

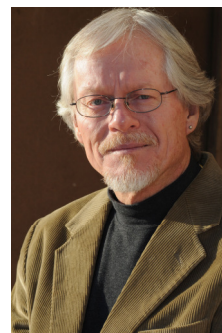
The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
July/August 2013



Doña Ana County: Values, Challenges & Opportunities

Commissioner Billy G. Garrett, District 1, Dona Ana County
Monday, August 12, 2013, 11:30 a.m., Good Samaritan Social Center
Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle



Most of us who live in Doña Ana County are here by choice. We are here largely because of other people, a unique and historic landscape, and a range of lifestyle opportunities. Generally speaking, this is a good place to work and live. At the same time, some residents live in marginal or substandard conditions. There is much here that is worth preserving and much that needs to be done. Commissioner Garrett will talk about some of those challenges, how county government might expand opportunities in response to these issues, and the values that drive constructive change. He will also comment on the Special Election, filling the County Manager position, and financial management at the county.

A third-generation New Mexican, Billy Garrett grew up in Las Cruces where his father was the head of the Speech and Hearing Department at NMSU and his mother taught in the public schools. He holds degrees in architecture and anthropology from Arizona State University and served 26 years as an architect and manager in the National Park Service. In 2010 he was elected to represent District 1 on the Doña Ana County Board of Commissioners. In addition to his work as a Commissioner, he has been a leader in efforts to recognize and address Quality of Life issues, expand regional planning for sustainable development, and reduce euthanasia rates at our public animal shelter. Billy and his wife Cynthia live on the west mesa outside of Mesilla.

We invite you to join us for lunch and a conversation about Doña Ana County—today and into the future.

CALENDAR

August 5 (Monday) - Deadline for Reservations for Lunch with a Leader. RSVP Ruth Benjamins, Email: benjpa@q.com, Tel: 373-8490

August 5 (Monday) - 1:30-3:30 p.m., Board Meeting, Las Cruces City Hall, Room 2007. All are welcome!

August 12 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Lunch with a Leader, Dona Ana County: Values, Challenges, & Opportunities, Commissioner Billy Garrett. Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. \$10. **Reservations Required.** If reservations are not cancelled, you will be charged for lunch.

August 15 (Thursday) - 2-4 p.m., Third Thursday Book Club, Selection: *End the Depression Now* by **Paul Krugman**, at the home of Ardyth Norem, tel: 522-0780.

Notable Dates: August 26 - Ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1920) giving women the right to vote - 93th Anniversary. Also, it is Women's Equality Day.

NEW



The VOTER

Volume 44, Issue 3 - July/Aug 2013
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 - Erika Graf-Webster

Vice President & Program
Roberta Gran

Secretary - Christina Little

Treasurer - Ruth Benjamins

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Johnnie Aldrich

Co-Director, Voter Services
Gracia Class
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Chair: Marjorie Burr
Elected Member: Sue Cain

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Christina Little-373-1882

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Jane Asche - 532-8087
Sue Cain - 647-8250

Voting Impediments
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**Mental Health Services
in Doña Ana County**
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Mickey Curtis - 532-5655

Metropolitan Court
Marjorie Burr - 522-2528

ACTION COMMITTEE
Barbara Goedecke - 522-0323

Web Master
Dale Yeo - 405-7580

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

*President's Message*

Hope you are all having a great summer and enjoying the hot weather. After spending a few days in Phoenix early in July, I was very happy to come home to Las Cruces and our (relatively) cooler temperatures.

Though we are not meeting in July, League activities are ongoing. The Voter Services team has set **October 8** as the date for the Las Cruces municipal **Candidates Forum**. Regarding the **Voters Guide**, we decided that both local newspapers should be given the opportunity to bid on its production. We developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the *Voters Guide* and the *Who's Who*, and met with both The Bulletin and the Sun-News management to discuss our requirements. Their bids are due to us on July 15.

A personal highlight for me was attending the new Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) training session held on July 9-10 in Albuquerque, along with Roberta Gran and Bonnie Burn. This program was developed by the League of Women Voters of the U.S. (LWVUS) to address the goals of increasing membership in the local Leagues, promoting their visibility within their communities, and growing a core of current and future League leaders.

This program came about through the realization by the national League that many of its best practices and procedures were not well known at the local League level. The program has a three-tier construction: national, state and local League levels. Through donations to the Fund for Local League Growth, LWVUS conducts the program and provides its materials. It also provides dedicated coaches to each state League for a constant flow of communication and guidance. At the state level, a state coaching team is instituted, whose function is to continuously communicate with the MLD team in the local Leagues. For New Mexico, our own Bonnie Burn has been designated as one of the two state coaches, along with Linda Moscarella, a long-time state member-at-large. Bonnie is coaching the Los Alamos and Central New Mexico Leagues, while Linda is responsible for our League and the Santa Fe League.

The MLD program offers a variety of suggested new activities for local Leagues to improve their standing within the community, a number of which seem well suited to our League. We will be gradually implementing some of these over the next few months, and will be reporting on them in each issue of the VOTER – so watch this space.

Erika

Board Highlights - June 6, 2013 - Christina Little, Secretary

At the June 6, 2013, board meeting, several items of general interest were discussed.

- Board Meetings will ordinarily be the first Monday of the month starting at 1:30 pm. This is a change of both date and time. The next meeting will be held on August 5, Room 2007 of the City of Las Cruces Municipal Building. Because of Labor Day, the September meeting will be held on Thursday, September 5. All League members are welcome at all board meetings.
- In addition to the meetings listed in the May VOTER, there will be a Program Planning meeting on January 13, 2014, from 10:30 am to 1 pm at Good Samaritan.
- Jan Bray will present the LWVNM Alcohol Study to the League at a special Unit Meeting scheduled for September 30 in the downstairs Conference Room at Good Samaritan at 10 am.
- Doña Ana County will hold a special election on July 30 for three bond issues and an increase in the Gross Receipts Tax (GRT). Based on its Mental Health Position, LWVGLC will support the GRT, which funds operations for the Crisis Triage Center, and will write a letter to newspapers advocating for the issue.

19th Amendment Celebrates 93rd Anniversary

Celebrating Victory, a chapter in *Winning The Vote*, by Robert P.J. Cooney, Jr., p. 429, illustrates the low-keyed reception given the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that gave women the right to vote.

"Early in the morning of August 26, 1920, U.S. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby signed the proclamation that the woman suffrage amendment had been ratified by the necessary 36 states...[it] had become the law of the land.

"Suffragists and supporters across the country were exultant that the 'Susan B. Anthony Amendment' finally enfranchised the nation's 26 million women. Since there was no official government ceremony...suffragists organized their own celebrations.

"...Maud Wood Park recalled that when she, Carrie Catt, and Helen Gardener learned that the proclamation has been actually signed, they were 'all too stunned to make any comment.' ... 'we almost had to stick pins into ourselves to realize that the simple document at which we were looking was, in reality, the long sought charter of liberty for the women of the county.'"

An impromptu parade was held in New York City on August 27.

**New Member**

Dr. Rae Fortunato
Judith Walker-Riggs

Membership Directory 2013-2014

will be available at
Lunch with a Leader Meeting
on August 12 or
by mail, if you do not attend.

Friends of the League

John Ameriks, M.D.
Anonymous
Robert Buggert
Sharon Burbano
Reed R. Burn
Joseph P. Camunez, D.D.S.
Donald Dresp
Edward Jones - Connie Lee
Roberta Gran
Nancy & Ken Hall
Win Jacobs
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Barbara Myers
Jean Ossorio
Clifford Pelton
Nancy Phillips
Kathryn Schultz
David Sudimack, DDS
Sunspot Solar Energy
Donna Tate
Williams Design Group, Inc.
Zia Engineering & Environment
Consultants

Thank You

Editor's Note: Water is an issue of focus as southern New Mexico presently experiences a severe drought. During the 2013 NM legislative session, NM Senator John Arthur Smith proposed diverting water from the Gila River to Deming and potentially Las Cruces. On June 29th, the Audubon Western Rivers Action Network sponsored a "Water, Birds, and Conservation Summit," in Las Cruces that focused on NM water issues. Among the presentations was one about the Gila River and diversion proposals. The following paper gives information about the importance of the Gila River and the effects of diversion.

In 2010, the League of Women Voters of New Mexico completed a study of water in NM and adopted a position that supports **preservation and restoration of rivers and watersheds and maintenance of in-stream flow and general ecological health recognized as a "beneficial use" of water.** This position enables the state and local Leagues to advocate when legislation about the Gila or any other river in NM arises. A full copy of the position is available at www.lwvnm.org.

Protection of the Gila River

Position Paper Prepared by the Southwestern NM Audubon & Gila Native Plant Society

The Gila is a river of national significance and New Mexico's last major free-flowing river. The water in the river sustains the largest contiguous stretch of multi-aged cottonwood-willow forest remaining in New Mexico. Both small floods and high flow events are important for establishment and maintenance of this riparian forest. The spread of the invasive salt cedar is limited because the native trees are nourished by existing flow regimes,

The Gila's riparian forest is home to one of the largest concentrations of breeding birds in North America. Over 200 documented bird species use the extensive riparian ecosystem. Avian Species of Greatest Conservation Needs¹ dependent on natural Gila River flow regimes include the Abert's Towhee, the Bell's Vireo, the Common Black Hawk, the Gila Woodpecker, the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Audubon has designated three important Bird Areas along a 60-mile reach of the Gila River that are vital to conserving birds and other biodiversity. Audubon's beginnings in New Mexico are connected to this area, as members organized to fight dams in the 1960s and formed the first New Mexico chapter, Southwestern New Mexico Audubon.

Although there are a few small irrigation ditch diversions, as well as a small below surface dam that diverts water into Bill Evans Lake, the Gila River is not channelized and is free to flow wherever and create its own channels according to the laws of nature. This free-flowing river provides habitat for native desert fish that have disappeared from many other southwestern rivers. It is one of the most intact native fish communities in the Lower Colorado River Basin.

(Continued on page 5)



Gila River *(Continued from page 4)*

The Gila's waters include the federally endangered Loach minnow and spikedace in the Valley reaches and federally threatened Gila trout in the headwaters.² As Dutch Salmon, a long-time champion of the Gila, said in a 2004 Albuquerque Journal editorial, "Despite a modicum of irrigation in the Cliff/Gila, Redrock, and Virden communities, and a diversion at Bill Evans Lake for mining uses, the Gila remains a perennial and largely unregulated flow; it persists through drought and counts its floods as revival events."

The Threat of a New Gila River Diversion and Pipeline

In 2004, Congress enacted the Arizona Water Settlement Act (AWSA) to settle water disputes between the Gila River Indian Community and all parties. Under the AWSA, Congress authorized projects to meet water supply demands in southwestern New Mexico. New Mexico will receive \$55 million in federal funds for any water supply project including water reuse and conservation, irrigation efficiencies, and watershed restoration. If the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) chooses a water development project such as dams or diversion, the state will receive an additional \$34 to \$62 million to divert up to 14,000 acre-feet of water per year from the Gila and San Francisco Rivers. The New Mexico ISC is scheduled to make a preliminary decision whether to build a **diversion and pipeline by August 13, 2014.**³ If a diversion is approved, New Mexico will have to purchase Colorado River water from the Central Arizona Project to satisfy its obligation to replace newly diverted Gila river water for the Gila Indian River Community and other downstream Arizona water users. A project proposal submitted by Deming would divert up to 10,000 acre-feet from the Gila and create reservoirs on both Mogollon and Mangas Creeks. Diversion of river water would reduce small floods and high flow pulses that are important for the plant and animal life in the riparian corridor. The water stored in the Mangas reservoir also would be piped across the Continental Divide to Deming or potentially Las Cruces and the Rio Grande.

Who Pays for a New Large-Scale Diversion, Pipeline and the Water?

The estimated cost of constructing the Deming pipeline and diversion has ranged from \$190 to \$323 million. The maximum federal subsidy is only \$128 million. The operation and maintenance costs of a diversion and pipeline are estimated to be more than \$4 million per year. Also, for every acre-foot diverted, New Mexico has to purchase an equivalent amount of water for the Gila Indian River Community and other downstream Arizona water users from the Central Arizona Projects (at a current anticipated yearly cost of around \$2 million). We also would be paying for water that evaporated from the reservoirs. There is no guarantee that exchange water will be available in the future to purchase from the Central Arizona Project as required. Costs in excess of the federal subsidies will have to be borne by taxpayers and/or the New Mexico water users.

What are the Alternatives to Piping the Gila?

Local stakeholders have submitted over a dozen projects to the New Mexico ISC for meeting the future water demands of the four southwestern counties. These include improvements to municipal water systems, water reuse and conservation, irrigation efficiencies and watershed restoration. The \$66 million available through the AWSA could fund most of these projects at no taxpayer expense.

New Mexico derives an appreciable and important economic benefit from the free flow of water through the Gila River Basin. Tourism is the second largest industry in NM. NM's fish and

(Continued on page 6)

Gila River *(Continued from page 5)*

wildlife habitat contributes almost \$6.1 billion to the state economy through hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation. Tourism and outdoor recreation play a substantial role in increasing employment and wage levels in rural communities.⁴ Census data indicate that the population of those 65 and older in Grant County has grown from 16.5% to 22.1% over the past decade.⁵ Much of this population shift is due to retirees attracted by the abundant natural resources in our region, bringing in dollars earned elsewhere but spent mostly locally. The membership of Southwestern New Mexico Audubon and Gila Native Plant Society has increased with the influx of these retirees.

Southwest New Mexico and Gila Native Plant Society are in favor of cost effective, non-diversion alternatives that protect the free-flow of the Gila River yet provide critical water and wastewater infrastructure and conserve municipal and agricultural water supplies for the four-county region. This would be the best economic and ecologic outcome for residents of Southwestern New Mexico. We encourage the ISC to protect the Gila River from diversion.

¹ *Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New Mexico* Department of Game and Fish, 2006.

² *A study of how much water the Gila River needs to support a healthy ecosystem and the probable effects of altering stream flow is currently underway by The Nature Conservancy New Mexico Chapter.*

³ *The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission is tasked with coordinating the review of all proposal. Full documental of proposals can be obtained at the ISC's New Mexico Arizona Water Settlement Act website, h550.nmawsa.org/library.*

⁴ *To learn more about the economic benefits of conservation and restoration of Southern New Mexico's natural resources download this report: http://nm.audubon.org/sites/default/files/documents/economicreportnm_naturalassets_0.pdf.*

⁵ <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

The Camino Real Project Renamed Viva Doña Ana

Building sustainable communities has been a focused effort in the county for the last five years. Grants and local funding have been used to complete Vision 2040, now called One Valley, One Vision 2040 Regional Plan. "Picturing El Paseo" project, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Transportation, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, developed a model and tools for sustainable planning during its review and recommendations for improving the El Paseo Road corridor.

A \$2 million grant from the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, an association of the above three federal departments, was awarded to a consortium of agencies in Doña Ana County. This new effort was unveiled to

community leaders at a meeting on August 18, 2012. The project supports regional planning efforts for Doña Ana County that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure development. The regional plan covers the area from Sunland Park to Hatch and will build upon the efforts of the One Valley, One Vision 2040 Regional Plan.

The project was renamed Viva Doña Ana, and public workshops were held during the month of July in Las Cruces, Hatch, Chaparral, La Union, Radium Springs, Butterfield, and Sunland Park. A special presentation by Scott Bernstein that addressed jobs, transportation and quality of life in Doña Ana County was held in Las Cruces, and a report is published on page 7.

**Presentation by Scott Bernstein to Viva Doña Ana County Public Meeting,
June 28, 2013, Doña Ana County Government Center, June 28, 2013**

Marjorie Burr Reporting

How can Doña Ana County have good jobs, a healthy environment and a strong community? One answer was proposed by Scott Bernstein, president of the Center for Neighborhood Technology in Chicago at a public meeting on June 28.

Those who have heard the concept that the **real** cost of housing equals the cost of the dwelling place **plus** the cost of transportation to and from work, community services and amenities will learn that Mr. Bernstein "invented" this concept. The farther away a house is from the center of a population hub, the cheaper it is. But, when the cost of transportation is included, the price advantage lessens, or disappears. His lecture at this meeting took off from this idea and his points were usually backed up with data from the local real estate situation.

Bernstein said that real estate is the driver of the economy. He said that the market (i.e., economic developers) is looking for resilience in a local economy and a local community process that allows for adaptive capacity or collective efficiency. He noted trends that indicate higher density housing is becoming more attractive to consumers, and thus to developers. First, consumers are responding to the increasing price of gasoline by looking for housing that is closer to the population center and nearer public transportation. He also noted that the retiring population is looking for smaller homes, as are younger population cohorts. These groups are also more interested in rental housing, so the rental market is gaining on the suburban, single-family property market. The **location efficiency** of any building can be determined by measuring its local convenience and accessibility. Developers can pay attention to location efficiency to increase the demand for any building they construct.

In Doña Ana County, he noted, there are **no** areas where the H+T index (cost of housing plus cost of transportation divided by income) is "good," and there is little transportation choice. Even so, 20% of our population do not drive alone to work, but use alternative transportation, car pooling, public transportation, bicycling, or walking, for example.

How can we use the location efficiency concept in developing strategies for a more sustainable community? Bernstein suggested at least two ideas. We could reprioritize government spending from highways to mass transit. And we could develop high-density housing where transportation costs are lower. He raised the ancillary issue that policy-makers must deal with: should we spend money on improving existing infrastructure or on new, greener, sustainable innovations.

In closing, Bernstein touched on the rail transit hub under development in Santa Teresa in southern Doña Ana County. This could allow for passenger rail service between El Paso and Las Cruces, he said. Development of local and inter-city mass transit requires government funding. To pass tax increases he suggested that we stress the **cost-of-living benefits** rather than the environmental or quality-of-life benefit because voters respond most to cost considerations. The average household in Doña Ana County spends about \$10,000 a year on transportation and housing. They would favor developments using taxpayer funding, if they could be shown that this cost could be lowered.

*For more information about Scott Bernstein and Center for Neighborhood Technology,
Email: scott@cnt.org or view CNT's web site:
www.cnt.org.*



Southern New Mexico/El Paso Joint Land Use Study - Public Meeting, June 6, 2013, Butterfield Community Center - Reported by Win Jacobs

Begun in December 2012, the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) encompasses a rather vast area: Doña Ana, Lincoln, Otero, Sierra and Socorro Counties in New Mexico, plus El Paso County in Texas. Put another way, these include Fort Bliss, Holloman Air Force Base, White Sands Missile Range, Mescalero Apache and Alamo Navajo Reservations plus the land and communities contiguous to those installations. Doña Ana County Commission Board Chair Karen Perez and Otero County Commissioner Ronny Rardinco chaired the study. AECOM-Technical Services, Inc. is the consultant entity with Liz Drake serving as coordinator. The website for the study is www.snmejntlanduse.com.

This meeting, first of six to be held across the study area, was designed for public input, questions and suggestions for elements of attention to be included. Following a quick overview of the study's purposes and processes by Ms. Drake, attendees circulated among the information boards presented by the military and research representatives; one-on-one discussions often proved substantive and satisfying.

Compatibility and coordination are the buzzwords of the study: how to protect and enhance the quality of life in local communities while maintaining the value of the military training and testing environment. Ms. Drake presided over the flip chart on which were listed identified concerns, such as aviation and range noise, airspace, etc.

I took the opportunity to engage Ms. Drake with two concerns about which the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces (LWVGLC) has developed positions: water and affordable housing. Water had been identified on Ms. Drake's list, but responsibility for determining the carrying capacity of the land was "being studied by

others." She listened to my strong opinion that the issue was far too basic to be thus shunted off.

Affordable housing, both for installation personnel and for residents of surrounding communities, had not crossed their radar. I offered the example of Clovis, NM, when Cannon Air Force Base jumped in size: housing prices went through the roof and housing supply itself proved woefully inadequate. Ms. Drake added it to the list on the flipchart.

Important to note that Doña Ana County's own Comprehensive Plan has and will continue to address both issues in great depth and detail; this JLUS is focused on the interface between military installations and their surrounds.

It was heartening to hear that Fort Bliss continues to try to effect a land swap that would release some land in the Organ Mountains/Desert Peaks Monument area and have the swap remove development possibility from a chunk of land on their southwest corner.

In short, it will behoove League members to study the website and to stay current with the progress of this study.

(Editors Note: Please refer to Membership Directory, 2012-2013, p. 31 for LWVGLC's position on Land Use, and p. 28 for LWVGLC's



An Enlightening Weekend

Notes from Alianza's Conference
June 14-15, 2013, Universalist Unitarian
Church, Las Cruces NM
Reported by Win Jacobs

Alianza is a group of local citizens working to support asylum seekers from Mexico. To date their efforts have focused on Emilio Gutierrez Soto, an eminent Mexican journalist who fled to the U.S., with son Oscar, upon being threatened with death. An immigration judge will rule on Mr. Gutierrez' application for asylum in 2015. The local group has raised funds to equip a snack wagon by which the Gutierrez men hope to defray their living expenses while they wait.

Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center in El Paso is providing the legal support Emilio needs as he prepares to go before the judge. Alianza's fundraising will now focus on supporting the Center's provision of expert witnesses at that hearing. Presenters at the conference stated that only 4% of Mexican applicants are actually granted asylum, so Emilio will need all the expertise the Center and Alianza can muster.

The broader purpose of the weekend was to heighten awareness of the overall violence in Juarez and some other parts of Mexico. Journalists like Emilio are thought by many to be especially vulnerable since their exposing of corruption annoys officials. But journalists are far from the only victims. Between 1993 (the beginning of the "maquiladora femicides") and 2007, 3581 murders were reported. Between 2007 and 2012, estimates put the murder total at 125,632. Conference panelists estimated that 210,000 residents have fled Juarez since 2008, and that the city is home now to some 200,000 drug addicts—a relatively new twist.

An additional insight brought forward by the panel dealt with Mexico's current and ongoing bid to the world for economic investment that is based largely on the image

of a country under firm control by its government. This image could be dulled, panelists inferred, by too vigorous processing of claims of violence, even by too exacting recording of such claims and counts. So figures were given as estimates only.

The conference was sponsored, for its second year, by Alianza for Political Asylum Seekers, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Las Cruces NM, and the Government Department of New Mexico State University.

Emilio and Oscar have their pretty yellow wagon at Young Park 4-10 p.m. daily. Buy a snack and visit. Learn more by Googling Emilio Gutierrez Soto.

Editor's Note: A report on this event is being published because the League of Women Voters of the United States has a position on Immigration Reform that is excerpted below:

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

Additionally, Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S is "flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries."

The land flourished because it was fed from so many sources—because it was nourished by so many cultures and traditions and people.

Lyndon B. Johnson

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS

The League's Observer Corps can enable greater coverage and information gathering, provide early warning of upcoming issues of concern, increase League's visibility, and assist in networking with other groups. We appreciate the reports that are submitted by Observers. Following the League practice of publishing nonpartisan, objective reports, the information submitted may be edited for content and brevity.

Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS)

Board Meeting, Tuesday, June 25, 2013 -
Jane Asche, Observer

The school board meeting opened with a report of the negotiations in a closed session related to the Superintendent's compensation. Board President, Connie Phillips, reported that the Superintendent, who never received the promised raises in his contract over the past three years, agreed to forego this compensation permanently and in the future will receive the same percentage increase or decrease in his salary as the average percentage increase or decrease of other professional personnel depending on budget constraints in the district. Mr. Rounds said that this agreement had to do with acting in the best interests of the students and district personnel.

Highlights from the meeting follow below:

A notable recognition that relates to the encouragement of academic rigor in the district honored seven students at Vista Middle School who participated in the Duke University Talent Identification Program. These students who were mentored by one of their instructors, Jed Duggan, scored higher than the expected national benchmark for high school seniors on a national test (ACT) that demonstrates college readiness in four areas: math, English, science and reading (see LCPS website for details).

Erlinda Martinez reported on the importance of good nutrition in early childhood with regard to the academic performance of students in school. The district is now providing meals to close to 3,000 Head Start children.

A plan is now underway to comply with the

state mandate to have all charter schools located in public facilities by 2015. The plan will be dependent on a bond issue vote in 2014, the selling of certificates of participation, and money from the state that was formerly provided for the lease of private facilities.

Lydia Polanco, the coordinator for elementary instruction, reported that 175 K-3rd elementary school teachers are participating in the Depth of Knowledge Project. They have participated in a pilot training program to integrate classroom instruction with the Common Core Curriculum Standards.

The Safe Routes to School Program that encourages students to walk and ride bikes to school now has 2500 student participants. It is a good example of an effective partnership between the Las Cruces Police, the Las Cruces city government, parents, students, and the County Health Department and is meant to foster good health and alleviate obesity. The program components, known as the 5Es, entails **E**ducation, **E**ncouragement, **E**ngineering related to traffic control, **E**nforcement by police escorts on special days, and **E**valuations by parents, children, and school staff.

The NEA leadership was able for the first time to make considerable progress in working toward better compensation for nurses, counselors and social workers. The ultimate goal is for them to be able to participate in a tiered system of professional development and pay increases similar to classroom teachers, a plan that was passed by the 2013 NM Legislative Session, but vetoed by Governor Martinez. Teachers in the "Turn Around Schools" Project directed

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS (Continued)

by the University of Virginia will receive extra compensation for all the extra days of planning and development required by this project. Finally, teachers will receive a 2.5 % raise in pay for the school year 2013-2014. The "Turn Around Schools" are 10 schools that volunteered to participate in a special reform project to increase the academic achievement of all students to high levels and to create a school climate that involves the principal, teachers, students and parents in the process.

The discouraging part of the news of the evening was that the district will cut back from 260 days of instructional time in teacher contracts to 242. This is a cost cutting measure to cut down on operational costs. This practice is going in the wrong direction in terms of what research indicates is good for student learning.

The final discussion of the evening centered on the state mandate to put in place anti-bullying policies that deal with both personal confrontations and bullying through social networking. The policies will put in place training for school employees, a grievance process for investigations, sanctions, counseling, and mediation strategies.

Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority, Friday, June 28, 2013 - *Vicki Simons, Observer*

Three Commissioners, Art Jiron, Chair, Arturo Marrujo, Vice-Chair and Steve Pandak were present for the meeting.

During the public participation period, I asked whether MVPHA had information about Westwind Terrace, a project for new affordable housing units and rehabilitation of older units, submitted to the Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) for tax-credit funding for this year. Robbie Levey, Executive Director, reported that it had been turned down along with the other two

proposals submitted from Doña Ana County. The Board discussed this, and the feeling is that it is very difficult to impossible to receive tax-credit funding for new units. Doña Ana County has been successful in receiving funding for rehabilitation of units in the last couple of years, but not for new units. This is a problem for all agencies in the county involved in developing new affordable housing units. I reminded the Board that LVWGLC Affordable Housing Committee has submitted a letter of support for MVPHA and the other agencies to MFA regarding the awarding of funding for new units, and they appreciated the support.

The next item of public participation involved a client at the Oak Street apartments, affordable housing units for veterans, and her problem with insect infestation there. There followed a long discussion of extermination techniques used. The Board will further investigate the problem.

The rest of the meeting consisted of routing reports from staff members: Sharon Hansen, Accountant; Lee Monague, Modernization/Maintenance Manager; Isabela Solis, Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator; Jesse Padilla, Deputy Director; and Robbie Levey, Executive Director.

The meeting was adjourned to go to Executive session.



VOLUNTEER

to help staff Branigan Library booth
at Farmer's Market, 400 Block
the **last Saturday** of each month
through **December 2013.**

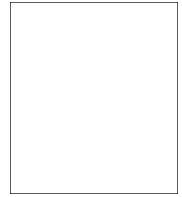
Shifts
8:30 - 11:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Contact: Don Behnke
(505) 466-3344 or bbs.nm2@gmail.com



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



FIRST CLASS



*August 26
Ratification 19th
Amendment*

July/August 2013
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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.