

The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
December 2012



Legislative Breakfast

Saturday, December 1, 2012, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle

As we go to press, the 2012 General Election is over for candidates running for office except for NM House District 37, incumbent Terry McMillan and challenger Joanne Ferrary. Redistricting has resulted in many changes. New NM State Senators are Joseph Cervantes (D-31), who is moving from the House to the Senate, Ron Griggs (R-34), Lee Cotter (R-36) and William Soules (D-37). Returning is NM State Senator Mary Kay Papen (D-38). Senator John Arthur Smith (D-35), who represented Doña Ana County in the past, has returned because of redistricting.

New NM State House of Representatives members are Bill McCamley (D-33), Phillip M. Archuleta (D-36), and Doreen Gallegos (D-52). Jeff Steinborn (D-35) and Nate Cote (D-53) were returned to the legislature. Rodolpho "Rudy" Martinez (D-39) is now representing Doña Ana County because of redistricting. Representative Mary Helen Garcia (D-34) ran unopposed. All have been invited to attend including the candidates tied for House District-37, Terry McMillan (R) and Joanne Ferrary (D).

Please Join us for our Annual Legislative Breakfast.



HOLIDAY SOCIAL #2



Saturday, December 8, 2012, 2-4 p.m.
Carol Jackson's Home, 4451 Superstition Dr., Las Cruces
Bring an hors d'oeuvre to share - Beverages provided.

Calendar

November 26 (Monday) - Deadline for members to make reservation for the Legislative Breakfast. RSVP Bonnie Burn, Tel: 526-0013, Email: burnb@comcast.net

December 1 (Saturday) - 9:00-11:00 a.m., Legislative Breakfast. Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle, Breakfast: \$10. Reservations Required. If you don't cancel your reservation, you will be charged for lunch. RSVP Bonnie Burn, Tel: 526-0013, Email: burnb@comcast.net

December 6 (Thursday) - NO Board Meeting.

The VOTER

Volume 43, Issue 7 - December 2012
Usually Published Monthly

**The League of Women Voters of
Greater Las Cruces**

P.O. Box 8322
Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org

President - Bonnie Burn

Vice President & Program
Erika Graf-Webster

Secretary - Martha Duran

Treasurer - Ruth Benjamins

Director, Membership
Roberta Gran

Co-Director, Voter Services
Gracia Class
Gwen Hanson

Nominating Committee
Chair: Nancy Phillips
Elected Member: Judith Scott

STUDY GROUPS

Affordable Housing
Vicki Simons -522-4813
Christina Little-373-1882

Education
Jane Ashe - 532-8087
Sue Cain - 647-8250

**Impediments to Voting in
Doña Ana County**

Johnnie Aldrich - 522-1544
Roberta Gran - 650-8490

**Mental Illness Services
in Doña Ana County**

Becky Beckett - 522-8171
Mickey Curtis - 532-5655

Metropolitan Court
Marjorie Burr - 522-2528

ACTION COMMITTEE
Vicki Simons - 522-4813

Web Master - Dale Yeo

Newsletter Editor
Bonnie Burn - 526-0013
burnb@comcast.net

**Look Back: Election Protection and
Campaign Transparency - Bonnie Burn, Reporting**

On November 12, guest speaker Viki Harrison, Executive Director, Common Cause New Mexico, described efforts to protect the voter and the election process. "Making every vote count" was a major project. Training poll watchers was a major focus, and two hundred watchers covered counties in New Mexico during the Primary and General Elections. Watchers were positioned outside the polls with large posters that stated, "Problems Voting, Talk To Me." Common Cause also followed up on phone calls from polling places that were having problems, (e.g., Rio Rancho where voting was available mainly by precinct with the addition of three voting convenience centers). The lines were long and voting went on at some polls well after 7 p.m.

Issues that will improve the voting experience include:

- Expanding early voting time and locations.
- Implementing uniform voting methods throughout the state. Although legislation was passed that created voting convenience centers, each county decides how to implement them.
- Eliminating voter suppression tactics by accurate poll watcher/challenger training and preventing erroneous purging of voting rolls.
- Issuing provisional ballots to ensure that every voter who is eligible to vote gets to vote.

Campaign finance is a focus for Common Cause and emphasizes as much disclosure as possible. Recently, in Albuquerque, a public presentation was sponsored in collaboration with the League of Women Voters. A panel presented information about campaign finance. NM State Senator Peter Wirth (D-Santa Fe) discussed his recent disclosure legislation that passed the Senate but not the House. NM State Senator Steve Fischmann described his experience with campaign financing in the NM legislature. Dick Mason, Co-President, LWVNM, gave a history of the LWVUS position on campaign finance. Viki Harrison spoke about the efforts of Common Cause in this area.

Issues that Common Cause will be following during the 2013 NM Legislative Session include: mandatory voter photo ID, online registration, preregistration of 16- and 17-year-olds so that at age 18 they will be registered to vote, reform or elimination of Citizens United v. FEC, and actions by ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council).



President's Message

"When and where the League was needed most, we were there protecting and defending democracy," said Elisabeth MacNamara, president, LWVUS, in the League's *Leaders' Update*, November 8, 2012. And, I agree! Phew! This was a busy election year, and I believe the League played an essential role in our community. If ever there was a time when democracy needed to be saved, it was during this election. We felt the effects of the Supreme Court decision, Citizens United vs. FEC, and the money that was unleashed. We had a choice of moving forward or returning to some period in our history that would bring back discriminatory voting practices along with suppression of minorities and women. It was rewarding to hear the voters' voices from the voting booths. There were surprising results at all levels of government. Although the atmosphere seemed conciliatory and it appeared that gridlocked Congress may want to solve some of our critical problems, the glow was short-lived as talk of secession and impeachment hit the air waves.



As the saying goes, think globally but act locally. Thus, the League is preparing for the 2013 NM Legislative Session by holding its annual breakfast for NM legislators. As is mentioned on page 1, redistricting has brought about change—familiar faces are representing different districts and some first-time candidates won election. We hope **YOU** and all of the members of the Doña Ana legislative delegation will accept our invitation and join us for breakfast on December 1.

The League's voting impediments study is moving forward. While it is still in its research phase, we hope the general election results will produce some interesting information for it. Voter suppression remains alive and well, and the League must be even more vigilant in ensuring the "every vote counts," and every voter gets to vote. All of us experienced the effects of lots of available campaign money and the League hopes to educate and advocate for reform that will bring sanity to the election process.

On a lighter note, our Holiday Social is scheduled for December 8 (see p. 1). We had such a good time last year that we want to repeat it. It isn't often that we can socialize and make merry. We look forward to seeing all of you at Carol Jackson's home.



In closing I want to wish all of you a joyous holiday season that includes families and friends and a very Happy New Year.

Bonnie Burn



Membership Update

Peter Ossorio
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Las Cruces, NM 88011

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Tel: (575) 522-3112
Cell: (575) 644-8436

No one will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Friends of the League

John Ameriks, M.D.
Anonymous
Biad Chile Ltd. Co.
Reed R. Burn
Joseph P. Camunez, D.D.S.
Donald Dresp
Edward Jones - Connie Lee
Jackie and Adrian Edwards
Nancy and Ken Hall
Win Jacobs
Lilley Law Offices
Louise P. Lockhart
Barbara Myers
Francisco Mario Ortiz Law Firm
Jean Ossorio
Kathryn Schultz
Wanda Skowlund
David Sudimack, DDS
Sunspot Solar Energy
Donna and Tom Tate
Williams Design Group, Inc.
Zia Engineering & Environment
Consultants

Thank You



League News



President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

November 5, 2012

Re: Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to ask you to designate the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks area as a national monument, using Presidential powers granted you under the Antiquities Act of 1906.

This area encompasses 600,000 acres (938 of the 3,804 square miles) in Doña Ana County, New Mexico. It is a special region in the United States known for its unique Chihuahuan Desert landscapes, natural treasures including the Organ Mountains, Kilbourne Hole, Broad Canyon, and the Potrillo volcanic field, and for possessing nationally significant American and pre-American historical sites including the Butterfield Stagecoach Trail, Gadsden Purchase International Boundary, thousands of petroglyphs and other archeological areas such as Billy the Kid's Outlaw Rock, World War II Aerial Bomb Targets, and Geronimo's Cave.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces organized the first community meetings to protect those areas. In 2006 we supported the "Citizens Wilderness and National Conservation Area Proposal", federal legislation introduced in 2009 that sought designation as federal wilderness and national conservation areas and in 2011 legislation proposed by Senators Bingaman and Udall, S.1024, that presently awaits action in the U.S. Senate. Congressman Steve Pearce introduced HR 4334 in 2012 that awaits legislative action. The League does not support this bill because it fails to protect almost 90% of the lands that our community believes should be protected and removes interim wilderness protection for 19,667 acres of land in the Organ Mountains.

We value our New Mexican heritage and want to see it protected on a permanent basis. Through countless hours of community meetings, public hearings and conversations with the public, ranchers, hunters, off-road vehicle enthusiasts, the issues of concern such as border security, vehicular access, storm water management, and ranching have been addressed.

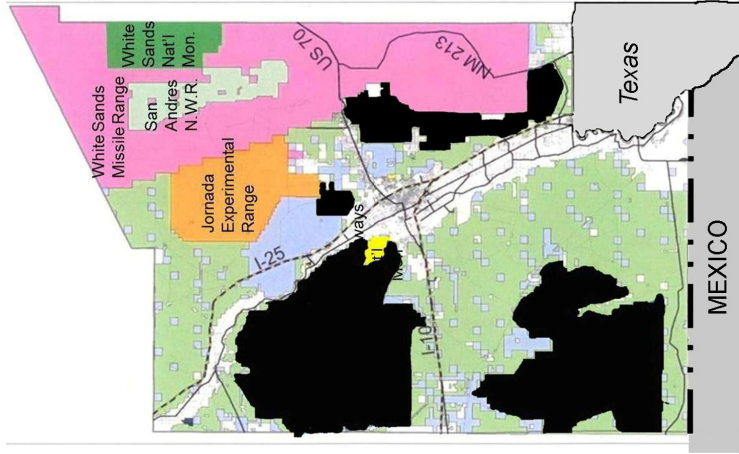
The League supports having the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as the federal agency to oversee the national monument. In Doña Ana County, BLM has a long tradition of community involvement. Any national monument in this area should be managed in a way that facilitates research, conserves resources, respects existing ranching interests, and provides for a wide range of uses such as outdoor recreation, hunting, and tourism.

For your information, I have included a handout from our recent public forum on this proposed initiative.

We, therefore, ask you to grant our request that the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks initiative become a national monument. You may remember your 2008 campaign visit to Las Cruces with our beautiful Organ Mountains as your background. Please remember us and approve the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Burn, President

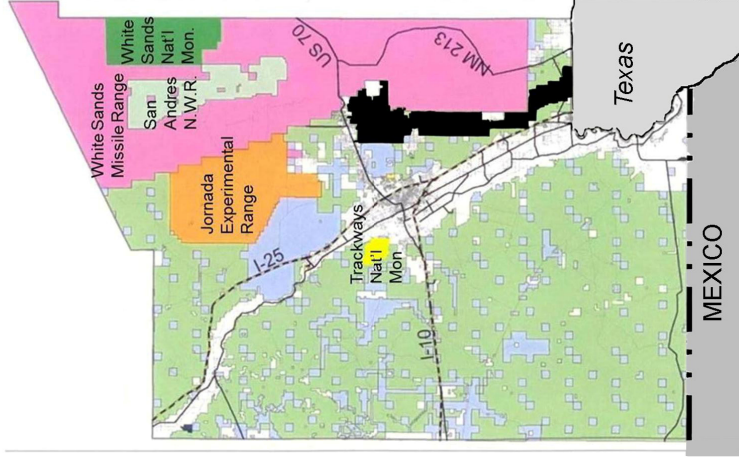
DOÑA ANA COUNTY - WILDERNESS AREAS SHOWN IN BLACK



Wilderness Alliance Proposal

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks
National Monument

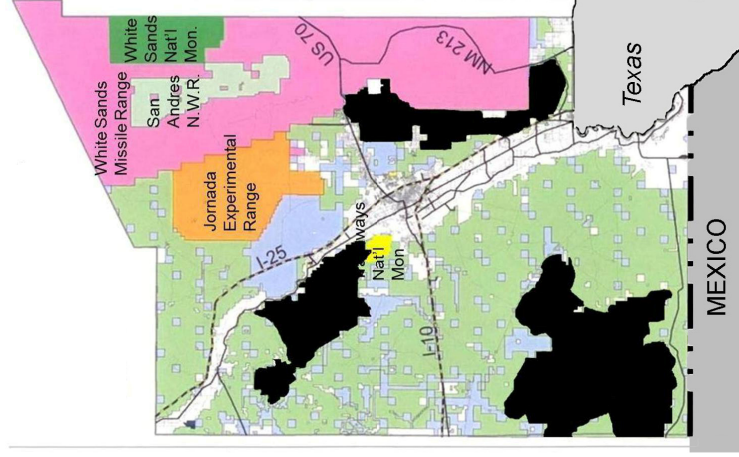
Size: 600,000 acres
(938 square miles)



Congressman Pearce's Proposal

H.R. 4334 Organ Mountains
National Monument Establishment
Act

Size:
58,512 acres
(91 square miles)



Senator Bingaman's Proposal

S.1024 Organ Mountains-Doña
Ana County Conservation &
Protection Act

Size:
241,000 acres of Wilderness
and 75,000 acres of National
Conservation Area
(495 square miles)

The RIGHT TO VOTE: A Brief History

With permission to reprint from a three-part series published in The Voter, LWV of Central New Mexico, and written by Shelly Shepherd, Co-President

After completing a general election that was filled with negative advertisements and the free flow of campaign cash, it seems appropriate to pause and remind ourselves of our precious **RIGHT** to vote.

Voting is not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, so each state may create its own laws unless federal laws are passed that apply to every state. When the country was founded, only white men with property were permitted to vote. Working men, women, Native Americans and all other people of color were denied the franchise.

By the time of the Civil War, most white men were allowed to vote, whether or not they owned property, due to the efforts of those who championed the cause of frontiersmen and white immigrants. Immigrants in some cases had to wait 14 years for citizenship to gain the right to vote. Literacy tests, poll taxes, and religious tests were used in various places.

In 1868, the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified granting citizenship to former slaves and counting them as whole persons. In 1870, the 15th Amendment was ratified that guaranteed the right to vote to black men, with most women of all races still unable to vote. Some women in the U. S. territories such as Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado, had achieved the right to vote.

The “Black Codes,” state laws that restricted freedom of African-Americans, were enacted and included restrictions on voting. Literacy tests, poll taxes, hiding the location of polls, economic pressures, threats of violence and other strategies were used to suppress the African-American vote.

The historic convention held in 1848 in Seneca Falls, NY, marked the beginning of the women’s suffrage movement in the United States. After a 72-year struggle, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1920. The League of Women Voters was established thereafter by suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt to help women navigate the electoral process.

Native Americans were not granted citizenship until 1924 or allowed to vote until 1948. American Indians were citizens of their tribal nation as well as the United States and those tribal nations are characterized under U.S. law as “domestic dependent nations,” a designation that creates particular tension between rights granted via tribal sovereignty and rights the individual Indians retain as U.S. citizens. Although the Citizenship Act (1924) declared Native Americans U.S. citizens, those in NM living on reservations were referred to as “Indians not taxed” in the NM Constitution and could not vote. Giving up their tribal affiliation allowed them to vote as early as 1887. Many western states denied them the right to vote through property requirements, economic pressure, hiding the polls and condoning physical violence against those who voted. Native Americans could be drafted into the armed services. After World War II, Miguel Trujillo, a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, filed a lawsuit against the state, Trujillo vs. Garley, that gained the right to vote (1948) for all New Mexican Native Americans.

Mexican-Americans fared no better. Those living in Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico and Texas were supposed to receive voting rights along with American citizenship in 1848 when the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War. Property and literacy requirements, violence and intimidation were imposed in those states. During the period 1848-1912, as the territories achieved statehood, Mexican-Americans had their civil rights violated and suffered violence and legal trickery. They voted more frequently when voting materials were printed in a language other than English (Voting Rights Act of 1975).

Asian Pacific-Americans were considered ineligible for citizenship under the “whites-only” clause of the 1790 Nationalization Law. Some received the right to vote when naturalization and immigration laws were changed in 1943, 1946, and 1952. Nevertheless, because citizenship is a prerequisite for voting, immigrant Asian-Americans did not vote in large numbers until 1965. Those born on U.S. soil were citizens and had the right to vote.

(Continued on page 7)

Voting Rights *(Continued from page 6)*

Several important federal laws were enacted that improved the voting process. In 1964, the 24th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified that eliminated all discriminatory poll tax or other taxes that prevented people from voting. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, passed because of the efforts of Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement, outlawed all major forms of discrimination against racial, ethnic, national and religious minorities and women. Among other things, it ended unequal application of voter registration requirements as well as racial segregation in schools, at workplaces, and by facilities that serve the public. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed discriminatory practices that particularly disenfranchised African-Americans. In later renewals, language that assisted minority voters who did not speak fluent English was added. This particularly helped Asian Pacific-Americans and Latinos. The 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution (1971) changed the voting age from 21 to 18, thus enabling the Vietnam veterans and future men and women serving in the armed forces to vote.

Despite federal laws, amendments to the constitution, and the efforts of many dedicated Americans and organizations to ensure open elections and the ideal of "one person one vote," restrictions and roadblocks are reappearing. The League of Women Voters must continue its advocacy efforts against legislation that would restrict voter participation and continue its legacy of providing comprehensive voter education.

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS

Meetings were held after Voter deadline.
Look for them in the January issue.

VOTER SERVICES STATISTICS

2012 General Election
October 1—November 12, 2012

Voter registrations - 130

Candidates Forums - 3
October 2, NM State Senators
October 10, NM State House of Representatives
October 17, 3rd Judicial Court & District Attorney
County Clerk, Treasurer, and Commissioners
Approximate attendance 75-100
Televised live on CLC-TV and rebroadcast

Video, Voting in Doña Ana County
93 viewings

Voters Guide - 16,500 copies in English
15,000 copies in Spanish
in collaboration with CAFé

Telephone Calls - 60

Web Site Visits: 2,483

**Interested in Joining
A BOOK CLUB**

Some League members have discussed starting a Book Club. The purpose of the club would be to become more knowledgeable about current issues of interest, including the social, political, economic and other factors that are shaping our country and the world. In addition, the club would provide the opportunity for us to socialize and to get to know each other better.

Are you interested? If yes, please come to an organizational meeting on January 10, at 2:00 p.m. at Marjorie Burr's house, 695 Stone Canyon Drive. At this meeting, we will decide on the characteristics of this book club, including:

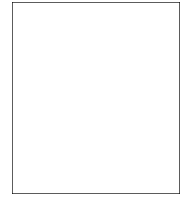
- Books in what subject areas are of interest to us?
- When, where and how often should we meet?

Contact Erika Graf-Webster (521-0600, egrafwebster@q.com) if you have questions.
Good Sam's residents - we'll arrange transportation for you if you wish to come.



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FIRST CLASS



**Legislative Breakfast
December 1**

**Holiday Social
December 8**



**December 2012
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Membership Application

Membership: Individual (\$60), 2nd Household Member (\$30), and Students (\$25)
New Members joining after November 1 pay half-dues.

Name: _____

2nd Household: _____

Address: _____ **City/State/Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Cell:** _____ **Email:** _____

\$ _____ Contribution to the League Make Check payable to LWV of Greater Las Cruces

\$ _____ Contribution to the Education Fund (Tax Deductible) Make check payable to
League of Women Voters Education Fund

All checks should be mailed to

League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces, P.O. Box 8322, Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces, 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.