



# UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

**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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## **Calendar**

- June 20 Lunch with a Leader, Rep. Stephanie Garcia Richard, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m.
- June 29 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- August 15 Lunch with a Leader, Naomi Maestas and Gloria Maestas, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m.

## **Lunch with a Leader: Rep. Stephanie Garcia Richard**

Our June 20 Lunch with a Leader speaker will be our very own League member and state representative, Stephanie Garcia Richard. Come to hear about the 2016 Special Session the governor called to fix the budget crisis and fight crime; the scheduled 60-day 2017 session; and another Special Session a few weeks ago where the governor agreed to restore funding to higher education and accept the budget for 2017. Never a dull moment.

In July there will be NO Lunch with a Leader, but on August 15 County Clerk Naomi Maestas and Elections Manager Gloria Maestas will be talking about the elections in Los Alamos and answering any questions or taking suggestions you might have about getting the vote out.

*Karyl Ann Armbruster*

## **Needed: Volunteer(s) for Arrangements**

Over the past few years Mary Van Eeckhout has been Director of Arrangements for our League. She has stored the equipment for the refreshments and, with help from Carol Smith, has set up the refreshments at the venues for our forums. They have done a great job!

But Mary is moving to Minnesota, so we need a volunteer to take over. In election years, we hold as many as five forums; in other years, one or two. League and AAUW members supply food, the League purchases the beverages. If you'd like to help us in this important task or share it with another, contact Becky Shankland (672-9106 or [rebecca.shankland\(at\)gmail\(dot\).com](mailto:rebecca.shankland@gmail.com)). Thanks!

# **BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-18**

## **Officers**

Co-Presidents: Barbara Calef and  
Rebecca Shankland

1<sup>st</sup> VP: *not filled*

2<sup>nd</sup> VP: *not filled*

Treasurer: Kathy Taylor

Secretary: Rosmarie Fredrickson

## **Directors**

Reservations: Amy Birnbaum

Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster

Newsletter Editor: Wayne Archer

Nominating Committee: Carroll Thomas

Membership: Rebecca Shankland

Voter Services: Lynn Jones

Board of Public Utilities Observer: Julie  
Williams-Hill

Publicity: Jody Benson

Directors at Large: Akkana Peck, Tarin Nix

## **Off-Board Directors**

Arrangements: Mary Van Eeckhout

Fundraising: Suzie Havemann

Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill

Assistant Webmaster: Barbara Lemmick

Observer Corps: Lynn Jones

Social Media: Julie Williams-Hill

## **Co-President's Message: Political Discourse – Convince or Confront?**

In April I wrote about the virtues of "talk-talk," not "tweet-tweet." Recent events have made me reflect on the contrast between "convince" and "confront."

For the late proposed recreation bond, the League sponsored a Lunch with a Leader where people on both sides gave their views. Pro and con speakers were given a fair chance to convince the citizens of their views (though apparently there were a few groans and sniggers from the audience, a possible crack in the door that opens to incivility).

Now we read of the personal attacks that were made on supporters of the bond. Confrontation is the antithesis of democracy's need for open debate where all views are heard and the community counts on a sensible outcome. To have these attacks result in the resignation of two of our respected, hard-working political leaders is tragic. What citizens will be courageous enough to volunteer for political leadership if they and their families become targets simply because of their views? Listening respectfully to differing views is how we work toward solutions--confrontation just hardens opposing opinions.

The League has a long tradition of fair, open, vigorous debate, which is the backbone of sound decision-making. With the national political scene becoming so vitriolic, it's important for our local political discourse to celebrate convincing our listeners, not confronting them.

*Becky Shankland*

## **Observer Corps Reports County Council**

The Recreation Bond failed to pass on May 23<sup>rd</sup> by 465 votes, according to the County Clerk. Of 13,378 registered voters, 7,378 cast their ballots. That is a good voter turnout, so we are pleased that many in our community participated.

At the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, the County Council appointed Carrie Walker to the Board of Public Utilities (BPU). Carrie has a Ph.D. in nuclear physics. After doing graduate work in nuclear energy policy, she moved to Los Alamos in 2011 to work at LANL. Her scientific background is a good match for a member of the BPU, and we wish her well.

*Lynn Jones*

### **Board of Public Utilities**

At the May 17th Board of Public Utilities (BPU) meeting, members discussed possible increases to the water and sewage rates. The Department of Public Utilities will propose ordinances for an 8-percent increase to the water rate and an 8-percent increase to the sewage rate for BPU approval at the June 21st meeting. Copies of the proposed ordinances and links to the Open Forum discussions where the public can leave comments, are on the DPU website at <https://rebrand.ly/DPUWaterandSewerOrd>.

Other important topics scheduled for the June 21st BPU meeting include a discussion of possible options to replace the White Rock wastewater treatment plant and a presentation on the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). The IRP was prepared by DPU's consultant to assess risk and cost on various future energy generation resources for the County. To assist the BPU and the County Council, the IRP is a support tool designed to provide information to aid the County on crucial decisions for projects such as the Carbon Free Power Project (small modular nuclear reactor project) or when the County should exit the San Juan coal-fired plant.

*Julie Williams-Hill*

## **Report of May Lunch with a Leader: Recreation Bond**

There was a good turn-out for the informal debate on the recreation bond at the LWL meeting in May. Darren Meadows and Susan O'Leary represented the Los Alamos Future PAC. They were joined by James Chrobocinski during the Q&A. Lisa Shin and Lisa Brenner spoke for the A Better Way for LA PAC. Both groups were supportive of the recreational opportunities for Los Alamos residents that the bond would subsidize, but Shin and Brenner opposed using a bond to raise the funds.

Meadows explained that the bond election was the result of a very transparent process with many public meetings. He said the cost of the proposed recreation center was cut from \$45 million to \$18 million. O'Leary pointed out that the original list of twenty projects was cut down to the five that would offer the greatest benefit to the community.

Shin and Brenner argued that the County should use a sales tax rather than a bond (NM has a gross receipts tax, not a sales tax); form public-private partnerships to lower the cost to the county; and seek donations from private citizens or philanthropic organizations.

Some of the discussion hinged on the concern that county revenues will fall dramatically if the LANL contract is given to a non-profit next year. Brenner pointed out that Representative Garcia Richard's effort to pass legislation requiring the gross receipts tax be paid by any contractor at LANL or Sandia had failed. Meadows countered that the county could halt construction if needed.

The bond failed to pass on May 23. Now it is up to the County Council to decide how to allocate the existing funds in the CIP budget.

*Barbara Calef*

# **LWVNM Convention Report**

At the biennial LWVNM convention in May, Judy Williams of Santa Fe was elected president of the LWVNM. She has twice served as president of the League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County, chaired the Santa Fe County Health Policy and Planning Commission, and served on the Santa Fe County Corrections Advisory Committee.

Convention delegates voted to approve three new studies. The Board approved one new special project. The leaders of those studies encourage all interested members to join their study committees, described here:

## **Transfer of Federal Public Lands**

Barbara Calef and Judy Williams will lead a two-year study of the pros and cons of transferring ownership of federal public lands to the state, considering what is the best option for preservation of habitat and conservation of wildlife as well as the state and local economies.

Federal lands are lands in the [United States](#) for which ownership is claimed by the U.S. federal government, pursuant to [Article Four, section 3, clause 2](#) of the [United States Constitution](#).

**Article XXI. Section 2 of the New Mexico Constitution** says, “The people inhabiting this state do agree and declare that they forever disclaim all right and title to the unappropriated and ungranted public lands lying within the boundaries thereof.”

The first objective is to educate ourselves about how federal lands were created, how the provisions in the constitutions have been interpreted, and how the public lands have been managed in the past. We will investigate the status quo as well as the potential outcome of large transfers. The second objective is to develop a position for advocacy.

The scope will include histories of public land use and surveys of the management of BLM and National Forest Service lands as well as National

Monuments in the state. We will look at studies such as the Utah land transfer analysis and other relevant reports.

To join the committee, send an e-mail to [bfcalef\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:bfcalef(at)gmail(dot)com).

## **Nuclear Waste Storage Issues**

Karen Douglas of CNM will lead a study of nuclear waste storage issues. High Level Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) from commercial nuclear power reactors has been stored in Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installations (ISFSI) using Dry Cask Storage since 1985. These ISFSIs are currently licensed for 40 years of safe operation and located in 34 states across the US. Initial tests on High Burnup Nuclear Fuel from ISFSI Dry Cask Storage performed by Argonne National Laboratory (ANL) in 1999 following 14 years of storage indicated no degradation of nuclear fuel. Follow-up testing performed by ANL in 2012 indicated questionable integrity of High Burnup Fuel (increased potential for radiation release) from ISFSIs after 27 years Dry Cask Storage. Additional testing is underway with ANL results expected in 2017.

Commercial utilities have paid more than \$35 billion into the Nuclear Waste Fund for disposal, but no permanent repository has opened. The high-level radioactive waste remains at the utilities in more than 70 locations throughout the country.

Pending disposal in a permanent facility, two sites are being considered as an interim destination for the high level spent nuclear fuel: one in New Mexico and one in West Texas, near the New Mexico border.

### **Study Objectives:**

The overall objective of the study is to inform ourselves about the issue, inform our members, and create a position for advocacy on issues of nuclear waste disposal. Specifically

- Determination of public safety and continuing environmental protection for the two candidate Consolidated Interim

Storage Facilities (CISF) for Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) from domestic commercial nuclear reactors.

- Review of technical data regarding commercial nuclear power, nuclear waste including SNF, and options for SNF storage and disposal.

For more information and to sign up for the committee, contact Karen Douglas at [ug90t16\(at\)unmalumni\(dot\)com](mailto:ug90t16(at)unmalumni(dot)com).

## Health Care Position Clarification

Akkana Peck will lead a mini-study of the LWVNM state health care position. She says, “In particular, we want to look at issues of cost and access as they affect patients: things like transparency in pricing, cost-shifting and ‘surprise billing,’ bankruptcies as a result of health care costs, and the effects that might arise from a repeal of the ACA (Obamacare).

“LWVNM already has a good health care position, so we don't need to do a full study as we would if we were writing a whole new position; we'll merely look at a few points our current position doesn't address. The study will be starting up soon, and participants are welcome!”

If you wish to be involved, contact Akkana at [akkana\(at\)shallowsky\(dot\)com](mailto:akkana(at)shallowsky(dot)com)

## Criminal Justice Reform-- Expanding NM's Problem-Solving Courts

Meredith Machen, the former president of LWVNM, was elected Director of Special Projects. She, too, is looking for volunteers. “LWVNM has embarked on an exciting journey to explore challenges and opportunities for advocacy related to criminal justice reform. We are looking for League leaders and community members interested in sponsoring local events and promoting effective programs that help people get the behavioral health care they need

to live productive lives. We will consider alternatives to incarceration, including drug, alcohol and mental health treatment courts; teen courts and other courts; reducing recidivism and alleviating the strain on our judicial and corrections systems. Help the League help NM expand proven and far less costly alternatives to incarceration by advocating for best practices. For a brief introduction, please see this four-minute YouTube

<https://learning.csgjusticecenter.org/> explaining mental health courts and/or check out <https://csgjusticecenter.org/mental-health-court-project/> and

<https://stepuptogether.org/toolkit>. We have a small grant from Common Cause to support our work and want each League to participate. Please contact me at [mermachen\(at\)cybermesa\(dot\)com](mailto:mermachen(at)cybermesa(dot)com) or 505 577-6337 to find out more about how we can make an important impact on our state.”

shortfall. The state should not repeat that mistake.

## **From LWVNM Action Committee**

The Action Committee sent the following letter to all legislators before the Special Session.

### **Position on the 2017 Special Session**

*LWVNM believes that the tax system should be progressive and equitable, taking into consideration relevant differences in annual income. The tax system should generate adequate revenues to meet essential needs. Also, LWVNM supports transparency in the legislative process that allows citizen participation.*

LWVNM urges the Legislature and the Governor to agree on a budget that fully funds essential government services. In order to do that they must enact sensible measures that draw revenue from those who can best afford it. We oppose cuts to essential services.

*LWVNM opposes* an increase in the Gross Receipts Tax on essential goods and services, especially food and medicine, because they would make the tax system less progressive. LWVNM agrees with Governor Martinez and the legislative leaders that the tax system in New Mexico needs comprehensive reform. But comprehensive reform requires careful study in order to assure that it accomplishes the intended goals. New Mexico leaders made the mistake of rushing through legislation in the recent past and it has been a factor in our present budget crisis. In the closing hours of the 2013 session Republican Governor Martinez and Democratic House Speaker Kenny Martinez made a deal behind closed doors. That deal included a reduction in corporate taxes and a number of other tax giveaways to special interests, all of which have contributed to the present budget

## **From LWVUS: League of Women Voters Statement on the Paris Climate Agreement**

Washington, DC – The League of Women Voters president, Chris Carson, issued the following statement in response to President Trump's announcement that the United States will leave the global Paris Climate Agreement:

“Withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement is a giant step in the wrong direction for the health of the planet and all living beings. President Trump’s decision today will undermine global cooperation and have a harmful impact on U.S. relations with our most trusted world allies. The long-term effects of this decision will make more people sick, especially children and the elderly. The League of Women Voters is gravely disappointed to see the United States on the wrong side of history in the fight to protect our planet.”

# **LWVLA ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, April 18, 2017  
Mesa Public Library, Los Alamos, NM**

The meeting was called to order by Co-President Becky Shankland at 1:12 pm. A quorum was established. Introduction of attendees followed with recognition of board members and their jobs.

Jody Benson moved that the minutes of last year's annual meeting be approved as printed in the July Update. Kyle Wheeler seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Kyle Wheeler and Lynn Jones were appointed to read the minutes of the April 18, 2017 annual meeting.

## **President's Report**

President's report for 2016-2017 was given by Barbara Calef. Some of the achievements outlined were:

- Lynn Jones and her committee authored an excellent Voter Guide.
- Several sessions were held to register voters.
- A pre-primary forum was held for local candidates.
- Two forums were held for candidates for state and local positions.
- Ten editions of the newsletter "Update" were produced.
- Wendee Brunish, Akkana Peck, and Becky Shankland attended the National League Convention.
- The local LWV hosted the LWVNM Council meeting in May.
- The local LWV held a consensus meeting for the state charter school study, which resulted in a new position.
- A legislative preview meeting was held. Neither of the senators representing Los Alamos were able to attend because they

were called to a caucus meeting at the Roundhouse.

- Following a Lunch with a Leader talk by Andrea Cunningham, the League wrote and Becky Shankland read a letter to County Council asking them to act to reopen the Public Health Office.
- Karyl Ann Armbruster organized eleven excellent Lunch with a Leader programs.
- Wendee Brunish resigned in the fall and Becky Shankland and Barbara Calef agreed to accept the presidency as co-presidents.

## **Membership Report**

Becky reported that our membership had rebounded from last year's low to about 71 members. Ten new members joined during this election year.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Kathy Taylor reported that there is currently \$5,197.53 in the general account, there is \$2,146.06 in the savings account at Los Alamos National Bank, and \$19,177.75 in the Ed Fund in Washington DC.

**Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation** LWVLA is currently qualified tax exempt under a 501(c)(4) designation that covers "social welfare" organizations. The League also has an Education Fund, which is qualified as tax exempt under 501(c)(3), which allows donations to be fully tax exempt. The board has voted to convert entirely to 501(c)(3) designation.

In order to change the status to a 501(c)(3), we must adopt the restated Articles of Incorporation. Kyle Wheeler moved that the League adopt the restated Articles of Incorporation. Amy Birnbaum seconded the motion. After a brief discussion the motion passed.

## **Bylaws Amendments**

Conversion to a 501(c)(3) also entails adoption of specific wording in Articles I, II, III, and XIII of the Bylaws of the League.

Amy Birnbaum made the motion to amend the Bylaws in Article I, II, III, and XIII as required. Akkana Peck seconded the motion. The discussion centered around the fact that these changes have to be made to proceed with the conversion to a 501(c)(3). The motion passed. Since Becky Shankland and Barbara Calef agreed to be co-presidents at the resignation of Wendee Brunish, the Bylaws need to be changed to permit co-presidents. It was proposed to add "Co-Presidents" in Article VI Sections 1,2,3. Amy Birnbaum made the motion to change the Bylaws to allow co-presidents. Kyle Wheeler seconded the motion.

Kathy Taylor proposed to amend the motion to delete the references to "co-presidents" from Sections 2 and 3 since she felt they were not needed there. Akkana Peck seconded the amended motion. After a discussion of whether or not the co-presidents wording was necessary in Sections 2 and 3, Kathy's amendment was approved. A vote on the main motion was called and passed.

Kyle Wheeler moved that a change to Article IX, Section 1, be made to decrease the size of the nominating committee. She proposed one member be a board member and one be appointed. Akkana Peck seconded the motion. During discussion Michael McKay said that it is essential to have at least two people on the nominating committee and requested that those words be added. The amendment was accepted. The main motion passed.

Becky moved an amendment to change Article VIII Section 2.B to elect one member of the nominating committee rather than two. The motion passed with a vote of 12 for and five against.

The vote on the main motion also passed.

#### **Adoption of Local Program**

Becky Shankland moved that the changes made to the positions on Environment, Sustainable Water, and the Medically Indigent Fund

subsequent to the program planning meeting be accepted. Karyl Ann Armbruster seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### **Adoption of the 2017-2019 Budget**

After a presentation of the proposed budget by Rosmarie Frederickson, noting the change to a two-year budget, and a reminder that this was a negative budget, Tarin Nix moved that the budget be accepted as proposed. Becky seconded the motion. After a short discussion the question was called and the motion passed.

#### **Election of Officers and Directors**

Carroll Thomas presented the following slate of Officers:

Co-Presidents: Barbara Calef and Becky Shankland

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: unfilled

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: unfilled

Secretary: Rosmarie Frederickson

Treasurer: Kathleen Taylor

Directors:

Reservations: Amy Birnbaum

Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster

Membership: Becky Shankland

Directors-at-Large: Tarin Nix and Akkana Peck

BPU Observer: Julie Williams-Hill

Publicity: Jody Benson

Voter Services: Lynn Jones

Off-Board Directors:

Arrangements: Mary Van Eeckhout

Fundraising: Suzie Havemann

Newsletter: Kathleen Taylor

Nominating Committee: Carroll Thomas, chair

County Council Observer: Lynn Jones

Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill

Assistant Webmaster: Barbara Lemmick

Social Media: Julie Williams-Hill

Barbara asked for nominations from the floor.

There were none.

Tarin Nix made the motion to accept and elect the nominees. Karyl Ann Armbruster seconded the motion. It passed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Check here to receive our local newsletter Update as an electronic file, saving us postage.

\_\_\_\_ Check here if you prefer the newsletter mailed in hard copy.

\_\_\_\_ 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 Education 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

\_\_\_\_ Budget, Finances

\_\_\_\_ Elections

\_\_\_\_ Water Issues

\_\_\_\_ Land Use, Public Lands

\_\_\_\_ Local Government

\_\_\_\_ Health Care

\_\_\_\_ Money in Politics

\_\_\_\_ Website, social media

\_\_\_\_ Other (please suggest) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Education

\_\_\_\_ Living Wage

\_\_\_\_ Voting Rights/Voter Services

\_\_\_\_ Sustainability

\_\_\_\_ Public Transportation

\_\_\_\_ Public Relations

\_\_\_\_ Newsletter

\_\_\_\_ Membership

\_\_\_\_ Not sure (I just support LWV)

*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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