



UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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Calendar

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|-------------|---|
| November 14 | Lunch with a Leader, Julianna Koob and Marshall Martinez, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m. |
| November 30 | Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon |
| December 9 | LWVNM Advocacy Workshop, Santa Fe, 9:30 a.m. |
| December 12 | Lunch with a Leader, Voices of Los Alamos, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m. |

Lunch with a Leader: Julianna Koob and Marshall Martinez

On November 14 (rather than on the usual third Tuesday) the speakers at Lunch with a Leader will be Julianna Koob and Marshall Martinez. They will be talking about reproductive rights and the legislature in New Mexico. There will be a discussion of the 2017 NM legislative session with a focus on the strategies that win and ways that grassroots work are key. This conversation will dig into the details of how they successfully stopped bad bills and furthered proactive reproductive health care legislation through the power of grassroots support and storytelling.

Julianna Koob has fought to advance the rights of women and children for more than 25 years, beginning as a domestic violence shelter crisis advocate and later becoming a legislative advocate fighting for the rights of girls and women to make their own healthcare decisions, to receive equal pay, and to have access to abortion without barriers. She is particularly proud of her work to pass legislation increasing equity for girls in school sports programs, requiring equitable pay for women, and increasing services for victims of sexual assault.

Koob earned a Master's degree in Social Work and a law degree, but credits survivors of domestic and sexual violence and organizations led by women of color with the bulk of her education on women's rights and systems change.

Marshall Martinez is a native New Mexican community organizer who has been working in Social Justice for 16 years. As the Public Affairs Director, he works with a staff of Planned Parenthood organizers across the state to lift up and amplify the voices of Planned Parenthood supporters to impact policy and culture around Reproductive Health Care, including abortion.

In December, again on the 2nd Tuesday (December 12), the leaders of Voices of Los Alamos will speak. Voices began out of the Indivisible movement. They participated in the March on Washington in Santa Fe and the March for Science. They meet at the Unitarian Church monthly for an hour from 6:30-7:30. Generally it is on the fourth Monday, but the meeting is always announced in the Los Alamos Daily Post. There will be a lively discussion about what they have done so far and their plans for the future.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-18

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Rebecca Shankland

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Co-President's Message: Make America Smart Again!

At the October 16 citizens' rally to preserve the Next Generation Science Standards for NM schools, my favorite sign was "Make America Smart Again."

Barbara Calef, Lynn Jones, Jennifer Macke, and I were part of a large protest group, estimated at 200 people, that assembled in Santa Fe to speak at a hearing of the Public Education Department (PED). The topic of science standards had become a hot-potato issue when their release revealed that the PED planned to delete the age of the Earth, replace "the process of evolution" with "biological diversity," and substitute "climate fluctuations" for "climate change."

Meredith Machen prepared an excellent letter of protest from the LWVNM; Akkana Peck, Barbara Calef, Karyl Ann Armbruster, and I sent one from the LWVLA. At the hearing, speakers from LANL, the LANL Foundation, National Science Teachers Association, Sierra Club, various teachers' unions, National Center for Science Education, and a diverse group of others including students and religious groups spoke eloquently, reinforcing the hundreds of e-mails that had been sent earlier.

The result? Education Secretary-designate Christopher Ruszkowski dropped the proposed changes and announced that the original Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) would be adopted, though with some NM-based additions that are probably harmless and probably unnecessary.

The fundamental arguments for keeping the originally proposed NGSS were that they had been heavily vetted by many scientists and teachers over several years and had been adopted successfully by at least 18 other states. These standards would indeed make NM students smart, able to compete for scientific positions, and prepared to contribute to the future NM economy.

However, since these modifications were made in a secretive, un-transparent way, it is imperative for the League and many other watchdog groups to keep track as the standards are implemented. The recent discovery that history topics have also been altered by removing such subjects as Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, trust-busting, and Roe vs. Wade sends another signal: beware the intrusion of anti-intellectual politics into our public education. Keep New Mexico students knowledgeable and smart!

Becky Shankland

LWVNM Advocacy Workshop

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico is sponsoring its annual workshop, "Effective Citizen Advocacy at the Legislature," on **Saturday, December 9, 2017, 9:30 to noon, New Mexico State Capitol, Room 322 (enter on the East side only).**

The public is invited. Learn tips from legislators and a professional lobbyist on how to interact with legislators, speak at hearings, and advocate for your cause.

Speakers:

Senator Peter Wirth, D-Santa Fe, District 25

Senator Sander Rue, R-Albuquerque, District 23

Jim Jackson, Chief Executive Officer of Disability Rights New Mexico, an independent private non-profit organization authorized through federal law to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

Welcome, New League Member!

Kristin Henderson joined the League last spring; now we're happy to introduce her to the membership. Of course, many of us knew her as a County Council member, but here's more about her:

Kristin moved to New Mexico in 2002, and to Los Alamos in 2003. She has worked in real estate since 2006. She served on the County Council from 2013 - 2017, and as Chair in 2015. She ran on a platform of "reasonable progress," and worked on the Council to improve housing, support kids with financial decisions (funding the teen center and 4H, for instance), economic development, and other quality of life initiatives. She also served as liaison to the various regional and national entities that advocate for nuclear waste cleanup and other issues that affect communities which host DOE sites, and was involved with planning for the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park. Since leaving Council in 2017, she has continued her work in real estate, established the Friends of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (she is its President), and serves on both the Regional Development Corporation and the Bradbury Science Museum Association Board. Kristin has two daughters, one in middle school and one in high school. As a citizen, she continues to be an advocate for "reasonable progress" in town and economic development both on the hill and in the region.

Observer Corps Reports

Board of Public Utilities

At the October 18th Board of Public Utilities (BPU) meeting, Department of Public Utilities staff gave two presentations to the BPU members. First, staff presented an assessment of the natural gas distribution system, including the financial and physical condition, both of which are good. Second, staff updated the BPU on the implementation plan to address various recommendations that were made in a July 2015 Future Electrical Energy Resources Report and later adopted by the BPU. Efforts that have been completed or are currently underway include an Integrated Resource Plan, a Value of Solar Study, a Solar Firming assessment, an investigation into a small modular nuclear reactor project, and a preliminary review of public interest in a community solar garden.

DPU will also be holding a public meeting on the revised Long-Range Water Supply Plan on Monday, November 13th at 6 PM in Council Chambers, 1000 Central Avenue, Los Alamos, NM. A copy of the plan is available on the DPU website at: <https://rebrand.ly/DPUWaterSupplyPlan>.

Julie Williams-Hill

County Council

The county began serious code enforcement in May after the various new ordinances, procedures, personnel, and training were in place. This prompted the formation of a citizen protest group “The Los Alamos Citizens in Action Group.” They placed a survey on Survey Monkey to get input from Los Alamos citizens (<https://surveymonkey.com/r/DMY6G82>). The County Council will be holding a work session at 6 pm on November 7th in County Chambers in the Municipal Building to discuss code enforcement with the public. Some facts presented by County Manager Burgess at the 10/10 and 10/24 council meetings are the following:

Since May, the county has issued 1188 notices of violation, which represent single violations. Of these, 467 were to individual residences (some had multiple notices of violations such as high weeds and broken fences); 34 were to commercial properties; 8 were to the county. The county staff reported 95% of the violations, and 5% were reported by residents (whether anonymously or not). More information will be coming from the county as the November 7th date approaches, including data on the numbers and types of violations, and comparisons with other communities’ efforts at code enforcement.

Lynn Jones

Report of October Lunch with a Leader:

Naomi Maestas and Gloria Maestas

County Clerk Naomi Maestas and Elections Manager Gloria Maestas gave a rundown of the extensive responsibilities of their office. County Clerk is now a full-time position in Los Alamos. With a staff of five, she must record and archive the county’s permanent records; manage an online records website; issue marriage licenses; serve as clerk to the Probate Court; and provide administrative support as needed. The County Clerk also serves the County Council, attending all meetings and preserving a record of the proceedings. Documents such as ordinances and resolutions are filed and may be accessed using the online records website. In addition, the Clerk conducts naturalization ceremonies on the 4th of July.

Of course, the County Clerk’s most prominent responsibility is to conduct all federal, state, county, and local elections, for which purpose she maintains election and voter registration records and voting systems. The conduct of elections is governed by state law and either municipal or county code. Los Alamos, which is both a municipality and a county, follows the county code.

Some of the attendees were surprised to learn that the rolls of registered voters with names, addresses, and political party can be purchased, but Maestas assured the group that they are sold only for election purposes to facilitate canvassing by the parties.

Maestas discussed various aspects of the voting process. She emphasized the importance of signing the outer envelope for mail-in ballots and noted that two ballots may be enclosed in one envelope, but it must be signed by both voters. Mail-in ballots are preferred for school board elections because participation is greater than for in-person voting and the cost is the same.

For absentee-by-mail voting, every application is tracked. There is a record of who voted and whether they voted in person or absentee. Voters who are concerned about the mail can call to confirm that their ballot was scanned. However, the votes are not tabulated until election day.

The voting machines used in the county are owned by the Secretary of State and certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. Certification is performed in the warehouse in the basement of the Municipal Building prior to each election. The public is invited to watch the whole process. Part of the task is to assure that each machine is counting everyone's ballots, checking for over-votes as well as under-votes and accuracy in tabulating votes cast for each candidate.

Clerk Maestas has focused a lot of effort on voter registration. Her staff regularly offered to register voters at the farmers' market this year. On National Voter Registration Day, they visited the high school as well as offering to sign people up at Starbucks and in the Municipal Building lobby. (Smith's would not give permission for voter registration on their premises.) She remarked that her staff gives a welcome bag to new residents who register in the Clerk's office and praised the motor voter law, whereby people are invited to register or update their registration when they apply for or renew their driver's license or state ID in the Department of Motor Vehicles office.

League members who wish to join the effort to register voters are invited to visit the County Clerk's office to watch a 25-minute video and receive voter registration forms. There is no need to make an appointment.

Clerk Maestas praised Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver for joining the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), a non-profit organization created with assistance from the Pew Charitable Trusts to improve the accuracy of state voter rolls and increase access to voter registration for eligible citizens. So far twenty states have joined in creating a database of voters that records the voter's name and last four digits of his or her social security number. Maestas assured League members that when she receives notification that a voter is registered in more than one place, she checks with the voter before purging his or her name.

In an effort to make the polls more accessible, Maestas has secured Council approval for moving the vote center in White Rock to the White Rock Town Hall and, for Election Day, adding a vote center at the Betty Ehart Senior Center. There is generally a high turnout in Los Alamos, but participation could be greater, especially for the primaries. Maestas concluded by asking for more volunteer poll workers.

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(s): _____ E-mail _____

- Check here if you are willing to receive our local newsletter Update as an electronic file.
- Check here if you prefer to receive our local newsletter Update by hard copy in the mail.
- 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
- 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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