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The VOTER

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO
6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109

MONTHLY CO-PRESIDENTS' REPORT

by

KAREN DOUGLAS AND DONNA SANDOVAL

The League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico (LWVCNM) is pleased to announce that Karen Wentworth has accepted the First Vice-President/Voters' Guide position that she has been filling since June, 2021, in an off-board capacity. Previously, Karen championed hardcopy Voters' Guide activity. She assumed responsibility for the online Vote411.org that was previously managed by Mary Wilson. The online Vote411.org voters' guide will cover the four Central New Mexico counties in 2021—Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance, and Valencia.

During July and August, LWVCNM discussed the possibility of holding hybrid Luncheon Unit meetings beginning in September along with potentially resuming Northeast Heights Unit meetings. However, continued pandemic-related restrictions limited the September 9th meeting to Zoom. LWVCNM will reevaluate the situation going forward as precautions necessitated by the pandemic change.

Social media activity came to the forefront for LWVCNM following outside intrusion into the July 8, 2021, unit meeting presentation by Independent Monitor Dr. James Ginger. Dr. Ginger discussed the national focus on police practices. The intruder posted offensive remarks the the Zoom chat during the presentation and, when these were not addressed during the presentation, subsequently voiced his frustration on social media outlets. Karen Wentworth, Trish Lopez (social media expert who posts part-time on both Twitter and Facebook), Audrey Brunner and Sofia Wolinski (two seniors from Albuquerque Academy, both interns who post on Instagram), Starlyn Brown (website coordinator), and Ashley Benning (posting on Facebook) held additional discussion regarding publicizing Vote411.org when it goes live during the second week of September. In-person early voting begins October 16, and Election Day is November 2, 2021.

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LWVCNM Leadership

Co-Presidents:
Karen Douglas
Donna Sandoval

**1st Vice President/
Vote411.org:**
Karen Wentworth

**2nd Vice President/
Membership:**
Cassandra Spacek

3rd Vice President/Program:
Jennifer Black

**4th Vice President/
Development Committee Chair:**
Vacant

Treasurer:
Denise Blood

Secretary:
Ashley Benning

Voter Services Chair:
Cyprian Devine-Perez

Voter Guide Distribution:
Lani Desaulniers

Sustainability/Climate Change:
Jeanne Logsdon

**Office Manager/Webmaster/
Zoom Host:**
Starlyn Brown

**Advocacy Team/Observer
Corps:**
Alan Ramos

LEAGUE CALENDAR

All of the following are Zoom meetings. Members will receive invitations on the LWVCNMTopics listserv. Anyone who does not receive an invitation can email president@lwvcnm.org. If you need help with Zoom, please reach out to our Zoom host, Starlyn Brown, at sbrown@unm.edu.

October 14 (Thursday)—Monthly meeting at noon: Voter Education, Part Two

November 10 (Wednesday)—Monthly meeting at noon: Consumer Fraud/Identity Theft

The deadline for the monthly Voter remains the 15th of each month. Please submit your articles to Anne Pierce-Jones, *VOTER* editor, at apiercejones@outlook.com.

LEAGUE WORKS WITH ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO GET ELECTION INFORMATION TO PARENTS

Cyprian Devine-Perez, Karen Wentworth, and Janet Blaim have been working with community coordinators from the Albuquerque Public Schools to produce flyers containing basic voter information to send home with students. These flyers contain information about where and when voters can do early or absentee voting. This is the first time LWVCNM has been able to collaborate with APS to get voting information into the hands of busy parents, and we appreciate the opportunity to do so.

Many thanks to Janet Blair, who produced the flyers in both English and Spanish.

OFFICE HOURS

Closed until further notice due
to Covid concerns.

The VOTER Editor:
Anne Pierce-Jones
apiercejones@outlook.com

CO-PRESIDENTS' MONTHLY REPORT, continued from page 1....

Potential LWVNM/LWVCNM concurrence with California Criminal Justice Reform/Policing Practices introduced consideration of a Fall, 2021, LWVCNM panel in either November or December, 2021, as an educational effort prior to concurrence discussions during January, 2022, program planning. Member recommendations regarding panel makeup and topics pertaining to the concurrence with the League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) Criminal Justice Reform position are welcome during early October. Recent focus on violent crime in Albuquerque, along with the subsequent New Mexico response to the public outcry in response to Albuquerque's violent crime, increased following the August 19, 2021, shooting of four police officers. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham had previously deployed supplemental New Mexico State Police to Albuquerque to support the Albuquerque Police Department, which had recently had many vacant positions for uniformed police officers. The Governor has also revised the 2022 call to the New Mexico Legislature to include consideration of public safety legislation during the 30-day session that focuses on finance.

The LWVCNM Natural Resources Committee initiated advocacy by prompting CNM Co-Presidents Donna Sandoval and Karen Douglas to sign a petition to Mayor Tim Keller requesting enforcement of a ban on retail use of thicker plastic bags. The City's ban on plastic bags was reinstated on August 1, 2021, but use of the thicker plastic bags continued. The petition had already been signed by 19 organizations, with a deadline of August 27.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The LWVCNM will inform voters of the upcoming November 2 elections and the ballot through a social media campaign on Facebook. The focus of the campaign will be to direct people to VOTE411.org for personalized ballot information. This personalized ballot information will come up in response to the voter entering their address. Candidates enter their own information on VOTE411.org, and that information is not altered in any way. Private information belonging to persons who visit VOTE411.org, such as their addresses, is not saved on the website.

The date when this social media campaign will go "live" has not been identified as of this writing, but to remain up-to-date, one should click the "Like" button on the LWVCNM page on Facebook. To share the important election information and other happenings, "share" the LWVCNM posts with your connections on Facebook. We also encourage comments on our LWVCNM posts. Following the election, LWVCNM plans to post weekly on Facebook to keep members updated.

The LWVCNM has plans to expand our present on social media to include Twitter and Instagram in the coming months. We will share the "handle" for these accounts in the Voter and on Facebook.

TRIBAL LAW STUDY UPDATE

The Tribal Law Study group has four focus areas. The focus for Donna Sandoval is economic development. She has received feedback from fellow study group members requesting that gaming be included and is compiling information on the social and economic impacts of gaming on tribes. She is also summarizing the history and current status of gaming compacts with the State and revenue sharing by tribe.

THE VOTER GUIDE IS NOW AT THE PRINTER

The 2021 Voter Guide is now at the printer. We hope to have it before early voting begins so we can send it to the early voting centers. This year we are only printing a guide for Bernalillo County. We will have online information about candidates in Sandoval, Torrance, and Valencia counties.

In the past, we have printed a guide for Sandoval County, but this year the incorporated communities in Sandoval County chose not to opt in to the Local Election Act. Bernalillo, Rio Rancho, San Isidro, Cuba, Corrales, and Jemez Springs will all hold their municipal elections in March of 2022.

This is a complex election. In Bernalillo County, we will vote for a mayor in Albuquerque, as well as for City Council members, Albuquerque School Board members, Central New Mexico Community College Governing Board members, Directors for the Albuquerque Municipal Arroyo Flood Control Authority, the Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District, and a local zoning control district. Because all the candidates in these races are running from specific districts, few voters will see the same ballot. For example, a voter might live in an area with a City Council race, but see no school board candidates on their ballot.

Everyone living within the Albuquerque city limits will get to vote on bond issues and the question of whether to build a soccer stadium.

The committee members who worked on the Voter Guide this year deserve a vote of thanks from everyone. Jeanne Logsdon, Cheryl Haaker, Ashley Benning, and Lani Desaulniers deserve special thanks for wrestling with the complex technical issues in VOTE411, our online software, and for the hours they have put in working to bring the Voter Guide together.

Our question committee and teams for the four counties have done a terrific job. Many thanks to Cyprian Devine-Perez, Alan Ramos, Mary Smith, Anne Gler, Vivian Skadron, Janet Blair, MaryEllen Smith, Donna Rigano, Liz Shields, Mary Wilson, Judy Binder, and Michelle Meaders.

The Voter Guide we produce every year represents the very best of the League of Women Voters. We work hard to give voters honest, unbiased information about the candidates running for public office. In these difficult times of voter confusion and misinformation, we continue to work to give voters the basic tools they need to make decisions.

PUBLIC TRANSIT IN ALBUQUERQUE'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation is a very important goal in Albuquerque's 2021 Climate Action Plan (CAP) because 40 per cent of our GHGs come from transportation. Thirteen of the 50 CAP recommendations relate to transportation. The CAP gives priority to improving public transit because frontline communities rely more on it as their most affordable, and often only, form of transportation. Seven of the CAP's 13 transportation strategies relate to public transit. This month's *Voter* article reviews the public transit strategies. Next month, the other six transportation-related strategies will be addressed.

Many League members do not use ABQ RIDE regularly, so you may be tempted to move on to the next *Voter* article. But consider the trenchant perspective of Chris Ramirez, founder of a local nonprofit organization, who said on KOB-TV:

Even if you don't ride the bus, you probably know or even rely on someone who does. This is an important part of the story. You may not benefit from zero fares, maybe you have a car, you don't have a bus route near your house, but guess what, the person that works at your grocery store, the person that works at the day care, the person that works at your favorite fast-food restaurant where you get your favorite breakfast burrito, they're all gonna benefit. (9/21/2021)

Public transit is important to all of us, whether we ride the bus or not. Here are the seven CAP strategies related to public transit, organized by the timeframe in which the CAP task force expects them to be put into place:

Near-term and ongoing strategies (by 2022)

- Treat public transportation as a public good, fund it effectively, and market it as a socially responsible and affordable option emphasizing rider safety and autonomy.
- Reevaluate routes and increase access to transit, prioritizing low-income neighborhoods, seniors, and people with disabilities, also specifically targeting access to outlying neighborhoods, adjacent communities, and public green and open spaces.

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PUBLIC TRANSIT IN ALBUQUERQUE'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN, CONTINUED...

- Partner with the media to feature bus rider stories in an effort to combat fear and prejudice while highlighting advantages and accessibility.

Medium-term strategies (by 2026)

- Increase funding for public transit, and invest in free public transit for transit-dependent riders while prioritizing youth, students, older persons, and residents with low incomes.
- Improve safety of buses and bus stops for vulnerable populations (e.g., women and children, persons with disabilities, older persons) by improving lighting, visibility, protection from the elements, and epidemic-safe strategies.

Long-term strategies (by 2031)

- Improve the “last mile”—the distance between public transportation and people’s residences or workplaces—with possible bicycle and ride-sharing options.
- Transition mass transit to zero-emissions fuel sources.

Progress is being made now on at least two of these strategies. Just last month, Albuquerque’s City Council unanimously voted to approve a pilot program to make bus trips free in 2022, using grants from federal transportation programs—Not just for students or seniors, but for *every* rider. The second area of progress is testing how well the Proterra Catalyst E2 electric bus works in our transit system. Electric buses will replace those powered by diesel and natural gas. The City put one electric bus into service in February, 2021. If results are good and funding is available, it expects to put five more electric buses in place by the end of 2021.

Submitted by Jeanne Logsdon, Chair

LWVCNM Environment and Natural Resources Committee

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE HAVE AN ELECTION AND NOBODY RUNS?

This November there are 17 ballot positions on which no one will vote in Bernalillo County. In Sandoval County, there are 23 open ballot positions. Because no candidates signed up to run, they will not appear on anyone's ballot.

It's an unexpected consequence of the Local Elections Act passed in 2018 by the New Mexico Legislature. The act consolidated all the small local elections, such as school board, soil and water conservation districts, and others, into a single election. This year's election takes place on November 2.

But no one will be voting on board members for four Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) in Bernalillo County. Property owners in Ventana West, Juan Tabo Hills Estates, Montecito Estates, and The Trails are out of luck. The terms of their board members will expire, and someone in the Mayor's office or the City Council will appoint someone who owns property in each district to the public board overseeing the improvement districts.

In Sandoval County, property owners in Stonegate, Lomas Encantada/Enchanted Hills, Broadmoor Heights, Tierra del Oro, and the Stonegate Tax Increment District are in the same boat. Exceptions are the Mariposa PID, where property owners have a full roster of candidates on their ballot, and the Cabezon PID, where candidates are running for two of the four positions.

Public Improvement Districts are at the grass roots of the democratic system. They affect a small number of people in a limited area who have agreed to tax themselves for some public purpose, such as a park or improvements to a drainage system. They have a history of elected board members, although in the past those members could be real estate developers or persons with a special interest in the district.

The Local Elections Act requires board members to actually own property in the district. Legislators have no way to require that voters pay attention to government actions that affect their property. It is up to citizens.

Property owners in these districts haven't completely lost their chance to participate. Anyone can talk to their City Councilor, many of whom are up for election this year, and ask to be appointed to their local PID Board.

It is not a difficult job. It doesn't require a great deal of attention. However, the problems with the lack of candidates have caused the primary sponsor of the Local Voter Election Act to rethink whether these should be elected or appointed positions. He is considering introducing legislation that would make that change. The motto of the *Washington Post* is "Democracy Dies in Darkness." When we look at this election cycle, I wonder whether democracy also dies in indifference.

Submitted by Karen Wentworth

OCTOBER VOTER GUIDE DISTRIBUTION UPDATE

The printed LWVCNM Voter Guides for Bernalillo County should be available for distribution in early October. One of our members has offered her garage (near UNM Hospital) for us to use as a distribution hub on the first day of availability. Several members have volunteered to deliver the Guides to designated businesses and locations throughout the County.

We encourage you to pick up Guides for yourself, your family, your friends, and your community. They will be available at our office until we run out. Please plan to call the office at 505-884-8441 to check on hours before you come.

Voter Guides will be available to the public at Early Voting locations, County public libraries, UNM libraries, Albuquerque's Senior Centers, Family and Community Centers, and County Recreation Centers.

Many community organizations will stock the Guides, including the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, the Albuquerque Indian Center, Congregation Albert, the Jewish Community Center, the Oasis Center, St. John's United Methodist Church, and St. Martin's Hopeworks.

The following business support our efforts and stock our Guides:

Animal Humane Thrift Shop

Bookworks

Frontier Restaurant

Great Harvest Bakery

Green Jeans Farmery

John Brooks Foodtown—4th Street

Keller's Farm Stores

La Montanita Coop

Moses Country Health

Natural Grocers—Wyoming

O'Neill's Pubs

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Sandia Lab FCU locations

Silver Street Market

Thrift A Lot

Thrift Town

Tin Can Alley

Triangle Market—Cedar Crest

Whole Foods Market—Wyoming

YMCA—H. B. Horn

YMCA—McLeod

Join Us! Thursday, October 14, at Noon via Zoom
VOTER EDUCATION, Part Two:
The 2021 Municipal Election—What Is On the Ballot, and What Isn't

This year on your ballot you will see the usual candidates for Mayor and City Council, but there will also be candidates for School Board and other entities you haven't heard much about. We have a panel of experts who will speak to us via Zoom at our regular noon meeting on October 14. They will discuss a little-known entity that is on the ballot this November, and an interesting problem that came up in this election—board positions with no candidates running.

One of these is the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority, or "AMAFCA". AMAFCA is responsible for the big concrete ditches running through the center of Albuquerque. These ditches were created to move water that falls on the Sandia Mountains through the City to the Rio Grande without damaging property along the way. This year, two of the board members who set policy for AMAFCA will be on the ballot. The Executive Engineer, Jerry Lovato, works out the project details and supervises the agency. He will explain what AMAFCA does and how it works.



One of the most interesting things about the municipal ballots in Bernalillo and Sandoval counties this year is what isn't on them. There are 17 ballot positions in Bernalillo County and 23 in Sandoval County for which there are no candidates. And because no one is running for these positions, you won't see them on your ballot.

Albuquerque allows the creation of Public Improvement Districts. These are areas of the City in which real estate developers create a district with special property taxes. Homeowners are then assessed a specific amount each year to pay for things like parks or drainage improvements. Residents of these districts see the cost reflected on their property tax bills. These districts have boards that traditionally have been elected. In Albuquerque, the City administration hires law firms to run the districts and work with their boards. Chris Muirhead from the Modrall Sperling Law Firm will explain how these districts work and will look at the problem of the vanished board members.



Mr. Muirhead's practice is focused on public finance. For over 20 years, numerous New Mexico municipalities and counties have relied on him for advice on such public financing matters as general obligation bonds, gross receipts tax revenue bonds, utility system revenue bonds, special district financings, and economic development projects. Mr. Muirhead serves as general counsel and issuer's counsel for the New Mexico Hospital Equipment Loan Council, a statewide issuer of conduit debt for New Mexico healthcare facilities.

One of the benefits of League membership is your opportunity to learn about elections and election problems that are really not covered anywhere else. We hope you will join us for this enlightening panel discussion.



6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124
Albuquerque, NM 87109

The League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico, a tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization is a nonpartisan political organization, that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy by education and advocacy.

APPLICATION FOR LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

Mail above information to LWVCNM, 6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109, along with annual dues as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| First member of household | \$65 |
| Each additional member of household | \$33 |
| Student member (proof required) | \$12 |