

The VOTER

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



Lunch with a Leader

Monday, November 12, 2012, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle

Election Protection and Campaign Finance Transparency

Viki Harrison, Executive Director, Common Cause

Election Protection: Common Cause, through its New Mexico election protection program, Count Every Vote NM (CEVNM), targeted 15 counties during the general election to ensure the security of the election process. Poll watcher training was provided by Common Cause. The poll watchers then distributed a "Voter Bill of Rights" for New Mexico that gave information about voting and ways to resolve problems. Signs in English and Spanish provided hotline numbers that connected the voter with a qualified attorney to whom any voting problems could be reported immediately. Along with dozens of national and local partners, including LWV of New Mexico, this program ensured that elections ran smoothly and all eligible citizens had their votes counted accurately.

Campaign Finance Transparency: Common Cause NM (CCNM) again worked with NM Senator Peter Wirth (D-Santa Fe) to clean up the NM Campaign Reporting Act and implement a disclosure portion for independent expenditure committees who do electioneering. CCNM will meet with non-profit organizations, leadership in the NM House and Senate, the Attorney General's office, and other interested

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Calendar

November 1 (Thursday) - 2-4 p.m., **Board Meeting**, Branigan Library, Roadrunner Room.

November 5 (Monday) - **Deadline for reservations for Lunch with a Leader.** RSVP Roberta Gran, Tel: 373-8490, Email: robertagran@q.com.



November 6 (Tuesday) - **2012 General Election** - Remember to vote at a Voting Convenience Center. Voters Guide available at League's web site: www.lwvglc.org.

November 12 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., **Lunch with a Leader, Election Protection and Campaign Finance Transparency, Speaker: Viki Harrison, Executive Director, NM Common Cause,** Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle, Lunch: \$10. Reservations Required. If you don't cancel your reservation, you will be charged for lunch.

Notable Dates in November

November 11 - Veteran's Day
November 12 - Elizabeth Cady Stanton's
 Birthday (1815-1902)
November 22 - Thanksgiving

Save the Dates

December 1 - NM Legislative Breakfast
December 8 - League Holiday Social
January 15 - NM Legislative Session Begins

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The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces

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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

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
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League Around Town

On September 25, **Marjorie Burr** and **Erika Graf-Webster** were guests on the Southwest Seniors radio show (KSNM 570 AM) hosted by Keith Whelpley. The topic was availability of voter information, and the League's upcoming candidates' forums and Voters Guide were discussed. Also, through the efforts of Marjorie Burr, the League now has a new video, "Voting in Doña Ana County," on its web site, www.lwvglc.org.

League member **Cynthia Pelak** invited **Bonnie Burn** to speak to the students in her class, Social Inequality, at NMSU. Bonnie discussed the history of the League, voter services activities, and voter suppression.

The **NM Secretary of State**, through a contract with Disability Rights New Mexico and the Governor's Commission on Disability, sponsored a "Voter Education Forum" in Las Cruces on September 27, from 3-5 p.m., in City Hall. Jim Parker, Director, NM Governor's Commission on Disability, **Lynn Ellins**, County Clerk, Doña Ana County, and **Bonnie Burn** were panelists. Mr. Parker traced legislation that made accessibility available to those who are disabled. Mr. Ellins discussed accessibility and voting accommodations for people with disabilities, including curbside voting. Ms. Burn discussed the voter services activities the League provides for voters to make informed decisions. In

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Lunch with a Leader *(Continued from page 1)*

parties before the session starts in January. The bill is very long and complicated, and the fewer amendments during the session, the better chance we have of passing something meaningful. The bill passed the NM Senate unanimously last session! The need for heightened transparency has never been more urgent, as millions of dollars from anonymous sources flooded into elections this year. Disclosure would allow us to find out who is contributing to our candidates. Financial transparency is a fundamental requirement for any democracy.

Viki Harrison, Executive Director, Common Cause, manages the state office in Albuquerque, organizes and coordinates legislative programs, conducts research, directs fundraising initiatives and serves as a lobbyist. Before joining Common Cause, she was the Executive Director of NM Repeal, where she led the winning campaign in New Mexico to abolish the death penalty. Earlier in her career she was the Program Manager for Animal Protection of New Mexico and part of the team that successfully banned cockfighting in NM.

Ms. Harrison has extensive knowledge of the legislative process in New Mexico having successfully lobbied in NM since 1997 on the local and state level. She graduated summa cum laude from the University of New Mexico with BA's in Women's Studies and African American Studies.

Please Join us for our Lunch with a Leader Presentation

President's Message

KUDOS to our Voter Services Team for a successful and busy, busy election cycle (see p. 5 for details).



As we experience a flood of campaign money that resulted from the Citizens United decision and listen to campaign rhetoric, I am reminded of the importance of our votes during this election. Although some of you heard my concluding remarks at the final Candidates Forum on Wednesday, October 17, I am taking the liberty of printing them once again. It is easy to forget how we EARNED the RIGHT TO VOTE and how that right can be easily eroded.

The U.S. Constitution speaks to voting through its amendments.

- The 15th Amendment, passed in 1870, after the bloody Civil War in which more American lives were lost than in any other war, gave more men the right to vote because voting could not be denied based on race, color or previous servitude.
- The 19th Amendment, passed in 1920, finally gave women the right to vote after a 72-year struggle that began in 1848 and culminated in 1920.
- The 26th Amendment, passed in 1971, changed the voting age from 21 to 18, thus allowing those who were drafted into the armed service during the Vietnam War to vote.

So voting is a **hard-earned RIGHT**. During this election year many attempts have been made to put obstacles in the path of voters. The Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 did away with all barriers to voting. It is with dismay that we see strategies being proposed that would prevent people from exercising this hard-earned right and influencing the outcome of elections.

I will leave you with one thought expressed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt:

No one will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting.

Remember - Your Vote is Your Voice!

Bonnie Burn

Welcome

NEW MEMBERS

Olga Pedroza
908 S. Alamo
Las Cruces, NM 88001
Tel: (575) 640-2564
Email: olgapedroza11@hotmail.com



Happy Thanksgiving

Friends of the League

John Ameriks, M.D.
Anonymous
Biad Chile Ltd. Co.
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
Lilley 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 About Town *(Continued from page 2)*

increasing accessibility, the group suggested the League make voice available on the League's web site to accommodate those who are sight impaired. **Bernadine Chavez**, Coordinator, Disability Rights New Mexico, conducted an accessibility assessment at the 39 voting convenience centers in Doña Ana County. She will be sending a copy of the results to Mr. Ellins in the very near future.

On Thursday, October 11, **Bonnie Burn** was a guest on the Todd Dickson show, The Bulletin, (KSNM 570 AM) where several issues about voting were covered. Voters were assured that photo IDs were not needed to vote. Voting is now conveniently available at Voting Convenience Centers of the 39 locations in Doña Ana County. The availability of the League's *Voters Guide* also was advertised.

Dressed as suffragists, **Dale Yeo, Roberta Gran, and Bonnie Burn** spoke to a crowd of voters in Albert Johnson Park and Branigan Library on October 20 about the women's suffrage movement and the importance of voting. The Early Voting Rally was organized by NM Communities in Action & Faith (CAFÉ) who partnered with the League to publish the *2012 Voters Guide* in English and Spanish. The goal was to bring newly registered voters together to vote at Branigan Library, one of the alternative voting sites in Doña Ana County. The program opened with students telling their stories about the effect of President Obama's Dream Act change on their lives, and ended with Carli Romero, who led the effort to register 1500 new voters, walking with the new voters into Branigan Library **to VOTE**. This was truly **Democracy In Action**.

Look Back – Pressing Ahead in Early Childhood Education – Presentation by Luis Reyes, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Graduate School, New Mexico State University

The League's first afternoon social, held at Sunset Grill, Sonoma Ranch Golf Course, on October 8 was a success. Our guest speaker, Dr. Luis Reyes provided new information about childhood education.

The Education Committee identified early childhood education as a priority focus for this year. In light of recent political news that the program Head Start and other early childhood initiatives may not be funded in the near future, the presentation made by Dr. Reyes was significant to future advocacy.

"Pressing Forward" is an apt title for what is happening in early childhood education. Dr. Reyes describes it as moving from the status of "glorified baby sitter," a term often used to describe education taking place in a day care setting, to early childhood professional. In the past, to work in a public school, teachers and professional aides had to be licensed; however, day care workers were not. Dr. Reyes introduced the terminology that moves a discipline into professional status. He gave a history of the progress of the discipline that began with the National Association of Nursery Education (1920), now named the National Association for the Education of Young Children

(NAEYC). Through the intervening years between 1920 and the present, standards were identified to ensure quality nursery school programs in the U.S. Individuals working in this area continued to require more education to assure quality programs, and the discipline moved from vocational or occupational to professional. A Child Development Associate credential became available in 1970 as women returned to the work force and sought better care for their children. By 1985, a two-year associate's degree was formalized. Between 1996 and 2001, the early standards were revised. By 2006 a two-year, accredited program was available to students at NMSU. The profession continues to advance as more studies reveal the significant role that early childhood education plays in achieving future success for students as they progress through the education system.

Dr. Reyes challenged the League to partner with the childhood community and professionals to achieve social responsibility in our community—giving parents a say in whether children should be held back, encouraging higher pay for early childhood professionals, and promoting teaching children things when they are ready.



League News



Voter Services - Prepared by Gwen Hanson, Co-Director

This summer and fall have been very busy seasons for Voter Services as we approach the culmination of all our activities to date in the November 6th General Election. Our activities have been focused on **voter registration** and **voter education** through the (1) "Voting in Doña Ana County" video, (2) the 2012 *Voters Guide* in both English and Spanish, and (3) three candidates' forums for New Mexico legislators and county elected offices.

Voter Registration: Tom Schmutge organized voter registration in September-October until the deadline for registration ended October 9th. The total number of registrations coordinated by both Bonnie Burn and Tom Schmutge for June-October, 2012, was 130. The League appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with CAFé, NAACP, Unitarian Universalist Church Action Committee, and Colonias Development Council. Many thanks to the following volunteers: Johnnie Aldrich, Ruth Benjamins, Bonnie Burn, Marjorie Burr, Sue Cain, Martha Duran, Roberta Gran, Tom Schmutge, Judith Scott, Vicki Simons, and Aletta Wilson.

Voter Education:

- **"Voting in Doña Ana County"** is a five-minute video directed toward first-time voters voting at a voting convenience center. The script, written by Marjorie Burr, Cynthia Pelak, and Bonnie Burn, was approved by the League's Board of Directors and produced by Marjorie Burr. Doña Ana Community College's Creative Media Center produced CDs. The video appears on YouTube with an access link posted on the League's web site. Actors included Margaret Burr, Marjorie Burr, Cliff Pelton, Gwen Hanson, Ellen Haltom, and Erika Graf-Webster. Alex Burr was the photographer.
- **Voters Guide:** Dale Yeo took major responsibility for the production of the *2012 Voters Guide*. In addition to the LWVGLC-funded English edition, a Spanish edition was made possible by our collaboration with the NM Communities in Action & Faith (CAFé) and its grant-funded voter education initiative that included translation costs. Thanks to Sarah Nolan, CAFé Executive Director,

for her hard work. Both the English and Spanish editions were published by the *Las Cruces Bulletin*. The English edition was distributed Friday, October 12, and the Spanish edition, Friday, October 19, 2012. Many thanks to the our League committee for its persistence, energy, and tenacity in producing this year's Voters Guide: Dale Yeo, Bonnie Burn, Gwen Hanson, and Gracia Class.

Candidates' Forums: Gwen Hanson and Gracia Class coordinated the three forums, held October 2, 10, and 17, 2012. They were held in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Las Cruces. Candidates answered written questions posed by live audience participants. Each forum was broadcast live on Channel 20, CLCTV, and will be rebroadcast until November 6.

- The first forum included eleven of twelve candidates running for the NM State Senate, and was moderated by Vicki Simons. The audience was estimated at 70 people.
- The second forum included fourteen of fifteen candidates running for the NM State House of Representatives, and was moderated by Erika Graf-Webster. The audience was estimated at 80 people.
- The third forum included eight candidates running for offices in the 3rd Judicial District, as well as ten of eleven candidates running for Doña Ana County elected offices, and was moderated by Bonnie Burn. The audience was estimated at 90-100.

Thanks to the following volunteers who supported the success of these three forums: Vicki Simons, Erika Graf-Webster, Bonnie Burn, Roberta Gran, Johnnie Aldrich, Sue Cain, Aletta Wilson, Dale Yeo, Bob Burn, Ellen Young, Carol Jackson, Susan Schmutge, Martha Duran, Marcia Anderson, Ellen Haltom, Gracia Class, and Gwen Hanson.

Special thank you to the City of Las Cruces for allowing us to hold our candidates' forums in the City Hall Council Chambers and giving us access to its television facility. Our appreciation to Adrian Guzman and Udell Vigil, City of Las Cruces, for their support of our forums by facilitating the technology, the building facilities, and the security that allowed for our League's success.

2012 New Mexico Tax Expenditure Report Summary - *Barbara Goedecke, Reporting*

INTRODUCTION: Expenditure policy goals are frequently addressed through special tax provisions with the intent to accomplish a specific, but indirect, government policy objective. Rather than through direct appropriations, regulations, or other fiscal actions, some tax policy objectives may be achieved by special tax law provisions that reduce otherwise applicable tax obligations. Tax code provisions that reduce otherwise applicable tax liabilities are generally referred to as tax expenditures. A tax expenditure reduces tax revenues by identifying particular economic values to be retained by the taxpayer through mechanisms defined by the tax code and its administration.

There are generally two categories of tax expenditures. One category provides incentives to encourage specific economic activities that policymakers perceive serve public purposes. A second category provides (or allows retention of) economic resources to taxpayers facing specific circumstances or demonstrating particular qualifying characteristics.

Tax expenditures are taxes not collected — they are special provisions of a tax system designed to achieve economic outcomes that deviate from established baseline taxation principles. Properly formulated, tax expenditures can be a very efficient means to achieve a public purpose by targeting economic resources to encourage certain activities or to benefit specific members of society.

As with any use of public funds, tax expenditures should be periodically reviewed to ensure they are achieving intended consequences at a minimum cost to the public. A potential concern with any particular tax expenditure, however, is that it may achieve unintended consequences, or be debilitated by ambiguity as to whether the intended consequences are being achieved. The challenge in observing the specific benefits of many tax expenditures is the analytic motivation for periodic, objective review of tax expenditure programs.

On August 9, 2011, New Mexico's Governor Susana Martinez issued Executive Order 2011-071 that directs the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department, in coordination with other executive agencies, to develop the first annual tax expenditure report. This 2012 New Mexico Tax Expenditure Report seeks to provide a comprehensive review and analysis of existing tax expenditure programs in New Mexico and provide a

foundation for annual tracking of tax expenditures. Through this report we develop many insights, explore tax policy foundations, compile a tax expenditure reference resource, quantify specific tax expenditures, and address many policy objectives. Most importantly, it establishes a data and analytic resource to further develop our understanding of the benefits that may be achieved by New Mexico's specific future tax expenditure policies.

2012 New Mexico Tax Expenditure Report Key Findings

- There is no consistent, straightforward means available to routinely track tax expenditures.
- The ability to analyze the specific benefits of the tax expenditures is largely beyond the scope of the analyses summarized in this report, and will require a concerted, multi-agency effort.
- Several tax expenditures constitute large and impending or persistent exposure* for government revenues.

*Many tax expenditures stem from social, not economic, policy objectives. For those programs, alternative measures of benefit will have to be conceived, and they might not strictly rely on economic output data. Further benefit analysis (in many cases) can only be accomplished through a concerted, multi-agency effort.

EXAMINATION OF POLICY ALTERNATIVES: The 2012 New Mexico Tax Expenditure Report has attempted to remain as objective as possible. Its purpose has been to articulate the revenue costs of the tax expenditures identified, offer useful characterizations of tax base issues, and provide an insight into the benefits and objectives served by the tax policies evaluated. In keeping with this philosophy, the report makes no comprehensive policy recommendations.

By deliberately implementing tax policies that reduce tax revenues, however, tax expenditures are a form of government spending administered through the tax code. The opportunity cost of these tax expenditures is what the foregone revenue could have funded in their absence. As such, this report must recognize that fundamentally restructuring current tax expenditures could fund significant policy proposals. The report is not necessarily the appropriate venue through which to advocate such alternatives, but one proposal — broad based tax reform — is presented for consideration.

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, October 16, 2012, 6:30 p.m. – Jane Asche, Observer

All School Board members were present. The school board meeting opened with an outstanding performance by the new Centennial High School Chorale, lead by director Ida Holguin. A large part of the agenda items were approved as part of the consent agenda. Highlights from the meeting follow below:

The 2012 NEA – New Mexico's Human and Civil Rights Award – This award was presented to LCPS teacher Patricia Burnam, one of the teachers in the JUMP Program (Joint Ungraded Multi-Age Primary Program).

Recognition by the Public Education Department (PED) – Ten LCPS schools were recognized for their outstanding progress in raising the proficiency level of the students to perform at or above grade level in reading/language arts and mathematics. This resulted in the award of an extra \$300,000 from the PED to be shared by the ten schools for instructional purposes.

Safe Routes to Schools Project (SRTS) – A major project is underway to assure the safety of children as they come and go to school each day. The project is supported by four major work groups that focus on traffic control, engineering of infrastructure, encouragement of children and parents to utilize safety practices, and planning for program sustainability. Emphasis is also being placed on bus transportation safety and additional buses, including the use of charter buses, to transport children to school.

Reduction of Classroom Size – The administration has placed a great deal of effort on finding ways to hire more teachers and come up with creative strategies, including the use of more volunteers and teacher aides, to reduce class sizes and shore up instruction in schools that are experiencing larger

than expected enrollments. Good progress is being made to bring the class sizes as closely as possible into compliance with state standards on class size.

Parent Involvement – A number of programs within the school district are focused on parent involvement in the academic success of their children, but special mention was made of the ongoing efforts by the Hispano Chamber of Commerce to encourage the engagement of parents and students in educational achievement.

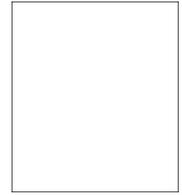
JUMP (Joint Ungraded Multi-Age Primary Program) – The most exciting report of the meeting was the progress being made in seven schools where 20 teachers are engaged in this experimental program to work in multi-aged classes with children who have development needs. The classes include children from kindergarten to second grade level, ages 5-8. One hundred percent of these children were lacking in grade level proficiency in reading and language development at the beginning of the year and therefore at risk of failure in other subjects and in jeopardy of retention. The children in these multi-age classes began the school year 25 days earlier than other students under the leadership of teachers with special training to meet their needs. As of the October 16 ninety-day progress report to the school board by Arsenio Romero, the principal who oversees this special program, 60% of the students are now proficient in their language and reading development. This is amazing progress in a very short amount of time. This progress demonstrates what can happen when teachers have the resources and support that they need to help the most vulnerable students succeed in the public schools.

This school board meeting lends evidence to the great effort teachers and administrators in our Las Cruces Public School System are expending to create a supportive learning environment for all students.



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FIRST CLASS



2012 General Election
November 6, 2012

**Your Vote is
 Your Voice!**

November 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.