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## October meetings to focus on campaign finance

In the current federal campaigns we are seeing the effects of unregulated and unreported money in campaigns. Much of this comes as a result of the Supreme Court's January, 2010 Citizens United deci-

sion. This decision took away the Congress's right to regulate campaign financing. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) calls the Citizens United decision "the worst Supreme Court decision of the 21st century."

At the June 2012 LWVUS Convention the LWVNM delegates joined with other state and local Leagues to support a resolution that stated: "We, the representatives of local and state Leagues assembled at the 2012 LWVUS Convention, call upon the LWVUS Board to advocate strongly for all appropriate, duly-considered measures which may include, but are not limited to, a constitutional amendment and which are consistent with our current positions on campaign finance reform and individual liberties; allow Congress and the States to set reasonable regulations on campaign contributions and expenditures; and ensure that elections are determined by the voters." The resolution passed with an overwhelming voice vote.

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### LWVCNM hosts visitors from Bahrain

At the request of Karen Schafer, Albuquerque Council for International Visitors (ACIV), LWVCNM members recently hosted a delegation of professional women from Bahrain, a small island country situated near the western shores of the Persian Gulf. They live in a constitutional monarchy and are interested in learning about democracy as they visit cities in different states, including Washington D.C. In Albuquerque, they were particularly interested in the League of Women Voters. "We discussed the League's history and answered questions about our *Voters' Guide*, democracy in America and the League's internet presence. All were amazed that American women had been unable to vote until 1920," said Gayle Prinkey, Voter Services chair. In Bahrain the right of women to vote has not been a problem. One of our members suggested that if they form an organization like ours, they can call it "United League of Voters."

-- Photo by Cheryl Haaker

### October Calendar

Oct. 4	Board meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 5.	<i>Voter</i> deadline
Oct. 9	Evening Unit, 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 11	US Senate debate on KRQE, 6 p.m.
Oct. 11	Luncheon Unit, 11:45 a.m.
Oct. 15	Midtown Unit, 1:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	US Senate debate on KOAT, 6 p.m.
Oct. 25	US Senate debate on KOB, 7 p.m.
Oct. 22	NorthEast Heights Unit, 10 a.m.

**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***

Jan Bray

***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.

## **Membership Committee report**

### **New Members:**

Briana Zamora, Judith Orrell

### **Give Online! via Paypal**

Now, you can contribute to the League's tax deductible Education Fund (which publishes the *Voters' Guide*) or the nondeductible Operations Fund via Paypal. The new service will allow you to give securely using your credit card or Paypal account. To try it out, go to our home page, [www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org), and click on "Contribute" from the left navigation bar. Alternatively, just visit [www.lwvnm.org/donate.html](http://www.lwvnm.org/donate.html).

### **Join, Renew Membership Online**

Dues will again be due by October. You will be able to renew or join online via Paypal! Stay tuned to announcements on LWVCNMTopics or periodically check [www.lwvnm.org/join.html](http://www.lwvnm.org/join.html).

## **Presidents' Corner**

### **Part II -- The Voting History of America**

*By Shelly Shepherd, co-president*

I hope that you found Part I in last month's *Voter* about the voting history in America to be interesting, and that you have been inspired to continue the League's efforts to defend the voting rights of all Americans.

Some Native Americans became citizens if they gave up their tribal affiliations in 1887, but many did not become citizens until 1924. The Citizenship Act passed in 1924 was supposed to convey all of the benefits of United States citizenship to Native Americans. However, the bill reads "all noncitizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and are hereby, declared to be citizens of the United States." Still, a Native American man or woman living on a reservation in New Mexico (or as the State Constitution referred to them, "Indians not taxed") could not vote. Native Americans who did not live on reservations were technically allowed to vote. For most, that meant leaving their home and community and, for many, being assimilated into a non-native society. Many Western states, however, denied the right to vote through property requirements, economic pressures, hiding the polls, and condoning physical violence against those who voted.

Native American veterans returning home from World War II were no exception. Young men who were considered capable enough to fight for their country, if they returned to their reservation, still were not allowed to vote in the elections that shaped the country they served. But one Isleta man forced the state to change. Miguel Trujillo was a veteran of the United States Marine Corps. In his past, he saw many young Native American men sign up to ship out, some never to return. At least 25,000 Native Americans served in World War II. According to William C. Meadow's book *The Comanche Code Talkers of World War II*, Native Americans volunteered for the armed forces at the ratio of two for everyone drafted during World War II. The experience steeled his resolve to get the vote for all Native Americans in New Mexico. In 1948 Trujillo made the trip from his home in Isleta to register in Valencia County and was denied this right. Trujillo filed a lawsuit against the state and Trujillo vs. Garley, the case that would decide once and for all if New Mexico's Native Americans could vote, was born. On Aug. 3, 1948, a panel of five federal judges ruled in Trujillo's case. The position was that the portion of the New Mexico Constitution excluding Native Americans living on reservations in the state from voting violated the 14th and 15th Amendments. Trujillo had won one. Native Americans living on New Mexico reserva-

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## Unit Meetings

*(Continued from page 1)*

In the 2012 Legislative session the LWVNM supported two memorials that asked our Congressional delegation to support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would mitigate the effects of the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision. Both resolutions passed.

### **Luncheon Unit -- Oct. 11 at 11:45 p.m.**

Current Status of Campaign Finance -- Viki Harrison, executive director of Common Cause New Mexico, will talk about the current status of campaign finance at the Oct. 11. The meeting will be held at 11:45 a.m. at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul NE.

Harrison is Common Cause New Mexico's executive director, where she manages the state office in Albuquerque, organizes and coordinates legislative programs, conducts research, directs fundraising initiatives and serves as a lobbyist. Common Cause has been a strong supporter of campaign finance reform on both the national and state levels.

Before joining Common Cause, Harrison was the executive director of New Mexico Repeal, where she led the winning campaign in New Mexico to abol-

ish the death penalty. Earlier in her career she was the program manager for Animal Protection of New Mexico and part of the team that successfully banned cockfighting in the state.

Harrison has extensive knowledge of the legislative process in New Mexico, having successfully lobbied for animal rights, human rights and citizen advocacy issues since 1997 on the local and state levels. She graduated summa cum laude from the University of New Mexico with BA degrees in Women's Studies and African American Studies.

Reservations for the lunch must be made by 10 a.m. on Oct. 8. The cost of lunch is \$15. To make a reservation, please call the LWVNM office at 884-8441 or email [lunch@lwvnm.org](mailto:lunch@lwvnm.org).

### **Evening Unit -- Oct. 9 at 6:30 p.m.**

A representative from Sen. Tom Udall's office will discuss the senator's constitutional amendment he has introduced that would allow the Congress to regulate campaign finance. The meeting will be at 6 p.m. at the Erna Fergusson Library Community Room, 3700 San Mateo N.E.

### **Midtown Unit - Oct. 15 at 1:30 p.m.**

Jo Porter, past president of the LWVNM, will give a brief overview of the history of campaign finance reform. The meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m., Manzano del Sol, Hobby Room (1st Floor), 5202 Roma Ave. N.E.

### **NE Heights Unit -- Oct. 22 at 10 a.m.**

Dick Mason of the LWV of New Mexico will discuss the LWV history on campaign finance reform (1970 on) and where they stand now. The meeting will be held at La Vida Llena Retirement Community, 10501 Lagrima de Oro N.E.

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## Presidents' Corner

*(Continued from page 2)*

tions could vote in the 1948 election for president (Harry Truman won).

But even though Native Americans no longer have to fight for their right to vote, there are issues that keep their voices from being heard. There are still numbers of Native Americans not voting who should be able to. There are still people either afraid or reluctant to vote. Some Native Americans fear that voting could lead to the state taking over their tribal affairs or have other unforeseen impacts on sovereignty. So, some 60 years later, there are still those on reservations who worry that voting would cost them their homes and way of life.

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## Volunteers needed to help with *Guide*

Tens of thousands of *Voters' Guides* will be distributed to libraries, banks, community and senior centers and other locations for the 2012 general election soon. This year we're also targeting high school seniors. This publication is the only nonpartisan guide to both the municipal and general elections for Bernalillo and Sandoval counties.

So, if you can help make community building and expectations of a fair and just government part of your civic duty, please leave your name, phone number, zip code and hours you are available. Contact the League Office, 884-8441.

## Carol Tucker Trelease reviews Olin Bray's book

### *Book review by Carole Tucker Trelease*

*Political Incompetence: What's Wrong With Our System and How to Fix It* by Olin Bray. The eBook is available at Amazon and Smashwords

In this interesting short book, Olin Bray asserts that our political system is in trouble because myths and opinions often override facts, drama and analysis in determining policy and elections.

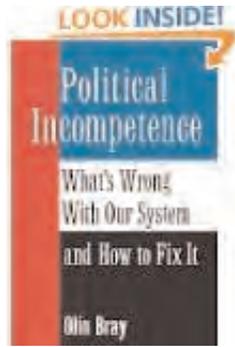
The target audience for this book are those who believe that politics should be about identifying and understanding problems and trying to solve them using fact and analysis, not ideology and myths. The book will help these people become more politically competent and more effective citizens, which are essential in a democracy.

Political incompetence exists in both the electorate and in elected officials. Political incompetence is described, and ten widely believed myths are challenged. For example, tax cuts are not always the answer. Sometimes they are. There is reality, and there is perception.

Political competence is described. There is political incompetence when decisions are based on ideology and myth rather than facts and analysis. Politically competent voters can, and in fact, must listen to multiple biased messages, sort out the facts from opinions, and make up their own minds. Politically competent people may not agree with each other, but at least they will understand what they agree and disagree on.

Look for deception. Check out facts at the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania <http://www.factcheck.org> as well as at <http://flackcheck.org>.

The next section of the book reviews some methodology issues such as how to ask the right questions. Policy questions based on myths are always the wrong question. This section also reviews some basic statistics, which I don't understand much about, but other people do.



Cover of Olin's book

The following section of the book examines several policy areas (taxes, health care and employment) and describes how policy proposals can have serious, often not anticipated, ripple effects. For example, taxes are a complex topic, which can be looked at from many conflicting perspectives. There is no perfect tax system. Good tax decisions must be based on data and analysis. Regarding health care, the United States does NOT have the best health care in the world. We have the most expensive health care, but there are problems with access, cost and quality. Regarding employment, there are some people in this country who are unemployed or underemployed.

The last section of the book describes group and organizational skills that can help people use the individual competence skills described earlier. We must have the willingness and ability to listen to what someone is saying and really understand the points that he or she is trying to make. We need to ask clarifying questions to try to make sure we understand what is being said. We should not be judgmental. We should ask for data and then try to figure out how to analyze the data. We need to respect people we disagree with and be willing to compromise.

Three organizations are described as working to develop political competence in a group context. The League of Women Voters helps members work to develop consensus in many areas at the local, state and national level. America Speaks has town hall meeting across the country on various topics. The organization provides town hall participants with extensive background information, data and analysis. The Center for Deliberative Democracy, based at Stanford University, operates similarly to America Speaks. They select a cross section of the community, using a random sampling process, to get participants. CDD has experts prepare extensive background information for participants. The CDD process takes several days, while the America Speaks town hall takes just a day.

For future reading, one might enjoy *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* by Robert Putnam and Lewis Feldstein.



### PRC Concensus

LWVCNM members gather Sept. 8 at the Erna Fergusson Library to come to a consensus about the Public Regulation Commission (PRC). The Santa Fe League of Women Voters did a study on the PRC and asked for consensus of their proposed positions..

-- Photo by Cheryl Haaker

## Remembering LWVCNM's history -- Part 4

*Editor's Note: The following is the fifth part of a series on the history of the LWVCNM presented at the 1998 Salute to Albuquerque by long-time member JoAnne Ramponi, who has since died. Co-President Shelly Shepherd thought it contained interesting information that many members might like to know.*

Alice Mehlberg served as president from 1988-90. She stated "of importance to me in the beginning was to bring the board of directors together as a working unit-to have a clear vision of our work, to view that work from each others' eyes, and be able to move ahead in the direction the League had chosen." This started off with the board retreat at Pinon Canyon. A great deal of the early months was spent on internal issues and bringing everyone up to speed. The Education Fund became a major focus as we learned to use it to its potential. The Salute to Albuquerque dinner was a major project of the board. Never had the board taken on such a vast fund raising project.

Alice said that "through it all what amazed me then and even now, is that the League marched on while the board was attending to business and continued its efforts in a vast arena i.e., *Voters' Guides*, debates, voter activities, consensus, lobbying at all levels of government, etc. The machinery of our organization never quit, nor even blinked an eye as leadership changed and focused on a variety of new activities-what a tribute to every committee

chair and every member of the League. They just continued on with the work of the League in spite of us!"

Alice was instrumental in getting representation by local League presidents on the state board. This has brought better communication among the state and local Leagues. After all we are a vast state and we have many different areas of interest. During this time we were still lobbying for the establishment of Petroglyph National Monument which was realized on June 27, 1990, housing positions were adopted, an historic homes tour of the Downtown Neighborhood Association was held, the education committee did a study of year round schools. And there was talk again about us moving from the Tower Building.

Well it did happen. Louise Dean did find us a new home at 5015 Prospect NE. This was a big move for League and it is also thanks to the new president, Carol Pierce (Phillips). This included the addition of a computer and a printer. Carol brought an activist perspective to the League along with a determination to make the democratic process more accessible to citizens. Program activities during her term included examination of plans that were being prepared for the development of Petroglyph National Monument, legislative interviews with elected officials, full participation in the National League study on health care and active involvement in revising the Children's Code.

*(Continued in a future issue)*

## Minimum wage question must appear on the Nov. 6 ballot

The New Mexico Supreme Court ruled in mid-September that an Albuquerque minimum wage question must appear on the Nov. 6 ballot. While the high court's reversal of a district court decision may have settled some recent debates, it nonetheless offers us an opportunity to revisit LWVCNM policy positions on the initiative process.

LWVCNM believes it should take more than the five initiators to start the initiative process. If the minimum wage proponents had involved more qualified voters in drafting their proposed measure, they might have caught the typo that took them to court.

LWVCNM argues more signatures should be required to compel an election. But apparently no one faulted minimum wage proponents for turning in too few signatures. Initiatives require 20 per cent of municipal election turnout, whereas recall of the mayor requires a third.

LWVCNM supports a refined process for reviewing initiative petition titles and summaries.

The city clerk and city attorney recently testified they lack the authority to clarify proposed measures. The city council can amend an initiative question only after petition signatures are gathered.

LWVCNM contends elections on initiative questions should not be forced to occur within 90 days of the filing of petition signatures. Some argue only the city council can issue an election resolution and then appropriate election funds. Others counter that a concurrent election was the only way to ensure sufficient turnout in favor of an increased minimum wage.

LWVCNM has called for a city committee to study processes for direct democracy. In recent years court cases and controversies have erupted over city voter ID, councilor and mayor recalls, matching funds for publicly-funded candidates, timing and control of redistricting and the legality of initiative measures. Perhaps LWVCNM should once again petition the city council to establish a Charter Revision Committee focused on election issues.

-- *Sterling Fluharty*



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