

the VOTER

March 2024
Volume 55, Issue 10



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Co-Presidents' Communiqué

Hi Everyone,

Hard to believe it's already March! With the impending start of spring, the League renews its commitment to its Program that will be recommended to our membership for the 2024/25 fiscal year. We sent out an all-call wanting to know what you thought our focus should be next year. We also had our annual Program Planning meeting that showed a continued interest to finish the revisions to three Positions: Education, Affordable Housing, and Libraries. At the Annual Meeting in April, we'll be recommending we bring closure to these three Positions.



I hope you've received the various emails from Housing Committee Chair Beth Bardwell and Education Committee Chair Eileen VanWie. They have arranged several unit meetings which gives the membership an opportunity to discuss the research and study that has gone into two Position revisions: Education (see more on page 5) and inclusion of Beneficial Electrification into the Affordable Housing Position. If consensus is reached, the Positions will then head to the Annual Meeting for consideration and adoption. A lot



of work that has gone into the recommendations so please, try to attend one of the unit meetings (see page 2 for dates and times).

Meanwhile, we've kicked-off the first meeting of the newly revised Voter Services Committee (VSC). Please join the team! This group will focus on voter education and get-out-the-vote activities between now and November 5 – General Election Day. The

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Honoring Women for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Work

March is National Women's History Month and this year's theme is honoring local women whose work exemplifies the values of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI). The JEDI principles are central to the League's success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in strengthening democracy.

For the last four years, the League has recognized the sustained contributions of local individuals or a small group of individuals to making democracy work through their efforts to mobilize civic engagement and promote justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in Southern NM.

On Sat., March 9th at 2 p.m., during the General Membership Meeting, the League will host a panel discussion of local women, all are awardees of the League's Making Democracy Work Award. They will discuss how the values of JEDI have informed their work and motivated them to develop innovative programs and projects in support of civic engagement whether through helping residents gain citizenship, exercising the right to vote or informing the policy choices of local government.

The panel will be moderated by Dr. Teresa Maria Linda Scholz, Vice President for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity at NMSU. Dr. Scholz identifies as Guatemalan and US American and is a first-generation high school graduate, and first-generation college student, raised in Guatemala and the United States.

Panelists include: • **Mary Carter**, Executive Director of the Women's Intercultural Center in Anthony, NM: Citizenship Program; • **Robyn Holmes**, Otero County Clerk: Defending voting rights in the 2022 General Election; • **Kayla Blanchard**, Health Equity Specialist and Coordinator of the Otero County Com-

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Communique cont. from page 1

next VSC **hybrid meeting** will be 3 p.m., Tuesday, March 12 (in-person at the DACC Workforce Center, 2345 Nevada Ave.) Contact [Kathe Kanim](#) if you would like a link to the Zoom. Your ideas and volunteer time are needed more than ever!

And as always, your involvement in our organization is appreciated!

- *Jo Galván Nash, Co-President*

Honoring Women cont. from page 1

munity Health Council: Vot-ER initiative.

The meeting is open to the general public and attendees are welcome to join in person or virtually over zoom. The meeting will be at the DACC Workforce Training Center, 2345 Nevada Ave. To join over zoom, click [here](#).

- *Beth Bardwell, Vice President*



2023/24 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO BOARD:

Jo Galván Nash & Kathe Kanim – Co-Presidents

Beth Bardwell – Vice-President

Edwina Jaramillo – Secretary

Kathy Brook – Interim Treasurer

Kathy Brook & Eileen VanWie – Past Presidents

Dale Yeo – Voter Services Co-Director and Co-Director - OPEN

Kate Mangelsdorf – Membership Director

Eileen VanWie & Josie Miller – Youth Engagement Co-Directors

OPEN – Public Relations Director

and

Nancy Stanton — Development Chair

Jo Galván Nash – The Voter Editor

Kate Mangelsdorf, Chair, and Johnnie Aldrich, Members – Nominating Committee

OPEN — Historians

Claudia Powell & Tom Krajci — Otero Unit Liaisons

Upcoming Calendar Events

MARCH 2024

Women's History Month; March 6 Dred Scott Case;

March 2, Sat.: **Final Affordable Housing Consensus Meeting** to discuss integrating Beneficial Electrification into the Housing Position, 2:00 p.m.; Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3589738432>

March 4, Mon.: **Regular Board Meeting**; 5:30pm, Zoom

March 8, Fri.: **International Women's Day**

March 9, Sat.: **General Membership Mtg.**, 2pm, DACC Workforce Center, 2345 Nevada Ave., hybrid mtg.

March 10, Sun.: **Daylight Savings Time Change**

March 10-April 4: **Ramadan**

March 11 or 12, Mon. or Tues.: **Education Position Unit Meetings**, 5pm, Zoom, contact [Eileen](#) for a Zoom link.

March 12, Tues.: **LWV Voter Services Committee**, 3pm, Hybrid, DACC Workforce Center and Zoom

March 18, Mon.: **Short Board Meeting**, 5:30 pm, Zoom

March 21, Thurs.: **Education Committee Mtg**, 5pm, Zoom

March 28, Thurs.: **LCPS Literacy Extravaganza**, 5-7pm, Downtown Plaza (look for League members!)

March 31, Sun.: **Easter & César Chávez Day**

Learn More About the National Program

For many years the national program of the League has focused on the Campaign to Make Democracy Work with its components of voting rights, improving elections, money in politics (formerly campaign finance), and redistricting. A new component is the electoral college, something I mentioned when I spoke about national program at the LWVSNM program planning meeting in February.

The League has a long-standing position in support of the election of the president by popular vote. The position dates to 1970 reflecting the outcome of a study of the presidential election process. During that period the League testified in support of amending the Constitution to replace the Electoral College (EC) with direct election of the President, rather than attempting to reform the Electoral College.

In 2008, the national convention voted to study the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC)

under which states would agree on how they would cast their electoral votes as an intermediate step toward eliminating the Electoral College.

Notably, the New Mexico legislature agreed to join the NPVIC in 2019. (Hannah Burling, co-president of LWVNM, was involved in lobbying the legislature on this topic.) The compact is activated when enough states join the compact to account for a majority of the electoral votes. The agreement is that the states in the compact will cast their electoral votes for the winner of the popular vote nationally.



If you are interested in learning more about this subject, see [Impact on Issues, 2022-2024](#), pages 49-51, and [National Popular Vote](#).

- *Kathy Brook, LWVNM Co-President and SNM Past-President*

Do You Want to Attend the National LWV Convention?

There's a great opportunity for our members to attend the national convention of the League of Women Voters. Our League is allowed three delegates to the convention (based on the number of our membership) which will be June 27-30, 2024 in Washington, D.C. Co-President Jo Galván Nash will be one of our delegates and you could be another.

The location of the convention is the Washington Hilton Hotel, 1919 Connecticut Ave NW, Washington, DC and the in-person registration cost is \$550. However, if you attend virtually, the League will pay for the \$125 registration fee and you'll be able to attend any of the sessions over the three-day period.

If you want to be a delegate (either virtually or in DC), you can [contact Jo](#). If you want to be an observer, you can just go to the website below and register yourself. Virtual delegates will have the ability to submit motions, debate, and vote. Virtual observers will have full access to all convention events and the ability to observe plenary sessions.

I attended the 2020 convention as an observer, which was entirely virtual, and the 2022 convention in Denver as a virtual delegate. Many years ago I had the opportunity to attend several conventions, including at least one in DC. It's a wonderful experience but virtual attendance is also a great way to learn more about the League.

For more information, including the agenda, go to the [convention website](#).

- *Kathy Brook*

Membership Dues for 24/25

The League has received a few questions from members about their yearly dues. The League's fiscal year doesn't end until April 30, 2024. By mid-April, around the time of the LWVSNM Annual Meeting, our Treasurer Kathy Brook will begin accepting payments for the 2024/25 fiscal year (May 2024 through April 2025). Dues are expected to remain the same as this year: \$65 for a single person and \$32.50 for a second household member. Any deviation from this amount would be addressed during the Annual Business Meeting in April.

Join the LWVSNM Board

Membership Director Kate Mangelsdorf or Membership Committee Member Johnnie Aldrich want to hear from you! They are searching for members who will volunteer to become Board members. Voter Services needs names of two members who would be willing to co-chair the activities that relate to voting, voting education and getting voters to the election polls.

Long-time director Dale Yeo is hanging up her Voter Services cap and we know she has big shoes to fill. But Dale says she'll still be active and will help with guidance and advice for the next set of Board members. Voter Services is essential to the mission of our organization.

Other Board positions that need to be filled are PR Director and Historian. Jo Nash, co-president, is still trying to fill in the gaps with the PR appointed position. But a fulltime member is needed to help with publicity, assisting with the Who's Who Directory, and sending information to the local website firm that can make changes to our webpages in case you don't have web publishing skills.

Finally, we don't want to lose our League history! The Historian (an appointed position that does not have to attend Board meetings) will gather our important documents at the end of each fiscal year and get them placed into the NMSU archives. Our Voters' Guides, Board minutes, and the monthly Voter newsletter are the type of publications we want to put submit for safekeeping in permanent historical files.

Please consider stepping up to one of these positions, and let [Kate](#) or [Johnnie](#) know that you'd be willing to serve. You **will not** be left without support! Board meetings are generally twice a month.

New Citizens Deserve LWV Support

Are you available on **Friday, March 8**? The League is invited to honor America's newest citizens during the U.S. District Court's Naturalization Ceremony. LWVSNM tries to have at least one representative in attendance for each ceremony.

The event will begin at 10 a.m. at the Las Cruces Convention Center. If you can attend, please contact Clerk of the Court [JoAnn Standridge](#) (575-528-1408) by March 4. And please arrive at least 20 minutes early. Special seating will be provided, and the League will be recognized for its attendance. Thank you for considering this event. It's always memorable!

Financial Support for League's Work in 2024 to be a Priority

As the first months of 2024 have passed, our League's board members and committees have been busy working to plan activities that will focus on our key mission "to empower voters and strengthen democracy" and our role to provide information to voters about this year's elections.

In order to accomplish these important goals, we must have financial resources to cover the work our dedicated volunteers are willing to undertake. Put simply, fundraising for the League's work will be an ongoing theme throughout the coming months. While much of the focus will be to cultivate partnerships with prospective donors among the foundation and business communities, similarly there will be several opportunities for League members to make contributions.

Wanted!
**SILENT
AUCTION
ITEMS**

The first of these opportunities will be to participate in a Silent Auction at the April Annual Meeting. We need donations of auction items as well as generous bids for the items that will be offered on April 13, 2024. Some members have already committed to contribute items such as jewelry, gift cards, unused/unopened children's puzzles and books, and bath and food baskets....but more items are needed!

If you would like to donate auction items, please contact Nancy Stanton, Development Chair, at: senraba@yahoo.com or 352-205-3984 by April 5th to discuss pickup arrangements.

Primary Election News

Filing day for the June 4, 2024 Primary Election candidates will be March 12 during regular office hours at the Bureau of Elections in the Doña Ana County Government Building. [Read the Proclamation](#). The League's new Voter Services Committee will be developing questions for our area candidates to answer through the state [Vote411 website](#) – an online Voters' Guide. More information about Vote411 is coming soon.

Kayla Blanchard Honored for “Making Democracy Work”

Kayla Blanchard of Alamogordo has been selected for the 2024 Making Democracy Work Award (MDWA) given annually by LWVSNM. Blanchard was presented a Certificate of Recognition and a cash award for \$250 at the February 10 program planning meeting.

As a public health official, she participated in a fellowship program that provided seven months of training in the nonpartisan initiative *Vot-ER* which is a national initiative which integrates voter access into healthcare institutions. Kayla’s work included site-based outreach through posters and waiting room slides, digital outreach and “healthy democracy kits” — a lanyard and a QR code on a badge that connects people to their state-based voter registration site (see <https://vot-er.org/>).

“Kayla’s work exemplifies what this award is all about — recognizing individuals who are strengthening democracy in southern New Mexico,” said Co-President Jo Galván Nash. “Her work with the *Vot-ER* project is engaging others to be active in activities that advance voter registration and participation.”

“I am truly grateful for this honor, and I pledge to continue advocating for civic health and democracy in all communities!” Blanchard said. “As someone who has witnessed firsthand the unique challenges faced by rural areas, I am acutely aware of the critical need to empower and engage residents in the democratic process.”

This is the fourth year for the MDWA and the second time it was awarded to an Otero County resident. The winner is traditionally announced around February 14, the anniversary of the creation of the League of Women Voters in 1920.

▪ *Jo Galván Nash, Co-President*



Kayla Blanchard is the health equity specialist and coordinator for the Otero County Community Health Council (OCCHC) in Alamogordo. She has trained more than 100 people in strategies to promote voter participation in diverse clinical and community settings.



Blanchard’s colleagues nominated her for the League award. Above, her colleague, Holly Mata of Las Cruces, accepted the award on Kayla’s behalf. Unexpectedly, icy weather on the San Augustin Pass prevented Kayla from traveling from Alamogordo to Las Cruces to receive the award in person.

Education Committee Set to Unveil Proposed Changes to Position

The Education Committee has been meeting at least twice a month for over a year and is almost ready to share with the League membership the updated education position, a membership study guide, and consensus questions. *Please select one of two scheduled unit meetings to attend via Zoom and **mark your calendar for Monday, March 11 or Tuesday, March 12 from 5:00-6:30 pm.*** During the meeting, members will reach consensus on the position. We want to hear your voices prior to seeking approval of the position at our annual meeting in April.

LWV Consensus is an agreement among a substantial number of members, reached after study and group discussion at meetings called unit meetings. No voting takes place to reach member agreement. Consensus is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; rather it is the overall sense of the group as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions. In the consensus process, the Study Committee does not produce a statement with which members agree or disagree. Rather, the Study Committee uses questions to guide discussion, after providing background materials prior to a consensus meeting. (Non-members may not participate in consensus meetings, though experts may be available to answer questions.)

The draft Position will soon be posted on the LWVSNM website [under the “Program and Positions” webpage](#) to review in advance. We look forward to listening to ideas that come from members at the unit meeting conversations. Education Committee Members are: Jane Asche, Kathy Brook, Rebecca Courtney, Patricia Johnson, Kate Mangelsdorf, Josie Miller, Jo Galván Nash, Elisa Sánchez, and Eileen VanWie.

▪ *Eileen VanWie, Education Committee Chair*



Know Your Local Government Event

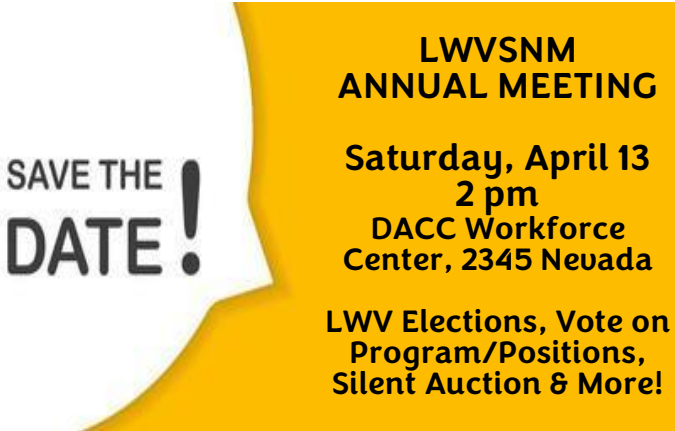
The City of Las Cruces, in collaboration with the League of Women Voters and the Las Cruces Public Schools, completed the *Know Your Local Government* event on February 7, 2024. The event was part of learning opportunities geared towards providing high school students with an opportunity to delve into the local workings of their community.

The event engaged students from Centennial, Las Cruces, Organ Mountain, and Rio Grande Preparatory Institute. A group of students from each school, selected by their government teacher, focused on addressing real issues in Las Cruces, including beautifying the city’s landscape, tackling litter and weed problems, finding solutions for affordable housing, providing engaging activities for youth, and evaluating the impact of urban heat on health, equity, the economy, and environment.

Students collaborated with both their peers and city experts to investigate these real challenges and provided possible sustainable solutions. Students presented their findings to an audience of their peers and a panel of judges. All of the teams provided innovative, practical, and possible solutions to a local government issue.

This event not only fostered civic engagement but helped to equip students with problem-solving skills. It promoted a deeper understanding of the day-to-day inner workings of their local government.

▪ *Josie Miller, Co-Director, Youth Engagement*



LWV Youth Engagement Leaders Get First-Time Voters Registered

Representatives of the Doña Ana County Clerk’s office and of the League’s Youth Engagement Committee registered young voters in Chaparral and Gadsden High Schools in February and will be registering young voters in Santa Teresa in March. Thanks to Emily Burr, Cynthia Mendoza, Karena Oberman, Stewart Oberman, and Rebecca Courtney for their participation in the process. Tentatively, a voter registration drive for Las Cruces Public Schools will take place in April.

At right, League member Rebecca Courtney works with a Gadsden high school student.

Far Right Photo: Pictured are LWV Youth Engagement Co-Director Eileen VanWie; Sal Melendrez, Mike Paulino, and Branden Jaquemai, teachers, Emily Burr, DAC Bureau of Elections Lead, and Cynthia Mendoza, DAC Bureau of Elections Communications Coordinator.



League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico

Treasurer's Report • 02/01/2024 - 02/29/2024

Prepared on 02/29/2024 by Kathy Brook

DATE	DETAIL	AMOUNT
	BALANCE FORWARD as of 01/31/2024	\$ 6,904.59
NEW INCOME		
2/5/24	Deposit --4-5: Donations/Gifts in Addition to Dues	\$65.00
2/5/24	Deposit --3-1:Dues,	\$65.00
2/26/24	PayPal Transfer	\$155.35
	TOTAL INCOME	\$ 285.35
NEW EXPENSES		
2/12/24	Green Chamber of Commerce Membership Dues, Chk 1175	\$129.00
2/20/24	Dale Yeo reimbursement; 14-1 Website hosting	\$106.97
2/23/24	Kayla Blanchard, Chk 1178; 13-2 Celebrations, MDW	\$250.00
2/23/24	Consumer Cellular, Chk 1180; 10-1: Bd expenses, telephone	\$22.11
2/28/24	US Postal Service, Chk 1181; 10-2 Bd expenses, PO Box	\$200.00
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 708.08
	BANK BALANCE as of 2/29/2024	\$ 6,481.86
Pending	Deposit of \$235 (\$200 Donation + \$35 Red cup Donations)	

COMMITTED FUNDS

Diversity Fund	\$ 220.00
Youth Engagement Fund	\$ 725.00
Social Media Fund	\$ 250.00
New Mexico Listens Project	\$ 500.00
TOTAL COMMITTED FUNDS	\$ 1,695.00

Donations designated for Voter Guides totaled \$1295.53 and have been fully expended.



LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Regular Meeting

February 5, 2024

Observer: Jennifer Kreie

At the first meeting of the Council in February, there were no proclamations. There were several people with public input on various topics. Four resolutions were passed.

One resolution in particular might interest League members. A resolution was passed to amend the contract with the OIR Group. The OIR Group monitors, evaluates and reports twice a year to the City about Police Department issues. In response to many comments from the public in the past two years this amendment adds four community outreach meetings done by the OIR Group throughout the year in order to be more transparent to the public and to hear public comments.

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Regular Meeting

February 20, 2024

Observer: Kathy Brook

This being the first regular council meeting following the death of LCPD Officer Jonah Hernandez much of the public comment portion of the meeting was devoted to extending condolences to the officer's family and to the members of the police department. There was also considerable comment, especially from business owners, about what is perceived as a deterioration in the quality of life and an increase in danger to citizens in Las Cruces, most notably in the Picacho and North Valley Dr. areas.

At the end of the meeting, the city manager noted he has more direct responsibility for public safety than the councilors and that the council has not pushed back on public safety recommendations coming from city management. Because the current structure of council meetings has councilor, mayor and manager comments coming at the conclusion of the meeting, when many members of the public have already departed, the mayor indicated that the order of meetings would change so that public input will come immediately before council/manager comments.

The council approved resolutions relating to budget adjustments, grant awards, and ambulance services.

The League is still looking for an Observer Corps volunteer to attend the Doña Ana County Commission Meetings. If you can attend their meetings (usually twice a month), please contact a Board member. You can attend in person or watch online. Short reports that are of interest to League members are written for each month's Voter. Plus, it keeps our elected officials on their feet knowing that we are watching our government in action.

D.A. Meets with NAACP

The NAACP of Doña Ana County met on February 17, 2024. The guest speaker was Doña Ana County District Attorney Gerald Byers. DA Byers talked about the public concern with someone who is charged with a felony who is released on bond and commits another felony prior to trial. Senate Bill 271, Repeat Felony Offender No Bond Hold, addressed this problem and it has passed in this legislative session. With the bill, if a second felony occurs the person would be held without bond until trial. DA Byers pointed out that the governor still must sign this bill before it becomes law.

DA Byers discussed other issues regarding how cases are managed in the DA's office and the legal constraints that determine how some types of offenses are processed.

Dr. Bobbie Green, chapter president, told everyone about upcoming events during Black History month and she mentioned the need to plan the next Juneteenth event.

- Submitted by Jennifer Kreie, NAACP and LWVSNM Member

UPCOMING GOVT. MEETINGS

LC City Council:

March 4; March 11 (work session); March 18; March 25 (work session); April 1; all at 1:00 p.m., City Hall

County Commission:

March 12; March 26; all at 9:00 am, DAC Govt. Center.

LCPS School Board:

March 15 (special mtg.) 9:00 am, LCPS Admin. Bldg. Conference Rm A/B.; March 19, 6 pm, Regular Meeting; LCPS Admin. Building Board Room.

Books for LWVSNM Book Club – March 2024

We read so we know things

BOOK CLUB MEETINGS ARE ON 1ST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, 3:00 PM

If you would like to participate, contact Erika at grafwebster@icloud.com

Books Selected for Upcoming Meetings

<p>March 7</p> <p>Moderator: Rorie Measure</p>	<p>END TIMES elites, counter-elites and the path of political disintegration by Peter Turchin This book offers a big picture birds eye view of how political leaders have dealt with the kind of crisis we are in now, the reason civilizations inevitably reach this kind of crisis, and how things have turned out both positively and negatively. "Peter Turchin brings science to history. Some like it and some prefer their history plain. But everyone needs to pay attention to the well-informed, convincing and terrifying analysis in this book." —Angus Deaton, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics <i>Peter Turchin, one of the most interesting social scientists of our age, has infused the study of history with approaches and insights from other fields for more than a quarter century. End Times is the culmination of his work to understand what causes political communities to cohere and what causes them to fall apart, as applied to the current turmoil within the United States.</i></p>
<p>April 4</p> <p>Moderator: Kathy Brook</p>	<p>Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America by Heather Cox Richardson <i>A vital and urgent call to action about the precarious state of American democracy, charting its historical challenges and current threats, from one of our era's most important and insightful historians. Richardson reminds us that democracy is not a static institution but a living, evolving process that requires constant vigilance and participation from all of us. The lessons of the past offer a roadmap for navigating a moment of political crisis. Richardson delves into the tumultuous journey of American democracy, revealing how the roots of Donald Trump's "authoritarian experiment" can be traced back through the earliest days of the republic. She examines the historical forces that have led to the current political climate, showing how modern conservatism has preyed upon a disaffected population, weaponizing language and promoting false history to consolidate power.</i></p>