



UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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Calendar

- December 13 Lobbying Workshop Santa Fe, 10 a.m.-noon
- December 16 Lunch with a Leader, Anne Laurent, Mesa Public Library, 11:45 a.m.
- January 8 Legislative Preview, Fuller Lodge, 7 p.m. (6:30 for refreshments)
- January 20 Lunch with a Leader, Angelica Gurule, Mesa Library, 11:45 a.m.
- January 23 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- February 5 Bag It, Reel Deal, 7 p.m.
- February 9 Legislative Reception, Garrett's Desert Inn, 5:30 p.m.
- February 10 League Day at the Legislature, NM State Land Office, 10:30 a.m.

Lunch with a Leader December 16: Anne Laurent

On December 16 our Lunch with a Leader program will be at Mesa Library at 11:45. Our leader, Anne Laurent, is a LEED-Certified licensed architect who moved with her husband and two children from Michigan to Los Alamos in 2008. She is now the Director of the Division of Community and Economic Development as well as in charge of Capital Projects. Laurent will be talking about the comprehensive plan - what is happening, what needs to happen, and how will the public be involved?

Laurent earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Architecture degrees from Rhode Island School of Design. She continued her professional career in private architecture in Arizona. The Laurent family moved to Michigan after Steve was accepted into law school. At that point, Laurent went to work for the Grand Rapids Transit Authority. She eventually became studio manager for a full service private architecture/engineering firm working on a variety of commercial and governmental projects.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

President's Message

Following the election, Lynn Jones and I met with County Clerk Sharon Stover and Gloria Maestas to discuss the problems at the MVD, where citizens who apply for a driver's license or renewal are supposed to be offered the opportunity to register to vote. Paper forms were being lost and an effort early this year to have applicants complete an on-line process failed.

Stover called Bureau of Elections Director Bobbi Shearer, who informed us that a new system will be implemented by June 2015 to facilitate the MVD voter registration at the counter. The data will go directly to the voter registration database. Meanwhile, citizens who thought they had registered at the MVD but had not completed the process were given provisional ballots at the polls.

Shearer also told us that every ballot cast would be recounted in the race for State Land Commissioner, where Aubry Dunn is currently leading Ray Powell by 0.14% or 704 votes.

Stover informed us that, in Los Alamos, 58% of registered voters cast a ballot, half of them voting early. On Election Day there were lines at the polls because so many people waited until the last few hours to vote; next time there will be three stations instead of two at each vote center.

At the state level, the LWVNM board met in Socorro on November 15 and adopted the new position on Natural Resources that has been developed through concurrence. Read it on the LWVNM website.

Priorities for advocacy in the 2015 legislative session were approved. (See article on Legislative Preview.) The board also approved plans for the annual Legislative Reception and League Day, to take place on February 9 and 10, and initial plans for the biennial state convention, which will be held in Albuquerque May 16-17.

Barbara Calef

Welcome, New Member!

We are pleased to welcome Ashley Mamula, who joined our Los Alamos League in the past month.

Lobbying Workshop

LWVNM will hold a Lobbying Workshop on Saturday, December 13, from 10 a.m. to noon in Room 322 of the Round House. Learn about the legislative process and how to effectively lobby your legislators. We will hear from the following legislators and lobbying experts and learn tips for advocacy.

The speakers will be

- Senator Peter Wirth, D-Santa Fe
- Senator Sander Rue, R-Bernalillo
- Linda Siegle, government relations and lobbying
- Julianna Koob, government relations specialist and policy advocate

To carpool, contact Barbara Calef at [bfcalef\(AT\)gmail\(DOT\)com](mailto:bfcalef(AT)gmail(DOT)com) or 662-3825.

School Board and UNM/LA Advisory Board Election

Positions 3, 4, and 5 on the Los Alamos Public Schools Board are up for election. The districts are all on the Hill. Candidates must reside within the boundaries of the position for which they are running. Positions 3 and 4 on the UNM/LA Advisory Board are also up for election. Advisory board positions are at large; there are no districts. Candidates must file on Tuesday, December 16. The election will be held on Tuesday, February 3.

District 3 includes Precincts: 8, 9, 12, 14.1, 16.2

District 4 includes Precincts: 15, 16.1

District 5 includes Precincts: 10, 11, 13, 14.2, 17

Two League Events in Santa Fe in February

Legislative Reception, February 9, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

For this event the State League invites all League members and New Mexico legislators. In addition to the opportunity to speak informally with League members and legislators from around the state, there will be a panel discussion about education funding and priorities.

League Day February 10

Every year the State League organizes this event for members to familiarize themselves with our state government, attend committee meetings, and lobby the legislators. From 10:30 to noon we will hear talks by Fred Nathan about Think New Mexico's hospital pricing transparency initiative and by Dr. Gabriel Sanchez about voter disenfranchisement.

Planning to attend both events? Consider reserving a room at Garrett's Desert Inn for the night of February 9. The motel is offering a rate of \$59 plus tax for single occupancy/\$69 for double occupancy, and waiving the \$8 parking fee. Reserve your space under the code "SWING VOTE" to take advantage of this rate. After the January 25 cut-off date, rooms will cost \$99 for a single room if space is available. Call 1-800-888-2145 to make a reservation with a credit card or advance deposit. Be sure to mention the code.

Ban the Bag

Following months of meetings and research, members of the Ban the Bag Coalition, of which the League is a member, spoke to the Environmental Sustainability Board on November 20, seeking their support in the effort to pass an ordinance to ban single-use plastic bags (the large tan grocery bags with handles) and to impose a fee on paper bags. The fee is necessary to ensure that merchants do not suffer from the increased cost of paper bags and as an incentive to customers to bring re-usable bags

when shopping. The Environmental Sustainability Board voted to support the goal, advising the group to bring a petition to the Council.

As part of the campaign to educate residents about the problem, the coalition will screen the film Bag It at the Reel Deal at 7 p.m. on February 5. Tickets will cost \$5 for adults, with free admission for children under 18. At the most recent meeting, the LWVLA Board voted to provide advertisements for the film. Plan to attend!

Barbara Calef

Education Study Ready for Consensus

Last week, the Education Study Team presented consensus questions to the Board of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos. After a lively discussion, the Board approved the following consensus questions for the study:

1. For which school-related issues should community input be solicited (for example, strategic planning and funding issues)?
2. What kind of formal mechanisms or communication channels are necessary to create strong two-way communication between K-12 education leaders and members of the community?
3. What are important characteristics of these communication channels?

The Consensus meeting will be scheduled for the second week of January. League members will be informed of the meeting logistics once they are finalized. We encourage League members to attend the meeting and be a part of the final phase of the education study. For more information, contact Susan O'Leary at [susan.oleary\(AT\)yahoo\(DOT\)com](mailto:susan.oleary(AT)yahoo(DOT)com).

Lunch with a Leader for January 20

On Jan 20 our speaker will be Angelica Gurule. She started working at the end of June as the Los Alamos County Environmental Services Division Manager. From 2003-2012 Gurule was employed by Los Alamos National Laboratory's Environmental-Risk Reduction Office, where she worked on sustainability and waste reduction, pollution prevention, and environmental stewardship. Gurule's position was created as a result of the restructuring of the Environmental Sustainability Board. It combines the post of Management Analyst held by Tom Nagawiecki, who left last fall, and that of a vacant assistant supervisor position. Gurule's main responsibilities are to oversee the transfer station and the closed landfill. She will also be working closely with the Environmental Sustainability Board and is part of the County's Green Team, which encourages sustainability efforts among County employees.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

2015 Legislative Preview

The League is preparing for the next NM legislative session! The 2015 NM legislative session will begin on January 20 and continue for 60 days. LWVNM's priorities are: education funding; voting rights, including stopping passage of a voter photo ID law; and ethics and money in politics.

Our League is coordinating with the American Association of University Women to hold our annual legislative preview in Fuller Lodge on Thursday, January 8, from 7 to 9 p.m. with refreshments at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is invited.

Our legislators, Representative Stephanie Garcia Richard and Senators Carlos Cisneros and Richard Martinez, are planning to come and share their views on the upcoming session. AAUW President Judy Prono will moderate. Also, State Representative Jim Smith (R-Bernalillo), a member of the Legislative Education Study Committee, will speak about education; Viki Harrison, Executive Director of

Common Cause New Mexico, will discuss campaign financing and ethics in government.

Barbara Calef

Board of Public Utilities

At the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) work session on November 14, I requested that the board begin immediately to broadcast their meetings so that citizens unable to attend the meetings can follow them from home. This request was based on the LWVNM position Transparency in State and Local Governments, which says, "Broadcast as many public meetings as possible, in both real-time and an archived format, preferably on-line."

Many residents spoke at that meeting and again at the November 19 BPU meeting to criticize the proposal to charge a monthly fee specifically targeting homeowners with solar panels. One oft-repeated comment was that the proposed rate structure re-design does not support BPU policy to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. The board voted to delete the charge from the ordinance for the new rate structure, which was then sent to Council for consideration.

At the November 25 County Council meeting, I repeated my request that the BPU meetings be recorded and broadcast and also made the following comments.

Furthermore, we ask the Council to work with the Board to develop a strategy for a public discussion of the issues facing our Utilities Department with the re-structuring of the San Juan Generating Station. Do we want to increase our investment in coal at this time? What steps should be taken now to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040? LWVLA defines a sustainable society as one that satisfies its own needs without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations. Let's design an electrical system for a sustainable society.

(We have been informed that recording and broadcasting of the BPU meetings may begin in the January.)

Barbara Calef

Observer Corps Report

At the October 28th County Council meeting, Chris Chandler, Mark Jones, and George Chandler spoke during the Public Comment part of the meeting. They are concerned that the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) are holding closed meetings regarding important policy decisions that should have wide public input and County Council participation. The Los Alamos League has an interest in transparency and in sustainability, so LWVLA is interested in these issues.

Also at this meeting, the Teen Center budget was revised to provide for new public restrooms at Ashley Pond. They will be attached to the Community Center building, but accessible only from the outside (the Pond side), for the community to use during activities in the area. The County is expecting this construction to be completed by August of 2015.

The November 14th County Council meeting took place on a Friday at noon. The County Council holds meetings at noon on Friday once every other month in an attempt to encourage more members of the community to participate. The Friday meetings are confined to an hour and a half because of the lunch-time limitations of working councilors and the public. This restricted timing led to two agenda items being tabled for a later Tuesday night meeting when more complete discussion could take place.

At the November 25th meeting, Barbara Calef (our LWVLA President), Will Fox, and Mark Jones spoke regarding DPU and BPU, requesting transparency and public and Council input to important decisions being made at this time by the DPU and BPU involving the rewriting of the contract between Los Alamos County, PNM, and the other owners of the San Juan Generating Station. These citizens encouraged public input into the future energy sources and utility plans for Los Alamos County.

Lynn Jones

Report of November Lunch with a Leader: Kurt Steinhaus

At the November LWL, Kurt Steinhaus, Director of Community Programs at Los Alamos National Laboratory, spoke about the laboratory's extensive programs for science, technology, engineering, and math education in northern New Mexico. The programs include partnerships with universities as well as training for math and science teachers and lobbying the legislature to provide more funding for education. As a sign of success, he told the group that 87% of PhDs at the Lab worked there in some capacity before completing their education and 41% of the laboratory's employees are native New Mexicans. The Laboratory and staff contribute \$250,000 annually to scholarships and much more annually to non-profit organizations.

Steinhaus described an astonishing number of programs he runs to promote economic development in the state. They include a variety of strategies to provide technical assistance for small businesses and to help entrepreneurs start new companies. He said that there are 170 patents at the Lab waiting to be developed by entrepreneurs. His group collaborates with Sandia Laboratory, PNM, Northrup Grumman, Intel, and the Air Force Research Laboratory to support technical businesses. As an aside, Steinhaus noted that broadband infrastructure has the greatest impact on the economy.

Barbara Calef

Report of October Lunch with a Leader: Bonnie Gordon and Carol Clark

Bonnie Gordon announced that the LA Daily Post will be three years old on February 7, 2015. That's unusual in a climate where the New York Times recently laid off a hundred journalists. Carol Clark, publisher and editor of the on-line newspaper, described how they reached this point.

She and Gordon met when they were both working at the Los Alamos Monitor. Gordon later went to work for UNM/LA while Clark pursued her dream of starting her own newspaper, receiving training from the Small Business Center. The LADP took off with a bang. When, on the first morning, an order for an ad came in from Los Alamos County, Clark realized that she did not know how to put an ad on the website. With the help of Greg Kendall, the website was moved to Drupal Gardens. Today the LA Daily Post carries 70 ads, and receives 70,000 unique visitors per month from 129 countries.

The current staff includes Gordon, who serves as the lifestyles editor, graphic artist, and webmaster; and Chris Clark (Carol's grandson), who is responsible for the social media. The office is on Central, across from the Municipal Building parking lot.

Explaining the composition of the newspaper, Gordon said that its major focus is Los Alamos. The weekly calendar, [In and Around Town](#), is published on Thursday. Readers can click on the words at the top of the bar to read the accompanying article. Everything except the ads is archived and the search engine is robust.

Ads are sold by the week with discounts given for one month or more. Each ad is displayed for 20 seconds, but clicking on the ad will take the reader to the website. Gordon and Clark are planning to run "How to get the most from the Post" tutorials to demonstrate how the website works.

Readers can subscribe for a daily list of headlines and/or breaking news. There is also a Facebook page. The LADP depends on community members for much of its news and welcomes letters to the editor.

Clark and Gordon are forming a Citizens' Advisory Board with people from different walks of life to suggest improvements. They have signed up Kurt Steinhaus (education and science), Susan O'Leary (Washington Post experience), Marvel Harrison (mental health issues), Bill Enloe (finance), Jack Colleen (public safety), and Katie Korkos (art and culture).

The success of the LA Daily Post has spawned a copycat. With advice from Clark, the Jemez Daily Post was created to serve the community of Jemez Springs with a similar format.

Barbara Calef



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS
MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mail to: LWV Los Alamos
P.O. Box 158
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

Check here if you are willing to receive our local newsletter Update as an electronic file, saving us postage.

Check here if you wish to receive friendly reminders of upcoming events by e-mail.

Membership Categories

Single membership: \$45

Household membership (two+ people at the same address): \$65

Single Sustaining membership: \$75

Household Sustaining membership (two+ people at the same address): \$95

Note: Membership checks should be payable to LWV-Los Alamos

Additional ways to support the local League

Unrestricted contribution (not tax deductible): \$ _____

LWV Education Fund (tax deductible): \$ _____

Note: Checks for tax-deductible contributions must be payable to LWVLA Ed. Fund and not combined with any other payments.

Interests (check as many as apply)

- One-time activities (unit meetings, fund-drive mailings, etc.)
Affordable Housing
Election Reform
Fuller Lodge
Land Use
Local Government
Medically Indigent Fund
Public Transportation
Sustainability
Water Issues
Not sure (I just support LWV)

Other (please suggest) _____

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.

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