

The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
December 2009



Breakfast with the Legislators - December 5 , 9 a.m. Good Samaritan Society, Main Dining Room

We invite you to join us and talk with our state legislators during our annual legislative breakfast meeting. This year it is being held on the first Saturday in December, 9 a.m., in the main dining room of the Good Samaritan Society. There is plenty of room, and you are encouraged to bring your family and friends.

Our goal for this event is to give our legislators a chance to summarize the past legislative year and to tell us what their plans are for this short session that begins on January 19 and ends on February 18. With a looming budget deficit, we are anxious to hear how this might be overcome.

They don't get to do all of the talking. League members also will have a chance to chime in and express their legislative priorities and ask questions that will help us to better understand the political process. At the local level we will be following bills related to the Branigan Library, metropolitan court, and mental health. At the state level we will be following bills related to ethics, campaign reform, and other priorities to be decided at the December 11 Action Committee meeting. The November 2010 Primary and General Elections will include state representative candidates.

We look forward to seeing you there.

CALENDAR

November 30 (Monday) - **Deadline for Reservations for Legislative Breakfast**
RSVP Vicki Simons (522-4813) It is **important** that everyone **make a reservation**.



December 5 (Saturday) - 9 a.m., **Breakfast with the Legislators** at Good Samaritan Village's Social Center, Main Dining Room . **Topic:** Legislative Session 2010. Breakfast is \$8.

December 7 (Monday) - 5 p.m. **Board Meeting**, Branigan Library Board Room. Members are welcome.

Notable Events:

December 15 - Bill of Rights passed (1791)

Mark Your Calendar

January 19 - 2010 NM State Legislative Session Begins

January 26 - LWVNM League Day at the Legislature (Santa Fe)

February 14 - LWVUS 90th Birthday

March 15, 17, 22, and 24 - Know Your State and Local Government (in collaboration with the Academy of Learning in Retirement)



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Volume 40, Issue 8 - December 2009
Published Monthly

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

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Vicki Simons

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Director, Membership
Pat Pedersen

Director, Program
Sharon Burbano

Director, Public Relations
(Vacant)

Nominating Committee
Johnnie Aldrich, Chair
Marjorie Burr, Elected Member

STUDY GROUPS

Behavioral Health Services
Becky Beckett—522-8171
Mickey Curtis—532-5655

**Election Procedures and
Voter Turnout**
Marnie Leverett—522-0347

Metropolitan Court
Marjorie Burr—522-2528

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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.

President's Message

I am, and I hope you are, looking forward to our Legislative Breakfast on Saturday, December 5. Hopefully, no special legislative or committee sessions will arise, and we can have an opportunity to talk with all of our legislators. The short session usually involves budget and appropriation matters. We will be watching any further legislative developments involving the establishment of a metropolitan court in Doña Ana County. During the October special session called by the governor, the funding that allowed much-needed renovation and expansion at the Branigan Library came under threat, which we believe, as we go to press, was overcome.

Thank you and kudos to League members who helped with our voter services activities during the recent City of Las Cruces municipal election, November 3. We were pleased to serve the community by sponsoring a candidates' forum on October 13 that was very well attended and by publishing a two-page *Voters Guide* in *The Bulletin*, October 16 edition.

Our Branigan Library Study Group has been hard at work this past month. Please see an update article on p. 4.

I received an unexpected invitation to address the monthly luncheon of the Certified Public Accountant's Society on October 15 and took this opportunity to introduce the League to some of its members. At the invitation of Roberta Gran, member of the NMSU Women's Club, I attended the fall reception hosted by the club at the NMSU President's home. Mrs. Manuel Pacheco greeted the guests. Through Roberta's efforts, I also was able to meet Diane-Michele Prindeville, associate professor in the Department of Government, NMSU. Along with Ana Villalobos and Marc Legarreta, we are hoping to build connections at NMSU to exchange information with students about voting, election processes, and government information. On Halloween, Sally Christman, League member who lives near Anthony, and I spent the day at the Anthony-Berino Community Awareness Fair. We registered voters and sold tickets for our quilt raffle. Anthony is pursuing incorporation, and this gave me an opportunity to meet some of the people involved with this effort.

Finally, in October Peter J. Smith and Jocelyn Gordon, consultants for the Vision 2040 Regional Plan, presented draft documents of the proposed plan and conducted public input meetings throughout the county. See my observer report, p. 6.

In closing, I hope that all of you have a Happy Thanksgiving that you are able to share with family and friends.



Bonnie Burn



LOOK BACK —> Way Back
Brief History of the League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
Marjorie Burr

At least one attempt had been made previous to 1967 to organize a local League of Women Voters in Las Cruces, but it had been unsuccessful. However, on October 15, 1967, two forces came together to form a local League. First, the League of Women Voters of New Mexico was eager to have an organizational foothold in the southern part of the state in order to help promote the call for a Constitutional Convention to rewrite the state constitution. And at this time there was a critical mass of energetic young women, many newly arrived in Las Cruces from places where they had known the League of Women Voters and were willing to work toward organizing one in their new hometown. By November 16, a provisional League was formed and the women had set to work.

The League initiated a "Know Your Town" study during which members interviewed and investigated all aspects of local government. It also held its first candidates' forum for municipal elections in February 1968 and registered voters in several drives. To promote the Constitutional Convention, the League held forums, offered a speakers' bureau to community groups, and wrote columns for the local newspapers.

With the publication in January 1969 of "Las Cruces," the booklet resulting from the know-your-town study; a successful growth in membership and community fund drive; as well as impressive work in voter registration and nonpartisan candidate information, the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces was recognized as a local League by the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters of New Mexico.

As a local League, the organization began studies of local issues leading to membership consensus and action in support of its positions on the issues. Land use and health care were among the early issues studied that generated much controversy in the community. As of 2009, LWVGLC has position statements on the following issues: solid waste recycling; metropolitan court; Branigan Library; county government; election procedures; health care in Doña Ana County; land use planning; municipal elections; water; and education. The League also is active in voter services activities—voter registration, candidates' forums and publication of candidate information prior to elections, and publication of a directory, "Who's Who," with contact information for elected and some appointed officials.

Women have gone from leadership in the local League to elected positions as well as appointments to government boards and commissions. Policy of the LWVUS has changed to allow men into full League membership, but the local League is still predominantly women. Membership in 2009 is about 90 people and the annual budget is \$12,000.

Welcome 

New Members

Margaret (Peggy) Hollenbeck
 1634 Mulberry (Apt. i2)
 Las Cruces, NM 88001
 Tel: 571-3141
 Email: pegnplace@gmail.com



E-VOTER In Your Future

You probably realized that this announcement was inevitable. The Board reached a decision that we must send out the monthly newsletter electronically. It's not a matter of high printing costs. It is a matter of high postage cost. OR, it's a matter of dollars and cents

Our goal for The VOTER is to provide an educational newsletter. In so doing, the issues vary from 8 to 12 pages. In the recent past the postage has gone up twice, so that any issue over one ounce now costs \$0.61 in first class postage for each copy. If our membership increased dramatically and our mailings reached 200 pieces, we could get a bulk mail permit, which would cost \$370, \$185 to get the permit, thereafter \$185 per year to maintain it, in addition to postage per issue.

Almost all of our members use email. There are still a few who do not, and we will accommodate them by printing copies on home printers and mailing them out at first class postage rate.

The Annual Meeting VOTER will continue to be printed and mailed 30 days before the meeting, but it will be smaller—relying upon our Membership Directory for bylaws, nonpartisan policy, and positions, unless changes are proposed.

The E-VOTER will begin with the January 2010 issue that should be distributed in late December.



Local League News Briefs

Branigan Library: Glitch Appears in Current Expansion of Branigan Library

Marnie Leverett, Chair

Branigan Library is not having its best year.

After long delays while funding passed through countless state protocols, the proposed additions to the Branigan Library building finally got a good start this summer: conversion of the Dress Room into a computer center housing 25 computers, expansion of the second floor to hold a new public meeting room replacing the Dress Room, and an expansion of the children's section. Before the construction could be finished, part of the funding for completion was threatened by the serious shortfalls in the state budget. There was some talk about delaying the completion of the building addition which would have been very disruptive to all library programming and activities. Cooler heads prevailed, and we heard from Santa Fe that the funding was available for finishing the project after all.

Meanwhile, Library Director Kathleen Teaze announced her decision to take another job in Maryland, a blow to continuity and high spirits.

Our League's library committee decided to start a coalition of groups who might be interested in raising morale, gathering some positive ideas for the library and showing some visible support for the library. We met with the president of the Friends of the Library, Eileen Monahan, and plan on meeting with members of AAUW.

We decided to track the money route and verify its presence. We also felt that it was a good time to show our state legislators our support for the library. We called our state representatives and senators to see what actually was happening to the funding that had been promised. State Senator Steve Fischmann and State Representative Joseph Cervantes promised to look into the situation and give us some details. Also, Assistant City Manager Robert Garza promised to keep us informed. He verified that no critical problem exists for the remaining funds, and he will keep an eye on them until the job is finished. However, he pointed out that another building project,

promised for early next year, which would complete the additions to the children's library and refurbish some meeting rooms, is going to need some lobbying support if it is to become a reality. Our committee is keeping close tabs on this and will keep you all informed.

(Editor's Note: As mentioned in the October issue of The VOTER, the Branigan Library space is stretched to its limit. Even with these additions, there is no longer room for expansion, and the current building is in need of repair. The time is now to give careful attention to and support for this heavily used community resource.)

Board Highlights

- It is with regret that we accepted Marnie Leverett's resignation as Director of Public Relations. She is continuing to chair the Election Procedures/Voter Turnout and Branigan Library committees. Many thanks for the help she gave us with publicity. This year was particularly busy with both the Health Care Reform Forum and the voter services activities we sponsored. The Board seeks a volunteer to replace Marnie.
- Members will be receiving a survey in the mail very shortly. It's been a while since we asked our members about themselves and their interest in the organization. It is important to know if our organization is moving in the direction that members wish and how better we can serve their interests.
- Policies are necessary parts of an organization that enable it to function well. The Board adopted several at this meeting, and these are now posted on our web site, www.lwvglc.org. Please look them over.
- We want to thank Nancy Stotz for reviewing and compiling information about the draft documents of Vision 2040.
- Kudos to Vicki Simons and League members who made our voter services activities related to the City of Las Cruces municipal election a success.
- Reports from the Branigan Library Committee and participation in the Anthony-Berino Community Awareness Fair were received.

The next meeting is December 7, 5 p.m., Branigan Library Board Room.

CO₂ Data Measurements

Thomas Schumgge and Kate Schultz, Climate Change Committee

Systematic measurements of atmospheric CO₂ began in the middle 50's during the International Geophysical Year (IGY) of 1957-1958. The IGY was started at the beginning of the Cold War, and governments, both in the west and in the Soviet Union, were interested in obtaining geophysical information that would be of military value. While climate change and global warming were not concerns, there was interest in obtaining measurements of CO₂ because the head of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, Roger Revelle, was aware that there were some inklings of an effect. Therefore, he got support from the Office of Naval Research to set up a CO₂ measuring system on Antarctica by Charles Keeling who worked at Scripps. In two years of measurements they observed a slow but continuous rise of CO₂. In a later paper Revelle wrote, "Human beings are now carrying out a large scale geophysical experiment (i.e., increasing CO₂) of a kind that could neither have happened in the past nor be reproduced in the future."¹

With these funds, Keeling also set up an observation station at the top of Mauna Loa volcano in Hawaii that was far away from any of the major sources or sinks of CO₂. After the IGY ended, there was a scramble to get continued funding, and the operation shut down briefly in 1963. Then they were able to get continued funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The Keeling curve showing the continuous rise of atmospheric CO₂ is one of the most impressive geophysical measurements. The concentration in the 50's was 310 PPM (parts per million) and now is about 385 and rising at the rate of about 2 PPM per year. The increase of atmospheric CO₂ accounts for about 55% of the carbon released by fossil fuel burning; the remainder is absorbed in the biosphere both in the ocean and on land.

While the Keeling Curve data provided the first continuous and reliable measurements of CO₂ in the modern atmosphere, the drilling of ice in the Antarctic and northern Arctic regions were producing exciting information on atmospheric CO₂ from the past.

By 1985 a French-Soviet drilling team at Vostok Station in central Antarctica had produced an ice

core two kilometers (1.24 mile) long, which carried a 150,000-year record: a complete ice age cycle of warmth, cold, and warmth. They found that the level of atmospheric CO₂ had gone up and down in remarkably close step with temperature. The Vostok core, an ice driller declared, "turned the tide in the greenhouse gas controversy."² At the very least, it nailed down what one expert called an "emerging consensus that CO₂ is an important component in the system of climatic feedbacks."³

¹Keeling (1960)

²Lorius et al. (1985); see also Barnola et al. (1987); Genthon et al. (1987)

³Mayewski and White (2002)

LWVUS Supports Clean Energy and Fights Global Warming

LWVUS Leader's Update, November 12, 2009

Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) is asking senators to join him in a letter urging Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) to ensure that the Senate clean energy and climate bill does not repeal the sections of the Clear Air Act that require coal-fired power plants to meet modern standards for global warming pollution. Old, "clunker" coal plants are the nation's largest source of global warming pollution; it will be significantly more difficult to stop global warming, transition to clean energy and create more clean energy jobs if we do not hold these plants to modern pollution standards.

- Old coal plants must be required to meet smokestack-specific standards.
- Pollution caps will not be enough to significantly cut coal plant pollution in the next decade.
- Singling out existing coal plants from compliance will give them an unfair advantage, tipping the market against clean sources like wind and solar.
- Investment in America's aging energy infrastructure does not move the country forward in creating clean energy jobs.
- Not cutting this pollution reduces our ability to stop global warming.

Contact Senators Bingaman and Udall to urge them to sign this letter (see *Who's Who* for contact information).

Vision 2040 – Project Enters Final Stage

Bonnie Burn, Observer

Meetings were held throughout the county during October to review the draft copy of the Vision 2040 Regional Plan proposed by the project consultants, peter j. smith & company, inc.

I attended the Joint Meeting of the Las Cruces City Council and Doña Ana County Commissioners on October 21 and the Public Input Meeting on October 22. Both were held in the County Government Building.

The draft documents comprise five volumes: Summary, City of Las Cruces Proposed Plan, Doña Ana County Proposed Plan, Inventory and Appendix. Copies of the volumes are available throughout the city and county and for purchase from InstaCopy, Downtown Mall. The goals of the plan are to:

- guide population growth
- protect strategic farmland
- conserve water supply
- keep taxes low
- grow the economy
- protect scenic views

Sustainability is a theme throughout the Vision 2040 Plan. “According to the United Nations, *sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*”

Growth Areas, complete and unique neighborhoods that make efficient use of resources and contribute to a high quality of life, are recommended by the consultants to accommodate projected future growth. These consist of public gathering spaces that combine residential and commercial developments, multi-family housing, and a transportation hub. Moving farther away from the center, the plan suggests single and smaller multi-family residential housing and outdoor recreation areas. Surrounding the growth area are rural areas that preserve the character of traditional range and native desert lands.

Regionally, the proposed plan preserves the mountains, the river, and recognizes I-25 as the major transportation corridor of the region. Four plans were developed for (1) existing urban growth areas, (2) future urban growth areas, (3) rural center

growth areas, and (4) developing rural growth areas. Different population figures are projected for each area. Multi-use buildings as high as five stories with specified units per acre, residential units in the form of apartments or townhouses, and single- or multi-family residential development in the surrounding area were proposed for these areas.

Future Land Use Plans apply the growth concepts discussed in the proposed regional plans. They also become the basis for Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map revisions. A comprehensive plan for the City of Las Cruces and another for Doña Ana County were developed. That for Las Cruces recommends denser and more intense development than in the county where retaining the rural characters of its communities is important while accommodating future growth.

Major issues voiced at both meetings were concerns about density, needs of the agricultural industry, preservation of wilderness, and WATER.

On the back page of a folded information sheet developed by the consultants and distributed at the meetings were some interesting facts that are reproduced below. The options for the future of Doña Ana County and Las Cruces were

- to keep everything the same. Status quo would consume approximately 15,129 acres of land in Las Cruces and 41,695 acres in the rest of the county and approximately 439 miles of new roads in Las Cruces and 1,206 miles in the remainder of the county would have to be built; OR
- to pursue a new and better way to control the dramatic growth that is projected for the region over the next 30 year. The proposed regional plan reduces land consumption by 15% in Las Cruces and 55% in the county; preserves 70 to 85% of existing agricultural land throughout the county; reduces road construction by 20% in Las Cruces and 50% in the county.

Projections in Vision 2040, indicate reducing the vehicle miles traveled could save the average household as much as \$387 per year. Reducing the cost of road repair would save the City \$25,178,578 and the county, \$230,680,204 over the next 30 years.

(Continued on page 7)

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.

Las Cruces School Board Meeting - October 20, 2009 - 6:30 p.m.

Nancy Phillips, Observer

Attending: Connie Phillips, President, Maria Flores, Sonia Shoup, Bonnie Votaw, and Superintendent Stan Rounds

Absent: Chuck Davis, who was present via teleconference for the first two votes on budget items.

Facilities Plan Update: Herb Torres reported that the Facilities Plan is reviewed and revised every five years, with the current cycle being 2005-2010. An annual update includes changes in projections and population growth. Staff are now working on the 2010-2015 Plan. Improvements to Las Cruces High School have been #317 on the State's list of projects, and the Board is hoping to push this number closer to 100. The plan for schools in White Sands has been modified because the anticipated additional combat brigade was cancelled.

Financial Reports: All budget adjustments and distributions were approved unanimously. Superintendent Rounds believes the District will not require any layoffs this fiscal year. Next year there may be a total budget cut of 10%, but it's unlikely there will be a cut in personnel. One survey showed that 81% of those polled are against cutting education funds.

Superintendent's Report:

- Merrie Lee Soules, chair of the Committee on Redistricting gave an interesting and thorough report of the committee's work and recommendations. Maps showing the new districts that include the projected numbers for the new elementary school are available at the District office, District website, and the impacted schools. Eleven schools are at over-capacity now, but with the recommended redistricting only three will be over-capacity next year. Currently the percent of elementary students eligible for free lunch is 71%; the new school is projected to

have 65%; the percent of Hispanic students with remain the same at 73%.

There [were held] public hearings as follows: October 28, 5:30 p.m. at Highland; November 2, 6:00 p.m. at Camino Real and November 3, 7:30 p.m. at Sierra.

- The Bond Election in 2010 for \$4 million will be discussed at the November 17 Board meeting. The requested funding will not include salaries but will be for small equipment and repairs.

Instruction: An interesting report on the Behavior Intervention Classrooms (BICS) at Conlee Elementary School brought kudos from parents and guardians of students who have attended and gained a great deal from this program. Thus far there have been eleven participating children, ten of whom have achieved success in moderating their behavior. Staff anticipates expanding the program to assist more children in the future.

Dr. Sanchez reported that cell phone use is being restricted in both middle and high schools. Middle school students will not be allowed to use texting in between classes, while high school students are allowed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Vision 2040 *(Continued from page 6)*

A final plan for approval will be brought back in January, 2010. In considering the plan, remember that in 1969, 40 years ago, the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County did not look as they do now, and we can only project what these areas will look like in 2040. We have purchased the five volume draft documents. If you would like to read them, let me know, (526-0013 or email: burnb@comcast.net).



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Thank You

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