

THE VOTER

September 2008

2403 San Mateo NE, W-16C
Albuquerque, NM 87110
Telephone and FAX:
505-884-8441
www.lwvabc.org

Diane Goldfarb
President

Aileen Gatterman
Voter Editor

SEPTEMBER 2008 UNITS — REPEALING THE DEATH PENALTY

It is Time to Repeal the Death Penalty in New Mexico. In 2006, the League of Women Voters of New Mexico reached consensus on **a position on the death penalty. The position reached is, in part, "The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports the repeal of the death penalty and the institution of a sentence of life in prison without parole as an alternative." At the LWVUS Convention in 2006 a similar position was adopted. For the full LWVNM position go to: <http://www.lwvnm.org/positions.html> and scroll down to "Death Penalty."**

In the 2009 legislative session, a bill will be introduced that is consistent with the LWV position. Some points to consider and to convey to your legislators are listed on page two of this *Voter*.

Thursday, September 11, 11:45 a.m., Luncheon Unit

Reservations are required*

Albuquerque Grand Airport Hotel
2910 Yale SE

Speaker: Kathleen MacRae

Topic: Can New Mexico Repeal the Death Penalty?

Kathleen MacRae is the Development Director for ACLU-NM and is formerly the Director of the New Mexico Coalition to Repeal the Death Penalty. Kathleen has lived in this state for ten years and, in addition to her work to repeal the death penalty, she has been active in community activity in Santa Fe. She received her Masters in Social Work from Rhode Island College with concentrations in community organizing and development, public policy analysis, and non-profit administration.

Monday, September 15, 1:30 p.m., Midtown Unit

Manzano del Sol, Hobby Room, 5201 Roma NE

Speaker: Dick Mason

Topic: The Death Penalty in the 2009 Legislative Session.

Dick Mason represents LWVNM on the New Mexico Coalition to Repeal the Death Penalty.

Tuesday, September 16, 6:00 p.m., Evening Unit

Speaker: Patrick Tyrell

Topic: The International View of the Death Penalty.

Patrick Tyrell is Co-Chair of the New Mexico Coalition to Repeal the Death Penalty. He is also Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers of New Mexico.

Wednesday, September 17, 12:00 Noon, Sandoval County Unit
Corrales Community Center Meeting Room, 4234 Corrales Road
Speaker: Juan Melendez
Topic: The Exonerated.

Juan Melendez is a board member of the New Mexico Coalition to Repeal the Death Penalty. Juan spent over 17 years on Florida's death row before being exonerated in 2002. He now lives in New Mexico and speaks throughout the world on the death penalty. There are presently 129 people who were on death row and have been exonerated. For more information, go to Juan's website at: http://www.voicesunited4justice.com/death_penalty.htm.

COMING EVENTS

Saturday, September 13, 11:30 a.m.—LWVCNM Salad Luncheon
Immanuel Presbyterian Church
114 Carlisle SE
(See page 3 and flyer insert)

Tuesday, October 7, 5:00 p.m. — **Voters' Guide** Kickoff Event
Albuquerque Academy's Simms Theater
6400 Wyoming Blvd. NE
(More on page 4)

Saturday, October 18, 10:00 a.m. — Membership Coffee for
Sandoval County; Location TBA
(More on page 7)

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE

We've had a very good response from our members to the request for donations to the LWVCNM Education Fund. In case you have not yet had an opportunity to sit down and write out a check— or if you want to give an additional donation for the upcoming *Voters' Guide*—it's not too late. A return envelope is included with this *Voter*.

For those of you who give to United Way through your workplace, please remember that you can designate the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico Education Fund as the recipient of your gift.

These gifts will go to further the educational activities of our local League.

*Cost of the luncheon is \$16, payable at the door. Reservations are required. Call the office at 884-8441 by 10:00 a.m. on Monday, September 8. If you prefer a fruit plate rather than the menu item, please let us know at the time you make your reservation.

**LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
ALBUQUERQUE/
BERNALILLO COUNTY**

Board Meeting

1st Thursday of each month
5:30 p.m.
Offices of
Sutin, Thayer & Browne
6565 Americas Parkway NE

Program Committees

Check with the following
League members about
community activities:

Advocacy

Delores Watkins

Drug Policy

Delores Watkins

Natural Resources

JoAnne Ramponi

Includes transportation,
land use, air quality,
water and energy

All League members
are welcome at all
unit meetings, committee,
and board meetings.

The *VOTER* is published
each month by the
League of Women Voters
of Albuquerque/Bernalillo
County.

**For more information on re-
pealing the death penalty check
these websites:**

www.deathpenaltyinfo.org
and
www.nmrepeal.org

President's Corner

Summer is winding down and we're rolling at LWVCNM. The expectation is that once the Labor Day holiday is over and the campaign season heats up, we'll be inundated with requests for speaking engagements, voter registration, participation in forums, and more. Our Voter Services Chair, Dolores Waller, has already been busy with a large number of summer requests. While plans are not far enough along for this issue of the *Voter*, Dolores is working with other groups to explore a possible fall forum for congressional candidates. Any notice of that event will be sent to you later.

Under Community Education Chair Donna Hill, work is progressing for an October judicial forum. It will be an opportunity for the public not only to meet judicial candidates, but also to learn about the judicial selection process and the importance of judicial independence.

Work has been underway on the general election *Voters' Guide* for some time, and the candidates are sending in their responses. Co-editors Josephine Porter and Andrea Targhetta, along with state *Voters' Guide* editor Jennice Fishburn, are anticipating a large—at least 44 pages—guide this year. It will be expanded to cover Valencia County, and there will be additional space devoted to the judicial races. All 75,000 copies of the *Voters' Guide* will be ready by October 7, and next month you'll receive your invitation to our grand kickoff event that day.

An ad hoc committee was formed earlier this year to review LWVCNM positions and policies in light of our name and boundary changes. Chaired by Meg Wente with members Helen Wright and Marilyn Morgan, this committee combed through the appropriate materials and has made its recommendations to the Board of Directors. An expression of appreciation from the Board goes to these members who were so thorough in their work. The name change has already begun to be made in our printed materials and will be in the next Member Handbook; other changes in the positions can be made at our annual meeting next year. Some positions, however, will require studies to adapt them to our new boundaries, and that will take time. We thank Meg, Helen and Marilyn for starting the process for us.

You're welcome to join in any of LWVCNM's activities. Just give me a call at 821-4229 if you would like to be included. And enjoy the election season, all you political junkies out there.

Diane Goldfarb

Time to Repeal the Death Penalty; Points to consider:

- Most developed countries, and some underdeveloped ones, will not extradite suspects who are eligible for the death penalty back to the U.S. This actually hurts law enforcement.
- By some estimates, over the last 30 years New Mexico has spent about \$140 million on the death penalty and has executed one person. Those funds can be used in so many other ways. The proposed New Mexico legislation would direct some of that money to a fund for victims of violent crimes and their families.
- Of people who were once on death row, 129 have now been exonerated.
- There is no clear evidence that the death penalty acts as a deterrent. We do know that murder rates in states without the death penalty are lower than in the states with the death penalty. This may be due to other factors, but it should bring into question the effectiveness of the death penalty as a deterrent.
- The death penalty hurts U.S. prestige abroad. Almost every developed country and many underdeveloped ones, have abolished the death penalty. The U.S. is in the company of Iran, Saudi Arabia and China who still use the death penalty.

LWVCNM SALAD LUNCHEON

Our members are reminded that our second annual Salad Luncheon will be held on Saturday, September 13 from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. The luncheon will be at the Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 114 Carlisle SE. This location is one block south of Central on Carlisle. Parking is on the east side of the church.

Members are asked to bring a salad that serves from 8 to 10 people. We would like members who are bringing salads to arrive by 11:15 a.m. The League will provide drinks and dessert. We do need help with setup, serving and cleanup; if you can assist with any of these duties, call JoAnne at 884-8441.

The flyer enclosed in this *Voter* provides more information on this event.. You are encouraged to use the flyer to invite guests who may be interested in what the League does. Please call JoAnne at 884-8441 by Tuesday, September 9 to make reservations for this luncheon.

PUBLIC ACCESS TV OPPORTUNITIES

Public Access television provides a Community Bulletin Board where local, non-profit organizations may advertise upcoming events or post their logo — with contact information — so that viewers can access their services. In October, for instance, the League could “advertise” the locations of the *Voters’ Guides*.

Community Channel 27 offers a course in production where you can learn how to use overhead lighting, cameras, a video switchboard, and an audio board. Take the course and receive a free half-hour of air time once a week or a free hour once a month depending on availability and the needs of your group. To my knowledge, two League members have taken courses. One also took a course in editing DVDs. Another, who has since moved away, took the courses and turned them into a very happy career in film production. No one can predict where training through a League opportunity can take you!

If you would be interested in knowing more about the Community Bulletin Board, or if you have an interest in producing television shows, please call me at 884-8441.

Judith Binder
Skills for Democracy

DRUG POLICY

The next meeting of the Drug Policy Study Committee will be on Thursday, September 25, 1:00-3:00 p.m., at Manzano del Sol, 6th floor lounge. Manzano del Sol is located at 5201 Roma NE.

Agenda:

1. Discuss: recommendations for any changes to the pain management presentation; outreach options and next steps;
2. Develop questions to be answered through the addiction study;
3. Conduct “overview” of related resources for the addiction study:

Drug War Deadlock (Laura E. Huggins, ed.); *Rethinking Substance Abuse: What the Science Shows and What we Should Do About It* (William R. Miller and Kathleen M. Carroll, eds.); *High Society: How Substance Abuse Ravages America and What to Do About It*, Joseph A. Califano, Jr.

Now is a good time to join this committee while questions are being developed and a method of study is planned.

Dee Watkins, Chair

FAIR REPRESENTATION UPDATE

The Study Group is continuing to work on the consensus questions for the November unit meetings. The group has planned a series of articles to appear in the *Voter* which will provide background information to help members form opinions on these questions. Topics the group is researching include the effect redistricting has had on competitiveness over the last few Census cycles and likely impacts of Census undercounts on New Mexico (the most under-counted state in the nation.) The group is also looking into how citizens can volunteer to assist the Census Bureau.

The Fair Representation web page, www.lwvcnm.org/fair/, includes links to the group's reports, additional resources, and a "Subscribe" button to make it easy to join the *LWVNM Fair* mailing list.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 23.

Cheryl Haaker
Chair, Fair Representation Study Group

ACTION CORNER

The number of topics of interest to League members is usually large and varied. Now many opportunities for action seem to be emerging. The Advocacy Steering Committee recommends the following topics and strategies for action. Please review the following list of topics and let us know of your interests.

- Campaign (Public) Financing
- Ethics
- Voter ID
- Pay Equity
- Pain Management
- Tax Increment Development Districts (TIDDS)

There are many ways to help. Check out the strategies listed below and let us know what you could do.

- Monitor opportunities for action and report to the Steering Committee;
- Watch City Council meetings on Channel 16 or on video tape;
- Review Council agendas and minutes;
- Attend a Committee meeting to plan and implement an action plan;
- Follow legislation on websites of the state and/or Congress;
- Clip/note news items from your favorite media sources;
- Draft questions for candidates for use at forums;
- Draft letters of support for topics.

Call or send an email to Dee Watkins with your list of interests.

The next Advocacy Steering Committee meeting is Wednesday, September 3, 1-3 p.m. at the League office.

FORUM ARRANGEMENTS PENDING

The LWVCNM Judicial Forum is awaiting confirmation of the date, place and availability of judges for the forum. We regret that we do not have this information to print in this *Voter*.

FUNDRAISER DROPPED

LWVCNM will not be selling Entertainment Books for 2008-09. We appreciate the support members have given the operating fund through the purchase of these books in past years. However, because of the decrease in the number of restaurant coupons contained in the books, there has been a declining interest in them, and the volunteer hours it takes to sell them does not any longer appear to be worthwhile. Thanks to Donna Hill who was such a dedicated salesperson over the past few years.

Diane Goldfarb

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE VOTERS' GUIDE KICKOFF

The publication of the 2008 General Election *Voters' Guide* will be a cause for celebration. It will be especially large and will be expanded to cover Bernalillo, Sandoval and Valencia counties, as well as to provide additional information on the judicial elections.

The guide will be ready for distribution on Tuesday, October 7, and on that day League members, candidates and the public will be invited to a special "kickoff" party. It will be held in the lobby of the Albuquerque Academy's Simms Theater at 5 p.m. Please save the date for an event that we hope will help promote the League and the *Voters' Guide* throughout our area.

LWVCNM WEBSITE MATTERS

Contribute to the Education Fund Online

Now you can contribute online via the League's web page! Just click on the "Donate now" button on the home page (www.lwvcnm.org) and follow



the instructions. You will be able to make a credit card contribution via the JustGive.org secure website any time you're feeling generous, and a full 97% of it will go to the tax-deductible LWVCNM Education Fund, which publishes the *Voters' Guide* and *Who's Who* and holds forums and other educational events.

Join the Listserve for the Latest Information

The League's email listserv, *LWVABCTopicsListserve*, is an easy way to keep track of the latest happenings - reminders of unit meetings, opportunities to help out, and other events of interest. You can expect to get no more than a few messages a day, generally less. To subscribe, go to the "News" page on the website, www.lwvcnm.org/news.html. There is a box on the right side titled "Subscribe to LWVABCTopicsListserve." Enter your email address in the box in place of the words "enter email address", and click on the "Yahoo! Groups Join Now" button.



Cheryl Haaker
Technology Chair

DOES REDISTRICTING HINDER FAIR REPRESENTATION?

A quick review.

Fair representation means voters have choices in choosing who will represent them and that these representatives will be held accountable. An important factor in holding elected officials accountable is the competition they face from other candidates for their office. A concern today is that there are fewer candidates for office and less competition among candidates. Competitive races are commonly defined as those decided by 10-20% margins or less. A small margin of victory indicates the possibility for electing new representatives.

The trend toward declining competition is illustrated in the 2004 Congressional House election when incumbents re-election rates were 95%; only seven incumbents were defeated in the 2004 general election. Recent Congressional elections show 90% of the incumbents have won by margins of more than 10%, and half of that 90% have won by margins of 30% or more.

New Mexico data shows that in the House races of 2006, 60% of the seats were uncontested. However, about 60% of the contested races were competitive. In contrast, the 2004 Senate election shows a pattern much like Congress: 17 seats were contested; 25 were uncontested. Only seven of the races were competitive by margins of 20% or less. So if competition is important in holding representatives accountable, what impacts competition and perhaps causes it to decline?

Studies show mixed results about what factors impact a decline in competition.

Conventional wisdom and the popular media report that declining competition in Congressional elections is due mainly to redistricting through partisan or bipartisan **gerrymandering**. However, redistricting as the primary cause of a decrease in competition is debated by the academic literature. Studies* have shown redistricting to have three effects: reduction of competition, neutral effect and increased competition. Generally, however, this literature has not reached a consensus about the consequences of redistricting for Congressional competition.

Two other contributing factors are being debated as important causes of the decrease in competition. These factors are: **partisan polarization** and **incumbency**. The term partisan polarization is used to describe the situation when parties become more homogeneous within the party and more divergent from each other. They tend to clash more often and negotiate and compromise less often. Suggested causes are: social forces such as residential patterns, geographical collection of one party due to education, income, religion, immigration, and ideological realignment of voters. "A deep cultural divide between the red states and blue states" (Mannan, 2004*) is quoted in the media as both truth and myth. An opposing view is "that national political forces are moderated" (Abramowitz, Alexander & Gunning, 2006*) by a range of factors.

Incumbency advantage results not so much from direct benefits of office but because incumbents face low-quality challengers who are poorly financed. Others are often reluctant to challenge because the odds of success are small. The rapid escalation of campaign costs in recent years also contributes to the difficulty of competing with entrenched incumbents.

How to create a responsive electoral process is a challenge. This article has tried to introduce a broader view of the complexity of competitiveness so that discussion and decision making in this study will produce the best possible results. A look at what other states have done to promote competitiveness will be another article.

Dee Watkins
Member, Fair Representation Study Committee

* A complete list of references is available from the Fair Representation Committee.

Voters' Guide Moves Ahead with Your Help

The preparations for the 2008 General Election *Voters' Guide* are continuing but we need your help. A Distribution Chair is especially needed to arrange the distribution (Please...Andrea and I promise to help.) Specifically the *Voters' Guide* needs:

- A Distribution Chair to organize calling the many distribution locations and to organize the "Distribution Day" push to bring the Guide to the voters (August - October);
- Proof readers to meet at our publisher, Automated Elections, in Rio Rancho. (probably September 15-19);
- Members to call the distribution locations to confirm they will be a distribution place for our Guide (Early September);
- Distribution workers to deliver Voters' Guides (October 7-8);
- Help with our October 7 "Voters' Guide Kick-Off" party.

There are also many one-time projects in which everyone can participate. Please call the League office (884-8441) and volunteer. Thank you.

the 18 Indian Pueblos that exist in New Mexico lie in Sandoval County. In recent years uranium mining, copper mining, timber harvesting are becoming important industries. Many county residents are employed by the U.S. Government, mostly working in Albuquerque. More recently the county has many new residents, retirees from colder climates, younger families in search of more reasonably priced housing near Albuquerque. There are five established incorporated areas in the county, plus the recently incorporated area of Rio Rancho, which range in population from 200 to 11,000.

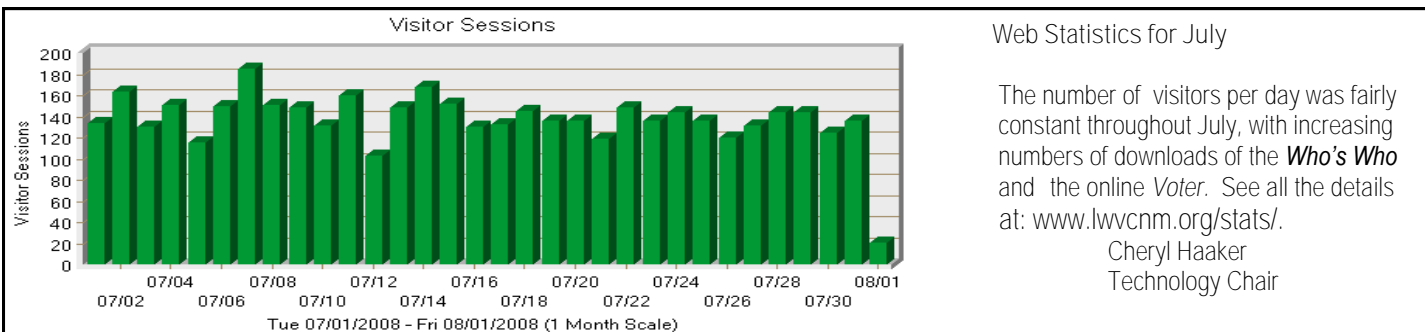
The League of Women Voters of Southern Sandoval County is an outgrowth of the Sandoval County League. Since 1962 its growth has gone through various stages as the history and highlights that follow will show. The idea of a Sandoval County League was initiated by some members of the Albuquerque League, six of whom were members of the first county Provisional League. Some of these members were from Corrales and Alameda, just adjacent to Sandoval County. In the early stages of the fledgling provisional League, Sara Louise Weaver, Kay Strauss, Ann Rustebakke, and Rosana Gall led the way. Members through the years have come from Corrales, Paradise Hills, Jemez, James Springs, Bernalillo and SanYsidro. Later when Rio Rancho slowly settled in, new members joined from that new community. In later years, it was decided that it made more sense to cover only the southern part of Sandoval County due to the long distances between towns in the county. As Rio Rancho grew, more members joined from that new area which subsequently became a city. Efforts are being made to recruit new members from other villages and towns, the newest area being Cochiti Lake, halfway between Bernalillo and Santa Fe. Through the years, guidance has been given by both the League of Women Voters of New Mexico and the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County League in the persons of Mariette Cunico and June Robertson.

A Bit of History:

SOUTHERN SANDOVAL COUNTY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Sandoval County is located in the northwest quadrant of New Mexico, just north of Albuquerque, about 3700 square miles in area, approximately 34,000 in population. The county boundaries were established in 1850 when New Mexico became a territory of the U.S. Bernalillo has been the county seat except for a short period when it was in Corrales; in 1912 the county seat was returned to Bernalillo. It is a county rich in natural resources, and with the advent of settlers, a cattle and sheep raising county until recently. Seven of

From: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, NEW MEXICO STATE AND LOCAL LEAGUES
 HISTORY AND PROGRAM, 1982, Page 35
 By Mariette Cunico, Historian
 League of Women Voters of New Mexico



Web Statistics for July

The number of visitors per day was fairly constant throughout July, with increasing numbers of downloads of the *Who's Who* and the online *Voter*. See all the details at: www.lwvncm.org/stats/.

Cheryl Haaker
 Technology Chair

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Patricia Risley Campbell
10501 Lagrima de Oro NE, #371
87111
291-3371

Email addresses have changed for:
Elene Gusch, Donna Hill, Heather
Ramponi, Mary Ellen Smith

Email addresses available from office
or JoAnne Ramponi for: Patricia Risley
Campbell, Elene Gusch, Donna Hill,
Heather Ramponi, Mary Ellen Smith
and Terrell Wexler

Terrell Wexler
11001 Piñon Azul NW 87114
890-5735

Submitted by Kathleen Kimler Altobelli
August 8, 2008

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NOTICES

OFFICE HOURS CHANGE

As noted on this month's calendar, the LWVCNM office is closed on Labor Day but starting on Tuesday, September 2, the office will be open from 9:30 a.m. until noon, Monday through Friday.

SAVE THIS DATE

A membership coffee is scheduled for Sandoval County on Saturday, October 18 from 10 a.m. to noon. A flyer about the coffee will be available at the Sandoval County Unit meeting on September 17. The flyer will also be included in the October *Voter*.

For information regarding this event contact JoAnne Ramponi at 884-8441.

2008-09 DUES NOTICES

This is to let you know that dues notices have been sent out. Our membership year is October 1-September 30. You will find a self-addressed envelope included with your dues notice. Please return your dues as soon as possible to the League office. When you join at the local level you are also a member of the state and national Leagues.

Dues for 2008/09 are \$50 for the first member of the household and \$25 for each additional household member. Membership dues are not tax deductible. Contributions to the operating fund are appreciated. Please make any changes to your address, phone or email on the sheet that comes with the dues renewal.

If you have any questions please contact JoAnne Ramponi at 884-8441.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The membership year for LWV/ABC is October 1 through September 30. Join any time during the year. Dues are not tax-deductible. With membership in LWV/ABC you also belong to LWVNM and LWVUS. The first membership in a household costs \$50. Add \$25 for each additional membership in a household (all mail goes to the same address). Student memberships are \$25. Make your check payable to LWV/ABC and mail with this form to:
Membership, LWV/ABC, 2403 San Mateo NE, Suite W-16C, Albuquerque, NM 87110

Name(s)

Street Address

City State Zip Code

Home Phone

Work Phone

Renewal _____ New _____ Student _____

Email _____

UNIT	LOCATION	LEADER	MEMBERSHIP
Luncheon 2nd Thursday 11:45 a.m.	Albuquerque Grand Airport Hotel 2910 Yale SE Reservations required \$16*	Marilyn Morgan	Vivian Boyle
Midtown 3rd Monday 1:30 p.m.	Manzano del Sol 5201 Roma NE Hobby Room (on first floor)	JoAnne Ramponi	Lois Reed
Evening 3rd Tuesday 6:00 p.m.	Cherry Hills Library 6901 Barstow NE Optional dinner after meeting	Jan Bray	Delores Watkins
Sandoval County 3rd Wednesday 12 noon	Corrales Community Center Meeting Room 4234 Corrales Road Brown Bag Lunch	Carolyn Lindberg	Mary Mulvany

* Luncheon Unit reservations: call the League office (884-8441) by 10:00 a.m. the preceding Monday. If you do not attend and have not cancelled by the deadline, you will be billed for the cost.

September Calendar

- 1 Labor Day: Office closed
- 2 Membership Committee, 10:00 a.m.
- 3 Advocacy Committee, 1:00 p.m.
- 4 LWVCNM Board, 5:30 p.m.
- 4 Deadline for October Voter
- 6 LWVCNM Board Retreat
- 11 Luncheon Unit, 11:45 a.m.
- 13 Salad Luncheon, 11:30 a.m.
- 15 Midtown Unit, 1:30 p.m.
- 16 Evening Unit, 6:00 p.m.
- 17 Constitution Day
- 17 Sandoval County Unit, Noon
- 23 Fair Rep. Committee, 1:00 p.m.
- 25 Drug Policy Committee, 1:00 p.m.

Membership:

You can join LWV anytime of the year. Contact Membership Chair JoAnne Ramponi at 884-8441.

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Albuquerque, NM
Permit No. 443

League of Women Voters
Albuquerque/Bernalillo County
2403 San Mateo NE, W-16C
Albuquerque, NM 87110
Return service requested



The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.