



# UPDATE

**League of Women Voters of Los Alamos**

**P. O. Box 158, Los Alamos, NM 87544**

**Website: [www.lwvlosalamos.org](http://www.lwvlosalamos.org)**

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Newsletter Editor: Kathy Taylor *kathytaylor1000(AT)msn(DOT)com*

## ***Calendar***

- January 7 LAPS Bond Forum, LAHS Speech Theater 7 p.m.
- January 9 Legislative Preview, Fuller Lodge, 7 p.m. (6:30 for refreshments)
- January 10 Lunch with a Leader, Mesa Public Library, 11:45 a.m.
- January 24 Board Meeting, PEEC, noon
- January 28 Program Planning, Lynn Jones's home, 7 p.m.
- February 4 Legislative Reception, 5:30 p.m., Garrett's Desert Inn
- February 5 League Day at the Legislature, 10:30 a.m., Garrett's Desert Inn
- February 5 School Board and UNM/LA Board Election

## ***Lunch with a Leader, January 10: Tom Ribe***

The next Lunch with a Leader will be on January 10 at the Mesa Public Library upstairs meeting rooms. Our speaker is Tom Ribe, a native of Los Alamos, raised by long time League of Women Voters activist Mally Ribe. Mally was very active in the Los Alamos League until she and Fred Ribe moved from Los Alamos to Seattle in 1978. Ribe has an MS in Environmental Policy from the University of Oregon and has written extensively on energy, public lands, and wildfire. He is author of "Inferno by Committee, A History of the Cerro Grande Fire." He is also knowledgeable about natural resource issues relating to the Four Corners area and worked for LANL between 1992 and 1997 in the Environmental Restoration program. He lives in Santa Fe where he writes, works in venture capital, the tourism industry, and as Executive Director of Caldera Action, a group focused on the preservation of the Valles Caldera National Preserve. Ribe's talk will provide an overview of Los Alamos's power sources, and urge a conversion of the electricity supply over the next decade to address climate change using a combination of energy conservation, green power, and natural gas. He has also volunteered to answer any questions about the Valles Caldera.

You may purchase a meal for \$10 or bring your own. If you would like to place an order, please contact Karyl Ann Armbruster at *kaskacayman(AT)gmail(DOT)com*, or call her at 661-6605. Lunch comes from the Co-op and will only be available if you order in advance.

*Karyl Ann Armbruster*

## **President's Message**

League members went to the high school in December to register students who will be 18 before the January school bond election. In addition to signing up a number of students, we registered several teachers who had recently moved.

The official date for the school bond election is January 29, but the ballots will be mailed out early in January. They must be returned to the County Clerk's office by the 29th. The bond, for \$20 million, will NOT raise the tax rate. It will enable the school district to continue the long-term plan for renovating our aging school structures. To date, much of the high school has been re-built and work has begun on the middle school. The new bond will fund replacement of the academic wing of Aspen Elementary School and other infrastructure costs.

*Barbara Calef*

## **Forum on the School Bond Election**

The League will hold a forum on the school bond election in the Los Alamos High School Speech Theater on Monday, January 7 from 7 to 8 p.m. The speakers will include LAPS Superintendent Gene Schmidt and at least one member of the school board. Everyone is invited to hear the details of the plans and to ask questions. If you would like to know more, but cannot attend the forum, further information is available at [www.laschools.net](http://www.laschools.net) or by calling the Los Alamos Public Schools district office at 663-2230.

*Barbara Calef*

## **School Board and UNM/LA Board Election**

The next School Board election, to fill the two seats in White Rock currently held by Dawn Venhaus and Melanie McKinley, is scheduled for February 5. However, only one candidate filed for each district. Jim Hall will represent the Pinon Elementary School District and Matt Williams will represent the Chamisa Elementary School District.

The UNM/LA Board election is scheduled for the same day. Incumbent Ronald Dolin, running for a second term in Position 1, is opposed by Michelle Hall. Incumbent Micheline Devaurs filed for Position 2 and John William Hoffmann filed for Position 5.

*Barbara Calef*

## **Program Planning**

Every winter League members get together to discuss our goals for the following year, which begins with the Annual Meeting in April. On Monday, January 28, from 7 to 9 p.m., all League members are invited to gather at Lynn Jones's house at 520 Navajo Rd. on Barranca Mesa for an evening of program planning. We will consider whether there are local issues we should address based on our League's current positions (on our website at <http://lwwlosalamos.org>), or whether there are other studies to be undertaken. Currently we are engaged in a study of land use and public transportation, led by Janie O'Rourke. In addition we will discuss topics of interest for the State League, which will hold its convention in May. Do we wish to update an LWVNM position, or suggest a new state study? Bring your ideas and join the conversation! If you wish to car pool, contact Barbara Calef at 662-3825 or [bcalef\(AT\)gmail\(DOT\)com](mailto:bcalef(AT)gmail(DOT)com).

*Barbara Calef*

*Barbara Calef*

## **2013 Legislative Preview**

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos and the American Association of University Women will hold our annual legislative preview in Fuller Lodge on Wednesday, January 9, from 7 to 9 p.m. with refreshments at 6:30 p.m. The public is invited to participate.

Our legislators, Representative Stephanie Garcia Richard and Senators Carlos Cisneros and Richard Martinez, have all agreed to come and share their views on the upcoming session. Also, Dick Mason of *Health Action New Mexico* and Marcela Diaz of *Somos Un Pueblo Unido* will address the issues of health care and immigrant concerns.

The 2013 session will begin on January 15 and continue for 60 days, during which legislators will address the full range of policy questions. Among those certain to be discussed are redistricting reform, education, qualifications for PRC commissioners, mandatory photo IDs for voting, driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants, implementation of the health insurance exchange, and Medicaid expansion.

*Barbara Calef*

## **Legislative Reception**

**Monday, Feb. 4, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Garrett's Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail**

This year the State League will again hold a legislative reception the evening before League Day. There will be a panel discussion about how to improve elections in New Mexico with Viki Harrison, Director, Common Cause NM to discuss Election Protection and Campaign Finance Reform; Denise Lamb, Santa Fe County Elections Director to discuss the Wisconsin Election Accountability Model; Dick Mason, LWVNM Leader and Action Chair to discuss LWVNM Priorities. League members as well as legislators are invited to attend.

## **League Day at the Legislature**

**Tuesday, February 5**

**10:30 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Educational events and lunch at the Desert Inn**

League Day actually starts at the Roundhouse where members can attend committee hearings from 8 a.m. or visit their legislators.

Then at 10:15 we will head to the Desert Inn to hear **Nandini Kuehn**, Ph. D., health care expert, speak about Implementing the Affordable Care Act in New Mexico, and **Ruth Hoffman**, Director, Lutheran Advocacy on Social Justice and Public Policy Issues for 2013. The lunch speaker will be **Mary Wilson**, attorney, Immediate Past President of LWVUS. She will discuss "Essential Elements for Reforming Redistricting in New Mexico."

Members can pick up their information packets at the reception on Feb. 4 or when we reconvene at the Desert Inn on Feb. 5 at 10:30 a.m. These packets contain one-pagers on each of the League's priorities for this session. We would like each of our legislators to get a copy of these summaries of our positions directly from the League members who are their constituents.

### **Lunch Reservations**

Reservations for the \$10 box lunch are required by Jan. 31 and payable at the event. Please e-mail [mermachen\(AT\)cybermesa\(DOT\)com](mailto:mermachen(AT)cybermesa(DOT)com) or leave a message at 505-988-4523 with your three choices of these : 1. Turkey (with mozzarella) on white croissant or Veggie (w/ portabella) on wheat croissant 2. Brownie or Lemon Bar 3. Lemonade or Ice Tea. Lunch also includes a fresh fruit salad.

To carpool to either event, contact Barbara Calef at 662-3825 or e-mail [bfcalf\(AT\)gmail\(DOT\)com](mailto:bfcalf(AT)gmail(DOT)com).

## **Los Alamos County's Plans for San Juan Chama Water**

The San Juan-Chama Project (SJC), which was authorized by Congress in 1962 and completed in 1970, diverts water from San Juan River tributaries across the Continental Divide through a series of tunnels and other structures into the Chama River Basin, from which it flows downstream to users along the Rio Grande. The Bureau of Reclamation issues contracts for the water to cities including Albuquerque and Santa Fe as well as tribes and irrigation districts. In cases of prolonged drought all those who have signed contracts will have to share in water shortages. Los Alamos paid nearly \$36,000 for its contract and pays another \$25,000-\$40,000 annually for operations and maintenance. So far Los Alamos has not used the water, but has leased its annual share of 1200 acre-feet to the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District to maintain in-stream flows. The County is not allowed to make a profit on such transfers, but has been able to break even on payments. For more than a decade the Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities has been examining the feasibility of lifting the water from the Rio Grande some 1000 feet up onto the mesa above White Rock Canyon.

There has not been an urgent need for the water. The County's groundwater rights of 5541 acre feet per year (afy) seem to be adequate for a stable population of 18,000 and a laboratory committed to conservation. During a presentation to a joint meeting of the Sierra Club and the League of Women Voters, Jack Richardson, the Project Manager for the County's San Juan Chama Water Utilization Study, explained why Los Alamos should move forward to utilize its water right. There is the perpetual risk that some of our current wells will become contaminated by LANL activities. The aquifer is sustainable, but would benefit from resting, and some of the wells need to be replaced.

Furthermore, the County is seeking to increase the population by 7,000, and LANL wants the

flexibility to compete for projects requiring a high volume of water. They expect to open a supercomputing facility within a few years that will use a significant amount of water. And finally, there is a desire to secure the water right through beneficial use before it is claimed by one of the larger cities as drought and population growth makes water in the state ever more precious.

Richardson explained the five alternatives that had been explored over the years. The first four were all impractical or inadequate. They included pumping water up Guaje Canyon across San Ildefonso property, permission for which was denied by the Pueblo; taking water from Santa Fe's Buckman Diversion and pumping it up the face of the canyon to Overlook Park, but Santa Fe would only agree to a 25-year lease; collecting the run-off from Los Alamos, Guaje, and Water Canyons, which would produce only 600 afy; and digging a tunnel 24 feet in diameter and 900 feet deep, to be tied to a collector well on the edge of the river, the most costly concept. Any alternative calling for the use of surface water would require construction of a treatment plant to make the water potable.

The fifth option is by far the most practical as well as the least expensive to construct and to maintain. The plan is to drill up to three wells between 1100 and 1200 feet deep along the rim of White Rock Canyon and draw the 1200 afy, to be offset by releasing an equal amount of San Juan Chama water from Abiquiu Reservoir. Initially a test well will be drilled at the end of Potrillo Mesa in White Rock to intercept groundwater flowing from the Jemez before it reaches the Rio Grande. If data from the well convince the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) of the connection between the groundwater and the river, the SJC water right will be invoked. If the OSE does not approve, the well can still be used for groundwater production based on the County's groundwater rights.

Depending on the productivity of the Potrillo well, up to two additional wells may be drilled, the second on the north side of Pajarito Canyon and the third in Overlook Park. Each well will

occupy a one-acre site and will require a pump station, to be built of stone, a disinfection system, and a drainage pond. The water will be pumped to the Pajarito Booster Station. Drilling of each well will take about three months, and work on the test well is scheduled to begin in the spring. The project should be completed by 2017 or earlier.

There is no question that the fifth option is preferable to the first four. It is the least expensive, most reliable, easiest to implement. However, both the County and LANL need to re-examine their policies regarding growth. It is obvious that water shortages are going to become more severe in the near future.

*Barbara Calef*

## **Report of November 8 LWL: Becky Ehler**

New County Attorney Becky Ehler, accompanied by Assistant County Attorney Katie Thwaite, announced that the County Attorney's office is fully staffed for the first time since 2010. The office is currently located in the basement of the Community Building.

Ehler briefly reviewed further amendments recommended by the Charter Review Committee. (See Kyle Wheeler's report below for the most recent developments.) She also reported that she participates in monthly conference calls to discuss impending land transfers from DOE to the county. One of those is Rendija Canyon, but the issue is complicated by the presence of unexploded ordinance and cultural sites. Also, Ehler mentioned that the Sunshine Portal went into effect in August. New Mexico State law now requires that local governments as well as the state provide transparency and accountability regarding government revenues, spending, and other information. To access the LAC Sunshine Portal, go to the County website (<http://www.losalamosnm.us/Pages/home.aspx>) and click on the sun icon.

*Barbara Calef*

## **Observer Corps Report – December 2012**

The County Council has long had a goal of assisting public schools in Los Alamos, but it must work within the parameters of the anti-donation laws in New Mexico and its own County Charter. At its November 27th meeting, the County Council approved a grant of \$51,700 to the Los Alamos Public Schools for bringing electric and water utilities to the LAPS A-15 parcel on DP Road. This helps the schools develop this land for increased lease revenues or a possible land swap. The County had already budgeted for this kind of assistance to the schools, so when the request came in from LAPS, and it met the requirements of a mutually beneficial capital project, the Council readily agreed.

The Charter Review Committee recommendations regarding the Utilities Department met with continued debate at the December 4 Council meeting. The Council found it difficult to decide how to proceed with two of the recommendations, and ultimately chose to create a 5-member ad hoc committee to review the authority versus the liability of the Utilities Board and the County Council. The core of the discussion centered on the Utilities Board currently having broad authority, but the County having ultimate liability, without the authority. This is the situation that the CRC recommendations were intended to correct. The ad hoc committee will be reporting on these issues to the new County Council in January.

*Lynn Jones*

## ***Outcome of CRC & Council Meeting, December 2012***

The Charter Review Committee (CRC) met with the County Council on December 4, with the expectation that the council would introduce ordinances that would start the clock ticking for a special election in March 2013 to determine whether voters would support more CRC recommendations regarding changes to the county's charter.

The CRC recommended a complete rewrite of Section V, related to public utilities. The goals of the rewrite included:

- eliminating ambiguous language in Section V;
- improving the organization of the section;
- including language requiring voter approval of the purchase or sale of a utility (something not currently addressed in the charter at all), among other changes.

While the council agreed with some of the proposed changes, the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) strongly objected to any revision of the current Section V of the charter. (However, individually, some members didn't object to the cleaned up language of the rewritten version.)

One area of serious disagreement had to do with removing a member of the BPU. Councilors are elected for four-year terms, and BPU members are appointed by the council for five-year terms, with one BPU member's term expiring each year. The BPU has a great deal of autonomy, but council bears the liability if there is a problem related to utilities. The CRC's rewrite proposed to address this by giving council authority to remove a BPU member if a "super majority" (five members) of the council voted in favor of removal. [In practice, it takes only a "simple majority" (four members) of council to vote to remove the county administrator or the county attorney, so requiring a super majority to remove a BPU member seemed reasonable, and a high threshold, to the CRC members.] The proposed

change gives the council a little more authority without giving them too much power over the BPU. The BPU strongly objected to this change.

The second area that the BPU objected to was assigning a new utility, such as broadband, to the DPU. The current charter is silent on the subject, and the CRC recommends that the charter include language about the purchase or sale of any utility. The CRC's rewrite clearly states that the purchase or sale of a utility needs to be approved by the voters.

Another area of concern has to do with the transfer of profits from the Utilities Department to the county's General Fund. The charter is silent on how the transfer is calculated. Some councilors saw that as a shortcoming in the charter—one that the CRC had not addressed.

After nearly three hours of discussion and public comment, the council did not adopt the ordinances. Instead, in 2013 the new council will appoint a five-member ad hoc committee to address these issues and report back in six months.

My hope is that the council will retain most of the rewritten Section V and that the ad hoc committee will be able to address the issues of concern in a way that a majority of the council can support. I don't think anything proposed will satisfy both the council and the BPU because there will always be ongoing tensions related to authority and liability. I do believe, however, that if the council can support something and put it before the voters, the voters of this community should be able to decide whether to approve it.

Because the council deferred action on the ordinances related to utilities, it also deferred action on the CRC's proposed recommendations to various other sections of the charter related to structure of government. As a result, these items will return to the council, hopefully in 2013, and will then move forward to a vote of the citizens, either in a special election or in the November election of 2014 or 2016.

*Kyle Wheeler*  
*LWV-LA Membership Chair*  
*Member, Charter Review Committee*

### LWVLA Current Members

Agnew	Lew and Marge	662-7144	292 Casabel
Armbruster	Karyl Ann	661-6605	605 Totavi
Bennett	Liz	662-7347	263 Dos Brazos
Benson	Jody	667-8465	3547 Pueblo Dr.
Best	George	662-4075	332 Manhattan Lp.
Beyer	Ann	662-2783	343 Rim Rd.
Birnbaum	Amy	500-8210	5060 Easton Place
Bleck	Ilse & Rainer	662-2368	1007 Big Rock Lp.
Brunish	Wendee	660-1648	1225 Los Pueblos
Calef	Barbara	662-3825	4777 Sandia
Campbell	Katherine		169 Shutesbury Rd., Leverett, MA 01054
Casados	Pat	490-2807	1611 36th St.
Chandler	Chris & George	662-5900	1208 9th St.
Comly	Betsy	672-1574	235 Kimberly
Demichelis	Julia		3000 Trinity Dr., Apt 12
Ehler	Becky	672-2745	280 Bryce Ave.
Forman	Jill	662-2407	2246 34th St.
Frederickson	Rosmarie & Paul	662-5915	1372 47th St.
Gerwin	Janet	662-9568	50 Tesuque
Hahn	Thelma	672-3797	132 Piedra Lp.
Hall	Janet	672-6404	129 Monte Rey Dr. S
Havemann	Suzie	412-1620	1615 Sereno
Hertzman	Jeri		No current contact information
Hopkins	John	662-0495	1251 41st St.
Howell	Jeffrey		181 San Ildefonso
Hudgins	Laura	263-7522	P. O. Box 1064
Jacobs	Elaine	662-6404	3007 Villa
Jennings	Sandy & George	662-3291	3092 Woodland
Jones	Lynn & Mark	662-9443	520 Navajo
Key	Naishing & Pete Sheehey	662-3426	805 Tiffany Ct.
Lemmick	Barbara	661-4028	738 43rd St.
Machen	Donald	662-3476	1110 First St.
Maier	JJ	412-7442	4880-A Yucca
Marksteiner	Mandy & Quinn	661-4990	2533 36th St., Apt. A
Maxwell	Helga		Paid through April 2013 but moved to Washington state
McInteer	Carlotta	672-3325	329 Potrillo
McKay	Michael	662-3257	3175 Arizona
Mezins	Nick	662-4946	3000 Trinity Dr., Apt 99
Myers	Kelly	412-9683	1234 45th St.
Nobile	Anne	662-5688	137 San Juan
O'Rourke	Janie & Peter	663-0524	926 Circle Dr.
Petschek	Evelyn		628 Avendeda Caleya, Santa Fe, NM 87506
Richard	Stephanie	672-4196	30 Glenview Ct.
Roach	Susan & Fred	661-9730	865 Estates Dr.
Sandford	Tom	662-4107	1277 47th St.

### LWVLA Current Members

Sayre	Ed & Virginia	662-6889	1001 Oppenheimer Dr., Apt 101
Shankland	Becky & Tom	672-9106	6 Mariposa Ct.
Sherwood	Jane	662-3194	43 Timber Ridge
Taylor	Kathy	672-0152	557 Todd Loop
Thomas	Carroll	672-1937	115 La Senda Rd.
Thompson	Lois & Joe	672-3050	340 Aragon
Wheeler	Kyle & Mike	662-5577	1855 Los Pueblos
Young	Ginger & Eduardo Santiago		166 Navajo
Zander Barlow	Gale	662-9019	1496 41st St.



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.*

**IN THIS ISSUE**

**Page**

Calendar	1
Lunch with a Leader, January 10: Tom Ribe	1
President's Message	2
Forum on the School Bond Election	2
School Board and UNM/LA Board Election	2
Program Planning	2
2013 Legislative Preview	3
Legislative Reception	3
League Day at the Legislature	3
LA County Plans for San Juan Chama Water	4
Report of November 8 LWL: Becky Ehler	5
Observer Corps Report – December 2012	5
CRC and Council Meeting, December 2012	6
LWVLA Current Members	7
Membership Form	9