

The VOTER

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

6739 Academy Rd. NE Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109 lwvcnm.org (505) 884-8441

President Report

By Starlyn Brown

It is October and the last flurry of activity by LWVCNM for the November General Election is underway. Our fundraising campaign reached our goal of \$25,000 to pay for printing the *Voter Guide*. Voter Registration events, there have been over 20, are wrapping up. The *Voter Guide* containing information for Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrence and Valencia counties is printed and is being distributed to existing partners and many new partners and locations. VOTE411.org is live with election information. Our website LWVCNM.org has been updated with election information and the *Voter Guide* pdf. The number of volunteer hours spent on all these activities is staggering. LWVCNM is truly an amazing organization with amazing members. I have no words to adequately express my gratitude and thanks to everyone involved.

So, what's next? **Vote!** Verify your voter registration status and help others do the same, let others know where they can find election information, help with an absentee ballot request (until October 22nd), help someone produce their sample ballot, help others get to the polls, and did I mention **Vote!**

We have a special event scheduled at the Vortex Theater on Sunday, October 27, 2024. Please see page 3 for details.

LWVCNM has been given a Job Training Program grant by Central NM Community College (CNM). The grant dollars can be used by our members to cover tuition for CNM or UNM Continuing Education classes. I encourage you to look at the class offerings related to non-profits, board development, grant writing, accounting, and any other class that might benefit you and the League this fall or in the spring. If you find a class of interest, send me an email and we'll talk. [Trainings - Job Training Albuquerque \(jobtrainingabq.org\)](https://www.jobtrainingabq.org) and continuinged.unm.edu

Have you been reading the Observer reports in the monthly newsletter? They are quite educational and provide valuable information about what is being discussed and decided at various public meetings. We would like to increase the number of meetings that are being observed and reported on. We would like to have observers for the APS School Board, City of Rio Rancho, the Water Authority, and the Air Quality Board, to name a few. If you have an interest in observing and reporting on another meeting let us know. It is important for us to stay informed about the actions of a few that affect so many others. This is how our democracy works. However, our democracy also gives us a voice. The caveat being, if you don't know about a topic or issue, you cannot make your voice heard.

And finally, Please **Vote!**



MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Join us for the Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Series



OCTOBER EDUCATIONAL MEETING

Thursday, October 10th at Noon

WHERE: In person (members and guests only), Conference room, 6739 Academy Rd. NE, ample parking available; Zoom (members and general public)

TOPIC: "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the 2024 Election"

SPEAKERS: Professor Huiping Cao, NMSU Department of Computer Science.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has infiltrated every aspect of our online activities including the composition of educational articles, search for items and information, discussion of purchase options, and consideration of choices for lifestyle, education, and employment. Residents should anticipate that AI is also impacting our 2024 election outcomes by shaping our opinions and promoting selective data and facts. Information searches reliably offer related subjects from other resources and promote specific references which may alter or reinforce our beliefs and expectations.

Our October LWVCNM educational meeting, "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the 2024 Election" presented by Professor Huiping Cao, NMSU Department of Computer Science, will explore these concerns and indicate which decisions could most easily be altered by AI and those most resilient in the face of propaganda or distractions.



Professor Cao obtained her Ph.D. from the Department of Computer Science at The University of Hong Kong (HKU) in 2007 and her master's and bachelor's degrees from the School of Information at Renmin University of China (RUC) in 2002 and 1999, respectively. Her research interests are in the general areas of data mining, applied machine learning, and databases. In particular, she works on creating effective and efficient computational methodologies for the discovery of useful knowledge from complex data (e.g., sequences and graphs) through pre-defined mining requests or ad-hoc queries. She is also interested in applying these techniques to analyze data from different domains such as smart grids, animal and range sciences, agriculture, and high-performance computing.

Please join LWVCNM for our discussion of Artificial Intelligence on Thursday October 10th at 12:00 either in-person at the LWVCNM conference room, 6739 Academy Boulevard NE, or via Zoom.

November LWVCNM presentation

The November 14th LWVCNM Educational Meeting will address Native American Governments with panelists representing the American Indian Law Center, UNM School of Law; NM Department of Indian Affairs; and Native American Law Students Association. Please plan to join us for this hybrid meeting increasing our knowledge of our fellow Americans.



Save the Date!

When: Sunday, October 27th, 2 PM
Where: The Vortex Theater, 2900 Carlisle Blvd NE
What: Performance, Talkback & Happy Hour
Who: LWVCNM Members + One Guest
Cost: \$20 Discounted Ticket Price

With the election just a few days away, we warmly invite LWVCNM members to relax and enjoy an afternoon of award-winning theater. The topic of the play holds extraordinary relevance in a time of constitutional challenge. As a way of thanking our members for their hard work during this important election season, we have reserved a block of 30 tickets at a discounted price (tickets are regularly \$24). Reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis.

What the Constitution Means to Me Written by Heidi Schreck Directed by Leslee Richards

Heidi Schreck's Pulitzer and Tony-nominated play addresses themes of women's rights, immigration, domestic abuse and the history of the United States as she takes us on a tour of her childhood, teen years and adulthood while helping us understand the nuances and future of America's most important document. Director Richards says:

"This is the most challenging, fun and moving way to understand the history of our country, our politics and our future."

The performance will be followed by a **Talkback** where you will have the opportunity to meet the director and cast of the play, discuss the meaning and importance of the play, and learn how the cast members personalized the work. Reflect on what the performance meant to you and could mean to other audience members.

After the performance and Talkback, we will gather at the **Canteen Brewhouse, 2381 Aztec Rd NE**, for an optional Happy Hour. Make a full afternoon of this special gathering.

Please make your reservations ASAP. If we sellout our 30-member ticket block early, we will still have the option to reserve additional seats at the discounted price. All reservations must be accompanied by an online payment or check sent to our office.

Tickets cannot be held without payment.

How Do I Reserve My Ticket? It's Easy!

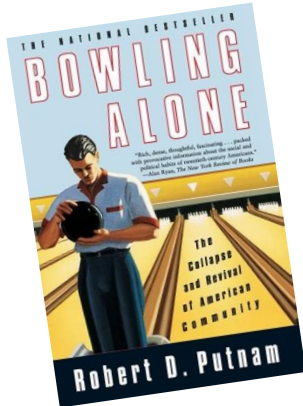
Reservations will be on a **first-come, first-served** basis, so please make your reservation **ASAP**. You may register in one of two ways: Download this [form](#), and mail it in with your check. Or, pay online with a credit card at <https://www.lwvcnm.org/lwvcnm-event/>. Reservations cannot be accepted without a payment.

If you need help with reservations, leave a message on our office phone at 505-884-8441.

LWVCNM BOOK CLUB

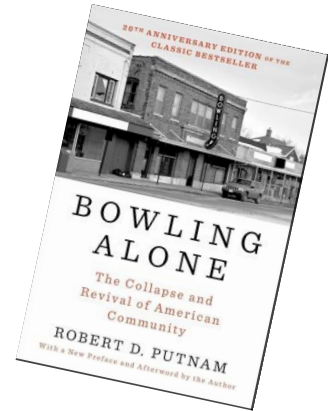
Date: November 20, 2024 (Note- this is the third Wednesday)
Time: 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Location: Park Plaza 1331 Park Ave SW, Albuquerque, 87102

For the November meeting the group selected the following title:



***Bowling Alone:
The Collapse and Revival of
American Community***

by Robert D. Putnam



Per the publisher, Simon & Schuster:

Robert D. Putnam is the Malkin Research Professor at Harvard University. He received the National Humanities Medal from President Obama in 2013 for “deepening our understanding of community in America.” Drawing on vast data that reveal Americans’ changing behavior, Putnam shows how we have become increasingly disconnected from one another and how social structures—whether they be PTA, church, or political parties—have disintegrated.

Read more about the book and author at this link: [Bowling Alone by Robert Putnam-Simon & Schuster](#)

An interesting July 2024 interview from the NY Times also examines his thoughts on the topic in the 20 years since his book’s publication. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/13/magazine/robert-putnam-interview.html#>

Contact Janet at 505-401-2052 for questions.

New Book Club members always welcome!

The LWVCNM Book Club meets the 4th Wednesday of each odd-numbered month, except November which is the 3rd Wednesday.

LWVCNM Updates & Happenings

ELECTION UPDATES

The **LWVCNM Voter Guide** for the November 5th general election can now be viewed using a link from our website: lwvcnm.org. The printed *Voter Guide* deliveries are underway. VOTE411.org is expected to go live on October 5.

We will be reaching out to volunteers to assist with delivering the guides to designated sites in the four counties in October. Members are also encouraged to distribute them to friends, family, and local businesses that they frequent. Guides will be available at the LWVCNM office at 6739 Academy NE Suite 124. Please call ahead of time: 505-884-8441 to arrange a time to pick them up.



The LWVNM has registered as an Election Related Organization with the Secretary of State (SOS). This gives us the opportunity to appoint nonpartisan "Watchers," which allows us to be inside voting locations to observe the voting process. This is different from a "Challenger" who can challenge the process.

Election Challengers, Watchers & Observers Information | Maggie Toulouse Oliver - New Mexico Secretary of State (nm.gov)<<https://www.sos.nm.gov/voting-and-elections/voter-information-portal-nmvote-org/election-challengers-watchers-observers-information/>>

Email us at act@lwvnm.org if you are interested.

Of course, the first priority is to be sure we have enough "poll workers" who are paid by the county to work at the polls. If you are interested contact your county clerk.

Election Misinformation

The SOS has appointed a point person to deal with misinformation about the election. The LWVNM has agreed to pass on any reports we get from members. We are not yet set up to do that right now, but likely will be just before early voting starts.

Membership Corner

It's that time of year. Expect to see your renewal letters in the mail this week. Please note that each member will receive her/his own renewal notice as it enables us to use the much cheaper bulk mail rate. Thank you for a speedy response to our renewal requests.

What is LWVUS Saying? Forwarded by Starlyn Brown

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan national, state and local organization. As the LWV of Central New Mexico, we focus on our four counties and grassroots actions that support democracy, voter education and awareness. An informed and inclusive citizenry makes for a healthier democracy. LWVCMN can also use policies developed at the state and national level. Meaning, we don't have to reinvent the wheel, we can take advantage of the hard work of others.

Why did I just say all of that? Because this is an extraordinary election, and we need to acknowledge and address issues and situations as they arise. **For the presidential election we look to the National LWV for guidance to share with our members. These are two recent articles that I am sharing with you concerning Kamala Harris and Racist Remarks.**

Kamala Harris

In Aug. 2024, Vice President Kamala Harris secured the Democratic presidential nomination. As an organization that believes in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy, we can celebrate the progress and historic impact of a woman of color securing her party's nomination for President while remaining rooted in our foundational principle of nonpartisanship.

The League's take on Harris as a nominee:

- While the League never endorses candidates, we recognize the historical significance of a woman of color receiving her party's nomination for president.
- Representation matters. For women and girls, especially women of color, this is an exciting moment.
- Every time a barrier is crossed for women, we celebrate that progress which opens doors for more women who look like her to succeed.
- As an organization founded to support women in exercising our right to vote, we celebrate the first women of color at the top of a major party ticket.

Press Release from LWVUS - Addressing Racist Attacks in Presidential Debate

For democracy to truly work, we must make space for all Americans — whether they were born in this country or made it their home via immigration — to be included and respected. That's one reason we were alarmed and disappointed that the dialogue in Tuesday's presidential debate included racist attacks against the Haitian immigrant community.

Racist ideas spread quickly. When paired with false allegations, they can lead to misplaced hate and even violence. They are dangerous, manipulative tools that have no place in politics.

The League champions truth, inclusion, and fair elections as part of a thriving democracy. We hope that further outlandish and racist claims about this community will be remarkably absent from further political conversations about our nation's future.

A true democracy, particularly in a nation founded by immigrants, must be for the people.

All the people.

The League of Women Voters stands with the immigrant community, and we will continue to push back on racist rhetoric that endangers the lives and compromises the safety of so many immigrants in this country.

DIGNITY NOT DETENTION



Mary Sullivent staffing the LWVCNM Voter Education and Registration table at the Dignity Not Detention event.

The League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico participated in a gathering at Tiguex Park in early September.

The *Dignity Not Detention Community Event* partnered with immigrant rights organizations across the state to publicize and educate the public on federal ICE detention conditions and injustices, highlighted in the 2023 NM legislative session bill that sought to end civil immigration detention in New Mexico and prohibit ICE contracts with privately-owned prisons such as those in Torrance, Cibola and Otero Counties.

Speakers included elected officials, including the bill's sponsors, Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino, D-Albuquerque, and Sen. Antonio "Moe" Maestas, D-Albuquerque

Community groups, including the LWVCNM gathered under a bright NM sky at Tiguex Park for the Dignity Not Detention event.



LWVCNM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Starlyn Brown

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Voter Guide Distribution: Ellen Kelly

Advocacy Team/Observer Corps:
Karen Wentworth

Volunteer Coordinator:
Linda Miller

If you need help with Zoom,
please reach out to Zoom host, Linda Miller,
lmiller@unm.edu

Please submit your articles for the monthly Voter by
the 15th of each month to Michal Mudd at:
VoterEditorMichal@gmail.com

LWVCNM CALENDAR

OCTOBER 9th (Wednesday) 5:30 pm
LWVCNM Board Meeting, ZOOM until further notice.
All members welcome

OCTOBER 5th (Saturday)
VOTE411.org goes live!
VOTER GUIDE distribution has begun!

OCTOBER 10th (Thursday) 12 Noon
LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM
Topic: The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the
2024 Election".
Presenter: Professor Huiping Cao, NMSU Department of
Computer Science

OCTOBER 27th (Sunday) 2 PM
Performance: *What the Constitution Means to Me*
Written by Heidi Schreck, Directed by Leslee Richards
followed by Talkback session
(see p. 3)
Where: The Vortex Theater, 2900 Carlisle Blvd NE
Reservations Required
Optional LWVCNM Happy Hour afterwards at Canteen
Brewhouse, 2381 Aztec Rd NE

NOVEMBER 5th (Tuesday) ELECTION DAY

NOVEMBER 6th (Wednesday) 5:30 pm
LWVCNM Board Meeting, ZOOM until further notice.
All members welcome

NOVEMBER 20th (Wednesday). 5:30-7:30 p.m.
LWVCNM Book Club
Selection: *Bowling Alone* (see p.4
(Note- this is the third Wednesday)
New Book Club Members always welcome

OBSERVER REPORTS



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting

19 August / 9 September 2024

Mary Mulvany /Janet Kirkpatrick

All 9 councilors were present at the Aug 19 & Sept 4 meetings: Louie Sanchez – District 1, Joaquin Baca – District 2, Klarissa Peña – District 3, Brook Bassan – District 4, Dan Lewis – District 5, Nichole Rogers – District 6, Tammy Fiebelkorn – District 7, Dan Champine – District 8, Renée Grout, District 9.

General Public Comment Items:

Speaking opportunity limited. Several members of the public mentioned difficulties with signing up online to speak at the August 19 meeting. Mr. Padilla, Director of City Council Services, stated that General Public Comment was limited to 30 speakers.

Albuquerque Minimum Wage Ordinance

At a previous council meeting Councilor Grout proposed an amendment to the Albuquerque Minimum Wage Ordinance to reduce the city’s minimum wage for tipped employees to \$3. The Albuquerque Minimum Wage Ordinance was proposed by Councilor Rogers on behalf of the city administration. Decision on the ordinance was deferred to the August 19th meeting. However, prior to this August 19th meeting, Councilors Grout and Bassan issued a press release stating they were withdrawing the \$3 tipped employee minimum wage amendment. In addition to setting minimum wage, the ordinance provided for the city to investigate wage theft claims.

Despite the withdrawal of the \$3 tipped employee minimum wage amendment, 29 people spoke against the amendment. Several speakers cited incidents of wage theft.

Councilor Bassan commented that our city has “much bigger fish to fry when it comes to crime and problems” than to enforce wage theft laws by “going after hardworking business owners.” See her comments at the 4-hour 25-minute mark of the video. [8.19.24 Council Video](#)

Other councilors asked for clarification and expressed that the bill needs to be fine-tuned. They also discussed whether the city’s enforcement of wage theft duplicates efforts by the State. Councilor Grout apologized to anyone she may have offended in proposing the \$3 minimum and stressed that she does not want to take wages away from anyone.

The Albuquerque Minimum Wage Ordinance failed by a vote of three in favor (Baca, Fiebelkorn, Rogers) to six opposed (Bassan, Champine, Grout, Lewis, Peña, Sanchez).

[O-24-21](#)

Balloon Fiesta/Soccer Stadium Appeal Denied

Several neighborhood associations and neighbors of Balloon Fiesta Park had appealed the Environmental Planning Commission’s decision to advance development of seven acres of the park for the soccer stadium. At the August 19th meeting the council voted to deny the appeal. Although they denied the appeal, they agreed that additional traffic mitigation measures must be taken.

Development of the soccer stadium will proceed. Eight councilors voted to deny the appeal, with one voting in support of the appeal (Bassan).

[AC-24-15](#)

Affordable Housing

At the September 4 meeting, the city council voted unanimously to pass redevelopment tax abatements on three affordable housing projects:

[R-24-75](#) Park Central Apartments developed by Route 66 Multifamily LLC. The project converts an office tower, located at 300 San Mateo Blvd NE, into 101 apartments.

[R-24-76](#) Somos Affordable Housing project developed by SOL Housing. This 70-unit multi-family project is located at 7200 Central Ave SE.

[R-24-78](#) Garfield Townhomes project developed by Garfield Townhomes LLC and Sunlight Properties LLC. This project adds 16 units at 2404 Garfield Ave SE.



Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission

September 2024

Karen Wentworth

Bernalillo County Commission Approves Tax Exemption for Film Studio

The Bernalillo County Commission has endorsed a \$186 million Industrial Revenue Bond to Mesa Film Studios. The IRB will exempt the studio from property taxes for 30 years. The city of Albuquerque owns the land north of Double Eagle Airport that the company plans to lease. Negotiations are underway with neighborhood associations, nearby tribal governments and the City of Albuquerque about the height of the proposed buildings for the studio. The company plans to build six sound stages and oversized million and 60-thousand square feet of office space. Company representatives say there will be 48 fulltime jobs associated with the studio.

The Bernalillo County Clerk’s office received \$2.2 million dollars for expenses related to the November general election.

The commission also approved a 6.5% increase in solid waste fees, and accepted grants from the state of New Mexico to assist in hiring more officers for the Metropolitan Detention Center and the Youth Services Center.

It also approved \$3.8 million dollars to the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority to design a sewage system for Carnuel, an unincorporated land grant community in the east mountain area.



Observer Report - Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

28 August 2024

Mary Templeton, observer

Present: David Heil (video), Michael Meek (video), Joshua Jones, Jay Block (Chair), Katherine Bruch (Vice Chair)

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

No agenda items were taken up for which the League has a policy position.

Additional Comments

Public Comment

Two of five speakers expressed concern about a large increase in property taxes for homeowners in the Alegria 55+ community based on reassessment of their clubhouse. The acting Chair encouraged them to work with the Assessor's Office on this issue.

Sandoval County Commission Website

<https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>



Observer Report - Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

11 September, 2024

Mary Templeton, observer

Present: David Heil (Chair), Michael Meek (Vice Chair), Joshua Jones, Jay Block, Katherine Bruch

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Affordable Housing

The Commission approved two HUD Continuum of Care agreements that provide \$356,000 in rental assistance.

As background:

LWVNM supports efforts to increase the availability of safe, decent, and affordable housing for moderate and low-income households through actions that include public and private partnerships and grants, developmental agreements, rehabilitation, fee waivers, density bonuses, and an affordable housing trust fund and land bank.

Additional Comments

Public Comment

Five of thirteen speakers expressed gratitude for Commission support of the Mesa Club and Desert Mountain Healing – two organizations that assist people in addiction recovery. Another five speakers presented an alternative US history and asserted that the only functions of government should be punishment and defense against invaders.

Commissioner Discussion

In response to public comment that the Commission has never taken action on a proposal from the public, the Chair then listed several proposals acted upon, including reducing the number of voter drop boxes in the County from seven to two.

Sandoval County Commission Website

<https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>



Affordable Housing Report -- Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative (MRGHC) Update

September 15, 2024

Janie McGuigan

The MRGHC met on Thursday, August 22, 2024 after a 3 month hiatus from their last meeting on May 9, 2024. In the interim, Serg Martinez, one of the original MRGHC members had resigned and was replaced by Steve Anaya. The following MRGHC members were present at the August meeting: Talia Friedman, Dan Majewski, Lawrence Rael, Ian Robertson and Steve Anaya. The Interim Chair, Talia Friedman asked for nominations for Officers for the MRGHC and the following persons were elected: Talia Friedman, President; Dan Majewski, Vice-Chair; and Ian Robertson, Secretary.

Updates and Action Items: The Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments (MRCOG) has agreed to be the Fiscal Agent for the MRGHC and a draft agreement is being finalized. The MRGHC finalized and approved the Executive Director position job description as an action item. It was also agreed that the MRCOG will be the official hiring entity for the MRGHC Executive Director but the City and County Human Resources Departments will be responsible for collaboratively advertising the position. The MRCOG will provide office space for the Executive Director.

Also, at the August meeting Lawrence Rael was instrumental in encouraging the MRGHC to get prepared to make fiscal/grant requests for affordable housing development at the 2025 New Mexico Legislative Session. The MRGHC members discussed the desire to request an allocation of affordable housing development funds which would then be released via Request for Information (RFI). The intent is to use the State funds as leverage to extend financial support across numerous new and rehabilitated multi-family construction projects. Both the City and County staff will be asked to submit proposed multi-family affordable housing projects by November 15, 2024.

At its next meeting on Thursday, September 26, 3:00pm @ MRCOG, the MRGHC will be seeking more information and education about affordable housing development processes, so they have invited Joseph Montoya, Deputy Director of Housing, of the City of Albuquerque's Health, Housing and Homelessness Department, to make a presentation at the meeting.



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

Volunteer Opportunities

Because Democracy is not a Spectator Sport....

We need your skills, your enthusiasm, and your commitment to the myriad of projects always underway. From simple clerical tasks to grass roots advocacy, ongoing or project-by project, we can fit your interests to a volunteer job. Expanding our volunteer base is a top priority of LWVCNM.



How to Find Out More About Volunteering? It's easy! Contact us at :

(505) 884-8441 or lwvcnmoffice@gmail.com Leave a message with your name/phone number and expressing your interest in finding out more about volunteering. We'll contact you to match your interests/skills with a volunteer position, explain tasks involved, review time commitment for various positions, and offer training where needed.

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.