

The VOTER

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



LUNCH WITH A LEADER - NM Senator Steve Fischmann

March 12, 2012, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room

Stephen H. Fischmann, NM Senator, District 37, will be recapping the legislative action undertaken at the 30-day NM legislative session that ended on February 16.

Senator Fischmann was elected in 2009. He currently is the chair of the Senate Science and Technology Committee and a member of the Senate Education Committee. He is a co-founder of the Children's Reading Foundation, chair of the Southwest Energy Alliance, and co-founder of the Quality Growth Alliance. Before retirement he was an executive with Levi Strauss where he worked in financial analysis and long range planning.

Senator Fischmann has worked with the League on numerous issues of mutual interest, most recently on issues related to public education. **Please join us for Lunch and an interesting legislative discussion.**

CALENDAR

March 5 (Monday) - Deadline for Reservations for Lunch with a Leader: NM Senator Steve Fischmann, "Recapping the NM Legislative Session." RSVP Marjorie Burr (522-2528 or Email: burrmb@aol.com). **Reservations are required.** If you don't cancel your reservation, you will be charged for lunch (\$10).

March 7 (Wednesday) - 10:00 a.m.- Noon, Board Meeting, Branigan Library, Roadrunner Room

March 12 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lunch with a Leader: NM Senator Steve Fischmann, "Recapping the NM Legislative Session." RSVP Marjorie Burr (522-2528 or Email: burrmb@aol.com). **Reservations are required.** \$10.

March 20 (Tuesday) - 10-11:30 a.m., CONSENSUS Unit Meeting - LWVUS Privatization Study, Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room. **See Special Insert and bring the insert with you.**

March 23 & 24 (Friday and Saturday) - 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Southwest Senior Expo, Las Cruces Convention Center. (See details, p. 5)

March 25 (Sunday), 2 p.m., FREE MOVIE - "Miss Representation," Branigan Library, Roadrunner Room

Notable Dates: March is Women's History Month

March 8 - International Women's Day

March 11-17 - Open Meeting Sunshine Week

March 17 - St. Patrick's Day

Mark Your Calendar:

April 14 (Saturday) - Annual Meeting, 9 a.m. - Noon, Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room. 3011 Buena Vida Circle.

May 12 (Saturday) - LWVNM State Council, Albuquerque (details in La Palabra, Spring Issue)

June 8-12 - LWVUS Convention, Washington Hilton, Washington, DC (information www.lwv.org)

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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)
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Vice President & Program
(Open)

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Director, Membership
Roberta Gran

Director, Voter Services
Erika Graf-Webster

Nominating Committee

Chair: Vicki Simons
Elected Member: Sadie Valverde

STUDY GROUPS**Affordable Housing**

Vicki Simons -522-4813
Christina Little-373-1882

Education

Jane Ashe - 532-8087
Sue Cain - 647-8250

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in Doña Ana County**

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Mickey Curtis - 532-5655

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Marjorie Burr - 522-2528

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Look Back: Program Planning

On February 13, more than 20 League members met to discuss possible study items for the next League year—an exercise called program planning. Within a fairly limited timeframe, the group came up with two proposals for local program and one for national program. The conversation was wide ranging, but targeted to the task at hand: *to propose issues that have widespread member interest, are timely, and are amenable to resolution through government action.*

Local Program Proposals - The two proposals that will go to the board from this meeting follow.

A study of impediments to voter participation in Doña Ana County.

The scope of the study is to research voting participation of the general population and of sub-populations to discover whether populations with certain characteristics display different voting behaviors. This could involve analysis of historic voting records by ethnicity, age, gender, type of residence (urban or rural), and type of election (general, primary, municipal, bond issue, school board). If statistically significant discrepancies among eligible voters of different populations are found, the study can undertake to discover what variables could account for this. Possible government actions could then be proposed to remove impediments to voter participation in the general population and/or for specific groups.

A study of immigration issues in Doña Ana County. Equity of enforcement of current immigration laws is a concern. The scope of this study could involve investigation of practices of law enforcement, working relationships and cooperation among federal and local agencies, disposition of cases for those found to be illegal residents, and other practices affecting the well-being of both citizens and non-citizens living in Doña Ana County. It is expected that this study would draw on information collected by at least two local organization: TAIS (Taskforce for Immigration Advocacy and Services), and CAFÉ (Comunidades en Accion y Fē) and the Immigration Task Force organized by Ambassador Delano Lewis, director, International Relations Institute, NMSU, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Immigration organized by Olga Pedroza, Councilor, City of Las Cruces.

National Program Proposal - The LWVUS Board directed that each local League could submit only one proposed study item. Despite the National Board's statement that it will not consider pursuing a constitutional amendment, this group decided to recommend that the board of LWVGLC submit the following proposal.

A consideration of a *constitutional amendment to revoke that part of the Constitution that the U.S. Supreme Court has interpreted to hold that corporations are persons with the same rights and responsibilities as persons.* This proposal necessarily involves a study of the current campaign finance practices including whether regulation of campaign finances impinges on freedom of speech, the

(Continued on page 3)

President's Message

March is Women's History Month, a time to celebrate the achievements of women. This year is particularly noteworthy because health care for women has come under assault.

The U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, chaired by Representative Darrell Issa (R-CA), heard testimony about the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) rule that would make contraceptives available to women at religiously affiliated institutions. The rule was interpreted as trampling on freedom of religion and freedom of conscience. The committee of 40 members has only 4 women congressional representatives. The first 5 witnesses were men, including clergymen. The sole woman witness was rejected by the Republican majority. Congresswomen Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) walked out of the meeting in protest.

An earlier assault was made by U.S. Senator Roy Blunt's (R-MO) add-on to S.1813 that would roll back access to birth control but also could deny coverage for maternity care, testing for HIV, mental health services, and screening for cervical cancer.

The withdrawal of funding for Planned Parenthood by the Susan G. Komen Foundation would have been a particular blow for breast cancer screening for women.

In 1992, the Year of the Woman, the number of women in Congress doubled from 5 to 10 percent. Since that date, the percentage has remained stagnant at 17 percent. Women make up 50.8 percent of the U.S. Population (U.S. 2010 Census Facts). Shouldn't representation be greater?

For 2012, the LWVUS has adopted the theme, "Power the Vote." It is time for our local League **to take action by engaging in rigorous voter registration and voter education about the election process.**

Program Planning *(Continued from page 2)*

role of Political Action Committees (PACs) in campaigns, and the effect of virtually unlimited money pouring into political campaigns.

What's Next? The two local proposals will be forwarded to the LWVGLC Board for its consideration at its March meeting. Individual members also may propose local study items at this time. The Board may recommend or not recommend none, any, or all of these items. If an item is recommended, the Annual Meeting may consider it and adopt it by majority vote. If an item is not recommended by the Board, it may be considered at the Annual Meeting if the membership votes to do so by majority vote, and it may be adopted by a two-thirds vote.

The same process is undertaken for program adoption at the national League level. The debate over program makes the LWVUS convention in June an exciting start to the summer.



LWVUS - PRIVATIZATION STUDY

CONSENSUS UNIT MEETING

Tuesday, March 20, 2012
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Good Samaritan Social Center
Creative Arts Room

**BRING SPECIAL INSERT
TO THE MEETING!**

MISS REPRESENTATION

FREE MOVIE

Sunday, March 25, 2 p.m.
Branigan Library
Roadrunner Room

The film exposes how mainstream media contributes to the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America.

Friends of the League

John Ameriks, M.D.
Biad Chile Ltd. Co.
Joseph P. Camunez, D.D.S.
Nancy & Ken Hall
Edward Jones - Connie Lee
Patricia Kratz
Lilley Law Offices
Louise P. Lockhart
Barbara Myers
Francisco Mario Ortiz Law Firm
Judith Scott and Paul Thomas
Wanda Skowlund
LaJune Smith
Marie Sutter-Sinden
Tom Tate
Zia Engineering & Environment
Consultants

Thank You



League News



Affordable Housing - *Christina Little, Co-Chair*

The Affordable Housing Committee has completed its study. An adopted position (approved by both the membership at unit meeting and the board of directors) has been reached.

This is a thank you from Vicki Simons and Chris Little to all the people who have participated in the study:

- To committee members, Jane Carter, Fran Clark, Marnie Leverett, Charlotte McCarthy, Paula Nielson, and Aletta Wilson, each of whom contributed significantly to the study. Additional thanks to William Little, who put together the slide show, and to Johnnie Aldrich, who served as our recorder for the member agreement meetings.
- To the many people in the community whom we interviewed. Special thanks to David Dollahon (who reviewed our work and met with us several times), to Rose Garcia (who arranged for a tour and gave us guidance along the way), to Thomas Hassell and Robbie Levey from the Housing Authority, to Ed Johnson from Habitat for Humanity, to Erin Quinn from the NM Mortgage Finance Authority, and to Councilor Sharon Thomas, who focused our attention on the relationships among affordable housing, transportation, and land use. It is both edifying and gratifying that the League reputation is excellent within the community. When the League calls, doors open.
- To the LWVGLC Board of Directors who offered excellent support throughout the entire process.
- To all the League members who attended any of our three meetings (all of which were competing with ALR), read our material, and offered questions and suggestions throughout the member agreement process.

We have all learned a lot. It has been great fun.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING POSITION

(Adopted by the Board of Directors 2012)

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces supports current and future efforts to increase the availability of safe, decent, and affordable housing for moderate and low income households through the following actions.

- Increase housing options for households in Doña Ana County, including but not limited to seniors, the disabled, and first-time homebuyers.
- Promote a variety of housing styles and types for rent and for purchase that are integrated within the community.
- Support strategies including public and private partnerships and grants, developmental agreements, rehabilitation, fee waivers, density bonuses, and an affordable housing trust fund and land bank.
- Support policies that link transportation, land use, and affordable housing.

League of Women Voters of New Mexico

Bonnie Burn, Reporting

League Day at the Legislature began on the evening of January 23 with a reception for members and legislators that was followed by a panel discussion about voter photo IDs.

On January 24, members picked up packets of issues fact sheets and distributed them to their local legislators. The House and Senate met in chambers late in the morning. Few committee hearings were held on the 24th; however, there was lots of activity at the Round House. The League organized three educational presentations that were very interesting: NM budget, driver's licenses, and voting issues. The League session was over about 1 p.m., and members were on their own to visit the Round House, listen to hearings, and meet with their legislators.

The weather was pleasant this year, and the visit to Santa Fe was educational and fun.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Las Cruces Public Schools - Las Cruces, New Mexico

RESOLUTION

“A RESOLUTION DECLARING FEBRUARY 14, 2012, AS A DAY TO RECOGNIZE THE OUTSTANDING WORK THE MEMBERS OF THE LAS CRUCES CHAPTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS IN ALL LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT CLASSROOMS”

WHEREAS, The League of Women Voters is a citizens' organization that has fought since 1920 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives; and

WHEREAS, The League of Women Voters operates at the national, state and local level through more than 800 state and local Leagues in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong; and

WHEREAS, The League of Women Voters was formed from the movement that secured the right to vote for women and the centerpiece of the League's efforts remains to expand participation and give a voice to all Americans; and

WHEREAS, The League of Women Voters engages in broad educational efforts as well as advocacy and their issues are grounded in our respected history of making democracy work for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that hosts candidate debates and forums because they believe deeply that the public should hear different views on the issues facing our communities and our nation; and

WHEREAS, The League of Women Voters supports the honest and respectful sharing of ideas as vital to the functioning of American democracy; and

WHEREAS, The League of Women Voters shares and expresses opinions that emerge from significant research, study and consensus; and

WHEREAS, The League of Women Voters is a national organization with strong and respected ties in New Mexico and our own community of Las Cruces; and

WHEREAS, The League of Women Voters of New Mexico was established in 1949 with the express purpose to examine and evaluate the functions and services of state government; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Las Cruces Public Schools Board of Education recognizes the outstanding work of the members of the Las Cruces Chapter of the League of Women Voters and declares February 14, 2012 as a day to honor the League of Women Voters in all Las Cruces Public School District classrooms.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education requests all social studies teachers in the district to set aside some instructional time on February 14, 2012 to ensure that students are aware of the historical roots of this organization and the service they continue to provide to all Americans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this proclamation be forwarded to the Mayor of Las Cruces, the Chair of the Doña Ana County Commission, and the Governor of the State of New Mexico.

Resolved this 7th day of February, 2012, at Las Cruces New Mexico.

Signed:

Connie Phillips, Ph.D., President

María A. Flores, Vice-President

Bonnie Votaw, Ed.D., Secretary

Chuck Davis, Member

Barbara Hall, Member



(L-R) Terry Cain, Sue Cain, and Bonnie Burn, Connie Phillips, Ph.D., President LCPS Board of Education

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS

The League's Observer Corps can enable greater coverage and information gathering, provide early warning of upcoming issues of concern, increase League's visibility, and assist in networking with other groups. We appreciate the reports that are submitted by Observers. Following the League practice of publishing nonpartisan, objective reports, the information submitted may be edited for content and brevity.

South Central Solid Waste Authority (SCSWA) - Board Meeting, February 16, 2012, 9:00-10:30 a.m., Transfer Station Meeting Room – Johnnie Aldrich, Observer

A quorum being present, Board Chair Dolores Saldaña-Caviness, County Commissioner, began the meeting promptly at 9:00 a.m., even though all of the Board members had not yet arrived.

Financial matters consumed a large part of the meeting. Pat Degman, Comptroller, Financial Services for the City of Las Cruces led the presentation and discussion. Information gleaned:

- The Authority has \$3.7 million cash on hand.
- A potential \$1 million loss is projected in the budget. Current loss is \$843,000, which will probably be reduced by the end of FY2011-2012.
- Recycling activities “have not exceeded the budget parameters,” despite rising fuel costs.
- Fuel is 8% of the total SCSWA budget.
- A recent audit of the Financial Statements by Independent Auditors gave the Authority a clean report for FY 2010-2011. Recycling was shown to be a “break-even activity in 2011.”

In other actions, the Board unanimously approved Resolution 2012-06, extending for a fourth year the Public Relations Services Price Agreement with Suzanne Michaels Communications of El Paso. SCSWA Director Patrick Peck praised Ms. Michaels's work in developing brochures and videos to educate the public, especially in regard to recycling and illegal dumping. “It's important for the public to understand that we do more than collect trash and operate the landfills,” he said.

Discussion of Resolution 2012-08, the 5-Year Business and Master Plan Update for SCSWA had to be postponed to a Special Meeting because of the non-delivery of the spiral-bound document. That meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 21, at 8:00 a.m. at the Transfer Station. It was

recommended that Ms. Michaels write an article to inform the public of the essentials in this 5-Year Plan.

In his own report, Director Peck emphasized that this year's education focus will be on illegal dumping. Chair Saldaña-Caviness will be heading a Task Force to further study the issue and to recommend solutions. The group's first meeting will be at the County Government Building on February 28.

Las Cruces Public School Board Work Session, February 7, 2012, 4:00 - 6 p.m., Administration Board Room - Bonnie Burn, Observer

The agenda was reordered to accommodate the Resolution presentation to League members Bonnie Burn and Terry and Sue Cain. The Resolution acknowledged the 92nd Anniversary of the League of Women Voters, February 14, 1920. Text of the resolution appears on page 6.

The 2010-2011 LCPS Audit Report was accepted by the Board members. Completed by Moss Adams, the report was lauded for its comprehensiveness. There were 19 findings, 16 of them related to charter schools. Corrective action has been initiated.

Assistant Superintendent Dean reviewed the status of the current annual budget. Expenditures identified as problem areas were:

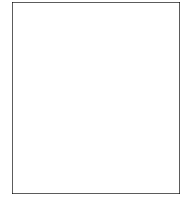
- substitute teachers (\$204,000)
- transportation costs (\$958,567) related to the magnet junior high program
- Title XX Child Care at Oñate and Las Cruces High Schools (\$100,000),

Superintendent Rounds gave an extensive presentation about happenings at the NM legislative session. Final wins and losses in the education budget and proposed education legislation will be reported in the local newspaper.



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FIRST CLASS



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Membership Application

Membership: Individual (\$60), 2nd Household Member (\$30), and Students (\$25)
New Members joining after November 1 pay half-dues.

Name: _____

2nd Household: _____

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

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

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

\$ _____ Contribution to the Education Fund (Tax Deductible) Make check payable to
 League of Women Voters Education Fund

All checks should be mailed to

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

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.