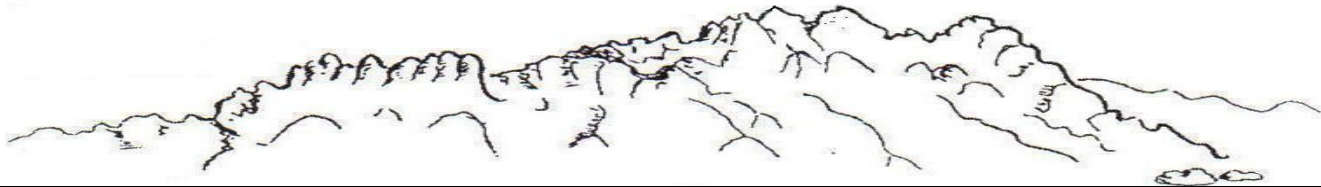


The VOTER

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



Special Calendar for January/February

Unit Meetings - Affordable Housing Study

10-11:30 a.m., Good Samaritan Social Center, 3011 Buena Vida Circle

January 23 Further discussion and slide presentation

Location: Recreation Room (downstairs across from elevators on Main Auditorium Floor)

January 30 Concurrence Meeting

Location: Conference Room (downstairs next to Main Auditorium Ground Floor)

Please see accompanying article, p. 4.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

February 1 (Wednesday) - 10:00 a.m.- Noon, **Board Meeting**, Branigan Library, Roadrunner Room

February 6 (Monday) - **Deadline for Reservations for Lunch with a Leader: Program Planning.**
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 lunch (\$10).

Lunch with a Leader - Program Planning

**February 13, 2012, 10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Good Samaritan Social Center,
Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle**

The agenda consists of two planning sessions to identifying programs for study and action. One session involves local program recommendations that will be adopted by Greater Las Cruces members at the Annual Meeting in April. The other will be developing recommended program items for League of Women Voters of the United States that will be adopted by delegates at its 2012 Convention in June. Here is the Lunch meeting schedule as follows.

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.	Program Planning for LWVGLC
11:30 a.m. - Noon	LUNCH
Noon - 1 p.m.	Program Planning for LWVUS

Please bring your Membership Directory (See p. 28-33) - *Please see the article, p. 2.*

Notable Dates:

February 14 - Valentine's Day and 92nd Anniversary of founding of the League of Women Voters.

February 15 - Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) Birthday

February 16 - NM Legislative Session Ends

The VOTER

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

P.O. Box 8322
Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org

President - Bonnie Burn

Vice President & Program
(Open)

Secretary - Martha Duran

Treasurer - Ruth Benjamins

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 Ashe - 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

Lunch with a Leader - Program Planning

Developing program issues for study and action is an annual event for local Leagues. The Greater Las Cruces League will undertake this effort at its February Lunch with a Leader. This activity is the basis for both advocacy and education efforts. Each year we get together, review our current local positions, discuss issues of interest that can be resolved by local government and propose a program for adoption by members at Annual Meeting. These recommendations will be presented for approval to the LWVGLC Board of Directors at its meeting on March 7.

In June, 2012, League of Women Voters of the United States will be holding its biennial convention. A call has been sent to local Leagues to make program recommendations for study and action that will be considered and adopted at convention. March 1 is the deadline for local Leagues to submit recommendations to LWVUS.

As you consider your recommendations, please keep in mind the following questions: (1) Is there widespread member interest, (2) Is this a timely issue, and (3) Is government action the most effective way to address the problem?

When making program recommendations at the local and national levels, a brief statement, 300 words or less, stating the scope of the study is required. Also, consideration must be given to ensure adequate resources—both money and volunteer time

The final goal of program adoption for study and action is advocacy or lobbying. How to differentiate between the two? LWVUS recently published a document that helps League members understand these two concepts:

- Advocacy encompasses pleading for or against causes, as well as supporting or recommending positions.
- Lobbying is a specific advocacy technique. It is an attempt to influence specific legislation, including both legislation that has already been introduced in a legislative body and specific legislative proposals that the League may oppose or support. There are two types of lobbying: direct and grassroots.

To constitute direct lobbying, a communication must either: (1) Be directed to a legislator, his/her staff or other governmental employee who may participate in the formulation of legislation, and refer to and express a view on specific legislation, or (2) Be directed to the general public and refer to and express a view on specific legislation. The communication includes a statement that directs readers to contact their legislators or includes the contact information for a legislator or employee of a legislative body.

One important caveat is Leagues are advised to keep clear lines between voter services and advocacy activities. For example, Leagues that have taken a position on a ballot measure should not include that position in their *Voters Guide*.

Source: "Defining "Advocacy" vs. "Lobbying," 10/12/2011, LWVUS web site, www.lwv.org, For Members.

President's Message

Happy Valentine's Day. You will be reading this greeting well in advance of that holiday and will have plenty of time to buy that card, gift, flowers, or candy for that special someone in your life.



During the month of February, we remember and appreciate our members; the hours they volunteer and the financial support they provide; and our Friends and Community Supporters without whose contributions we would not be able to carry out our work.

Happy Birthday to the League of Women Voters: Yes, the national League is celebrating its 92nd year of providing voter education and civic service to communities around the nation.

League of Women Voters of the United States: will be holding its biennial convention, "The Power of the Vote!," June 8-12, at the Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, DC. I invite you to attend. Being with League delegates from all over the U.S. is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The energy, discussion, workshops, and business of the League keep delegates on the go. Throughout convention, guest speakers provide food for thought, and the banquet speaker is someone to whom you want to listen. Although our treasury cannot support all expenses, it can help, and you can add on vacation days and see the nation's capitol and surrounding sights.

State Council: LWV of New Mexico will be holding a Council meeting (May 12, Albuquerque). Details will be available in the Spring issue of *La Palabra*. Although Councils, like the NM legislature, mostly focus on budget matters, additional educational events may be added.

Annual Meeting: And finally, we come to the Annual Meetings that local Leagues hold to adopt one-year budgets and programs for study and action, and elect some new officers. Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for April 14, 9-11 a.m., at Good Samaritan's Social Center. At our February board meeting, we will begin preparation for the annual meeting by identifying League members to serve on the Budget and Bylaws Committees, and the Nominating Committee will be calling members to ask you to serve as officers and directors. Please say "Yes" when an invitation is extended to you. Annual Meeting details will be presented in the April VOTER mailed to members by March 14.

It would help us work out the details for the Annual Meeting, if you will attend the **Program Planning Lunch with a Leader on February 13**, and if you will **read** through the back part of your **Membership Directory, pages 18-33**. We want to make the League the kind of organization you want, and we need your comments and involvement to reach that goal.

Welcome 
NEW MEMBERS

Cynthia Pelak

Casey Anchor

Email change

Diane Prindeville

dmprindeville@gmail.com



League
of Women Voters

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
92 Years Old
February 14, 1920

Friends of the League

John Ameriks, M.D.

Biad Chile Ltd. Co.

Nancy & Ken Hall

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 & Environment
Consultants

Thank You

Unit Meetings - Affordable Housing Study

Vicki Simons and Christina Little, Co-Chairs

This issue of the Voter is being published just before the Affordable Housing Committee embarks on two unit meetings. Both meetings will be at Good Samaritan. The meeting on January 23 will be in the Recreation Room (downstairs across from the elevator). The meeting on January 30 will be in the Conference Room (downstairs next to the auditorium). Come for coffee and conversation any time after 9:30 am. Academy for Learning in Retirement (ALR) is having meetings on both days, and we want to make sure that League members have good access to parking.

You can find the final report on the League website - <http://www.lwvglc.org/>.

We are going to close the door to the meeting room at 10 am. If you come later, just come on in.

On **January 23**, we will have a slide show presentation that will give you a glimpse of the kind of affordable housing that has been built in our community. Committee members will present important highlights from our report concentrating on the need for affordable housing, the role of the City of Las Cruces, the Mortgage Finance Authority, the Housing Authority, and nonprofits – all of which play critical roles.

At the **January 30** meeting, we will be talking about the relationships among transportation, housing, and land use as well as asking for League members to adopt a local League position.

The topic of Affordable Housing has proved stimulating and sometimes challenging. We hope you will join us for the two unit meetings when all League members will have a chance to join the discussion and help formulate a local League position.

PROPOSED CONCURRENCE POSITION

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

- o Increase housing options for seniors, the disabled, first-time homebuyers, and households that earn their living in **Doña Ana County**.
- o Promote a variety of housing styles and types for rent and for purchase that are integrated within the community.
- o 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**.
- o **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.*

There is an estimated shortage of approximately 4,700 affordable rental units in Las Cruces for renters earning less than \$20,000 per year

LOOK BACK: LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST - 2012

Erika Graf-Webster, Director, Voter Services

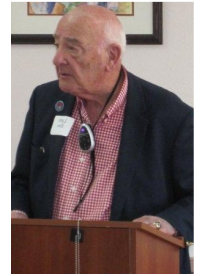
The League's annual Legislative Breakfast was held on January 14 at Good Samaritan's. All 12 local state senators and representatives were invited. In spite of having scheduled the event in accordance with the recommendation received from the legislators at last year's event, only one legislator, Representative Joseph Cervantes, was able to attend. Since the legislative session was scheduled to start on Tuesday, January 17, caucuses and committee meetings kept the other legislators in Santa Fe.



Representative Cervantes provided an overview of the major bills that would be addressed. Since this is a "short" (30-day) legislative session, its objective is to develop the annual state budget. However, additional

legislation, such as bills addressing student retention in the years from Kindergarten to the 3rd grade, would also be proposed, since they contain an "appropriations" component. He provided the attendees with a very insightful description of what the criteria and the processes are to have a bill considered in this session. Also, as a member of the Rules Committee, he gave a short tutorial on how the Rules Committee works with legislation.

Mr. Lynn Ellins, Doña Ana County Clerk, also attended the meeting. He provided a detailed explanation of the new approach to voting in the county, namely the utilization of 39 voting centers instead of the 100+ precincts used in the past. The voting center approach is expected to save the county well over \$100,000. Voters, no matter where they live may vote at any center. The voter's name will be checked off in the computer as having voted. The voter's appropriate ballot will be printed. Provisional ballots will be eliminated except for voters who are not registered at the Elections Office. Educating the public about the new centers will begin soon. The projected implementation date is June, 2012, Primary Elections.



Finally, President Bonnie Burn talked about and handed out information on the major legislative items upcoming in this legislative session that have been identified as a priority for state League advocacy efforts. These bills will be tracked by the NM League, and advocacy action may be taken in support or opposition.

Reframing the discussion on the "social contract" between the rich and the rest of society.

"There is nobody in this country who got rich on his own. Nobody. You built a factory out there, good for you. But, I want to be clear: you moved your goods to market on the roads the rest of us paid for. You hired workers the rest of us paid to educate. You were safe in your factory because of police forces and fire forces that the rest of us paid for. You didn't have to worry that marauding bands would come and seize everything at your factory and hire someone to protect against this because of the work the rest of us did. Now look, you built a factory and it turned into something terrific or a great idea. God bless. Keep a big hunk of it. But part of the underlying social contract is you take a hunk of that and pass it forward for the next kid who comes along."

Elizabeth Warren, campaigning for U.S. Senate from Massachusetts

Source: NYTimes Article, "Bitter Politics of Envy," 1/13/2012.



League News



League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS)

There has been a lot of chatter on the LWVUS Leader's discussion lists about **Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission and Campaign Financing**. Many local Leagues throughout the country are requesting that LWVUS take action on this Supreme Court ruling by identifying it as a priority in the League's 2012 legislative action agenda.

The discussion included proposing a constitutional amendment and including the words "corporations are not people." Other Leagues suggested the amendment language include non-profit corporations because contributions are being made by them.

LWVUS agrees that democracy is at risk after the Citizens United decision and that action must be taken—money in elections is one of the League's priorities. However, ratifying a constitutional amendment is not an easy process. It takes a two-thirds vote in both the House and the Senate, and has to be ratified by three-fourths of the states (38). Crafting the language for a constitutional amendment that would amend the First Amendment is only one of the challenges. Freedom of the press, due process, and many laws associated with corporations as people would have to be changed.

Senator Tom Udall, supported by Senators Bennett, Harkin, Durbin, Schumer, Merkley, and Whitehouse, introduced a joint Senate Resolution that proposes an amendment to the Constitution. It concerns contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

Another topic that emerged was support for funding all of the U.S. **financial obligation to the United Nations**. The U.S. sometimes withholds funding of this organization as leverage to gain its will. The League of Women Voters was invited by President Harry Truman to send a representative to the UN when it was organized in 1945, was among the first organizations recognized as a non-governmental organization (NGO), has an observer presence to this day and special consultative status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

League of Women Voters of NM (LWVNM)

League Day at the Legislature is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24. This annual event will include educational events along with visits to local legislators where packets of advocacy fact sheets about priority legislation the League has identified. As this issue of The VOTER goes to press, a minimal number of bills have been pre-filed. Among them, LWVNM has selected the following as priority legislation:

- SB9 - Mandatory Combined Tax Report, Sponsored by Senator Peter Wirth for support. This offers some tax relief for businesses.
- SB6 - Create NM Health Insurance Exchange. Sponsored by Senator Dede Feldman. The League will oppose this bill because it allows health insurance companies to sit on the Board of the Exchange which League believes is a clear conflict of interest.
- Eliminating driver's licenses for undocumented drivers will be opposed because League believes drivers licenses are a public safety issue for all.
- Voter Photo ID Requirements also will be opposed using the LWVUS position that all citizens should be enfranchised.

Fact sheets that give information about the LWVNM position about the issues have been prepared:

- Driver's Licenses for All: A Public Safety Issue
- Health Care
- Education

Log on to www.lwvnm.org and click League Day at the Legislature for additional information.

Redistricting: NM's legislative redistricting plans have been approved by the court but may be appealed by the legislators. LWVNM's Redistricting Committee, chaired by Cheryl Haaker, will be meeting to discuss next steps for the committee.

Salute to New Mexico is the League's way of recognizing New Mexico's 100th Anniversary of Statehood.

**Check
La Palabra, Winter 2012
for more information**

Show Up, Be Counted!

Lora Lucero, Director, Natural Resource, LWVNM

(Longer version of this article appeared on Democracy for New Mexico blog)

Something New Mexico Senator Peter Wirth (D-Santa Fe) said a few weeks ago to a gathering in Santa Fe has stuck with me through the holidays. Simple and to the point. He said, "If you want to make a difference, show up." Or words to that effect.

He was talking about the New Mexico Legislature and how ordinary citizens can have a real impact on the fate of legislation. Wirth shared his story about one contentious committee hearing years ago. A constituent called him and said she wanted to bring her students to the Roundhouse to see their government in action. He encouraged her to arrive early because the committee rooms at the Roundhouse fill up quickly when there is a controversial bill.

The teacher arrived early with her gaggle of students in tow. They all sat down and patiently waited for the action to begin. Soon enough, the lobbyists in suits and ties showed up but there were no seats available. One lobbyist asked Senator Wirth to move the students out of the room, but he refused, telling the lobbyist: "This is their government too." Or words to that effect. The controversial bill that Senator Wirth was hoping would make it out of committee did, thanks in part to the students who showed up and participated in the process. The suits were not pleased.

The 99% is sharing that same message. **We can make a difference if we show up!**

The short 30-day session begins on January 17th at noon and ends on February 16th at noon. When in session, the Roundhouse is a madhouse that makes little sense to the average New Mexican. In addition to the Legislators, their staffs, analysts, lobbyists, and the press, you will find women dressed in their finest outfits, young pages scurrying around delivering messages, and citizen activists hoping for a moment to share an elevator and speak with a Legislator. You will also find some of the best pieces of New Mexican art on the walls of the State Capitol.

If you have never attended a legislative committee hearing, resolve to make 2012 the year you do. Your presence, whether you speak or not, will have an impact.

Connecting with your state senator or representative, either in person, phone or email, is easy to do. All of the information is available here. <http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/default.aspx> Following the progress of draft legislation is fairly easy too. <http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/BillFinder.aspx> Believe me, when a Legislator sees a message from a constituent, he or she takes it seriously, on both sides of the aisle. Let them know what you think.

New Mexicans are lucky to have a state legislature that is open and accessible to everyone, unlike many other states. We need to take advantage of that and participate in the process.



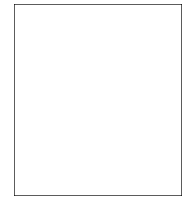
Susan Brownell Anthony (February 15, 1820 - March 13, 1906) never saw the end of the women's suffrage movement, but worked tirelessly from 1854, when she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton, to 1900 when, at age 80, she resigned as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Anthony and Stanton published a newspaper, *Revolution*, that focused on injustices suffered by women. In 1872, she registered to vote and voted in that election, an act that got her arrested but also

brought attention to the fight for suffrage. She was convicted but never paid the \$100 fine. Stanton was acknowledged as the founder of the "votes for women" movement, but she and Anthony formed a partnership. Anthony, as a single woman and great orator, carried forth the messages that Stanton wrote on her kitchen table while tending her seven children. The struggle for suffrage went on for 72 years. Anthony never doubted that women would win the right to vote. She is additionally commemorated by the Susan B. Anthony dollar coin, U.S. Mint, July 2, 1979.



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FIRST CLASS



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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.