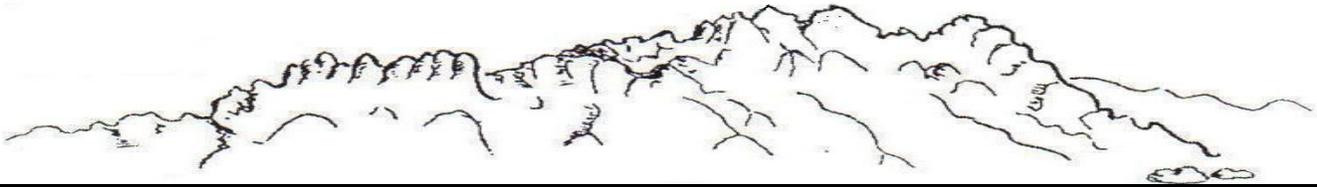


# The VOTER

League of Women Voters  
of Greater Las Cruces  
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)  
Web Site: [www.lwvglc.org](http://www.lwvglc.org)  
July 2011



## *Lunch with a Leader*

Monday, July 11, 2011, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle

## *An Overview of Las Cruces Public Schools, 2011* *Superintendent Stan Rounds*

A "committee of seven" has been studying the local education system for the past year, and the time has arrived to share its findings. Superintendent Stan Rounds will open the educational series by speaking to League members at the July Lunch with a Leader general meeting. On the following three Mondays, the committee is offering an Education Institute to reveal "the rest of the story." (See pp. 4-5 for details.) We hope to see you at lunch and invite you to the unit meetings that follow so that you will be prepared to reach consensus or concurrence in the very near future.

Superintendent Rounds will give us an updated view of the local education system. All of the national issues that you have been reading or hearing about in the media are impacting our local area. School district budgets, core curriculum, adequate yearly progress (AYP), No Child Left Behind (President G.W. Bush), and Race to the Top (President B. Obama) will be covered. Additionally, the impact of the NM Legislature and the NM Public Education Department will be discussed. The question, "what is the future of public education in Las Cruces," will conclude his presentation. There will be time for questions and answers. If you want to prepare yourself, please visit the League's web site, [www.lwvglc.org](http://www.lwvglc.org) and find two papers that present information provided by Superintendent Rounds, Dr. Steven Sánchez, and Mr. Terry Dean. These are posted under the **Program** tab, **Education Study**. Also, go to pp. 4-5 of this issue for a teaser blurb that introduces the topics covered by all of the study papers.

Stan Rounds began his employment with Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) in mid-year, February 26, 2007, when he was hired by the Board of Education. He has a 36-year career in NM education, first as teacher and coach with Albuquerque Public Schools and then as superintendent in Des Moines, Alamogordo, and Hobbs before coming to Las Cruces. Two impressive credentials that are proving helpful in Las Cruces are four years as associate superintendent of finance for the NM Department of Education and one year as the NM Legislative Education Study Committee's financial analyst. He holds a bachelor's degree in Education, Magna Cum Laude, from the University of Albuquerque (1973), and a Masters of Arts in Educational Administration, University of New Mexico (1978).

After Mr. Rounds' presentation, please mark your calendar for July 18 and 25, and August 1, to attend the Education Institute. See pp. 4-5.

**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

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**Nominating Committee**  
Chair: Vicki Simons  
Elected Member: Sadie Valverde

**STUDY GROUPS**

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

**Education**  
Bonnie Burn - 526-0013

**Mental Illness Services  
in Doña Ana County**  
Becky Beckett - 522-8171  
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**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

**CALENDAR**

**July 4 (Monday) - Independence Day Holiday**

**July 5 (Tuesday) - Deadline for Lunch with a Leader.** RSVP  
**Shannez Dudelczyk, Email:** as.dudelczyk@gmail.com or  
**Tel:** (505) 670-5146.

**July 6 (Wednesday) - 4:30 - 6 p.m., Board Meeting,** Branigan Library

**July 11 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m - 1 p.m., Lunch with a Leader,** Topic:  
An Overview of Las Cruces Public Schools, 2011, Superintendent Stan  
Rounds, LCPS, Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room,  
3011 Buena Vida Circle. Lunch is \$10.

**Education Institute:** 10-11:30 a.m. Mondays (See pp. 4-5 for details)  
July 18 - Good Samaritan, Building E Lounge, 3011 Buena Vida Cir.  
July 25 - Unitarian Universalist Community Room  
August 1 - Unitarian Universalist Community Room  
2000 S. Solano Dr. (Between Missouri and University Ave.)

**Notable Dates:**

July 19, 1848 - First Women's Convention, Seneca Falls, NY

**Board Highlights**

June 1, 2011, 4:30 - 6 p.m., Erika Graf-Webster's Home

**Appointments:** Paula Nielson was appointed as director, Special  
Projects, a one-year appointment to the Board.

**Treasurer's Report:** Revenue in the form of membership dues and  
contributions was \$3,382. Monthly expenses were \$405. Checkbook  
balance was \$6,805. Education Fund balance was \$1,980. CD  
balance was \$1,076. Fifty members paid dues; three members  
subscribed to the VOTER.

**Alternate Meeting Sites:** Shannez Dudelczyk reported on potential  
alternative sites for League activities. The Las Cruces Convention  
Center and Sunset Grill at Sonoma Ranch Golf Course were selected  
by Board members for more detailed research.

**Membership:** A few members have responded to the increase in  
membership dues by becoming community supporters of the League.  
The Board approved continuing to distribute a Membership Directory  
to them. The Board adopted a one-year \$5 introductory fee for student  
members. At the end of the year, the renewal fee will be \$25.

**League Activities:** Lunch with a Leader will resume on July 11 and  
continue through November on the second Monday of the month.

**Other calendar dates:**

December 3 - Holiday Social, Carol Jackson's Home, 2-4 p.m.  
January 14 - Legislative Breakfast, 8:30 - 11 a.m., Good Samaritan  
April 14 - Annual Meeting, 9 a.m. - Noon, Good Samaritan

## President's Message

### The Year of the Consensus

Although I mentioned it before, I am going to confirm that we will be reaching either consensus or concurrence on three major studies this year.



We open our summer League program with the unveiling of our **local Education Study**. At Annual Meeting, it was mentioned that no one had seen or heard anything about our findings. That was because committee members had their "noses to the grindstone" and were educating themselves about this complex issue. Now, we are ready to share what we have learned. The details are spelled out on pages 4-5. We found the issue very complex and decided that an Education Institute of three unit meetings was the only way to get our arms around it. As our advertisement on p. 8 notes: **Program is the heart of League. We need your voice to reach consensus. Please mark your calendar.** We look forward to hearing how a format of short unit meetings scheduled close together works for you. A **unit meeting** according to League definition is a grouping of members within a local League to provide more opportunity for discussion. They may be time or geographically oriented or both. Refreshments will be served at the Education Institute unit meetings.

Next up for consensus is the **LWVUS Education Study** about the role of federal government in education. I will be discussing this in more detail in the August issue and will only say here that the deadline for consensus is November 30, a nice holiday present.

Finally, Christina Little and Vicki Simons, co-chairs of the **Affordable Housing Study**, have indicated that they may be opening 2012 with a consensus meeting(s) in January. The Committee has been publishing papers in *The VOTER* since the study began. The most recent paper appears on p. 7.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that the deadline for membership dues renewal, **June 30**, is fast approaching. If you want to be included in the Membership Directory, we need your payment by that date. I've had some comments from members who find the increase in dues a hardship. Several who are not active but want to continue to keep up with the League—receive the newsletter and voter services information—have made donations to the League as friends or community supporters. The League does have scholarship assistance for individuals who wish to belong to the League but can't afford the full dues payment. Letters requesting this assistance should be sent to me for decision by the Board. Information is confidential.

Looking forward to having your participation in our Education study by attending Lunch on July 11 and the Education Institute.

*Bonnie Burn*

# Welcome

## New Member

### Email Address Change

Marnie & Jim Leverett  
jimlev@live.com

Win Jacobs  
winjacobs@gmail.com

### Address Change

Pat Kratz  
3200 Sundown Road  
Las Cruces, 88011  
Tel: 522-2325

Kathryn Schultz  
6542 Chukar Court  
Las Cruces, 88012

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

John Ameriks, M.D.  
Biad Chile Ltd. Co.  
Joseph P. Camunez, DDS  
Citizens Bank  
Dental Associates, PA  
Doggie Dude Ranch and  
Cat Farm  
Donald and Winifred Dresp  
Adrian and Jackie Edwards  
Nancy & Ken Hall  
Edward Jones - Connie Lee  
First New Mexico Bank  
Pat Kratz  
Lilley Law Offices  
Louise P. Lockhart  
Francisco Mario Ortiz Law Firm  
Tom Tate  
Zia Engineering & Environmental  
Consultants

*Thank You*

## Education Study Committee Rolls Out Findings

*Bonnie Burn, Chair*

In May, 2010, League members began a study that reviewed the current local education position to determine if it is adequate and reflects the current situation in the Las Cruces Public School District. In addition, points of interest (e.g., school funding, curriculum, educational structure) were identified for inclusion in the study.

It was soon determined that the position needed to be updated to reflect the complexity of education in our current culture. To educate ourselves about the issues we undertook a literature review, followed by interviews with relevant community stakeholders, and in-depth research about selected topics such as core curriculum, testing assessment, teacher performance and charter schools, issues that are presently being discussed by the public and in the media. We selected two books, *Death and Life of the Great American School* by Diane Ravitch and *The Flat World and Education* by Linda Darling-Hammond that are relevant to the discussion. Finally, we captured the issues in written papers that are posted on the League's web site: [www.lwvglc.org](http://www.lwvglc.org).

The committee struggled with two dilemmas: (1) how to present all of this information to our members, and (2) the best venue for presentations. We knew that a single Lunch with a Leader meeting would not allow enough time to discuss this topic. We decided that unit meetings of 1-1/2 hours length would be a better way to talk about the issues. After reviewing our work, we discovered that the material fell into three topic areas, and came up with a presentation plan:

- Baseline information about the Las Cruces Public School System will be presented by Superintendent Stan Rounds at our Lunch with a Leader on July 11.
- An Education Institute that consists of three unit meetings will provide information about our topic areas. All of the unit meetings will be held at the same time, **10-11:30 a.m., and on consecutive Mondays**, the day that is associated with our Lunch with a Leader. Here is the schedule
  1. July 18, NM State Government Regulations and How They Impact our Local School System, Good Samaritan, Bldg. E, Lounge, 3011 Buena Vida Circle
  2. July 25, Education Reform Movement and Its Relevance to our Local School System, Unitarian Universalist Community Room, 2000 S. Solano Dr.
  3. August 1, It Takes a Community-wide Effort to Build Good Schools, Unitarian Universalist Community Room, 2000 S. Solano Dr.
- Consensus or concurrence on a new position will be held at a Lunch with a Leader meeting as soon as committee members can absorb the discussion notes from the unit meetings.

To encourage you to read the written papers (4-6 pages in length) posted on the web site, we are introducing the papers in a few words that follow.

### DID YOU KNOW?

*Education Study Papers—Posted on [www.lwvglc.org](http://www.lwvglc.org)*

#### Study Interviews

**Educating Prospective Teachers** (Drs. Luis Reyes and Cristobal Rodriguez): NMSU's College of Education prepares individuals who wish to become teachers (K-12) by graduating them with bachelor's degrees or providing licensing for students who wish to teach and already have a degree in another field. Details about curriculum, student teaching, teacher performance are given. . . .(more)

#### General Education Issues Relevant to LCPS.

Superintendent Stan Rounds and Associate Superintendent Steven Sánchez discuss general education issues for the district such as curriculum, adequate yearly progress (AYP), student testing, teachers performance, alternative schools . . .(more)

**School Finance** Superintendent Stan Rounds and Assistant Superintendent of Finance Terry Dean give an in-depth interview about how schools are

*(Continued on page 5)*

**Education Study Papers** *(Continued from page 4)*

financed and what happened in the 2011 NM Legislative session. Read about the NM Education Formula, LCPS Operating Budget, Capital Outlay, and more . . . .(more)

**Meeting with the National Education Association**

Patrick Sanchez, president, and others introduced the NEA and its function as a union for teachers and classified workers (e.g., education assistants, cafeteria workers, maintenance and grounds keepers). Classroom teaching, student testing, teacher evaluation from the teacher's perspective, details are . . . .(more)

**School Boards** (Drs. Connie Phillips and Bonnie Votaw) The responsibilities of a school board and major concerns such as curriculum and instruction, student testing, professional development of teachers dominated the discussion. Perceptions or misperceptions of the school district . . . .(more)

**Student Government Leadership** (Mayfield and Las Cruces High Schools and San Andres Learning Center) Student leaders provided their perspective of the school experience for them. Although organized differently at each school, the issues discussed were . . . .(more)

**LCPS District Advisory Councils** , made up of representatives from every public school in the district. They were established in 1994 at the direction of the Board of Education and the Superintendents of School and offer a parent's perspective . . . .(more)

**Chambers of Commerce** (Greater Las Cruces and Hispano) Early College High School and recognition of middle school students are two efforts that promote student graduation . . . .(more)

**Public Education Commission** (Eugene Gant—District 7). As an elected body, commissioners focus on developing a strategic plan in collaboration

with the NM Public Education Department, authorizing and overseeing charter schools and administering the Carl D. Perkins Care and Technical Education grant program . . . .(more)

**Study Topics**

**Report on the New Mexico and Las Cruces Public Schools Core Curriculum Standards** (Sue Cain and Jane Asche) As part of the recent school reform movement, a group of states and their governors have worked together to develop a very specific set of common standards for a core curriculum. New Mexico is one of the participating states that have adopted these core curriculum standards. To fully understand the details of these standards and their impact . . . . (more)

**Standardized Testing** (Erika Graf-Webster) Standardized testing of student performance has been used for the last four decades as the most meaningful indicator of the quality of US education. In recent years, however, standardized testing has been an essential tool for the No Child Left Behind mandates, and has come to be used for evaluating teacher performance, as well as grading individual schools. A number of highly respected individuals . . . . (more)

**Teacher Performance and Evaluation** (Judy McGuire) While most educators agree that we must find a way of fairly evaluating teacher performance, not many agree on the method. One common thread of many evaluation systems is a new focus on student achievement. Does this lead to . . .(more)

**Literature Review and Report ...Local Charter Schools** (Jane Asche) Over the past couple of decades, charter schools have become a source of choice for parents who feel their children's educational needs are not being met in the traditional school setting. The effects of charter schools both on the regular public schools and student outcomes are very mixed and a matter of great controversy . . . .(more)

**Book Reviews: *The Flat World & Education*** by Linda Darling-Hammond. She examines and explains the problems in education, compares the American education system with systems around the world, and presents solutions. She writes about inequality and policy; how the opportunity gap affects education . . . .(more)

**Book Reviews: *The Death & Life of the Great American School*** by Diane Ravitch. She analyzes how school reforms have actually played out in reality and how she came to change her mind about school choices and testing. Citing examples of reforms from across the country and an influx of private foundation money. . . .(more)

## Local Redistricting Warrants a Look at City Charter Development

*Marjorie Burr, Past President, LWVGLC, and Charter Commission Member*

Discussion of the Charter has experienced an upswing because of current redistricting deliberations. A home-rule city, which Las Cruces is, may redraw its district boundaries, and the Charter in Article II, Section 2.01, sets the requirements for this. I especially call your attention to the statement in the Charter that "The total length of all district boundary lines shall be as short as possible." This, along with other requirements for equal size and preserving communities of interest, must guide redistricting according to our City Charter.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces (LWVGLC) was involved in development of the City Charter. In the early 1980s the League undertook a study of home rule for the city of Las Cruces and came to the consensus that Las Cruces should explore its option under state statutes for home rule for a municipality. "A municipality which adopts a charter may exercise all legislative powers and perform all functions not expressly denied by general law or charter" [NM State Statutes, Article X, Section 6D].

Using its position for home rule, LWVGLC lobbied the City Commission (as it was then known) advocating for the appointment of a Charter Commission to write a charter for the City of Las Cruces. In February 1984, the City Commission appointed to a Charter Commission 15 citizens tasked with writing a City Charter within 180 days, a time limit set by state statutes. Among the 15 Charter Commission members were League member and former president Marjorie Burr, and John Haltom, NMSU Government Department Head.

The Charter Commission organized itself with a chairperson, Bryce Brisbin, and vice-chairperson, Ed Fernandez. Subcommittees were formed for each of the general categories expected to be covered in the Charter. Mindful of the six-month timeline, the Commission set to work. There were regular weekly meetings, first with subcommittees meeting and reporting to the Charter Commission at regular intervals and then with full Charter Commission meetings scheduled weekly. An important resource was the **Model City Charter** published by the National Municipal League. The city administration provided secretarial support and legal counsel, an assistant city attorney who attended all meetings.

The Charter Commission completed a draft of the City Charter within the timeline and presented it to the City Commission. The Commission had several problems with the proposed Charter. Two significant differences were (1) the election of Councilors from single-member districts rather than at large, and (2) the election of a mayor by the electorate. The City Commission wanted to keep the provisions of at-large elections for the Councilors, and a mayor chosen from among the members. Because state statutes require the City Commission to approve the proposed Charter before it goes to a vote by the electorate, the differences between the two Commissions had to be ironed out. The 180-day limit was extended.

At least three of the original 15 members of the Charter Commission resigned in late summer/early fall, some because of disagreement with the City Commission's handling of the report of the Charter Commission. The Charter Commission regrouped, with John Haltom as chair and Marjorie Burr as vice-chair. This group came up with changes and compromises that were satisfactory to both commissions. One compromise was a City Council of six councilors, each elected by district (single-member districts), with the mayor being chosen by the Council. This is a "weak-mayor" system; in this case, a very weak mayor since she/he does not have a city-wide constituency. In any case, one of the first charter amendments proposed and passed (1989) by the electorate was for a mayor to be elected at large. The system upon which the city government is based is the council-manager system, with the Council setting policy and the City Manager administering the government within the oversight of the Council.

The City Charter, as written by the Charter Commission and approved by the City Commission, was approved by the city's electorate on March 5, 1985. The City Charter has now served Las Cruces for 26 years. Because we are a home-rule municipality, in considering issues like redistricting we may rely on our own charter, along with the federal Voting Rights Act, rather than state statutes to direct the process.

The Charter has other interesting provisions that

*(Continued on page 7)*

**Las Cruces City Charter** *(Continued from page 6)*

many may not be aware of. A part of the Charter that is often ignored by the City Council is in Article VI, Section 6.03: "The Council, before taking any action concerning land use and development and the financing and location of capital improvements, shall cause a finding and report to be made concerning the relationship between the proposed action and the comprehensive plan."

Although the Charter has been amended to allow for run-off elections, a provision supported by LWVGLC, I believe another part of Article II on Council Elections could be studied with an eye toward improvement. To be nominated for a City Council seat, a candidate must submit a nominating petition consisting of names of only 25 qualified electors in his or her district. This small number may allow for the frivolous nomination of a person and/or a plethora of candidates on the ballot, both of which have happened in the past.

The history of the Charter and the League in Las Cruces are closely linked in my memory. It is a great example of how the League has supported good government.

*[Editor's note: Visit the City of Las Cruces web site, [http://www.lascruces.org/Departments/Legal\\_Services/City%20Clerk/Resources.aspx](http://www.lascruces.org/Departments/Legal_Services/City%20Clerk/Resources.aspx), to view or download a copy of the Charter.]*

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### **Housing First** – *Christina Little, Co-Chair*

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The LWV Affordable Housing Committee has been exploring the various housing options available in our community. On April 7, 2011, we visited with Pam Angell and Nicole Martinez from the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope and a supporting nonprofit, Abode, Inc., to learn about *Housing First*.

*Housing First* takes chronically homeless people off the street and gets them into housing. The premise is, if you can solve the housing problem, other issues may resolve themselves. A definition of **chronically homeless** is anyone who has been homeless four times in the last three years or has been homeless for one year continuously. In addition, a person must have a disabling condition.

With most programs, there are many conditions that must be met to be admitted. With *Housing First*, individuals must meet the criteria of being chronically homeless, but services are optional.

Abode, Inc. acquired two group homes (which came with 15 project-based vouchers [separate from the Housing Authority]) in April 2008, utilizing funds from HUD, the City of Las Cruces Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) process, and grants.

In the two homes, which are close to shopping, bus lines, etc., there are 15 subsidized rooms plus two rooms for resident managers. Each of the houses is divided into corridors. One of the four corridors is

set aside for women, so there are bedrooms for four women in each house. Each of the houses has a common area with a large-screen television and a computer with Internet access. Residents cook for themselves, and there is room in each kitchen for individual supplies.

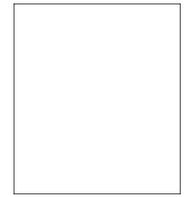
Clients who are accepted into the program pay approximately 30% of their income toward rent (with a small deduction for their disability). It is not uncommon to enter the program without any income. These individuals pay a minimum rent of \$25 per month. Historically, the clients have generally gotten on disability, obtained jobs, or otherwise acquired income. Once people are in the program, the staff at the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope is able to provide assistance in accessing programs like SSI or General Assistance (through the State of New Mexico). The staff also makes certain that the clients are able to access other services (medical care, etc.).

There is a therapist who comes to the house once a week and sees some of the residents. Others go to Southwest Counseling. The only requirement is that they meet with a case manager monthly. During this process the clients develop goals. However, because this is a *Housing First* program, this is a self-assessment process rather than a rigid measurement of whether or not one is allowed to stay in the program.



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**FIRST CLASS**

**Education Study Unit Meetings**



Program is the heart of League.  
 Your voice is needed to reach  
 consensus. Please mark your  
 calendars and plan to attend.  
 (See pp. 4-5 for details)

**July 2011**  
**In This Issue**

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**Membership Application**

**Membership:** Individual (\$60), 2nd Household Member (\$30), and Students (\$25)

**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.