

## ***DINNER WITH A LEADER***

***VICKI SIMONS – Health Security for New Mexicans***

***OCTOBER 9, Good Sam's*** The doors will open at 5:00 pm. Social time will be from 5:00 - 5:20 pm, and dinner will be served at 5:20 pm.

LWVGLC member Vicki Simons will preside over a discussion of healthcare for New Mexicans following a short film on the topic. The emphasis will be on current status and direction of efforts in New Mexico.

Vicki retired in 1992 as Laboratory Director at Memorial Medical Center. Subsequently she received a Master of Public Health from the University of Texas School of Public Health in Houston and has been active in border health issues. Vicki founded the Border Environmental Health Coalition. She has been involved as volunteer for Health Security for New Mexicans since 2003 and is currently serving as Treasurer of the organization. Vicki is also active in the League of Women Voters GLC.

## ***Message from the President***

Dear Members,

The Program Fiesta was a grand event with 28 attending. The Creole Dixie Land Jazz Band played for us and they were so good that they even inspired a few of us to dance! Following dinner, the leaders from the various committees gave us an overview of what they have been doing: Sue Schmutge reported on the Observer Corp, Erika Graf-Webster on the Youth Engagement Committee, Vicki Simons on Voter Services, Christina Little on Affordable Housing, and Marjorie Burr on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee.

*Elisa and Cliff pictured*



We have over a hundred names on the Membership Involvement Sheet. These are members who are currently involved or have expressed interest in being involved in specific LWVGLC activities. The Activity Sheet is included in this month's Voter. If you haven't had a chance to add your name, please email me the activities you would like to participate in.

The Election Advisory Council (EAC) sponsored an event September 16<sup>th</sup> called A Community Conversation: Democracy in Dona Ana County. Gwen Hanson, Erika Graf-Webster and I were volunteers. Gil Sorg, Christina Little, and Johnnie Aldrich participated as well. The purpose of the event was to have a conversation with voters, especially those who vote only in the general elections, about why they don't vote in local elections. With an average of just 9 percent voter turnout in local elections, clearly the League and the EAC need to figure out what we can do differently to create a voting culture. Voter Services does a wonderful job in providing voter registration opportunities and information about candidates through the web site, the voter guide, and the candidate forums. We just need to figure out how to reach a broader audience with that information. We will be working on this in the months to come. I have high hopes that between collaborating with EAC, our increased efforts in Voter Services and the YEC's work with getting more civics education in the schools we will see an increase in voter turnout by 2018. I'm hoping that all the members can get behind this effort.



I want to give a huge welcome to Christine Sorg as our new Vice President. I'm so excited she will be joining the board. Congratulations to Yvonne Flores who has been accepted to the LWVUS Delegation to the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (UNCCC) being held in Bonn Nov 6-17, 2017.

All My Best,  
Kim Sorensen, President

## ***A Fiesta - Celebrating League Member Involvement***

Following is a compilation of how our members are actively supporting League activities. Send added items to Kim Sorenson to complete her list. This makes a terrific reference, so keep it where you can find it!!

**Voter Services Committee:** Kim Sorensen, Johnnie Aldrich, Gwen Hanson, Dale Yeo, Vicki Simons

**Voter Registration:** Johnnie Aldrich, Mickey Curtis, Mary Ellen Kebbel, Nancy Phillips, Ruth Wisner, Mildred Evaskovich, Jane Asche, Vicki Simons, Kim Sorensen, Lizz Taylor, Mary Ellen Knapp

**Voter Education (K-12):** Terry and Mary Ellen Kebbel, Mary Ellen Knapp

**Candidate Forums:** Dale Yeo, Vicki Simons

**Voter Guide:** Dale Yeo, Vicki Simons, Mary Ellen Knapp

**League News Letter:** Bonnie Votaw, Marjorie Burr

**Membership:** Sue Lashley

**Finance:** Steve Litts, Mary Ellen Knapp (finance drive)

**Observer Corp:** Sue Schmugge, Vicki Simons, Johnny Aldrich, Sue Lashley, Kim Sorensen, Dale Yeo

**Public Relations Committee:** Marjorie Burr

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee:** Marjorie Burr, Mickey Curtis, Johnnie Aldrich, Gwen Hanson, Dale Yeo, Cathy Mathews, Alex Burr, Elizabeth Taylor, Kathy Brook, Barbara Goedecke, Win Jacobs, Christina Little

**Affordable Housing Committee:** Christina Little, Jane Carter, Vicki Simons, Beth Bardwell, Christine Sorg

**Youth Engagement Committee:** Erika Graf-Webster, Terry Kebbel, Sue Cain, Dale Yeo, Jane Asche, Olga Pedroza, Scott Krahling, Gill Sorg, Yvonne Flores, Fred Martino, Lizz Taylor, Wendi Miller- Tomlinson, Michael Milam, Cindy Murrell, Martha Duran

**Discussion Groups:** Gwen Hanson, Erika Graf Webster, Mickey Curtis, Johnnie Aldrich, Sue Cain, Yvonne Flores, Dale Yeo, Vicki Simons, Marjorie Burr, Lizz Taylor, Mary Litts, Beth Bardwell, Lizz Miller, Christina Little

**Health Care Study (state):** Mickey Curtis

**Transfer of Public Lands Study (state):** Kurt Anderson, Lizz Taylor

**Nuclear Waste Study (state):** Marjorie Burr, Alex Burr, Bonnie Votaw

**Judicial Reform (state):** Joy Goldbaum

**Reproductive Rights (state):** Mary Ellen Kebbel

**LWVGLC Board of Directors:** Kim Sorensen-President, Connie Lee-Secretary, Vicki Simons-Voter Services, Dale Yeo-Voter Services, Gwen Hanson-Member at Large, Sue Lashley-Membership Services, Steve Litts-Treasurer

**Nominating Committee:** Jane Asche

**Special Skill Contributions**

- **Computer (word processing)** Dale Yeo
- **Social Media (facebook/twitter)** Wendi Miller-Tomlinson
- **Public Speaking** Johnnie Aldrich, Mickey Curtis, Erika Graf-Webster
- **Writing articles (op eds, letters to the editor etc.)** Marjorie Burr, Johnnie Aldrich, Dale Yeo, Erika Graf-Webster

**Development (learn how to use social media):** Josie Dominguez

**Outreach to minority community leaders:** Josie Dominguez

*Editor's Note: Please send corrections. I'm especially hoping to get names correct. Bonnie*

**UPCOMING EVENTS** - check your calendar by looking at LWVGLC web page "events"

<http://lwvglc.org/>

October 3, 2 p.m. ET LWVUS **Fall Leaders for Democracy Webinar\***

October 5, 10-12 a.m., LWVGLC Board Meeting, Branigan Library

*Remember, everyone is invited to the Board meetings! Please come.*

October 9, 5:15 – 7:00 p.m., Dinner with a Leader: Vicki Simons, "Health Security for New Mexicans"

October 10, 7:30 – 8 p.m., District 3 City Council Candidate Forum, KRWG, NMSU Campus  
October 17, 7:30 – 8 p.m., District 5 City Council Candidate Forum, KRWG, NMSU Campus  
October 24, 7:30 – 8 p.m., District 6 City Council Candidate Forum, KRWG, NMSU Campus  
October 24, 8:00 – 8:30 p.m., Municipal Judge, District II Candidate Forum, KRWG  
October 28, 10:30 – 12:00 a.m., New Member Orientation, 1219 Dry Creek Place  
January 8, 2018 – Lunch meeting presentation, Karen Douglas, LWVNM Nuclear Waste Storage Committee, first report

### **\*LWVUS Webinar**

The League of Women Voters is leading the way for independent redistricting across the country and we invite you to join us to learn more during our Fall [Leaders for Democracy Webinar on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2pm ET](#). Representative democracy depends on voters freely choosing their elected officials, not elected officials choosing them. The League works to promote transparent and accountable redistricting processes and to end hyper-partisan practices that don't benefit constituents.

LWV leaders will report on their work on this issue including: **Chris Carson**, President; **Wylecia Wiggs Harris**, CEO; **Carrie L. Davis**, Executive Director, LWV of Ohio; **Lloyd Leonard**, Strategic Advisor to the CEO.

### **Fall Leaders for Democracy Webinar**

October 3, at 2pm ET

Please register before the webinar [HERE](#).

*Can't make it on the 3<sup>rd</sup>?* No worries, [please register](#) and you will receive a recording of the webinar to watch on your own time.

## **50 Years Ago**

### **Remembering the Beginning of LWVGLC**

By Marjorie Burr

Jo Brenchley, the president of the provisional League of Las Cruces in 1968, was perhaps the most significant president the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces has had. It was under her leadership that the group of women got themselves organized and set to work to establish a local League in Las Cruces.



The local League was started at the instigation of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico. Sandy Cohn of the state board offered guidance, hands-on and face-to-face. The group took on the challenges with enthusiasm and energy the likes I have not seen in the 50 years since. I don't recall any direct actions by Jo, but it was under her leadership that obstacles were turned into opportunities. I believe she harnessed and directed the women's work to fulfill the requirements for local League status, and it happened within one year.

The following data were gleaned from the early issues of the *Bulletin*, a mimeographed newsletter mailed to members. In January membership was reported at 57, “44 [of whom] attended meetings in January.” By the next month membership was up to 72. A Meet the Candidates forum for City Commission candidates was held in February 1968. Voter registration involved tables set up in public place on Saturdays staffed by League members. Numbers reported: by July 1968, 320 voters had been registered; the September Bulletin reported 230 voters registered in three Saturdays. In all the October 1968 edition of the Bulletin reported 816 new voters registered in 13 Saturdays. I don’t think this number has been matched since then.

The provisional League also participated in the state League study/action to call for a Constitutional Convention to draft a new constitution for New Mexico. The League’s action on this raised the consciousness of the city and later its favorable vote on the proposed document (although it lost statewide). A requirement for local League status was to hold a finance drive, asking local businesses to show their support for the organization through financial contributions. The only comment surviving on this was that it was “satisfactory.”

Probably the main activity of the year was a know-your-town study to find out how government worked in Las Cruces. I’ll have more on this in a later article. Jo Brenchley led the League through a celebration coffee held in February 1969, to mark our acceptance as a Local League in the LWV organization. Then a new “first” president was elected.

Jo had been active in Las Cruces city recreation activities, especially in the Red Cross. As a volunteer she worked with Sam Graft, City Recreation Director. When he was offered a position in state government, Jo also moved to Santa Fe to continue her work. I visited her a few years after the move, but then I lost track of her.

## ***LWVNM Study – Nuclear Waste Disposal***

By Bonnie Votaw

Because New Mexico is the site of a proposed interim (160 years) repository of spent fuel nuclear waste, LWVNM approved a study and formed a statewide committee to revise and update LWVNM’s work, ***The Nuclear Waste Primer, A Handbook for Citizens, 1993 revision***. Marjorie Burr, Alex Burr and Bonnie Votaw are representing LWVGLC on the committee. The committee’s work will include regular articles in *La Palabra* and presentations to local groups.

An introductory session in Las Cruces is planned for the January 8, 2018 lunch meeting. Karen Douglas, who is chairing the committee, will be the featured presenter. Consensus questions have been proposed and will be the subject of ongoing articles in each issue of ***La Palabra***. The first two articles appeared in Summer 2017 and Fall 2017 editions of ***La Palabra***. The summer article, written by Karen Douglas, is “Nuclear Waste Storage in US – Where we are and where

we may be going.” Laura Atkins wrote the fall article, “Does the League support the development of consolidated interim storage sites (CISF) for spent nuclear fuel?” Upcoming issues of *La Palabra* will continue the strand of information and keep you informed of developments in the study as they occur. We hope previewing the information will keep members aware and preparing for consensus activities when they occur in 2018.

A new version of the **Primer** is being commissioned with a technically qualified team from Longenecker & Associates. The committee is seeking funding for the technical research and writing from the Department of Energy.

Please save the date January 8, 2018 to further your learning about this important topic.

## *Treasurer's Talk*

By Steve Litts

Congratulations to the **75** individuals who have taken the step to become a part of the solution. To **educate** registered voters so they can make informed decisions at the ballot box; who have committed themselves to **registering** more eligible voters; who will **seize the initiative** rather than merely **wait** and **hope** for an election outcome that reflects the values and vision vital to our community, state and nation.

**BUT, it's NOT TOO LATE.** Yes, YOU can become a member of LWVGLC – NOW. Just send your check - \$60 individual or \$90 for two members living at the same address. The League's address is LWVGLC, PO Box 8322, Las Cruces, NM 88006. I'll thank you in advance.

### **TREASURER'S CHALLENGE:**

**If ten (10) more people renew their membership or join for the first time by the end of October, I'll personally bake and serve my special recipe cookies at the November meeting. (Our kids and grandkids give them FIVE STARS....)**

### **TREASURER'S REPORT – September**

Beginning Check Book Balance	\$7,334.51
Total Income	\$ 868.00
Dues – Donations- Dinner Collections	
Total Expenses	(\$ 300.00)
Good Sam Dinners	
Net Carryover to October	\$7,902.51



## **Election Advisory Committee – LWVGLC ROCKS!!**

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces has a long history of collaborating with the Dona Ana County Clerk's Office in supporting voter registration drives, and voter education. In more recent years League members have participated in the new Election Advisory Committee, a community consortium of interested residents and organizations, meeting

regularly to support community projects of the Dona Ana County Clerk's Office.

Photo: Maggie Toulouse Oliver, New Mexico Secretary of State, shown with League members Kim Sorensen, Johnnie Aldrich, and Gwen Hanson, attending "A Community Conversation- Democracy in Dona Ana" held Saturday, September 16, 2017.

## ***Girl Scouts Honor Gwen Hanson***

Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest recognized Gwen Hanson at their Women of Distinction luncheon on September 21 at the Hotel Encanto. Recognition cited Gwen's service to LWVGLC, following years of volunteering locally and nationally with the American Red Cross, often taking assignments to areas such as Ground Zero and Katrina. Whether living in Greeley, CO and serving as Treasurer of the Philharmonic Guild or serving as a prevention/intervention specialist in a Houston school district, Hanson applied her education in nursing and social work.



In the picture, to the left of Gwen is Judith Leibbrook, Board member of the GSDSW. To the right is Diane Flanagan, CEO of the GSDSW.



## **OBSERVER POST**

### ***South Central solid Waster Authority***

Susan Schmugge, Observer

Regular & Executive meeting 9/21/17

5 out of 8 members present

**ALERT: Recycling changes will be coming to southern New Mexico as a result of Gulf storms and changes in Chinese regulations.** Look for news articles in local papers in coming weeks, as well as at what *you* can reuse and recycle as we approach the coming holidays.

SUN-NEWS ARTICLE LINK

<http://www.lcsun-news.com/story/news/local/2017/09/23/new-limits-china-may-restrict-local-recycling/696691001/>

### ***Report on Open Primaries Meeting, October 9, 2017***

*Erika Graf-Webster*

New Mexico Open Primaries, a nonprofit organization that advocates for the adoption of Open Primaries for New Mexico, recently sponsored a meeting on the topic of Open Primaries. An “Open Primary” is defined as a primary in which any eligible elector can vote, regardless of his or her party affiliation.

The event was advertised as an “Election Reform Panel Discussion”.

Panelists were Bob Perls, founder of NM Open Primaries and former state legislator; Scott Krahling, Doña Ana County Clerk; Dr. Christa Slaton, Professor of Government, NMSU; and Jeff Steinborn, NM State Senator.

A series of predetermined questions were posed to the panelists, followed by an open Q&A session. The questions were as follows:

1. Why do you think it’s important to have a discussion about changing the way we do elections?
2. 40% of voters aren’t members of a political party. What type of primaries would be most fair to NM voters and increase voter turnout?
3. NM laws make it difficult for minor party candidates to get on the ballot. Should the laws be changed to allow them easier access?
4. NM suffers from some of the least competitive elections in the US. Should we move to an independent redistricting commission?
5. What is the most important election reform that you want people to know about?





There was wide audience participation through questions and comments. Bob Perls, President of NM Open Primaries, closed the meeting by encouraging all to visit the website <http://www.nmopenprimaries.org>.

**NOTE: Erika has extensive notes on the dialogue of the open primaries session, both panelists and audience. If you are interested, contact her.**

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### ***VOTER Table of Contents***

Page 1	Dinner With a Leader Message from the President
Page 2	Celebrating Our Involvement
Page 3	Upcoming Events
Page 4	50 Years Ago
Page 5	Nuclear Waste Disposal
Page 6	Treasurer's Talk
Page 7	Election Advisory Committee Hanson Honored by Girl Scouts
Page 8	Observers Post Open Primaries Meeting
Page 9	LWVGLC information Table of Content

### **OCTOBER 2017 VOTER**

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