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Co-Presidents' Communiqué

Hello League Members and Friends,

It's hard to believe that 2023 is nearly over. But, it has been a year filled with many League activities. We have continued our outreach to the community, including our youth and government officials. And, on behalf of the Board of Directors, we thank each and every member who committed to our mission throughout the year.

As we look back at this year, let's congratulate ourselves for getting people to become more aware of the 2023 election and for getting to the polls! There are now elections held every year, and we can't let people forget about the non-presidential cycles.



The observations by our members who were election "watchers" indicated many young people were voting and residents were still registering on election day (see page 4).

Of course, there was a lot of work done to get more people interested in voting and our Voters' Guides continued to be important to the public. The fact that we printed a Spanish Guide is also beneficial to many throughout the county. We need to thank Voter Services Dale Yeo for always leading that charge!

Outreach came in a variety of forms, ranging from meeting with educators at NMSU and DACC to working with public school personnel through the Education Committee and the Youth Engagement activities. Co-Directors Eileen VanWie and Josie Miller will be continuing their work with high school students as we head into 2024.

2024 will also be a year to continue updating the League's positions regarding libraries, and we want to adopt updates to the LWVSNM Education Position and Affordable Housing Position at the Annual Meeting in April.

—continued next page

Legislative Conversation & Holiday Social a Success!

There's no better way to describe the Dec. 2 League event other than "fantastic!" The Legislative Conversation and Holiday Social attracted over 80 members from the local League, AAUW and NAACP. Plus, many non-members from the community were in attendance to hear four members from our county's legislative delegation talk about their 2024 priorities and answer questions from the audience.

We thank (photo below, L to R) Representative Raymundo Lara, Senator Jeff Steinborn, Senator Joseph Cervantes, and Senator Carrie Hamblen who spent the afternoon with us. Although several legislators were already in Santa Fe and could not attend, the conversation was priceless, and the League is eager to advocate for the positions it outlined to our lawmakers (see page 6).



Many, many thanks also go out to those who volunteered their efforts to make the event so wonderful. First and foremost, we thank Vice-President Beth Bardwell for coordinating the gathering; and kudos to League and NAACP member Liz Rodriguez-Johnson for organizing all the donations. The buffet food was delicious, and many guests were the lucky winners of the donated raffle gifts.

By the way, the raffle netted the League \$795 which will be used for our continued activities.

—continued on page 3

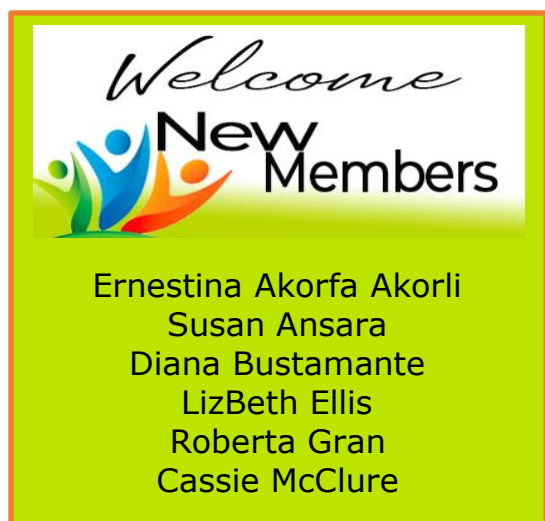
Co-Presidents' Communiqué (cont.)

We also look forward to see what the Otero County Unit of our League will be doing in the new year, as they had a tremendously successful 2023 by hosting many candidate forums in Alamogordo and Tularosa.

Let's keep up the momentum and keep spreading the word about how others can get involved with the League. 2024's General Election will be critical, and our League can be instrumental in supporting election and voter participation.

Have a wonderful holiday and stay safe as you ring in the new year.

▪ *Jo Galván Nash & Kathe Kanim, Co-Presidents*



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 – Treasurer

Kathy Brook & Eileen VanWie – Past Presidents

Dale Yeo – Voter Services Co-Director and

TBA, Co-Director

Kate Mangelsdorf – Membership Director

Eileen VanWie & Josie Miller – Youth Engagement

Co-Directors

TBA – Public Relations Director

and

Nancy Stanton – Development Chair

Jo Galván Nash – The Voter Editor

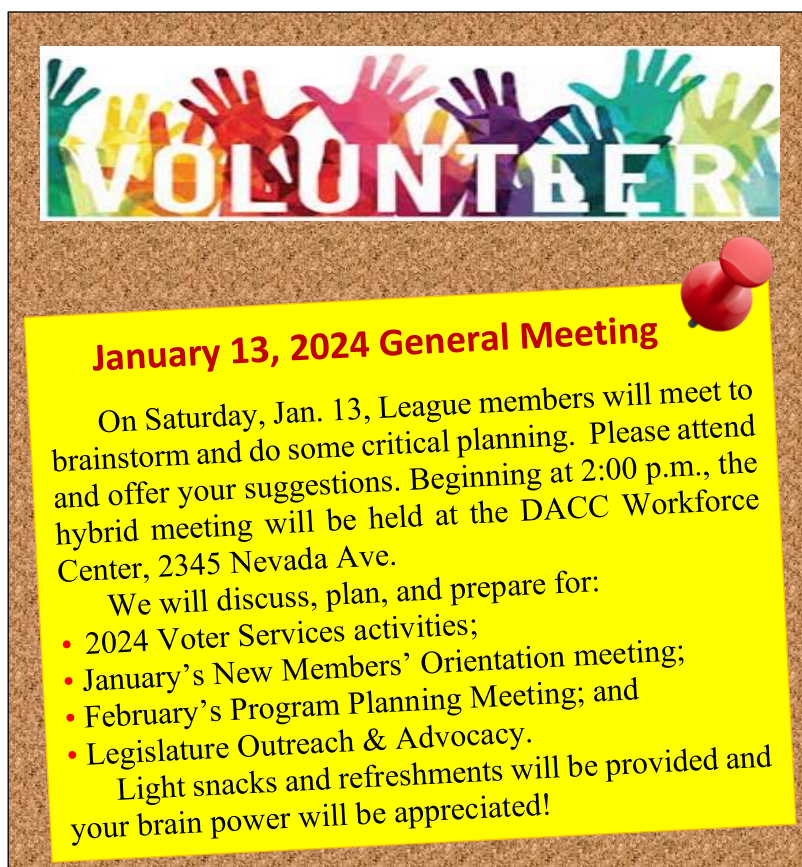
Mary Flynn, Chair, and Johnnie Aldrich and Kate

Mangelsdorf, Members – Nominating Committee

TBA – Historians

Claudia Powell & Cindy Broughton – Otero Unit

Liaisons



Upcoming Calendar Events

DECEMBER 2023

Dec. 7, Thurs., LWV Book Club, 3pm, [Zoom](#)

Dec. 7-15: Hanukkah

Dec. 11, Mon.: Education Comm, 5pm, contact [Eileen VanWie](#) if you want to attend or join.

Dec. 18, Mon.: **CANCELED** - LWVSNM Board Meeting

Dec. 24-30: Thank a Soldier Week

Dec. 25.: Christmas

JANUARY 2024

Jan. 1, Mon.: New Year's Day Holiday

Jan. 2, Tues.: Affordable Housing Committee, 3:30-5pm, ZOOM, contact Beth betbardwell@gmail.com

Jan. 2, Tues.: Regular Board Mtg., 5:30 pm via Zoom



Images from the Legislative Conversation & Holiday Social

Cont. from page 1

Others volunteers to recognize include: SNM members Nancy Stanton, Edwina Jaramillo, Kathy Brook, Rebecca Courtney, and Rosemarie Sanchez for donations, manning the raffles and sign-ins, beautifully decorating the large room, and contacting our Legislators.

It must be said that having two additional partners involved with the event was a feather in our networking cap. Thanks to the AAUW (Kay Brilliant and Donna Yargosz and Anne Chase, co-presidents), and the DAC-NAACP (Dr. Bobbie Green, president) for presenting their organizations' Legislative priorities and for joining forces with the League. Their participation is appreciated! As Beth Bardwell said, "...it took a small army of dedicated women to make an event like this blossom."

The League's next steps are to follow up with Legislators as bills get introduced during the legislative session.

■ *Jo Galván Nash, Co-President*



Photos: Rebecca Courtney, Eileen VanWie, Rosemarie Sanchez, Beth Bardwell and Jo Nash



Photo Left: LWVSNM Vice President Beth Bardwell and Sen. Jeff Steinborn; Above: Kay Brilliant addresses more than 80 attendees. She outlined the legislative priorities for the AAUW.



Photo at left, counter-clockwise: Dr. Dulcinea Lara of NMSU (left) chats with LWV Members Elisa Sánchez and Voter Services Chair Dale Yeo; Sen. Carrie Hamblen (left), the CEO/President of the Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce visited with LWVSNM Co-President Jo Galván Nash; Below is LWV and NAACP member Jane Asche with Rep. Ray Lara.



Above-left: NAACP member Reverend Carolyn Wilkins and Julia Brown, Esq., member of the NAACP and Board Chair of the national AAUW, attended the legislative event. Above-right: Dr. Monica Torres, president of the Doña Ana Community College, welcomed everyone to one of the DACC campus buildings — the Workforce Center where the League and the AAUW meet monthly.

Observations from Election Day

A dozen LWVSNM members volunteered to be election “watchers” during the November local regular election. Their work was to observe and take notes of the process. Those who contributed to this important transparency task were: Alex Burr, Amoreena France, Elisa Sánchez, Jo Galván Nash, Johnnie Aldrich, David Rice, Rebecca Courtney, Pattie Hartman, Charlotte Lipson, Eileen VanWie, Gill Sorg, and Kate Mangelsdorf. They attended a training prior to visiting approximately 14 voting locations from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Below are a few of the watchers’ observations which have been sent to the Secretary of State and the Doña Ana County Clerk:

CITY HALL: *There was a steady stream of voters and around 10:45 AM there was briefly a long line waiting to vote. This was a very smooth operation with no machine breakdowns or glitches except for the same day registration computer which was slow.*

LAS CRUCES HIGH: *In contrast to City Hall, voting was sparse. It was difficult to find the voting room in this huge complex. There should have been signage on Boutz; when the parking lot was full, it was hard to find a spot. Voting itself was quite smooth with young people at the computers.*

CAMINO REAL MID SCHOOL: *The poll workers, including college students, were exceptionally friendly. This precinct had only 300 votes, yet there was slightly more than 10% of spoiled voter ballots. It appeared that most of the problems were due to people incorrectly filling out the ranked-choice-voting section. By evening, it was tremendously hard for voters to even find the precinct area due to poor outdoor lighting.*



Friendly poll workers at Camino Real Mid School greeted voters throughout the day on Nov. 7, 2023. Unfortunately, overall turnout was light.

HILLRISE ELEM: *Several voters spoiled ballots (sometimes more than one ballot!). Most spoiled ballots resulted from the rank-choice voting feature. Notably, at the close of polls, the poll workers did a manual recount of all ballots in the bins of the voting machines. This process was necessitated by the mis-feeds [that took place earlier in the day]. Using the manual recounts, it was possible to reconcile the counts shown on machines and in the special bins on the machines. The machine tapes were prepared and signed by all poll workers.*

DESERT HILLS: *The Presiding Judge welcomed me and immediately told me about problems they were having with the tabulator. It caught ballots at the top of the machine, rather than dropping them in the container below the machine. At the end of the day, they intended to count all of the ballots by hand and compare the number to the number of green voter information sheets. Before I left, someone from the County came and reset the tabulator, fixing the problem.*

GOOD SAMARITAN: *Regarding Ranked Choice Voting — the machine rejected the ballot but the issue was resolved quickly; the voter was given a new ballot and the process continued moving smoothly and quickly. When I left at 5pm the count was 25 votes shy of 300! Good showing for this location.*

Collaboration with Higher Education

The LWVSNM Education Committee met with eight New Mexico State University Health, Education, and Social Transformation (HEST) faculty via Zoom on Nov. 13 to discuss teacher education related to issues addressed in the *Martinez/Yazzie v. New Mexico* court ruling. The faculty represented Literacy, BIL/TESOL, Multicultural Education, ECE, Associate Dean for Research, Ethnic Studies (BEST), Learning Technologies, and SPED. It sounds like the faculty are addressing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes future teachers need to provide an equitable framework of learning experiences for K-12 students.

The Committee met again on Nov. 30th. Members will continue to make public comment at Las Cruces Public School Board meetings. At the next meeting on Dec. 12, we plan to comment on



their Community Schools policy that is being updated by the Board. We reviewed and discussed the education priorities written for the Legislative Conversations and Holiday Social on Saturday, Dec. 2nd.

The Committee will meet via Zoom on **Monday, December 11 at 5:00 pm.** If you are interested joining the Committee, please send a message to vanwieek@yahoo.com.

▪ Eileen VanWie,
Youth Engagement Committee Co-Director

Legislative Outreach

We’re seeking several members to be involved with advocating for LWV legislative priorities during the 2024 Legislative 30-day session, Jan. 16th – Feb. 15th (see page 6). If you’re interested in emailing or calling legislators during the session, contact [Jo Nash](#) or [Kathe Kanim](#). A small committee will meet in January to set up a process of when to contact our legislators. Your involvement would be a great help.

Youth Engagement Report

The first meeting of the Youth Engagement Committee/Civic Engagement Project was held via Zoom on November 29th. At the meeting we discussed the *Know Your Local Government* project that involves the partnership among the LWVSNM, LCPS educators, and the City of Las Cruces. High school students will study local government in their school classes and then attend an event at City Hall on Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024. (The date at City Hall has been changed due to scheduling issues from an earlier reported date.) Students will be invited to solve real problems impacting Las Cruces and will create a presentation to share possible solutions with each other and a panel of judges. Hopefully solutions will be shared later with the City Council. If you are interested in helping with this project, please let us know.

The second project discussed was registering eligible high school students to vote in partnership with the County Clerk's Office, beginning in February. In the 2022-2023 academic year, Voter Registration Agents (VRAs) among the LCPS Educator Specialists registered 300 high school students to vote. Other students were registered by LWVSNM VRAs. We want to top that number and expand numbers in the other Doña Ana County schools.

The third project discussed was two NM Listens sessions with NMSU sociology students. NMSU Sociology Professor and LWVSNM member Cynthia Pelak arranged for League members to visit Dr. Stephanie Arnett's class on October 31 and November 9. Cynthia and Kathy Brook joined us for the two meetings, to get the students' thoughts on our government, democracy, elections, and on civic issues important to them. The listening project addresses the goals of the sociology course to understand the "social scientific" way (theory) of thinking about the world, the various customs of contemporary society, and the tools needed to address the theoretical framework.

At the first session, we had students discuss the following questions in small groups.

1. What is working and not working with our government?
2. What does *democracy* mean to you?
3. How does the concept of democracy relate to your answer to question one?
4. How do you see our democracy benefiting you?
5. What civic issues, social, and community concerns are important to you?

Students identified many important civic issues, such as homelessness, health care, immigration, gun violence, equal rights, climate concerns, education, drug abuse, and much more.

At the second meeting, a few short videos were shared and discussed. The first was a 4-minute PBS video called *Haudenosaunee: Women and Governance*, which describes how the Iroquois nations long enjoyed equity (women as leaders) in governance and was a model for our own democracy. The next 2-minute video, called *What is Civic Engagement?* resulted in broadening understanding of civic engagement to include political, as well as community actions by any and all residents to improve their communities.

Using common civic issues identified by the university students at the first listening session (homelessness, healthcare, immigration, gun violence, and drug/alcohol abuse), small groups were given time to research one of those issues online to find organizations and community leaders who could provide more information about the issue. For example, with gun violence, students found the *New Mexicans to Prevent Gun Violence*, the *NM Department of Health*, and the *Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence*. They also identified *Sandy Hook Promise* as a place to get information and give financial support.

The final topic was about elections, voting, and security. When asked how many had ever voted, with a group of about 40 students, two or three raised their hands. When asked to share their election and voting concerns, there were questions about the process, locations, ballots being confusing, "choosing the lesser of two evils," voting anxiety, voting manipulation, and the electoral college. The brief video of Doña Ana County Clerk Amanda López Askin, making a public service announcement (as the County Clerks in the state did prior to the election), provided a few answers to some of their concerns.

Talking with these young people gave hope for the future of our society. The two sessions provided a valuable introduction to themes that are important to the League of Women Voters.

A next meeting of the LWVSNM Youth Engagement Committee and LCPS Civic Engagement Project, is planned for **Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024 at 4:00 pm via Zoom**. We invite League members interested in youth engagement to reach out to Josie (jomiller@lcps.net) & Jghernan (jghernan@comcast.net) and Eileen (vanwieek@yahoo.com) to be included on messages to the Committee.

- Josie Miller and Eileen VanWie
Co-Directors, Youth Engagement

INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING

Constitutional Amendment

- **Amend the NM Constitution to create an independent redistricting commission** with full disclosure and public hearings throughout the process on the plan proposed for adoption.

WHY: Voters should select their legislators — rather than representatives choosing their constituents by drawing district boundaries. A 2022 poll by the UNM Center for Social Policy showed that 77% of likely voters support the creation of an independent redistricting commission; only 12% opposed it.

SALARIES FOR LEGISLATORS

Constitutional Amendment

- **Amend the NM Constitution to allow for state legislators to earn a daily or annual salary** that is fair and reasonable.

WHY: Paying legislators a fair and reasonable salary for their public service will help diversify future candidates vying to serve our communities and will attract and retain qualified, committed legislators. All New Mexicans who work are entitled to compensation; very few people can afford to work without pay — this should also apply to legislators. There is a cost to government and that cost should be paid by taxpayers.

GUN SAFETY

- **Support regulation of firearms, particularly assault weapons, for public safety.**

WHY: Assault weapons give assailants the power to turn common-day American gathering places (churches, schools, concerts, stores, athletic events, theaters) into zones of violence. In 2022, there were 44,427 verified deaths in the U.S. from gun violence of all types; 6,175 children ages 0-17 were killed or injured; 681 deaths were from mass shootings and mass murders; [Gun Violence Archives](#). As of Oct, 26, 2023, the U.S. has had at least 565 mass shootings during 2023; averaging nearly two mass shootings a day (ABC News).

EDUCATION

- **Continue to attract and retain educators with competitive salaries.**
- Fund stipends/bonuses/additional compensation to hire teachers in hard-to-fill vacancies (special education, bilingual, and multicultural) that will support Yazzie/Martinez mandates; additional funding is also needed for multicultural and bilingual instructional materials.
- Fund additional community schools and hire additional school social workers to combat absenteeism.
- Ensure that professional development and teacher training incorporates knowledge of multiculturalism; and fund expansion in higher education on multiculturalism and the creation, implementation and evaluation of college students' knowledge of Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- Provide additional funding to strengthen elementary reading instruction (English and bilingual).

WHY: New Mexico ranks at the bottom compared to other states with regard to educational outcomes. The mandates from Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit are still not being met. Absenteeism is a chronic, ongoing problem throughout the state.

WATER RESOURCES

- **Protect and conserve our usable water supply.**
- Restore personnel in the state's water agencies to implement the 2023 Water Security Planning Act.
- Provide additional funds to the state's agencies under the Water Data Act of 2019 and for aquifer mapping by the Bureau of Geology & Mineral Resources.
- Fund loans/grants to initiate collaborative regional water planning efforts to protect our declining aquifers and stream systems.

WHY: Previous personnel cuts at the state level have taken a toll. Water shortages in NM are a crisis that are "out-of-sight, out-of-mind." The state should provide reliable and accessible water data for regional water planners. NM needs robust water policies, processes, and data to address long-term drought, aging infrastructure and climate change. Recognizing our water-constrained future, the Legislature passed the Water Planning Security Act of 2023 and the Water Data Act of 2019, but these policies and programs have not received sufficient funding to fully implement them and address the magnitude of the problem.

Invitation to Sponsor MLK 2024 Weekend

LWVSNM Members: please read this invitation from Dr. Bobbie Green. If you would like to obtain a breakfast ticket or get involved, email NAACP at info@naacpdac.org or [LWVSNM Member Liz Rodriguez-Johnson](#).

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said “*We must rise together as brothers*”. And, although Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, the wisdom of the slain Civil Rights Leader continues to guide us through the difficult times we are facing even now. Each year, the Doña Ana County NAACP commemorates MLK Weekend by hosting programs which emphasize Dr. King’s principles of non-violence and the value of collaboration. This year’s theme “*Thriving Together*” speaks to the need for unity. Our MLK 2024 Breakfast keynote speaker will be NM Attorney General, Raul Torres.

MLK 2024 weekend will begin with a march on Sunday, January 14th from City Hall to the AFSCME Union Hall. The 2024 MLK Breakfast will be held on Monday, January 15th at the Las Cruces Convention Center at 8 AM. In addition to the march and the breakfast, our celebrations will include church services at local black churches throughout the city on Sunday morning, January 14th.

We know that you are interested in promoting the principles of non-violence in our community. Therefore, we invite you to become a supporter of the NAACP as we honor Dr. King TOGETHER. We hope that you will consider becoming one of our sponsors for this year’s MLK 2024 Weekend. Your brand name recognition will increase significantly because of your generosity. And, we will proudly announce your support during all of our MLK 2024 Weekend of Events.

Thank you for your consideration!

- Bobbie Green, President, Doña Ana County, NAACP

UPCOMING GOVT. MEETINGS

LC City Council: Dec. 11 (wrksession); Dec. 18; Jan. 2, 2024; all at 1:00 p.m., City Hall

County Commission: Dec. 12; 9:00 am, DAC Govt. Center.

LCPS School Board: Dec. 8, (Special Session – Appeal Hearing) 9:00 am; Admin. Building;
TOPIC:
Affirm, reverse or modify the Supt.’s decision regarding denial to remove a library book.
Dec. 12, 6:00 pm, LCPS Admin. Bldg. Board Room.

LWV at Philanthropy Fair



Johnnie Aldrich and Eileen VanWie (in photo) along with Karena Oberman and Cynthia Pelak represented the League at the NMSU Philanthropy Fair. It gave multiple organizations and non-profits a chance to reach out to students about services and opportunities. The ladies handed out LWV materials, offered voter registration and signed up new members to the League.

Thank You!

The League wants to thank two gentlemen who have been outstanding members of our community and have provided support to the LWVSNM. Richard Coltharp, publisher of the Las Cruces Bulletin, and Mike Cook, lead reporter at the Bulletin, are leaving the weekly newspaper and are moving on to new adventures. We thank both of them for multiple past issues of the LWV Voters’ Guide and for their fair reporting over the years. We wish them well!

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES

Regular Meeting

OCT. 2, 2023 • 5:30p.m. • Via Zoom

Board Members: Beth Bardwell (Vice President), Kathy Brook (Past President-ABS), Edwina Jaramillo (Secretary), Kathe Kanim (co-President), Jo Galván Nash (co-President), Kate Mangelsdorf (Membership Director), Josie Miller (Co-Youth Engagement Director), Eileen VanWie (Past President & Co-Director, Youth Engagement), Dale Yeo (Voter Services Co-Director) • **Otero County Unit (OCU) Liaison:** Cynthia Broughton, Tom Krajci • **Non-Board Member:** Nancy Stanton, Development Chair

There was discussion regarding the upcoming forums held in Otero County and by KRWG TV. J. Galván Nash reported that several Otero County Unit members coordinated several first-time in-person public forums for candidates in Tularosa and Alamogordo. She reported that C. Powell, C. Broughton, and T. Krajci, did a job well done organizing the forums. Also participating were J. Nash, K. Kanim, and Nancy Stanton. T. Krajci reported that the Tularosa school board forums will occur next Saturday. J. Nash also thanked those that participated in the KRWG forums. KRWG will send a list of dates when the forums will air.

In addition, J. Nash reported that Mesilla residents want to hold a forum 10/24/17 at 5:30p.m. J. Galván Nash asked for volunteers to fill the following roles: greeter, moderator, timekeeper, persons to help with questions.

In the meantime, the Forum Guidelines and Rules that J. Nash drafted from LWVUS, LWV Wisconsin, and LWVNM rules were voluminous. A simplified set needs to be in place by the October 7th forum. She asked the Board to look over the proposed rules this week and provide comments, if any. T. Krajci noted the rules worked well at the Alamogordo forum, however, for all candidates to receive the same question makes it boring. A suggestion was made to have different questions, but candidates could address a question not asked of them in their final two-minute comment. Another suggestion was to have candidates break up into two groups where the groups receive different questions.

B. Bardwell reported that she sent the Oct. 14 general meeting agenda to the County Clerk. D. Yeo will provide an overview of the area races and will distribute English and Spanish Voters Guides. The County Clerk will have a PowerPoint presentation on the Voting Rights Act, on Poll Watchers and Workers, on poll worker security, and ranked-choice voting followed by a Q & A from League members.

B. Bardwell reported that, with input from the subcommittee, she drafted a solicitation letter for food donations. She noted that we need to document the donations for tax purposes. N. Stanton asked for a copy of the businesses being asked, and that a quick acknowledgement should be sent to the businesses that donate.

J. Nash reported that the LWVSNM has received four donations totaling \$1,300— all to go toward printing of the Voters' Guides. \$100 was received from Mesilla Valley Transportation and the rest from League members. D. Yeo noted that donors were advertised on the front of the Voters' Guides. The Bulletin's English Voters' Guide is to be published on 10/13/23; the Spanish translation will be published on 10/9/23. She noted that there are 2,000 overruns that will need to be distributed.

D. Yeo reported a poor response rate on Vote411 for rural Dona Ana County. T. Krajci reported 15% response rate for Otero County and plans additional calls to encourage response.

J. Nash reported that K. Brook has volunteered to be the interim Treasurer. She noted that there were approximately 29 membership non-renewals that will severely affect the 23/24 budget revenue.

-Minutes by Edwina Jaramillo, Secretary

SUMMARY MINUTES

Regular Board Meeting

November 6, 2023 • 5:00 pm • Via Zoom

Board Members: Beth Bardwell (Vice President), Kathy Brook (Past President), Edwina Jaramillo (Secretary), Kathe Kanim (co-President), Jo Galván Nash (co-President), Kate Mangelsdorf (Membership Director), Josie Miller (Co-Youth Engagement Director), Eileen VanWie (Past President & Co-Director, Youth Engagement), Dale Yeo (Voter Services Co-Director); **Otero County Unit (OCU) Liaison:** none; **Non-Board Member:** Nancy Stanton

(continued next page)

Summary Minutes Continued

Co-Presidents' Report

Columbus Forum Report: K. Kanim reported that she and N. Stanton participated in the Columbus forum which went well with an excellent format but was mostly attended by the candidates.

Special Meeting Date to Set Legislative Priorities: B. Bardwell reported the LWVSNM priorities will be developed by 11/20/23 and a printed version will be sent to 15 invited legislators prior to the meeting.

MDWA: J. Galván Nash asked for volunteers to form a subcommittee to begin plans for awarding the yearly Making Democracy Work Award. E. Van Wie, N. Stanton, and J. Galván Nash volunteered. They will bring basic information to the Board for advertisement and making a selection.

Vice President Report/Meetings

Dec. 2 Social and Legislative Conversation Update: B. Bardwell led the discussion on numerous tasks to be undertaken in preparation of the Legislative meeting. Invitations, flyers, food, gifts, volunteers and many more items were discussed. It was determined that winners from the raffle must be present to win. Thank-you letters to the two other sponsoring organizations and to legislators will also be prepared.

Treasurer Report

K. Brook reported that she is continuing to sort out the reports and will be completed soon. She reported that some late dues were received, also received was a bill from the state League for the per member payment. J. Nash indicated that donations (except dues donations) by League members should be noted as in-kind on the appropriate SNM form.

Past-Presidents' Report(s)

LWVUS Program Planning Notice

K. Brook reported that the national League asks local Leagues to complete a survey leading up to the national convention (to be held June 20-24, 2024). The focus is on national issues, and local Leagues can recommend studies. The survey form is due in March. Meanwhile, K. Brook will prepare a mid-year budget by 12/4/23. J. Galván Nash asked her to keep her on track for program planning. K. Brook also reported that League co-presidents will receive an annual survey from the state League about LWVSNM activities. The survey is due 12/15/23.

Nuclear Issue Study: Additionally, K. Brook reported that LWVCNM will hold two Zoom meetings on the Nuclear Issue Study on 12/14/23 (one meeting at 11:30 a.m. and the other in the evening). The following week a consensus meeting on the issue will be held. LWVCNM will send an informational email with the specifics for the meeting. She noted that it is important to participate so that we can reach consensus to take to the national convention.

Unfinished Business:

A voter-registration proposal from a League member was discussed at length. The proposal is asking for funding and support from LWVSNM. (Note: The League's non-partisan policy prohibits visible support for candidates by League Presidents and Voter Services Directors. However, members are allowed to contribute to candidates of choice.) The focus is primarily to do targeted outreach to prospective voters to rural areas of Doña Ana County and under-represented communities. The targeted approach aligns with the state League's interest in communicating in Spanish and Navajo. The outreach via radio, social media, and "old-school" registration tables could occur. As a result of the discussion, it was decided that a subcommittee comprised of N. Stanton, E. VanWie, J. Galván Nash, and K. Brook will meet with the proposal's requester to get more detail and determine a way to support the project.

DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

Membership

Purge List Changes: The Board reviewed a short list of members to confirm their inclusion or removal from the Handbook. J. Galván Nash reported that the Handbook to be emailed to members will include contact information. The Handbook will also be posted online but will not include contact information, only member names. No copies will be printed.

Development: N. Stanton reported that she has been "beating the bushes" to obtain funding. Recent visits to five gyms look promising. She is also working with the state League to fundraise for donations from large entities under one umbrella (vs multiple local Leagues reaching out to the same entity).

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

—minutes by Edwina Jaramillo

SUMMARY MINUTES

Special Board Meeting

Friday, Nov. 10, 2023, 1:00 p.m. via Zoom

In Attendance: Jo Nash and Kathe Kanim, Co-Presidents; Kathy Brook, Past-President; Beth Bardwell, Vice-President; Edwina Jaramillo, Secretary [joined 1:50pm]; Dale Yeo, Voter Services Director; and Nancy Stanton, Development Chair. Absent: Eileen VanWie, Josie Miller, and Kate Mangelsdorf.

Jo called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Beth Bardwell developed a spreadsheet to jumpstart the discussion on what will be the League's Legislative priorities for the Dec. 2, 2023, social and legislative conversation. The items were culled from the previous Visioning Lab, members' input, and SNM program and priorities.

Among the items discussed were gun violence prevention, health, education, water, modernization of the Legislature, legislative salaries, affordable housing, paid family & medical leave, libraries, independent redistricting, expanding the legislative session and scope, taxes, and broadband. Advocating for some of the items would fall under the state's positions if there were no local positions.

After discussion and ranking among those in attendance, the five items to potentially advocate for are: 1) gun safety, 2) independent redistricting (requiring Constitutional Amendment "CA"), 3) paying salaries for Legislators/modernization (requiring CA), 4) water, and 5) education.

The next steps will be to obtain background information for possible legislation, research what bills may already be developed, get more specific information on what the advocacy and bill would focus on, or other information to determine what the bill would fund.

Those who will work on the items are:

- 1) GUN SAFETY: Beth Bardwell and Kathy Brook;
- 2) INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING: Kathy B;
- 3) PAYING LEGISLATIVE SALARIES/MODERNIZATION: Beth;
- 4) WATER: Beth and Edwina Jaramillo [an upcoming webinar on water issues will be watched];
- 5) EDUCATION: Jo Nash, Eileen VanWie and Josie Miller.

The draft items will be discussed at the next Board Meeting on Monday, Nov. 20. The meeting will begin early (5:00pm) and will focus primarily on this task. The final draft of the handout for Dec. 2 will be reviewed at a Special Board Meeting at 3 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 28 via Zoom.

—Minutes by Jo Galván Nash



LCPS BOARD OF EDUCATION • Regular Meeting

Oct. 24, 2023 • 6:00 pm

Observer: Eileen VanWie

Members Present: President Teresa Tenorio, VP Pam Cort, Secretary Robert Wofford, Carol Cooper, and Patrick Nolan

Public Comment focused on the Mayfield High School library book *Jack of Hearts*, with six people demanding the book be removed and two people supporting open access to all books. Apparently, there was a “Book Review meeting” on October 12 that some of the people attended and were disappointed in how it was handled. (They felt disrespected.). At the LCPS Board meeting, those stating the book was not age appropriate at a high school gave the New Mexico Statute 30-37-2 as a legal reason to remove the book. The Statute states, “*It is unlawful for a person to knowingly sell, deliver, distribute, display for sale or provide to a minor, or knowingly to possess with intent to sell, deliver, distribute, display for sale or provide to a minor:*

- A. *any picture, photograph, drawing, sculpture, motion picture film or similar visual representation or image of a person or portion of the human body, or any replica having the appearance of either male or female genitals which depicts nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement or sado-masochistic abuse and which is harmful to minors; or*
- B. *any book, pamphlet, magazine, printed matter however produced or sound recording which contains any matter enumerated in Subsection A of this section or explicit detailed verbal description or narrative accounts of sexual excitement, sexual conduct or sado-masochistic abuse and which, taken as a whole, is harmful to minors.”*

The two speaking in favor of keeping the book, affirmed that the Supreme Court has clearly stated that library books are not part of the curriculum; significant evidence for removing the book would be needed. (Note: I’ve been avoiding reading the book, but now must read it to judge for myself. Book reviewers online have praise for the book.)

The LCPS Foundation presented financial awards to several “innovative classroom teachers.” Superintendent Ruiz noted that October is Bullying Prevention Month and schools have added the STOPit app for anyone to quickly and easily report bullying. It’s already been used.

A great deal of time was spent discussing beginning of the year assessment data, from iReady and iStation (online assessment tools) that help teachers provide all students a path to proficiency in reading and mathematics. Students will be assessed again mid-year and at the end of the year, hoping for satisfactory growth. Currently there are few students close to being proficient in mathematics. Analyzing data has become an ongoing part of finding ways to support successful learning. Data will also be shared with parents and families, to help guide their support for children at home.

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Regular Meeting

November 6, 2023

Observer: Jen Kreie

Opening ceremonies included three presentations:

- Students from the Gadsden Independent School District showed their project called “Living Lumbre” which won national recognition in a competition of 3,500 schools. The students developed a solar insulated blanket with regulated heat and could be used by homeless persons, by soldiers in extreme settings and in other situations.

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- There was a presentation by the Vulnerable Road Users of NM which included statistics about the number of pedestrians and cyclists that are injured and killed on New Mexico roads.
- El Paso Electric presented information about the installation of smart meters, which will be done throughout 2024. More information is available at: <https://www.epelectric.com/smartmeters/nm>

Agenda items included eight resolutions that were passed or tabled. Two dealt with building demolition. One resolution passed to demolish a substandard structure at 375 Karen Avenue. However, another resolution to demolish a structure at 643 East Picacho was tabled after lengthy discussion of the possible historical significance and the opposition by many citizens in the Mesquite Historic District.

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Work Session

November 13, 2023

Observer: Kathy Brook

The agenda consisted of presentations on Work Force Connections, update of the fire code, and a strategy on affordable housing. The affordable housing topic was a preview of a report from Project Moxie, a consulting firm working with the city on a strategy to allow the city to maximize the impact of the available funding for affordable housing. A draft of the report will be delivered to the city in December (and will be available on the web site) with action by the Council expected in January. It was noted that the City will have available about \$30 million over the next 3 years, including the funding from the bond issue. Combined with other funds, there could be as much as \$178 million available to generate 757 housing units.

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Regular Session

November 20, 2023

Observer: Kathy Brook

The meeting included a lengthy public hearing on an appeal of action by the Planning and Zoning Commission denying a variance for a carport constructed in a residential area. In the end the variance was approved by the Council with conditions, including obtaining a permit for the construction after the fact. The Council also approved an updated rate setting process for Las Cruces Utilities and an ordinance which allows property owners to purchase affordable flood insurance.

LAS CRUCES BOARD OF EDUCATION • Regular Meeting

Tuesday, November 28, 2023, 6:00 pm

Observer: Eileen VanWie

Members Present: President Teresa Tenorio, VP Pam Cort, Secretary Robert Wofford, Carol Cooper, and Patrick Nolan

Businesswoman Wanda Bowman was recognized for the Ashley Furniture program called *Hope to Dream*. The furniture store gave away 211 beds to LCPS students. She intends to continue this program throughout the year.

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OBSERVER REPORTS

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There were two public comments regarding the book *Jack of Hearts (And Other Parts)*. The stated topic for the first comment was “Are Board members honest?” The commenter further stated “exhibits” showing comments made by two Board members that “lacked integrity.” The comments by the two Board members included calling the complainants “fascist” and book banners. The Hearing Committee was stacked against the complaints. The commenter said the complainants care about kids and are not “book banners.” Another person is a mother who filed the formal complaint and provided a document to the Board members with specific written quotations (62%) from the book that are “vulgar.” They believe the book is not age appropriate for 13- or 14-year-old teens. The commenter stated that some Board members are not willing to look at this issue impartially. The complainants are appealing the Superintendent’s decision to keep the book in the Mayfield High School library to the Board.

CSEC-LC President Valdespino shared information about Senate Bill 4, which the Governor signed and provides universal free healthy meals for all students. Healthy meals will now be made from scratch, so purchase of equipment and adding staff is necessary. The NM PED is having listening sessions around the state, called “*Kids Kitchens*” where students, families, and the public will have input into how the content of the bill is addressed. The meeting in Las Cruces is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 13, 5 pm at Arrowhead Early College Building 8 (2600 Arrowhead Dr). A statewide virtual meeting will be Thursday, December 14th at 3 pm. Board members were encouraged to attend.

<https://newmexicogrown.org/events/2023/upcoming-kids-kitchens-listening-sessions-statewide/>

The student advisor report included concerns about the need for locker sharing at Mayfield and Organ Mountain High Schools, which has resulted in things being stolen. Another item of concern to students is the shortage of teachers available to sponsor clubs.

Superintendent Ruiz shared that the school has received a \$1million grant for intervention programs addressing violent and/or criminal actions in three LCPS schools. The programs will include social-emotional learning education. He held a “meet and greet” meeting in Spanish for LCPS families using Spanish as their primary language.

A hearing to appeal the Superintendent’s decision to deny removal of a book from Mayfield High School library will be Friday, December 8 at 9:00 am. The Board voted to approve 10 minutes of collective comment for and against the decision (20 minutes total) at the hearing.