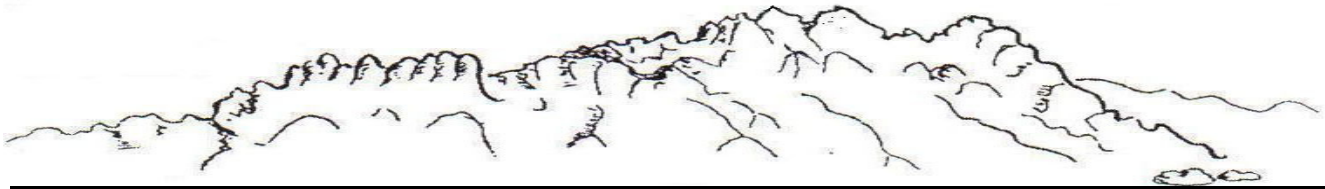


The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
January 2012



Legislative Breakfast

We invite you to meet and greet elected state senators and representatives from Doña Ana County who represent us in the New Mexico State Legislature. This is our opportunity to exchange information in an informal setting. We learn about issues they will be pursuing, and we express our local advocacy priorities. The 30-day legislative session begins on January 17 and ends on February 16. All New Mexico legislators will be elected on November 6, 2012.

Join us for this annual event!

Saturday, January 14, 2012, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
Good Samaritan Social Center, Main Dining Room
3011 Buena Vida Circle

CALENDAR

January 4 (Wednesday) - 10:00 a.m.-Noon, **Board Meeting**, Branigan Library, Board Room.

January 5 (Thursday) - **Deadline for Reservations for Legislative Breakfast.** RSVP Paula Nielson (386-7957 or Email: paulanielson@comcast.net) **Reservations are required.** *If you don't cancel your reservation, you will be charged for breakfast.*

January 14 (Saturday) - **Legislative Breakfast**, 9-11 a.m., Good Samaritan's Social Center, Main Dining Room. Breakfast is \$10. **Reservations are required.** RSVP Paula Nielson (386-7957 or Email: paulanielson@comcast.net)

January 23 (Monday) - **Affordable Housing Unit Meeting**, 10-11:30 a.m., Conference Room, Good Samaritan Social Center. (Please read the final report included with this issue of *The Voter*.)

January 23 and 24 (Monday evening and Tuesday) - **League Day at the Legislature**, sponsored by LWV of New Mexico, Santa Fe (Details on p. 3)

January 30 (Monday) - **Affordable Housing Unit Meeting**, 10-11:30 a.m., Conference Room, Good Samaritan Social Center. (Proposed Concurrence Position, p. 7)

Notable Dates in January:

- 9 - Birthday - Carrie Chapman Catt (1859-1947)
- 11 - Birthday - Alice Paul (1885-1977)
- 16 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (1929-1968)
- 17 - NM Legislative Session Begins
- 22 - Roe v. Wade (1973)

The VOTER

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

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Web Site: www.lwvglc.org

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Vice President & Program
Paula Nielson

Secretary - Martha Duran

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Director, Membership
Roberta Gran

Director, Voter Services
Erika Graf-Webster

Nominating Committee
Chair: Vicki Simons
Elected Member: Sadie Valverde

STUDY GROUPS

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

Education
Jane Asche - 532-8087
Sue Cain - 647-8250

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

Metropolitan Court
Marjorie Burr - 522-2528

ACTION COMMITTEE
Vicki Simons - 522-4813

Web Master - Dale Yeo

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

Board Highlights

December 7, 2011, 10:30 -12:30 a.m., Branigan Library, Board Room

1. Affordable Housing: The Board approved a proposed concurrence position and plans for unit meetings presented by Christina Little and Vicki Simons, co-chairs.
2. Centennial Parade: The Board reached a decision not to participate in the NM Centennial Parade scheduled for January 7.
3. Fund Raising: A solicitation letter was approved and sent to community supporters on December 6. Implementing a Pay Pal account is underway and will make it easier for individuals to make donations, especially if they visit the League's web site.
4. Membership: Roberta Gran reported on the New Member Orientation held on December 1, 6-7:30 p.m., at the home of Bonnie Burn. Three of the nine new members attended.
5. Legislative Breakfast: Erika Graf-Webster reported that post cards, "Hold The Date," were sent out, letters of invitation to legislators will be sent out during the week of December 26, and follow-up calls will be made thereafter.

Next Board Meeting: January 4 (Wednesday), 10 a.m. - Noon.



HOLIDAY SOCIAL A SUCCESS



Thank You, Carol Jackson, and more than 30 League revelers for a very fun event that got us in the spirit of the holidays!

NAME THAT LEAGUER
How many can you name before you peek at the answers on page 3?

President's Message

New Year's Resolution

Resolve to keep our community, state, and nation fair, vibrant, and strong by participating in League work to ensure good government.

The League is democracy in action.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Bonnie Burn

League Day at the Legislature

Monday evening, January 23, 5:30 p.m.

Panel Discussion - Voter Verification: Facts and Fallacies
Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe

Tuesday, January 24, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

7:30 a.m., Round House - Pick up LWVNM Information Packets and distribute to local NM legislators

10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. - Educational Events

NM State Land Office, 330 Old Santa Fe Trail

- **NM Budget** - **Alicia Manzano**, MPA, Outreach Director, NM Voices for Children

- **Driver's Licenses for Undocumented**

Marcela Diaz, Executive Director, Somos Un Pueblo Unido

Lunch

Box Lunch, \$10, select from ham, chicken, or vegetarian sandwich, chips, cookie and beverage.

Lunch Speaker

- **Voting Issues in New Mexico**

Denise Lamb, Director, Elections Bureau for Santa Fe County

Accommodations:

Garrett's Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, Tel: 1-800-888-2145, located across the street from the NM Land Office and a few short blocks to the Round House. Ask for the legislative rate of \$49 plus tax. You may be required to pay \$8 for parking if you check out the morning of League day.

Action Alerts: If you want to receive email Action Alerts throughout the 2012 Legislative session, please sign up for the LWVNM Topics List by logging on to www.lwvnm.org and sign up for the listserv.

NAME THAT LEAGUER
(Pictures, p. 2)

1. Betty Pool, Dale Yeo, Ellen Haltom, Marnie Leverett
2. Jane Carter
3. Jane Asche, Sharon Burbano
4. Gwen Hanson, John Simons, Bonnie Burn
5. Shirley Armstrong, Al Kissling
6. Erika Graf-Webster, Bonnie Burn, Johnnie Aldrich
7. Sharon Burbano, Ellen Haltom, Helen Buggert, Jane Asche
8. Carol Jackson, John Hanson
9. Johnnie Aldrich, Shirley Armstrong
10. Susan Schmutge, Betty Lovelace, Sue Cain

Happy New Year

Friends of the League

- John Ameriks, M.D.
- Biad Chile Ltd. Co.
- Joseph P. Camunez, DDS
- Citizens Bank
- Dental Associates, PA
- Doggie Dude Ranch and Cat Farm
- Donald and Winifred Dresp
- Adrian and Jackie Edwards
- Nancy & Ken Hall
- First New Mexico Bank
- Edward Jones - Connie Lee
- Patricia Kratz
- Lilley Law Offices
- Louise P. Lockhart
- Barbara Myers
- Francisco Mario Ortiz Law Firm
- Judith Scott and Paul Thomas
- Wanda Skowlund
- LaJune Smith
- Marie Sutter-Sinden
- Tom Tate
- Zia Engineering & Environmental Consultants

Thank You

Summary Report

Las Cruces Area Early Childhood Development Meeting

November 1, 2011 - Days Inn Conference Center - Las Cruces, NM
Jane Asche and Sue Cain, Co-Chairs, Education Committee

Between October 18 and December 15, 2011, four community meetings were held at four different locations in New Mexico (NM) on the subject of early childhood development: Taos, Farmington, Las Cruces and Clovis. The meetings were sponsored by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation; organized by New Mexico First; and convened by the New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnership, New Mexico Children, Youth and Family Department, and New Mexico Business Roundtable. In addition, each meeting included one or more New Mexico Legislator hosts. Persons attending were early childhood providers, civic leaders, business people, and policy makers. Within the category of civic leaders, Sue Cain and Jane Asche represented the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces (LWVGLC).

Impetus for these meetings grew out of the NM Early Childhood Care and Education Act that was signed into law in 2011 to establish an early childhood system across the state and support quality programs for our state's youngest children. The focus of the community meetings was to outline the importance of community public/private partnerships in fulfilling the promise of the act and to share ideas about regional and local issues that affect our youngest children and their families.

The three hour meeting addressed six agenda items:

1. A welcome from the Chair of the NM Early Childhood Development Partnership, Katherine Freeman, and our state senators, Stephen Fischmann and Cynthia Nava, who both serve on the NM Legislative Education Study Committee;
2. Presentation on the importance of early childhood development public/private partnerships by the program manager of the NM Early Childhood Development Partnership;
3. Community presentation on local and regional challenges and needs by Dr. Betsy Cahill, Director of Early Childhood Education in the College of Education at NM State University (NMSU);
4. Keynote presentation of research data on early childhood services and needs in NM by Dr. Peter

Winograd, the Director of the Center for Education Policy at the University of New Mexico (UNM);

5. Roundtable discussions by the attendees on the following four questions:
 - a. In our community what are the practical ways of providing support to families of young children?
 - b. How can we more directly include and encourage involvement of local businesses and business leaders in early childhood care and education issues?
 - c. Within our community, what are the ideas for identifying, recruiting, and retaining qualified and inspired caregivers and teachers for our youngest children?
 - d. What can be done in this region to improve collaborative initiatives and programs that support New Mexico families with young children?
6. And finally, a report from table representatives to the whole group of the ideas generated in the roundtable discussions.

The written responses to the roundtable questions were collected and will be compiled into a report for public dissemination in the near future by the organizers. A copy of the excellent materials that were distributed to meeting attendees are available in the League files. For those who would like to read them, please contact Sue Cain, 647-8250 or terryandsuecain@yahoo.com.

League representatives Cain and Asche concluded from the meeting that there is a keen understanding among policy makers and civic leaders about the importance of early childhood education for the educational success of all children during subsequent school years. However, the success of the NM Early Childhood Care and Education Act to provide the resources that are needed to achieve this success will depend on how well civic leaders and stakeholders help to generate public will to see that the NM State Legislators make early childhood development a major funding priority. LWVGLC can potentially be a major player in this process to help generate public will.



League News



Affordable Housing Moves to Concurrence

Vicki Simons and Christina Little, Co-Chairs

The Affordable Housing Committee has worked for two years to understand issues surrounding affordable housing in Doña Ana County. January 2012 will see the culmination of our efforts. Attached as a separate document to this *Voter* is a report that has been carefully assembled to give League members and interested citizens a good overview of the topic.

A proposed position that will be presented for **member concurrence** appears on page 6. The League has two primary methods for adopting positions that are then used as the basis of action and support for specific legislation. One of these methods is **consensus**. Members are asked open-ended questions, and a position is developed based on feedback by the members. The second method is **concurrence**. Here, League members are asked to agree or disagree with a position that has been reached by another League. We are presenting such a concurrence for your consideration. The original comes from Oxford, Ohio. The Affordable Housing Committee has made slight modifications to the position, both to reflect the change in location and to better describe issues in our community. Together with the national position included as an appendix in the Affordable Housing Report, the committee believes this will give LWV/GLC a robust and flexible position on affordable housing.

Two unit meetings are planned to discuss affordable housing. These are scheduled for Monday, January 23 and Monday, January 30, from 10-11:30 a.m. at the Good Samaritan Conference Room (next to the auditorium). **WARNING: there will be Academy for Learning in Retirement (ALR) meetings on both days so come a bit early to get a parking spot and join us for a cup of coffee.** We hope that both of these meetings will be fun, informative, and give members lots of opportunity to ask questions and talk about the issues involved.

On January 23, we are going to start with a video presentation showing the wide variety of housing that is being built and operated by Habitat for Humanity, the Housing Authority, and Tierra del Sol. There will

also be some pictures of rehabilitation efforts supported directly by the City of Las Cruces. Committee members will talk briefly about the following areas of our report: the need for affordable housing in our community; the role of the City of Las Cruces; the contribution of the Mortgage Finance Authority; and the role of nonprofits (Habitat for Humanity, Tierra del Sol, Community Action Agency, the YWCA, and the Community of Hope) as well as the Housing Authority. We welcome lots of questions and discussion.

On January 30, the first part of the meeting is going to be a discussion of the relationship between affordable housing, transportation, and land use. This will be followed by the actual concurrence process. Here members will have an opportunity to examine our proposed concurrence. If there are suggested changes, they can be made at this point. We will be seeking to achieve substantial agreement (not a majority vote) by the membership.

Please come to these meetings. The committee has found affordable housing to be an enormously interesting, important, and complex issue.

Based on input from the membership, the Committee will develop a final position. This will be presented to the board for final approval in February 2012. As with all League positions, the membership will have the opportunity to review the position again at the Annual Meeting.

The Affordable Housing Committee consists of Jane Carter, Marnie Leverett, Christina Little, Charlotte McCarthy, Paula Nielson, Vicki Simons, and Aletta Wilson. We now look forward to input and involvement by all League members.

UNIT MEETINGS - Affordable Housing

Good Samaritan Social Center
Conference Room - 10-11:30 a.m.
January 23 - Discussion
January 30 - Concurrence

Affordable Housing - Proposed Concurrence Position

The **League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces** supports current and future efforts to increase the availability of **affordable, decent** housing for moderate and low income household through the following actions:

- Increase housing options for seniors, the disabled, first-time home buyers and households that earn their living in **Doña Ana County**.
- Promote a variety of housing styles and types for rent and for purchase that are integrated within the community.
- Support strategies including public and private partnerships and grants, developmental agreements, rehabilitation, fee waivers, density bonuses, and an affordable housing trust fund **and land bank**.
- **Support policies that link transportation, land use, and affordable housing.**

Note: This position was adopted by members of the League of Women Voters of Oxford, Ohio, and represents findings of the study conducted by the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces (LWVGLC). The Affordable Housing Committee has made slight modifications (note **bolded** information) to the position, both to reflect the change in location and to better describe issues in our community.

Rethinking the Public Regulation Commission - *Bonnie Burn Reporting*

At the LWVNM Convention, May 13-15, 2011, members approved a study of the Public Regulation Commission (PRC). The study would focus on utilities and insurance, two primary functions, and review the structure. The study co-chairs are Neva Van Peski, and Karen Heldmeyer, LWV of Santa Fe.

Since the League convention, the PRC has made the news because of proposed increases in health insurance and the removal of Commissioner Jerome Block, Jr., District 3, following allegations of misconduct in office.

In Fall 2011, Think New Mexico (TNM), produced a 31-page report about the PRC. TNM is a results-oriented think tank, located in Santa Fe, with a mission to improve the quality of life for all New Mexicans, especially those who lack a strong voice in the political process. It performs and publishes sound, nonpartisan, independent research while not subscribing to any particular ideology. LWVNM has collaborated with Think New Mexico many times, and Fred Nathan, Executive Director, has been a speaker at League functions.

The report is very comprehensive. The opening section, The Accidental Agency, traces the legislation that brought about a new agency that would regulate utilities, telecommunications, insurance, motor carriers, pipelines, and the Fire Marshal's Office.

A brief history follows, along with a timeline of PRC controversies that are listed by year from 1999-

2011. Too much jurisdiction and too few qualifications for the elected office of Commissioner are discussed as primary problems.

The remaining pages are devoted to TNM's recommendation for PRC reform and include:

1. Streamlining jurisdiction by:
 - Creating a separate Department of Insurance
 - Moving the State Fire Marshal to the Department of Homeland Security
 - Consolidating corporate reporting in the Office of the Secretary of State
 - Eliminating duplicative regulation of railroads by the PRC and the Department of Transportation.
 - Transferring ambulance regulation to the Department of Health
 - Deregulating market entry and rates for almost all motor carriers of passengers and household goods.
2. Enhancing Commissioner's Qualifications by requiring candidates to have either:
 - A bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited college or university.
 - Or five years professional experience in law, engineering, economics, or accounting.

A copy of the report (\$10), may be ordered from its web site: www.thinknewmexico.org. TNM will be championing legislation during the 2012 legislative session to place these reforms on the 2012 ballot for New Mexico Voters to consider.

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS

The League's Observer Corps can enable greater coverage and information gathering, provide early warning of upcoming issues of concern, increase League's visibility, and 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 Public School Board

Meeting - December 13, 2011, 6:30-9:00 p.m.,
Sue Cain, Observer

The School Board meeting was lengthy, and complete details of the meeting are on the LCPS web site, www.lcps.k12.nm.us). Two presentations by Superintendent Stan Rounds were relevant to the League's recently adopted education position.

The first presentation was a review and discussion of the 2012-2013 high school schedule. An appointed committee of teachers and administrators, chaired by Michael Montoya and Nyeta Haines, was assigned the task of researching and recommending the most successful and frequently used annual high school schedule. The recommendation was to adopt a block schedule of seven periods because it offered the largest student instructional time, balanced with teachers planning time, and met all students' curriculum needs. The schedule consists of periods 1, 3, 5 and 7 on Mondays and Wednesday; periods 2, 4, 6, and 7 on Tuesdays and Thursdays; and all seven periods on Friday. Period 5 on Fridays would have fewer minutes than the others and was referred to as the "skinny period." The committee chairs, several members of the committee, and Superintendent Rounds responded to the many questions and concerns that were raised. The recommended schedule was approved unanimously by the board and will be implemented in the 2012-2013 school year.

The second presentation was about the charter renewal application for the Las Montañas Charter High School. Superintendent Rounds made the following recommendations:

- Beginning in January 2012, the finances of Las Montañas come under the control and guidance of Superintendent Rounds and Terry Dean, Assistant Superintendent of Finance, and that the finances become solvent by June 30, 2012. Mr. Dean will serve as the official finance chief.
- Las Montañas meet some academic standards targets that are set by LCPS, must set a student

attendance rate of 95% and develop plans to meet higher graduation rates. Dr. Steven Sanchez, Associate Superintendent, Division of Learning, Teaching and Research, will work with the administrators and professional staff of Las Montañas to assist in meeting student academic performance and graduation rates by June 30, 2012.

- For the next five years, the annual approval of the charter renewal application by the LCPS Board of Education will be dependent upon Las Montañas being financially solvent and meeting the attendance, academic performance, and graduation rates specified by Superintendent Rounds. Temporary renewal was approved through June 30, 2012.

The administrators and staff of Las Montañas have already been working for several months with LCPS's administrators and Superintendent Rounds to achieve these goals. Mr. Robinson, Principal of Las Montañas, spoke about the importance of working with non-traditional students and the commitment of his staff to meet the goals. He appreciated the support and assistance that has already been provided.

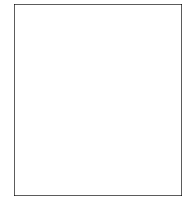
The LCPS Board of Education unanimously approved the recommendations made by Superintendent Rounds, the temporary renewal of the school's charter until June 30, 2012, and the annual assessment renewal procedures for the next five years.

Two additional agenda items of special interest involved students' learning experiences. One was the video, "LCPS Students Exploring Careers for their Future." The video included several students on site in local business and professional workplaces where students are spending one semester doing active career explorations. The second was the recognition of Daniel "Maceo" Rodriguez, an eighth grade student and first place winner in the National Constitution Day Poster Contest, competing with 30,000 other students. Daniel's art teacher had recognized his talent and helped him to compete in the poster contest.

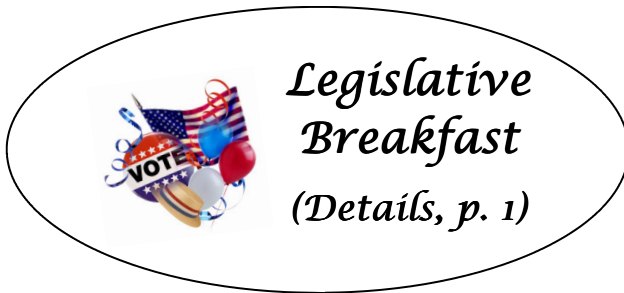


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FIRST CLASS



January 2012
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Membership Application

Membership: Individual (\$60), 2nd Household Member (\$30), and Students (\$25)
 New Members joining after November 1 pay half-dues.

Name: _____

2nd Household: _____

Address: _____ **City/State/Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Cell:** _____ **Email:** _____

\$ _____ Contribution 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 Education Fund

All checks should be mailed to

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

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.