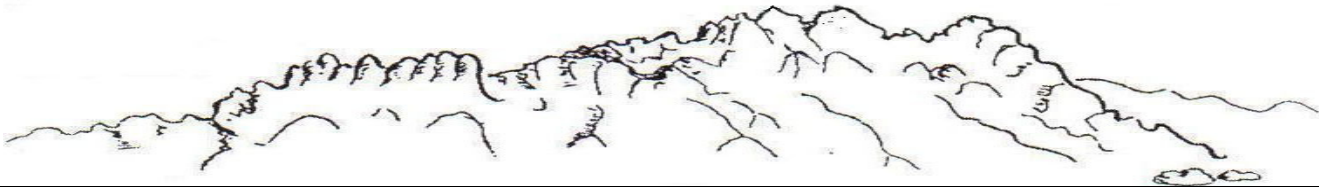


The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
May 2011



Redistricting: Process and Principles

Michael Sharp, Vice-President, Research and Polling, Inc.



**Creative Arts Room, Good Samaritan Social Center, 3011 Buena Vida Circle
Monday, May 9, 2011, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Members are invited to join us **one-half hour earlier** on May 9 to hear Michael Sharp discuss the redistricting process. Because Mr. Sharp is scheduled to appear at the Las Cruces City Council at 1 p.m., on the same day, we are starting our meeting with his presentation (11:30 a.m.) and having lunch afterwards (12:15 p.m.)

Mr. Sharp will discuss the redistricting process at the local and state levels. In addition, he will provide information about the principles that impact the creation of election district boundaries.

Michael Sharp, Vice President, Research and Polling, leads the redistricting efforts at the company. He has professional experience in more than 50 projects throughout New Mexico. He also has given informational talks and taught classes about redistricting.

Research and Polling, Inc.(R&P), is a market and public opinion research company founded in 1986 and is located in Albuquerque. Services provided by this company include: survey research, focus groups, litigation support, and demographic, redistricting, and geographical information services. The latter three are the services that gained R&P a contract to look at the current election boundaries for city councilors and county commissioners with the goal of aligning them to reflect the recently certified 2010 census figures.

DUES FORM

Membership: Individual **(\$60)**, 2nd Household Member **(\$30)** Renewal Period **(May 1-June 30)**

Name(s): _____ 2nd Household _____

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

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

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

\$ _____ Contribution to the Education Fund (Tax Deductible) Make check payable to LWV Education Fund

See article on page 2 related to dues

All checks should be mailed to

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The VOTER

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Vice President & Program
Shannez Dudelczyk

Secretary - Martha Duran

Treasurer - Barbara Goedecke

Director, Membership
Roberta Gran

Director, Voter Services
Erika Graf-Webster

Nominating Committee
Chair: Vicki Simons
Elected Member: Sadie Valerde

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
Mickey Curtis - 532-5655

Metropolitan Court
Marjorie Burr - 522-2528

ACTION COMMITTEE
Vicki Simons - 522-4813

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

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.

CALENDAR

April 25 (Monday) - 4-7 p.m., New **Board Orientation & Meeting**, Branigan Library, Roadrunner Room.

May 2 (Monday) - **Deadline for Reservations for Lunch with a Leader: Topic: Redistricting: Process and Principles. Please email or call Shannez Dudelczyk at (as.dudelczyk@gmail.com or (505) 670-5146).** Reservations are required. *If you don't cancel your reservation, you will be charged for lunch.*



May 9 (Monday) - **11:00 a.m. - 1 p.m., Lunch with a Leader, Topic: Redistricting: Process and Principles**, Michael Sharp, Vice President, Research & Polling, Inc. Creative Arts Room, Good Samaritan Social Center. **Lunch is \$10.**

Mark Your Calendar:

May 14-15 - LWVNM State Convention, Los Alamos
June 17-20 - LWVUS Council, Washington, DC.

Notable Dates:

May 8 - Mother's Day
May 17 - Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
May 21 - Armed Forces Day

Per Member Payment Forces Increase in Annual Dues

LWVUS has **AGAIN** increased per member payment (PMP), the amount of **tax** local Leagues pay from member dues to sustain LWVUS operations. Since 1998, LWVUS PMP has increased by \$15 to the current level of \$30 for individuals and \$15 for second household members. PMP due to LWVNM has remained constant during the last five years at \$12 and \$6, respectively. When members pay \$50 in dues, only \$8 is left in our local treasury after these assessments are paid. (See Annual Meeting VOTER, p. 8)

The Board did an analysis of what it costs to run this organization and learned that we are experiencing a shortfall of \$9.57 per member, a shortfall that will continue to increase as PMP continues to increase each year. Our contributions also have fallen. As a result of these two circumstances, our local League has insufficient operational income. (See Annual Meeting VOTER, p. 8)

At the Annual Meeting on April 16, members voted to increase the annual dues as follows:

\$60 - Individual Members
\$30 - 2nd Household Members

The Board also reached a decision to shorten the dues renewal period. **Dues now have to be paid by June 30.** Members will receive one post card reminder.



Annual Meeting Wrap –Up

The 42nd Annual Meeting began at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 16, and concluded at noon. Thirty-three members attended the breakfast meeting that was held at Good Samaritan.

Early business consisted of appointing another recorder, Diane Prindeville, to assist Martha Duran in taking the minutes. Two readers, Kate Schultz and Erika Graf-

Webster were appointed to read the minutes. William Little served as parliamentarian. The rules of the business meeting were adopted. The 2010 meeting minutes were approved as written. Members reviewed the state of the treasury: Balance (5/1/2010) of \$4,760, was augmented by \$13,315.85 in deposits, while expenditures were \$14,387.85, leaving a balance of \$3,688 in our checking account. In-kind contributions were \$663. The certificate of deposit balance is \$1,076, and the Education Fund balance is \$1,150. The report was accepted for file.

Marnie Leverett was recognized as our second lifetime member having achieved 50 years of membership in the League. She was honored with a certificate from LWVUS, and congratulations and flowers from members. Erika Graf-Webster recognized Dale Yeo, editor, *Voters' Guide* and *Who's Who* directory, for her considerable service rendered on both of those publications. She received a crystal paperweight engraved with the League logo and name. Board members surprised President Bonnie Burn by presenting her with a beautiful Copper Canyon bowl for her efforts on behalf of the League during her first two-year term as President.

The nonpartisan policy was re-adopted. An operating budget of \$9,077 was adopted. There was discussion about the proposed increase in membership dues, and increases to \$60 for individual and \$30 for second household members passed unanimously. The proposal to offer a subscription (\$12 per issue) for a printed copy of the monthly newsletter, The VOTER, was approved with the adoption of the budget. An Education Fund budget of \$2,560 was proposed to cover 2011-2012 local municipal elections.

All of the current local League positions were readopted, and the proposed program of extending both the Affordable Housing and Education studies for one year were approved unanimously.

The following officers and directors were elected:

- President: Bonnie Burn (2011-2013)
- Vice President: Shannez Dudelczyk (2011-2012)
- Treasurer: Barbara Goedecke (2011-2013)
- Director of Membership: Roberta Gran (2011-2013)
- Nominating Chair: Vicki Simons
- Elected Member: Sadie Valverde

(Continued on page 4)



Member Address Change

Marie McCallum
 2775 N. Roadrunner Pkway (#2103)
 Las Cruces, 88011
 Phone & Email: Same

2011-2012 Membership Directory

will be updated and published as soon as all member renewal dues are paid.

Please send changes to:
 Bonnie Burn - 526-0013 or
 Email: burnb@comcast.net

BOOK

EVERY VOTE EQUAL:

A State-Based Plan for Electing the President by National Popular Vote

Kopza, Grueskin, Richle, Fadem, Mandell and Zimmerman

Available for your reading enlightenment

To check it out:
 Bonnie Burn—526-0013
 Email: burnb@comcast.



Correction with apology:

Annual Meeting VOTER

Please add Betty Pool and Judy McGuire to the Education Study Committee members list on p. 13.

LWV Affordable Housing Committee Visit Habitat for Humanity International

Vicki Simons, Co-Chair

The League's Affordable Housing Committee has interviewed several more agencies that provide affordable housing to low-income and disabled individuals in Doña Ana County. In February, we visited Habitat for Humanity, Ed Johnson, Executive Director, and Tierra del Sol, Rose Garcia, Executive Director. The committee welcomes new members Aletta Wilson and Paula Nielson.

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, ecumenical, Christian, housing ministry that seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. To accomplish these goals, it invites people from all backgrounds, races, and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need. Ed Johnson remarked that he thinks Habitat can best be described as an organization that changes lives. Habitat International serves primarily as a resource organization with no active involvement in local Habitat affiliates. There are 1,800 Habitat affiliates in the U.S. and 17 in New Mexico. Volunteers come locally and from all over the U.S. For volunteers who come in RVs, there are 14 fully equipped RV parking spots adjacent to the Habitat office as well as other services in a central building.

Local Habitat operations, which began in 1987, include many steps that result in completed homes for families in need. These include finding land, land development, designing the houses, getting the appropriate permits, keeping up to date on codes, organizing volunteers, selecting families, managing

the sweat equity of the families, training families in home ownership issues, writing grants, soliciting community sponsorship and support, keeping financial records and building the houses. Habitat in Las Cruces is now building house #83.

Funding for the local affiliate is from grants: including CDBG and HOME funds from the City, 30%, and revenue from the ReStore (selling donated clothing, furniture, etc.) and donations from individuals and organizations, 70%. Habitat houses, depending on the number of bedrooms or presence of a garage, generally cost between \$75,000-\$80,000 to build. They are able to build at such an affordable rate because of the large amount of free labor and many services and materials donated or sold to Habitat at a discount. Habitat works hard to keep the mortgage, taxes and insurance under \$500 per month.

Selecting families to occupy houses is done by creating a list of families based on need, and willingness to partner, that is to provide sweat equity in the building and to have the ability to pay the mortgage. Habitat doesn't advertise, but is present at many local community events and gains applicants via word of mouth.

The committee was impressed with the number of houses Habitat builds with relatively few resources and the dedication of the staff of four and volunteers.

(Look for Tierra del Sol Report in June 2011 issue.)

Annual Meeting *(Continued from page 3)*

Continuing on the Board: Erika Graf-Webster, Director of Voter Services, and Martha Duran, Secretary.

Volunteers were sought to attend the LWVNM State Convention in Los Alamos, May 13-15. Bonnie Burn will attend as a GLC delegate, and Carol Jackson will attend as a State Board member. GLC is allocated five delegates. Anyone wishing to attend should call or email Bonnie Burn (526-0013, burnb@comcast.net).

Discussion during direction to the Board involved attracting new members by mixing up the activities of the League (e.g., Lunch with a Leader, social hour, and unit meetings). The Board will consider taking some of the summer months off. How to increase revenue for the League was also discussed (see article, p.2). Finding more "Friends" and "Community Supporters" whose contributions are not affected by per member payment is a possibility.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.

Bonnie Burn, President

Look Back: The Probate Process: A Presentation by Alice Salcido, Probate Judge

Reported by Bob Burn

Probate is a court proceeding to pass a deceased person's property to heirs or others named in the decedent's will. Property is defined as real property such as land and houses and personal property that includes bank accounts, investments, insurance policies, furniture, jewelry, and art work.

Probate is not required when the heirs or others named are joint tenants with right of survivorship or beneficiaries such as in a life insurance policy. In addition, probate is not required for payable on death (POD) accounts, transfer on death (TOD) deeds, property held in a trust, and in the case of life estates. A POD is a no-cost arrangement between a client and a bank or credit union that designates beneficiaries to receive all of the client's assets held by the institution upon the client's death. A TOD under New Mexico law allows a real property owner to record a transfer on death to a named beneficiary. With a life estate, the beneficiary has use of designated property such as a house until his or her death at which time the property passes on to the decedent's heirs. Probate is required if property is held in the decedent's sole name or for tenants in common and to obtain medical records.

Probate is conducted in the New Mexico county where the decedent lived (e.g., permanent address, registered to vote, driver's license, paid taxes) or, in the case on non-New Mexico residents, in the county where the property of the decedent was located at the time of his or her death. Judge Salcido presides over one of thirty-three (one for each New Mexico county) informal probate courts. Her court is in the County Government Building alongside the County Clerk's office. The informal courts handle straight-forward probate issues including admission of wills, appointment of executors (called personal representatives in New Mexico), and review of the reasonableness of fees charged by executors. Contentious issues and more formal proceedings must be handled by local district courts.

Personal representatives (PR) must be 18 years of age or older and of sound mind. PRs have legal authority to act on behalf of the decedent. They can be designated in the decedent's will, be a surviving

spouse, be other heirs or relatives, or as a last resort be any interested person such as a creditor or bank. Valid designation of a PR in a will requires the signatures of the testator and two witnesses; notarization is not required. If there are no heirs or interested parties, a decedent's property becomes State of New Mexico unclaimed property and any eventual proceeds go to the state.

The probate process starts with the presentation of a death certificate to the probate court. A notarized probate application obtained from the court is filed no sooner than five days after death and no later than one year after death. An initial order is issued by the probate judge admitting any existing will and appointing a personal representative. The PR is issued letters of testamentary (if there is a will) or letters of administration (no will) for banks and creditors when he or she provides a notarized acceptance of appointment. The PR then sends out notices to heirs and others named in the will and to banks and creditors of his or her appointment, gathers and lists all assets, pays debts, and distributes assets. Once all duties are performed, and no sooner than 90 days after appointment, the PR submits a verified statement of completion to the probate judge. The probate judge issues a Certificate of Full Administration and Release of Lien one year after the verified statement has been submitted, the estate is closed, and the probate process is completed.



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Las Cruces Public School Board Meeting, March 15, 2011, 6:30 - 8:15 p.m. *Sue Cain, Observer*

Dr. Connie Phillips called the board meeting to order with all members present. District 2 representative appointment by the board was still pending.

Superintendent Rounds reported on the 2011-12 budget focusing on federal and NM state funding. The estimated loss is \$11 million. The financial problems are compounded by the increasing student enrollment. The following strategies are being planned to help meet the reduced budget for next year and avoid increasing classroom size:

- Rescheduling the high schools day may save \$5 million.
- Energy saving strategies implemented may save \$1 - \$1.2 million.
- 430 possible staffing cuts reduced to 230 if proposed cost cutting strategies are successful.

Additionally, New Mexico is making a 2.5% cut in money for staffing next year by reducing one day from the 2011-12 contract year and increasing the payments from staff toward their own retirement funds. Total staff take home pay will be reduced by 2.75%.

To avoid increasing class sizes, adding additional sections at the high schools and middle schools is proposed while keeping K-3 at the smallest sizes.

A Spotlight on Excellence Video about the cooperation with NMSU Professors Evara Hammond and Zhuoliang Mao and eight LCPS elementary teachers, who teach Chinese language and culture to Grades K-5 students was shown. There are currently 350 million students in China learning English and 50 thousand in the U.S. learning Chinese.

The "Quality of Instruction Survey" was discussed and evaluated for results. Dr. Votaw recommended that the same instrument also be used next year so that data gathered can be analyzed and used more effectively. A motion was made and passed.

Jim Mulhauser and Sean Barham reported that the Energy Conservation Program achieved \$171,000 in savings for LCPS. The environmental impact for the first year has been the same as taking 180 cars

off of our streets and saving 25,652 trees for 10 years. The district is applying to partner with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The first reading of the Waste Reduction and Recycling was presented by Herb Torres. At the request of Maria Flores a goal of eliminating Styrofoam in the district over the next 3-5 years was added to the policy. Two more readings are required before passage by the Board.

Jo Galvan reported on Staff Re-employment, Assignments and Transfers policy. Possible revision to this policy recommended that "union" be replaced by "collective bargaining." Reduction in Force (RIF) is a separate policy and not covered in collective bargaining. The policies were referred back to Jo Galvan for further refinement.

Dr. Connie Phillips and Maria Flores reported on their visits to schools. To assist parental understanding, several teachers at Sonoma Elementary recommended redesign of report cards. Dr. Phillips met with Hannah Skandera, the new Secretary of the NM Department of Education.

Marnie Leverett Achieves Lifetime Membership



Members applauded Marnie Leverett as she was recognized for achieving a lifetime membership, having been a League member for 50 years. Joining in 1961, Marnie was a member of several local Leagues—Pittsburgh, PA, Toledo, OH, and Buffalo, NY. She joined the Greater Las Cruces League in 1993.

She served as president from 2003-2005, as director of voter services for three terms and organized the League observer corps to attend government meetings. She was a member of the Branigan Library Advisory Commission selected by her district's city council member. For several years, she and Jim, her husband, handled the League's information telephone line that helped voters find their precincts on election day. Marnie is well known in the community not only for her League work but also for her efforts on behalf of wilderness legislation.

Congratulations, Marnie.

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS

The League's Observer Corps enables greater coverage and information gathering, can provide early warning of upcoming issues of concern, can increase League's visibility, and can 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.

South Central Recycling Partnership, (SCRaP) - March 10, 2011 *Al McBrayer, Observer*

Curbside Recycling is in! About 30,000 "New Blue Recycle Cans" were delivered throughout the city and curbside recycling started on April 4, 2011. Friedman Recycling has expanded the list of recyclable items. (Plastics, #1-#7, including amber pill bottles, are now acceptable.) Plastic bags are still a problem though. (Better to ban than to recycle.) The lid of the blue can, has an imbedded list showing what goes inside. Part of the new recycling program is an ongoing educational portion (one year) about what is recyclable. It will keep us all up on what's new.

South Central Solid Waste Authority is investigating a program to start collecting household hazardous waste in small municipalities like Hatch and Anthony. This collection will be mobile and be at locations and dates to be announced when the program is up and running. Later, program success could expand the locations. In Las Cruces, household hazardous waste is collected at the Amador Recycling Center.

Earth Day was on Friday, April 22. The celebration was held on the preceding Saturday, April 16. South Central Recycling Partnership (SCRaP) staffed a booth at Young Park. Many local "Green" groups and organizations gathered at Young Park supported by OASIS from NMSU. The Fountain Theater showed the documentary, "Waste Land," that was sponsored by Friedman Recycling, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, and the South Central Solid Waste Authority.

With Curbside Recycling in place, the main focus of the SCRaP organization may change. The group may meet less frequently, but will continue to support recycling projects. We plan to continue our presence at city celebrations like Earth Day, Raft the Rio, The Farmer's Market and others.

Thank you for Recycling

League Members Get Second Look at Friedman Recycling – March 10, 2010 - *Report by Johnnie R. Aldrich*

On a recent trip to the Friedman Recycling Plant in El Paso, Shirley Armstrong, Martha Duran, and I were treated to a close-up view of what happens to all that "stuff" we throw into the recycling bins around town.

Those bins are now "single stream," meaning that we don't have to sort before we toss. Plastics, business and "junk" mail, small electronics, cardboard, newspapers – everything but glass – can go into the bins to be sorted at the Friedman plant and shipped to other facilities for the actual making of new materials. This one green industry employs 24 people just to keep the conveyor belt moving through the multi-acre facility during a 3-shift, 20-hour work day, 7 days a week. Other employees, many of whom actually live in Las Cruces, are secretaries, truck and heavy equipment drivers, and shift supervisors.

The sorting process was fascinating. The human sorters work fast, making decisions in micro-seconds about what to keep and where to throw it. Plastics have to be sorted according to color and composition, and part of the process is automated. One amazing part of the conveyor belt brought plastic bottles in front of a huge fan that picked them up and threw them over a barrier (or not) depending upon their weight. Lighter items cleared the barrier and went down a slide into one container. Heavier plastic bottles hit the barrier and went into another receptacle. What kind of training does it take to figure out how strong the fan's wind current must be and how high to build the barrier?

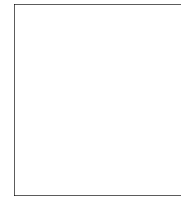
According to our guide, such innovation is ongoing, so that the information published in January about what can be recycled is already outdated. ALL plastics now are acceptable, as are the "slick"

(Continued on page 8)



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FIRST CLASS

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Friedman Recycling *(Continued from page 7)*

advertising pages that are part of most newspaper. Waxed cardboard containers? They're okay now. Remember last year when only corrugated cardboard was accepted?

The noise abated for about 10 minutes during the tour, though, because of a work stoppage. Someone had included a garden hose in the recycle bin. One of its loops lodged in the belt track, causing it to grind to a halt. A special crew of 4 or 5 workers rushed past us with grappling hooks and other tools to remove it and restart the motors. Food contamination causes other kinds of problems. One grease laden pizza box can "infect" all of the other items in a truckload of recyclables. The motto now is, "When in doubt, throw it out."

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