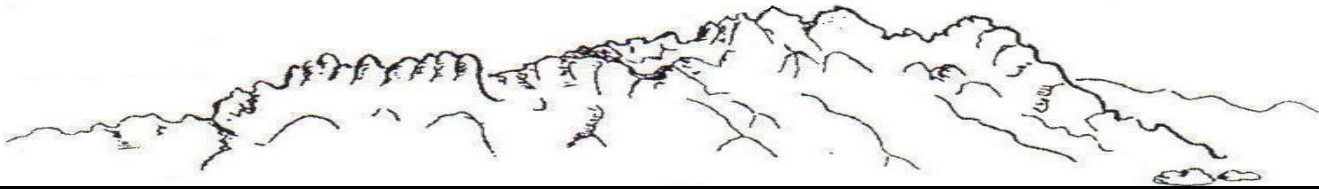


# The VOTER

League of Women Voters  
of Greater Las Cruces  
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)  
Web Site: [www.lwvglc.org](http://www.lwvglc.org)  
June 2010



## *Lunch With a Leader - June 14, 2010*

### **Some Thoughts Concerning Flag Etiquette and Protocol**

*Reverend Mr. Perkins Patton, Life Member, Disabled American Veterans*

It isn't often that Flag Day and Lunch with a Leader occur on the same day—June 14, 2010 is the exception. As a change of pace, we are looking at flag etiquette and protocol related to ceremonies and handling of a national symbol.

A retired clergyman, Reverend Mr. Patton served churches in Alaska, South Dakota, Maryland, Iowa and Texas. He is originally from Clovis, NM, and a graduate of Eastern New Mexico University, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary. As a life member of Disabled American Veterans, he has served as both a chapter commander and as a state chaplain, and he is an active boy scout leader. He has served the Sons of the American Revolution as a chapter president in Iowa, Texas, and New Mexico and as state president in New Mexico. He is presently serving a one-year term as vice president general of the National Society for the Rocky Mountain District.

We look forward to his presentation and hope you will join us.

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## CALENDAR

May 26 (Wednesday) - **Board Meeting**, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Branigan Library, Board Room

May 27 (Thursday) - Committee Meeting, **90th Anniversary of Ratification of the 19th Amendment, U.S. Constitution**, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Las Cruces City Hall, Conference Room 2007A.

May 29 - Primary Election **Early Voting Ends** at Noon.

June 1 (Tuesday) - **Primary Election Day**

June 7 (Monday) - **Deadline for Reservations for Lunch with a Leader**. RSVP Sharon Burbano (526-2860 or Email: [sburbano@aol.com](mailto:sburbano@aol.com)). **Reservations are required.**

June 7 (Monday) - **Voter Registration Reopens**

 June 14 (Monday) 10-11:15 a.m., **Special Presentation: Metropolitan Court for Doña Ana County**, Marjorie Burr and Ellen Haltom, Good Samaritan Social Center, Small Conference Room.

June 14 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m., **Lunch with a Leader** at Good Samaritan Society, Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. **Topic: Flag Etiquette and Protocol**, Rev. Mr. Perkins Patton, Lunch is \$8. **Reservation required.**

June 22 (Tuesday) - 10-11:30 a.m., **Education Study Group**, Good Samaritan Society, Social Center, Small Conference Room (near Main Auditorium). Contact: Bonnie Burn, 526-0013 or Email: [burnb@comcast.net](mailto:burnb@comcast.net)

**MARK Your Calendar:** June 3-4 - **Re-energizing America Conference**, sponsored by Congressman Teague, Farm & Ranch Museum

**The VOTER**

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

P.O. Box 8322  
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**President**—Bonnie Burn

**Vice President & Program**  
Sharon Burbano

**Secretary** - Martha Duran

**Treasurer** - Barbara Goedecke

**Director, Membership**  
Susan Schmutz

**Director, Voter Services**  
Erika Graf-Webster

**Nominating Committee**  
Donna Tate, Chair  
Jane Carter, Elected Member

**Director, Public Relations**  
Roberta Gran

**Director, Special Projects**  
Dolores Archuleta

**STUDY GROUPS**

**Mental Illness Services  
in Doña Ana County**  
Becky Beckett - 522-8171  
Mickey Curtis - 532-5655

**Election Procedures and  
Voter Turnout**  
Marnie Leverett—522-0347

**Metropolitan Court**  
Marjorie Burr - 522-2528

**ACTION COMMITTEE**  
Vicki Simons - 522-4813

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Bonnie Burn - 526-0013  
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The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

***President's Message***

As you look at the calendar on the front page, you'll notice that we have added a **NEW** opportunity to learn about the League. Before the Lunch with a Leader meeting each month we invite you to join us one hour earlier for a discussion about a League topic. How we reached the local position on establishing a metropolitan court in Dona Ana County is our first such discussion.



At the Annual Meeting, we noted that new members especially asked questions about positions and other components of League. The Board addressed these questions by deciding to offer this new opportunity. Actually, the last New Member Orientation was conducted one hour before Lunch with a Leader, and it was very successful. Members participated in two League events, the orientation and lunch, but had to travel only once to the Social Center. We called it "one stop shopping"; however, as we go to press, a name for this event has not been identified (e.g., Lowdown on League, League Work Session, and Where We Stand were suggested). Once a quarter, a New Member Orientation will be held in place of a topic discussion. Please plan to join us this month if you weren't here for the metro court unit meetings or if you would enjoy being reminded about the court system (See calendar, p. 1, for details)

LWVUS has not chosen immigration law reform as a priority legislative issue for this year; however, local Leagues may advocate using the national League's consensus position reached in 2008.

For the past two years, the International Relations Institute (IRI) at NMSU has held conferences about immigration. In March, 2010, the focus was on human rights. At the end of the sessions, Ambassador Delano Lewis, director, IRI, described the next steps as forming an action committee that would influence federal immigration legislation. I am representing the League among the individuals appointed to the Immigration Reform Action Committee. Two meetings have been held so far, each focusing on getting organized, finding direction, and ensuring that local organizations with a focus on immigration are included in membership. As work progresses, updates will be published in The VOTER.

In December, 2009, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) invited me to meet with them about a very special event, the 90th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that gave women the right to vote. A community committee of representatives from women's organizations is being assembled to plan a special celebration. Deanise Marta, president, Jo Bloom and Bonnie Eisenberg from AAUW and Dolores Archuleta and I are members of the organizing committee that is in the early stages of planning. Two meetings have been held so far. We continue to seek out women's organizations in the community. Let us know if you have suggestion of additional women's organizations that should be included, and please let us know if you want to join the committee.

*Bonnie Burn*

**Board Planning Meeting - Bonnie Burn reporting**

Newly elected and returning board members held a planning meeting on April 28. This annual event is a combination of orientation for board members and planning activities for the upcoming local League year. It is also a time when board members become acquainted.

During the orientation, members learned about the roles and responsibilities of board members, and they were introduced to a number of tools designed by LWVUS to help them.

Roberta Gran and Dolores Archuleta were appointed directors of Public Relations and Special Projects, respectively. Each will serve a one-year appointment.

Board meetings will be held on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Branigan Library Board Room unless otherwise announced.

Lunch with a Leader topics were identified:

- June 14 - Flag Etiquette and Protocol, as Flag Day is celebrated on this date.
- July 12 - Elephant Butte Flood Control
- August 28 - 90th Anniversary Celebration of the Ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote. (Currently being planned)  
No Lunch with a Leader
- September 13 - Bureau of Elections
- October 11 - United Nations
- November 8 - Ethics in Government
- December 11 - Legislative Breakfast

Three other items of interest were discussed. Formation of two new study groups, Education and Affordable Housing. The mid-term election will involve a lot of voter services activities. (See p. 6 for some details and ad below) To make all of this possible, a fund drive will be organized. Board members will be discussing fund development at the May 26th Board meeting.

*Welcome*



**New Members**

Barbara Rose Farber  
8080 Constitution Rd.  
Las Cruces, NM 88007-8981  
Tel: 526-1702  
Email: mondaez@aol.com

**Address Change**

Nancy Anderson  
Montana Senior Village Apts.  
355 Montana Ave. (#134)  
Las Cruces, NM 88005  
Telephone & Email: Same  
(Effective June 1, 2010)



**Dues  
Are Due**

- \$50 - Individual and 1st Household
- \$25 - Additional Household Member

**Make Checks Payable to:**  
LWV of Greater Las Cruces

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

**Donations in addition to dues  
are appreciated.**

November 2, General Election  
The League will be publishing a  
*Voters' Guide* and *Who's Who*.

To make a tax deductible donation  
make your check payable to:  
LWV Education Fund.



**VOTER  
REGISTRARS**

Member volunteers needed to  
register voters

- When: Late summer
  - Time: To be determined
  - Hours: To be arranged
- For more information:

Contact Tom Schmutge  
522-4546 or tschmutge@gmail.com

**Join  
A Study Group**



**Affordable Housing**  
Vicki Simons & Christina Little  
522-4813 or 373-1882

**Education**  
Bonnie Burn  
526-0013

**LWV Feats & Facts**  
Most famous member: Eleanor  
Roosevelt, member of NY League and  
wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

## Meet the Board of Directors

**Bonnie Burn**, President. I remain on the Board, to complete my second year of a two-year term. Retreating from the hurricanes, husband, Bob, also a League member, and I moved from Fort Myers, Florida. I joined the League in Framingham, Massachusetts in 1968. After a hiatus, I became active again in 2000 when I moved to Fort Myers, after I retired as a hospital administrator from the University of Michigan Hospitals. I have a BA in Sociology from the University of California in San Diego and an MSA in Health Administration from Central Michigan University.



Back Row (L-R) - Erika Graf-Webster, Susan Schmugge, Barbara Goedecke, Dolores Archuleta, and Roberta Gran  
Front Row (L-R): Bonnie Burn, Sharon Burbano.

**Sharon Burbano**, Vice President & Program. I retired to Las Cruces in 2005 from the San Francisco Bay area. I have lived and worked all over the States and was married and lived in Ecuador, South America, for ten years. My career(s) have spanned the entertainment, education, and business fields. I graduated from the University of South Florida with a degree in International Studies (specialty Latin America) and got my graduate degree from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. I have three children, one on each coast (Florida and California) and one here in Las Cruces.

**Martha Duran**, Secretary. I came to Las Cruces ten years ago to be near my daughter and son-in-law, both archeologists. I grew up in northern California, attended college, married a graduate student from Turkey and moved with him to Washington State University in Pullman, Washington. For twenty years, I was the executive director of the United Way, a small town, a small job. Since coming here, I have been on the Board of the Doña Ana Arts Council. As an avocation, I am a book artist. I make handmade papers, do marbling and some book binding. I teach small classes in my home studio and enjoy participating in art groups.

**Barbara Goedecke**, Treasurer. My husband and I moved to Las Cruces in 1961. He joined the physics faculty at NMSU, and I became a graduate student in Biology, earning a master's degree in 1964. I later worked as a lab technician in charge of special projects in clinical chemistry first for a private

laboratory, then for the Communicable Disease Center. I was a member of the group that founded the League and served as secretary, then president (1987-1989), and treasurer. I also was health care chair for LWVNM from 1999-2002.

**Susan Schmugge**, Director, Membership. I moved to Las Cruces in 2005 after my husband was offered a half-time, post-retirement job at NMSU. I grew up in Chicago, lived in the San Francisco Bay Area, New England, and the Baltimore-Washington area, with a year in southern France along the way. My current hobbies are reading, traveling, and needlework. We have four children, two in Oregon, one in Illinois, and one in Baltimore. My careers have been stay-at-home mom, teacher, and Village Manager in Columbia, Maryland.

**Erika Graf-Webster**, Director, Voter Services. I was born in Europe, immigrated to the U.S. from Austria at the age of 13. and became a citizen at the age of 18. I attended college in Massachusetts, then moved to the Washington, D.C. area to begin my working career. Over the 25 years or so before my retirement, I worked for large defense contractors as a senior systems engineer and project manager. Retirement brought me to Las Cruces two and half years ago. I came for the sunshine! I am not currently married and have no children. This is my first affiliation with the League, though I have made an effort to become knowledgeable about the local political scene and

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Meet the Board *(Continued from page 4)*

local issues. Joining the League just seemed like the logical next step. I have two fairly time-consuming hobbies: breeding and showing pedigreed cats (Burmese) and making jewelry.

**Roberta Gran**, Director, Public Relations. I moved to Las Cruces four years ago to work at NMSU's School of Nursing. I have lived in Turkey, Spain and Germany, and enjoy traveling and hiking. I have four children in New England and California. I went to Cal Poly and worked at Dartmouth. My career has been as an office and events manager, chef, cooking school teacher, caterer, import/export company owner, and singer. I am currently the assistant to Ambassador Delano Lewis at the International Relations Institute, New Mexico State University.

**Dolores Archuleta**, Director, Special Projects. I am a native of Las Cruces and a proud Native American. My first career was in nursing; then I changed to management and went to work for the Department of The Army at White Sands Missile Range. I retired in 1993 as a program analyst supervisor. In 2001, I was elected to the City Council and served eight years, four as the Mayor Pro-Tem.



## FLAG DAY

A flag day, either a day designated for flying a certain flag or a day set aside to celebrate a historical event, is usually codified in national statutes or, in some countries, by decree of the head of state. The statute or decree may specify locations where flags are flown and how they are flown, although custom may prevail.

In the United States, Flag Day is celebrated on June 14. It commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States as adopted by resolution of the Second Continental Congress in 1777.

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 as Flag Day. In August 1949, an Act of Congress established National Flag Day.

## LOOK BACK - Bonnie Burn

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed Barbara Couture, president, NMSU, as our Lunch with a Leader speaker on May 10th. Despite a busy schedule that involved a presentation to the New Mexico State Legislative Finance Committee that was hearing testimony in Las Cruces and an early afternoon meeting at NMSU, Dr. Couture managed an interesting PowerPoint presentation to 46 League members and guests. Although she has been in office only six months, she demonstrated her forte in defining future issues for NMSU.

She spoke of the budget issues facing the University during a period when the State of New Mexico faces serious financial challenges. The University is planning for a 10% budget reduction. Items like vehicles, electricity and even paper are being considered. Student tuition and fees have been increased by 8%. An across-the-board 4% decrease among the departments is in the plan. An overall goal of support for student and faculty recruitment and retention is a priority even with the reductions being considered.

On the positive side, student enrollment is up throughout the five University campuses. Community-university partnerships have developed on all campuses. Vision conferences and action plans are addressing problems.

Academic excellence achievements are made possible through scholarships for students. Special recognition of some departments was mentioned (e.g., biochemistry, aerospace engineering, and physical sciences).

Doing What Counts is a private and corporate fund development campaign to support higher education. A goal of \$225 million was set and \$220 million has been achieved so far. The money will be used to fund academic chairs, professorships for outstanding NMSU faculty, scholarships for student recruitment, and capital projects like the Native American Cultural Center.

A short question-and-answer segment followed, and athletics were among the issues mentioned. We appreciated the opportunity to meet and get acquainted with Dr. Couture.



# League News



## Greater Las Cruces:

**Voter Services Update** - *Erika Graf-Webster, Director.* The 2010 Voter Services effort was kicked off at a May 19 meeting. The core committee, consisting of Tom Schmugge for Voter Registration, Dale Yeo for creation of the *Voters' Guide*, and Nancy Phillips for organizing the Candidate Forums, developed an initial draft plan covering each of these areas, including milestones and proposed dates for the activities. Bonnie Burn, who also attended the kick-off meeting, provided the continuity link from past years, describing prior successful voter services activities, and providing guidance for the effort. Additional LWVGLC members will be asked to assist the voter services effort in the coming months, particularly in developing and proof-reading the *Voters' Guide* and the *Who's Who* pamphlet, staffing candidate forums, and helping with voter registration. More details will be forthcoming in future issues of The VOTER. To get involved now, please call me at 521-0600 or Email: [egrafwebster@comcast.net](mailto:egrafwebster@comcast.net). We are particularly interested in increasing the number of members who can register voters (See ad p. 3).

**Education Study Group:** At present, working as a team, Marie McCallum, Nancy Phillips, Betty Pool, Sally Christman, Erika Graf-Webster, and Bonnie Burn convened an organizational meeting on May 14. The goal was to review the local League's current education position, and brainstorm issues that are of current interest. A draft scope of work was developed:

*The study group proposes to review the current local League education position, last amended in 1999, to determine if it is adequate and reflects the current situation in the Las Cruces Public School District. In addition, points of interest (e.g., funding, curriculum, educational structure, to name a few) were identified for inclusion in this study.*

The study group will meet on Tuesday, June 22, 2010, 10-11:30 a.m., Good Sam's Social Center, Small Conference Room. All members who are interested in education are invited to attend.

**Affordable Housing Study Group** - *Vicki Simons and Christina Little, Co-Chairs.* The Affordable Housing Study Group will begin its

meetings about the first of August. Members of our League serve and have served on the Las Cruces Housing Commission and have been involved in non-governmental, non-profit housing organizations in Doña Ana County. We will be using all of their expertise in structuring our study and presentations. Christina Little and Vicki Simons, co-chairs of the committee, will be meeting with them in June to prepare materials and organize the study. We urge interested members to call us for more information and watch for notice of the first meeting.

Affordable housing is an extremely important and difficult issue, one our League has not tackled before. We are looking forward to this learning opportunity and to development of a position on which to base our advocacy. Contact: Vicki Simons (522-4813) and Christina Little (373-1882) (See ad p. 3)

## New Mexico

**State Council, May 15, Santa Fe** - *Becky Beckett, Delegate.* I was pleased to be able to represent GLC at this meeting. It was very enlightening and helped me to understand the League organization better.

Kathy Campbell, president, gave a brief President's Report. Noted were the new coalitions joined for the Legislative Special Session: Better Choices NM and America Votes. During the past year, Lora Lucero, director, Natural Resources, collaborated in a successful climate change forum. Also, she prepared testimony for the Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) regarding regulation of greenhouse gases at the state level. New Mexico joined 14 other states that are participating in an LWVUS project, Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) that focuses on voter protection. LWVUS has also changed its software programs from Capwiz to Salsa to communicate with members nationwide.

Cheryl Haaker, treasurer, reported that the State Convention direction to create a reserve fund has been fulfilled. The State League now has a \$4,000 Certificate of Deposit, 30% of funds held in reserve. The state per member payment remains at \$12 for

(Continued on page 7)

## League News *(Continued from page 6)*

individuals and first household and \$6 for second household members. Grant money will be available from the state treasury to help local Leagues with the costs of *Voters' Guide* publications.

An operation budget of \$18,817 was adopted.

Program: The Council recommended that two concurrence positions be proposed for adoption at the 2011 State Convention: Transparency in Local Governments, and Natural Resources. Jody Larson, Santa Fe League action chair and past president, will take the lead on the Transparency concurrence, and Lora Lucero, director, Natural Resources, will be lead on updating the current natural resources position. Joining or teaming with additional coalitions (e.g., Count Every Vote in New Mexico) was also discussed. Such action strengthens advocacy, increases visibility for the League and educates more people.

Fred Nathan, executive director, Think New Mexico, was the guest speaker. The organization focuses on solutions to issues and works on one issue at a time. Issues by which Think New Mexico has achieved success include: full-day kindergarten, repeal of the food tax; strategic water reserve; reform of the lottery so that the legislature rather than business administers the program; and home ownership title insurance reform. Its current focus is government ethics and "Pay to Play." Seven states prohibit lobbyists and government contractors from contributing to election campaigns in some way. This has been constitutionally upheld.

Again, this was an interesting, educational experience and I encourage any member to take this opportunity when it arises.



Becky Beckett &  
Fred Nathan

## United States

LWVUS is pursuing advocacy on two major issues: campaign finance reform and climate change. Recently a letter about campaign finance reform was sent to members who are signed up for Action

Alert Email messages. The letter addresses these talking points:

In response to the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC)*, that allows unlimited spending to be done in secret, the League issued a statement, Five Reasons to Add Your Voice:

1. Corporations and unions should disclose how money is spent in influencing elections; and determining the election outcome by the voter has to be protected.
2. Corporations and unions should have to stand by their ads—it should be clear who footed the bill.
3. Federal bailout money should stay out of electioneering—companies that receive federal bailouts should not be able to spend money in elections.
4. Coordinated spending should be open spending—this reveals involvement of candidates, corporations or unions who together encourage voters to support or oppose a candidate.
5. Foreign corporations should never have a hand in American elections.

The **Clean Air Act** that permits the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to take action against the biggest polluters is coming up for a vote in the Senate. Amendments sponsored by Senator Murkowski (R-AK) (SJ Res. 26) and Senator Rockefeller (D-WV) (S 3072) would block the EPA from carrying out its responsibilities. In 2007, the Supreme Court ruled that global warming pollutants were covered by the Clean Air Act. The EPA has begun to regulate the pollutants spewing from major power plants. Senator Murkowski's amendment would block all this progress.

**LWVUS Convention:** Although not listed among the calendar dates on p. 1, the national convention will be held June 11-15 in Atlanta, Georgia. Information, including a copy of the Convention Book is available at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). On the Convention listserv there has been a lot of chatter about offshore drilling and mining. A Florida League is proposing a resolution to lift the ban on travel between Cuba and the U.S. Of course, there are lots of caucuses. A lot of planning goes into organizing this convention, and information about it will be available on the national web site soon after it is over.

## Health Care Affiliates Meet in Doña Ana County – *Bonnie Burn, Observer*

Members of the Health Care Affiliates of the New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC) held an affiliate Spring workshop (April 29) and a public health care reform forum on April 30<sup>th</sup>. The gathering was hosted by the Health and Human Services Department, Doña Ana County, in the County Commission Chambers. Barbara Goedecke and I attended.

During Session 1, Melanie Goodman, field representative from Senator Bingaman's Office, discussed the implementation of the health care law recently passed by Congress. Her PowerPoint presentation gave some of the same information that appeared in the League's Health Care Reform article, *The VOTER*, May 2010.

The second presenter in this session was Jeff Dye, president and CEO, New Mexico Hospital Association. He had just returned from the annual meeting of hospital administrators held in Washington, D.C. He spoke from the hospital perspective and called attention to the following issues:

1. The phased implementation process of the new law means that health care is being given now but the insurance payments are not "kicking in" until a later date.
2. Enhanced Medicaid under the current federal stimulus bill is going to go away at a time when the state's Medicaid matching dollars are down.
3. As the expanded Medicaid program continues, the percentage the government pays reduces over the years from 100% to 90%, which affects state budgets.
4. On the positive side, with insurance coverage becoming more available to more people, emergency room visits should decrease.

Other critical issues for hospitals include: workforce shortages, complexity of delivery, treatment of chronic diseases, and implementation of electronic health care records.

Session II was a roundtable discussion about implementation of the new law. Members of the audience raised issues with a panel that included Melanie Goodman, Jeff Dye, Tasia Young, lobbyist at the federal level for the Health Care Affiliates, Lauren Reickholdt, Rio Arriba County, Silvia Sierra,

Doña Ana County, and Liza Gomez, chair, NMAC Health Care Affiliate. Gaps and needs were identified: (1) malpractice was not addressed in the current law; (2) the states and potentially the counties will bear the burden of matching federally allocated funds for Medicaid; (3) how to cover health care for undocumented individuals; (4) accessing the insurance exchanges through the Internet, (5) lack of vendors to sell electronic medical records software to health care providers, and (6) coping with a shortage of medical doctors.

Recommendation highlights coming from the audience were:

- Greater use of mid-level practitioners, especially nurse practitioners. New Mexico is one of the states that allows nurse practitioners to practice independently. The National Health Services Corps offers service to the rural areas. The issue of payment disparities for doctors providing care for Medicare patients needs to be made more uniform among states.
- Build coalitions among providers and hospitals to accommodate new changes in Medicaid health delivery. Establish county health care councils to help with planning and implementation. The hospitals have a limit to what they can do and cannot be relied upon as the answer to all of health care.
- Seek other means of financial support (e.g., grant writing) for programs as the new law offers opportunities for grant funding.
- County representatives should be added to the state committee that is responsible for implementation of the insurance exchange.

The forum adjourned at noon.

### LWV Feats & Facts

First legislative victory: Passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act in 1921 that provided federal money for maternal and children's programs. This act offered proof that the League's grassroots lobbying and coalition-building were effective legislative tools.



## **Climate Change and NOAA** by *Kate Schultz, Climate Change Committee*

A third of the Gross Domestic Product (\$4 trillion) is reliant on accurate weather and climate information. The federal agency that monitors weather, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), provides weather, water, and climate forecasts to the public and has a huge archive of contemporary data at Asheville, North Carolina, going back farther in time than Ben Franklin's observations. It also has older paleoclimate archives at the Boulder, Colorado location. NOAA has worked closely with many other agencies, both national and international, for many years. Most notably, it has worked with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) to provide vital weather predictions for space exploration and military use. Currently, NOAA is defining the boundaries for safe fishing in the Gulf of Mexico.

NOAA has many sources of data including measurements made in deep sea waters, sea surface and land weather stations and satellites, both polar and geostationary orbiting. A satellite in a geostationary orbit matches the Earth's rotation and stays over the same point on the equator at all times. This enables them to make continuous observations of the atmosphere. On March 4, 2010, NASA launched the GOES-15 (Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite). It is currently being tested by NASA and will be turned over to NOAA in a few months when it will be placed in orbital storage mode as a backup to the other three satellites in service. These provide high resolution images of weather patterns and atmospheric measurements that allow forecasters to pinpoint locations of severe weather with greater accuracy. The GOES satellites also measure solar activity.

Not long ago, NOAA was tasked to study and report on climate change with emphasis on the need to educate the public at a local level regarding climate change. NOAA has since established a portal at [www.climate.gov](http://www.climate.gov) that has vast amounts of information including an educational brochure titled "Climate Literacy" that is provided to science teachers. It is also working with the American Association of State Climatologists and with regional climatologists. NOAA will try to define the climate to which we are adapting (by state and region) by

providing historical trends and climate model projections using day-to-day and week-to-week information. It will provide technical support for state and local governments for operational decision-making regarding infrastructure and land management. Much of this process is still in development and will depend on additional financing from Congress.

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## **New Mexico Government Restructuring Task Force**

During the 2010 Legislative Session, House Bill 237 was passed. It created a 17-member task force to study the resources of the state's agencies' programs, services, funding and policies and the public need served by them. The task force also was charged with examining the laws, constitutional provisions, rules and court decisions governing state government and reorganization.

Members of the task force include five state representatives, five state senators, five public members, and the secretary of the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration. Findings and recommendations must be made by December 1, 2010 to the Governor and Legislature with presentations made to the Legislative Council, the Legislative Finance Committee and the Legislative Education Study Committee. A final report and proposed legislation must be made available to the Governor and legislators by December 31, 2010.

Jody Larson, Legislative Action Chair, LWV of Santa Fe County, volunteered to observe at the meetings. She submitted a report of the first meeting, April 21, scheduled one day before the deadline of April 22 set in the bill. Below are salient points from her report:

- Initial review of the house bill and information provided to the group ahead of the meeting were discussed.
- The budget under Governor Richardson was increased from \$4.8 to \$6.2 billion.
- The public education formula, once a national model, is now out of date and needs to be changed.

*(Continued on page 11)*

## LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS

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

### **Las Cruces School Board Meeting - April 20, 2010, 6:30 p.m. - Nancy Phillips, Observer**

All members of the Board were present.

President Connie Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Minutes of the March 16 Board meeting and the February retreat were approved unanimously.

**Superintendent's Report:** Superintendent Rounds addressed budget issues, assuring everyone that the District will maintain its programs and staff, will not lay off teachers, but will not fill vacancies created by resignations or retirements (i.e., attrition). Temporary employees can have no expectations of future permanent employment. The District must live within its means. He has had significant input from parents, students and teachers resulting in the following strategies to cope with budget constraints: continue to downsize staff without layoffs; AES (Advanced Education Services) facilitators will teach no more than 90 minutes per day allowing that program to continue; college career advisor centers will be staffed by AES facilitators who will design a curriculum to partially comply with new state regulations. Beginning in July, parents, gifted students, Board members and administrators, will be used in the program. In August, progress on the program will be reported every three months.

Two student-produced videos were shown: (a) "Innovative Summer School" by Las Cruces High School and (b) "Teen Pregnancy Prevention" by Sierra Middle School. (It was noted that New Mexico and Texas have the highest teen pregnancy rates in the nation.)

### **Public Input**

Several parents, students and guardians spoke in favor of continuing the valuable GRADS (Graduation, Reality, and Dual Role Skills) program for teen parents.

A parent spoke highly of the success of his son in the AES program. Other comments on the AES program included the issue of adequate time for teachers' preparation, and applauding the fact that Mayfield High School has a higher graduation rate than others in the district.

A citizen spoke to the issue of reinstating a bidding process so that local contractors have an opportunity to bid for all the new construction that is taking place in the District. Currently all the work is going to contractors from Albuquerque.

### **Budget Update**

Utility usage has risen this year, but the amount budgeted was higher than the projected amount, so there is a little extra to cover the rise in cost.

Employee benefits: health care has risen 6.4%, with the total of all benefits in the District at \$772,221.

Actual dollars from the state have decreased drastically in the last year. The District does not receive reimbursement for submitted expenses for several months, so is always in arrears by 170 days.

### **Reports**

Response to audit findings for Las Cruces Public Schools, Dolores Huerta Charter School and Las Moñitanas Charter High School were accepted and approved without question.

Certified and Classified Employee Reports accepted.

All construction projects were reported to be on schedule with a few delays due to weather.

Cathy Mathews, City of Las Cruces Landscape Architect, presented a resolution in support of the Alameda Trails Recreational Trail. The resolution was adopted by the Board.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

## Las Cruces School Board Meeting - May 19, 2010, 6:30 p.m. - Pat Pedersen Observer

Present were Maria Flores, Serena Shoop, Jack Davis, Dr. Connie Phillips, Chair, and Superintendent Stan Rounds. Dr. Bonnie Votaw was absent.

Awards were given to the teacher of the year, Michelle Estrada, a Kindergarten teacher from Desert Hills. Runnerup awards were also presented to Maria Jojala from Desert Hills, Steven Ewing from Oñate, Ken Schafer from San Andreas, and Karen Hansen from Mayfield.

There was no public participation.

Awards were given out in the Battle of the Books competition. Five students were awarded first and second place winners of the state competition held in Artesia. There was a huge group photo of all who participated in the event.

Superintendent Rounds showed graphs of the school budget and the various expenditures. Sixty-four percent of the budget is allocated for instruction and the remaining is allocated for salaries, benefits, and facility maintenance. He stated that this year the Las Cruces school budget has a \$7 million gap in funding. Next year the gap is projected to be more as the state has asked for an additional 3% cost savings. The budget committee is still working on the budget.

Terry Dean presented some information as to budget items. He reported that the schools are receiving a large amount of income from bills due, and this will fall off as the summer recess approaches.

Gloria Martinez reported on construction projects and showed slides of several projects: the completion of the Lynn Middle School gym facilities, and the new elementary, middle, and high school projects. There was some discussion about road improvements. A temporary road that will run north on Sonoma Ranch from US 70 to Peachtree to the site of the new elementary and middle schools is necessary because the city did not include plans for extending the road from US 70 north to the new country club. In addition there are road improvements planned that will continue Sonoma

Ranch Road south from Lohman to allow access to the new high school on Dripping Springs Road.

Mr. Herb Torres reported that, a study for improving Las Cruces High School was given to all staff, and the results will be presented later in June. Plans for improvements to the high school will then be started.

Superintendent Rounds gave a report about the new high school to be located on the grounds of NMSU. Planning is underway but not yet completed.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 15, 2010.

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### Government Restructuring *(Continued from page 9)*

- The 1978 reorganization took three years and included studies, appropriations for planning, a master plan, and implementation steps
- Significant changes in funding occurred in the 1978 reorganization, including reduction in earmarked funds and establishment of a severance tax permanent fund and bond fund.
- The revenue side as well as the expenditure side needs to be looked at to solve current financial challenges.

A PowerPoint presentation of eight states with recent restructure projects was presented. Lessons learned included not to do this in a crisis but to allow sufficient time and to consider elimination of programs rather than "rearranging the deck chairs." Setting deadlines, preparing implementation plans, and leaving a process in place to revisit changes and evaluate their effectiveness also were stressed in the presentation.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to philosophy about doing the work and how the work should be structured (e.g., using subcommittees, gathering information to find a baseline beyond which services should not be cut, looking at effectiveness, not just efficiency, understanding how the budget growth occurred). Context for final recommendations was part of the discussion. Should a blank slate process be used? To facilitate "thinking outside the box" it was suggested that members be assigned to subcommittees outside their area of expertise.

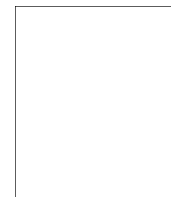
The next meeting is scheduled for May 24, 10 a.m. and May 25, 8:30 a.m. in Santa Fe.



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*Thank You*

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