

the VOTER

September 2019
Volume 51, Issue 4

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO

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Co-Presidents' Messages

With approval from the board at the Aug. 8 meeting, I proceeded to file with the NM Secretary of State the relatively simple paperwork required to incorporate the League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico. The official approval arrived in my mailbox on Aug. 19 so I am set to proceed with the next steps toward refiling the 501(c)(3) documents with the IRS.



Kathy Brook

I have referred the names of several interested members to the LWVNM study committee on the Judicial Qualifications/Selection Process and that group should be starting its work soon. The study plan includes determination of the current legal requirements for judges of the "lower courts" or "limited jurisdiction courts" – meaning magistrate, municipal, and probate courts; review of the positions of other state Leagues with respect to legal requirements; determination of the adequacy of current legal requirements to assure optimal justice for New Mexicans; and study of whether the selection process involving partisan elections is optimal compared with processes in other states.

Our October League meeting has been moved from the usual second Monday of the month to **October 21** because of lack of availability of our usual space and to make possible a visit from the LWVNM to bring us up-to-date on legislative priorities and redistricting based on the 2020 Census. More on that meeting in the next Voter.

— Kathy Brook
Co-President

Health Services Tops Meeting Agenda

Jamie Michael, director of Doña Ana County's Health and Human Services since January 2014, will be the featured speaker at our dinner meeting on **Monday, Sept. 9, 5-7pm**, Good Samaritan Social Center, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. **Please RSVP to Cindy Murrell** (cmurrell@nmsu.edu) if you plan to eat.



Jamie Michael

Ms. Michael is from a small town in north-western New Mexico. She graduated from the University of New Mexico in 1996 with a degree in community health. After more than eight years of promoting public health in Albuquerque, first working for UNM Health Sciences Center and then for a program promoting child passenger safety, Michael came to Doña Ana County in 2004 to manage the division of the Health and Human Services Department that focused on Improving conditions in the colonias in our county.

Since 2017, she has been administering a \$700,000/year federal grant to implement the 2016 law requiring the provision of outpatient treatment to people with mental illness.

In February 2018, Michael was recognized by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce with its Community Partnership award for her community outreach and program initiatives. We are excited to hear more about her experiences and successes in improving the options for people with mental health challenges at our meeting Monday, September 9.

—See page 2 for Eileen VanWie's message

Co-Presidents' Messages (cont.)

The LWV SNM Board workshop with Nancy Barnes-Smith, consultant of *Nonprofit Support and Success*, revealed strengths of our local League and challenges to address in the near future. Some strengths we identified are voter/election/civic engagement and youth engagement project. Challenges are to update our bylaws and policies and to create an active Development Committee. I'm imagining



Eileen VanWie your reaction, "Oh, how exciting!"

Nancy pointed out that to thrive as an organization, infrastructure (mission, bylaws, and policy) is critical. The LWV US provides helpful examples. The mission is *Empowering voters. Defending democracy*. The vision is *We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate*. If you're a person who likes to attend to details, being on an ad hoc committee to update the bylaws and policies would be rewarding. Development Committees can operate in ways that are fun. An example Nancy gave was after generating an appeal for money letter to potential donors in November, a letter sending party (yes, a fun party with food) would get letters personalized and sent off. Developing relationships with donors would also be part of the development process. Consider volunteering for either or both of these committees. [See photos of the workshop on page 6.]

The 2020 Suffrage Alliance has about 10 non-partisan organizations working together, planning two events together. A suffrage rally/march is being planned for **Saturday, Feb. 22, 2020** (place to be determined) and exhibits/programs for Saturday, Aug. 22, 2020 at the Farm and Ranch Museum. Those dates are close to special events: Feb. 21, 1920 New Mexico ratified the 19th amendment; Aug. 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment was added to the U.S. Constitution. The theme for the 2020 Suffrage Alliance organizations is "*If every woman voted . . .*" How would you finish that phrase?

— Regards,
Eileen VanWie
Co-President

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 5: LWVSNM Board Meeting, 9:30 am-12:00 pm
Branigan Library Board Room (earlier than normal)

- ♦ **Sept. 9: LWVSNM Dinner Meeting, 5pm-7:00 pm**,
Good Samaritan: Jamie Michael, DAC Health & Human Services Director; **email your dinner RSVP** to Cindy Murrell at cmurrell@nmsu.edu ASAP.

Sept. 11: Patriot's Day

OCTOBER

Oct. 3: LWVSNM Board Meeting, 10:00 am-Noon,
Branigan Library Board Room

- ♦ **Oct. 21: LWVSNM Dinner Meeting (new date), 5-7 pm**,
Good Samaritan, Speaker Dick Mason, LWVNM. This will be an important meeting to hear about state League activities

SAVE THE DATE

LWV Voters' Guide published in LC
Bulletin on Oct. 4
Early Voting Begins – Oct. 8
Early Voting Ends – Nov. 2

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO BOARD:

Kathy Brook & Eileen VanWie – Co-Presidents
Cindy Murrell – Vice President, Events & Speakers
Erika Graf-Webster – Acting Secretary and Youth Engagement Director
Bob Burn – Treasurer
Kim Sorensen – Member-At-Large
Vicki Simons & Dale Yeo – Voter Services Directors
Maryellen Kebbel – Membership Director
Jo Galván Nash – Public Relations Director

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575.524.VOTE (8683)
www.lwvglc.org

Election Approaching, Forums

It will arrive quicker than we think. Nov. 5 is the first time Las Cruces will hold a consolidated municipal election featuring the Rank Choice Voting (RCV) option. The “instant run-off” election, as it’s also known by, was the focus of a thorough presentation made to League members by County Clerk Amanda López Askin (pictured below) and Deputy Clerk Lindsey Bachman on Aug 12. Numerous questions were asked about RCV, which will be an option in the following races: Mayor, City Council Districts 1, 2 and 4, and Presiding Municipal Court Judge. The RCV will not apply to the School Board election (Districts 4 and 5) or the LCPS Mill Levy.



Meanwhile, the League will again collaborate with KRWG-TV to produce candidate presentations with questions submitted by the public. The sessions will be taped at NMSU’s Milton Hall. The Schedule for taping of the forums is:

Wed., Oct. 9 at 1 pm, Mayoral candidates

Wed., Oct. 16, City Council candidates:

-Dist. 1 at 1:00 pm

-Dist. 2 at 1:45 pm

-Dist. 4 at 2:30 pm

Wed., Oct. 23, at 4 pm, all School Board candidates together.

All the events will air on Thursday at 7 pm following the Wednesday taping. The public is invited to attend the forum tapings and submit questions. KRWG-TV is located at 2915 McFie Circle, Milton Hall. Parking is a problem so get a parking permit prior to 4 p.m. [They can be obtained online from the NMSU Parking Department.](#)

—Vicky Simons, Co-Chair Voter Service
and Jo Galván Nash, PR Director

Initial Survey Results

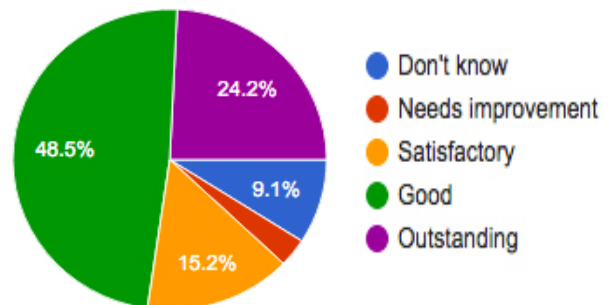
The League recently requested that all members answer several questions through a survey which is now closed. The tabulation is being prepared for all members to review.

The results will give all of us an insight into how our membership feels about the organization’s diversity, whether a change in meeting location is preferred, the demographic breakdown of the League and more.

Unfortunately, only one-third of the members participated. Below are a few of the answers (as of Aug. 26) that will be part of the final report, which will be emailed to all members.

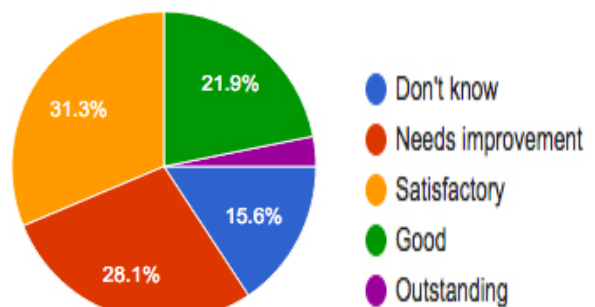
6a. Rate your League chapter's performance in creating Voter Awareness/Encouragement.

33 responses



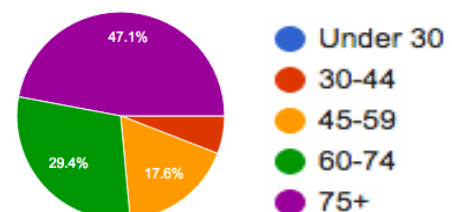
6c. Rate your League chapter's performance in Community Outreach

32 responses



2. Your age:

34 responses



NM Ethics Commission Meets in LC

Roughly 10 years of effort finally resulted in the formation of the New Mexico Ethics Commission. *"Until this year, New Mexico was one of just six states without an independent ethics board. New Mexico voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment establishing the commission in 2018, but it was left to the Legislature to pass legislation setting up the details of how the group would operate,"* noted the Albuquerque Journal (July 15, 2019).

The Legislature created the Commission this year, and the Commission met for the second time in Las Cruces on August 2 with an agenda largely aimed at formative tasks. Present were members Stuart M. Bluestone, Garrey Carruthers, July Villanueva and Francis Williams. Chair William F. Lang was not present. The Ethics Commission is comprised of seven members, three each of Democrat and Republican, plus one independent member. Five Commissioners had been appointed before the August 2 meeting: Democrats Lang, Bluestone and Williams, and Republicans Carruthers and Villanueva.

An audience of fewer than 10 people observed the Commission as it developed protocols for screening, selecting and interviewing applicants for the two remaining seats, one to be a Republican and one a member of one of the smaller, independent parties. The additional two members were selected a week later on August 9. They are attorney Jeffrey Baker and business owner Ron Solimon. Solimon is a Republican from Laguna Pueblo and a former president and CEO of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. Baker, an independent that worked for local governments in Albuquerque, served on the Supreme Court's Code of Professional Conduct Committee.

Currently, the position of Executive Director has been announced. The Ethics Commission will start receiving and investigating ethics complaints at the beginning of next year. Stay tuned.

<https://www.abqjournal.com/1355850/ethics-commission-takes-shape-seeks-director.html>

<https://www.abqjournal.com/1340777/public-role-urged-for-nm-ethics-commission.html>

<https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/news/local/new-mexico/2019/08/11/new-mexico-ethics-commission/1975581001/>

Voters' Guide Prep Underway

An incredibly important publication undertaken annually by LWVSNM is the Voters' Guide. Many residents rely on the information to better understand what candidates stand for and what their plans are should they be elected.

Helping to coordinate this year's Guide is the Voter Services Committee. Dale Yeo said the League "wants the candidates to address specific issues that will educate the public and create a record that we can go back to and remind them of their positions."

Many League members developed questions for the candidates to answer. Questions will be forwarded to all candidates for Mayor, City Council, Municipal Court Presiding Judge, and School Board. When the responses come back, it's all synthesized and printed.

The Guide also provides information on early voting and locations, Voting Convenience Centers and more.

Yeo said the Las Cruces Bulletin will insert the Guide into the newspaper's Oct. 4 edition. Plus, extra copies will be delivered throughout the county and will be posted on the League website.

Ranked Choice Voting Training

Training continues by various organizations to help the public better understand the Ranked Choice Voting system (also known as Instant Runoff). Common Cause of NM will hold a free workshop on Wednesday, Sept. 4, 5:00-6:30 pm at Branigan Library Community Room.

This training is also for candidates or those working on canvassing and get-out-the-vote. For more information contact Maria Perez, mperez@commoncause.org.

VOTE 411

CLICK HERE

VOTE411 is committed to ensuring voters have the information they need to successfully participate in every election. Whether it's local, state or federal, every election is important to ensuring our laws and policies reflect the values and beliefs of our communities.

Consider Protesting

Prior to 2016, I never participated in any public protest. Now, I chose to protest and speak out on many issues. As a member of the Immigration Committee, I am educating myself and speaking out on humane treatment of asylum seekers, especially children.

Imprisonment of children equates to punishment. To punish a child of any immigrant equates to logic that says the incarcerated child should have been more careful choosing what country and parent the child is born to and a bad choice is punishable.

The detention of children and the crisis playing out on our border is only one of the many symptoms born of the negative and acrimonious tone set in our nation's capital. Human beings catch emotion like we catch a virus. We can be roused by love and compassion. And, we feel pain and outrage as we have watched families bury their loved ones in El Paso. We also catch fear, hate, and rancor as both the El Paso and Dayton shooters did.

Why protest? Franklin Roosevelt, after listening to a group of activists who sought his support for bold legislation said, "You've convinced me. Now go out and make me do it." Members of Congress are home on recess now, making it a perfect time to protest. Nancy Pelosi recently told members of Congress to take the temperature of their districts during the recess. She wasn't referring to the scorching weather but rather to the scorching topics that have become so common.

To counter extreme negativity requires a positive movement. And, you can't have a movement without people showing up. Protest is a way to funnel outrage into positive peaceful action. I hope you will consider it. After all, democracy can only work to the extent that we actively participate in it.

— Mary Martinez White
LWVSNM Immigration Committee

Consolidated Elections and Ranked Choice Voting in NM

The New Mexico Elections Act passed in 2018 instituted broad election reforms including consolidating local elections and the option of ranked choice voting. All local elections have been moved to the first Tuesday in November in odd-numbered years. This includes municipal, school board and water district elections that used to be scattered throughout the year. Bond issue and tax-levy elections will all be mail-in elections. The Las Cruces municipal elections for the positions of Mayor, Presiding Municipal Court Judge and Districts 1, 2 and 4 City Council representatives will be Nov. 5, 2019. School board members Districts 4 and 5 will also be selected. The reforms are designed to promote more voting and to save money spent on individual and run-off elections. The bill also provides municipalities the choice to institute ranked choice voting or not.

Ranked choice voting (RCV) makes democracy fairer and more functional. It works in a variety of contexts. It is a simple change that can have a big impact. With ranked choice voting, voters can rank as many candidates as they want in order of choice. When used as an "instant runoff" to elect a single candidate like a mayor or a governor, RCV helps elect a candidate that better reflects the support of a majority of voters. When used as a form of fair representation voting to elect more than one candidate like a city council, state legislature or even Congress, RCV helps to more fairly represent the full spectrum of voters. Often, candidates win elections despite being opposed by most voters. With RCV, the winners earn a majority of the vote. This means you don't need to vote twice since there is no primary or runoff election. Instead, you get a winner in a single high turnout election. This saves money and reduces campaign finance needs. See the League website, <https://www.lwvglc.org/>, for a simple video presentation of how it works.

There have also been changes in voter registration. Voters no longer have to provide their complete social security number, only the last four digits. During the early voter period, 28 days prior to the elections, new voters may register and vote on the same day. This requires the new voter to apply at the County Clerk's office or certain early voter sites and show a picture ID. Voter Registration Agents will not be involved in this process.

If League members are interested in becoming Voter Registration Agents, please contact me.

—Vicki Simons
Voter Services Co-Chair, vrsimons@comcast.net

Seminar in Support of Non-Profits

Several League members attended a special workshop with Nancy Barnes-Smith of Nonprofit Support & Success. Her words and approach provided many good ideas for our organization. Thanks to all of those who attended. Members will soon hear some of the suggestions that came out of that seminar.



Co-president Eileen VanWie (far left) makes a point at the Saturday workshop with Nancy Barnes-Smith

Field Trips Planned with Border Servant Corp

League members will have the opportunity to learn about immigration issues here at the border; field trips are hosted by the Border Servant Corp.

League Day in El Paso with BSC:

Sept 17, 8:00 am-5:00 pm. Limit 20 people.

- 8:00 am: Meet at Peace Lutheran, 1701 Missouri Ave.
- 9:00 am: Meeting with a Border Patrol at the U.S./Mexico fence in El Paso.
- 11:30 am: Sharing with an immigrant family. We will drive to the home of an immigrant family. Lunch will be provided by the family.
- 2:30 pm: Meeting with Rueben Garcia at Annunciation House.

Cost \$30

League Day in Las Cruces with BSC:

October 8, 8:30 am - 3:00 pm. Limit 15 people

- 8:30 am: Orientation at Peace Lutheran, 1701 Missouri Avenue
- 9:30 am: District Court proceedings and presentation by a judge
- 12:00 pm: Lunch at Peace Lutheran and presentation by immigrant lawyer.

Cost \$30

Email Kim Sorensen sorensentweet@gmail.com for additional information.

Giving Thanks To ...

- **Mary Litts**, a League member and wife of Steve Litts, passed in early July. We thank her for her valuable service.

- **Gwen Hanson**, a member of our League, is headed to Texas with her husband Tom. A celebratory cake was presented to her during the August meeting.



Join the Fight!

It's a safe guess that most of us know a friend, family member or co-worker who is battling Alzheimer's. In their honor, let's help by participating in the annual "Walk to End Alzheimer's" on **Sat., Sept. 7** at Young Park. If you want to walk, donate or get a team to walk

[go online to sign up.](#)

Registration on the 9th begins at 8:30 am; ceremony at 9:30 am, and the walk starts at 10 am.





LWVGLC Board Meeting Minutes

June 6, 2019, Branigan Library

Reported by Erika Graf-Webster

NOTE: Actions to be done are highlighted in yellow.

Attendees

Kathy Brook (Co-President), Eileen VanWie (Co-President), Dale Yeo (Voter Services Co-Director), Vicki Simons (Voter Services Co-Director), Maryellen Kebbel (Co-Membership Director), Bob Burn (Treasurer), Jo Galvan Nash (Public Relations Director), Erika Graf-Webster (Youth Engagement Director), Laura Harper (Co-Membership Director), Cindy Murrell (Vice President)

Meeting Administration:

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-President Kathy Brook called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

2. Filling Open Positions

Eileen VanWie introduced Laura Harper and thanked her for agreeing to become Co-Membership Director. The Observer Corps positions are now all filled. Jo Galvan Nash has been observing the County Commission. Bob Burn and Louisa Huyge signed up to visit the City Council. Cathy Burn volunteered to observe the School Board and Beth Bardwell volunteered to observe the Affordable Housing Committee. We need a Development Committee Chair and committee. Jo, Dale, and Kathy offered to help with the committee. Perhaps we need to recruit a new member with those specific skills of fundraising and grant writing.

3. Changes to Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. Minutes May 2, May 13, 2019

The May Board Meeting Minutes reviewed. There were no changes and the Minutes were approved. At the May 13 Membership Meeting, revisions to the County Government position and the Elections Procedures Position were voted on and approved.

The Action Items shown in the May 2 Minutes (highlighted in yellow) were reviewed. All were reported as having been done, with the following exceptions:

- Re auditing of last year's financial records – Johnnie Aldrich said she would not be able to do it. Kathy Brook will do it instead.
- Re finding a chair for the Development Committee; Eileen reported that this has not successful yet.

Reports:

1. Treasurer's report

Bob Burn passed out the May Treasurer's report. He mentioned that two people who had reservations for the April dinner meeting, did not show, and he is not able to contact them. He also is keeping a list of members who have renewed and is determining what we owe as per-member-payment (PMP) to the US League and the state League, and therefore the remainder that stays in our funds. Bob reported that the current bank balance is \$7,956, but the "available" bank balance (e.g., the amount minus the owed PMP) is \$6,876. The Treasurer's report was accepted for the LWVGLC file.

There was some discussion about the fact that, while the US League is waving PMP for student members, the state is not. Erika Graf-Webster stated that she had offered to cover state PMP for student members a year ago, when LWVGLC first decided to offer free student memberships, and that offer still stands.

Dale Yeo reported that she had investigated the cost of the “Square”, a small credit card reader that may attach to cell phones that enables accepting payments by credit card. The initial cost of the Square is small (about \$20). The cost per use (e.g., to take a payment via credit card) is about 2.75% of the payment. Members agreed that it would be useful to have to collect payments at member meetings and when the League participates in external events. Erika moved to buy a Square for the League. Cindy Murrell seconded. The motion passed on a voice vote. **Dale will make the purchase.** Dale then reported on her search for hiring an outside vendor to revise and improve our website. She talked to and got estimates from a few companies. The best cost estimate was from WeAreIT, a small local company started by Ngage. They offered to redesign our website to make it more attractive and easier to use, and to provide training to one or more of our members to handle continued maintenance. Their fee for this is \$1,156. They also offer social media training, but that would be separate for \$150. We’ll consider this part in the future. Maryellen Kebbel requested that the redesign should result in a website that is accessible to vision-impaired individuals. Erika moved and Jo Galvan Nash seconded that we proceed immediately with the website redesign effort with WeAreIT. The motion passed unanimously. **Dale will coordinate this effort.**

There was some discussion about the ability to raise money by offering commercial advertising on our website. **Eileen will check with the state and the US League about what is allowed on a League website.**

2. Membership

Maryellen said that the “New Member Orientation” held on June 1 at Eileen’s house went very well. Five new members and three Board members attended.

Maryellen then talked about the Membership Directory. There was some discussion on what items should or should not be in the Directory. The resulting consensus was that the Directory should continue to have its current contents – list of members, Bylaws, positions, etc. The goal is to have the new Directory available sometime in August.

The discussion then turned to the creation of a new membership form. There were some proposed changes requested.

Jo will do a mock-up of a new form that includes student and regular membership and send it out for comment.

Eileen passed out a copy of the newly established LWVSFC Diversity Fund, a fund established to “remove the cost of membership as a barrier to a more diverse membership”. It is assumed that if LWVGLC would choose to establish such a fund, we could follow this model. However, there was little further discussion of this.

3. Public Relations

Jo handed out a draft of a member survey that she is proposing to send to the entire membership. The objective of the survey is to capture data about our current organization that could be used to develop future goals for increasing and diversifying membership and focusing our League activities. Several suggested changes were proposed by the attendees. **Jo will develop a new draft and send it to the Board. Cindy will experiment with a few online survey tools.**

Dale will check with WeAreIT to determine if a survey section could be added to our website.

4. Voter Service

Vicki and Dale said that the League, in collaboration with KRWG, will host three forums for the upcoming elections: City Council, Mayor, School Board. *Dale will discuss with Fred Martino about the possibility of including judges in a forum.*

The new legislation pertaining to elections passed during the last legislative session will not yet be in effect for this upcoming election. Lindsey Bachman, Deputy County Clerk, had responded in email to a request by Erika on exactly what laws/regulations will be in effect. **Erika will send a copy of that email to the Board.** The Las Cruces City Council passed the use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for City elections. The County Clerk’s office is doing a great deal of training about RCV. For the time being, the Board agreed that there did not seem to be a need for a League forum on this subject.

Dale stated that a new RFP will need to be done for the Voters Guide for this local election. She plans to send it to the two newspapers.

5. Youth Engagement

Erika announced that teacher Julie Wojtko, submitted by our League as a candidate to participate in the Harvard University workshop “Improving Civics Education via the Harvard Case Study method”, has received formal notification

that she has been accepted to attend this workshop. A news release, prepared by Jo and Erika, will be sent to the local media.

Erika also announced that we now have a new intern, Jon Martin, a graduate student in the Government Department of NMSU. Jon's initial task is work on getting the 18-24-year-old voter participation survey executed during the fall. Jon is also available to help with Candidate Forums and the development of the Voters Guide.

6. Immigration

Eileen said the meeting with US Representative Xochitl Torres Small went well. Representative Small has a good understanding of the immigration issues and is working to support improvements in the system. The taping of the Immigration Forum on KRWG went well. Check the June Voter for the schedule of the three presentations.

7. Program (Upcoming Unit and General Meetings, Plus Time and Place of Meetings)

- a. There is no membership meeting in **July**.
- b. Cindy passed out a survey about options for meeting times and places. **The Board is to review and comment.**
- c. **August 12** is planned as a Unit Meeting, to discuss RCV and the election laws that passed and failed during the last session.
- d. There was considerable discussion about the "Fiesta" that has been held in the past as our **September** meeting – what was its purpose, what was intended to be accomplished. Comments were made that it was a meeting during which the whole membership was briefed on what the committees were doing; it was a way to increase interest by members to work on issues; it was a good forum for giving kudos for specific accomplishments; some members just appreciate coming to the monthly meetings and hearing the speakers. In the end, the Board decided that more thought needed to be given to this, and agreed to switch our September and October events, so that the "Fiesta" (title to change) will be in **October**.
- e. The **September** meeting will seek a speaker on Mental Health Services in Dona Ana County; **November** meeting is tentatively aimed for discussion of New Mexico's proposed "Public Bank"; **December** meeting will be the Legislative Dinner.

Other Items:

1. Status of 501(c)(3)
Our 501(c)(3) application has been denied because the process changed, and our filing fee of \$250 has been returned. We are required to become a NM corporation in order to apply again for the 501(c)(3) designation. **Kathy will research what all needs to be done to enable our application for the 501(c)(3) application.**
2. The LWNM approved our name change to League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico and asked us to discuss the geographic region that would be included and to report back at the July state Board meeting. The application to the LWVUS has been submitted. They meet June 20-23. The LWVUS representative at the State Convention, Liz Bander, offered to facilitate the process.
3. **The LWNM Board will meet here in Las Cruces on November 16.** **Eileen and Kathy will** *make arrangements for this state Board meeting.*
4. **The 2021 LWNM Convention will be here in Las Cruces.**

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM.



OBSERVER REPORTS

Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority (MVPHA) • Regular Meeting

Aug. 27, 2019

Observer: Beth Bardwell

Members absent: 0; Total number of Board members: 3

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program: The housing choice voucher program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the public housing authority on behalf of the participating family. In FY19, the Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority (MVPHA) was awarded up to \$7.654 million in Housing Assistance Payments for up to 1,642 vouchers.

Annual evaluation of the performance of the Section 8 program: The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that all housing authorities meet strict requirements and full compliance with regulations in the operations of their Section 8 program. A review of 14 key areas includes the proper selection of applicants from the Housing Choice Voucher waiting list; the sound determination of reasonable rent for each unit leased; determination of the tenant's adjusted income; rate of lease-up; apartment compliance with Housing Quality Standards; and the voluntary enrollment of families in the Family Self-Sufficiency program. In addition to ensuring integrity of the program and quality of service to Section 8 residents, high performing programs can receive additional funds and vouchers if available.

FY19 evaluation of performance and MVPHA Resolution 2019-10: Evaluation of MVPHA's Section 8 program begins with a self-certification by MVPHA staff based on a random sample. HUD reviews these files and other data to ensure program integrity and accountability. MVPHA staff completed their annual self-certification with a total score of 130 points or high performing status. If approved this would elevate MVPHA from a standard performer in FY18 to high performer status in FY19. Staff also discussed implementation of a Corrective Plan of Action to increase total points awarded for Determination of Adjusted Income. MVPHA Board reviewed the staff's self-certification and unanimously passed Resolution No. 2019-10, approving the program's certification for HUD review.

LCPS Board of Education (BOE) • Regular Meeting

August 20, 2019, 6:00 p.m., LCPS Board Room

Observer: Jo Galván Nash

All Board members were present (Ray Jaramillo was via telephone for part of the meeting); the Superintendent was not in attendance.

Interim Superintendent Named:

The BOE made a surprise announcement (and voted unanimously) naming Las Cruces resident Dr. Karen Trujillo as the Interim Superintendent for LCPS. She begins her new job on Sept. 10, 2019. Her appointment was made on the heels of another unexpected announcement by the current superintendent, Dr. Greg Ewing, that he is resigning his position effective Sept. 9. The BOE placed Dr. Ewing on administrative leave for the remainder of his employment. Ewing has been with LCPS since December 2016. Dr. Steven Sanchez, deputy superintendent, will be the Acting Superintendent until Trujillo comes on board.



OBSERVER REPORTS

Board of Education (cont.)

Trujillo briefly served as a Doña Ana County Commissioner immediately prior to her appointment as NM Secretary of Education under Governor Lujan-Grisham. Her job in Santa Fe was cut short, but her experiences include a long career with NMSU, and as a principal and teacher. “She’s a unique individual to help us out,” said Board President Ed Frank. “She will bring NMSU and the school district closer.”

“I’m so excited to meet with everybody,” said Trujillo in response to her appointment.

Academic Instruction

Deputy Supt. Sanchez reported that the 2018/19 graduation rate for English language learner (EL) students is 84.9%; an upward shift of 3.9% compared to the previous year. “This is a testament to the incredible work of our teachers...providing student centered learning environments,” Sanchez said.

He also reported that instructional time for gifted students has been increased to 90 minutes per week – a huge increase. Sonoma and Hillrise elementary schools also are piloting a mathematics block for gifted and high potential students. Plus, high schools are to provide gifted seminars throughout the year.

↪ Upcoming meetings: Sept. 4, Work Session, 4:00 pm, LCPS Board Room
 Sept. 17, Regular Meeting, 6:00 pm, LCPS Board Room

Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) • Regular Meeting

August 27, 2019, 9:00 a.m., Doña Ana County Govt. Center

Observer: Jo Galván Nash

All five commissioners were present; the County Manager was present.

Elections:

County Clerk Dr. Amanda López Askin reported that ballot positioning has changed. It used to be a random selection of which name is placed on the ballot first, second, third, etc. Now, the state Secretary of State initiated a new system and here are the ballot positions selected on Aug. 28:

MAYOR’S RACE:

Position #1: Jorge Sanchez

Position #2: Gregory Z. Smith

Position #3: Isabella Solis

Position #4: Mike A. Tellez

Position #5: Alexander Paige Baca Fresquez

Position #6: Bev Courtney

Position #7: Jesusita Dolores Lucero

Position #8: William Bill Mattiace

Position #9: Ken Miyagishima

Position #10: Gina Montoya Ortega

To see all ballot positions in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County, [visit the Secretary of State’s website](#) and search by “Dona Ana County”.

Fire Station for Anthony:

County Fire Chief Nicholas Hempel reported on a new fire station in Anthony, about 1.5 miles north of O’Hara Road on Road 460. The future use for the old facility, owned by the County, is unknown as this time. The new location is larger, will have updated living quarters, and allows for training space.



OBSERVER REPORTS

Law Enforcement Business

Parents from the Gadsden School District announced their concern that the high schools in the GISD system no longer have permanently assigned School Resource Officers (SROs), which are uniformed police/sheriff officers. The SROs are now monitoring all schools, according to the parents. The parents were told to work with the Sheriff on the issue.

Meanwhile, a \$38,000 raise for the County Undersheriff was requested by Sheriff Kim Stewart. She outlined what his duties are and currently earns \$80,000. The undersheriff is appointed by the Sheriff and is not an elected official. Commissioner Shannon Reynolds said he is not in favor of the requested amount, but that the Undersheriff is earning \$20,000 less than similar positions in Class A counties in NM. A motion to increase the salary by \$20,000 did not receive a second. A motion to increase the salary by \$5,821 was approved.

➔ *Next Regular Monthly Meeting: Sept. 10, 2019 • 9:00 a.m.*

Polishing Your News Releases

Dale Yeo and Marjorie Burr were among the League members who attended an Aug. 2 seminar recently sponsored by the Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce (Carrie Hamblen) and WESST. It focused on tips for writing press releases, getting publicity for organizations, and promoting events. One of the main tips they shared on contacting the media is to keep the news release information.... “short, but include all pertinent info, the Who What When Where Why, and contact info should be in every release.”

On radio, Public Service Announcements (PSAs) should not exceed information that is longer than 30 seconds when reading it out loud. PSA should also include the 5 Ws.

Give at least two-weeks’ notice when publicizing an event. Media like to get e-mails, versus hard-copies, especially newspapers. And if you include a photo with your news releases, organizations may want them no larger than 72 dpi so they can be posted online. Newspapers may want a higher resolution for printing.

Panelists at the workshop also included Fred Martino, KRWG TV, Lucas Peerman, LC Sun-News, Marty Racine, LC Bulletin

Website Update

After some personnel shifts at the WeAreIT office (which is helping us redesign our website), we are back on track. The content is being finalized and a training on how to maintain the new site will be provided. Keep your fingers crossed — we hope to go live with the new website by mid-September!



DUES REMINDER

Thanks to all who have renewed!
A membership directory will include all dues-paying members. If you still need to pay, do so immediately.

Send a \$65 check to:

LWVSNM

P.O. Box 15142

Las Cruces, NM 88004.

or

Bring your check to the Sept. 9 meeting.

If you have questions about membership, contact Maryellen Kebbell 575-528-9891, Maryellen.kebbel@gmail.com

And yes, there is a cost savings if you and another family member join the League. Students are free!

Treasurer's Report

Reported by Bob Burn, Treasurer

League of Women Voters 2019-2020 Treasurer's Report July 2019				
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Date	Description	Deposit/Credit	Payment/Debit	Balance
1-Jul	Citizen's Bank Balance			\$ 8,501.85
1-Jul	Outstanding Payments/Debts Previous Months			\$ 1,687.50
9-Jul	Check 1964: June 10 Diner Payment		\$ 420.00	\$ (420.00)
9-Jul	Daisy Maldondo June 10 dinner	\$ 15.00		\$ 15.00
9-Jul	Memberships	\$ 260.00		\$ 260.00
9-Jul	LWVUS		\$ 128.00	\$ (128.00)
9-Jul	LWVNM		\$ 52.00	\$ (52.00)
9-Jul	Contributions	\$ 50.00		\$ 50.00
9-Jul	LWVNM New Checks		\$ 31.70	
19-Jul	Check 2001-Consumeer Cellular		\$ 19.47	
31-Jul	Memberships	\$ 357.50		\$ 357.50
31-Jul	LWVUS		\$ 176.00	\$ (176.00)
31-Jul	LWVNM		\$ 71.50	\$ (71.50)
31-Jul	Education Fund Donation	\$ 100.00		\$ 100.00
Citizen's Bank Balance (Actual)		\$ 782.50	\$ 471.17	\$ 8,813.18
Outstanding Payments/Debits			\$ 2,115.00	
Account Balance after Debit Payment				\$ 6,698.18

Candidate Books for LWGLC Book Club – September 2019

Status	Book
Books Selected for Future Meetings	
Selected for September 26 at Marjorie's	<p>Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World by Anand Giriharadas</p> <p>Giridharadas takes us into the inner sanctums of a new gilded age, where the rich and powerful fight for equality and justice any way they can--except ways that threaten the social order and their position atop. He asks hard questions: Why should our gravest problems be solved by the unelected upper crust? Rather than rely on scraps from the winners, we must take on the grueling democratic work, build robust, egalitarian institutions and truly change the world.</p>
Selected for October 24	<p>How Safe Are We?: Homeland Security Since 9/11 by Janet Napolitano</p> <p>Former Secretary of Homeland Security Napolitano offers an insightful analysis of American security at home and a prescription for the future. She pulls no punches, reckoning with the critics who call it Frankenstein's Monster of government run amok, and takes a hard look at the challenges of the future. But ultimately, she argues that the huge, multifaceted department is vital to our nation's security. An agency that's part terrorism prevention, part intelligence agency, part law enforcement, public safety, disaster recovery makes for an odd combination the tradition-bound Washington D.C. culture. But, she says, it has made us more safe, secure, and resilient.</p>
Selected for November 21 NOTE: Members will select to read one or the other book	<p><u>Two books on Impeachment:</u></p> <p>Impeachment: A Citizen's Guide by Cass Sunstein</p> <p>"With insight, wisdom, affection, and concern, Sunstein has written the story of impeachment every citizen needs to know. This is a remarkable, essential book." —Doris Kearns Goodwin</p> <p>To End a Presidency: The Power of Impeachment by Laurence Tribe and Jashua Matz</p> <p><i>To End a Presidency</i> addresses one of today's most urgent questions: when and whether to impeach a president. The authors provide an authoritative guide to impeachment's past and a bold argument about its proper role today. In an era of expansive presidential power and intense partisanship, we must rethink impeachment for the twenty-first century.</p>
Candidate Books for Future Selection	
<i>Date in left column is the date on which the book was added to this list</i>	
2-24-19	<p>The Opposite of Hate: A Field Guide to Repairing Our Humanity by Sally Kohn</p> <p>As a progressive commentator on Fox News and now CNN, Sally Kohn has made a career out of bridging intractable political differences and learning how to talk respectfully with people with whom she disagrees. But these days even famously "nice" Kohn finds herself wanting to breathe fire at her enemies. It was time to look into the epidemic of hate all around us and learn how we can stop it. Kohn talks to leading scientists and researchers and investigates the evolutionary and cultural roots of hate and how incivility can be a gateway to much worse.</p>
4-2-19	<p>Doing Justice: A Prosecutor's Thoughts on Crime, Punishment, and the Rule of Law by Preet Bharara</p> <p>By the one-time federal prosecutor for the Southern District of New York, an important overview of the way our justice system works, and why the rule of law is essential. Using case histories, personal experiences and his own inviting writing and teaching style, Preet Bharara shows the thought process we need to achieve truth and justice in our daily lives and in our society.</p>

Status	Book
4-13-19	<p>Open: The Progressive Case for Free Trade, Immigration, and Global Capital By Kimberly Clausing</p> <p>With the winds of trade war blowing as they have not done in decades and Left and Right flirting with protectionism, Kimberly Clausing shows how a free, open economy is still the best way to advance the interests of working Americans. She offers strategies to train workers, improve tax policy, and establish a partnership between labor and business.</p>
4-21-19	<p>People, Power, and Profits: Progressive Capitalism for an Age of Discontent by Nobel prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz</p> <p>The American economy tilts toward big business, but as Stiglitz explains, the situation is dire. A few corporations dominate entire sectors of the economy. Too many have made their wealth through exploitation of others rather than through wealth creation. Stiglitz identifies the true sources of wealth and of increases in standards of living. The assault on the judiciary, universities, and the media undermines the very institutions that have long been the foundation of America's might. We need to exploit the benefits of markets while taming their excesses, making sure that markets work for us—the U.S. citizens—and not the other way around.</p>
6-26-19	<p>A Thousand Small Sanities: The Moral Adventure of Liberalism by Adam Gopnik</p> <p>Not since the early twentieth century has liberalism, and liberals, been under such relentless attack, from both right and left. The crisis of democracy in our era has produced a crisis of faith in liberal institutions and, even worse, in liberal thought. <i>A Thousand Small Sanities</i> is a manifesto rooted in the lives of people who invented and extended the liberal tradition. Adam Gopnik argues that liberalism is not a form of centrism, nor simply another word for free markets, nor merely a term denoting a set of rights. It is something far more ambitious: the search for radical change by humane measures. Gopnik shows us why liberalism is one of the great moral adventures in human history--and why, in an age of autocracy, our lives may depend on its continuation.</p>
6-26-19	<p>The Conservative Sensibility by George Will</p> <p>From the Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist, an "astonishing" and "enthraling" (<i>Booklist</i>) new examination of how the Founders' belief in natural rights created a great American political tradition</p> <p>The Founders' vision, articulated first in the Declaration of Independence and carried out in the Constitution, gave the new republic a framework for government unique in world history. Their beliefs in natural rights, limited government, religious freedom, and in human virtue and dignity ushered in two centuries of American prosperity. Now, as Will shows, conservatism is under threat--both from progressives and elements inside the Republican Party. America has become an administrative state, while destructive trends have overtaken family life and higher education.</p>
7-20-19	<p>GIVE PEOPLE MONEY: How a Universal Basic Income Would End Poverty, Revolutionize Work, and Remake the World, by Annie Lowrey.</p> <p>A brilliantly reported, global look at universal basic income—a stipend given to every citizen—and why it might be the answer for our age of rising inequality, persistent poverty, and dazzling technology. The UBI movement calls into question our deepest intuitions about what we owe each other. Yet as Lowrey persuasively shows, a UBI—giving people money—is not just a solution to our problems, but a better foundation for our society in this age of marvels.</p>