

The VOTER

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



Land Management — New Mexico State Land Office

**Monday, September 10, 2012, 11:30 a.m., Good Samaritan Social Center,
Creative Arts room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle**



The New Mexico State Land Office administers the State Land Trust that consists of 9 million acres of surface estate and 13 million acres of subsurface oil, gas, and minerals held in trust and used to generate revenue for New Mexico's public schools, state institutions of higher learning, and other public entities. New Mexico's Enabling Act of 1910 and the Ferguson Act of 1898 designated the beneficiaries for whom the grants of land would be held in trust and administered by the Commission of Public Lands. In Fiscal Year 2011, trust lands and permanent funds produced more than \$499 million in income for the trust. Land Commissioner Ray Powell, M.S. D.V.M. will speak about the history, current issues and challenges, and future plans involving the State Land Office.

Commissioner Powell received his doctorate in veterinary medicine from Tufts University (1985) with a special emphasis on wildlife medicine. Prior to his election in 2010, he worked with Dr. Jane Goodall and the Jane Goodall Institute for Wildlife Research Education and Conservation. He served as State Land Commission from 1993-2002. During that period he was president and vice-president of the 22 member Western States Land Commissioners Association (1996-1998). Other boards on which he served include: State Investment Council, Mining Commission, Oil and Conservation Commission, Youth Conservation Corps Commission, and the Capitol Buildings' Planning Commission. Commissioner Powell continues his interest in veterinary medicine by serving on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases and the New Mexico Board of Veterinary Regulation and Licensing Board.

A native of Albuquerque, he received bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of New Mexico. He continues to live in Albuquerque with his wife, a professor emeritus at the University of New Mexico.

The Commissioner of Public Lands is elected for a 4-year partisan term and is term-limited after serving two terms. He ran successfully for Public Land Commissioner in 2010 and serves until 2014.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED -

See *Calendar*, p. 2, September 3, for information. Lunch \$10.

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The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces

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Web Site: www.lwvglc.org

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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
Erkia Graf-Webster - 521-0600
Johnnie Aldrich - 522-1544

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

Board Highlights - August 2, 2012, 2-4 p.m., Las Cruces City Hall, Conference Room 2007B

1. Quality Review of FY2011-12 treasury transactions was conducted by William Little and received a satisfactory evaluation.
2. Membership reported that renewals were made by 74 members, with the addition of five new Friends, and 19 members who did not renew. Some of our newest members who were not active did not renew and six moved away.
3. Voter Services dominated the meeting as approval was given for instructions and questions for the Voters Guide and letters of invitation to the candidates' forums. A memorandum of understanding was developed between LWVGLC and CAFé to collaborate on a Spanish edition of the *Voters Guide*. Voter registration dates were scheduled at Walmart and Pro's Ranch Market
4. Voting Impediment Study is underway and is co-chaired by Erika Graf-Webster and Johnnie Aldrich. The study group is getting organized and has begun looking at data.
5. Public Regulation Commission Consensus Unit Meeting will be held on August 27, 1-3 p.m., at Good Samaritan Social Center

CALENDAR

August 27 (Monday) - 1-3 p.m. Unit Meeting: Public Regulation Commission, Good Samaritan Social Center, Conference Room next to Main Auditorium. Presenters: Neva Van Peski, Karen Heldmeyer, Jody Larson, LWV of Santa Fe County.

September 3 (Monday) - Deadline for Reservations for Lunch with a Leader. RSVP Roberta Gran, Membership Director, Tel: 373-8490; E-mail: robertagran@q.com

September 6 (Thursday) - 2-4 p.m., Board Meeting, Las Cruces City Hall, Room 2007A.

September 10 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Lunch with a Leader - Ray Powell, Public Land Commissioner, 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.

September 13 (Thursday) - 6:30-8 p.m., Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument Presentation, David Soules, Good Samaritan Social Center, Main Auditorium. Open to the public

Mark Your Calendar:

September 22 (Saturday) - 10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., LWVNM Board Meeting, Santa Fe, Contact: Bonnie Burn, President, Tel: 527-0013, E-mail: burnb@comcast.net

Notable Dates: September 3 - Labor Day
September 17 - U.S. Constitution Adopted (1787)

President's Message

At the moment, some of us are immersed in voter education about the upcoming 2012 general election (see p. 5). But September is also the month that we celebrate the adoption of the U.S. Constitution; September 17 marks its 225th anniversary. Recently, this document has been the subject of numerous interpretations, and has often been used as source documentation to substantiate points of view. Although this is an important document and should be recognized, in this election year I am more interested in the NM Constitution, a document celebrating its 100th anniversary.



As we contemplate voting on November 6, members of the NM State Senate and House are running for election. The NM Constitution states that the NM Senate shall be composed of 42 members and the House of 70 members. This year the 2010 U.S. Census is adding new faces to the chambers as redistribution of population has created changes in district boundaries. Each senate district represents 49,028 residents and each house district represents 29,317 residents. Did you know that the President of the Senate is the NM Lieutenant Governor? The Speaker of the House of Representatives is elected by the members of the house. These two individuals direct the flow of business within their respective chambers.

The NM legislature is a citizen legislature; therefore, the senators and representatives serve without pay. They are reimbursed for travel and lodging while attending legislative sessions and mandatory meetings.

Senators must be at least twenty-five years of age, must live in the district that they represent and are elected for four-year terms. Representatives must be at least twenty-one years of age, must live in the districts they represent, and are elected for two-year terms. Once every four years, the entire legislative body is elected. If a senator or representative removes his or her residence or maintains no residence in the district from which he or she has been elected, then he or she shall be deemed to have resigned. No person is eligible to serve in the legislature if he or she holds any other office of trust or profit with the U.S. federal government, State of New Mexico, or New Mexico county government. Vacancy shall be filled by appointment of an individual chosen by the county commissioners of the county in which the vacancy occurs.

I think we know about the length of meeting time for the legislature: 30 days in even-numbered years and 60 days in odd numbered years. Three items of business may be taken up during the 30-day session:

1. Budgets, appropriations, and revenue bills,
2. Bills proposed by special messages from the governor, and
3. Bills of the previous regular session that were vetoed by the governor.

(Continued on page 6)

Membership Directory 2012-2013

Available at
Lunch with a Leader
September 10
or a copy will be mailed
to you.

Send corrections to
Roberta Gran
650-8490 or
robertagran@q.com

Friends of the League

John Ameriks, M.D.
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Jean Ossorio
Kathryn Schultz
Wanda Skowlund
Sunspot Solar Energy
Donna and Tom Tate
Williams Design Group, Inc.
Zia Engineering & Environment
Consultants

Thank You

OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, September 22, 11 a.m.
1950 S. Sonoma Ranch Blvd.

Centennial High School

Torn Apart: New Mexican Families Separated as a Result of U.S. Immigration Enforcement-Only Policy

Vicki Gaubeca, director, ACLU of New Mexico Regional Center for Border Rights

In the three plus years that I have been at the ACLU -NM Regional Center for Border Rights and traveled along the U.S.-Mexico border from Brownsville to San Diego, the most heartbreaking work has been to witness family separations that are the result of bad immigration policy. Most unauthorized immigrants, including in the border region, have long roots in U.S. communities and are dedicated, tax-paying workers. A recent pilot study conducted by our office along the border showed that at least one-third of individuals being deported to Mexico have lived in the U.S. for at least six years. A study released by No More Deaths in late 2011, "A Culture of Cruelty," showed that an individual lives in the U.S. an average of 14 years before being deported. In all, some 9.5 million people live in "mixed status" families in the U.S. and about 4 million U.S. citizen children live with at least one undocumented parent. What this means is that the effects of our outdated, enforcement-only immigration system includes more and more New Mexican families being torn apart; leaving in its wake deeply affected U.S. citizen children and spouses.

Let me give you a few examples of the stories of family separation that I've heard just in New Mexico (pseudonyms have been used):

Dolores, 24, is a U.S. citizen with two boys, ages 5 and 3) born in the United States. Last fall, she was driving a car with her husband in a small, rural town when she was pulled over by a police officer for a "broken windshield." During the stop, the police officer asked her husband, who was a passenger, if he was here "legally," to which he answered honestly. Her husband had come to the United States as a child and had been living in New Mexico for almost 20 years. After graduating from a local high school as class valedictorian, he had been able to find work on a dairy farm. He was the major breadwinner of the family and had never been in trouble with the law. The police officer called Border Patrol and, in less than 48 hours, her husband was deported to Mexico. Dolores is now receiving public benefits to care for her

children and is considering moving to a country she knows nothing about to be closer to her husband.

Maria, 18, is a U.S. citizen living in a rural town in Southern New Mexico with four younger siblings. Both of her parents, who had been in the United States since the early 90s. were deported during a community raid conducted by sheriff's deputies in 2007. Maria, who looks like she's 13 years old, is now the head of the household; she works as many hours as she can while finishing high school. To qualify for cash assistance, she also has to do community service. Two of her siblings are also teen-agers and she struggles every day to provide them with the guidance and discipline they need. Many times she wishes her parents were around to help.

U.S-born Mario, 22, married the "love of his life," Griselda Martinez, after graduating from high school, where they met. Griselda, who had come to the U.S. as a child, became more and more afraid each day that she was in danger of being picked up and deported. She was afraid to go to church, get groceries or even leave the house to "hang the clothes to dry in the back yard." Fed up with feeling constant fear, she moved to her grandparent's home in central Mexico. Even though he speaks no Spanish, Mario plans to move to Mexico to be by her side.

The effects that these separations have had on family members have been devastating. At the very least, there needs to be fair and just immigration reform that protects the civil and human rights of individuals in the United States, including preserving family unity.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families...and does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

Consensus position adopted 2008



League News



Voter Services Report

Prepared by Gwen Hanson, Co-Director

Voter Services activities are on schedule and proceeding according to plan.

Voter Registration is being coordinated by Bonnie Burn until Tom Schmutge returns from his vacation. She has announced the following dates:

- August 5 – Walmart (571 Walton Blvd.), Noon-6 p.m.
- August 19 - Pro's Ranch - Noon to 6
- August 28 – Good Samaritan- 1 to 5 p.m.
- August 30 – Village at Northrise – 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
- September 1 – Farmer's Market- 8:30 a.m. to Noon
- September 9 - Walmart (571 Walton Blvd.) – Noon to 6 p.m.

Dale Yeo is editor of the **Voters Guide** and coordinating the many activities associated with production. The letters, instructions, and questions for the candidates that will be listed in the *Voters Guide* have been developed and approved by the Board. The packets for the candidates were mailed August 4, with a deadline for return of August 17. The development of the content of the *Voters Guide* has begun using the template from past years. A request for volunteers to proof-read the *Voters Guide* was made at the luncheon, August 13, and members responded. The deadline for submitting the first copy to the *Bulletin* is September 14. Proofreading will probably be done during the first week of October. **October 12, is the planned date for distribution of the Voters Guide.**

A **Memorandum of Understanding** between the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces and New Mexico Comunidades en Acción y de Fé (CAFé) was developed and approved by the Board for the purpose of describing the financial responsibility of CAFé for the printing of the Spanish edition of the *Voters Guide*. It also included the funding of a certified translator to translate the candidates' answers to the questions, if the

candidates do not provide their answers in both English and Spanish. We appreciate the collaboration with Sarah Nolan, Director, CAFé, for providing the opportunity to offer a bilingual *Voters Guide*.

Three **Candidate Forums** are planned and scheduled. There was a change in date for the first forum from October 3 to October 2, due to the scheduling of the first U.S. Presidential Debate on October 3. There was also a change in the scheduled times for the third forum, October 17, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. to 6:00- 8:00 p.m. All forums will be held at Las Cruces City Hall Council Chambers and televised live and rebroadcast on Comcast Cable Channel 20, the community government channel..

Letters of invitation to the candidates to participate in the forums were sent Tuesday, August 14, with a response requested by August 31.

The schedule for the forums is as follows:

6:00-7:30 p.m.
October 2 - NM Senate
October 10 - NM House

6:00-8:00 p.m.
3rd Judicial District & Doña Ana County
Candidates for County Clerk, County Treasurer,
and County Commissioner

At the August 13 Lunch with a Leader, volunteers signed up to participate as question reviewers, greeters, question card distributors and retrievers, and timers. Thanks to all of you who volunteered to assist with the three candidates forums.

There will be additional opportunities to help. Please call 556-9251, or look for the sign-up sheets

Your Vote is Your Voice!

Look Back – Organ Mountain- Desert Peak Monument Proposal

Bonnie Burn Reporting.

At first I was concerned that enough League members would show up for Lunch with a Leader on August 2 to hear David Soules' presentation about the Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument initiative. More than 20 members made reservations and by the end of the Lunch members were asking if the League would sponsor an information presentation for the public. The thought was not to have members of the community debate whether to support or oppose the initiative, but just to give everyone an opportunity to see the pictures and learn about the history of the area and its significance for preservation.


I had seen David Soules' presentation at a County Commission meeting in the spring, and I was moved by it. It was the impetus for arranging his presentation at the August Lunch with a Leader meeting. He began by introducing League members to "Google Earth" and, from the air, was able to trace the Butterfield Stage Coach mail route in the Mesilla area. Looking from above, one can still see the overland trail. Messrs. John Butterfield,

William G. Fargo, James V. P. Gardner, and others created a proposal for a southern stagecoach route from St. Louis to San Francisco that carried mail and passengers in a "snow-free" southern route.

Mr. Soules' presentation, however, was not limited to the Butterfield route. He covered the petroglyphs, caves, and Billy the Kid hideouts that are part of the rich history of this district. He also talked about BLM's oversight and other issues that have arisen in the debate, (i.e., grazing, hunting, use of all terrain vehicles, private lands within the designated areas, extraction of valuable minerals, and law enforcement related to border issues). Those of us who are now "arm chair tourists," got a bird's-eye view of the wonderful areas we can no longer access by foot.

At the end, members felt that the League should sponsor a public presentation so that, the value of our historic areas could be viewed by members of the community without debate about pros or cons for the monument initiative.

Please plan to join us.



**Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks
National Monument Initiative:**
Slide and History Presentation
about the Organ Mountain region
and Doña Ana County

David Soules, Presenter

Thursday, September 13
6:30-8:00 p.m.

Main Auditorium
Good Samaritan's Social Center

Public Welcome

President's Message (Continued from page 3)

The 60-day session may consider those items and any others proposed by senators and representatives. The governor may call additional sessions, called special sessions, to consider only specific issues proposed by the governor as he or she deems necessary, but no special session may exceed 30 days. The regular sessions begin annually at noon on the third Tuesday in January.

Legislation passed by both houses of the legislature goes to the governor for final approval. If the governor vetoes the legislation, a two-thirds vote by members of both houses is required to override the governor's veto. During session, the governor must sign or veto legislation within three days of transmittal (Sundays excepted) or it becomes law without signature. Legislation transmitted within the last three days of the session or afterwards must be acted upon by the governor within 20 days of session adjournment, or the governor may take no action, called a pocket veto, and let the legislation die.

I hope this short story helps you understanding the workings of the NM Legislature.

Bonnie Burn

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.

Messila Valley Public Housing Authority, July 17, 2012 – Vicki Simons, Observer

The meeting was called to order at 2 p.m. with four Commissioners present. The agenda was adopted and minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Under new business, a Las Cruces resident presented his case for buying a strip of land that lies between his land and a public housing complex. He needs the land to conform to the city's set back regulations. He was promised by the previous Executive Director of the Housing Authority that he could buy it. There has been some delay in concluding the transaction due to the changes in organization of the Housing Authority. He has invested money in his property and asked the Board to consider his case soon. The Board agreed to do that.

The Resident Commissioner, Steve Pandak, has been appointed to the Board by the Mayor and awaits approval by the County Commission. Mr. Pandak works at the Community of Hope and deals with housing for veterans.

Management reports followed the business items:

- The new Modernization/Maintenance Manager;
- Housing Programs Manager/Interim Deputy Director; and
- Executive Director.

Issues discussed were low vacancy rates, veterans being eligible for public housing and delay in receiving budgeted monies to cover the veterans housing program due from NM State Government. Also discussed was possible development of a tax-credit project in Hatch. The Housing Authority is transferring a building in Anthony to the city to be used for a community center.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

South Central Solid Waste Authority Board Meeting, July 19, 2012, 9:00 a.m. at the Transfer Station Board Room – *Johnnie Aldrich, Observer*

Today's work session was devoted to Director Patrick Peck's explanation of the reasons for a collection rate hike which will take effect beginning on September 1, 2012. In the regular meeting that followed, the Board of Directors, which consists of representatives from both the City of Las Cruces and the Doña Ana County Commissioners, voted to accept the rate increase.

For now, the only consumers of SCSWA to be affected by the rate increase are the direct customers of SCSWA collections, (i.e., the city and county and private contractors like Southwest Disposal). These entities may eventually pass the rate increase along to their customers. The estimated cost to consumers for trash collection will be approximately \$0.26 per month per household.

One reason for the rate increase is sustained high fuel costs over the past three years. Furthermore, it was pointed out that when the Authority was established three years ago, no one expected that the current recession would last as long as it has. One effect of the recession has been a market decline in the prices paid for paper and plastic so that recycling revenues have not met predicted levels. Processing fees for recyclables also have increased, again primarily because of higher fuel costs to the processors. The bottom line is that "the current rate structure no longer covers the cost of depreciation [of equipment] and other operating expenses," according to Director Peck.

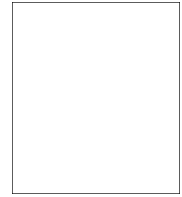
Other business at the meeting included the extension of Director Peck's contract for another year.

Some consumers will be happy to hear the report from one of the board members that "promising discussions" have been held with a glass recycling company in Albuquerque that wants to service all of New Mexico. Details on this possibility will perhaps be reported at the September board meeting.




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FIRST CLASS

EXTRA

UNIT MEETING
Public Regulation Commission
Study Consensus
August 27, 1-3 p.m.
(See Calendar, p. 2)

September 2012
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REGISTER TO
 VOTE
 BY
 OCTOBER 9



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.