

The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
February 2010



Lunch General Meeting - February 8, 2010, 11:30 a.m.
Good Samaritan Society, Social Center Creative Arts Room
Program - Advocacy & Lobbying

The League year moves quickly after the holidays. Because of deadlines to get annual meeting information into the hands of members, bylaws, budget, and nominating committees begin work. And members have the task of deciding on programs for action and study. At the luncheon meeting on February 8, we will be proposing local and national League programs. The public policy positions for LWVUS are available in its publication, *Impact on Issues*. Summaries of the positions will be distributed at the luncheon. Our Membership Directory shows Greater Las Cruces current program for study and action on page 19 and all of our positions appear on pages 30-34. Please bring your Membership Directory with you to the meeting for ready reference.

When submitting program and study for action to LWVUS, each local League may (1) propose a new study, (2) suggest a position that needs to be reviewed, or (3) suggest a concurrence position. The Board of LWVUS will review all submissions and make decisions about recommended and not-recommended program items for consideration and adoption by the delegates at the June convention.

(Continued on page 2)

CALENDAR

January 26 (Tuesday) - **League Day at the Legislature** (Santa Fe), See *The Voter*, January 2010, p. 5

February 1 (Monday) - **Deadline for Reservations for Lunch General Meeting**
RSVP Sharon Burbano (526-2860) It is **important** that everyone **make a reservation**.

February 1 (Monday) - 5 p.m. **Board Meeting**, Branigan Library Board Room

February 8 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m., **Lunch General Meeting** at Good Samaritan Society's Social Center, Creative Arts Room. **Topic: Program Planning**, LWVUS and LWVGLC. Breakfast is \$8.

February 14 (Sunday) - **90th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters of the United States**

February 16 (Tuesday) - **Candidates' Forum, Town of Mesilla**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Mesilla Community Center, 2251 Calle de Santiago

Notable Events:

February 15 - Susan B. Anthony Birthday (1820-1906)

Mark Your Calendar

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

April 17 - **LWVGLC Annual Meeting**, Good Samaritan Society, Social Center, 9 a.m.

May 15-17 - **LWVNM State Council**, Santa Fe

June 15-17 - **LWVUS Convention**, Atlanta Marriott Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia

The VOTER

Volume 40, Issue 10 - February 2010
Published Monthly

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

P.O. Box 8322
Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
www.lwvglc.org

President—Bonnie Burn

Vice President & Voter Services

Vicki Simons

Secretary—Nancy Phillips

Treasurer—Roberta Gran

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

ACTION COMMITTEE

Vicki Simons—522-4813

Archivist—Barbara Myers

Historian—(Vacant)

Web Master—Dale Yeo
daleyeo@comcast.net

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.

President's Message

Our lead article, p. 1, focuses on one important component of preparing for Annual Meeting, program planning. A second equally important component is assuring leadership for the next two years. Per our bylaws, two officers and one director are elected each year. On the even years (2010), a vice-president, secretary and one director are elected. On the odd years (2011), the president, treasurer and one director are elected.

For the past three years, the League has experienced an increase in membership that we welcome wholeheartedly. We now have 95 members. It seems as if that is a sufficient number from which to draw a vice-president, secretary and one director.

Over the years, the League has built a reputation of trustworthiness at all levels, and we are especially pleased that this has happened at our local level. We have worked hard to ensure that our citizens have reliable, nonpartisan information when making choices in the voting booth. Along with our candidates' forums, we offered a community forum on health care reform this year. We have watch-dogged state funding for the Branigan Library and have advocated with our legislators to ensure that there are sufficient funds appropriated to finish the renovations started before the state budget deficit was identified. Attendance at our Lunch with a Leader and consensus/concurrence unit meetings is good.

When the Bylaws, Budget, and Nominating Committees were activated, those asked to serve agreed quickly. It will be with a great deal of pleasure that I welcome the same response when you are called about the two officers and one director positions that are up for election this year. We need you as leaders as well as volunteers to work on one-time assignments and to come to single events.

The quickest and easiest way to learn about the League is to serve on the Board. I look forward to having the Nominating Committees report, and to those of you who are willing to serve, I say, "Thank you."

Bonnie Burn

Lunch General Meeting *(Continued from page 1)*

We will follow the same procedure for our local program. The Board will consider recommendations developed at the February meeting and propose recommended and non-recommended items for program adoption at the Annual Meeting on April 17. Remember that we have a new position, Need and Resources for Mental Illness in Doña Ana County, that is not shown in the Membership Directory but will be published in the Annual Meeting *VOTER*. (See January *VOTER*, Board Highlights, for full text.)

Please plan to attend as we need to hear what concerns and issues you have for both the local and national League programs for study and action.

LOOK BACK Water Study Consensus Meeting

The complexity of the water system in New Mexico was brought home as Barbara Calef, study chair, and Kathy Campbell, president, LWVNM, led us through consensus questions. Johnnie Aldrich was the recorder for the meeting and leaves us with these summaries that will be integrated with those from seven other local League presentations. On behalf of the study committee, Barbara will present a proposed consensus statement to state Board members for approval at their March meeting. Thereafter, advocacy action may be taken on it. The position will be adopted by delegates at State Convention in 2011 when all of the state League positions are considered. As you read the summaries below, it may be helpful to review the consensus questions in the Water Study Insert, *The VOTER*, January 2010.

Public Welfare occupied a large portion of the study, and it has **five** categories that are listed after the statement. The following were given an **essential** rating:

1. Availability of water for sustainable long-term use under the category **Sustainable Long-Term Use**
2. Encouraging water-efficient residential and commercial landscape under **Economics**.
3. Maintaining the traditional rural and agricultural economies and preservation of public lands, water, and open spaces under **Culture**.
4. Assuring minimum stream flows, minimizing contamination to preserve viability of non-human species and maintaining ecological services under **Ecological Considerations**.
5. Monitoring and measuring all water resources and use and informing the public about capacity and condition of water resources under **Management and Decision Making**.

The **role of regional water planning** had two items rated essential. Provide regular updates of water supply and demand data, and provide a basis for collaboration with neighboring regions. Designated as important were the preservation of watersheds and protection of headwaters.

Making compliance with the Office of the State Engineer determinations under the Subdivision Act mandatory, expanding the Subdivision Act to include all developments, requiring proposed developments to acquire water rights before permitting, and increasing regulation and/or monitoring domestic wells and septic systems were rated essential under **coordination of land use and water supply**.

Essential reasons for **conserving water** included helping balance use with renewable supply, allowing more water to support ecosystems, and allowing for natural growth in population and supporting the economy.

We appreciated that Barbara and Kathy traveled from Los Alamos to make this presentation.



New Members

Louise Tracey-Hosa
320 N. Espina
Las Cruces 88001-2961
Tel: 650-0872
Email: louise@lapinon.org

E-mail Information

Kathryn Bardwell
E-mail: sbardwell@yahoo.com

Diane-Michele Prindeville
Correct Email:
dmprinde@nmsu.edu



TOWN OF MESILLA

CANDIDATES NIGHT

Tuesday, February 16, 2010
6:30-8:30 p.m.

Mesilla Community Center
2251 Calle de Santiago

Information: 524-VOTE (8683)



ACTION ALERTS

League of Women Voters of New Mexico

Now has a web page that follows legislative action during the State Legislative Session.

Log on to www.lwvnm.org
and open the **ACTION** tab for
up-to-date information!

New Mexico State Legislature
Sessions now available on your
COMPUTER

www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/webcast
Requires installation of
Microsoft Silverlight (very easy)

Local League News Briefs

Update On The Branigan Library

Marnie Leverett, Chair

The months of January and February are critical to the future of the Branigan Library. As League members know, there were three building projects stalled at the library because state funding was stopped before they could be completed. Those three unfinished areas include the Dress Rooms, the new meeting room on the second floor called the Campo Terrace Room, and the children's library area on the first floor near the new front door.

Eileen Monahan, president of the Friends of the Branigan Library, and I, representing the League of Women Voters, met recently with Assistant City Manager Robert Garza and the City's Acting Grants Administrator Augie Henry to be briefed on the current status of the grant money from the state that will finish those projects.

Though it was feared that recovering the money would require new legislation during the current session, it was discovered that the original approval of the funding for the three projects is still available in Santa Fe. It is expected to be appropriated to the city shortly after the current session ends in mid-February, and it is possible that construction will begin once again soon after that. Keep your eyes on the library for new developments and encourage your city councilor to keep the action going. The spaces still unfinished at the library are spaces much needed for public meetings and events throughout the city. Their usability will be a huge dividend for our library and for the city at large.

Board Highlights - January 4, 2010

- Pat Pedersen reported that members have been returning the member survey. She will make one last attempt to reach members who haven't turned in their surveys, and then analysis will be done and results reported.
- The League has been invited to moderate a candidates' forum for the Town of Mesilla. Vicki Simons made arrangements to hold it on February 16 (see ad p.3). The positions of mayor

and two trustees are up for election. Also, Hatch and Sunland Park are holding municipal elections.

- The League needs someone who will take responsibility for organizing the voter registration component of voter services. The League will want to conduct some registration drives before the primary (June) and general (November) elections.
- In preparing for the Annual Meeting, the Budget, Bylaws, and Nominating Committees have been activated. This is a targeted assignment. Work has to be done during February and results have to be presented at the March 1 Board meeting, in time to meet the deadline for mailing the VOTER to members 30 days before the Annual Meeting.
- Two activities, holding a Spring Community Fund Drive and celebrating the League's 90th birthday, were discussed. No decisions were made.

The next meeting is February 1, 5 p.m., Branigan Library Board Room.

Mental Health Issues - 2010 Legislative Session

Becky Beckett, chair, Mental Illness Study Group

As of January 19, there are a handful of behavioral issues being addressed by the legislature. They all affect Doña Ana County.

The Crisis Triage Center/System is the top priority of our County Commissioners. The County Health and Human Services Department is working diligently with the State Department of Human Services to have operating funds for the center included in the State Human Services' budget.

HJM4/Picraux and Feldman: Medical Home Establishment & Model Expansion. This urges an expansion of the medical home model to include behavioral health.

HJM12/Cote: Declare April 28, 2010 as "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day".

(Continued on page 5)

Warmest Decade - Thomas Schmugge, Climate Change Committee

On December 9, the *Las Cruces Sun News* stated in a headline that the decade 2000–2009 was the warmest on record as reported by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) with the 1990s being second. The WMO indicated that 2009 was likely to be fifth warmest on record. Actually, NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York found that for its meteorological year, December 2008 to November 2009, 2009 was the third warmest behind 2005 and 2007 (<http://data.giss.nasa.gov/gistemp/>). It was 0.7 C (1.3 F) warmer than their reference, the average for the 30 year period 1951–1980.

I would like to describe how they arrive at these estimates of the global temperatures.

The data are from more than 3,000 ground stations distributed over the land areas of the earth. Coverage is denser over the more populated parts of the world, particularly, the United States, southern Canada, Europe and Japan. Coverage is sparsest over the interior of the South American and African continents and over the Antarctic. In Las Cruces the station used is on the NMSU campus, located behind the Alumni Center. Other nearby stations include those located on the Jornada Experimental Range, at the Elephant Butte dam, the El Paso airport, etc. *(Continued on column 2)*

Mental Health Issues *(Continued from page 4)*

SB34/Keller: Prohibit Certain Medicaid Cuts.

SJM10/Papen: Behavioral Health Day at the Legislature, January 28, 2010.

Constitutional Amendment/Morales:
Reintroduction of amendment of Article 7, section 1 to delete "idiots, insane persons" and put in "by reason of mental incapacity."

A news release of January 18 states that Governor Bill Richardson directed New Mexico Behavioral Health Collaborative to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for more efficient, effective, and quality driven services. Budget issues and Medicaid redesign reasons are driving the needed changes. The Collaborative hopes to have an RFP out by the Spring of 2010.

Stations on land are at different elevations and exposures, and different countries estimate average monthly temperatures using different methods and formulae. To avoid biases that could result from these problems, monthly average temperatures are reduced to anomalies or differences from the average for base period (1951-1980) at the station. By doing so, any inaccuracies in the data from individual stations are reduced or eliminated.

There was a recent report from the Heartland Institute questioning the validity of the U.S. surface temperature record. They commissioned a study of the U.S. weather stations that examined about 70 percent of the 1,221 stations in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Historical Climatology Network (USHCN). The study, available at surfacestations.org, found that only 70 of the stations satisfied NOAA's criteria for being classified as good or best. NOAA looked at the data from those 70 stations and compared it with the results from all 1,221 stations and found little or no difference in the temperature anomaly.

This finding of the validity of the data from the U.S. stations confirms the WMO statement above.

Census 2010: The Census Takers – Cheryl Haaker, chair, Fair Representation Study

In March, census forms will be mailed out. **Fill yours out ASAP** and send it back in its postage-paid envelope. If the form is not mailed back, you may be called or visited (**but NOT e-mailed**) by a census taker. If this occurs,

1. Ask to see identification, an official government badge with his or her name on it.
2. A census taker will not ask to enter your home. There is no need to let them in so don't.
3. A census taker will ask only the information on the census form: your name, age, sex, ethnicity, and whether you rent or own the home. The same information will be requested for everyone staying at that address.
4. Census takers are sworn to secrecy regarding any information collected, and penalties for disclosure are severe.
5. If you are concerned about the identity of the census taker at your door, call your regional Census office at the Denver Regional Census Office, **720-475-3640**.

Vision 2040 – Joint Meeting

Bonnie Burn, Observer

The Las Cruces City Councilors and the Doña Ana County Commissioners held a joint meeting on January 14 at the County Government Center. All members were present. The main topic of discussion was Vision 2040, the forty-year regional plan.

David Weir, City of Las Cruces, and Chuck McMahon, Doña Ana, were presenters and once again reviewed the various stages of the project (see article, *The VOTER*, December 2009, p. 6).

The timeline for the next steps was identified:

- Mid-January 2010 - final draft documents of Vision 2040 and the City and County Comprehensive Plans will be made available by peter j. smith & company, inc. At this point the work of the consultants will be completed.
- Round 5 of public input meetings will occur next. Meeting times and places are to be determined.
- Staff from the city and county will then make edits to the Vision document based on comments from the January 14 joint meeting and the Round 5 public input meetings.
- The revised Vision document will then be presented at the April Joint Meeting of the City Councilors and the County Commissioners.

There continues to be concern about an adequate water supply to sustain future projections for population growth, that data collected at public meetings does not match plans proposed by the consultant, and that a consultant's template that could be used to generally develop a regional plan is being imposed on the Las Cruces/Doña Ana County area. It was suggested that a process be developed that shows the agreement between the city and county on each of the sections in the Vision document. This is particularly important because the plan recommends intergovernmental coordination between the city and the county.

Public comments ranged from the plan is not a good one to a reminder that the city and county do not look now like they did 40 years ago, and in 2050, 40 years from now, an entirely different "look" may better fit the needs of the population.

1-800-333-4636

U.S. Government now has one phone number to get information about various federal benefits and services.

Clean Energy Works

Bonnie Burn, Recorder

A roundtable discussion, Clean Energy, Climate Change and the Economy in Southern New Mexico, was held in Las Cruces on January 15 in the Hotel Encanto. It was organized by staff, Molly Brook and Kim McMurray, of Clean Energy Works, a coalition of more than 60 grassroots organizations seeking to achieve a comprehensive clean energy and climate plan that delivers clean energy jobs, less pollution, and a more secure America. The roundtable participants included representatives of the solar energy business, the newly formed Green Chamber of Commerce, and congressional liaison staff. State Senator Steve Fischmann moderated the discussion and I, representing the League of Women Voters, served as recorder.

A very informative discussion developed around the practical issues of implementing renewable energy in residential and commercial environments. Certification and licensing were a major topic, as solar, particularly, has a large electrical component. Training and licensing of employees ensures confidence by the home owner that the system will be installed properly, serves as criteria for supporting insurance rates, and may ensure the performance of the system. The speed at which employees are trained needs to be increased.

Weatherizing and rehabbing current older structures is an important path to increased energy efficiencies; however, obstacles such as age of the property and kinds of materials used often reveal problems that are not easily or inexpensively solved. Replacing light bulbs, reflective roof coating, blown-in insulation, efficient appliances including furnace, hot water heater, and cooling equipment offer help in increasing efficiencies.

Involving the home owner and the building industry in understanding the actual dollars saved by following efficient, green practices is another challenge. Having an energy rating system that is visible on the structure and included in property appraisals is a potential solution.

Practical problems (e.g., establishing standards that are used throughout the industry, having government pass incentives to encourage the industry to develop and involve the home owner to accept the new technologies) also were discussed.

Another meeting is in the offing.

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 - December 15, 2009 - 6:30 p.m.

Nancy Phillips, Observer

Attending: President Connie Phillips, Maria Flores, Bonnie Votaw, Terry Dean, Steve Sanchez, and Superintendent Stan Rounds. Chuck Davis attended via Skype.

Absent: Serena Shoop

After an outstanding performance by the Mayfield High School Madrigals, two members of the public gave input on federal stimulus grants and use of cell phones in schools. The latter raised concerns that limiting cell phone use will not solve the attention issue. Better instruction on civic responsibility is needed.

Superintendent Rounds reported on the District's efforts to assist 8th graders to make successful transitions to 9th grade that will help them remain in school through graduation. The counseling efforts also include students moving from 5th to 6th grade. Mr. Rounds then introduced several new principals and assistant principals, many of whom are transfers from within the District.

The Board approved the name, colors and mascot of the new middle school: Mesa Middle School, black and gold, Rattlers. These were chosen from the top three voted on by the public. The new East Mesa Elementary School will be completed by next fall, but the middle school will open its doors in a portable classroom complex because construction won't be completed until November.

Gloria Martinez reported on various construction projects in the District including renovations at Loma Heights, Las Cruces High, Lynn Middle School and Mayfield High girls' softball field, and construction of a drama classroom there.

The Board approved the Agreement with certified and classified employees and an average salary raise of 3.8 percent.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

South Central Recycling Partnership (SCRaP) Meeting - Al McBrayer, Observer

Las Cruces is on the short list of candidate cities to be selected by the New Mexico Recycling Coalition as a Target City. If chosen, Las Cruces would be eligible for funding from the state to promote New Mexico Recycles Month this coming November. In November 2009, Las Cruces was recognized statewide for its self-funded E-Cycle event.

Planning for the upcoming Earth Day celebration at Young Park, on Saturday, April 24, 2010 is underway.

Patrick Peck introduced an article from the *El Paso Times*, entitled, "El Pasoans Embrace Curbside Recycling." The article stated that about 8 percent of the city's residential garbage customers, 136,000 households, participate in the curbside program, and more than 93,000 tons of recyclables have been collected since the program started in 2007. Residents were educated about the program through TV and radio spots before the curbside cans were rolled out.

The bidding process has begun for curbside recycling in the City of Las Cruces. South Central Solid Waste Authority (SCSWA) also has begun work on a new web site. It will contain a SCRaP link with pertinent recycling information, locations, contact numbers, and upcoming events.

Additionally, Las Cruces City Schools has expanded its recycling program by creating a Waste Reduction & Recycling Demonstration Project. The bins at the schools may be utilized by neighborhood residents, too. Parents can send recyclables with their kids to be dropped off at the school. Also, the Post Office is sorting out cardboard for recycling.

Through the efforts of so many dedicated citizens, Las Cruces is starting 2010 with a greener view.

Next meeting: February 11, 2010, (10:00 a.m.), Amador Facility.



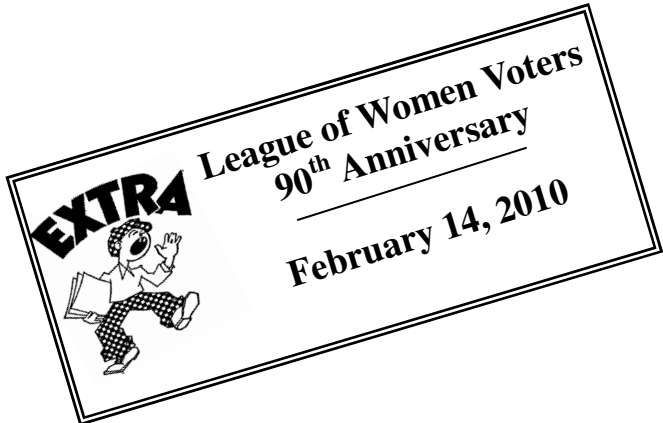
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

League of Women Voter of Greater Las Cruces
P.O. Box 8322
Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322

(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web: www.lwvglc.org



FIRST CLASS



Community Supporters

Thank You

- Alta Vista Animal Clinic
- John Ameriks, M.D.
- Binns Construction & Realty
- Joseph P. Camunez, DDS
- Compass Bank
- Doggie Dude Ranch And Cat Farm
- First American Bank
- Horizon Mechanical, Inc.
- Carole Jarden
- La Paz-Graham's Funeral Home
- Lilley Law Offices
- Francisco Mario Ortiz, Esq.
- Tate Associates
- Wells Fargo Bank
- Zia Engineering & Environmental Consultants

**February 2010
In This Issue**

Lunch General Meeting	1
President's Message	2
Look Back - Water Study	3
Branigan Library Update	4
Board Highlights	4
Mental Health Issues	4
Warmest Decade	5
Census 2010	5
Vision 2040	6
Clean Energy Works	6
Observer Reports	7

JOIN THE LEAGUE TODAY - Bring a friend with you!

Membership Type: Members joining after November 1 pay half-year dues.

Individual ___ \$50

Contribution to the League \$ _____

1st & 2nd Household ___ \$75

Contribution to the Education Fund \$ _____ (tax deductible)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____



Mail checks made out to LWV of Greater Las Cruces, P.O. Box 8322, Las Cruces, NM 88006-83223