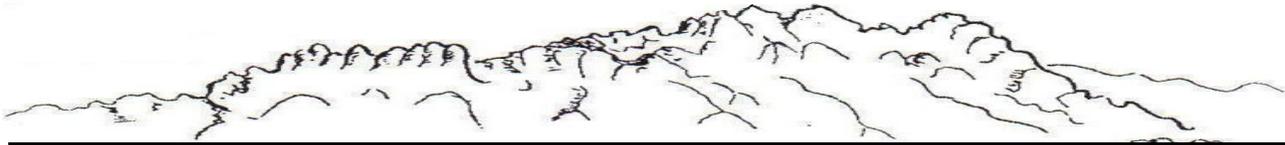


The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
February 2013



February Calendar

February 4 (Monday) - Deadline to make reservations for Program Planning Meeting and Lunch with a Leader. RSVP Roberta Gran, Tel: 373-8490, Email: robertagran@q.com.

February 4 and 5 (Monday and Tuesday) - League Day at the Legislature, Sponsored by League of Women Voters of New Mexico, Santa Fe, (see p. 5).

February 7 (Thursday) - 2-4 p.m., Board Meeting, Branigan Library, Roadrunner Room.

Lunch with a Leader—Program Planning

February 11, 2013, 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Good Samaritan Social Center,
Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle

The agenda consists of two planning sessions to identify programs for study and action: (1) local program recommendations that will be adopted by Greater Las Cruces members at its Annual Meeting in April; and (2) recommended program items for League of Women Voters of New Mexico (LWVNM) that will be adopted by delegates at its 2013 Convention in May.

The February 11th meeting schedule follows.

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

Please bring your Membership Directory (2012-2013) (See p. 28-35)

Please see the article, p. 2.

February 21 (Thursday) - 2 p.m., Current Events Book Club - Vicki Simon's Home, 4082 Sotol Dr., Tel: 522-4813, **Book Selection:** *Our Divided Political Heart* by E. J. Dionne

Notable Dates in February

- 14 - Valentine's Day and
- 14 - 93rd Anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters
- 15 - Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) Birthday

Mark Your Calendar

April 20, 2013, Annual Meeting - LWVGLC

May 18 and 19 - 2013 LWVNM Convention hosted by LWVGLC

The VOTER

Volume 43, Issue 9 - February 2013
Usually Published Monthly

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
Erika Graf-Webster

Secretary - Martha Duran

Treasurer - Ruth Benjamins

Director, Membership
Roberta Gran

Co-Director, Voter Services
Gracia Class
Gwen Hanson

Nominating Committee
Chair: Nancy Phillips
Elected Member: Judith Scott

STUDY GROUPS

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

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

Impediments to Voting in Doña Ana County

Johnnie Aldrich - 522-1544
Roberta Gran - 650-8490

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

It is time to come together for our annual program planning meeting in anticipation of recommending study and action items not only for our local League but also for the state League. During this meeting we review our current local positions, discuss issues of interest for study and action and propose a program for adoption by members at Annual Meeting. Those recommendations will be presented for approval to the LWVGLC Board of Directors at its meeting on March 6.

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico (LWVNM) is holding its biennial convention in Las Cruces on May 18-19, 2013. Local Leagues will be making recommendations for study and action that will be considered and adopted by the delegates to this convention. The Board of Directors of LWVNM will consider and approve those recommendations at its Board meeting on March 16.

As you consider your recommendations, please keep the following questions in mind: (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 state 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.

Chairs whose studies were approved at the previous Annual Meeting and are not completed at the time of the current Annual Meeting must prepare a request for extension following the guidelines in the paragraph above.

The final goal of program adoption for study and action is reaching consensus, adopting a position, and taking advocacy or lobbying action.

Please join us for this important League function.

Board Highlights - January 3, 2013 Meeting

- The committees involved with the business of the Annual Meeting were activated: budget, bylaws, and nominating committees.
- Lunch with a Leader calendar for the remainder of the year was approved:
 - February 11 - Planning Program for Study and Action
 - March 11 - Topic: Border Patrol Issues in Doña Ana County
 - April 20 - Annual Meeting
- Voter Services reported the two letters that contained *Voters Guide* questions for candidates and invited them to participate in the candidates forum have been combined into one. The 2013 *Who's Who* directory will be printed and distributed after the February 5 School Board election results are certified. The Board decided not to hold a candidates' forum or publish a *Voters Guide* for the upcoming LCPS School Board election.
- The Voting Impediments Study is moving forward. The committee has developed a questionnaire to be distributed to the Hispanic

(Continued on page 3)

President's Message

I may have said this before but I need to say it again—the League of Women Voters is needed more NOW than ever before among the voices in the political arena. We appear to be one of the few organizations that seeks to find solutions to our current problems in a nonpartisan way while focusing on collaboration and ensuring that all citizens have a voice in their government.



2013 marks the 93rd anniversary of the League of Women Voters. The League has a long history of gathering facts to spark conversations aimed at reaching understanding and agreement on issues. To quote President Elisabeth MacNamara, “Our ways are how we imagine a democracy should work. As a country, we are finding it harder and harder to find a common set of facts around which we can have a conversation. In many ways, legislative bodies appear to be fact-free zones these days.”

As you may know, the League was founded six months before the 19th Amendment that gave the women the right to vote was ratified. The League began as a “mighty political experiment” designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters. It encouraged them to use their new power to participate in shaping public policy. From the beginning, the League has been an activist, grassroots organization whose leaders believe that citizens should play a critical role in advocacy. It has always been a nonpartisan organization, neither supporting nor opposing political candidates and parties. League members are encouraged to be political, to register as voters in particular parties, and to educate citizens about and lobby for government and social reform legislation. The League is proud of its long, rich history. Happy 93rd Anniversary!

Bonnie Burn

Board Highlights *(Continued from page 2)*

- population in Doña Ana County, the first minority group to be identified for study. Sarah Nolan, Director, CAFé, is collaborating with the study committee.
- The LWVNM Biennial Convention will be hosted in Las Cruces by LWVGLC, May 18-19. The LWVNM Board approved Hilton Garden Inn as the convention site for meeting and lodging, and Lorenzo's Saratoga Room on University Avenue for the Banquet. Contracts have been signed. The event will be publicized in *La Palabra*, Spring Issue.
 - Campaign Finance After Citizens United public presentation was held on January 8. Although the audience was small, the program was broadcast live on the city's government channel, CLC-TV, and is available for viewing on your computer (See details on p. 5.)

Current Events Book Club



Our Divided Political Heart
by E. J. Dionne

Thursday, February 21, 2013,
2:00 p.m.

Host: Vicki Simons
522-4813



*Happy
Valentine's
Day*

Friends of the League

John Ameriks, M.D.
Anonymous
Biad Chile Company
Reed R. Burn
Joseph P. Camunez, D.D.S.
Donald Dressp
Edward Jones - Connie Lee
Jackie and Adrian Edwards
Nancy and Ken Hall
Win Jacobs
Diane and Michael Lilley
Lilley & O'Connell Law Offices
Louise P. Lockhart
Barbara Myers
Francisco Mario Ortiz Law Firm
Jean Ossorio
Kathryn Schultz
Wanda Skowlund
David Sudimack, DDS
Sunspot Solar Energy
Donna and Tom Tate
Williams Design Group, Inc.
Zia Engineering & Environment
Consultants

Thank You



League News



League of Women Voters - United States:

In keeping with League advocacy tradition, letters have been sent:

- **Gun Control:** Letter to Vice-President Joe Biden regarding gun control advising him of the League's long standing strong position in support of Gun Control. Since 1990, the League has used this position to lobby in support of an assault weapons ban, legislation requiring all dealers to run criminal background checks at gun shows and in opposition to laws that grant special protection for the gun industry. The League proposed common sense solutions to the gun violence that is plaguing our nation, and advocated for measures that will ban assault weapons, place limits on magazine size, close the gun show loophole and mandate annual reporting on gun violence in America. "Gun control is a matter of public safety and public health" according to Elizabeth MacNamara, President.
- **Changes to Contribution Limits:** With coalition partners, the League signed a letter addressed to U.S. Senators in opposition to efforts to restore party soft money systems and increase party contribution limits. There are proposals to increase the party and aggregate contribution limits or to repeal them altogether. Either action would provide dangerous new opportunities to buy and sell influence in Washington and to corrupt government decisions and federal office holders. Currently, an individual can give \$61,600 (and a couple, \$123,00) to a single national party committee in a two-year election cycle. An individual can give an aggregate total of \$117,000 (and a couple, \$234,000) in a two-year election cycle to all party committees and federal candidates. The aggregate limit includes two sub-aggregate limits: an individual can give a total of \$70,000 (and a couple, \$141,000) to all party committees and can give a total of \$46,000 (and a couple, \$92,000) to all federal candidates during a two-year election cycle.

These contribution limits are already extremely high. Only a miniscule number of the more than 300 million people who live in the U.S. can even consider making the current maximum allowable contribution. In fact, only 0.09 per cent of adult Americans gave contributions of \$2,500 or more

in the 2012 election, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

Raising the existing party contribution limits would serve to further empower a tiny handful of the wealthiest Americans to increase their ability to exercise undue influence over government decisions.

- **Voter Rights Suppression:** While there is plenty of action happening at the state level to limit voting rights, perhaps the greatest threat will occur at the national level when the U.S. Supreme Court hears two important voting rights cases this year:
 1. *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder* - This case will determine if Sections 4(b) and 5 of the Voting Rights Act are unconstitutional. If the Court sides with Shelby County it will gut the enforcement mechanism of the Voting Rights Act and weaken it beyond repair. This case will be heard on February 17, 2013.
 2. *Arizona v. The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.* This case will determine if the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) can stop Arizona from requiring documentary proof of citizenship when registering to vote. If the Court sides with Arizona, every state would be allowed to require onerous documentation beyond that required by the NVRA in order to register to vote. This case will be heard on March 18, 2013.

Besides these two cases, the League continues its legal battles in state courts in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and in federal court in Texas and Florida.

The League also is working to defeat efforts to decrease early voting days, illegally purge voting rolls, and any actions that make it more difficult to register to vote.

Conclusion: Indeed [the League] has a great deal of work to do—there is no rest for the weary.

Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side.

Mahatma Gandhi



LEAGUE DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

**Monday, February 4, 2013,
5:30-7:30 p.m.,
Legislative Reception and Panel Discussion
Garrett Desert Inn**

**Tuesday, February 5, 2013
8:10-10:15 a.m., and 2:00-5:00 p.m.,
Legislative Hearings or Chamber votes.**

**Lunch and Afternoon Speakers,
10:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Garrett Desert Inn
Lunch Speaker and Panel Presentations.**

Sponsored by:
League of Women Voters
of New Mexico,



ON YOUR COMPUTER

City of Las Cruces, CLC-TV



WATCH

**Campaign Finance After Citizens United:
A Public Information Presentation**

Sponsored by
League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
NM Common Cause

The presentation was held on
January 8, 2013, 6:30-8:00 p.m.,
City of Las Cruces Council Chambers
One hour and 45 minutes in length!

Look Back: South Central Regional Transit District - Bonnie Burn, Reporting

Jack Valencia, Project Manager Consultant for the South Central Regional Transit District, described the ambitious program of uniting three counties (Sierra, Otero, and Doña Ana) and eight municipalities (Las Cruces, Mesilla, Alamogordo, Sunland Park, Truth or Consequences, Elephant Butte, Hatch, and Williamsburg) into a single transit district.

Currently, members who provide transit service include Roadrunner Transit (Las Cruces), Ben Archer (Hatch), Z-Trans (Alamogordo) and Sun Metro (Sunland Park and El Paso).

The project was created by an Act passed by the NM Legislatures that created a State Rapid Transit District (RTD) in 2003. The district was certified in 2006 by the State Transportation Commission. It exists as a distinct political subdivision in the state and was funded by a \$250,000 grant from the NM Department of Transportation. It is supported by the South Central Council of Governments that is the fiscal agent and the Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization that offers planning support. The district will be a stand-alone organization once the Services and Financial Plan is in place.

In May 2008, A & R Consulting, a Houston Company, was hired to develop a Service and Financial Plan for the South Central Regional Transit District. An Existing Conditions Report on available transit services was delivered in August 2008, and public input meetings were held in October 2008.

The next phase is to adopt the Service and Financial Plan after public input. In 2012, Mr. Valencia, through TransCon - LCNM, reviewed the original plans and updated them to 2012. He is now in the process of presenting the updated plans to member entities. The goal is to move the plans forward for consideration, modification and adoption. State funding of the project expired in December 2012; thus, he is seeking additional funding from federal and state entities and local governments to continue this regional effort.

Councilor Sharon Thomas has been working with Mr. Valencia on this project and reiterated the importance of regional transportation in any plans for growth and development of the area.

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 School Board Meeting, December 18, 2012, 6:30 p.m. Jane Asche, Observer

A large part of the agenda was approved as part of the consent agenda.

The meeting began with a number of notable recognitions for teachers and student organizations. The 2012 Outstanding School Board of the Year Award for large districts from the NM Association of School Boards was awarded to the LCPS school board members. In addition Superintendent Rounds introduced a new award which he designed to be passed from school to school for making a school extremely welcoming to students and parents. The first school to receive this award was Sunrise Elementary, and Mr. Rounds stressed the role that was played by the head custodian in designing and implementing the program.

A significant business item on the agenda dealt with the 90-day report by the principal at Valley View Elementary related to the school staff's work with the University of Virginia to become a "turn-around school." Dr. Steven Sanchez, Associate Superintendent of Learning, Teaching and Research, stressed how happy and engaged the students were in this process and commented that the school staff have helped the students recapture the joy of learning while at the same time making some significant progress in academic performance. On-going business items on the agenda are reported under three major strategic goals that have been agreed upon with the board for the work of the superintendent to ensure 1) instructional programs to achieve student success, 2) quality in human resources, and 3) optimization of the budget to manage district resources and facilities.

New business items included preliminary approvals for phase II of the Early College High School development plan, the first reading of new policies with regard to school transportation safety including a plan to train all drivers on how to deal with a hostage situation, a policy that encourages procurement of services and goods from local small

businesses whenever possible, enhancement of the school system On-line Virtual Learning Academy that serves 600 students this semester, and a policy strictly prohibiting personnel from using profane language in dealing with students.

School board member Maria Flores gave an extensive report about site visits by board members to schools to observe education programs and school construction projects as well as visit with administrators about their concerns. Board members did a walking tour with teachers and students at one middle school that was designed to prepare teachers for the new evaluation policies. She reported that one principal asked the school board to revisit the current attendance policy that he felt was not in the best interest of the students and schools. In another school, they learned about the remarkable progress being made by students participating in the Lion's Crane Reading Foundation after-school literacy program. One student even went up 7 grade levels in a short period of time. Finally they visited the dual-language New American Charter School, a public high school dedicated to serving recent immigrants, their families and children who want to learn or perfect English and earn a high school diploma. The school is managed by a private, nonprofit corporation out of Denver, Colorado, and must meet the NM State Common Core Standards in order to grant high school diplomas. It seems that a great deal is being done within the district to improve the opportunities for students to achieve their maximum potentials.

South Central Solid Waste Authority Board Meeting, January 17, 9:00-11:25 a.m. - Johnnie Aldrich, Observer

Although one Board member was absent, the quorum requirements were met and the meeting continued. Board members include representatives from the Doña Ana County Commissioners and the City Council of Las Cruces, and their attendance record has been remarkable.

(Continued on page 7)

South Central Solid Waste *(Continued from page 6)*

An engineering company from Albuquerque, charged with building and maintaining the Corralitos Landfill, must renew its 20-year contract soon. The company has recommended that the Landfill be modified to increase its life span, enhance public safety by serving as a disposal site for asbestos, and restore native habitat and vegetation. The company, CDM Smith, Inc., thus is beginning the process of permit application now in order to include a series of public meetings to explain the reasons for, and extent of, the renovation process.

A second major presentation by SCSWA Director Patrick Peck outlined solid waste issues in Doña Ana County. A year in preparation, the report highlights the growing demand for solid waste disposal caused by the growing population of the area, especially in the south, and the need for extensive renovation and/or construction of new disposal facilities throughout the county. Another issue is pricing regulation since private haulers replacing city and county collectors seem to have widely disparate pricing policies.

Considerable discussion was given to the use of coupons to collect dumping fees. Director Peck indicated that coupon use never was intended to be a permanent collection method, suggesting that their use should be discontinued in the next two-to-three years.

Recycling is also a part of the current situation. Recycling is supposed to pay for itself, since the recycled items are sold to processors throughout the area to be made into other products. Because of the current recession, however, prices for recyclables are at an all-time low, so low that they are insufficient to cover the cost of transporting the recycled materials to the facilities for "renewal." Fuel prices affect both the processors and the solid waste collectors. Recession in one part of the economy thus affects all the rest of it. Director Peck does not expect this situation to continue indefinitely.

Will residents of the county ever have access to curbside recycling? The Board eventually will decide. City and county officials have not yet come to an agreement about whether those county areas that share a border with the city might be authorized to participate. Interested readers might want to call their county commissioners to ask about the issue.

Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority, Board of Commissioners Meeting, December 18, 2012 - Vicki Simons, Observer.

A quorum of the Board was present including the new appointee, Theresa Olguin-Fisher from Anthony. The other commissioners are Art Jiron, Chairman; Arturo Marrujo, Vice-Chairman; Felix Cordero, and Steve Pandak, Resident Commissioner.

The first item of business was public input from two tenants at Stone Mountain Place regarding problems with maintenance there. The tenants complained that maintenance managers from J.L. Grey were not present at all times. The representative of Grey disputed this. The Board asked for a written complaint from the tenants and will look into it.

The minutes from the November meeting were approved without reading. The annual audit report was reviewed; there were no significant findings.

The proposed low-income tax-credit project, renovation of the 20 Pecos Street Apartments and addition of 40 new units, was presented by Jeff Curry, Development Director, J.L. Grey Developers. The Board approved proceeding with plans for the \$8,000,000 project. It was noted that the MVPHA owns the apartments at Solano and Idaho outright, and that the project is not a HUD-subsidized complex.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board were re-elected for the 2013.

Management reports were presented by

- Sharon Hansen, Accountant, Voucher Program Manager;
- Jesse Padilla, Housing Programs & Interim Deputy Director;
- Lee Montague, Modernization/Maintenance Manager; and
- Robbie Levey, Interim Executive Director.

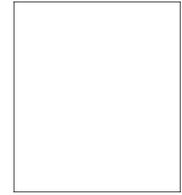
One issue discussed was whether the Board will make permanent the two-year limit on VA transitional housing.

The Board then went into Executive session and the public meeting adjourned.



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FIRST CLASS



**PROGRAM PLANNING
 MEETING**
 Starts at
10:30 a.m.
ON February 11, 2013

February 2013
In This Issue

Calendar	1
Program Planning	2
Board Highlights	2
President's Message	3
League News.....	4
Look Back –Regional Transit	5
Observer Reports	6-8



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.