

# The VOTER

League of Women Voters  
of Greater Las Cruces  
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)  
Web Site: [www.lwvglc.org](http://www.lwvglc.org)  
November 2013



## Education New Mexico: The Broken Promise

William P. Soules, Ph.D., Senator, State of New Mexico

Monday, November 11, 2013, 4:30-6:00 p.m.  
Sunset Grill, Sonoma Ranch Golf Course, 1274 Golf Course Road

Dr. Soules will talk about the constitutional mandate to provide an education for all children in the state and how the legislature, special interests, and society have failed that obligation. He will discuss the rise of charter schools, reduced funding, increased accountability, testing, and the commercialization of public schools.

What we must do to take back our schools and re-establish an educational system that empowers people and promotes democracy instead of profits will be part of his presentation.

A NM State Senator, Dr. Soules is a teacher at Oate High School. He served as an elementary and middle school principal. He has been a school board member, a community college administrator, and a college faculty member. In the NM Legislature, he is currently the vice-chairman of the Senate Education Committee.

*We invite you to join us for an Afternoon Social at the Sunset Grill to learn more about education.*

## CALENDAR

### AFTERNOON SOCIAL

Monday, November 11, 4:30-6p.m.  
Sunset Grill, Sonoma Ranch Golf Course  
1274 Golf Course Drive

Speaker: William "Bill" P. Soules  
Education New Mexico: The Broken  
Promise

RSVP by November 4 - Charge \$10  
Roberta Gran  
Email: [robertagran@q.com](mailto:robertagran@q.com), Tel: 373-8490

**NO LUNCH WITH A LEADER**

November 4 (Monday) - 1:30-3:30 p.m., **Board Meeting**, Erika Graf-Webster, Tel: 521-0600.  
All are welcome!

### VOTE

**November 5, Las Cruces Municipal Election  
Districts 3, 5, 6 & Municipal Judge**

November 6 (Wednesday) - 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.,  
Board Retreat, Gwen Hanson, Tel: 556-9251.  
**All League members are invited to attend.**  
RSVP: Gwen Hanson, 556-9251 or email:  
[gwenhanson10@gmail.com](mailto:gwenhanson10@gmail.com).

November 21 (Thursday) - 2-4 p.m., **Third  
Thursday Book Club**, Selection: *The Future* by  
Al Gore, Ardyth Norem, Tel: 522-0780

### November Notable Dates:

12 - Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902)  
28 - Thanksgiving & Hannukkah

**The VOTER**

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

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Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322  
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**President** - Erika Graf-Webster

**Vice President & Program**  
Roberta Gran

**Secretary** - Christina Little

**Treasurer** - Ruth Benjamins

**Director, Membership**  
Johnnie Aldrich

**Co-Director, Voter Services**  
Gracia Class  
Gwen Hanson

**Nominating Committee**  
Chair: Marjorie Burr  
Elected Member: Sue Cain

**STUDY GROUPS**

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

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

**Voting Impediments**  
Roberta Gran - 373-8490  
Johnnie Aldrich - 522-1544

**Mental Health Services  
in Doña Ana County**  
Becky Beckett - 522-8171  
Mickey Curtis - 532-5655

**Metropolitan Court**  
Marjorie Burr - 522-2528

**ACTION COMMITTEE**  
Barbara Goedecke - 522-0323

**Web Master**  
Dale Yeo - 405-7580

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

**Board Highlights - October 7, 2013 - Christina Little, Secretary**

A **League Retreat\*** is scheduled for Wednesday, November 6, 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the home of Gwen Hanson. All League members are invited to join the Board for all or part of the meeting. Lunch will be catered and an RSVP is required - please call Gwen Hanson, 556-9251 or email: gwenhanson10@gmail.com by Monday, November 4.

The retreat agenda will focus on the Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) Program initiated by LWVUS. Other topics such as: What is the League doing right? What needs to be improved? Where do we see the organization in the future? How do we recruit additional members? Should we continue with Lunch with a Leader? How do members get to know each other better? How does the League become a more inviting organization?

Meetings are being scheduled with Senators John Arthur Smith and Bill Soules as well as Representative Nate Cote prior to the 2014 Legislative Session. The focus of the meetings will be on educational initiatives.

Voters Service was very active in September and October with a voter registration drive, a *Voters Guide* published in the *Las Cruces Sun-News*, and a candidates' forum held on October 8 in City Council Chambers. Additionally, Bonnie Burn conducted interviews of the candidates who were put on the ballot by Judge Martin. These interviews and the original League candidates' forum are being aired on Channel 20 through election day, November 5.

The board voted to cosponsor, with NMSU's College of Education, a community-wide conversation, "Addressing Educational Equity for New Mexico's Children." The culminating event will be a policy seminar held on May 17, 2014, at the new performing arts center on the NMSU campus. All League members will be invited.

**\*Post Board Meeting Note:** A regular Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 4, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the home of Erika Graf-Webster, 521-0600.

**ALL LEAGUE MEMBERS**

**JOIN** the Board at its Retreat to plan  
the future direction of the League

**Wednesday, November 6, 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**  
**Home of Gwen Hanson**

Catered lunch and refreshments post retreat.

**RSVP** Gwen Hanson, 556-9251, gwenhanson10@gmail.com



## Message from the Vice President



On behalf of Erika Graf-Webster who continues on medical leave and is recovering nicely from knee replacement surgery, I am pleased to report that with the help of the Board, the League and I are continuing to fulfill the League's responsibilities to the community and its members.

Two major events occurred this month: (1) Las Cruces Municipal Election for elected positions of councilors and a municipal judge (see Voter Services details on p. 5), and (2) New Mexico Legislative Water and Natural Resources Committee and the Drought Subcommittee met in Las Cruces. League members are always pleased when NM legislative committees come to town. The Drought Subcommittee heard testimony about the Gila River Diversion initiative. Testimony about the Rio Grande Compact, water litigations, and the Water Trust was heard by the Natural Resources Committee.

The League Lunch with a Leader on October 14 at Good Sam's was a successful and very informative event. Dr. Bonnie Votaw's presentation is summarized in the Look Back article, p. 4.

The League has experienced a number of requests from the community to participate in legislative activities. It is gratifying to have the work of our organization recognized in this way, and representation at these meetings increases League visibility and member recruitment opportunities. We could do more if more of our members volunteered to help. We truly appreciate your attendance at Lunch with a Leader and miss you when you are not there. However, the League is noted for its advocacy about issues. When you answer "yes" to our broadcast email for help, it means that we can advocate for our positions. Consider why you joined the League of Women Voters. Our reputation for nonpartisan activity and our advocacy work on issues that affect all of us daily are the basis for the existence of the League. Please consider your areas of interest and offer a helping hand. Also, please come to the Retreat (Ad, p. 2) and help the Board plan for the future of the League.

In leading in Erika's place, this past month has been very exciting for me, and I've experienced a steep learning curve. I am grateful to those who were so helpful. I have learned a lot, but the greatest impression has been the incredible amount of work that gets done on a daily basis by dedicated members of the local League. What we manage to accomplish with so little in the way of resources constantly amazes me. I can only say that even though it may not show in spectacular ways, the League makes a **BIG** difference in the community. Let's **ALL** be a part of this effort to make democracy work!

*Roberta Gran*

# Welcome

## Membership Directory Update

Lynette Schurdevin  
55 Happy Trails Dr.  
Las Cruces, NM 88005  
Tel: (575) 636-3237  
Email: lynnetters618@gmail.com

## Friends of the League

John Ameriks, M.D.  
Anonymous  
Robert Buggert  
Sharon Burbano  
Reed R. Burn  
Joseph P. Camunez, D.D.S.  
Dental Associates PA,  
David Sudimack, D.D.S.  
Donald Dresp  
Edward Jones - Connie Lee  
Roberta Gran  
Nancy & Ken Hall  
Win Jacobs  
Keller Williams Realty, Laura Szalay  
Al Kissling  
Pat Kratz  
Marlene Lavetts  
Lilley & O'Connell Law Offices  
Louise P. Lockhart  
Barbara Myers  
Jean Ossorio  
Clifford Pelton  
Nancy Phillips  
Kathryn Schultz  
Sunspot Solar Energy  
Donna Tate  
Williams Design Group, Inc.  
Zia Engineering & Environment  
Consultants

*Thank You*



**Look Back - Reflections on Quality as an Issue in Public Education**  
**Bonnie Votaw, Ed.D, Member, LCPS Board of Education, October 14, 2013**  
*Bonnie Burn, Reporting*

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Dr. Votaw's longevity in public education and her subtle sense of humor turned her presentation into an enjoyable educational hour. She covered demonstrable quality in schools, charter schools, and touched on the deficits cause by poverty.

Statistics set the stage. There are 39 schools in the Las Cruces Public School (LCPS) system, 25,000 students, and 1700 teachers. The annual budget is \$310 million, about \$180 million in operating funds, and the remainder in capital outlay. Thirty years ago the ethnicity among the students was 54% Caucasian, 47% Hispanic, and 45% living in poverty. The 2012 statistics are 20% Caucasian, 75% Hispanic, and 65.5% living in poverty. The speed of change is accelerating and change creates a lot of stress that seems to result in the politicization of education beyond what it needs to be.

The focus of the school district is on student success that continues to be demonstrated by test scores. Retention of students in the third grade based on reading proficiency is also an issue. LCPS has undertaken several important initiatives in an effort to increase proficiency:

- The Joint Ungraded Multiage Program (JUMP) for Grades K-2 students seeks to help students gain from one to three years of proficiency. The program involves students and parents. Students move to Grade 3, when they are ready. About 280 students are enrolled, and this year 80% of the students moved into the third grade.
- LCPS is proud to be implementing the Common Core Standards. Teachers are meeting weekly to discuss progress, and make specific changes that are identified through testing.
- Early College High School (ECHS) at Arrowhead will graduate 108 students in December 2013: 32 seniors will

complete the required 66 credit hours for an associate degree at Doña Ana Community College, and 22 of them have a 3.5 grade point average. Enrollment is 452 students.

- A second Early College High School will open in 2014. Enrollment is expected to be 250 students who will focus on health careers.

Two schools have changed curricula and been given new names.

1. Rio Grande Preparatory Institute is the name of the former San Andres High School. The curriculum combines study with work through an Executive Assistance Program that matches students with local companies and grants a diploma, a certificate, and a job offer.
2. The Mesilla Valley Alternative Middle School is the new name of the former Mesilla Valley Training Center. It is expected to enroll 250 at-risk students in the 7th and 8th grades.

LCPS charter schools include three high schools, one middle school, and one elementary school. There are about 958 students enrolled and the budget is \$4-\$5 million dollars.

Perhaps the focus on education reform should be on policy reform. One of the major issues in education is poverty according to Dr. Votaw. Children living in poverty arrive at school with about a 5,000 word vocabulary while other children have a 20,000 word vocabulary. Starting from this deficit, it is very hard for children living in poverty to catch-up throughout school. Dr. Votaw suggested a national policy on poverty.

In concluding, Dr. Votaw recommended two books: Diane Ravitch, "Reign of Error," and David Berliner, "Manufactured Crisis."

*Note: Look to the League's web site, [www.wvglc.org](http://www.wvglc.org) for papers on Common Core Standards and Charter Schools.*



# League News



## League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces

**Voter Services** - Prepared by  
Gwen Hanson

This fall has been a very busy season for Voter Services as we complete our activities related to the Las Cruces Municipal Election on November 5. Our activities have been focused on (1) voter registration, (2) the *Voters Guide*, and (3) the candidates forum. Candidates are running for election to councilor positions in Districts 3, 5, and 6, and for municipal judge.

**Voter Registration:** Bonnie Burn coordinated voter registration during early fall. Registration ended on October 9. The total number of registrations for September, 2013, was 37. Many thanks to the following volunteers: Johnnie Aldrich, Ruth Benjamins, Bonnie Burn, Marjorie Burr, Sue Cain, Martha Duran, Roberta Gran, Tom Schmutge, and Vicki Simons.

**Voters Guide:** Dale Yeo again was the editor and took major responsibility for the production of the *2013 Voters Guide*, published by the *Las Cruces Sun-News*. It was distributed to subscribers and additional groups on Tuesday, October 8, 2013. Many thanks to Frank Leto, Publisher, and Anita Goins, Major Accounts Executive, of the Sun-News for their support this year. Thanks to the Voters Services Committee: Dale Yeo, Bonnie Burn, Gwen Hanson, and Gracia Class for their diligence.

**Candidates Forum:** Gwen Hanson and Gracia Class coordinated the Candidates Forum, held October 8, 2013, in the Council Chambers, Las Cruces City Hall. Candidates answered written questions posed by live audience participants. The forum was broadcast live on CLC-TV Comcast Channel 20 and will be rebroadcast until November 5.

- The forum included two candidates running for the position of Municipal Judge, Division II, and five candidates running for Las Cruces City Council, Districts 3, 5, and 6. The forum was moderated by Bonnie Burn. The audience was estimated at 70 people.
- Two City Councilor candidates were not certified on October 1 by the City Clerk due to inadequate number of petition signatures. Late Tuesday evening, October 8, Third Judicial District Court Judge, James T. Martin, ruled that the two candidates could be included on the ballot, following the candidates' filing a lawsuit to overturn the decision by the City Clerk. The two reinstated candidates were not included in the *Voters Guide* or Candidate Forum because the judge's decision came after the publication and the forum.

Thanks to the following volunteers who supported the success of our Candidate Forum: Bonnie Burn, Moderator; Roberta Gran, Candidate Liaison; Greeters Johnnie Aldrich, Joy Goldbaum, and Carol Jackson; Bob Burn, Timer; Reviewers Dale Yeo, Ellen Young, and Ellen Haltom; Co-coordinators and Runners - Gracia Class and Gwen Hanson.

Our appreciation to Adrian Guzman and Udell Vigil, City of Las Cruces, for their support of our forum by facilitating the technology, the building facilities, and the security that allowed for our League's success.

A special thanks to Esther Martinez, City Clerk.

**NOVEMBER 5**  
AT YOUR NEAREST  
VOTING CONVENIENCE CENTER



## 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 Public Schools (LCPS) Board Meeting**, Tuesday, October 15, 2013, 6:30 p.m. - *Jane Asche, Observer*

Highlights of the LCPS Board Meeting include a report on the "Turn Around Schools," the Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, and a board motion to help support the cost of the "Special Master" the LCPS Board has required Las Montañas High School to employ. Since the "Turn Around Schools" have been well covered in past reports, it will suffice to say that very good progress is being made by these schools and LCPS no longer has any elementary schools in the D or F category as judged by the state standards for schools.

An in-depth report was given by Dr. Martin Greer, the District Lead Psychologist, on the risk and resiliency factors among the middle school and high school students as determined by the surveys that have been conducted since 2009 in the district. Here are just a few of the staggering statistics for middle school students on high risk behaviors: almost 1 in 2 report having been bullied in school, 1 in 15 have attempted suicide, 1 in 4 have used alcohol, 1 in 20 do binge drinking, 1 in 6 have used illegal drugs, 1 in 7 have used inhalants that literally destroy brain cells, and 1 in 9 have engaged in sexual intercourse with 46% using no protection. Statistics on these behaviors among students at the high school level are: 1 in 14 report bullying and feeling unsafe in school, 1 in 7 have attempted suicide, 1 in 2 use alcohol, 1 in 3 do binge drinking, 1 in 3 have used marijuana, 1 in 10 use prescription drugs and other narcotics to "get high", 1 in 3 are sexually active with an average of 4 partners and 50% using no protection. This report was followed by a report from Ellen Williams, the Director of

Health Services, on the rise and use of so called designer drugs which have devastating results on the mental and physical health of the children.

Now let's hear the good news! The district has used this data to design prevention programs and health policy to mediate against these risk factors. Among the many initiatives, the district has developed an Institute for Parent Education. The single greatest resiliency factor known to mediate against middle school youth engaging in risky behaviors is having a close relationship with a parent that they feel they can talk with freely. Both students and parents are learning how to take responsibility for such a relationship and middle school students are already reporting that things are much better for them as a result. In high school, the single greatest resiliency factor is students feeling that they have a close relationship with a teacher or other staff person that they can easily talk to and trust. This has resulted in a focus at the high school level on teacher professional development to increase resiliency factors for youth. LCPS has taken a very proactive stance in assisting children and families to improve student success.

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### **South Central Solid Waste Authority Board Meeting (SCSWA)**, October 17, 2014, 9:00 a.m., Amador Transfer Station *Johnnie Aldrich, Observer*

Today's meeting of this City and County cooperative effort was more stimulating than usual because of the 20 minutes or so devoted to a topic in which many of us are intensely interested: glass recycling. The information reported to us today is an

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Observer Reports - South Central Solid Waste *(Continued from page 6)*

example of the slowness, and thoroughness, with which good government often works.

Almost two years ago, the present Authority Chair Miguel Silva made visits to glass recycling facilities in Santa Fe, Taos, and even Tucson, Arizona, to explore techniques and market possibilities. Continued high interest from the public resulted in the Authority naming a task force, headed by Tiffany Pegoda, SCSWA employee, who summarized the group's findings for us. Today's presentation about the possibility of Las Cruces establishing its own glass recycling facility was a detailed feasibility study. We learned that

- Users of the facility exist. Our present landfills receive approximately 3,500 TONS of glass annually in Las Cruces alone. Countywide the number increases to 7,500 tons.
- Curbside glass pickup is not a part of the current proposal. Customers wanting to hand in glass bottles and jars for recycling would have to take the items to two designated centers.
- Local markets do exist, including the city landscape department (e.g., ground glass can be used as mulch and decoration), the city and county engineering departments (e.g., ground glass can be used as a stabilizer under pavement of all kinds), artisans and hobbyists. El Paso and other nearby Texas cities taking advantage of the facility and its products is also a marketing possibility.
- Glass recycling equipment is elaborate, expensive, and high-maintenance. One machine that we saw in operation grinds the glass to a specified size and texture and even separates metal and plastic caps and paper labels into designated bins.
- At least \$250,000 would have to be added to the SCSWA budget for start-up and first year operating expenses.
- Earth Day, April 23, 2014, is the current target date for presenting the facility to

the public if the Authority approves the proposal.

In other business, the future was also the topic as Director Peck presented a detailed report on the projected impact of the proposed Flow Control Ordinance on operations of the Authority. This proposal, that would effect changes in the collection of solid waste throughout the county, must be approved by both the city councilors and county commissioners. Three predictions are that

- New drivers and equipment operators will probably have to be hired.
- We can expect increased demand for services, especially recycling containers at White Sands Missile Range and Gadsden Independent School District.
- We must continue development and building of transfer stations in the county, especially at Anthony.

The meeting went into a closed session to discuss personnel issues at 11:00 a.m. and your League observers, Susan Schmugge and I, departed.

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### **Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority**, October 15, 2013, Noon, *Vicki Simons, Observer*

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners began with a half hour Executive session closed to the public in order to have an exit conference with the auditor.

Upon resumption of the open meeting, it was announced that Arturo Marrujo, Vice-Chair of the Board has resigned due to conflict of interest. Mr. Marrujo works for Tierra del Sol and that was an increasing conflict of interest. His resignation means that there are two vacancies on the Board; one of the positions will be appointed by the Las Cruces Mayor and the other will be appointed by the Doña Ana County Commission.

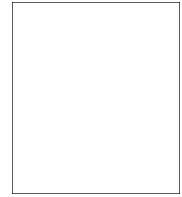
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**FIRST CLASS**



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**Observer Report Housing Authority**

*(Continued from page 7)*

During the meeting, the following actions were taken:

- The remaining Board members elected Felix Cordero as Chair and Theresa Olguin-Fisher as Vice Chair.
- Chairman Cordero introduced Glenn Barnett as the new Housing Choice Manager.
- The agenda was approved along with the minutes from the September meeting.
- Resolutions related to financing the Robledo Ridge renovations were approved by the Board.

The MVPHA office has been administered by a consultant group, Annetti Machuca Associates, for the past five years. In September, as a cost savings measure, the Board and management agreed to bring administration of the Authority in-house.

Management presented its reports. The reports began with Accountant Sharon Hansen who presented a positive routine financial picture. Christine Gonzales, Office Manager, reported on progress in office organization. Lee Montague, Modernization and Maintenance Manager, described his efforts to convert the authority's housing units to green energy, updating many appliances to new energy-saving ones, and investigating converting to solar energy. Jesse Padilla, Housing Program Manager and Deputy Director, reported that staff is preparing for its new management duties now that Annetti Machuca Associates contract has not been renewed. He reported that housing vacancies fluctuate but the available units are full 100% of the time. Robbie Levey, Executive Director, concluded with her report.