

The VOTER

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



Collective Impact and IFCE

**Monday, June 11, 2012, 11:30 a.m., Good Samaritan
Social Center, Creative Arts Room**

Jane Asche, League member, retired educator, and community activist, will speak to us about a relatively new community initiative, the Institute for Community Engagement (IFCE), an effort that brings together numerous organizations in a city (or field) to develop the kind of community we want to have in coming years.

Jane's presentation will include: (1) the mission, history, and a sampling of projects of the Institute for Community Engagement of which she is a board member; and 2) an overview of the concept of "Collective Impact," a major initiative upon which the Institute is about to embark.

Jane Asche is a retired educator who holds an Ed.D. in Adult and Continuing Education, an M.A. in Elementary Education, and a B.S. in Chemistry and Mathematics in secondary education. She was a national trainer, author, and curriculum designer for community- and business-education partnerships. Her job responsibilities have included teaching, research, curriculum development, and training and technical assistance to government agencies, volunteer associations, and nonprofit organizations. Much of her research focused on development of training materials for collaborative leadership focused on creating systems change in education and youth-serving organizations. Her work experiences include teaching at the elementary, secondary, and graduate levels of education as well as serving as a community development specialist at a land grant university.

CALENDAR

June 4 (Monday) - Deadline for Reservations for Collective Impact and IFCE

RSVP Roberta Gran, Email: robertagran@q.com, Tel: 373-8490

June 5 (Tuesday) - PRIMARY ELECTION DAY, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at Voting Convenience Centers.

June 7 (Thursday) - 2-4 p.m., Board Meeting, Branigan Library Board Room. All are welcome!

June 11 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Collective Impact and IFCE, Jane Asche, Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. \$10. **Reservations Required.** If you don't cancel your reservation, you will be charged for lunch.

June 18 (Monday) - 10 a.m. - Noon, Study of Impediments to Voting Participation in Doña Ana County, Good Samaritan Social Center, Small Conference Room.

Notable Dates:

June 8-12 - LWVUS Convention, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.

June 14 - Flag Day

June 17 - Father's Day

JULY - LEAGUE ON VACATION/ No Lunch with a Leader or Board meetings.



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
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 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

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Vicki Simons - 522-4813

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Bonnie Burn - 526-0013
burnb@comcast.net

Members Recognize Marnie and Jim Leverett

Marnie and Jim Leverett were recognized for their years of membership in and service to the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces and in the Las Cruces Community. Members and guests recounted stories of their experience with the Leveretts and applauded the many contributions they made to the League and their community.



Marnie received Honorary Membership, a designation given after 50 years in the League. She joined the League in Toledo, Ohio, in 1962, transferred to the Pittsburgh, Buffalo, and then Las Cruces Leagues where she and Jim finally retired. Marnie served in many leadership capacities in the League including president of LWVGLC (2003-2005). Her issues involvement included the election process, voter turnout, water and land-use planning that started as a League study committees and led to Vision 2040 and wilderness designation choices. Teamwork is the cornerstone of League accomplishment, and Marnie was a master at teambuilding.

Jim Leverett developed the League's original web site and served as web master for many years. As electronic voting machines were implemented, Jim brought attention to concerns about a paperless ballot. He established the first League "Election Day hot line" in their apartment where shifts of League volunteers answered multiple phones to respond to caller questions about voting locations and mechanics.

"We had jobs to do, and we did them" is Marnie's summary of their service. Indeed they did: Treasurer, Voter Service Chair, *Voter* and *Who's Who* editor and proofreader, President, Study Committee Chair, Webmaster/IT expert and all around voice of reason.

Calendar of Events - 2012-2013

Board Meetings are the 1st Thursday of the month, 2-4 p.m.

The VOTER deadline is the 15th of the month.

Lunch with a Leader is second Monday of the month,
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Good Samaritan Creative Arts Room

July - League on Vacation

August 13 - Renewable Energy

September 10 - Wilderness
Legislation (Late Afternoon meeting)

October 8 - Solid Waste Recycling

November 12 - Land use

December - Holiday Social

January 14 - Border Patrol

February 11 - Program Planning
for Local and LWVNM Programs

March 11 - Open

April 20 - Annual Meeting

President's Message



We got off to a very good start on our new League Year. The Salute to Marnie and Jim Leverett luncheon was well attended (40 members and guests). We listened to stories about their accomplishments over the years. For those of us who were not here in their "heyday," it was a pleasure to become acquainted with them. Kudos to Christina and William Little and Win Jacobs who organized a very memorable event.

The newly elected Board met on May 21 for orientation and program planning. Decisions about the calendar are shown under Calendar 2012-2013, p. 2. The Board decided that the **League would be on vacation during July—no Lunch with a Leader, Board meeting or VOTER.** Many members take vacations during July, and the fall is going to be a busy time for voter services because of the general election. So July is a month of R&R (rest and relaxation for us). We identified broad topics to be covered for our Lunch with a Leader program and have suggested speakers whose names will be announced after our invitations have been accepted. As something different, we are going to have an afternoon social event in September that will include a speaker(s). The March Lunch meetings is listed as open so that we can accommodate any topic, consensus, or special presentation that may arise between now and the end of the League year.

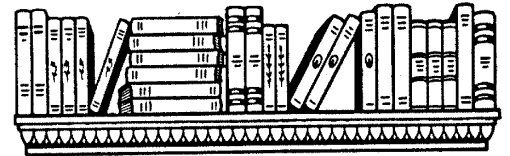
The Study of Impediments to Voter Participation in Doña Ana County will have its first organization meeting on Monday, June 18, 10 a.m. - Noon, Good Samaritan Social Center, Small Conference Room. Erika Graf-Webster is making arrangements for this meeting and will be in touch with members who signed up at Annual Meeting for this study group. Additional committee members are welcome. Please let Erika know your intention (521-0600, egrafwebster@q.com).

Roberta Gran, director, Membership, was appointed by the Board to serve on the Annual Meeting Nominating Committee with Vicki Simons, chair, and Judith Scott, elected member. The Observer Corps will consist of Johnnie Aldrich, South Central Solid Waste Authority, and members of the Education Committee who will rotate observing the Las Cruces Public School Board meetings.

Gracia Class and Gwen Hanson, co-directors, Voter Services, have been oriented to their portfolio and will be holding their first committee meeting on June 6.

It was a productive meeting, and we look forward to welcoming our members to an interesting year of activities.

Bonnie Burn



BRANIGAN LIBRARY BOOK SALE

Roadrunner Room

Saturday—June 2, 2012

10 a.m.—2 p.m.

"After Sale Bag of Books"

2-3 p.m.

Friend members sale

Friday, June 1, 3-5 p.m.

Contact: Maryellen 528-9891



Membership Renewals

Due by June 30

Individual \$60

Second Household \$30

LWW of Greater Las Cruces

Friends of the League

John Ameriks, M.D.
 Biad Chile Ltd. Co.
 Reed R. Burn
 Joseph P. Camunez, D.D.S.
 Donald Dresp
 Edward Jones - Connie Lee
 Jackie & Adrian Edwards
 Nancy & Ken Hall
 Win Jacobs
 Pat Kratz
 Lilley Law Offices
 Louise P. Lockhart
 Barbara Myers
 Francisco Mario Ortiz Law Firm
 Wanda Skowlund
 Marie Sutter-Sinder
 Donna Tate
 Tom Tate
 Zia Engineering & Environment
 Consultants

Thank You

STRATEGIC PLANNING – Part of Management Skill Set - Bonnie Burn, Reporting

It's hard to get excited about strategic planning! Yet, as I listened to Commissioner Billy Garrett discuss what is happening in Doña Ana County government, the heart just has to give a little flutter. Although it may not be the only way to go, strategic planning has to be among the skill sets used to cope with the volume and complexity of governing the county on a day-to-day basis.

Commissioner Scott Kraehling initiated the idea of developing a strategic plan soon after he was elected in 2008. Since then, the City of Las Cruces sponsored a workshop about strategic planning, and is working on a plan of its own. Commission Garrett was elected in 2010 and added his support and expertise to the process. All of the commissioners and County Manager Brian Haines are supportive.

The plan will have several important components. Seven principles were adopted by Resolution on March 27, 2012. The principles are outlined in the box on p. 5.

Part II of the plan will look at the conditions of the county, the forces and trends that need to be met over the next number of years and will offer data for forecasting what needs to happen to meet these needs. Thereafter, policy will be developed that will contribute to resolving or moving the issues forward.

The process of strategic planning started by revising the existing mission statement, a set of guiding principles and action items that have measurable outcomes. A request for public input about either submitting a new mission statement or revising the current statement is open until May 25th. Thereafter, a five-person panel will evaluate the submittals and reduce the number to three that will be presented on line for public comment by June 30th. At its July 10th meeting, Commissioners will make a final decision. The existing mission statement is:

Doña Ana County's elected officials, management team and employees are collectively committed first to public safety and then to sustaining a governmental culture that consistently serves our communities with pride to enhance the economic, environmental and social quality of life in Doña Ana County subject to available human, natural and economic resources.

During the summer, management staff will be developing goals, actions, and measurable outcomes or metrics. Management staff will be examining the processes in their departments and determining how they fit into the strategic plan. In the fall, the results of this part of the plan will be brought to the Commissioners for further consideration. Management staff will begin developing the 2013 budget around this plan. The plan will be tied to the FY 2014 budget.

This is not a sterile process. Because it establishes a framework for transparency and accountability, the chain of relevance moves from the commissioners, who have responsibility for establishing policy, to the county manager, who works with the departments to develop the action plans, and to department management, who are ultimately accountable for ensuring the goals of the strategic plan. Departments such as the Health and Human Services Department, the Sheriff, Utilities, and Community Development are involved. These complexities will be considered as the plan is further developed.

As the strategic plan continues to be developed, comprehensive planning and Vision 2040 will be part of the consideration. For example, the county has received grant funding from HUD that allocates \$2 million for the Camino Real Sustainable Corridor, land that extends from Hatch to Anthony. The grant is to be used for economic development, community preservation, transportation, rehabilitation of colonias, and border issues involving Doña Ana County and the Chihuahua area that borders on Santa Teresa and Sunland Park.

Since coming into office, Commissioner Garrett has been involved with the issue of the Code of Conduct established for commissioners, the problems with noise in the county, and the county community centers where the concerns are about the definition of their use and increasing their capacity for library and computer services have arisen.

Guiding Principles (Adopted by Resolution on March 27, 2012)

1. **Functions of Government:** Elected officials, managers, employees, and volunteers work together and with other entities in a spirit of mutual respect and public service to carry out the functions of county government in a manner that is courteous, efficient, transparent, accountable, engaged, and responsible to public input.
2. **Area Development:** Throughout Dona Ana County—from the smallest colonia to the City of Las Cruces—development will be proactively managed so that land use, transportation, utilities, affordable housing, and public facilities are fully integrated, mutually supportive, and respectful of the unique qualities of each community.
3. **Health Care and Medical Services:** All people living in Dona Ana County will have access to affordable health care and medical services that focus on emergencies, preventive strategies, and eliminating injury and disease that lead to premature death and disability.
4. **Economic Development:** Economic development will be supported in all areas of the county and for all segments of the population so that communities throughout the county are viable, a diversified growth strategy is maintained, and every resident can find work that supports a good standard of living.
5. **Public Safety:** Dona Ana County will be known as a safe place for residents, workers and visitors based on the effective reduction of serious crimes, risk of fire, and harm from environmental hazards—both natural and man-made.
6. **Infrastructure:** Roads, utilities, flood control structures, public facilities, and other infrastructure systems will be planned, built, and maintained to address critical needs and maximize economic viability for government entities, taxpayers, and businesses.
7. **Community-oriented Values:** Life in Dona Ana County will be enhanced by broad-based support for community oriented values such as the arts and life-long learning, a wide range of recreational opportunities, humane treatment of animals, compassionate care for those in need, conservation of the area's natural environment, respect for diversity and protection of human rights, and celebration of our multi-cultural heritage.

Ad Hoc Campaign Finance Committee for the City of Las Cruces

At the City Council Meeting on May 7, Mayor Miyagishima announced the individuals who will be serving on this committee: Erika Graf-Webster, LWV of Greater Las Cruces; Alex Burr, Southern New Mexico Chapter of Common Cause NM; Dolores Archuleta and Debbie Darby, former elected officials; Daniel Scheller, Ph.D., Department of Government, NMSU; Esther Martinez, City Clerk; and Pete Connelly, City Attorney.

The committee will undertake a review of current campaign finance guidelines for city elections, research best practices of other municipalities, and make recommendations to strengthen the city's campaign finance process. The committee will complete its work by November 2012.



League News



Dona Ana Hispanic Education/Achievement Gap Task Force Meeting Summary - Jane

Asche, Co-Chair, Reporting

April 23, 2012 – Dona Ana Community College Workforce Center

Background: The Task Force was formed in December 2009 following a “Community Conversation,” hosted by Senator Bingaman in Las Cruces with Juan Sepulveda of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. Senator Bingaman, who has a strong interest in education issues, convened the Task Force in response to concerns over the chronic and consistent gap in achievement and graduation rates of Hispanics in Southern New Mexico. The official promise of this Task Force is “We resolve to work collaboratively with all members of the community to eliminate the achievement gap leading to an educated citizenry and improved economic opportunity.”

The meeting on April 23 was a celebration of the achievements over the past two years and discussion of how to keep the momentum going once Senator Bingaman leaves office in January 2013. The meeting was attended by more than 40 community stakeholders representing all three school districts in Doña Ana County including central office administrators, principals, parents, students, business leaders, and local and state elected officials.

After a welcome and introductions, student leaders from the Task Force project known as Building Community Capacity for Educational Excellence (BC²E²) presented lively public service announcements they had created about the value of staying in school and acquiring a good education. Then the staff from BC²E² presented an overview of the project and data on their three work groups and major strategies: 1) activities to gain university, school district, and school buy-in to ensure race and culture are valued, 2) a series of community-wide activities to lift expectations around educational excellence and accountability that involved parents and students in leadership training and community dialogues among parents,

children, teachers, government leaders and the business community, and 3) activities to surround students with a community of mentors that included collaboration with the BRIDGE Early College High School Initiative at the Arrowhead Center for Economic Development.

After a guest presentation by Dr. Peter Winograd and Angelo Gonzales of the University of New Mexico Center on Education Policy Research about the dramatic statistics of disadvantaged youth and families in southern New Mexico, the subject turned to how all the work and effort carried out so far could be sustained after Senator Bingaman leaves office. The answer was suggested that it become part of a larger “collective impact” project. Come to the League’s Lunch with a Leader Meeting in June (see p. 1) to learn what this really means.

League of Women Voters of New Mexico Public Regulation Commission Study

Kathy Campbell, Reporting

Neva van Peski, Karen Heldmeyer and Jody Larson of LWV of Santa Fe County (LWVSFC) discussed the LWVNM study of the NM Public Regulation Commission (PRC) with the Los Alamos League (LWVLA) at lunch on March 8. The study is intended to address a long list of problems with the PRC as currently organized from corruption, inefficiency, and unqualified commissioners and staff to overly broad responsibilities and inability to balance public, consumer and investor interests properly.

The regular 2012 legislative session passed some PRC-related legislation, largely at the prodding of Think New Mexico, which chose PRC reform as its issue for this year. Three PRC-related amendments to Article 11 of the state constitution will be on the ballot in November:

1. Remove insurance regulation from the PRC’s duties, and establish a nominating committee to appoint the superintendent of insurance, with qualifications established by law.
2. Move responsibility for chartering and regulating corporations to the Secretary of State.

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Public Regulations Commission

(Continued from page 6)

3. Establish by law, educational and professional qualifications as well as continuing education requirements for PRC commissioners.

The first question for the League is, do we wish to advocate for passage of these amendments, as offered, in November? Subsequently, since the first and third of these amendments are open-ended, what would the League support in further legislation that will be needed to specify the details? And for what issues not addressed by the amendments should the League adopt positions?

The PRC was formed in 1999 by combining two regulatory agencies, the Public Utility Commission and the State Corporation Commission, which at that time included the State Insurance Board. Its five Commissioners are elected to four-year terms from five districts, and the position carries a professional-level salary of more than \$90,000 per year. Of its seven divisions, only three deal with regulatory matters; the other four provide support services for the regulatory divisions.

There was a great deal of discussion about qualifications for Commissioners: how relevant should any degrees be? How important is relevant experience? And who will judge relevance anyway? This was also an issue in the legislature, where more specific language included in the original bill (HJR 11) was replaced in a committee substitute bill.

The League also needs to be able to lobby for regulation of insurance, especially for consumer representation and transparency. And for those functions remaining with the PRC, consumer interests need to be better protected, perhaps by means of a dedicated staffed unit within the PRC. Also needed within the PRC, as well as within any spin-off regulatory agencies, is an organizational unit to address ethics complaints, i.e., an internal investigations unit such as exists at the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department.

Given that these issues are rising quickly to the top of the public agenda, with the election in November and a 60-day legislative session starting next January, the study committee plans to return in a few months for a unit meeting with LWV of Los Alamos at which specific consensus questions will be discussed.

Source: VOTER, LWVLA, March, 2012, reprinted with permission.

LWVNM State Council: Three League levels were brought together at the League of Women Voters of New Mexico State Council held on May 12, at the MCM Elegante Hotel in Albuquerque. Delegates from local Leagues in Los Alamos, Sante Fe County, Greater Las Cruces and Central New Mexico were represented, as were members of the State Board. Joining the delegates was Peg Hill, director on the Board of the League of Women Voters of the United States and liaison to LWVNM

Council meets biennially in even numbered years. Delegates may adjust the two-year budget adopted at convention and take up any other business related to program or voter services that arises between conventions.

Co-presidents Linda Moscarella and Dick Mason, and co-vice presidents, Meredith Machen and Joe Keefe, led the meeting. In the absence of an identified president and vice president, a team leadership model was adopted for the period 2011-2013. During the past year, the details for the model were developed and put into practice. Further refinements during the coming year will make this a viable model for use by other Leagues.



Delegates listen to Dick Mason give a report about the NM legislative session as team leaders, (L-R) Joe Keefe, Meredith Machen, and Linda Moscarella look on.

The budget discussion resulted in an adjustment to the LWVUS Convention allocation so that three delegates from the LWVNM Board may attend the national convention, June 8-12, in Washington, DC. The registration fee, \$320, and other expenses in the amount of \$800 were approved.

Program reports were given. Delegates approved temporarily suspending further work on the Natural Resource Position Update and Land Use Study

(Continued on page 8)

LWVNM State Council Meeting

(Continued from page 7)

until decisions can be made about committee membership. This in no way reflects disinterest in the study or diminishes the importance of the study. Commitments by two of the committee leaders, Barbara Calef and Lora Lucero, made this action necessary.

The Alcohol Study is in the process of being reorganized because of the unexpected death of its leader, Dee Watkins.

The Public Regulation Commission (PRC) Study continues to go forward (see p. 6) for an update.

Meredith Machen is organizing state voter services activities for the upcoming general election in November. She has contacted local League *Voters Guide* editors. Most of the work will be done via email. Delegates once again asked the LWVNM Board to approve a grant to local Leagues to help with the cost of printing the *Voters Guides*.

Peg Hill, keynote speaker, brought us up-to-date about LWVUS activities:

- Distributed copies of the newly approved education study position, *The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education* (March 2012). The Privatization Study position will be available after the June Board meeting. Both positions will be approved by delegates at the 2012 Convention
- Discussed and encouraged attendance at the LWVUS Convention.
- Reported on LWVUS advocacy for climate change, campaign finance, and voter suppression.
- Highlighted a new initiative entitled the Broader Middle East and North Africa, that partners LWVUS with the U.S. Government to organize meetings that focus on empowering women, basic freedoms of expression and speech, and transparency and accountability in government. Each meeting will bring together 125 participants representing countries in the Middle East, North Africa, the Levant and the Gulf.



League of Women Voters - United States

League to Serve as U.S. NGO Partner in G-8 BMENA Initiative - On March 8, LWVUS distributed a press release that announced its involvement with this new initiative.

For the first time since 2004, the United States has assumed the G-8 Presidency for 2012, and, in that role, has co-chair responsibility for the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) initiative. The initiative is a multilateral effort to promote cooperation between the G-8 and BMENA governments and civil society to advance reform efforts throughout the region. The U.S. has invited Tunisia to serve as co-chair, making this the first time that two democracies have led the initiative.

The League has been invited to partner with the United States government as its NGO partner. The role of the League is to organize ten different preparatory meetings that will take place in seven to eight different countries between March and November and that will culminate with the ministerial meeting in December.

Preparation for several meetings is already underway. Doha, Qatar has been selected for the July 11-12 meeting that will focus on women's empowerment.

The League's activity in international government issues dates back to 1945 when President Harry Truman invited the League to help with the organization of the United Nations. To this day, the League has an observer in the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). More recently, in 2011, the League worked with women in Egypt and Tunisia focused on promoting democracy. Its efforts in Tunisia culminated with the formation of a Tunisian League of Women Voters to promote greater informed participation in Tunisia's newly established democracy.

Within the U.S. the League is organized around 800 local and state-level chapters staffed mainly by committed volunteer members. From the beginning, the League has been an activist, grassroots organization whose leaders believed that citizens should play a critical role in advocacy, and that belief has shaped the League's work today.

(Continued on page 9)

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.

Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority, April 17, 2012 – Vicki Simons and Christina Little, Reporting

Ralph Chaffee, Vice-Chairman, brought the meeting to order at 2 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority (MVPHA) at 926 S. San Pedro. Robbie Levey, Interim Executive Director, introduced the League observer and members of the Board made positive comments about the LWV/GLC Affordable Housing Study Report.

Chairman Art Jiron was in the hospital and could not attend the meeting. As soon as a quorum was present, the meeting resumed. The new Board members are:

- Art Jiron, Chairman (representative of City of Las Cruces, appointed by Mayor)
- Ralph Chaffee, Vice-Chairman (representative of Doña Ana County, appointed by County Commission)
- Felix Cordero, Commissioner (representative of City of Las Cruces, appointed by Mayor)
- Arturo Marrujo, Commissioner (representative of Doña Ana County, appointed by County Commission)

A fifth Board member, a Resident Commissioner, is yet to be chosen. That member will be from the client base from public housing in Doña Ana County. It was decided that applications will be reviewed by the Board at the next meeting. Staff will provide input.

Robbie Levey directed the staff reporting. Reports were heard from the Accountant (Financial Report), the Housing Choice Voucher Program Manager, and the Housing Programs Manager. Staff is still working to combine programs from the Las Cruces and Doña Ana Housing Authorities, including the rental voucher programs. An audit of the MVPHA is due September 15 and they are preparing for that.

The main topic of discussion at this meeting was increasing the construction loan for the Robledo Ridge project, which is a low-income tax-credit joint

project of the New Mexico Finance Authority and the Housing Authority. It is a multi-family project located off Valley Drive near Mayfield High School. An older affordable housing community, Valley Vista, will be completely renovated and turned into a mixed income community with 71 units varying from one-bedroom to five-bedroom units, with 11 market rate units. The MVPHA and the New Mexico Housing Corporation will be the co-general partners of Robledo Ridge. After discussion the increase in the capital improvement loan was approved by the Board. The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

LWVUS Global Democracy *(Continued from page 8)*

BMENA activities are sponsored by the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) at the U.S. Department of State. MEPI works to create vibrant partnerships with citizens to better the development of pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies throughout the MENA region. More information about MEPI can be found at www.mepi.state.gov.

A Dialogue Among the Women of the U.S. and Cuba - Zaida Arguedas

LWVUS Deputy Director Zaida Argueda attended the League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVF) Council meeting, "Viva La Liga," May 11-12, in Tampa, FL.

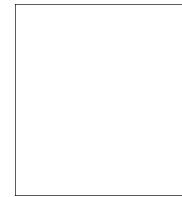
Dr. Blanca Munster, a Cuban scholar and co-author of the book, "Women in Cuba: 50 Years After the Revolution," (2010) was one of the keynote speakers. She discussed the impetus for her book and acknowledged that many laws and legal proceedings have been instituted over the years to address violence against women but implementation has been slow. Women have made strides in health, education, and political empowerment.

LWVF has obtained a special U.S. federal license to conduct its program, Sisters Across the Straits, that allows League members to travel to Cuba to learn about its history, culture and society to forge new relationships with Cuban women. Three delegations traveled in 2011 and six are scheduled for 2012.

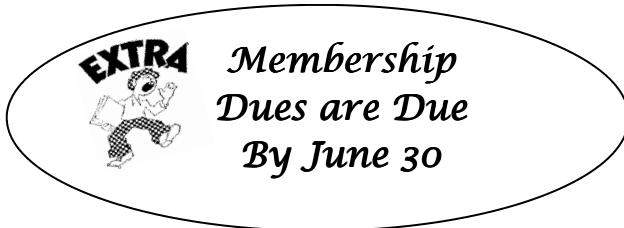


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FIRST CLASS



**VOTE - June 5
 PRIMARY ELECTION**

**June 2012
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Membership Application

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

Name: _____

2nd Household: _____

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

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

\$ _____ Contribution to the League Make Check payable to LWV of Greater Las Cruces

\$ _____ Contribution to the Education Fund (Tax Deductible) Make check payable to
 League of Women Voters Education Fund

All checks should be mailed to

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

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