979 to the eve of the Great Recession the top one percent received 36 percent of all of the gains in household income and the top 0.1 percent received 20 percent of the gains. From a different perspective, in 1965 the CEO of a large company averaged about 24 times what a typical worker in his company made, but by 2007 they were making almost 300 times what a typical worker earned. In addition to this increasingly skewed income distribution, the middle class has also seen reduced social/economic mobility and reduced public and private benefits, such as government safety net programs and corporate health care and pension benefits. In spite of our perceptions about intergenerational mobility in the U.S., of the affluent industrialized countries only Britain and Italy have a lower rate of intergenerational economic mobility.

Second, they suggest that the usual explanations of the value of education and the effects of globalization have only a minor role in this escalation. If these were the main causes, you would have expected similar results in all of the developed countries rather than almost exclusively in the US.

Third, the cause of this growing inequality lies in the political -- not the economic -- system and both parties share the blame for these changes. Some are the result of deliberate policy actions, such as tax changes that greatly reduced the progressivity of the system. For example, now the top ten percent of earners pay about the same effective tax rate, whereas earlier tax rates were very progressive in this range. Other results are caused by policy drift, the refusal to do something when

things change and require additional regulations.

Finally, they suggest that these political changes are the results of explicit political warfare being waged very skillfully and with a lot of resources by those reaping the benefits. This political warfare has two distinct components -- elections and the lobbying and infighting after the election. They believe it is significant that special interests and business spend a lot on elections, but that they spend far more on lobbying between elections. The middle class has no comparably financed and experienced groups fighting for their positions to level the playing field, although unions when they were stronger partly played this role. Increasing polarization, rejecting attempts to compromise, and the use of supermajorities (such as to halt filibusters) are all tactics that make changes more difficult.

However, they are hopeful because when things get so bad and so visible major political changes can occur, as with the New Deal. They believe that the financial crisis may have created enough outrage to stimulate such a change. However, they emphasize that winning an election is not enough, policy drift can still block needed changes. The middle class still needs well-organized and experienced advocacy organizations to make sure the needed changes actually occur. To indicate the problem, they quote an FDR comment, "You have convinced me. Now make me do something about it."

Some will obviously accuse the authors of class warfare, but it seems that all they are really doing is describing what has been going on for 30 years and suggesting that perhaps the middle class needs to begin to respond. -- *Olin Bray*

Shortened summer office hours set

The LWVCNM office will maintain shortened hours during the summer. In June, July and August the office will be open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to noon.

Long-time League member Dee Watkins dies

Long-time League of Women Voter member Dee Watkins died April 18. She was an active member of League, serving on the Drug Policy Committee and regularly presenting pain management information to organizations throughout the state. She was a resident of Albuquerque since 1975 and formerly of Waterloo/Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Dee is survived by her husband Roland L. Watkins; her son, Paul of Albuquerque; and a sister, Karen Orr and husband, Alan of Cedar Falls, Iowa. Dee was preceded in death by her parents. She was a speech pathologist and an early education consultant for Albuquerque Public Schools. Besides her activity with the League of Women Voters, Dee was president of the Keystone Park Homeowners Association. Her final resting place will be Waterloo Memorial Park Cemetery in Waterloo, Iowa. Please make any memorials to Vista Care Hospice Inpatient Unit, 5600 Wyoming NE, Suite 10, Albuquerque, NM 87109, or to the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico Education Fund, 2315 San Pedro NE, Suite F-6, Albuquerque, NM 87110.

Membership Report

Welcome new member:

Barbara Fries

1509 Dartmouth NE, ABQ, 87106, 883-5680

Change of address:

Julia White, 5201 Roma NE, Apt 116, ABQ, 87108

Some updates from Bernalillo Co. Clerks Office for LWV Third-Party Registrars:

Dates Regarding Primary Election

Questions: call Vince Facio 468-1216

- * May 8 Registration for Voting in Primaries Ends
- * May 8 Absentee & Absentee in Person Opens at Clerk's Annex -- 620 Lomas
- * May 19 Early Voting Opens
- * June 1 Last Day for County Clerk to mail out Absentee Ballots
- * June 2 Early Voting/Absentee Voting Closes
- * June 5 Primary Election Day
- * June 11 Voter Registration for General Election Opens



Return Service Requested
League of Women Voters of
Central New Mexico
2315 San Pedro NE Suite F-6
Albuquerque, NM 87110