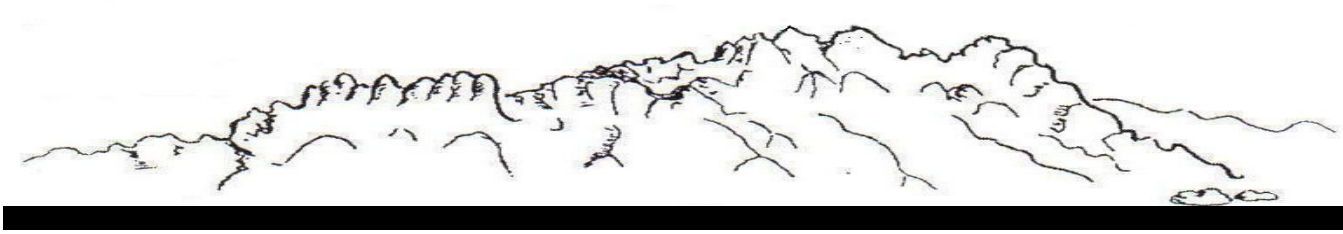
The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
February 2011



Program Planning for Annual Meeting and State Convention

Creative Arts Room, Good Samaritan Social Center, 3011 Buena Vida Circle
Monday, February 14, 2011, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

AGENDA

10:00 - 11:00 a.m. Program Planning for League of Women Voters of New Mexico

11:00 - 11:30 a.m. Lunch

11:30 - 1:00 p.m. Program Planning for LWV of Greater Las Cruces

February is the month during the League year that our local League prepares for our upcoming annual meeting. This year NM local Leagues also are being asked to make recommendations for LWV New Mexico programs for study and action that eventually will be adopted at its convention in May. To give adequate attention to this important League business, we are taking our League Lowdown and Lunch with a Leader allotted times to suggest, debate, and recommend program direction for both levels.

Goal: To brainstorm ideas for possible study next League year at both the local and state levels of the League of Women Voters. This is the **first part of the program planning process**—to discuss and suggest possible issues for study and action. These suggestions are then forwarded to the Boards of respective levels of the League for recommendations, and members vote to adopt program at the Annual Meeting and State Convention.

What is the program planning process: Program is the heart of the League. It is the basis for study that leads to consensus that allows advocacy on issues that affect all of us. This year, at meetings around the country, League members will be gathering and thinking about issues that are important to local and state governments. The guidelines for recommendations are that the issue is one that can be addressed by government action, is one whose scope is manageable by our group, and members are available to commit to its study. Be aware that in League-ese **"program" means the issues that we study and act on**. This is much more than inviting a speaker on a particular topic. It is the hard work of educating ourselves in depth about a topic. Our local League currently has two ongoing studies related to affordable housing and education.

Resources: Our current local positions are available in the Membership Directory, pp. 27-32, and on our web site: www.lwvglc.org. LWVNM positions are available on its web site: www.lwvnm.org.

Be a part of this important component of League work! Let your voice be heard!

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The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces
P.O. Box 8322
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(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org

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Vice President & Program
Sharon Burbano

Secretary - Martha Duran

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Director, Membership
Susan Schmugge

Director, Voter Services
Erika Graf-Webster

Nominating Committee
Donna Tate, Chair
Jane Carter, Elected Member

Director, Public Relations
Roberta Gran

STUDY GROUPS

Affordable Housing
Vicki Simons - 522-4813
Christina Little - 373-1882

Education
Bonnie Burn - 526-0013

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
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Web Master - Dale Yeo

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

CALENDAR

February 1 (Tuesday) - 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., **League Day at the Legislature**, First Christian Church, 645 Webber Street, Santa Fe (See *La Palabra*, Winter 2011, for details).

February 1 (Tuesday) - 1:00 p.m., **Affordable Housing Committee Meeting**, Discussion with Ed Johnson, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, 720 Santa Fe Street. For information contact Vicki Simons (522-4813) or Christina Little (373-1882).

February 3 (Thursday) - 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., **Board Meeting**, Branigan Library, Board Room.

February 7 (Monday) - **Deadline for Reservations for Extended Lunch with a Leader**: **Program Planning,** RSVP Sharon Burbano (526-2860 or Email: sburbano@aol.com). **Reservations are required**. ***If you don't cancel your reservation, you will be charged for lunch.***

February 14 (Monday) - 10:00 a.m. - 1 p.m., Extended **Lunch with a Leader**, **Program Planning** (See Agenda, p. 1). Creative Arts Room, Good Samaritan Social Center. Lunch is $8, **Reservations required. If you don't cancel your reservation, you will be charged for lunch.**

February 17 (Thursday) - 1:00 p.m. - **Affordable Housing Committee Meeting**, 210 East Idaho, Ste. B. Discussion with Tierra del Sol staff followed by a van tour of properties. To reserve your spot, call Vicki Simons (522-4813) or Christina Little (373-1882).

February 17 (Thursday) - 6:00 p.m.. **Model United Nations Team Dinner, NMSU** - Las Cruces Convention Center, $60 per person. Reservations: Bonnie Burn, 526-0013 or burnb@comcast.net.

Notable Dates:: February is Black History Month
February 14 - Valentine's Day
February 14 - League of Women Voters 91st Anniversary (1920)
February 15 - Birthday, Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906)

Board Highlights - January 5, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.., Branigan Library

- Activated annual meeting committees: budget and nominating committees. Bylaw review is not necessary this year.
- Financial report: Income ($504) and Expenses ($435.08) leaves a balance of $4,671.05. Education fund balance is $761. The certificate of deposit ($1,040.63) will be rolled over at maturity date, January 14. Liability insurance for Board members will be researched as potential expense for 2011 proposed budget.
- Lunch Program was updated. February 14 meeting will expand to two hours to accommodate planning for local and state programs for study and action. Probate Judge Alice Salcido accepted speaker invitation for March luncheon.
- League Day at the Legislature (February 1): four League members have volunteered to attend : Johnnie Aldrich, Marjorie Burr, Roberta Gran, and Bonnie Burn. Any League member is welcomed to attend.

President's Message

We turn our attention to the upcoming Annual Meeting. Scheduled for Saturday, April 16, at 9 a.m., the meeting again will be a breakfast held in the Creative Arts Room, Good Samaritan Society's Social Center. The Annual Meeting VOTER that covers all of the details is scheduled to be mailed to members by March 16, one month in advance of the meeting.

At the January Board meeting, we activated the Budget Committee and the Nominating Committee. Based on the thorough review by the 2010 Bylaws Committee and having no new information about bylaws from state or national Leagues, we are not reviewing our bylaws this year.

The Budget Committee members are Marjorie Burr, Erika Graf-Webster and Johnnie Aldrich, and they will be preparing an operating and education fund budget for FY 2011-2012.

The Nominating committee consists of Elected Chair, Donna Tate, elected member, Jane Carter, and Board appointed member Susan Schmugge, Membership Director.

The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for the following offices:

- President (2011-2013)
- Vice President (2011-2012 completing Sharon Burbano's term of office)
- Treasurer (2011-2013)
- Director (2011-2013)
- Nominating Committee Chair
- Nominating Committee Elected Member

These committees will be completing their work during the month of February and will make recommendations to the Board at its meeting on March 2.

In closing, I want to encourage you to attend the **NMSU Model UN Team Dinner fund raiser** (see ad, right column). The League has been involved in this event since 2007. It is the only fund raiser the students have. This year, the team is representing Lithuania and will conduct business for that country in the mock UN exercises set up for the many colleges and universities that participate in this program. The Team has won awards in all of their competitions and will be going in New York. The guest speaker at the dinner is Career Minister Edward Perkins who was U.S. Ambassador to the UN (1992-1993), serving on the UN Security Council. He also served as Ambassador in Liberia, South Africa, and the Commonwealth of Australia. He retired with the rank of Career Minister in the U.S. Foreign Service in 1996.

Bonnie Burn

Welcome

New Members

Alexis Shannez Dudelczyk
Tel: (505) 670-5146 (Cell)
Email: as.dudelczyk@gmail.com

Judy McGuire
2904 Long Bow Dr.
Las Cruces 88011
Tel: 932-9905
Email: judy.mcguire2@gmail.com

Address Change

Marie McCallum
2882 Roadrunner Rd.
Las Cruces, 88011

New Mexico State University
Model UN Team Dinner

February 17, 2011 - 6:00 p.m.
Las Cruces Convention Center

Speaker
Ambassador Edward Perkins

Cost: $60/person
RSVP: Bonnie Burn
526-0013 or burnb@comcast.net

Barb's
Flowerland

Remember Your favorite Valentine

Arroyo Plaza
2001 E. Lohman
Las Cruces

575-525-1850
www.BarbsFlowerlandInc.com

GO SEE TOUR
Immigration Detainee Hearings

Sue Cain, Marjorie, Burr, and Bonnie Burn

On January 4 at 8:20 a.m., ten League members were met by U.S. Magistrate Judge Carmen Garza and were escorted to the Sierra Blanca Court Room in the new U.S. Court House at 100 North Church Street to observe immigrant detainee hearings.

Two court room sessions were observed. At 8:30 a.m., *presentments*, the first appearances of the detainees, were held in the Sierra Blanca Courtroom before The Honorable Lourdes A. Martinez. At 9:30 a.m., the *General Docket* court was held in the Tortugas Courtroom before The Honorable William P. Lynch. Preliminary and change of plea hearings are conducted here. In each courtroom, League members participated in a question and answer session with the presiding judge and court personnel. The League had an opportunity to explain the LWVUS position on immigration and the reason for our interest in observing. Between court sessions, Judge Garza arranged for League members to have an informal discussion with the federally appointed district attorney, the public defender, the court interpreter, and the clerk of the court.

The offenses involved in the hearing included:

- crossing the U.S. - Mexican border at a non-entry port for the first time, a misdemeanor;
- crossing for the second time after deportation, a felony; and
- serious criminal charges (e.g., transporting drugs, illegal aliens, and conspiracy) ,also felonies.

The judges and court personnel were very careful to ensure that the detainees understood their rights and made accommodations for special circumstances (e.g., one detainee had hurt his knee and ankle in crossing and a female detainee was pregnant—both were only handcuffed rather than shackled). The detainees were brought before the judge individually rather than as a group, and each was asked the same set of questions to ensure they understood their rights and the hearing. procedure. A court interpreter was present, translated for the detainee, and repeated in English, the detainee's answer for the court. A retired marshal was on hand to specifically ensure the welfare of the detainees as they awaited their court appearances. The federal government pays for each day of detention, and the marshal ensures that they are treated with respect, are well fed and housed, receive medical treatment as needed, and have access to religious/spiritual support.

Economics continues to be the major reason for coming to the U.S. —finding a job and sending money back home to families. Most recently, the immigrants seek a better and safer way of life for themselves and their families due to the current violence in Mexico. Some immigrants are being forced to carry drugs into the U.S. because they or their families are being held hostage by the drug cartels and threatened with death. Overall, the number of crossings has decreased partly due to the U.S. economic situation but also because of technology that allows connections to be made after a detainee has been fingerprinted. A crime committed in another state will show up in New Mexico during a records check.

In departing the court, we felt that the detainees were being treated well. Court personnel emphasized that the detention and court hearing model we observed was unique to this court. Every effort is made to ensure that human rights are respected and the needs of the individuals are considered. We observed that as well,

There was interest among the judges in the work the League is doing in the area of immigration. As a follow-up, Judge Ronald C. Brack invited the League to observe his court docket where sentencing of detainees takes place. A broadcast email announcing this invitation was sent to our members and we will be observing Judge Brack's court on Wednesday, January 26, at 9 a.m.. Our observations will be reported in the March issue of The VOTER.

Remember, remember always that all of us, you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists.
Franklin D. Roosevelt

LOOK BACK: Border Insecurity: How Political Myths are Deteriorating the Civil Rights of Border Residents

Bob Burn Reporting

Vicki Gaubeca, Director, Regional Center for Border Rights, ACLU New Mexico, addressed League members at the Lunch with a Leader meeting on January 10, 2011.

An unfortunate series of myths exists concerning border safety and security along the United States-Mexico border. Some of the myths are the border must be fully secured before immigration reform can be considered; more boots on the ground are needed; undocumented immigrants are pouring out of Mexico into the United States; crime is flourishing as a result of illegal immigration; undocumented immigrants sap the economy and live off taxpayer dollars.

In actual fact, the border has never been more secure than it is today. The Border Patrol has 18,415 agents (almost 9.5 per mile of border). There are 5,000 customs agents at border crossings, 6,000 additional Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, FBI agents, 655 miles of fence, and seven drones patrolling the border. The Department of Homeland Security spends $11.3 billion annually on border security. It would be impossible to stop all illegal entry into the United States as a condition for addressing immigration reform. The fact is that over 90% of the more than 10 million undocumented immigrants residing in the United States have lived in our country for more than 5 years.

Border cities are among the safest in the United States. On average, cities with large undocumented immigrant populations have lower crime rates than cities with fewer undocumented immigrants. El Paso and San Diego have two of the lowest crime rates in the United States. The crime rate in the state of Arizona has decreased 20% since 2004. The majority of undocumented immigrants have strong family ties and religious values, and they have come to the United States simply to find work and provide for themselves and their families.

On average, the cost of detaining and deporting one undocumented immigrant is $18,200. To deport all undocumented immigrants in the United States would cost taxpayers over $2 trillion. On the other hand, undocumented immigrants currently in the United States will contribute over $1.2 trillion to the economy, an average of over $80,000 per individual, over their working lives in the forms of spending and paying taxes including Social Security that they will never collect.

There has been a tendency for the federal government to shift immigration enforcement to state and county law enforcement agencies. The intent is to allow local police, when apprehending criminals, to verify and report their immigration status to ICE. This often leads to racial profiling and harassment. To date, over 50% of those apprehended were not criminals, and many were citizens. In addition, public safety has been undermined because undocumented immigrants, and many citizens, fear that reporting crimes will lead to deportation. It is important to remember that all United States constitutional rights not specifically applicable to citizens apply to undocumented immigrants. These include the Constitution itself, the Bill of Rights, and most of the other constitutional amendments.

Marjorie Burr, Catherine Christmann, Bonnie Burn, and Ellen Young

League Recognizes Branigan Library's 75th Anniversary

At its Board Meeting on January 5, Bonnie Burn, president, presented a book, *Winning the Vote: The Triumph of the American Suffrage Movement* by Robert P. J. Cooney, Jr., to Catherine Christmann, Youth Services Manager in the absence of Lynette Schurdevin, Library Administrator. On hand to make the presentation were Marjorie Burr, past League president and past member of the Library Advisory Board, and Ellen Young, District 6 representative on the Library Advisory Board and League member.

The book may be checked out from Branigan Library.

Reflections & Dialogue on Immigration and Immigration Reform

Bonnie Burn Report

Leaders and members from eighteen community organizations that advocate for or provide services to immigrants were brought together by Las Cruces City Councilor Olga Pedroza and presented a public forum on January 20th at City Hall Council Chambers. Duplicate sessions were held at 1-4 p.m. and 5:30-8 p.m. The forum was an educational opportunity organized around four themes: law, economics, ethics, and myths. The forum adopted the League model for conducting candidates' forums and shared moderating functions with the Taskforce for Immigrant Advocacy & Services (TIAS-NM). There was a lot of new information presented and the brief summary that follows will not do justice to the presenters or the material.

The program began with the legal aspects of immigration and focused on the protections offered by the NM Constitution to individuals living in NM, whether citizens or not. An overview of family-based paths to residency showed a jammed immigration system that presents many obstacles and requires years to gain legal entry into the U.S. The issue of the federal government shifting immigration enforcement to local law enforcement was discussed. (See Look Back, p.5 for more details.) Impact on crime victims demonstrated the ways in which immigrants become victims even when married to U.S. citizens and how undocumented immigrants fear reporting crime to the police or seeking help even when victimized. The city police chief emphasized the need to carry out the duties of local law enforcement, not immigration enforcement, and the need for cooperation with federal agencies.

The audience learned about the economical impact of immigrant workers on gross domestic product. New evidence reveals that immigration is now an international issue as people seek refuge from oppressive governments and conditions in their home countries. A video presentation gave some history of immigrant employment through the last 50 years, mentioned the effects of the bracero movement, and discussed possible solutions.

During the ethics segment, a Presbyterian minister, a Catholic bishop, and a rabbi reminded the audience that we are our brothers "keepers" and addressed the philosophy of welcoming strangers presented in biblical and torah literature.

Finally, personal testimony from two individuals reinforced the problems immigrants face daily. The sessions were well attended—over 100 in Session 1, and about 75 in Session 2. Although security was available, the crowd was orderly and individuals submitted questions on 3x5 cards. Afterwards, many individuals provided positive comments about the forum and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to receive factual, researched information.

Las Cruces Convention Center - Bonnie Burn Reporting

Tom Schmugge, Johnnie Aldrich, Roberta Gran, and I, (pictured on left) along with Nancy Anderson, Mickey Curtis and Erika Graf-Webster helped to celebrate the grand opening of the new Convention Center. Non-profit organizations were invited to staff free booths that introduced the organizations to visitors. This was an opportunity for us to register voters and to make some children happy by winning a prize after playing our game of "pick the yellow ball out of a bucket." Flexible bracelets with "Future Voter" embossed on the outside and "Voting is the American Way" on the inside was the grand prize. All children were given a sticker, "Future Voter." And every one went away with some candy. We were glad to have this opportunity to introduce the League.

Friedman Recycling

(Continued from page 7)

cans, as the mixed material moves down the line. Common recycled material is finally consolidated in bins where it is compacted, baled, and stored for shipping to venders around the world. Though it was noisy and dusty, all were impressed by the thoroughness of the separating processes and how clean the end product appeared. The vendors will accept 2-3% contamination by other materials in the final bales.

Friedman Recycling is a family owned business with plants in Phoenix, Tucson, and El Paso. Everyone left with a much better understanding of recycling. .

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.

South Central Recycling Partnership, (SCRaP) Tour - January 6, 2011

Al McBrayer, Observer

Thirty invited guests and members of the SCRaP committee traveled to Friedman Recycling facility in El Paso. The goal was to view the processing of single stream recycling received from collection sites in Las Cruces. Morris Friedman, President and Chief Operating Officer, was on hand to conduct the tour.

Can you find Al McBrayer, William Little, Marjorie Burr and Bonnie and Bob Burn?

Before touring the recently expanded facility that included adding more automated equipment, Mr. Friedman described the operation of the facility, explained the cost structure of recycling, gave details about the most profitable types of materials accepted for recycling, and answered questions. To our question about glass, he responded that at this time it is not effective to recycle it. It is difficult find a vendor to process it into useful new products. Transportation and weight of glass also figure into the non-profitability of recycling it.

Before beginning the tour, everyone was issued reflective vests, hard hats, safety glasses, face masks and ear plugs. Once inside the facility, Mr. Friedman guided us through the operation that is automated but does use employees to monitor the conveyor belts. They sort and discard inappropriate materials that are not caught by electric eyes, powerful air jets and magnets that separate tin from plastic and paper and cardboard from aluminum

(Continued on page 6)

Las Cruces Public School Board Meeting, January 18, 2011, 6:30 p.m. -

Roberta Gran, Observer

Dr. Connie Phillips called the board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Absent from the meeting were Chuck Davis and Serena Shoup.

National Board Certified Teachers Awards and NM School Boards Association Training awards were given out to five teachers and three school board members, respectively.

Superintendent Rounds reported on the 2011 pre-legislative session news. The main issue is budget. Across NM, school districts are preparing for potential across-the-board-cuts of 2-3%. The focus seems to be to make cuts in administration and shift that money to the classroom. LCPS has an already lean administrative budget—0.73% of the total school budget. How to find an additional 1.5% cut will be difficult for the district. No money is being budgeted for enrollment growth that results in about $2 million coming to the district if growth was 1%. It is not expected that the health care insurance expense will increase; however, employees may have to pay as much as 2% more into their retirement fund. On its web page, the district has created a video and posted legislative information that will be updated as the legislative session progresses: www.lcps.k12.nm.us.

The Court Youth Center, per state statute, cannot be sold to Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation for the nominal price of $1. The sale has to reflect current market price value or more.

Las Cruces High School Power Program is offered to students who have dropped out of high school with at least 5 credits and are at least 17 years of age . The program has enrolled 213 and graduated 91 students between 2006 and the present.

Updates were given on 20 ongoing construction projects. Resolutions regarding personnel policies received first and second readings. The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

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FIRST CLASS

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JOIN THE LEAGUE TODAY

Bring a friend with you!
Membership: Individual ($50), 2nd Household Member ($25)
Join after November 1 pay half dues. Dues renew on May 1.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ **Phone:** _____

Email: _____

$ _____ Contributions to the League
Make Check payable to LWV of Greater Las Cruces

$ _____ Contribution to the Education Fund (Tax Deductible)
Make check payable to League of Women Voters

All checks should be mailed to
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Thank You

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.