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The Voter

League of Women Voters of
Central New Mexico
December 2014

LWVCNM homepage: <http://www.lwvcnm.org>

Maggie Toulouse Oliver To Speak at December General Meeting

Voting is a critical part of governing. Making it easier or harder to register and vote can significantly affect turnout and election results. Therefore the role of the county clerks and Secretary of State in developing, implementing, and monitoring this process is important.

The speaker for the General Meeting of the Dec. 11 League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico is Maggie Toulouse Oliver, Bernalillo County Clerk since January 2007. She will give us

her perspective on the election -- what parts of the process worked and what needs improving.

The turnout in this fall's election was sig-

nificantly lower than for the last mid-term election. Did the process have any effect on this and if so what needs to be changed to improve turnout? She will also give us some idea of what types of voter restrictions (voter ID, registration issues, and limitations on early and absentee voting) are being proposed around the country and their potential effects. Restrictions, which affect different groups differently, can limit their turnout and in some cases the reduced turnout can be enough to affect the outcome of some races. These are clearly areas the LWV needs to know about and should be active in.



Maggie Toulouse Oliver

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Position Review Meeting Dec. 6

There are two critical meetings that determine what LWVCNM does over the next year. One of those meetings, the Position Review meeting, will be on Saturday Dec. 6 at Nueva Vista (a part of La Vida Llena).

The meeting will be from 10 a.m.- noon with coffee and munchies starting at 9:30 a.m.. Hope to see you there.

At this meeting, for all League members, we review our positions to determine if any changes are needed, if anything needs to be restudied, or if we need to consider new studies to create new positions. This year we will focus on state and local positions in preparation for the state convention, which will be in May in Albuquerque.

Read over our positions (they are in the Member Handbook). Mark them up if they need

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December Calendar

Dec. 4	Board meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Dec. 5	Voter deadline
Dec. 6	Position Review Meeting
Dec. 11	General Meeting, 11:45 a.m.
Dec. 13	Lobbying Workshop, 10 a.m.-noon, Santa Fe

Note: *There is only a General Meeting in December, no unit meetings.*

**League of Women Voters of
Central New Mexico
Board Meeting**

**1st Thursday of each month
Offices of Satin, Thayer & Browne,
6565 Americas Parkway NE**

Program Committees

Mental Health Study

Jan Bray & Shelly Shepherd

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 and can be accessed online at our website www.lwvcnm.org.

**Lobbying Workshop Set
for Dec. 13**

Would you like to give Congress a piece of your mind? How about the New Mexico Legislature?

Learn how to communicate most effectively with your elected officials by attending the League of Women Voters' Lobbying Workshop. The Santa Fe League (LWV Santa Fe County) is hosting this year's workshop. It will be Saturday, Dec. 13 from 10 a.m.-noon in the New Mexico State Capitol Room 322.

The trainers/speakers will include:

- * Sen. Peter Wirth, D-Santa Fe, 25
- * Sen. Sander Rue, R-Bernalillo, 23
- * Linda Siegel, government relations and lobbying
- * Julianna Koob, government relations specialist and policy advocate

For more information, call the League office at 505-844-8441 or email action at [lwvnm dot org](mailto:lwvnm.org).

President's Corner

By Andrea Targhetta

Individual human rights have been on the front burner for the League of Women Voters over the decades. We believe in respect for all individuals without discrimination of any kind. Back in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Paris, France on Dec. 10th. This came in response to World War II in which the international community was so appalled at the violence in that war that they promised to never let it happen again. As you very well know this did not halt the violence or war.



Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt holds the Declaration of Human Rights.

The drafters of this Declaration were from various countries: Lebanon, Russia, China, France, United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Chile and Canada. Eleanor Roosevelt chaired the drafting of the Commission on Human Rights and was the motivating push for adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration is considered to be the basis of international human rights law today.

Forty-five years later, the UN General Assembly adopted the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action in which both government participants and non-governmental organizations took part in dialogue to reinforce the original Human Rights Declaration and plan a global approach. This approach included the additional issues of women's rights, the rights of children and the rights of the world's indigenous peoples.

The Vienna Declaration recommended the creation of a High Commissioner for Human Rights which stands today as a prominent office within the United Nations. Today the Commission covers at least 56 areas of human rights which include torture, trafficking, racism, poverty, health, education and environment as examples of just a few areas.

Dec. 10, 2014 is a day to remember that we, both as a nation and as individual citizens of the world, have a duty to adhere to the principles governing human rights. Please go to <http://www.un.org/en/rights> or your local library to read about this area of need.

December General Meeting

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Toulouse Oliver's priorities as county clerk include improving the election process, increasing the integrity and transparency of the process, public education and modernization of the election process. In 2008 she and her staff conducted the first post-election audit in New Mexico's history. She played a key role in passage of the Voter Center legislation and implemented the largest and most successful version of the process in the state.

In its January 2014 report the bi-partisan Presidential Commission on Election Administration cited Toulouse Oliver's testimony and Bernalillo County's experience in two of its recommendations on voting centers and early voting.

The meeting will be held at 11:45 a.m. at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 2020 Menaul N.E. Reservations for the lunch must be made by 10 a.m. on Dec. 8. Please specify if you want a vegetarian meal.

Martha Burk to be Keynote Speaker at Conference Banquet

The keynote speaker for the LWVNM Convention banquet on May 16 will be Martha Burk, a political psychologist and women's issues expert who is co-founder of the Center for Advancement of Public Policy in Washington, D.C.



Martha Burk

Burk serves as the Money Editor for *Ms. Magazine* and is a syndicated newspaper columnist and frequent blogger for Huffington Post. Her latest book, *Your Voice, Your Vote: The Savvy Woman's Guide to Power, Politics, and the Change We Need* (2012), is a *Ms. Magazine* book selection.

The banquet is part of the state convention that will be held May 15-17. Most activities, except for a reception on May 15, will be held at the Crowne Plaza in Albuquerque.

All League members are encouraged to attend the conference and banquet. More information about the conference is coming.



Pollster Bruce Donisthorpe, left, and blogger Joe Monahan discuss the General Election at LWVNM's November Luncheon Unit meeting.

(Photo by Brenda McKenna)

Danice Picraux: Insights from the Legislative Floor – Part 2

Editor's Note: Danice Picraux continues with her personal discoveries as a women in the New Mexico Legislature.

Women do not have mentors and the few who are in power may share but only sparingly -- never actually taking a great risk to help you, in part because their own position may be too dependent on the "powers" that be -- the men.

There are several paths to overcome such obstacles, and each must find her own. For myself, I view the issue as one of expectations. There was an expectation that perhaps I would not be successful or effective; that I would respond emotionally (when you are doing well, you are responding passionately, not emotionally), that I would be flailing about, arms waving, energy surging, and then moving on. That would have meant failure and a negative way of dealing with gender bias. Rather, it was important to have the energy and to direct it, point it, unite and lead.



Danice Picraux

It was important to "learn the ropes," learn the subject matter, learn the players and the process, build my own area of expertise, build rapport, gain experience, show leadership -- become an ally, a friend and a resource for others.

I remained true to who I am. Reasoned, thorough, persistent. I have staying power and when pitfalls occurred, I just picked myself up and kept moving on. My goal was to rise above the stereotypes. It was important to let the flow of expertise lead me, and I refrained from being adamant and strident, so that I was not branded an emotional feminist. If I were too angry or emotional, I would have lost effectiveness.

Book Report: *The Problem of the Media*

Editor's Note: Book Review -- This review of an important public policy book is a regular feature in the Voter. by Olin Bray, author of *ebook*, *Political Incompetence: What's Wrong With Our System and How To Fix It*

The Problem of the Media: U. S. Communication Politics in the 21st Century by Robert W. McChesney, 2004, Monthly Review Press, New York, 367 pages.

We all know the importance of open government. However, equally important, but often ignored, is the media that communicates information to citizens. McChesney is an endowed professor at the University of Illinois focusing on the history, politics, and economics of the media. His latest book is *Digital Disconnect: How Capitalism is Turning the Internet Against Democracy* (2013). This review is of his older book since it covers all of the media rather than one aspect of it.

The chapters address the politics of the media, corporate control versus journalists' professionalism, criticism of the liberal media, hypercommercialism and market dominance, and media reform. The constitution supports a free press, not commercial media corporations. The founders supported a free press and provided heavy government subsidies for it. Almost 75 percent of the mail was newspapers and the debate was whether they should be sent free with a low subsidized postage. He also says that professional, unbiased journalism is a recent idea. For most of our history journalists had a clear and loud political bias, and most newspapers were nonprofits and arms of political parties or interest groups. The balance came from having a lot of sources even though each had its own bias. As newspapers shifted to for profit corporations and consolidated, instead of cities having six or eight or more newspapers each with a different position, you got one or two newspapers. Professionalism was an attempt to quiet the political controversy that arose from losing the multiple perspectives on government and the news. However, professionalism only affects the content, not the commercial and marketing side of the large media corporations. And the journalists who are promoted to editors and really control the content and which stories are covered are those more sensitive to and amenable to the commercial side. The professionals may get Pulitzers but not real control of the media corporations.

New technologies often led to critical points

where media policy could be seriously debated. The Western Union monopoly led to the rise of the Associated Press and a wave of newspaper consolidations. Radio and television both led to similar transitions -- a lot of small independent stations consolidated into a few large media corporations. While there was some policy debate at each point, commercial interests always won. The concept of a free press was shifted to mean leave the media conglomerates alone. Their freedom from regulation is what the free press meant. McChesney's latest book, *Digital Disconnect*, is about the policy debate around the newest technology, the Internet. The industry's position now is that media policy is too complicated for the general public and Congress therefore it should be decided by the media companies and the regulators (especially the FCC). The current fight over an open versus an unregulated Internet is simply the latest round in these policy debates. An open internet requires government regulation and oversight to ensure that all content providers are treated equally, while an unregulated Internet would allow the media companies to restrict some information flows or charge extra for some content providers thus providing a competitive advantage for their own information.

McChesney talks about eight myths about the U.S. media that industry propagates. First, the media doesn't matter that much. Then why do companies spend billions in advertising? Second, our current media system is the outcome of what the founders intended as a free press. Third, the media debates have accurately reflected the range and preference of the public and their interest. Fourth, our commercial media provides the highest quality of journalism possible. Fifth, the news media in the U.S. today has a left wing political bias. Sixth, our commercial, profit-driven media gives the people what they want. Seventh, technology determines the nature of the media. Eighth, no alternative to the current system would improve matters.

McChesney's book provides a lot of food for thought. Media policy is critical for an informed public, which was really the founders' intent. While open government may be important, it can't really be that effective without an effective media to communicate that information to the public. That is what a free press is all about and why it is so important and needs much more public input into media policy and thinking about the points he raises.

APD-DOJ Sign Settlement Agreement

Editor's Note: LWVCNM is a member of APD Forward, a group made up of organizations concerned about practices of the Albuquerque Police Department. LWVCNM members stay attuned to events surrounding the police department. This report was written by member Peggy Howell.

Department of Justice (DOJ) and the City of Albuquerque have finalized a settlement agreement defining the terms under which the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) will, among other things, reform its policies and practices governing the use of force. The agreement will be supervised by an independent monitor. The 106-page agreement requires APD to change the department's use of force policies. As reported by APD Forward, they will be required to stop using Tasers and other electronic control devices against people who do not pose a threat to themselves and others.

Other changes APD must undergo include dismantling the Repeat Offender Project and refocusing the missions of special tactical units as well as providing de-escalation training to officers.

A civilian mental health advisory committee will be created to advise officers on appropriate ways to interact with people who are mentally ill or in crisis. There is to be community input on the new set of guidelines to be established for the use of officer-worn cameras and a built in check on officer's adherence to these policies: Officers required attendance at community meetings and the



Recent APD meeting. (Photo by Peggy Howell)

comprehensive gathering of demographic data on arrests to discourage disproportionate targeting of minorities are also requirements of the agreement.

A team of New Mexico civil rights attorneys organized by APD Forward to review the agreement said that the independent monitor who will be hired to oversee the reforms could determine the success of the agreement. The group also emphasized the use of on-body cameras.

Noting the importance for the City of Albuquerque of this first step, the APD Forward team repeated their commitment to monitoring this process and holding APD accountable to the very end.

Position Review Meeting

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changes. Identify any new positions/studies you think we need. Proposed changes and studies from this meeting are presented to the LWVCNM Board, and if approved, are sent to LWVNM for the state convention. State positions have changed dramatically since your 2014 Member Handbook was printed. You can view the current positions online at lwvnm.org/positions.html

Next year the focus of this meeting will be on national positions in preparation for next year's national convention. However, if you have a burning national issue or study topic, you should bring it up this year because it takes some time to get something

ready to take to the national convention.

The meeting will be in the Nueva Vista Creative Arts room on the second floor, just to the left of the elevators. Nueva Vista is on the corner of Juan Tabo and Lagrima de Oro (one block north of Montgomery). The entrance is on the west side. They have a few visitor parking spaces, but you can also park on both sides of Lagrima de Oro and in the church parking lot on the north side of the street.

The other critical meeting is Calendar Planning, which is held in June and identifies topics and speakers for the unit meetings for the next year.

Keeping Up with Education in New Mexico

Education Group Speaker, Beth Ciccone, retired Albuquerque Public School teacher, opened the discussion by asking attendees to think of a challenge a child (you) may have had prior to going to school: “I haven’t finished my homework,” “My parents were arguing and I didn’t get breakfast,” “I fear being bullied,” “I’m shy, and there are too many in my class,” “I raise my hand and the teacher ignores me.” Many children start their day already stressed, and providing enough time in the daily routine to reach children who need support is a seriously pressing problem.

Educators also start their day with the stress of mandates coming from statisticians and administrators.

Background: All states are mandated to follow No Child Left Behind protocols and are required to conduct one high-stakes test each year that aligns with Common Core State Standards if the state has adopted the Common Core (not all states have done so). New Mexico is using The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) as their high-stakes test for the first time this school year.

The PARCC is given in two parts -- a Performance-based Assessment given in March and the End-of-Year Assessment given late April to May.

Donations to the Education Fund

In Memory of Pat Howell

Jim & Bette Bolton, Lisa Franzen, Peggy Howell, Shelly & Gary Shepherd

In Memory of Edna Fowler

Carol Johnson, Shelly & Gary Shepherd

In Memory of Monna Utter

Frank & Andrea Targhetta

Dean Smith Joins LWVCNM Board

Dean Smith has been appointed and approved as a Director on the LWVCNM Board. He will fill a spot left by Jan Bray but have no specific area of focus at this time.

He will be a great asset to CNM. We welcome Dean to our board family.

All members are welcome to attend any board meeting, and we also encourage all members to approach Board members with any ideas, suggestions, or concerns. An updated list will be in our new handbook.

-- Andrea Targhetta

New Mexico's PARCC -- and previously the Standards Based Assessment (SBA) have had and will have significant teacher evaluation measures and also significantly inform each school's grade.

New Mexico is one of a dozen states in the partnership.

New Mexico's Public Education Department additionally requires that each district have a short cycle assessment with testing performed at least three times a year. Each district may select the test, but only with approval from PED. End-of year exams are also required, but they are not used to grade students, only to measure teacher accountability. However, many students know their grade is not dependent on this “test,” which is stressful for principals, teachers, and parents.

It is important to note that all teachers are familiar with the Common Core Standards, a tool, not a curriculum, from the New Mexico Public Education Department, and Pacing Guides are provided for math and language arts. The guides include the objectives, time lines and instructions that the teachers will be incorporating into daily lesson plans.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of specialists to serve the number of children who are unable to “keep up” with the speed, according to the Pacing Guides, necessary to cover the material. APS District Testing is also mandated. starting at kindergarten. From third grade on, the tests are taken on computers. So pressures are mounting; children need to know academic content as well to proficiently use the computer to take the PARCC.

-- Judith Binder

Voter Services Report

The League received a request from Gloria Suber for someone to give a talk explaining the voting process to a class of APS Transitions students at CNM. Transitions Services is for 18 to 22-year-old young adults who have graduated from high school and are challenged in some way. The program is to help with the transition from high school to the adult world. They had expressed interest in the voting process. Pam Harris spoke to the class on Nov. 25 and registered two of the students.

Adelle Merville of Grace Church requested a League member to give a presentation on the legislative process for their senior group on Tuesday Jan. 13 at their noon pot luck. Trish Lopez has volunteered to do the presentation.

-- Pam Harris