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Message From the Board

As the calendar has flipped from 2025 to 2026, Leagues at all levels are focusing on the next election and on program planning. The board hopes that many of you will join us for our annual program planning meeting scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 14 (note the new location), when we will provide feedback to LWVUS on national issues and to the local board on local issues. Specifically, we want to know whether the League's positions are adequate for our advocacy.

One area where an update is proposed is our local position on Branigan Library. Located on pages 4-5 in this *Voter* is the existing position as well as a proposed update on which we are seeking concurrence. The update reflects the changing nature of libraries, the fact that our League area now serves a wider array of libraries, and the importance of freedom of expression.

February 14 is Valentine's Day, but also a crucial date for the League – our 106th birthday as a national organization.

In New Mexico we also find ourselves in a fast-moving 30-day legislative session in New Mexico where we have members locally and throughout the state who are especially monitoring legislation related to healthcare, the environment, and voting, elections, and ethics. In addition, local members, including Friends of Branigan Library president Lynda St. Clair, are following bills related to support for libraries.

If you want to learn more about advocating with legislators, check out the recording of the latest Advocacy Workshop sponsored by LWVNM on the home page of lwvnm.org. For more information, click on the [Action tab](#).

Thanks to all who helped with the very successful Legislative Conversation and Social event in December, especially to Liz Rodriguez-Johnson and



Kathy Brook

—continued on page 2

Help us Plan for Next Year — and Have Fun at the Same Time!

All League members are invited to participate in the 2026 Program Planning meeting on Saturday, Feb. 14. It will be held at a new location - the Unitarian Universalist Church, 2000 S. Solano Dr. (between Corbett and Wofford Drives), in the church library. It in-person meeting will begin at 2:00 p.m.

Facilitated by Kathy Brook, Liz Rodriguez-Johnson, and Kate Mangelsdorf, the meeting is particularly important as we chart the League's future work. As you know, our "program" goes hand-in-hand with the SNM Positions which gives us guidance on our advocacy as we head into a new fiscal year. Of course, this "blueprint" will include discussion about the mid-term elections and what actionable steps we will take.

We also have a proposed library position to review for concurrence by the membership and an immigration position to recommend for consideration by the national convention in June. We will also discuss local issues that members might want to study and advocate for in the coming year. Please review the existing local positions in the [Handbook/Directory](#) and identify areas where we might need new or improved positions.

And in this important election year, we are pleased to announce that we have a new voter services initiative to increase voter participation in rural county areas.

Finally, we will have a fun activity. We'll make democracy-themed posters that can be used at rallies and other events and that can be posted on our social media sites.

There will be lots of discussion and opportunities to contribute ideas. We look forward to seeing you!



▪ *Kate Mangelsdorf, Membership Director*

BOARD REPORT (cont. from page 1)

Nancy Stanton who solicited food donations as well as raffle items from local businesses and to Rebecca Courtney and Edwina Jaramillo who led the efforts of many volunteers who decorated the meeting room. Thanks also to League members and friends who bought raffle tickets contributing \$1,066 to the League's coffers for Voter Services.

As the treasurer, I especially appreciate that Liz Rodriguez- Johnson was willing to take a look at the League's finances over the 2024-2025 fiscal year, as required by our bylaws,

At its January board meeting, the LWVNM board agreed to take to the LWVNM Council meeting in April our healthcare committee's proposal for a study of the impact of medical malpractice policies on access to healthcare. Thanks to our committee, chaired by Joanne Turnbull, for its work in recent months which led to this proposal. (For those who are not familiar with state League processes, there is a state Convention in odd-numbered years and a Council meeting in even-numbered years. The Council meeting provides an opportunity to update state program on an emergency basis and our League argued that the malpractice issue deserves immediate attention.)

As we start a new calendar year, we have neither a president nor a first vice president (as Beth Bardwell is currently in California with her daughters and grandchildren.) Please let us know what League challenges you can undertake in the coming months.

▪ *Kathy Brook, Treasurer*

Healthcare Policies Impact Immigrants

LWV-US and healthcare discussion groups are sponsoring an online webinar on Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 5:15 p.m. (Mountain) for "Recent Legislation and Policy Changes Are Impacting Healthcare." To attend, get registered at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81734476821?pwd=up4YOvGoT7AWd8X2vcHbbFa4xRjXDO.1>

Leading experts will discuss what their organizations do, what they see occurring with migrants' healthcare needs, how policies have changed, and the impact on immigrants. You'll hear suggestions on how to improve situations for immigrants and families. Featured are Dr. Triveni DeFries, Asst. Professor of Medicine at Univ. of California-SF who is the Executive Director of the UCSF Human Rights Initiative, and Ben D'Avanzo, senior strategist for health and economic policy for the National Immigration Law Center.

Registration is necessary.

2025/2026 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO BOARD:

OPEN – President/Co-President
OPEN – 1st Vice-President
Liz Rodriguez-Johnson – 2nd Vice President
Edwina Jaramillo – Secretary
Kathy Brook – Treasurer
Kate Mangelsdorf – Membership Director
Jo Galván Nash – Past President
OPEN - PR Director

Off-Board Volunteers

Social Media – Rebecca Courtney & Kathy Brook
Voter Services Activities Coordinators - David Rice & Rebecca Courtney
Publicity Coordinator – Lynda St. Clair
Healthcare Committee – Joanne Turnbull
Education Committee – Eileen VanWie & Patti Wojahn
Nominating Committee: Kate Mangelsdorf, Chair, and Rebecca Courtney & Ruth Jaure, Members
Observer Corps: Kathy Brook, Jennifer Kreie, and Patti Wojahn
Historian - Ruth Jaure
Voter Editor & Webmaster - Jo Galván Nash

Upcoming Calendar Events

FEBRUARY 2026

Black History Month

Feb. 1, Sun.: **National Freedom Day**

Feb. 2, Mon.: **LWVSNM Board Meeting**, 5:00 p.m.,
Via Zoom; contact [Kathy Brook](#) for link; All members welcome.

Feb. 5, Thurs.: **Book Club**, 3 p.m., contact [Erika](#) for a link

Feb. 9, Mon.: **League Education Committee**, 5:00 p.m.,
Via Zoom; contact [Eileen VanWie](#) for link;
NOTE: the monthly Education Committee Meetings have returned to 5:00 p.m.

Feb. 14: **Valentine's Day; 105th Anniversary of LWV**

Feb. 14: **LWVSNM Program Planning** (and Make a Poster); 2:00 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church library, 2000 S. Solano.

Feb. 16: **Presidents' Day Holiday**

Feb. 20, Fri.: **LCPS Nat'l History Day Senior Contest**,
9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Rio Grande Prep. Institute

Feb. 20, Fri.: **League Healthcare Committee**, 1:00 p.m.
in-person at Las Cruces Village, Building E conference room.

LWV Healthcare Members Monitoring Important Legislation

The LWVSNM Healthcare Committee welcomed two new members in January: Liz Rodriguez-Johnson in December and Broni Bruce.

Shirley Armstrong coordinated a partnership between the League and Patients Primero to present a four-part educational series on New Mexico's healthcare crisis for the Academy for Learning in Retirement in early January. The series was well-attended and well-received. The Healthcare Committee is now tracking League-supported healthcare legislation during the 30-day session.

The Healthcare Committee is proposing a statewide study on *the impact of medical malpractice on access to health care*. The rationale is that NM's dire provider shortage is worsening and existing malpractice laws are cited as barriers to physician recruitment and retention. Consider this 2025 data from Patients Primero: 41% of Doña Ana County residents report trouble finding a Primary Care Physician (PCP), 60% report trouble accessing specialists, 53% report wait times of 2-6 months for both PCPs and specialists, 60% have traveled out of state for healthcare, 45% know someone who left NM because of healthcare, and 37% know someone who didn't move to NM because of it.



Joanne Turnbull

Moreover, malpractice is on the Governor's call for the 30-day session. The LWVNM does not have a position on medical malpractice and therefore cannot speak to this issue.

Both the local and state League boards have approved the proposal which will be presented at the April 2026 State Council. If approved, our Healthcare Committee will provide leadership in implementing the study, soliciting the participation of the four other local Leagues.

The next healthcare committee meeting is Friday, Feb. 20 at 1:00 p.m. at Las Cruces Village, Building E Conference Room. New Members are welcome; please email me — turnbulljoanne@gmail.com — if you would like to join us.

▪ *Members of the Healthcare Committee*

Shirley Armstrong, Kayla Blanchard, Kathy Brook, Broni Bruce, Erika Graf-Webster, Chris Little, Liz Rodriguez-Johnson, Terri Sugarman, and Joanne Turnbull (chair).

Nominating Committee Wants to Talk with You!

If you have a few spare hours in your month, please consider donating it to the League. Our organization's leadership has been struggling with the departure of Board members followed by the lack of volunteers to take their place. The Board wants to emphasize that being on the Board does not need to be overly burdensome to anyone. There is one Board meeting a month and most Board members also serve on a committee.

Although LWVSNM is in need of a co-president, 1st Vice President, Director of Voter Services, and Director of Public Relations, these are simply titles that oversee a **very flexible** list of responsibilities. For example, the Director of Voter Services is quite critical for this organization. However, if you don't have the time to assume the entire umbrella it covers (voter registration, candidate forums, Voter Guide, Vote411, etc.), perhaps you would consider taking on *one* of the tasks. You could join the Board to assist with Voter Services and manage only the development of the Voter Guide or only the involvement with Vote411.

From now until our Annual Meeting in April, the

Nominating Committee will be gathering names of those willing to serve beginning on May 1. And please know that the Board will support you in whichever task you select and will continue to recruit others to organize additional activities. We have many projects that simply need a leader!

Regardless of what "title" duties falls under, we welcome helpers to: 1) organize monthly general membership meetings with speakers; 2) coordinate a small committee for the Making Democracy Work Award project (we're faced with not awarding it this year due to lack of a coordinator); 3) produce *The Voter* newsletter; 4) maintain basic updates to the League website; 5) help with social media such as TikTok; 6) coordinate Board meeting agendas and serve as chair; 7) observe the County Commission meetings; etc.

All Board members initially begin their roles as a newbie, but no one will be left alone to learn the ropes. If you have questions, please [contact Kate Mangelsdorf](#), nominating committee chair, to discuss your interests. Thank you!

▪ *Jo Galván Nash, Past President*

Information for the Program Planning Meeting on Feb. 14

LWVSNM **Current** Library Position

Branigan Memorial Library (1986, 1996 and 2007)

The League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico believes that a public library is a major community resource. Growth in our city and county has outpaced the current library resources. The Branigan Memorial Library continues to lag behind established standards for public libraries. It is essential that the following actions be taken:

1. That the main library facility be expanded in order to enlarge the collection and provide adequate space for staff and program.
2. That branch libraries be established to improve geographic access to library services. Possible collaboration with other community entities such as schools, recreation centers or senior centers should be encouraged.
3. That the County Government be encouraged to provide more financial support to reflect the widespread use of the library throughout the County.

Proposed Public Library Position Statement

Public libraries are a major community resource. The League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico supports public libraries because they are essential institutions for strong, viable, and sustainable democracies. They support civil rights by providing access to materials, resources, and programming, which should be enjoyed by all and distributed equitably in our communities.

Public libraries play an important role in facilitating free and open access to information. They support citizens' right to know, contribute to civic education and media literacy, and serve as safe spaces for individuals and gathering places for groups to come together to learn, debate, organize, and enjoy a wide range of intellectual, cultural, civic, and recreational activities. Public libraries can improve digital equity by providing high quality internet access and can provide business resources.

Public libraries can and should enrich our communities. This requires they keep pace with growing and evolving community needs, receive appropriate financial support from governments, and engage in synergistic partnerships with other organizations.

DRAFT Background for Position Statement

Serving Community Needs

Libraries must adjust the quantity and range of their offerings, their staffing, and their facilities to match the changing needs of their communities. Options to be considered include full-service branch libraries to improve geographic access, electronic offerings, and collaborations with other community entities such as schools, recreation centers, and senior centers.

- **Democracy and Voting Rights.** Libraries are crucial places for citizens and voters to access information, engage in debate and discussion, and practice the skills of democracy. This includes opportunities to participate with professional library staff, library boards, and local governing authorities in setting library policies and programming.
- **Digital Access and Equity.** Libraries can provide internet access and a range of online resources that contribute to digital equity, both in ordinary times and in situations of emergency and disaster, when they serve as crucial lifelines.
- **Accessibility.** Libraries should be designed as safe, welcoming spaces for people of all abilities. In both their physical locations and their online presence, libraries need to be consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This includes recently passed Subpart H, which adds specific requirements for state and local governments (including their libraries).
 - Accessibility includes adequate hours of operations and staffing levels that provide necessary support services for patrons in person, on the phone, and on the internet.
 - Accessibility also requires signage and staffing that considers the multilingual nature of the communities being served.
 - Space should be available for a variety of regular library programs for adults, teens, and children and for special events. Examples might include programs on financial literacy, tax preparation, media literacy, tutoring, children's story time, etc.

Background for Position Statement (cont.)

- Spaces that can be used by individuals for community activities and meetings can be an important asset to the community and whenever possible patrons should be able to register for their use online as well as on the phone or in person.
- **Individual Interests and Autonomy.** The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) has always been a strong advocate for Citizens' Right to Know as the foundation of Citizen Participation in democratic government. Similarly, the LWVUS believes that the Individual Liberties guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States should be protected and should not be weakened or abridged. The LWVSNM opposes all censorship efforts including those targeting groups based on age, gender, race, and other statuses, along with calls for defunding and/or privatization of libraries that threaten their standing as public institutions and public resources.
 - Collection development should focus on the acquisition of materials including books, other multimedia items and software in a variety of formats and languages to serve the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of all library patrons. By housing a “library of things,” public libraries can provide a variety of physical items, including tools, art supplies, games, and household items.
 - The right of citizens to know, the constitutional right to freedom of expression, and the ability of community members to engage with ideas that may not be found in other venues must be protected from the threat of restricting access to books and other media, particularly those representing controversial and critical viewpoints and marginalized voices.
 - Public libraries' essential character as a safe space for all must be protected.

Support for Public Library Systems

Libraries require both support for current operations and resources to expand their services as their communities grow and technologies change.

- **Financial Support.** Public libraries provide essential community services and thus should be fully funded by tax dollars from local municipalities and counties and state governments. Clearly articulated programs of financial support should provide long-term, assured, and stable funding for operations and should plan for the probability that communities that depend on public libraries may increase in size and diversity over time.
 - Adequate operating budgets, including funding for regular maintenance, should be included in regular government budgets and be funded by existing and ongoing sources of income.
 - Budgets for capital improvements and expansion may need to be supported by General Obligation bonds but should be planned for well in advance.
 - Budgeting policies should allow for funds to be carried over to subsequent fiscal years to avoid creating an incentive to spend funds injudiciously rather than risk losing them.
 - Private contributions that can enhance library services and facilities (e.g., grants, trusts, foundations, Friends of the Library groups) should be encouraged but should not be relied on to adequately fund the library system's operations or capital improvements and expansion needs.
- **Information Support.** While each public library is unique, much can be learned from the experiences of other libraries, so taking advantage of the resources provided by organizations like the [New Mexico Library Association](#) and the [American Library Association \(ALA\)](#) and operating in accordance with their standards is encouraged to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local public libraries in Southern New Mexico.
 - Library staff, operating within the standards of the ALA, are trained to make professional decisions about selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of resources, services, and technologies and should be allowed to do this without political interference.
 - The [LWV and ALA Civic Collaboration Guide](#) can serve as a valuable resource for libraries to develop and support programs focused on educating and empowering individuals so they can effectively participate in civic life, including voting, supporting candidates, and becoming candidates for public office themselves.

Conclusion

The amazing breadth and depth of services provided by public libraries is unparalleled in our society and the LWVSNM is proud to support these essential institutions. They provide access to expand and deepen knowledge and are vital to an informed citizenry and a vibrant democracy.

Local Students Compete in National History Day Event – Judges Needed!

Las Cruces Public Schools is sponsoring a district-level student event as part of National History Day (NHD). This year's theme, "Revolution, Reaction, and Reform in History," invites student to explore moments when people challenged existing systems, responded to change, or worked to reform society. LCPS is reaching out to LWVSNM members to serve as judges for a contest on Friday, Feb. 20 from 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Rio Grande Preparatory Institute, an alternative high school located at 2355 Avenida de Mesilla.

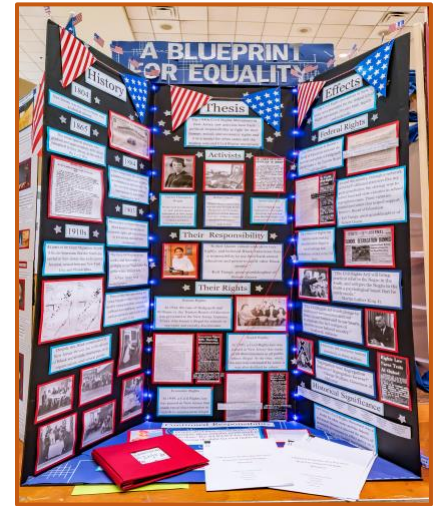
Judges will evaluate students' projects; 9th-graders began by choosing a topic and then investigated the topic connected to the theme. They will present their learning through exhibits, documentaries, websites, papers, or performances. Their projects were designed to build historical thinking, research, and communications skills. Several top winners will advance to the regional competition in Silver City on Feb. 24.

LCPS Jamie Patterson, a social studies content specialist, said judges will play an essential role by conversing with students about their research and providing constructive and encouraging feedback. Judges do not need prior experience, just curiosity and a willingness to listen, said content specialist Josie Miller, also an LWVSNM member.

Judges will need to report prior to 9:00 a.m. when in-person training begins. To volunteer, or to get more information, contact Jamie Patterson at jpatterson@lcpss.net or Josie Miller at jomiller@lcpss.net.

The NHD website explains that students who participate in this event "become writers, filmmakers, web designers, playwrights, and exhibit developers as they create unique contemporary expressions of history." [Visit the website here.](#)

Watch CBS' Jane Pauley's report about National History Day:



This exhibit is one of the finalists in the 2025 national competition.

National History Day® is a nonprofit education organization improving the teaching and learning of history.

Rep. Ferrary to Retire from Legislature

Rep. Joanne Ferrary has announced she will not seek reelection. She has been a champion for many of the causes supported by LWVSNM. And, if you didn't know, she is a member of our League.

Joanne represents District 37. Her exit will leave the seat open for someone new to represent Las Cruces and county residents.

She says this 30-day session will be her last as she retires this calendar year. She'll be missed in Santa Fe!

Rep. Ferrary has served in the Legislature since 2017 and was last reelected in Nov. 2024. She is an essential member of the Consumer Affairs Committee and Health and Human Services Committee, not to mention the many duties she has on Interim Committees.



Rep. Joanne Ferrary

League Members at the Session



Kayla Blanchard is a member of the LWVSNM healthcare committee.

Two of our members are working hard on behalf of important legislation. Joanne Turnbull, chair of the LWVSNM healthcare committee, is representing the League during the state League of Women Voters Day at the Legislature Jan. 29-30, and is monitoring several healthcare bills.

Also providing law-makers with important information from the Rural & Frontier Healthcare Taskforce (part of the NM Rural Healthcare Association) is LWVSNM member Kayla Blanchard. February 28 was also Public Health Day at the Rotunda which brings attention to health equity and gives experts a chance to connect with legislators and discuss community health needs.



Candace Avalos • Bronwyn Bruce
Julia Escarsega • Bobbie Green



Las Cruces City Council • Regular Session

December 1, 2025

Observer: Jennifer Kreie

Four resolutions and one ordinance were passed in this meeting. Two resolutions dealt with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) plan to revitalize the area along Motel Boulevard. The third resolution was to limit the use of fireworks during the holidays. The fourth approved the legislative priorities for 2026, which includes a \$10 million request for funding the renovation and expansion of the Branigan Memorial Library. The ordinance passed amended chapters in the municipal code.

Near the end of the meeting councilors give comments about various things and Councilor Mattiace asked City Manager Taumoepeau to explain inconsistencies in the City's budget. This has been covered in some emails and news articles but here is the link of the meeting, if you want to hear this exchange. Jump 2 hours and 16 minutes into the video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_NJ7U9mo34A&t=2694s

Las Cruces City Council • Regular Session

January 5, 2026

Observer: Jennifer Kreie

Two new councilors joined the Council: John Muñoz, District 6, and Michael Harris, District 3. Councilor John Muñoz was elected Mayor Pro Tem for the new term.

The new Council acted on five resolutions: First, a wine and beer license was approved for a restaurant on Telshor; Second, a resolution was approved that included a pay raise to police (5% for some positions and 3% for others). It's worth noting, that Councilor Mattiace asked what is Las Cruces' state rank with regard to pay; the presenter from the police union said Las Cruces is ranked 15th. Councilor Bencomo followed up with a question on the gap between pay in Las Cruces and others in the top 10. The gap was less than two dollars. Bencomo then asked about benefits and besides other benefits and incentives, the City pays for 82% of the employee's insurance. No comparison was made with other municipalities.

The last three resolutions were approved.

Las Cruces Board of Education • Regular Session

December 16, 2025

Observer: Elisa Sánchez and Patti Wojahn

In attendance: Pamela Cort, Robert Wofford, Ed Frank, Teresa Tenorio, Superintendent Ruiz, and student advisory council member Saraya. Patrick Nolan was absent.

Public comments included concern about air filters insufficient for classroom needs; the need to support the students' organization against smoking in or near school property; issues with the company contracted to oversee the school buses and its operations; a request for a parent representative on the school board.

The NEA-LC reported on this year's efforts related to weapon detection system procedures. They also encouraged giving fairer stipends (additional salary above the base amount) for teachers who oversee student organizations/athletics.

The student advisory council member Saraya reported on the successful coordination between the schools and the Lion's Club \$5,000 donation for student shopping experiences. She also reported on Arrowhead Park Early College High School's need for the intercom system to be repaired and heating issues at Arrowhead and Centennial High. Superintendent Ruiz spoke on the ceremony honoring Organ Mountain High School for winning the 2025 Class 5A NMAA Esports State Championship, and members of the board reported on their school outreach activities, including the LCPS Empowered Parents Academy celebration of parents who earned certificates for completion of English, Spanish, and GED courses.



Board of Education (cont.)

Technology Support Services leaders discussed their progress in supporting, for instance, the 30,000 LCPS users and 1,800 wireless spots with 43 staff members. They shared future goals for supporting the LCPS Strategic Plan.

Human Resources Director Cindy Donnelly shared progress in operations, filled positions, and retention. The greatest need for staff is in special education and speech/language specialists. Retention efforts include mentorship, apprenticeships, trainee programs, education fellows/residents, and university partnerships. She also shared progress in hiring substitute teachers, some of whom become permanent employees, along with a good number of teachers working toward National Board Certification and principals taking degrees at four New Mexico colleges.

Las Cruces Board of Education • Regular Session

January 20, 2026

Observer: Eileen VanWie

Members Present: Vice President Robert Wofford, Secretary Patrick Nolan, Teresa Tenorio and Ed Frank (on Zoom); Absent: President Pam Cort

There were three people who made public comment. The first comment was about improving clean air in classrooms. Carol said there are high quality air filters in schools, but recommended people model wearing N-95 masks to encourage others to wear them. They improve disease prevention by 98%. Michael described his strong educational background and criticized comments made by recently elected Board members that “accept poor student performance” in the LCPS. Paul was grateful for the policy that allowed students to remain in their same school after redistricting was made, as well as other things for which he was grateful and then he prayed.

Meanwhile, CSEC-LC leader Irma Valdespino shared a variety of items, including concerns about bills being proposed in the NM Legislature. Some legislators say we are a poor state; we have a very good financial situation. She heard the Governor was going to recommend a 1% increase in school employee salaries, which is disappointing. Some LCPS employees donate plasma two to three times a week to supplement their incomes. She hoped the Board will pass the CSEC-LC collective bargaining agreement, later on the agenda.

Student Advisory Council member, Alexa, from Organ Mountain High School, shared student concerns about deteriorating bathrooms in high schools, needing additional well-trained security guards, poor quality of food in schools, and some student behavior.

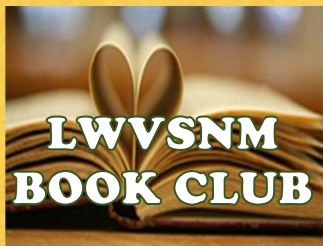
Superintendent Ruiz reported on a meeting with Doña Ana Community College President Mónica Torres about how they can continue and strengthen their partnership. A leadership team from the district met with local legislators to try to align priorities for the Legislative session. Sherley O’Brien of Student Services and Community Relations presented on the school attendance zones report. Growth on the East Mesa is something that needs continuous monitoring and there is a general decline in enrollment. The goal is 0% transfer for stability.

Chief of Staff Josh Silver reported on the request for quotes regarding contracting services policy, with the goal to improve student outcomes. It involves hiring an outside consulting firm to advise the district on purchasing services for students, such as teachers of color. There were diverse opinions expressed, but they approved this action with the idea that they may still disapprove of specific services.

Deputy Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, Leadership, and Research, Dr. Wendi Miller-Tomlinson, brought to the Board the second reading of Policy JFB Student Transfers. The Board was comfortable passing it without the third reading. The purpose of the policy is to maintain balanced enrollment across all schools, while providing flexibility for students to choose a school that best meets their needs.

The Board approved the CSEC-LC Collective Bargaining Agreement. Members of CSEC are in the process of voting on its approval.

The Board had a moment of silence at the end of the meeting to honor the memory of LCPS teacher Helen Davis and Renee Nicole Good’s death, who had been a charter school board member of her child’s school.



The book club meetings are on the 1st Thursday of each month at 3:00 p.m. If you want to participate, contact Erika at grafwebster@icloud.com

Reading Books is Good for You!

— Rachel Maddow

**Feb.
5**

The Mission: The CIA in the 21st Century by [Tim Weiner](#)

A masterpiece of reporting based on-the-record interviews with six former CIA directors and scores of spies, station chiefs, and top operations officers: *The Mission* is a gripping and revelatory history of the modern CIA, reaching from 9/11 through its covert operations in Afghanistan and Iraq to today's secret battles with Russia and China, concluding with the Agency's own fight for survival under the current president of the United States. At the turn of the century, the CIA was in crisis. Intelligence was not being collected. Then came September 11th, 2001. After the attacks, the CIA transformed itself into a lethal paramilitary force, running secret prisons and brutal interrogations, mounting deadly drone attacks, and all but abandoning its core missions of espionage.

**March
5**

The Arrogant Ape: The Myth of Human Exceptionalism and Why It Matters by [Christine Webb](#)

Darwin considered humans one part of the web of life, not the apex of a natural hierarchy. Yet today many maintain that we are the most intelligent, virtuous, successful species that ever lived. This flawed thinking enables us to exploit the earth towards our own exclusive ends, throwing us into a perilous planetary imbalance. But is this view and way of life inevitable? *The Arrogant Ape* shows that human exceptionalism is an ideology that relies more on human culture than our biology, more on delusion and faith than on evidence. It exposes the ways that many scientific studies are biased against other species and reveals underappreciated complexities of nonhuman life—from the language of songbirds and prairie dogs to the cultures of chimpanzees and reef fishes, to the acumen of plants and fungi. With compelling stories and fresh research, she gives us a paradigm-shifting way of looking at organisms on their own terms.

Treasurer's Report for Nov 2025-Jan 2026

By **Kathy Brook, Treasurer**

Beginning Balance, November 24, 2025	\$14,922.41
New Income	\$1,880.25
Dues (Nov bank statement)	\$153.03
Donations (Nov bank statement)	\$600.00
Raffle proceeds (Nov bank statement)	\$1,066.0
Dues (Dec bastatement)	61.22
New Expenses	\$4,488.00
Osteen Media Group, voter guides, chk 1238 (Dec statement)	\$4,070.00
LWVUS, dues, chk 1240, 1241, 1242 (Dec statement)	\$170.00
Zia Promotional Products, chk 1232	\$198.00
Ending Balance, January 23, 2026	\$12,314.66

Designated Funds (included in bank balance above)	\$
Diversity Fund	\$1,979.00
Otero/LWVSNM	\$736.00
Youth Engagement	\$375.00
Election/voter materials (reduced by payment to Osteen Media)	\$3,090.00
Balance on Target e-card as of 11/30/2025	\$0

Deposits, pending

 Donation, \$2,000

Outstanding checks/commitments

 LWVUS, last per member payment under the old dues system, chk 1244, \$2,832

 Legislative Conversation Event expenses, chk 1245, \$210.19

 Reimbursement of Kathy Brook for Zoom subscription

Opinions/Editorials Sent to Media by LWVSNM

January 23, 2026 • By Lynda St. Clair, LWVSNM

New Mexico's 2026 Legislative session runs from January 20 – February 19. The League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, has identified the following priorities for legislative action.

HEALTHCARE: INCREASE NEW MEXICANS' ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE. New Mexico has a shortage of healthcare professionals, and the crisis is growing. Between 2019 and 2024, New Mexico lost 248 Primary Care Physicians and between 2017 and 2021, 22% of OB-GYNs. Lack of healthcare access hurts our residents and discourages people from staying in or moving to NM.

WATER: ADDRESS THE GROWING WATER SHORTAGE CRISIS. New Mexico needs accurate state-wide information of current water resources and the tools to manage the state's limited water resources for regional water planning, aquifer resilience, and compliance with the Rio Grande Compact.

PRO- DEMOCRACY REFORMS: PAY OUR STATE LEGISLATORS A SALARY FOR THEIR PUBLIC SERVICE. Paying legislators a fair salary for their public service will help increase the diversity of the pool of future candidates and will attract and help retain qualified, committed legislators.

IMMIGRATION: GUARANTEE PUBLIC OVERSIGHT OF IMMIGRANT DETENTION FACILITIES. All people deserve fair and humane treatment under the law. Privately operated NM detention facilities have been reported as understaffed, unsafe, and unsanitary. ICE currently contracts with three New Mexico counties who subcontract with private contractors to operate detention facilities. ICE uses local governments as pass-throughs for no-bid contracts with private detention operators. This impedes public oversight and transparency in the operation of privately operated federal detention facilities.

EDUCATION: ENSURE THAT ALL LCPS STUDENTS WHO WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN APPROVED AFTER- SCHOOL ACTIVITIES WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO. After-school programs are extremely important to provide a well-rounded education and are especially vital for supporting students identified in the Martinez/Yazzie Court findings.

HOUSING: SUPPORT SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN LAS CRUCES. The Las Cruces Affordable Housing Investment Strategy (2024) found that 51% of renters in Doña Ana County earn less than 50% of Area Median Income (AMI). To provide long-term, affordable units for low-income households, the City of Las Cruces can leverage a larger share of federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits for developers by providing a local match to help construct Peachtree Phase II, Paseos Verdes, Royal Crossing or other eligible projects

LIBRARIES: EXPAND AND IMPROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY FACILITIES IN LAS CRUCES. Public libraries play a foundational role in supporting a strong, viable, and sustainable democracy and are free and welcoming public spaces for all area residents to gather, learn and enjoy a wide range of intellectual, cultural, civic, and recreational activities. Growth in our city and county has outpaced the 1979 library facility, and resources. The City of Las Cruces is looking to invest millions for Phase I facility renovation/expansion, but additional state funding will be necessary to complete the project in a timely fashion.

We encourage all citizens to contact their State Senators and Representative to advocate on behalf of the issues they believe should be addressed.

Lynda St. Clair

Member of the League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico and President of the Friends of Thomas Branigan Memorial Library. She earned a PhD from the University of Michigan and taught management and leadership course for 15 years at Bryant University in Rhode Island before retiring to Las Cruces. She loves libraries, learning, and liberty.



NAACP Focuses on Civil Rights

The Doña Ana County branch of the NAACP held a brunch on January 19th at the Convention Center. It was a success with a great turnout to hear Leon Howard, executive-director of the ACLU New Mexico. He is a civil rights lawyer from Albuquerque. NAACP celebrates the legacy of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. each year. This year's theme was "The fierce urgency of now."

Meanwhile, the NAACP DAC held its monthly meeting on December 20, 2025. The guest speaker was Israel Chavez, a local civil rights attorney who spoke about possible legislative action for police reform concerning use of force policies across the state. Dr. Bobbie Green, chapter president, said one goal in the legislative session is to get a special investigator position created to investigate officer involved shootings rather than have police departments do the investigating.

- *Jennifer Kreie, member of NAACP and LWVSNM*

Visit the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site

The state's newest historic site has been open to visitors since November. Have you stopped by for a visit? Located on the Mesilla Plaza (2350 Calle Principal), the historic home and its contents were donated to the state by the late J. Paul and Mary Daniels Taylor. Hundreds of pieces of art, furniture, sculptures, textiles, and even the family's live turtles, are on display Wednesday through Sunday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets for guided or self-guided tours [can be purchased online](#) or at the adjoining Reynolds Visitors Center.

Also part of the site is The Barela Store operated by volunteers of "Friends of the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site." Operated by the nonprofit organization, the small and colorful gift shop does not charge tax and sells many items that reflect the contents of the historic home which is next door.



Taylor family members were recognized at the historic site's Grand Opening.



Watch the Video from LWV-US

UPCOMING GOVERNMENT MTGS.

LC City Council:

Feb. 2; Feb. 9, (work session); Feb. 17; Feb. 23 (work session); all at 1:00 pm., City Hall

County Commission: Feb. 3 (work session); Feb. 10; Feb. 24; all meetings at 9:00 am; DAC Govt. Center

LCPS School Board: Feb. 17, 6 p.m.; Feb. 27, Extended Work Session, time TBA; both at Dr. Trujillo Admin. Bldg. Board Rm., Loretto Towne Center

The Barela Store (pictured below) is open Thursday through Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and on special events and some Wednesdays.

The Friends organization welcomes new members throughout the year and actively supports the educational programs and activities at the museum. For more information, visit www.taylormesillafriends.com.

