

# The VOTER

League of Women Voters  
of Greater Las Cruces  
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)  
Web Site: [www.lwvglc.org](http://www.lwvglc.org)  
January 2015



## *Lunch with a Leader*

**Fred Martino**

Director of Content  
KRWG Public Media, NMSU



**“Local Public Media Journalism:  
Expanding To Meet Community Needs”**

**Monday, January 12, 2015, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room**

Fred Martino has served as Director of Content for KRWG Public Media since 2008. He came to Las Cruces after nine years as Director of News and Public Affairs for WGTV Public Media in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Martino will discuss feedback regarding local journalism. Audience needs are changing, with many more people accessing news online. Martino also will discuss the ways that public media is striving to provide public policy information and forums. He views journalism and related programming as a critical part of a deliberative democracy. Martino holds a Master's degree in Communication as well as Master's in Public Administration from Grand Valley State University. He has completed coursework for a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration from New Mexico State University and is currently working on his dissertation.

## *Calendar*

**January 5 (Monday)** - Deadline for making reservations for Lunch with a Leader. RSVP Ruth Benjamins, email: [benjpa@q.com](mailto:benjpa@q.com) Tel: 527-0204

**January 8 (Thursday)** - 1:30-3:30 p.m. Board Meeting, City Hall Conference Room 2007. All are welcome.

**January 12 (Monday)** - Lunch with a Leader, Fred Martino, Director of Content, KRWG Public Media. Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. \$10. Reservations are required. RSVP to Ruth Benjamins, email: [benjpa@q.com](mailto:benjpa@q.com) Tel: 527-0204

**January 15 (Thursday)** - 2-4 p.m. Book Club “Evolution & the Science of Creation” by Bill Nye. At the home of Marjorie Burr, 695 Stone Canyon Dr., 522-2528, email: [burrmb@aol.com](mailto:burrmb@aol.com)

**January 20 (Tuesday)** - 10-11:30 a.m. Committee Meeting, Elections Procedures. Good Samaritan, Building E, 2nd floor, West Lounge. All members are welcome.

**January 26 (Monday)** - 10:00 a.m. Unit Meeting: Quality of Life Study, Good Samaritan Social Center, Conference Room (downstairs near main auditorium).

**January 25 (Monday)** - Last day for Reservations for special rates in Santa Fe, Garret's Desert Inn \$59 single occupancy; \$69 double.

## *Save the Date League Day at the Legislature*

**Monday, February 9, 5:30-7:30 pm** Reception  
Garrett's Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail

**Tuesday, February 10, 8 a.m. on—Legislative Hearings**  
LWV Information Event—10:30a.m.—Noon  
NM Land Office, Morgan Hall, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail

**Special room rates cut-off-date is January 25**

Accommodation & Event information on page 6

**The VOTER**

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

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**Vice President & Program for Study and Action**  
Gwen Hanson

**Secretary** - Sadie Valverde

**Treasurer** - Ruth Benjamins

**Director, Membership**  
Johnnie Aldrich

**Co-Directors, Voter Services**  
Marcia Anderson & Dale Yeo

**Director Events and Speakers**  
Roberta Gran

**Nominating Committee**  
Chair: Ardyth Norem

Elected Member: Sue Cain  
Board Member: Marcia Anderson

**Program for Study & Action**

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

**Education**  
Ruth Benjamins - 527-0204

**Election Procedures**  
Ardyth Norem—522-0780  
Barbara Goedecke—522-0323

**Health Care**  
Vicki Simons - 522-4813

**Quality of Life (Happiness)**  
Cynthia Pelak - (575) 496-3170

**Voting Impediments**  
Roberta Gran - 373-8490

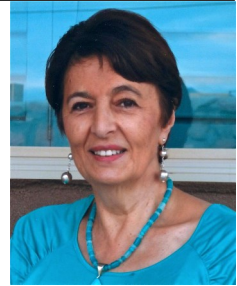
**Water Issues**  
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Barbara Goedecke - 522-0323

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*President's Message*  
*Happy 2015!*



Another year has come and gone, and a new year is starting. (Do you find it weird to write “2015”? Me too.) This is when we typically take stock of what we did last year, where we are now, and what we plan to do in the coming year.

In terms of the League, I believe we had a very successful 2014. Our services to the voters – Voter Registration, Candidate Forums, the Voters Guide – were particularly well done this year, though they did manage to shine a light on the fact that we have very little visibility or impact in our Hispanic community. OK, one big entry into the 2015 To-Do list – find ways to establish relationships with our Hispanic citizens and residents.

Since 2015 is not a year in which a major election will take place, the League will use it to refine our Voter Services processes and to embrace new technology for the education of the public. We hope to develop videos and crisp educational documents in collaboration with KRWG TV and the Bureau of Elections. The purpose of these materials is to explain how, when, where to register to vote, and, for first-time voters, clearly describe the voting process. We plan on distributing these materials both physically and through social media; it simply should not be the case, as it is now, that any Doña Ana county resident does not know how to register or how to vote. So this is another big item on our 2015 To-Do list.

In other League matters, we received a lot of recognition for reports developed by our Education Committee with regard to for-profit virtual charter schools and a detailed review of teacher evaluation. This study has resulted in a revision of our Education Position. LWVNM has strongly praised our Education Position and is proposing adopting it as a state League position. Way to go, Education Committee!

When looking at our Las Cruces community as a whole, democracy received some bumps and bruises during 2014. The whole minimum wage discussion and action was fraught with disagreements and continues to be divisive for the community. On the one hand, we had an excellent example of citizen action in CAFé’s successful minimum wage initiative that resulted in a new minimum wage ordinance. On the other hand, we saw an orchestrated effort via questionable procedural maneuvering to squash the CAFé initiative, and to water down the strength of the new ordinance. The community’s confidence in the City Council has suffered. Hopefully, this situation will improve during 2015. We, the League, do not have a specific position on minimum wage, so we were not vocal on this issue. However, we, the League, do very much care about democratic processes. We, strongly, encourage the City Council, as well as its detractors, to re-embrace the mantle of democracy, and to work together collaboratively to ensure that our city continues to be a great place in which to live.

*Erika*

### December Board Meeting Highlights

Johnnie Aldrich, our Membership Director, reported that we have four new members: Bea Garrett, Yvonne Magdalena Flores and Gil and Christine Sorg. A new member orientation was planned (and carried out) after the legislative breakfast December 6.

The major upcoming event that was discussed at the Board meeting was the Legislative Breakfast on December 6 (see report on page 4). Gwen Hanson led this effort. Folders containing fact sheets on our four priority issues – Affordable Housing, Health, Education and Water – had been prepared and were ready for handout to the legislators as well as the members attending the Breakfast.

Bonnie Burn reported the results of the Education Committee Unit Meeting held on November 17. The meeting updated members about the for-profit virtual charter school incursion into New Mexico, the current local STEM education efforts, and the politicization of teacher evaluation. The Board approved the recommended changes to the League's current position that resulted from the unit meeting. Note: LWVNM is considering adopting by concurrence our Education position as the state's education position at the upcoming May state convention.

A Unit meeting for the Voting Impediments study was announced and scheduled for December 15 at Good Samaritan's Conference Room in the Social Center.

The Board appointed Marcia Anderson as the Board member to the Nominating Committee.

The Board also discussed a first draft of a cost reimbursement policy for expenses incurred by our committees and as part of study efforts. More information is needed on this, and Gwen Hanson has offered to collect this information. The intent is for each committee and study chair to provide their expense estimates to the Budget Committee, so that it will be included in the annual budgeting process.

The date of January's Board meeting was changed from January 1 to January 8.

### Membership Directory

#### Corrections and Changes

Yvonne Magdalena Flores; email  
yvonnevavoom@aol.com

Bea Garrett's email  
bea\_garrett@yahoo.com.

Dale Yeo's new email  
y.dale43@gmail.com

### Notable January Birthdays

January 9: Carrie Chapman Catt  
(1859-1947)

January 11: Alice Paul  
(1885-1977)

January 19: Martin Luther King  
(1929-1968)

### *Friends of the League*

- Sharon Burbano
- Bob Burn
- Joseph Camunez, D.D.S.
- Don Dresp
- Joy Goldbaum
- Ken & Nancy Hall
- Pat Kratz
- Louise Lockhart
- Barbara Myers
- Clifford Pelton
- Nancy Phillips
- Betty Pool
- Judith Scott
- Sunspot Solar Energy
- Donna Tate

*Thank you*

## A Look Back: Legislative Breakfast

Reported By Kelly Burnham

LWVGLC held its annual Legislative Breakfast on December 6, 2014. All New Mexico Senators and Representatives within the Greater Las Cruces area were invited. Unfortunately, several had conflicts (some of the legislative committees were already holding hearings), but we were happy to welcome Senators John Arthur Smith and William Soules and Representatives Jeff Steinborn and Bill McCamley.

While at past Breakfasts we had just asked the legislators to talk about the bills they thought would come up in the session, this year the League tried a different approach. The League wanted to ensure that the legislators understood what our important issues were, and to ask the legislators for their comments on those items. The League identified four areas of primary concern:

**Affordable Housing, Education, Health and Water.** Under Vice President Gwen Hanson's leadership, fact sheets for each of these areas were created. These were assembled into folders and were presented to the legislators for discussion during the Breakfast and for later reference during the legislative session.

The chairs of each of the four advocacy areas presented an overview of each issue, and requested the legislators' support for positive action.

In response to the summarized fact sheet by LWVGLC's co-chairs Christina Little and Vicki Simons of the Affordable Housing Committee, Senator Smith raised concerns regarding federal restrictions on lending, such as those limiting approval of the amount of a loan based strictly on the square footage of the house and the number of occupants. Senator Smith noted contractor abuses and the drop in availability of loans for less expensive houses, in contrast to the availability of loans for more expensive houses. Christina Little pointed out the availability of land bank and trust monies from the general fund as ways to help with the latter problem. With sequestration and decrease in funding for rental vouchers being a concern for low-income renters, spending money on weatherization and remodeling of existing

housing were proposed as partial solutions by Senator Smith.

Sue Cain summarized the three fact sheets on education issues prepared by LWVGLC co-chairs Bonnie Burn and Ruth Benjamins. The fact sheets addressed Student Assessment, Teacher Evaluations, and School Grading; Adequate Funding for Public School Education; and Early Childhood Education.

As to student testing, community residents have repeatedly made it clear that they opposed the amount of time students spend being tested. Representative McCamley indicated that schools now spend five days in fall and five days in spring on testing. He intends to seek to limit the amount of time schools can spend on testing via legislation.

On the issue of appropriate funding for public education, Senator Soules, vice-chair of the Senate Education Committee, said that a looming problem is the drop of gas and oil prices, noting that most of the funding for school comes from these sources. Senator Smith noted that declining oil and gas prices may result in cutting funding for education during the 2015 Legislative Session. During the 2008 Recession, however, New Mexico did not suffer any reduction in force (RIF) or layoffs of teachers, as was the case in many states. Upon hearing that Doña Ana County Commissioners may repurpose the current Spaceport GRT designated for STEM education in Doña Ana County school districts, he suggested that constituents remind county commissioners that replacement funding from the state is not available. The legislators suggested that proactive ordinance action to repurpose the GRT for local education be delayed until a new threat to this funding arises.

With regard to early childhood education, Senator Soules said that, because funding is lacking, he would support the rescinding of a tax break now available to the very wealthy. Senator Smith asserted that even if funding were not an issue, lack of trained early childhood educators is a problem that must be addressed. He noted the need for collaboration between educators and the

*(Continued on page 5)*

**Legislative Breakfast** *(continued from page 4)*

Children, Youth, and Families program. Senator Soules indicated the need for the legislature to understand and value the long-term investment in early childhood education.

Strong concerns were voiced by the attendees about charter schools and for-profit/virtual charter schools. The Education Committee's widely distributed and praised report about such concerns was recommended for the legislators' consideration. Senator Soules said that New Mexico was ten years behind in developing charter school legislation. Legislation is now planned, especially regarding the for-profits.

Vicki Simons summarized the LWVGLC's fact sheets on Health Care for New Mexicans. On behalf of the LWVGLC, she asked for the legislators' support of the "Health Security for New Mexicans" bill. Senator Smith voiced concerns about how to pay for the program, and said the monies might have to be diverted from education. Both he and Representative Steinborn noted the problem of a lack of health care providers in New Mexico. The proposed new school of Osteopathy at NMSU (strongly supported by the legislators) and increased funding for nurses' training were offered as partial solutions. Representatives Steinborn and McCamley voiced support for universal coverage (such as the public option/Medicare/co-op model through which private providers are protected but everyone has health care coverage). Representative McCamley reported that 106,000 New Mexicans signed up for Medicaid under the Affordable Health Care Act last year.

Win Jacobs presented the LWVGLC view on the water issue, as reflected in the fact sheet about New Mexico's water supply. Succinctly, she asserted that New Mexico has two screaming needs: "more money and more water." She remarked that without water, New Mexico would have few young people to educate, few sick people to care for, and a lot of empty houses.

In response, Senator Smith voiced the recognition that New Mexicans cannot afford to be territorial about water. He suggested greater coordination among those working on the issue, e.g., NMSU and

NM Tech, who enjoy the "greatest pool of knowledge" about the issue. Representative Steinborn pointed out the collaborative efforts of UNM and Water Resources Research Institute (WRRRI) as well. The need for continuity in the state engineer's office would help in the effort, so that institutional memory and a statewide rather than localized focus would be enhanced.

Representative McCamley emphasized that most water law was enacted in the 1850s, and that the focus of water customers should be shifted away from the old "use it or lose it" attitude towards water rights.

Representative McCamley indicated that he would seek to introduce bills requiring water providers to bill customers based on water budgeting (a tiered system with smaller users billed at a lower rate than larger users), to incentivize efficient water usage, and to reclaim water from oil and gas fields.

Following this interchange about League priority issues, the legislators were invited to address their own issues of interest.

Senator Soules had to leave the Breakfast early because of a previous meeting commitment. Before leaving he reassured members that education was a priority issue for him.

Representative Steinborn indicated that he would be working on bringing greater transparency to state government. For example, legislative sessions are currently webcast, but they are not archived. He will seek that they all be archived, and that interim meetings be webcast in real time and archived as well. Representative Steinborn is also working with Common Cause to require lobbying groups to publish the aggregate amount of money spent to influence New Mexico state government by posting the source and amount on the Secretary of State's website.

Senator Smith's chief goal is to balance the budget. He also voiced concern about our infrastructure, especially our roads. He intends to carry a bill for reconstruction of roads, but asserted the need for local involvement and payment if streets and roads are to be kept in repair. Indian

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Legislative Breakfast *(Continued from page 5)*

gaming compacts will be at issue. He is also supporting a change in state liquor laws to help small businesses compete.

Representative McCamley's number one issue is the perception of 62% of New Mexicans that the "system" is not working for them but only for the "ultra-wealthy." He believes that an increase in the minimum wage, a tax on corporate CEO's who make a salary grossly disproportionate to corporation workers, and other steps to protect the middle class and to deal with gross income inequality are keys to restoring the belief that the "system" is working for all.

The Breakfast ended with a big round of applause for all the legislators. Numerous comments were made that this had been a very good and informative Legislative Breakfast.

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## League Day at the Legislature

Monday and Tuesday, February 9 and 10, 2015

This is a special day for Leaguers, especially those new to the organization. New Members can just follow the crowd to the legislative hearings of your choice or go with several of your friends that know their way around.

The evening before, February 9, a special reception and panel discussion about education funding and priorities are scheduled from 5:30 until 7:30 p.m. at Garrett's Desert Inn.

The Inn is also where a block of rooms have been reserved for League members. It's just down the street from the Roundhouse (Capital Building). Parking is free for those with advance reservations. Single occupancy is \$59 plus tax and double occupancy is \$69 plus tax. Deadline for special room rates is January 25.

Tuesday morning, February 10, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. Leaguers will visit particular legislators or attend whatever legislative hearings interests them. At 10:30 a.m. there is another forum for Leaguers and Legislators about the Hospital Pricing Transparency Initiative and Voter Photo ID and Disenfranchisement. This forum will be held in the New Mexico Land Office, Morgan Hall, 310 Santa Fe Trail across the street from Garrett's Desert Inn.

## Children's Reading Alliance

By Bonnie Burn

Effective January 1, the Children's Reading Foundation will have a new name, Children's Reading Alliance (CRA), and a new web site. Many of us have been involved with this organization since its inception four years ago, 2010. Maria Flores, Terry Miller, Steve Fischmann and Douglas Hoffman were the four founders who laid a strong foundation for this new organization that sought to engage families and the community in supporting and promoting children's literacy. "Read to a Child Every Day" for at least 20 minutes was a slogan soon memorized by people in the community.

Some of the first programs introduced in the community are still ongoing:

- Books on Buses - a program that leaves books on the city buses for children to read and take with them.
- Books for Babies - new parents are given a board book, a pamphlet on the importance of sharing books with babies and a bib to take home with their newborn.
- Reading Buddies - a program at elementary schools where volunteers share reading experiences with second and third grade students.

Jan Reed was instrumental in initiating and building these programs

In Doña Ana County, 65 percent of children have NO preschool experience, but every child has a parent. CRA recognizes that children learn a lot at home if their parents have information about basic skills and tools for developing them. Play, Talk and Read with your children and Ready for Kindergarten teach rhymes and singing games, introduce letters that represent sounds and make up words, and numbers that stand for amounts. These programs were brought into Sunland Park by Ida Garcia who recruited and trained facilitators, brought families into the classes, and made sure the program thrived in the southern part of the county. First Teacher is another program designed for bi-lingual or monolingual

*(Continued on page 10)*

**Immigration  
Public Information Meeting**

Sue Cain, Observer

Representatives of Catholic Charities and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of New Mexico held a public information session that explained President Obama's Executive Action concerning immigrants without official status. The meeting was held on Friday, December 5, from 10:30 a.m. to noon in the Roadrunner Room of Branigan Library. The goal was to help immigrants know who will be eligible. These sessions are being offered before folks might attempt to take any steps to seek legal help, especially from notaries who are reported to take advantage of misinformation. More than 50 people were present.

The two bilingual presenters were Emily Hauck from ACLU of New Mexico and Lauren Armstrong, attorney for Catholic Charities. The presenters explained which immigrants who have already been living in the U.S. will be qualified to remain in the U.S. when President Obama's Executive Action on Immigrants becomes effective. A thorough explanation of what type of evidence each immigrant must have to prove that they have been living in the U.S. and when the applications can be made was shared by Lauren Armstrong orally and using a large screen with the information shown written in Spanish. Members of the audience were encouraged to ask questions and offered answers throughout the presentation.

A few examples of the type of information that was shared were:

- Anyone having a criminal record or a DUI offense is not eligible.
- There is, now, no limit on age to be eligible.
- Documents must be provided to prove that an immigrant has been living in the U.S. (Examples: Receipts from paying utilities, official mail sent to them at residence in U.S, letters from employers, letters from neighbors, an evidence of taxes paid.)
- Each applicant must pay a fee of \$465.
- Applicants must have documents to prove that their child or children are U.S. citizens.

Community members unable to attend Friday's presentation were assured that there will be additional opportunities in the future for more information sessions.

The following website is also helpful for folks trying to understand what this means and how one can prepare to apply. <http://www.adminrelief.org/>

Additional information is also on the President's web site: [http:// www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration/immigration-action](http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration/immigration-action).



**2015 New Mexico Legislative Session**

Starts January 20, 2015, Noon  
Ends March 21, 2015, Noon

**WATCH** for emails from Marjorie Burr and Barbara Goedecke during the session. The emails will give you many opportunities for **ADVOCACY** based on League study positions and will increase your knowledge about proposed legislation.

Members are encouraged to attend League Day at the Legislature (see p. 6). Please contact Erika Graf-Webster, [egrafwebster@q.com](mailto:egrafwebster@q.com) or 521-0600, if you are interested in attending.

**Committee members wanted:**

The Election Procedures Committee needs members interested in brainstorming .the election process for ways to increase voter participation. Also video & brochure designing, production and distribution skills needed.

Next meeting is Tuesday, January 20 at 10 a.m., Good Samaritan, Building E, 2nd floor. west lounge.

## LEAGUE DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

**Editor's Note:** The following 2010 VOTER article by Johnnie Aldrich explains some of the reasons , why "League Day at The Legislature" should not be missed.

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Under any circumstances, League Day at the Legislature is one of my favorite League of Women Voters activities. This year our special day, and it was particularly special this year, fell on January 26, when brisk cold and sunny skies made the recently fallen snow sparkle in Santa Fe.

I missed most of the morning orientation meetings in our usual meeting place at the Land Office because I staffed our LWVNM table in the Round House lobby. We keep League information sheets there with details about the bills we are supporting (or opposing) and membership applications from each of the four Leagues. We answer questions about issues from both the general public and League members and provide a very important "stashing" space for the coats of members who are visiting their legislators or attending committee meetings on bills of interest. The League table is a gathering place for us all once the morning meetings have adjourned.

This year (2010) was so special because of the Commemorative Memorials read in both the House and the Senate. Presented in the House by Rep. Gail Chasey (D-ALQ) and in the Senate by Sen. Dianna J. Duran (R-Dist. 40), the Memorials congratulated the League on the 90th birthday of its founding and praised our public service in the efforts to strengthen our democracy by educating citizens and advocating in support of issues that we have studied. I was hugely pleased to represent Las Cruces by joining the Presidents of the other 3 local Leagues and our NM President Kathy Campbell on the rostrum.

The presentation in the House was particularly gratifying because when Rep. Chasey asked for comment from House members, seven of our nine representatives spoke up to laud the League's work in New Mexico. Rep. Cervantes was the first to suggest that all legislators, even the men, should join him in League membership. Rep. Steinborn seconded that suggestion in his expression of thanks to us. After the Memorial was unanimously adopted, almost a party atmosphere prevailed as many of the Representatives came to the rostrum to shake our hands and offer personal congratulations. Reps. Joni Gutierrez, Mary Helen Garcia, and Nate Cote joined Reps. Cervantes and Steinborn.

The Senate presentation was a bit more staid, as one would expect of a Senate event, I suppose, but the standing ovation for the League at the conclusion of the presentation was also a thrill.

When I returned to the League table after the formalities, I realized that our Representatives in the House had made a huge impression on my fellow Leaguers from the northern environs of our state. Those who had watched from the gallery and those leaders who had been on the rostrum had high praise for the delegation from Doña Ana County because of the enthusiastic support we received that day. Southern New Mexico is now clearly in the consciousness of our northern colleagues!

I spent the better part of that afternoon of the 26th in the audience of a committee meeting in progress. The topic of the first 4 items on the agenda was DWI enforcement and punishment. High school students from Albuquerque pled passionately for stronger punishments. Committee members spoke to the issue, some agreeing with the emotional arguments of the students, some not. I was delighted to be reminded that citizens, even non-voting ones, can, indeed, influence government. But citizens who care must be willing and able to devote time and effort to the process.

Democracy does work "exceeding slow," but it does work. League Day at the Legislature is just one way to participate, and I urge readers to consider the trip to Santa Fe next year.



### Fall Water Conference

By Win Jacobs

“New Mexico’s Water Future: Connecting Stakeholder Needs to Water Information” was the ambitious theme of the conference organized by the Water Resources Research Institute (WRRRI) of New Mexico State University. Researchers from the state’s three premier universities—NMSU, UNM, and NM Tech—convened in Santa Fe November 18-19 to present extensive, real-time data to a diverse audience. Planners and politicians, urban and rural, as well as a few ordinary citizens came to listen and learn and question because of their common understanding: there is no longer enough water to go around as it once was perceived to be. Senator Papen framed this as a quality of life issue: “we need to know, in order to act effectively.”

What exactly do we need to know? Surface water, and its lack, is easy to see. Ground water is another matter, requiring sophisticated methods of measurement to assess both quantity and quality, and ultimately dispersal both economically viable and fair. The same is true of brackish water, sometimes touted as “new water,” and produced water which flits over the oil and gas horizon but in reality has yet to deliver on any seeming promise.

The plethora of facts and figures and charts will soon be available on the WRRRI website: [wrrri.nmsu.edu](http://wrrri.nmsu.edu). There is no way, realistically, to summarize, here, their individual and aggregate detail. This conference demanded a willingness to learn, to interact, to commit to following-through with actions, not just good intentions.

I continue to offer the League’s willingness and ability to coordinate civic education and discussion, through public forums, independent or in cooperation with other groups such as: NM First, regional water planning through Lower Rio Grande Water Users Group, and Viva Dona Ana. Any League member willing to participate, actively, is my new best friend!  
521-9331—call me!

### Little Drops of Water

By Win Jacobs

There is much activity within the water interest kaleidoscope! Here is a quick overview of actions and reactions to monitor:

- U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) decides to allow Texas countersuit against New Mexico and appoints a special master, expected to begin work in January 2015.
- Elephant Butte Irrigation District files motion to intervene (#141) in TX vs. NM suit.
- Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) votes to proceed to accept federal dollars for Gila diversion. Gila Watershed Alliance is concerned.
- Office of the NM State Engineer calls for more information on the plans by Augustin Plains Ranch to drill more than 3000 wells and to build a pipeline to move water from ranches around Datil (high country west of Socorro) to Bernallio County. This developer’s original plan was not approved and is still being fought by area ranchers.
- Colorado is moving to shield its water from undue flow south.
- Lower Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Groups is moving into high gear in preparation for a meeting of ISC (Interstate Stream Commission) in Las Cruces on January 13.
- New Mexico First Implementation Team is working to be ready with proposals to the legislature this January and February.
- City of Las Cruces Conservation Department is now on Facebook.
- Academy for Learning in Retirement has scheduled a series on water for May 4-13, with Drs. Sam Fernal, Phil King, and KC Carroll from NMSU presenting.

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Editor: Both of these columns stress the extent and complexities of Water. If anyone is interested, wants to help, or just wants more information, please call or e-mail Win Jacobs.

Web site: [winjacobs@gmail.com](mailto:winjacobs@gmail.com) Tel:521-9331 e-mail: [winjacobs@gmail.com](mailto:winjacobs@gmail.com)

## Reading Alliance *(continued from page 6)*

Spanish speaking families. Karina Carrillo has been involved with this six week program since it began and has recruited and kept families engaged. These parent education programs have reached over 300 families in the past two years. With an average of three children per family, that is a possible 1,000 children who have gained some preschool experience. In two years, a total of 44,000 books provided by CRA have been given to families.

Other reading programs include the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, a unique program founded by singer and actress, Dolly Parton, that delivers age appropriate books every month to the homes of children from birth to five years old. CRA registers children and pays the fee of \$30 per child. Books for You will provide books to organizations that request them to give away as part of special programs and events.

Members of the Board of Directors are Ann Rohovec, President; Rhonda Karol, Treasurer; JoAnn Jones, Secretary, and members: Lucia Veronica Carmona, Maria A. Flores, Rorie Measure, Terry Miller, and Elisa Sanchez. CRA has partnered with many organizations in the community. As is often said, it takes a Village to Raise a Child, but it takes an Alliance to Raise a Reader. Become acquainted with CRA by logging on to [www.childrenstreadingalliance.org](http://www.childrenstreadingalliance.org).

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## LWV HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE MEETING

December 10, 2014

Co-chairs: Vicky Simmons and Sue Cain

The Health Care Committee met on December 10 to discuss the upcoming Legislative Session and possible lobbying actions that might be taken by members of the LWV/GLC.

The Committee is primarily focusing on legislation that will increase the number of New Mexicans who have access to health care. Prior to passing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010, there were well over 400,000 New Mexicans without access

to health care, one of the highest percentages in the U.S. While the Committee feels that the Affordable Care Act is a step in the right direction to reforming our poorly performing and expensive health care system, the roll out in New Mexico has not been very successful. The Legislature and Governor Martinez's Administration chose not to set up a state health care insurance exchange for uninsured individuals, but only a small business health insurance exchange. Individuals had to go to the federal health exchange to sign up for subsidized health care insurance.

The goal of the NM Department of Health and Human Services was that 80,000 individuals would sign up through the federal exchange: only 34,000 uninsured did. Fewer than 1,000 signed up through the NM small business exchange. While the Martinez Administration did agree to expand Medicaid, it is unclear how many eligible New Mexicans did sign up. According to one estimate, about 100,000 were added to the Medicaid program in the state.

Implementation of ACA required a massive overhaul of the enrollment process of the health insurance market, and outreach systems were needed to help enrollees navigate the market place. In New Mexico none of these organizational arrangements were done well.

Health Care reform at the state level is allowed through Section 1332 of the ACA, Waiver for State Innovation provision, beginning in 2017. The Committee supports reform at the state level by endorsing the Health Security for New Mexicans plan that will be introduced in the 2015 NM Legislative Session. Two separate and independent New Mexico studies have shown that this plan will guarantee that all New Mexicans will have comprehensive health coverage and will control rising health care costs. At a time of tight state budgets, savings in health care costs will free up General Fund State money to invest in education, jobs and protecting our air, water and land. The committee will be lobbying legislators on an individual basis to pass this bill.

**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 Schools (LCPS) Board Meeting**

December 9, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Administration Building - Sue Cain, Observer

The Centennial High School girl's volley ball team and coaches were honored for winning the New Mexico State Championship after playing for only two years.

Superintendent Rounds gave an update on the Crossroads Project, a public school education option for students who have been suspended from their home school. They are students in middle and high school who have chosen this opportunity to continue their education during their period of suspension. The school serves 42 high and 20 middle school students. The school will be located in the Bradley building at 821 East Lohman. Renovations on the building are expected to be completed by late summer, with occupancy scheduled for August 2015.

Reports about the Head Start Meal and Early Childhood Center at Booker T. Washington were reviewed and discussed. This is also the location of programs for homeless children.

Other issues discussed that related to approval of Policy JIJ Student Nutrition and the Policy ILBB State Program Assessment were the following:

- Emphasizing a nutrition standard for all food services in cafeterias and classroom snacks.
- Modifying and reducing amount of time taken for testing during school year 2014-2015.
- Allowing a three-year period where the results of students' achievement test scores will not be used to evaluate teachers. The goal is to free teachers to develop new programs and approaches to learning and allow teachers who want to use new innovative approaches and techniques to help students achieve academic success.

Some Board members shared information about their visits to several of the Las Cruces Public Schools.

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**VOTER's New Editor – Jane Carter**

The VOTER has been in the very capable hands of Bonnie Burn for several years. Bonnie turned this publication into a very attractive newsletter with very interesting content. Thanks to her outstanding stewardship, we have received numerous compliments on the VOTER, both from our membership and from the friends, supporters and legislators who are sent the VOTER each month. We, the League, say a big THANK YOU to Bonnie – your work is very much appreciated.

As of this issue, January 2015, Jane Carter has assumed the role of editor for the VOTER. The League is very grateful to Jane for taking this on. Producing the VOTER is quite a labor-intensive effort, and Jane's commitment to this role is much appreciated. All of you who contribute to the VOTER – please provide your input to Jane in a timely fashion, and please help her as needed. WELCOME JANE!



League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces  
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 Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322  
 (575) 524-VOTE (8683)

*Las  
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 City*

**FIRST CLASS**

**Membership Application**

**After November 1 - \$30 for Individual;  
 \$15 for each additional household member  
 Annually: \$60 Individual; \$30 Second In  
 Household; \$30 Students**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 2nd Household: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contributions:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **League of Women Voters Education  
 Fund (Tax Deductible)**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **Contribute to LWV of Greater Las  
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Mail checks to LWV of Greater Las Cruces,  
 P.O. Box 8322, Las Cruces, NM 88006

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

**January 2015**

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