

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

2315 San Pedro Drive NE, Suite F-6 ♦ Albuquerque, NM 87110-4158 ♦ 505.884.8441 ♦ www.lwvcnm.org ♦ https://www.facebook.com/LWVCNM

July 2016

## The VOTER

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### District Attorney to address LWVCNM July General Meeting

**District Attorney Kari Brandenburg,** 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, will discuss the organization of the District Attorney's Office, issues addressed by the District

Attorney, and new case management in her address to the LWVCNM July General Meeting on Thursday, July 14th, 11:45 am, at the MCM Elegante (2020 Menaul Blvd NE).

The Office of the Second Judicial District Attorney, on behalf of the State of New Mexico, is responsible for the effective and efficient prosecution of criminal cases within its jurisdiction, thus assuring a safer community and greater quality of life for Bernalillo County citizens. Victim advocates provide dedicated and personalized support during times of crisis and uncertainty, lessening the trauma that often accompanies victimization. Alternative sentencing programs help first-time, non-violent offenders avoid felony convictions, while providing them the support and structure they need to overcome challenges in their lives. Criminal Divisions within the District Attorney's office include : Community Crimes Division • Crimes Against Children Division • Felony Domestic Violence Division • Felony DWI Division • Gang Crimes Division • Grand Jury Division • Information Systems Division • Juvenile Crimes Division • Metro Court Division • White Collar Crimes Division • Pre-Prosecution Probation Division • Process/Locate Division • Records Division • Special Proceedings Division • Victim Impact Division , Officer Involved Shootings, and Inspection of Public Records.

LWVCNM Positions regarding Criminal Justice include:

- Children and Families/Juvenile Justice
- Death Penalty including Defense Funding/Counsel, 06
- Drug Policy
- Inspection of Public Records

DA Brandenburg graduated from Sandia High School and went on to receive a bachelors degree from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. In the next step of her education, she completed her law degree at Southern Methodist University. Following her graduation from law school, Brandenburg returned to the Land of Enchantment to begin working with New Mexicans. Her first step was the New Mexico Public Defender's Office, where she acquired extensive trial experience. She then joined her father in private practice, limiting her work to criminal law. DA Brandenburg has extensive knowledge of the New Mexico Criminal Justice System, practicing law in Metropolitan Court, Magistrate and District Courts throughout the state of New Mexico. In addition, her experience has taken her outside of the state, to participate in Federal cases in California, Arizona and even before the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver, Colorado. Brandenburg was a foster parent to three children before she started her own family in 1984. When her second child died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome in 1987, Brandenburg became active with the New Mexico SIDS Affiliate, serving as President for eight years. She continues to do volunteer work today. Brandenburg has four children.

*Make reservations for the July 14<sup>th</sup> Luncheon by emailing [lunch@lwvcnm.org](mailto:lunch@lwvcnm.org), or by calling the LWVCNM office (884-8441) by 10:00 am Monday, July 11th. Please specify if you would like a vegetarian meal.*

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**Summer Office Hours**  
Through - Labor Day, September 5  
Monday - Wednesday - Friday  
10 am to Noon

**Closed Independence Day!**

## **July 2016**

**Thursday, July 7<sup>th</sup> 5:30 pm**  
Natural Grocers  
4420 Wyoming Blvd NE

**Board Meeting**

**Saturday, July 9<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am**  
9:30 am

**Calendar Planning**

Coffee, Tea, Pastries, Fruit available

La Vida Llena

10501 Lagrima de Oro Road NE

Nueva Vista Building -2<sup>nd</sup> floor Creative Arts Room

Juan Tabo & Lagrima de Oro Road NE

(parking available across the street @ St. Stephen's United Methodist Church)

**Monday, July, 11<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am**

***Luncheon Reservation Deadline***

**Thursday, July 14<sup>th</sup> 11:45 am**

**Luncheon Meeting**

MCM Elegante Hotel Albuquerque

2020 Menaul NE

**Saturday, July 16<sup>th</sup> TBA\***

**LWVNM Board Meeting**

North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center

7521 Carmel Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113

\*Check <http://lwvnm.org/> for the meeting time.

## **LWVCNM Annual Calendar Planning**

LWV Program Focus

“Campaign for Making Democracy Work”

Saturday July 9<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am

9:30 Coffee, Tea, Pastries, Fruit available

La Vida Llena, 10501 Lagrima de Oro Road NE

Nueva Vista Building -2<sup>nd</sup> floor Creative Arts Room

**Calendar Planning is the opportunity for members to suggest topics/  
speakers for Unit Meetings scheduled through April 2017.**

LWVUS requested that state and local leagues focus 2016-18 Program efforts on "The Campaign for Making Democracy work." LWVUS further defines "Our Work" as:

- Protecting Voters (Voting Rights, Improving Elections, DC Voting Rights)
- Educating and Engaging Voters (Registering Voters, Educating Voters)
- Reforming Money in Politics (Money in Elections, Ethics & Lobbying)
- Defending the Environment (Clean Air Defense, Global Climate Change, Clean Energy)

LWVCNM would like to devote as many unit meeting topics to these LWVUS focus areas as possible. Many valuable speaker suggestions have already been provided and we look forward to ideas from membership.

Parking is available in the St. Stephen's UMC parking lot across the street from the Nueva Vista Building. Please plan to join us and contribute your suggestions.

## History Made

It was brought to my attention after the June luncheon by a lifetime member of the League, and rightly so, that two days prior to the luncheon there was an historic moment in U.S. history. Since we did not announce or celebrate that groundbreaking occasion, let us take a moment to do so now.

Hillary Clinton is the first woman in 240 years, from a major political party to win the nomination for President of the United States. The party she represents is irrelevant. The significant fact is that the previous nominations for this coveted position were all male. There were women prior to this who had tried to be the nominee, including Hillary Clinton herself in 2008, and who failed to obtain enough votes in the primaries to advance to the general election. Women have been nominees for Vice President of the United States from both major parties, but no woman has ever been the top of the ticket before now.

The League of Women Voters has always promoted diverse representation in our government so as to reflect those they represent. We saw a big step taken in that direction with the election of the first African American President. Now that sphere has been broadened to possibly include women in the highest position in Washington.

*Andrea Targhetta*

## ***Political Animals: How Our Stone-age Brain Gets in the Way of Smart Politics by Rick***

***Shenkman***, 2016, Basic Books, Hardcover, 302 pages.

An investigative reporter looks at some recent scientific research and comes to some interesting conclusions about the problems with our political process. He contends that our brains and instincts evolved over millions of years and were optimized to deal with an environment we no longer face. Unfortunately, these incorrect instincts often override our more rational thought processes when it comes to politics.

The book addresses four key questions. First, why aren't voters more curious and knowledgeable? Second, why

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**Note:** *It is very important to spell out the full name:*

*League of Women Voters® of Central New Mexico Education Fund.* This will make sure that our league gets credit and not, say, the League of Women Voters®US.

*George Richmond*

do we find reading politicians so difficult? Third, why aren't we more realistic? Fourth, why does our empathy for people in trouble often seem in such short supply? In terms of voter knowledge and involvement, he suggests that most voters don't see how politics relates to their daily lives or the effects of their votes. At the turn of the century (the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>) he says voters got information on policies and candidates from three sources – churches, political bosses in the machines, and unions – all directly involved in their daily lives. And the voter turnout often exceeded 80 percent. Now with all three sources gone or vastly decreased, a 60 percent turnout is high.

We are also very poor at reading politicians. He contends our instinct for reading people evolved when we were living in small hunter/gatherer groups. There was

*continued on page 4*

***Political Animals, continued from page 3***

direct face to face contact and we saw people doing many things and could decide who was good and bad at which tasks. He contends that most people are still fairly good at reading people in small face to face groups. However, we now live in huge groups without that face to face contact. TV speeches and debates and campaign rallies are a poor substitute for face to face. We can't see the subtle signs of lying or deception that our instincts need to be accurate. Also we only see the candidates in carefully controlled, rehearsed settings not doing a lot of things so we can really judge their competence. However, unless we consciously work at it, we still rely on our instincts.

He describes some research on voters being realistic. In general, in good times voters vote for the incumbent and in bad time for the challenger. Obviously, one cannot reasonably blame the president for the weather, such as a drought. However, we do. Research found that consistently regardless of the party more people in drought areas vote against the incumbent.

He says we need to be aware of when our instincts are triggering emotions and emotional decisions and carefully think through these situations. Telling people their emotional response is wrong doesn't work. You need to shift them into a more rational thought process. What he calls system 2, while system 1 is our instinctive, auto-

matic decision process. One problem is that we tend to live in neighborhoods with and associate with people who agree with us, which reinforces system 1 thinking because nobody asks you to explain why or justify your decision – they all already agree with it.

He contends that many voters are like his mother when she was widowed. His father had done almost everything. She suddenly was responsible for and had to figure out how to pay the bills, run the household finances, and keep the house and car maintained and insured. There were serious consequences if she didn't learn how to do those things. And there was no single place she could go to and get all the information she needed. Today when voters turn 18 they are suddenly responsible for and have to register to vote (after realizing they need to), learn about the issues and candidates, and go vote. And they have no single place to go to for all the information. The difference is that there are no serious consequences if they don't bother to do these things. They don't see direct connections with their daily life so they have little incentive to get involved.

The author makes a lot of interesting and insightful points that are worth considering. He sometimes overstates the science, but most of his points seem reasonable given what we do know. The book is well worth reading, especially given our current campaign.

*Olin Bray*

## **SAVE THE DATE**

### **Calendar Planning**

**Saturday July 9<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am**

**Calendar Planning is *your* opportunity  
to suggest topics/speakers for Unit Meetings  
scheduled through April 2017.**