

The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
May 2015



Lunch with a Leader

The DACC Challenge: Addressing Workforce Development and Citizenship in Doña Ana County

**Renay Scott, PhD, President
Doña Ana Community College**

**Monday, May 11, 2015
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

**Good Samaritan Social Center
Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle**

Doña Ana Community College (DACC) and community colleges nationwide are being asked to play a major role in addressing workforce training needs at an affordable cost. The private and public sectors also are calling on community colleges to ensure that our graduates have the “soft skills” necessary for success in the workplace and in our neighborhoods. Soft skills or people skills are personal attributes that describe an individual's ability to interact with others. Soft skills complement the hard skills of knowledge and occupational skills that enhance relationships, job performance and career prospects.

Dr. Scott will be presenting information about the “DACC Challenge,” a charge to close gaps in education, attainment of workforce credentials, development of soft skills and civic engagement in New Mexico as a strategy for supporting economic development in the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County.

On June 1, 2014, Renay Scott, Ph.D. became the 9th President of DACC. She has a rich background in education administration that includes dean, department chair, tenured professor and her last position as Vice President and Provost, Owens Community College. Her scholarship includes curriculum, instruction, assessment, education, and history with an emphasis on American History.

CALENDAR

May 4 (Monday) - Deadline for making reservations for Lunch with a Leader. RSVP Ardyth Norem, Email: ardythnorem@icloud.com, Tel: 522-0780

May 7 (Thursday) - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., New Board Orientation Meeting, Home of Gwen Hanson, Tel: 556-9251, Email: gwenhanson10@gmail.com

May 11 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Lunch with a Leader: Renay Scott, Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. RSVP Ardyth Norem, Email: ardythnorem@icloud.com, Tel: 522-0780. Charge is \$10. Reservations Required: If reservations are not cancelled, you will be charged.

May 15 (Friday) - LWVNM Convention Informal Reception, Home of Carol Tucker Trelease, Tel: (505) 220-6185.

May 16 (Saturday) LWVNM Convention, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2901 University NE, Albuquerque.

May 21 (Thursday) - 2:00 - 4:00 p.m., Third Thursday Book Club, “Thieves of State: Why Corruption Threatens Global Security,” by Sarah Chayes. At the home of Gwen Hanson, Tel: 556-9251, Email: gwenhanson10@gmail.com

Save the Date

May 10 - Mother's Day

**June 18-21 - LWVUS Council
(Leesburg, VA)**



**RSVP by May 4, 2015, to Ardyth Norem,
(575) 522-0780 or Email: ardythnorem@icloud.com**

The VOTER

Volume 47, Issue 1 – May 2015
Usually Published Monthly

**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

President - Gwen Hanson

**Vice President & Events
and Speakers**
Ardyth Norem

Secretary - Sadie Valverde

Treasurer - Ruth Benjamins

Director, Membership
Yvonne Magdalena Flores

Co-Directors, Voter Services
Marcia Anderson & Dale Yeo

Nominating Committee
Chair: Ellen Young
Elected Member: Johnnie Aldrich

Program for Study & Action

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

Education
Ruth Benjamins - 527-0204

Election Procedures
Ardyth Noreem - 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
Win Jacobs - 521-9331

Action Committee
Barbara Goedecke - 522-0323

Web Master
Dale Yeo - 405-7580

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

President's Message



It is a pleasure and honor to welcome the beginning of a new League year as your newly elected president. Appropriately, I would like to acknowledge the work and accomplishments of past presidents, Erika Graf-Webster (2013-2015) and Bonnie Burn (2009-2013). They have set very high standards for this office, and I look forward to their counsel and support.

As we were reminded at our Legislative Breakfast in December, this is a particularly important time for the League of Women Voters. Our non-partisan organization's goals to "Educate", "Advocate", and "Impact" local area issues have never been more relevant. As we enter the 2015 Las Cruces Municipal Election season, our community looks forward to League educational materials - Who's Who and Voters Guide, and candidate forums. In addition, ongoing studies and committees of interest will provide members with the opportunity to share information already gleaned, as well as to participate in new areas of interest. Lastly, the League offers collaboration with other community and governmental organizations to learn, share, and act. We welcome your participation and ideas.

Our May 7 Board Meeting will be a "Mini-Retreat" to discuss and develop a plan of action for the coming year. It is my sincere desire to have each of you participate in one or more of the areas of interest identified at the retreat, and the Board and I will support your participation. If you have questions or suggestions for this new year, please feel free to contact me - phone: 556-9251 and/or email: gwenhanson10@gmail.com.

Please join us in the important work of the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces,

Summary of March 2015 Board Meeting - Erika Graf-Webster, President

Before the Board's business meeting began, Amanda Formica and Marisol Diaz of the Ocotillo Institute's Empowerment Congress gave a presentation describing its mission and discussing how it and the League might work together. The Empowerment Congress' youth workshop might be a good venue for League participation. The Board agreed to explore this further. A workshop meeting between the League and the Congress was suggested (and was conducted on April 1).

Johnnie Aldrich reported that we continue to get new members – the membership as of early March stands at 82. Voter Services co-chair

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Board Meeting Summary *(Continued from page 2)*

Dale Yeo reported that the contents of the Who's Who has been completed and has been provided to the Sun-News for publication. Ardyth Norem, chair of the Election Procedures committee, reported that Craig Fenske of Common Cause had come to the last meeting and had asked for League support for their public financing proposal to the City Council.

The rest of the meeting was primarily devoted to planning for the Annual meeting on April 18. The Nominating Committee report listed the proposed candidates for the offices up for election at the Annual Meeting. Its report and recommended candidates were approved. Also approved were the Budget Committee's report and the Bylaws Committee's report, which proposed a few changes in the Bylaws for consistency.

The Board also reviewed and approved the new Quality of Life position; it and the revised Education and Election Procedures positions, will be voted on by the membership at the Annual meeting. There was some discussion about the three new studies – voting hindrances, governmental impact on Quality of Life factors, and revision of the current Metropolitan Court position – that had been identified at the Planning meeting. It had become apparent that the first two studies could not be staffed. The Board therefore voted to bring the first two studies to the Annual meeting as “not recommended”, but the Metropolitan Court study as “recommended”.

The Board meeting concluded with a discussion of options for recognizing Bonnie Burn and the great work she has done for the community. The option selected was to establish a scholarship, the “Bonnie Burn Education Scholarship”, for high school seniors who wish to become educators and intend to pursue this at NMSU. The Board agreed to fund this scholarship for \$1,000, and to ask the community for additional donations.



**Membership Directory
New Members**

Jo & John Bloom

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Tel: (575) 382-0722

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Cell: (575) 202-3231

Email:

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Taylor, Elizabeth

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Las Cruces, 88001

Email Change

Marnie Leverett

marnieleverett@yahoo.com



**TIME TO PAY
MEMBERSHIP
DUES**

May 1 - June 30

\$60 - INDIVIDUAL

\$30 - 2nd Household

LWV of Greater Las Cruces

P.O. Box 8322

Las Cruces, NM 88006

**Have you
changed**



- Address
- Name
- Telephone number
- Email address
- List your cell?

Call or Email

Johnnie Aldrich

522-1544

jraldrich@earthlink.net



League News



New Mexico State Convention

La Palabra, the LWVNM quarterly newsletter, is now available on line. You should have gotten an email message (4/16/15) that let you know the issue is available for download. Along with lots of information about the local Leagues and the NM legislative session, all of the Convention information is available.

The Convention is hosted by LWV of Central New Mexico in Albuquerque. It opens on May 15 at 5:30 p.m. with an informal reception at the home of Carol Tucker Trelease. The convention business begins with lunch and a speaker at Noon, May 16. There is a banquet at 7:00 p.m. On Sunday, May 17, the convention business is concluded in a morning session. GLC will be sending five delegates to the convention:

Who's Who Published!

Marcia Anderson, Co-Chair, Voter Services

We are happy to announce that we now have in our possession 7,000+ copies of the 2015-16 **Who's Who**, our biennial signature project, that was published this year by the *Las Cruces Sun-News*. Despite printing delays we finished it, thanks to the tireless collecting and compiling efforts of Dale Yeo and proofreading by Dale, Charlotte McCarthy, Gwen Hanson and Marcia Anderson.

As a new year begins for the League, Voter Service again looks forward to a City of Las Cruces Municipal Election in the fall, voter registration activities and distribution of that newly published **Who's Who**.

If you are able to help with any Voter Service events or activities please contact Dale Yeo at email: y.dale43@gmail.com or tel: 575-405-7530) or Marcia Anderson at email: maanders211@yahoo.com or Tel" 575-523-1317)

Still Talking About Water

Win Jacobs Reporting

Beginning in 2013, the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) decreed that the State Water Plan of 2004 be updated. In 2013 the NM legislature awarded \$400,000 to the ISC for this purpose, and the New Mexico Finance Authority put in another \$400,000; of this \$15,000 was assigned to each region to cover the cost of consultants to facilitate regional response as assigned, with the balance presumably covering the preparation of the technical platform. Angela Bordegaray, ISC Water Planner, is the team leader.

For our region, William Little is chairing the technical advisory group. He, Kurt Anderson, and Beth Bardwell serve on the steering committee. Sharon Thomas, Yvonne Magdalena Flores, and Win Jacobs serve on the Quality of Life working group, and Beth and Randy Harris and Win, on the Public Outreach Group.

As of June 30, 2015, the \$800,000 allocation from 2013 will have been exhausted. By the close of the 2015 sixty-day legislative session, no additional monies were allocated. Some funding for university research, presumably on brackish water, has been included in the new budget. Consultants' technical platform is promised to be fleshed out by June 30, 2015.

Invited to participate in the monthly meeting of the New Mexico Water Dialogue, Win learned that as disjointed as the whole effort looks from Doña Ana County, it is no better in the other 15 regions—some regions haven't had their first meeting.

Cross-region fertilization of ideas for action, through the Dialog, New Mexico First, and other entities, can build momentum. Legislative interim committees will be

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League News



Water *(Continued from page 4)*

meeting over the summer. The U.S. Supreme Court will be playing a decisive role, perhaps sooner rather than later.

The economics of agriculture will continue to dictate adaptability of crop and method. Municipal and industrial users will have to reckon with depleted water sources at increased cost, and environmental choices will remain important but ever more difficult.

The League, at all levels, would seem well positioned to advocate for common sense and cooperation, and for putting our tax money where our mouth is.

Journey to be Remembered - Ardyth Norem, Reporting

Ten LWVGLC members and friends visited the Brackish Groundwater National Desalination Research Facility in Alamogordo, NM, on April 11, 2015.

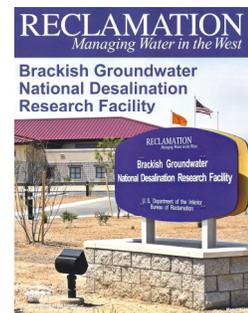


Front Row (L-R) - Grayce Greene, Jane Sharpe, Yvonne Magdalena Flores, Sharon Shoemaker, Dale Yeo.
Back Row (L-R) - Johnnie Aldrich, Gwen Hanson, Randy Shaw, Facilities Manager, Ardyth Norem

The Alamogordo site was having a national competition for experimental approaches to desalination. There were seven competing demonstrations and three additional trial systems within the facility. Competitors came from venture capital sponsors as well as systems developed by university research programs. The systems were judged by their efficiency in producing purified water, utilization of sustainable energy sources and the production of usable end products derived from the brackish water. Some systems could be used in harsh remote environments

while others would rely on accessible technical resources. Winners of the competition will receive a cash prize and money to sponsor a multiple year demonstration at a site of their own choosing.

The tour was organized by Yvonne Magdalena Flores at the suggestion of members of the GLC Third Thursday Book Club. After reading the book, "Unquenchable: America's Water Crises and What To Do About It" by Robert Glennon, members became interested in seeing this water option that is so close to home.





League News



Like a Southbound Train: a Morning in Criminal Immigration Court - *Kelly Burnham, Reporting*

On Wednesday, March 11, ten members of the Greater Las Cruces League of Women Voters, watched as the wheels of justice efficiently rolled at the morning session of court at the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico. Hosted by Federal Magistrate Judge Carmen E. Garza, members watched as 50 newly arrested and shackled criminal defendants were accorded their rights under the Constitution and other federal law.

During the morning session of court, Magistrate Judge William P. Lynch presiding, defendants were brought forward in groups of six or seven along with their court-appointed counsel. All proceedings were conducted in English; a Spanish interpreter speaking through headsets provided the defendants with translation of the proceedings.

The majority of the cases on the docket involved defendants charged with reentry after deportation. Because of the sheer numbers of such cases, the simplicity and certainty of proof, and the relatively low period of incarceration faced upon conviction in most cases, the court moves them quickly. On this day, 34 defendants, set for preliminary hearing on their charge of reentry after deportation, waived their rights to a preliminary hearing and to speedy presentment to the grand jury. After waiver of these rights, all but one of these defendants requested a speedy hearing to enter a plea of guilty; and guilty plea proceedings were then and there set for the Friday or Tuesday immediately following. The defendants continued in custody until these proceedings.

League members also watched as the court conducted guilty plea proceedings for an additional six defendants charged with

reentry after deportation. In a joint guilty plea proceeding, the defendants stood together with their counsel to be advised of their rights. An Assistant United States Attorney summarized the proof the United States would present at trial on the charge of reentry after deportation. These six defendants pled guilty to the charge, and their cases were to be set for speedy sentencing by a Federal District Judge.

After court was in recess, Judge Garza arranged for members to meet with Judge Lynch, one of the Federal defenders, one of the Federal prosecutors, and a Federal pretrial/probation officer. The Federal Defender explained to the group his duty to meet with his clients at the jail, to explain the charges against them, the possible defenses and strategies available to them, and the consequences facing them, all through an interpreter as he does not speak Spanish. The Pretrial/Probation Officer explained his duties. The Assistant United States Attorney was not the assigned prosecutor in the great majority of the cases covered by the court that morning; he apparently had no personal interest or involvement in them other than to assure that the proceedings were legally conducted.

League members were struck by the seeming impersonality and monotony of the proceedings. Judge Garza explained the difficulties of providing due process under the law to the large number of persons arrested and charged with criminal offenses on the border. She also noted the economic and social pressures that lead people to come across the border illegally. The morning illustrated in a small way how the system can work like a well-oiled machine because of the efforts of hard-working and well-intending government entities (law enforcement agencies arrest; prosecutors charge a violation of the law; defenders defend; judges accord due process; defendants are convicted and sentenced), but questions arise about whether Justice is served.

Voter Rolls Purged

Scott Krahling, Chief Deputy Clerk

Following federal and state law, the Doña Ana County Clerk's Office has removed 17,084 inactive voters from the voter registration roster.

This is a very serious subject, and the Bureau of Elections staff has spent the last month going through each record and verifying that all 17,084 voters removed from the roster met the federal requirements.

Federal law dictates that inactive voters are registered voters who fail to vote for two consecutive general election cycles. Inactive voters are removed if during that period a voter fails to vote and fails to return one of two mailings sent from the Secretary of State's office.

Federal and state law requires counties to purge the voter rolls in years following a General Election by convening a three member Board of Registration. This board is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners from lists of names provided by both major political parties. This board reviews our process and grants the Clerk's office permission to proceed. It is this board that gives final permission to remove the voters.

Federal law outlines the process and because the state did not comply in previous years, we have not purged voters since 2009. This led to the number of inactive voters being higher than normal.

The political party makeup of the removed voters is what we would expect considering the political makeup of the county. There were 7,981 Democrats removed and 3,991 Republicans removed. The remaining 5,112 were either in a minor party or declined to state a party when registering.

We keep the list saved for future reference, and it is available for public inspection.

After the purge, Doña Ana County has retained about 100,000 active voters in its registration database. Voters purged from the roster must re-register in order to recover their right to vote in future elections.

If you have questions you can contact me or Lorrie Munoz, our Bureau of Elections Supervisor. Our office number is (575) 647-7428.

Achievement Recognition



Shirley Armstrong, Susan Schmugge, Judy LaPointe, Sue Cain, Marjorie Burr, Betty Pool, Johnnie Aldrich, Ellen Haltom, Bonnie Burn, Dona Tate, Gwen Hanson, Roberta Gran, Charlotte Lipson, Ardyth Noem, Sadie Valverde, Dale Yoe, and Kurt Anderson

At its April 6 City Council Meeting, Mayor Miyagishima presented Bonnie Burn with the Mayor's Distinguished Service Award.

The Mayor presents this award on a quarterly basis to a business or individual whose efforts resulted in an exceptional impact to the Las Cruces community. Bonnie, seen above, is holding a plaque and the Mayor's Distinguished Service decal.

Bonnie has been involved with the community since she moved to Las Cruces in 2006. Her involvement increased exponentially when she served as League president from 2009-13. Needless to say, Bonnie was surprised and appreciative. She especially thanked Sue Cain for nominating her, Sharon Thomas for supporting her nomination, and Mayor Miyagishima for making the award.

Accolades Continue

At the League's Annual Meeting, President Erika Graf-Webster further recognized Bonnie's efforts on behalf of the League and the community by announcing the establishment of the Bonnie Burn Education Scholarship in the Las Cruces Public Schools Foundation. This \$1,000 scholarship will support one Las Cruces senior high school student who wishes to pursue a career in education and who studies at New Mexico State University. Bonnie has had a life-long interest in education. Since 2010, she has worked with GLC's Education Committee that pursued a comprehensive study of school reform and its affect on the LCPS system. She accepted this recognition with surprise and gratitude

Treating Teachers like Cattle: Assessment-Based Accountability

Kelly Burnham, Reporting

On March 13, 2015, members of the Greater Las Cruces League of Women Voters joined New Mexico State University professors and students, classroom teachers, community leaders, and other members of the community to hear Audrey Amrein-Beardsley, Ph.D., from Arizona State University speak about the misuse of student test results as a criterion for evaluating teachers. Hosted by NMSU's Borderlands Writing Project, Dr. Beardsley, formerly an elementary classroom teacher and mathematics teacher, is an eminent educational policy researcher and "Edu-Scholar," a designation that recognizes university scholars who contribute substantially to public debate about education.

"Teachers are not Public Enemy No. 1," Dr. Beardsley said, in response to some media mischaracterizations. She explained how the use of **Value-Added Methods (VAM)** to evaluate teachers for raises, promotions, tenure, and retention is "a morale killer for teachers." Moreover, her research reveals that such use of VAM is statistically unreliable, invalid, and subject to bias. She has recently published a book, *Rethinking Value-Added Models in Education: Critical Perspectives on Tests and Assessment-Based Accountability* (Routledge, 2014), and writes a blog, VAMboozled! (<http://vamboozled.com/>) on the subject.

Taking the audience thirty years back in history, Dr. Beardsley traced the interest in standardized testing in education to the Cold War and the Soviet success with Sputnik. Public concern that United States students be "brought up to speed" in science and mathematics was re-introduced through the political message of then-candidate George H. W. Bush and his "Texas miracle," where testing was touted as a tool for assuring his "No Child Left Behind" educational policy would make students and teachers "accountable" via test results.

Based on her archival analysis of the past thirty years of "high stakes testing" (testing that determines promotion and graduation) and VAM (using student test results to evaluate teachers for reward or punishment), Dr. Beardsley flatly asserted that testing is not working. For students, testing has not resulted in increased learning and achievement. What was advertised as a means for supporting learning has turned into a disincentive for both students and teachers. For teachers, VAM has had a negative effect, especially since student test scores are being used for teacher evaluation and retention. The tests were not designed for this purpose, and such use is highly questionable from methodological and ethical perspectives.

Specifically, Dr. Beardsley attacked the Education Value-Added System (EVASS), an econometric model used first in statistical analysis of cattle feed in Tennessee. Based on a simple input/output measure of cattle feed's impact on beef growth, meat production, and genetic development, econometricians (or "economagicians," as Dr. Beardsley humorously called them), sought to apply this same model to measure student performance and achievement (teacher feed in, student growth out). The model, while attractive in its simplicity, simply fails to take into account important variables, such as class composition, economic and social factors, and location of schools in the United States. Dr. Beardsley pointed out that the lowest-performing states (which she identified as the southern swath of states beginning with Arizona, including New Mexico, all the way across to Georgia and Florida) are ironically the most likely to use high stakes testing and VAM.

Simply put, politicians like testing because it is cheaper than such measures as lowering class size and paying good teachers to continue teaching, and it reduces the complexity of learning, how it takes place

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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 Pubic Schools (LCPS) Board Meeting, April 14, 2015, 6:30 p.m., Administration Building - Barbara Goedeke, Observer

All board members were present and the place was packed. A sizeable audience remained even after the student musical performances and the recognitions were finished.

An extraordinary effort was made to encourage public input. Allowances were made even for people who came in the last minute. Six people gave their input: 4 mentioned the 1-hour planning time that they used to have 4 years ago; the Special Ed. Teacher said it was particularly important in her work. They all want it restored. Another speaker wanted to know why the PED was restricting the flow of information from teacher to student with respect to the PARCC test. Finally, one speaker said that we should get corporations out of the public schools. Parents are not being given enough information on these tests but see only the stress they cause for their kids.

Later, before the financial report, Superintendent Rounds took a point of personal privilege to give a very moving eulogy on the death of Clarence Fielder, a long-time educator who once worked in the LCPS system. The bulk of the meeting had to do with the financial report given by Terry Dean. He said, and I quote:

"Our District financial position is dire. If no 'course corrections' are made, the district could easily become bankrupt by the end of the next fiscal year. We have leveraged and utilized every available fund in any legal and ethical way."

The fiscal year began with approximately \$8.3M in cash. That was a \$5M reduction from the previous year. The State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) for this year is approximately \$177M. The cash balance, plus the SEG, plus \$3M in other revenue bring the total available resources to \$188M. Total estimated expenses are \$185M. In January, the budget was reduced by 6%, so we are looking at an ending cash balance for this fiscal year of \$3.2M. Approximately 4% is available to us thru the cash balance – the carryover cash from one year to the next. 94% is in SEG or in recurring funds.

Next year, there will be \$3.2M plus \$180M in SEG. But we will be operating with \$2.5M less than in the current year. If these expenditures level we will end the next fiscal year with about \$750,000 cash.

Our enrollment is flat, so we will see no increases in funding there, but we do have a couple of windfalls:

1. Our Teaching & Experience Index increased by .007, which translates to \$1.1M
2. The at-risk Index. Every year the PED re-computes this index.

Together these windfalls will bring us the \$180M in SEG for next fiscal year.

No clear way of resolving this dilemma was suggested. The Board itself seemed at a loss and Superintendent Rounds said that he and Mr. Dean had been doing this sort of thing for at least 24 years, and they would come up with something.

Head Start funding was approved as was the application for IDEA-B Funding (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), which provides more than \$21.5M in federal funds to supplement state and local funds to educate these children.

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS *(continued from page 9)*

Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority (MVPHA), Board Meeting, March 19, 2015, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. - Beth Bardwell, Vice-Chair MVPHA Board and League Member Observer

All Board Members and staff were present.

The MVPHA Board of Commissioners gave Robbie Levey, Executive Director, a plaque in honor of her years of service as the Executive Director of MVPHA. Mr. Juan Olvera will serve as the new Executive Director of MVPHA effective March 9, 2015. He has over 25 years of executive management experience in construction, development, finance, compliance, and procurement. Since 2008, Mr. Olvera has served as the Director of Development and Capital Projects at the Housing Authority of the City of El Paso. He holds a BS in Chemical/Industrial Engineering from the Monterey Institute of Technology, Mexico and a Master's in Engineering Management/Industrial Engineering from Stanford University.

After approval of the minutes from previous meetings, the MVPHA Board approved two resolutions concerning:

- Establishment of the standards and procedures for ensuring that contractors and subcontractors performing work in connection with project and activities funded by public housing assistance provide training, employment and contracting opportunities to (i) low and very low-income persons, and (ii) to business concerns which provide economic opportunities to low and very low income persons; and
- Submission of the MVPHA annual plan five-year plan and civil rights certification for review and approval by HUD.

The remainder of the regular monthly meeting was devoted to MVPHA staff updates and reports. Highlights below:

- The MVPHA is reconsidering its earlier

decision to install solar panels on the public housing main office and are preparing a solicitation to install solar panels on public housing. This project will be funded by Reserve Funds. Estimated cost is \$150,000.

- The MVPHA's 2015 application for a new tax credit development located at Pecos Apartments scored 166 out of a total of 200 points. Additional points are pending the outcome of the design competition. A total of sixteen applications state-wide have been submitted this year. The state will announce the award of tax credits for affordable multi-family housing units in mid-April.

- The MVPHA will meet with Community of Hope next week to evaluate opportunities to utilize Rapid Rehousing funds (\$60K annually) to house homeless veterans in the MVPHA owned Alamendra and Pecos Apartments.

- **Housing Choices Vouchers (HCV):** MVPHA contracted with the Bernalillo County Housing Authority (BCHA) to help MVPHA improve the status of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Section 8 Program and to train MVPHA staff to administer this program in-house. The HCV Program provides vouchers to low-income applicants to subsidize rental costs. The HCV Program is the largest program administered by MVPHA currently serving 1,034 tenants of which 75% have an income under 30% of the area median income. Presently the HCV Program is in "troubled status," (scoring 85 out of a total 145 possible points) and is not currently leasing up vouchers to 98% of total vouchers (1,607) or 92% of funding levels, two important metrics of high performing Section 8 programs. Actions to improve performance are highlighted below:

- MVPHA held orientation meetings on March 11-13 for Doña Ana County-wide landlords of multi-family housing regarding the Section 8 program and the

(Continued on page 11)

MVPHA *(Continued from page 10)*

roles and responsibilities of MVPHA, Section 8 tenants and landlords..

- Three MVPHA staff responsible for administering the HCV Program participated in a week long training in El Paso, TX.
- MVPHA is hiring a HCV Manager for the Section 8 program. Applications are being accepted through March 27, 2015.
- MVPHA will amend the process for selecting families for the HCV Program from lottery to first in date and time to increase lease up rates.
- MVPHA prepared a corrective action plan for improving the status of the HCV Program which HUD approved on March 4, 2015.
- Betty M. Valdez is scheduled to hold a training session on the HCV Program for MVPHA Commissioners on March 20, 2015.

MVPHA Board of Commissioners discussed by-laws governing attendance requirements for Commissioners at regular meetings. Commissioners agreed to review and approve any changes to the by-laws and formalize the written process for hiring an Executive Director of the MVPHA at the next monthly meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3 p.m. Executive session ensued.

South Central Solid Waste Authority (SCSWA) Board Meeting, April 16, 2015, Transfer Station, 7864 West Amador Avenue
Susan Schmugge, Observer

The SCSWA has been holding its regular Board meetings every month as it expands budgets, services and facilities. In order to expand services and facilities the Authority will increase fees in the next fiscal year. And, as the Authority continues into its sixth year, it has good staff members who know their jobs, work well together, and keep looking for ways to improve the equipment, services and facilities under its authority.

Trash and recycling are doing well. Recycling has increased throughout the Authority's district. Newly purchased equipment (glass crusher, tire shredder) work well and older pieces are highly maintained so that they break less frequently and last longer. Friedman Recycling Company of El Paso, Texas and the Authority are preparing to sign a 5-year extension to their contract.

So the City of Las Cruces as well as residents of the rest of Dona Ana County and Truth or Consequences can rest assured that the smooth operation of trash collection and recycling is being conducted in a fair and professional manner.

**Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better—It's not.
The Lorax by Dr. Seuss**

Teachers—Assessment-Based Testing *(Continued from page 8)*

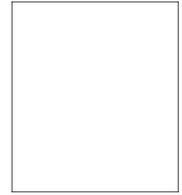
and who is responsible to a single number, like an accountant's "bottom line." Testing makes it look like politicians are doing something, teachers are blamed for failures, numbers talk, and the public is cowed. As a wise professor once said, "If we must be cows, let us at least then be bossy cows."

Because of an extensive question-and-answer session at the end of Dr. Beardsley's presentation, the scheduled break-out groups were postponed. These break-outs, "Testing in Schools: Info and Options," "Take the Test!" and "Next Steps: Time to Teach/Time to Learn" will be rescheduled by the Borderlands Writing Project.



League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces
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FIRST CLASS

April 2015
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Membership Application

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

Date: _____
 Name: _____
 2nd Household: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State/Zip: _____
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 Telephone: _____

Contributions:
 _____ **League of Women Voters Education
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Mail checks to LWV of Greater Las Cruces,
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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.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
 OF NEW MEXICO**

2015 Biennial Convention

**Crowne Plaza Hotel
 1901 University Blvd NE, Albuquerque
 Hotel Front Desk: 1-505-884-2500
 Room Reservations 1-877-277-6963**

**See newsletter, *La Palabra*, online
 For additional details:**

Brief Summary of Activities

**Friday, May 16, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
 Reception at the home of
 Carol Tucker Trelease**

**Saturday, May 17, Noon - 7:00 p.m.
 Lunch with Speaker
 First Plenary Session
 Banquet with Speaker**

**Sunday, May 18, 8 a.m - 1 p.m.
 Second Plenary Session
 Silent Auction**

**Hosted by LWV of Central New Mexico
 Andrea Targhetta, President
 (505) 280-8892**