

# the VOTER

June 2024  
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## President's Communiqué

Happy June Everyone!

Election day is just about here and I would guess that many of you have already voted. Once the election is over, and after the League takes a mini-vacay in July (no meetings), we'll resume our work to get people ready to vote in the General Election. A critical election, for sure!

For now, let's celebrate what the coming weeks will bring us: Flag Day (June 14<sup>th</sup>), Juneteenth (June 19<sup>th</sup>, [see page 9](#)), and Independence Day (July 4<sup>th</sup>). Unfortunately, I find it ironic that as we celebrate these special occasions, we also wrestle with the question of whether our nation's Supreme Court is honoring the tenets for America's third branch of government. Is each Justice maintaining her/his commitment to being fair, unbiased, apolitical, and ethical when determining the nation's most complicated court cases?



Jo Galván Nash

As you know, in one recent example, a Justice is now facing criticism for having a US flag flown upside-down at his home, and a second flag at another home; both are seemingly connected with the January 6<sup>th</sup> insurrection. Even if it was a family member who may have posted the flags, we have to ask ourselves whether this Justice should be allowed to rule in cases that relate to "#Stop the Steal." Can he be unbiased? Should he recuse himself? What do you think?

In today's political climate, what *are* the standards for our Justices and why does their [Code of Conduct](#) have no teeth? Is this appropriate for the highest court in the land? Even though they are selected by the President, we *do* vote for many levels of the judiciary. And, we *do* vote for a President who determines which Justices will serve on the bench. I suppose that has to suffice, for now.

Have a nice summer. *The Voter* returns in August.

■ Jo, LWVSNM President

## June Meeting to Put the "Vision" Into Focus

On Saturday, June 8 at 2:00 p.m. we'll meet for the annual Visioning Lab. That's the day we'll roll up our sleeves and work on how to put action into our Program and goals. In past months, members put a lot of thought into developing our League's Program and setting our priorities, but without executing any *action*, our vision will fall short.

We hope you'll come (in person or on Zoom) and share some ideas. The meeting will be at the Doña Ana Community College Workforce Training Center at 2345 Nevada Ave. Snacks will be provided.

Vice President Beth Bardwell will facilitate the discussion on additional ways to execute voter services. We know it involves voter registration, election watchers, get-out-the-vote activities, forums, and more. But how, when, and where should these activities take place in order for our efforts to be effective and to reach as many citizens as possible?

We also need to drill down on the Library Position. What exactly *is* our vision for these buildings filled with books? What do we need to study or research in order to modernize the League's 17-year-old position? One thing's for sure, we could use your input as we update the guiding language to support our advocacy.

Please join us in this months-long process with League members who are familiar with the current status and the level of services provided by Branigan Library. And we want to hear what you know about the strengths and weaknesses with libraries throughout Doña Ana County.

## In Memoriam



It with a heavy heart that we extend our deepest condolences to Eileen VanWie, our Past President and the current Education and Youth Engagement Director. Her husband of 57 years, Dr. Joe VanWie, passed away on May 16. The couple's two daughters, Nicolle from Minnesota, and Erika from Utah, were able to return home to support their mom and be with their father.

Please keep the VanWie family in your thoughts and prayers.



Please help out ...

### Voter Registration Agents Needed!

If you are a current LWVSNM Voter Registration Agent or want training to become a VRA, please contact  
Rebecca Courtney, [rebeccacourtney1965@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccacourtney1965@gmail.com)

You can make a difference  
as we make plans to register as many citizens as possible before the  
general election in November

## 2024/25 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO BOARD:

Jo Galván Nash – President  
Beth Bardwell – Vice-President  
Edwina Jaramillo – Secretary  
Kathy Brook – Treasurer  
Kathy Brook & Eileen VanWie – Past Presidents  
Kathe Kanim – Voter Services Director  
Kate Mangelsdorf – Membership Director  
Eileen VanWie & Josie Miller – Youth Engagement  
Co-Directors  
Eileen VanWie – Education Committee Director  
Nancy Stanton – Development Director

and

OPEN – Public Relations Director  
Tom Krajci – Otero Unit Liaison  
Jo Galván Nash – The Voter Editor  
Ruth Jaure – Historian  
Kate Mangelsdorf, Chair, and Rebecca Courtney,  
Member – Nominating Committee  
OPEN – 3<sup>rd</sup> Member for Nominating Committee

## Upcoming Calendar Events

### JUNE 2024

- June 3, Mon.: **Voter Services Committee**; 1:00 pm, via Zoom; contact [Kathe Kanim](#) for meeting link
- June 3, Mon.: **Regular Board Meeting**, 5:30 pm, Zoom
- June 8, Sat.: **LWV Visioning Lab**; 2:00 pm, DACC Workforce Center, 2345 Nevada; hybrid
- June 10, Mon.: **Education Committee**, 5:00 p.m., Zoom; contact [Eileen VanWie](#) for link
- June 14, Fri.: **Flag Day**
- June 15, Sat.: **NAACP-DAC Banquet, 6pm**
- June 16, Sun.: **Fathers' Day**
- June 17, Mon.: **Short Board Meeting**, 5:30 p.m., Zoom
- June 19, Wed.: **Juneteenth**
- June 27-30: LWVUS Convention

### JULY 2024

*No Meetings or The Voter in July*

July 4: Independence Day Holiday



[lwvsnm.org](http://lwvsnm.org)

## Voter Registration Results for DAC High School Students

As a Content Specialist for Middle School ELA for the Las Cruces Public Schools, Josie Miller and her co-workers organize voter registration events in the high schools on election years. This is a very important election year for our country because more voters turn out for Presidential elections. The Las Cruces Public Schools partnered with the Doña Ana County Clerk's office, Sign-Up Genius for voter registration agents operated by Stewart Oberman, and the League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico, to provide voter registration agents (VRAs) to register 18-year-old students or those who will turn 18 by the next election in 2024.

The VRA's worked at the following schools in Doña Ana County over the last several weeks and were able to register 634 students!

- ✓ Arrowhead Park Early College HS – 10
- ✓ Centennial HS – 49
- ✓ Las Cruces HS – 100
- ✓ Mayfield HS – 140
- ✓ Organ Mountain HS – 44
- ✓ Rio Grande Preparatory Institute – 14
- ✓ Santa Teresa HS – 123
- ✓ Gadsden HS and Chaparral HS

The teachers and the students made this an exceptional year for our voter registration project, and we thank them very much.

- *Rebecca Courtney, Voter Services Committee*

## Joining Forces to Support Voting in NM

The LWVSNM is working cooperatively with the state League and its fundraising subcommittee. Hundreds of letters were recently sent to businesses throughout the state to ask for financial support on Voter Services activities, primarily Vote411.org, the online Voter Guide tool. As you know, our local candidates, and all others in New Mexico, are included in this online guide that helps voters make informed decisions before they vote. Development Director Nancy Stanton and I are part of the subcommittee.

It's also important to know that local fundraising efforts also continue as the League begins the process of printing the English and Spanish guides for the General Election. This process begins with writing a request-for-proposal to be sent to area printers and ends with distributing the guides in Doña Ana County by early October, just in time for early voting.

It would be great to have a local Voter Guide for the Primary Election; however, SNM's budget cannot sustain the additional cost.

If you have insight into a potential donor for the General Election guides, [please contact Nancy](#).

- *Jo Galván Nash, President*



**Click here to check out the local candidates' answers before you vote early or on June 4.**



## About Transparency

This information may be of interest to our members. [Click here to read Heath Haussamen's article "Transparency laws help preserve democracy."](#) In the final paragraph, there's also a registration link to attend a free training by the NM Department of Justice regarding the Open Meetings Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act.

This training emphasizes the importance of transparency and compliance in government and informs the public of their rights under New Mexico's Sunshine Laws. Registration is open to the public; the event will be held on June 26 beginning at 9:00 a.m. at City Hall.

## Membership Renewal Time

Dues for the 2024/25 fiscal year are beginning to trickle in and we're happy to report that many of you have elected to "round up" your dues with an additional donation. Thank you!

Please take a moment and renew your membership!

Ways to pay your dues:

**ONLINE WITH PAYPAL OR CREDIT CARD:**

<https://www.lwvsnm.org/join/>

**MAIL: PO Box 15142, Las Cruces, NM 88004**

Don't forget that dues (and any additional donation) are tax-deductible. Dues remain the same at \$65 for an individual; \$32.50 for a second same-household member; and \$0 for enrolled high school and higher education students, 16 years and older.

As a reminder, the "round-up" is a new campaign to support our activities in this important election year. When paying your dues, consider adding a donation. For example, when you pay your \$65 dues, you can "round-up" with a \$35 donation, for a total of \$100.

As a side note, if you joined the League last winter or spring, and if you paid \$32.50 for half the year, you would now want to consider paying \$65 to cover a full year's membership (May 2024 through April 2025). For further questions, feel free to [contact me](#) or [contact our Treasurer, Kathy Brook](#).

- *Kate Mangelsdorf, Membership Director*

## Voter Guides – Where Should They Be Located?

The popular LWVSNM Voter Guides are widely used and just prior to the General Election, the English and Spanish guides will be distributed as an insert in area newspapers. There are also many guides that are picked up at other locations such as Branigan Library, the County Government Building and City Hall.

What we want to know from you — *where do you think the League should place copies of the 2024 guides?* Let us know by emailing any Board member or email [lwvsnm@gmail.com](mailto:lwvsnm@gmail.com).



The image features the "ONE PERSON ONE VOTE" logo at the top, with "ONE PERSON" in blue and "ONE VOTE" in red. Below the logo is a photograph of two women in front of the US Capitol building. One woman is holding a sign that says "VOTING IS [checkmark] people power". Below the photo is a blue banner with the text "Our president should be elected by the *people* — not the Electoral College." and a red banner with the text "Be part of the movement at [LWV.org/onepersononevote](http://LWV.org/onepersononevote)".

LWVUS has not given up its fight to eliminate the Electoral College. Just as women did in the early days of the suffrage movement, LWVUS is creating the One Person One Vote campaign to demand that the people's voices be heard.

The One Person One Vote campaign is on a mission to educate, engage, and activate the American people. There is a toolkit available to League members to spread the message, educate, and engage your networks about abolishing the Electoral College.

Thanks to SNM Member Johnnie Aldrich, we're reminded that we can sign up to be a part of the movement. [Click here!](#)

## Guest Column Hopes to Spark Public Participation

In Las Cruces, like much of the United States, we are experiencing a housing crisis. Interest rates remain high (7% in April), and Las Cruces home values continue to rise after increasing 23% between 2019 and 2022. Only a small number of new homes are starter homes. Since 2017, rent in New Mexico has increased by 70%, leap-frogging over a 15% growth in wages. More than half of Las Cruces area renters are rent-burdened paying more than 30% of their income on rent.

We must address our housing shortage from every angle, ranging from incentives to regulatory reform to help renters and homeowners at every income level and stage of life. Realize Las Cruces, which revises the City's land development code, is a long-term policy strategy designed to address these problems.

Realize Las Cruces will unlock restrictions on incremental development of attainable housing or "missing middle" housing in the City of Las Cruces. Specifically, the goal of the City's proposed design standards and



*Becky Corran*



*Beth Bardwell*

zoning reforms is to give property owners, home-builders, and developers more freedom to build missing-middle housing and mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods, including Accessory Dwelling Units, townhomes, duplexes, small apartment buildings, clustered housing and more.

All of us stand to benefit. Consider a young professional who just graduated from NMSU beginning their entry-level career. Given the shortage of affordable apartments and high-interest rates, they will struggle to find a home within their reach and may consider moving to another city. Consider newlyweds who are looking to start a family and buy a small, economical starter-home. What if they could stop renting and start building home equity? Consider seniors who want to downsize but remain in the same neighborhood. As of today, that may not be possible. But with Realize Las Cruces, residents will be able to rent, buy or build housing, while expanding property values and city revenues.

Zoning transformations like Realize Las Cruces are proven tools to build enduring prosperity in Las Cruces. Communities that enacted similar reforms saw increased housing stability, property values climb, and available housing stock grow. For example: after implementing a similar policy, Tysons, Virginia saw an increase in available homes by 23% (U.S. avg: 3%), and an increase in rent of just 4% (U.S. avg: 31%). Realize Las Cruces incorporates best practices from across the country to address housing shortages through long-term policy change.

Las Cruces' success depends on us addressing housing at every level, with investments in infrastructure, public-private partnerships, and policy change. Realize Las Cruces will build prosperity in our community in innovative ways. Please speak up in support of Realize Las Cruces at the upcoming work sessions and City Council meetings.

- *Becky Corran, Las Cruces City Councilor and a member of LWVSNM; and Beth Bardwell, LWVSNM Vice-President and Chair of the Affordable Housing Committee*

## Voter Services Update

As soon as the Primary Election winds down, the Voter Services committee will gear up for the General Election. Please join us at the Visioning Lab June 8, 2024. We will have information about Voter Registration, Election Watchers and an update of the printed Voter Guides and a variety of ways you can do more to ensure this election empowers voters and strengthens our democracy.

Rebecca Courtney will share information on the rewarding activity of registering voters, how to become a Voter Registration Agent (VRA) and dates of upcoming events to register voters; and David Rice will share information on the rewarding activity of Election Watching, how to become an Election Watcher and schedule of events for the General Election starting in October.

As for the additional projects for the Voter Service Committee:

- A task force will meet this summer to plan for and design the flyers to rural areas in Dona Ana County in our election information and GOTV initiative.
- Tom Krajci continues to monitor and provide valuable feedback to the Secretary of State's office and Vote411.org to improve the online Voter Guides.
- We anticipate Candidate Forums will pick up interest as we get closer to November.

See you June 8, 2:00-3:30 at the Workforce center, Nevada Drive.

- *Kathe Kanim, Voter Services Director*



### LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION • Regular Meeting

May 21, 2004

Observer: Jo Galván Nash

*Members in Attendance: Teresa Tenorio, Bob Wofford, Ed Frank, and Pam Cort; and Supt. Ignacio Ruiz.*

#### LIBRARY CHALLENGES

Two members of the audience spoke during public input with concerns about books in LCPS libraries. One person blasted the book “Push” which has been challenged in other parts of the country. The audience member said it’s available in a local high school, and he questioned the book’s educational value. He said students should not be exposed to the content. *{The book also became the movie “Precious” and centers on an African American girl who is sexually assaulted by her father, and she ends up with two children.}* Another parent said there is also pornographic material in school libraries, and he said the School Board should “correct things” and should be listening to parents as to what type of library books should be allowed, as he doesn’t want children exposed “to this smut.” He criticized the Board saying a recent Board policy revision “is basically replacing a flawed process with another flawed process.”

#### DISTRICT BUDGET

The Board also approved 4-0 (member Patrick Nolan was absent) the district’s largest operational budget ever, totaling more than \$625.8 million for the 2024/25 fiscal year. The budget contains a 3% increase for all school personnel. Finance officials said the budget went through three town hall meetings and included items recommended through a community survey. The top public priorities were campus safety, facilities, and instructional resources. All three of those were included in the proposed budget:

- \$2.1M for school safety, including fences, playground improvements, intercom systems, and more;
- \$42.7M for facilities, including a new Columbia Elementary, elementary multipurpose rooms, heating/cooling, and roofs;
- \$18.5M for new furniture for four elementary schools;
- \$7.65M for instructional resources including a STEM outreach program from NMSU, software, and materials.

It was also noted that previous federal COVID funding is no longer available and that district personnel will be facing increases of 15.5%, 5% and 3% for medical, dental and vision coverages, respectively.

Finally, to address survey questions from the community, the audience was shown how class loads are addressed (meaning the number of teachers assigned to the number of students) in a budget process. Figures for classrooms (except for bilingual) are based on this state formula:

1. **Kindergarten** cannot exceed 20 students (classrooms with 15-20 students are entitled to an Education Assistant (EA));
2. **Grades 1-3** on the average cannot exceed 22 students (1<sup>st</sup> grade classrooms with 21 or more are entitled to an EA);
3. **Grades 4-6** on the average cannot exceed 24 students;
4. **Grades 7-12** cannot exceed 160 students daily (English courses grades 7-8 not to exceed 27 students max; English courses grades 9-12 not to exceed 30 students max).



## OBSERVER REPORTS

### **LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Regular Session**

May 6, 2024

Observer: Jen Kreie

The audience was completely filled, mostly with Palestinian supporters and members of the Jewish community. The full house was due to the final agenda item, a resolution that called for a cease fire in Gaza.

Before public input, Mayor Enriquez asked for a motion to remove the cease fire resolution from the day's agenda. This motion passed. Most of the Palestinian supporters stormed out yelling. Over two hours was spent hearing mostly from citizens against the cease fire resolution, though it was no longer under consideration.

Resolutions:

- Resolution passed to appoint James Derossit as municipal judge II.
- Resolution passed on rehabilitation of residence at 1001 Colorado Avenue.
- Two resolutions passed dealing with city finances: (1) adoption of funding to non-profit organizations to provide health-related public service and (2) authorization of \$1,100,000 from the Telshor Fund for the police department's "real time crime center."

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### **LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Work Session**

May 13, 2024

Observer: Kathy Brook

The first work session was held jointly with the Doña Ana County Commission to receive a status report on the opioid settlement funds. Over a 17-year period, \$9.9 million will be allocated to the City of Las Cruces, \$14.5 million to Doña Ana County, and \$711,000 to Sunland Park. So far, Las Cruces has received about \$3.5 million. Shara Thorpe is the DAC Opioid Settlement Coordinator and there is an advisory council working to determine how the funds should be spent. Allowable uses focus on treatment, prevention, first responder training and related activities. Currently a needs assessment by NMSU Crimson Research is under way, including compiling administrative data, and meeting with key informants such as first responders and those with lived experience related to opioids.

The second work session addressed the LIGHT (Lessen the Impact of Grief, Harm, and Trauma) program which was launched about a year ago and which includes social workers among the first responders. Average time on task per call has been two hours and the cost per call is lower than for general emergency response calls. Providers were described as patient-focused, and they do not hurry through their contacts.

The second topic of this session was "revenue options to create a sustainable capital improvement fund." Potential sources of funding for capital infrastructure include capital outlay (which is not intended to provide full funding for projects), GO bonds, property taxes and gross receipts taxes. The city has recently conducted a community opinion survey and found a willingness among registered voters to support additional gross receipts taxes for projects in the area of public safety, parks and recreation, streets, and other quality of life issues such as libraries and museums. Action may be taken on how to proceed at a Council meeting in July.



## OBSERVER REPORTS

### LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Regular Meeting

May 20, 2024

Observer: Kathy Brook

The main items on the agenda were approval of the budget and the capital improvement program for 2024-2025. The proposed budget was approved with amendments to provide \$200,000 for support services for public safety employees and \$300,000 for the Community of Hope Mano y Mano program. Funding for both items will come from the Telshor fund.

There was considerable discussion about the use of the Telshor fund which has a current market value of about \$42 million. The city has been using the interest earnings from the fund but with this budget will be reducing the fund by about \$28 million (mostly for capital expenditures including affordable housing). Discussion included questions about what the city would do when it no longer has a flow of interest from the Telshor fund. One alternative source of funds is grants, an area where the city is now more active.

#### UPCOMING GOVT. MEETINGS

##### LC City Council:

June 3; June 10 (work session); June 17; June 24 (work session); July 1; all at 1:00 p.m., City Hall.

##### County Commission:

June 11; June 14 (2pm special mtg.) and June 25; all at 9:00 am, DAC Govt. Center.

##### LCPS School Board:

June 4, (work session, 4pm); June 14 (special mtg., 2 pm); June 18, 6 pm; LCPS Admin. Board Room.

*Volunteers to observe the County Commission meetings are needed. Contact Kathy Brook if you are interested.*

#### LWVSNM Book Club

**June 6, 2024, 3 p.m.**

*If you would like to participate, contact Erika at [grafwebster@icloud.com](mailto:grafwebster@icloud.com)*

The Exvangelicals: Loving, Living, and Leaving the White Evangelical Church

By [Sarah McCammon](#)

Growing up in a deeply evangelical family in the Midwest in the '80s and '90s, Sarah McCammon was strictly taught to fear God, obey him, and not question the faith. McCammon was a rule-follower and—most of the time—a true believer. But through it all, she was increasingly plagued by fears and deep questions as the belief system she'd been carefully taught clashed with her expanding understanding of the outside world. After spending her early adult life striving to make sense of an unraveling worldview, by her 30s, she found herself face-to-face with it once again as she covered the Trump campaign for NPR, where she witnessed first-hand the power and influence that evangelical Christian beliefs held on the political right. Sarah is among a rising generation of the children of evangelicalism who are growing up and fleeing the fold, who are thinking for themselves and deconstructing what feel like the “alternative facts” of their childhood.

**BOOK CLUB MEETINGS ARE ON 1<sup>ST</sup> THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, 3PM**



# Community Connection

## NAACP of Doña Ana County Monthly Meeting

The May 18, 2024 guest speaker was Rosenda Chavez-Lara. She is one of the two people campaigning to be the Democratic candidate for the District III Municipal (city) Judge. Ms. Chavez-Lara talked about her personal background, professional legal experience, and plans for change, if elected in November. Neither Ms. Chavez-Lara nor her opponent are on the Primary Election ballot. Instead, the Democratic candidate will be selected by the Central Committee of the Democratic Party of Doña Ana.

State Senator Jeff Steinborn asked for support for a proposed Mimbres Peak National Monument designation, something either the U.S. President or Congress can do. This national monument would encompass federally owned land south and north of Deming and include three mountain ranges.

The NAACP members passed a resolution to support the creation of this national monument.



More information and a petition of support are at: <https://protectmimbrespeaks.org/>

Officer reports were given and there was discussion about the upcoming Juneteenth banquet and celebration. On June 15 at 2 PM there will be a free community gospel choir concert at the NMSU Adkisson Recital Hall. The banquet information is below. Tickets are available online: <https://naacpdac.org/asp-products/juneteenth-2024-banquet/>

- Jennifer Kreie, NAACP and LWVSNM

**2024 JUNETEENTH BANQUET**

NAACP Dona Ana County Branch

MILK

**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Mitch Boyer**  
Descendant of 1st Black family in New Mexico

**TICKETS \$75**

**Las Cruces Convention Center**

**JUNE 15 | 6.00 PM**

680 E University Ave,  
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Follow Us

Black Programs

New Mexico Office of Hispanic American Affairs

## TULAROSA BASIN DOWNWINDERS CONSORTIUM

**YOU ARE INVITED**  
to join with the New Mexico Downwinders  
in our fight for justice:  
**We are ALL Downwinders!**

Reach out to your members of Congress via phone call or email and ask them to support the expansion and extension of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) that was overwhelmingly passed as part of Senate Bill S.3853.

Find your member of Congress at <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>

The original RECA bill will expire in June 2024 and the clock is ticking.

**Make contact today.**

Contact Speaker Johnson at <https://www.speaker.gov> or 202-225-2777 and Minority Leader Hakeem Jefferies at 202-225-5936; ask him as the Leader of the House to schedule a vote on the RECA Amendments before the program sunsets in June 2024.