



THE VOTER

DECEMBER 2011

**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS**

**January 21st, 2012
LEAGUE
Meeting**

**AL GORE'S
CLIMATE
REALITY PROJECT**



*The League of Women Voters
Las Vegas Valley*

*We Wish you a
Joyous Holiday Season
And a
Healthy and Happy
2012*

Check out
our
League
Website
[www.
lwvlasvegasvalley.org](http://www.lwvlasvegasvalley.org)
For up-to-date information

*(There will be no regular December meeting.
Members are invited to the Christmas Social
Sunday, December 4
Phone 702-464-7887 or
lwv@lwvlasvegasvalley.org for information)*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *By: Sandy Metcalf*

Thank you to all who donated to our silent auction and raffle. And a great round of applause to all who won the silent auctions or raffle. You helped the League's treasury a great deal. In addition, you heard some thought provoking information from Detective Baughman.

Many of you expressed an interest in studying human trafficking so we can advocate for stiffer penalties at the 2013 legislative session. If you are interested in being part of a study team, let Sam King or me know.

See you at Bev's home in December.



*Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah,
and a
Joyous Holiday to each of our friends.
Love, Health and Prosperity next year,
Carol and Dwayne Chesnut*

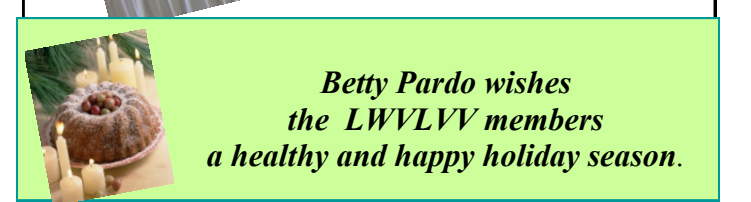


LWVUS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By: Elisabeth MacNamara

The national League is proud to announce the launch of our new website, www.lwv.org on Thursday, December 1. We've built and designed the website as part of our plans to modernize the way we inform and interact with the public. One of our goals in creating this new site was to grow the community connected with the League and to raise more resources to do our work that is critical for the health of our democracy. It is our hope, as we head into an important election year, that the new site will assist us in better showcasing the collective and vital work done by the League at local, state and national levels to serve the voters and defend our democracy.

The new website has a members area that provides Leagues and members with tools and templates to help you more easily do your work in running the League. Over the last eighteen months, LWVUS listened to member views about the website: at small group sessions held at the last national convention, through an online survey, and through comments shared over time about what you wanted from a member section of the LWVUS website. Please be sure to [visit the site](http://www.lwv.org) next week and help us spread the word!



*Betty Pardo wishes
the LWVUS members
a healthy and happy holiday season.*



NOTE:
**Our yearly collection for
Straight from the Streets will be in
February - a chance to be a real
sweetheart!**



*Happy Holidays from
Richard and Ann Marie Smith*



EDUCATION STUDY By: Jane Newman

1) The Las Vegas Valley League of Women Voters wholeheartedly endorses the notion that quality public education is vital to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy. A literate citizenry, capable of critical thinking and problem solving, is paramount to continue to build a nation of opportunity and freedom. We believe that it is the responsibility of every legislator, elected official, educator, business and institution, parent, and adult citizen to work together to promote quality education for all children. This social mandate falls heaviest on the state and local government and populations to provide quality education and to meet the special needs of all children.

With consensus, the LVVLWV believes that the principal role of the federal government in education is to ensure the **equity and adequacy** of the public education afforded to every child, pre-K through 12th grade by providing **oversight** of state programs. We agree that decisions about education are best made at the school, district, and state levels by those closest to the children in our classrooms and most acutely familiar with their needs.

2) Because Nevada had already endorsed and begun implementation of the Common Core standards, our discussions did not revolve around the adequacy and wisdom behind the new guidelines, nor how they were tied to applications for Race To The Top funding. We did consider questions stemming from Common Core as to whether or not a national assessment, national curriculum, or national data should be mandated. Although there is always curiosity about how students across the nation compare, we believe that every state should maintain its role in determining the curriculum and assessments. The federal government may offer nationally common assessments and curriculum on a voluntary basis, but that decision should remain at the state level.

We believe that any national assessment should be voluntary and the data provided as “criterion referenced” to clearly inform parents, educators, and policymakers of the outcomes of instruction at every level as well as the growth and mastery of each individual child. We oppose all unfunded mandates from the federal level. No other high-performing nation mandates common assessments until graduation and none use this data to punish, rank, or reward schools. We see a danger in continuing down this mandated “No Child Left Behind” path.

With consensus, we welcome federal dissemination of research, “white papers,” best practices, grant opportunities, and curriculum and assessments used by states offered in collaboration. We do not believe that any of these instructional tools should be mandated, nor should any “strings” be attached, nor sanctions imposed for sharing or utilizing these federal options.

3) The input and discussion of our Education Study included a wide variety of local and state board members, educators at the both the classroom and administrative levels, parents, grandparents, school volunteers, local activists and concerned citizens. Each and every member agreed that poverty, family, and individual factors weighed heavily in the success of each child and while there is an overwhelming desire to provide the food, housing, neighborhood safety and nurturing out of school, we recognize the reality which is that the schools cannot parent students. We believe that departments of education can do their best to partner with social service and law enforcement agencies to improve the learning environment for each child but that it is not feasible, with present funding to require that schools provide more than referrals, resources, and supportive adults for issues related to food, health care, neighborhood safety, and secure housing. We believe that it is only reasonable to expect that schools provide equity in the high quality teaching and learning materials/resources offered, along with clean, safe, well-maintained physical facilities, a positive learning environment, and the opportunity and expectation that every child can be successful.

The federal government must provide adequate and equitable funding for special needs such as Special Education and English Language Learners but not through competitive funding. Every child should have the right to become a winner, without losers due to grant-writing and lobbying.



*Warmest thoughts and Best Wishes for a Wonderful Holiday Season.
Freda Greenfield*

HEALTH By: Ellen Nakamura

My name is Ellen Nakamura and I have been a League member for a while. I am a volunteer Medicare counselor and help AARP prepare taxes for the community. I am interested in re-forming the Health Committee. If you are interested, we can meet monthly or quarterly, depending on health and health policy issues.

Please email me at enakamura@att.net with a subject line “health committee” or leave me a message at 702-281-1154. The first meeting is on December 8th from 5:30 to 6:45 PM at Sahara West Library, 9600 W. Sahara Ave in the snack foyer. I look forward to meeting you.

Happy Holidays and a Wonderful 2012.

Sandy & Lyell Metcalf



MINUTES *By: Ann Marie Smith*

League President Sandy Metcalf called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. She presented certificates of appreciation to Carol Chesnut, Dwayne Chesnut and Forrest Darby for the work they did on redistricting on behalf of the League. She then presented a plaque to Attorney Denise Pifer, who served as League's attorney during the redistricting process and submitted several briefs.

She then asked for brief committee reports.

President Metcalf introduced our speaker, Metro Vice Detective Chris Baughman who spoke on Human Trafficking. Detective Baughman started with a brief video presentation that focused on the riches accumulated by pimps and the physical injuries suffered by the women who are forced to work for them.

He gave League members an overview of how young girls are recruited, often from cities far away from where they are taken. The pimp makes sure he knows all the details about a girl's family, and uses this information as a threat. He uses various means to make sure that once a girl enters the life, it becomes almost impossible to get out.

After four years in Vice, arresting pimps and rescuing the women caught up in the life, he had become aware of the lack of information circulating on this subject and decided to do something about it. To that end, he wrote a book entitled "Off The Street: Prostitution Is Not A Victimless Crime." It is his story of fighting to protect a class of women who are too easily forgotten and too readily dismissed.

There is no true hotline for people in need, but they can call Metro's number 828-3111 and ask for Vice. A question and answer period followed. Detective Baughman then signed copies of his book.

Following the presentation, the annual silent auction fundraiser was conducted. There were 7 baskets that were raffled off and approximately 30 silent auction items, including something for everybody.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

VOTER SERVICES *By: Sondra Cosgrove*

If you are interested in participating in voter registration, you can become a Field Registrar by taking a training class through the Clark County Elections Department. The next training date is Dec. 6th. You can find more information by going to the Election Department's webpage:

<http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/Depts/election/Pages/FieldReg.aspx>

There is already a lot of interest in next year's elections; it would be a missed opportunity to not tap into this interest to register more Nevadans to vote. If you would like to be on a list of League members willing to help proctor HUD resident council elections, or be notified when local organizations need assistance registering members, please email the Voter Services Committee Chair, Sondra Cosgrove, at sondra.cosgrove@gmail.com.



Congratulations for the many accomplishments of the League, and Happy Holidays to everyone.

Judge Nancy Alf

ENVIRONMENT *By: Terri Robertson*

The impacts of climate change are pervading the earth's environment. These changes have and will continue to affect society as we know it in various ways. What exactly is causing these changes? How does society combat these changes? Is it actually possible for society to have an effect on climate change? Sometimes the thought of how huge the problem is makes us think that as individuals we can make little difference in what is happening.

The League of Women Voters of the Las Vegas Valley has been chosen to receive a presentation by Al Gore's Climate Reality Project. At our January 21, 2012 meeting Eric Torres will discuss the components and causes of climate change and the effect on the natural world and society.

In addition to doing climate presentations personally, Eric also voluntarily serves as the South West District Manager for Climate Reality, formerly known as The Climate Project. In Dec 2006, Eric was chosen to personally train with Mr. Gore and several dozen scientists from such scientific agencies as NASA, NOAA, the US Geological Survey, the Scripps Institute for Oceanic study and many more in the understanding of Mr. Gore's slide presentation and it's supporting science and how to present it. Since becoming involved with Climate Reality, Eric has given over 100 presentations to over 10,000 people collectively.

Your Environment Committee wishes you happy holidays and encourages you to begin your new year by learning all you need to know about climate change and the future of our world.



*Happy Holidays
From
Sam King*



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS By: Sam King

As a political junky, I have studied political arenas and issues the majority of my adult life and find that while our 21st century technology has impacted the campaign process and marketing of the candidates, elections remain fueled by money and a candidate's words and actions.

The League of Women Voters believes that transparency is the best protection for fair and open elections. Campaign Finance Reform which mandates transparency is the linchpin to protecting the election process and protecting the citizens' right to know and to facilitate citizen participation in decision-making.

We also believe Nevada has not maximized nor stabilized its tax base to adequately support state programs including public education. Nevada Tax reform is long overdue. The League supports action to reform the Nevada tax structure so that it is a tax system which is balanced, fair, non regressive, adequate and has a sound economic impact. Reforms should ensure a tax system which is:

- 1) Balanced and diversified
- 2) Supports environmental protections, a basic level of health and human services, and quality education K-20
- 3) Maximizes federal funds
- 4) Structures in budget reserves
- 5) Allocates appropriate funds for actions requiring local government action
- 6) Reviews revenue collection
- 7) Reviews special tax exemptions as to their relevance
- 8) Provides internal/external audits
- 9) Reviews internet tax structure to determine impact on Nevada based business
- 10) Reviews sales tax as to possible expansions or retractions

The League supports the Environmental Protection Act .A healthy community is dependent upon a healthy environment. The League supports sensible water policy. Sensible water projects should be environmentally sound since much of Nevada is a desert.

The League of Women Voters has long participated in studying the health care system within our state. We are reviewing reforms to health care.

The best protection we have to ensuring that we improve our quality of life is to make informed decisions , to voice our concerns

CHILDREN AT RISK By: Liz Bates

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Nevada is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation that has been a leader in youth mentoring services since 1973, developing positive relationships that have a direct and lasting impact on the lives of youth in our community, ages 6 through 18.

BBBSN can always use volunteers for mentoring, help at fundraising events or other activities. If you are interested contact Ed Krien at 702-731-2227 x 15 or ekrien@bbsn.org.

EDUCATION By: Sam King

The League of Women Voters Las Vegas Valley Education Committee meets monthly at 8:30 am prior to our program at the Main Street Social Club, the third Saturday of the month, September through April. Please come and join us for our meetings.

Public Education is at a crossroads as we face uncharted economic times, a fast-paced information hungry global society and a shifting, perhaps even a polarization of the responsibility and defined mission of public education. Much is reported and supports the fact that educationally the United States is a nation at –risk. There are fewer students who perform well on assessments and fewer that graduate from high school. Many young people are finding their way into the juvenile justice system and graduating into the prison system. As a state, Nevada's young people mirror the national picture.

Some have suggested that public education must be reformed or perhaps should be out-sourced or privatized. There is debate on what the federal government's role is in public education. What we have is data to support there is a problem, but the jury is out on how to reform the system.

Constitutionally, education is a state responsibility, although there is a movement to have national standards. Fiscally, states are facing funding shortfalls and federal support comes with guidelines. Equal access is based upon civil rights issues including racial and ethnic balance and meeting the threshold of needs for those with disabilities.

Accountability is required but in terms of clarity and in respect to legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act – there is work to be done to translate accountability into achievement and accurate measurement of student learning and success. Learning is a process which requires transition and lifelong support that is impacted by environmental problems such as health issues, poverty, gangs and family disruptions. There are support agencies however no playbook on the role and responsibility of the public education system to address external environmental issues or health considerations. Efforts have been made to develop partnerships at the state and local levels – preschool programs, all-day kindergarten, curriculum and counselors to instruct in life skills, strategies and prevention programs, parenting classes, gang prevention, after school activities, vocational and career training. All are good support strategies. Nevertheless with limited resources how do we provide access? Where do these fit in with public education and accountability?

The League of Women Voters studies, researches and looks for consensus when advocating and examining issues. Then we look for policy change. One long time argument with public education in Nevada is that education is underfunded. We are looking at the Clark County School District budget, audit and bond oversight operations. We are looking at new reforms as they emerge. During the 2011 Legislative Session reform practices were structured in law including a re-structuring of the State Board of Education. Our committee will review the state regulations and their impact. Education is the linchpin to our future.



*Love—Health—Peace.
May the gifts of the season last
throughout the year.
Jan Biggerstaff*

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS LAS VEGAS VALLEY



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

The LWVLVV meets September through May, the third Saturday of the month. Meetings are currently held at the Las Vegas Social Club adjacent to Main Street Station, Main and Stewart. A 9:30 a.m. breakfast/social is followed by the program at 10:00 a.m.

BREAKFAST \$20 *with reservation.*
Admittance: \$5.00 (included in breakfast charge).

2011-12 PROGRAM CALENDAR

Dec. 3, 2011 Helen J. Stewart Dedication

Dec. 4, 2011 **Holiday Social**

Jan 17, 2012 Climate Project

Feb. 21, 2012 TBA

Mar 17, 2012 Election selection

April 21, 2012 Governor invited Annual meeting

May 17, 2012 TBA

August 11, 2012 CANDIDATE FORUM

September 19, 2012 We're Back



Programs subject to change

NAME BADGES

Magnetic 12.00
Pin \$10.00
All profits go to the
501 (c)(3) Education Project Fund
See: **Freda Greenfield**
at meeting or
lwv@lwvlasvegasvalley.org

LWVLVV OFFICERS 2011-2012

President: Sandy Metcalf
1st. VP: Sam King * 2nd VP: Jan Biggerstaff
Secretary: Ann Marie Smith *
Treasurer: Lyell Metcalf
Directors: Beverly Abderrahman * Sondra Cosgrove
Freda Greenfield * Betty Pardo

YEARLY DUES—thru—MARCH 2012 * INVITE A FRIEND

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LAS VEGAS VALLEY

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ eMail _____

Yearly dues: () \$55 New/Renew Member () \$75 Household () \$25 Student

Please note: Pictures are occasionally taken for our publications during meetings. Please check if not ok to use _____

Mail to: **League of Women Voters, P.O. Box 12291, Las Vegas, NV 89112**