



UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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Website: www.lwvlosalamos.org

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Calendar

- January 31 LWVNM Legislative Reception, Garrett's Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, SF, 5:30 p.m.
- February 1 LWVNM League Day at the Legislature, State Land Office, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail, SF,
10:15 a.m.; Roundhouse in the afternoon
- February 12 Program Planning Meeting, 6 Mariposa Ct., White Rock, 7 p.m.
- February 20 Lunch with a Leader, Andrew Harnden, Los Alamos Public Library, 11:45 a.m.
- February 22 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- March 8 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon

Lunch with a Leader: Housing & Special Projects Manager Andrew Harnden

On February 20, Lunch with a Leader will feature Andrew Harnden, who has been working as the County's Housing & Special Projects Manager since July 2016. He studied urban geography at Queen's University and the University of Toronto in Canada before moving to the US. His background includes affordable housing policy, planning and development in Santa Fe, Colorado, and overseas. Harnden enjoys community outreach and recognizes the importance of feedback for identifying housing needs for all segments of the Los Alamos population including the workforce, seniors, and other groups.

Bring your questions to ask after his short formal presentation.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Co-President's Message: What Happens at League Day at the Roundhouse?

The answer to this burning question is: COME AND FIND OUT!

New Mexico has an amazingly open and accessible legislature. We are lucky to live so close the State Capitol, a remarkable architectural space that is affectionately known as "the Roundhouse." Furthermore, our legislators are welcoming and eager to hear our opinions. We want League Day to serve as an introduction to the building, the people, and the procedures you will encounter there.

To entice you to attend, here is the schedule:

LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION: Wednesday evening, January 31, Garrett's Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

1. Have drinks and snacks with our favorite legislators.
2. Write a name tag with your name and League and an indication of a couple of issues that interest you; then you can find people from other Leagues who share those interests.
3. Hear about the study of what's right and wrong with NM taxes from Richard Anklam, NM Tax Research Institute.
4. Pick up a League Day packet with lobbying information.
5. Join other League members for dinner if you like.

If you wish to join a carpool for this event, contact Lynn Jones at [jonesmm1\(AT\)Comcast\(DOT\)net](mailto:jonesmm1(AT)Comcast(DOT)net) or call 662-9443.

LEAGUE DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE: Thursday, February 1, 10:15-noon at the State Land Office, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail

1. Gather at the State Land Office lecture hall, pick up the information packet if you did not get one on Wednesday.
2. Enjoy talks by Viki Harrison, Common Cause New Mexico, on the 2018 Ethics Commission constitutional amendment and what is needed in the enabling legislation that will be filed next year; and Bill Jordan, New Mexico Voices for Children and the N.M. Fairness Project, on revenue generators that can address the fairness and sufficiency of our tax system.
3. Lunch where you like.
4. Reconvene at the Roundhouse around 1 to tour the building and visit your legislators with information sheets on issues of priority for the League. Visit the House and Senate and/or committee hearings.
5. Head for home around 3 p.m., ready to continue participating in your very own state legislature

If you wish to sign up for a tour of the Roundhouse on League Day, contact Becky Shankland at [rebecca.shankland\(AT\)gmail\(DOT\)com](mailto:rebecca.shankland(AT)gmail(DOT)com) or 672-9106(h) or 412-0776. You may also ask for carpooling possibilities from Becky.

Becky Shankland

Report on the Legislative Preview

The 2018 Legislative Preview, held at Fuller Lodge on Wednesday, January 10, was well attended. AAUW's Helena Whyte was the excellent moderator and three Hilltalkers from the high school debate team assisted the LWV and AAUW by keeping the time and carrying microphones to members of the audience during the Q and A sessions.

Stephanie Garcia Richard opened the discussion by noting that the state government was \$350 million in the hole in January last year. This year they have a surplus. The legislature is seeking a 1.5% increase in compensation for teachers while the governor is calling for 2%. Both budgets call for an increase in pre-K funding. Garcia Richard wants the funding to be more equitable and is supporting legislation to boost spending on at-risk students, to provide more oversight for charter schools, and a bill to re-define school age as up to 21. She is also supporting a bill to end the GRT exemption for a non-profit entity that may win the Lab contract.

Senator Cisneros remarked that he had missed the legislative preview last year because of the Senate caucus called to deal with the budget shortfall. In contrast, this year the legislature is pursuing a budget of \$6.6 billion, a 2.9% increase over last year, enabled by the rise in the price of oil from \$30 per barrel last year to \$60 per barrel this year.

Last year legislators had to “sweep and swap” to find sufficient funding to run basic government services and the reserve was below 1%. This year the reserve will rise to 8%; the goal is 10%. The legislature's top priorities are early childhood education and issues of badly needed funding for the 2nd judicial district. Cisneros closed by inviting constituents to visit him in the Roundhouse and to email or text to express support for or opposition to a particular bill.

Senator Martinez is chairman of the Judiciary Committee, which advances or holds back bills depending on their perceived value. Martinez commented that he opposes extending the three strikes law and re-instituting the death penalty. He does support a penalty enhancement bill that would make it a felony rather than a misdemeanor to leave the scene of an accident where someone has been injured.

In response to a question about extending the sessions and paying a salary to the legislators, Martinez said that a bill for that purpose introduced years ago never got a hearing. He does support consolidation of the interim committees to ease the work load. Garcia Richard said she values fellow New Mexicans serving as legislators and no legislator will risk voting for a salary. Cisneros feels the sessions should be extended. “Pay is not the driving factor,” he said.

Artie Pepin, Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), explained that the state has thirteen judicial districts and his office is responsible for everything except the making of decisions in court, which is the job of the judges. The judicial branch of the government, which has 2,000 employees, receives 2.6% of the budget. They have requested an increase to be able to pay better and cut the vacancy rate, which is 18% in some judicial districts. Because the salary for judges is the lowest in the nation, those best qualified are often uninterested in seeking appointment. A new constitutional amendment has been proposed to give the courts 3% of the budget instead of allowing the legislature and the governor to determine how much to allocate for them each year.

Pepin addressed the provisions of the constitutional amendment that was adopted in 2016. It has two components: judges can detain a defendant who is deemed to be dangerous; a non-violent defendant should not be detained because he or she is unable to make bail. Pepin noted that it is unconstitutional to incarcerate a defendant for being unable to pay. He went on to say that 70% of the people arrested are low risk, but many are “economically marginal”; they scrape by. If they are imprisoned, they are likely to lose their jobs and their housing, so they may be willing to accept a conviction in exchange for freedom.

He pointed out that the spike in crime heralded by the media occurred prior to the implementation of the rules passed by the Supreme Court only six months ago. However, there are some problems with the rules. The district attorney (D.A.) must bring a motion to the court to detain a defendant. If the D.A. does not act, the judge has no way of knowing that the defendant may represent a threat. In Albuquerque 3,000 people have been arrested more than ten times. Pepin said that the D.A. should show up. The argument that a mini-trial is required is untrue, he said. The procedure should not take more than half an hour. Bernalillo has recently created a public safety assessment that will assist the courts in determining the risk posed by defendants and could be extended to the whole state.

Barbara Calef

Observer Corps Reports

Board of Public Utilities

The Board of Public Utilities held its first monthly meeting of the year on January 17th. Jeff Johnson was elected chair and Carrie Walker elected vice chair. Deputy Utility Manager Steve Cummins gave a presentation on the Department of Public Utilities' efforts to investigate solar installation locations. The BPU directed Cummins to move forward with solar panel-covered parking at the Municipal Building. BPU members approved the revised Long-range Water Supply Plan, which will now go to the County Council to be adopted. Also approved by BPU members was a transfer of \$2.5 million from the natural gas fund to the wastewater fund for a new Wastewater Treatment Facility in White Rock.

On January 25th the DPU held a public meeting on the Carbon-Free Power Project, a project to construct a nuclear facility using small modular reactor technology. A joint BPU and County Council meeting followed. The BPU and County Council will decide in early March whether or not to continue into the next phase of the project. DPU is collecting citizens' comments on its open Forum page

<https://www.peakdemocracy.com/5826>

Julie Williams-Hill

County Council

The County Council passed a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) at their December 5th meeting. They approved a Splash Pad at Overlook Park for \$720,000; Golf Course Improvements of \$4,524,000; Outdoor Ice Rink Improvements of \$1,200,000; and a “kiddie pool” up to \$6,500,000. The catch on the kiddie pool is that construction will not be contracted until the LANL contract is awarded, and the Deacon Street project will be delayed by one year, and thus moved to 2020.

At the County Council meeting on January 9th Council chose a Chair and Vice Chair for the coming year. David Izraelevitz was chosen to stay on as chair, and Christine Chandler was chosen as Vice-Chair.

Also at the January 9 meeting, the Council voted to donate 4.2 acres of land (Tract A-9) to Bethel Development, Inc. for the building of affordable housing. This land is on the north side of DP road just west of where the Canyon Walk Trail crosses DP road. There will be 70 units for rent, consisting of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments. Renters must have total income of 40%, 50% or 60% percent of area median income, which varies by family size, but ranges from \$30,480/year for a single person to \$126,300 for a family of six. Assuming the NM Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) approves the arrangement, the apartments are required to be ready by December of 2020.

Lynn Jones

December Lunch with a Leader: Voices of Los Alamos

Voices of Los Alamos is an offshoot of an organization created early last year called One Los Alamos in response to the xenophobia that was sweeping the country. The founders, Anghar Dandekar, Madhari Garimella, Ryn Herrmann, Heidi Rogers, Sandra Tobin, and Elena Giorgi, wanted to start a dialogue for our community. Two of them are immigrants and Dandekar, who spoke first for the group, pointed out that there are residents in Los Alamos from over seventy countries. Their first action was to ask Council to proclaim the third week of January Diversity Week and to sponsor an art contest at the Middle School.

The organizers decided to create an action group, which they named Voices of Los Alamos. This is their mission statement:

Voices of Los Alamos is a non-partisan, progressive advocacy group created as a way for Los Alamos residents to voice their concerns over the current political events (both at the state and at the federal levels). We strive to build community, educate, discuss, and enact action plans, with a focus on the following issues: social justice, women's rights, human rights, education, environment, health care, gun safety, election reform.

The group meets in the Unitarian Church at 6:30 p.m. on the fourth Monday of each month to share political action items (phone calls, petitions, town hall meetings, etc.) regarding Los Alamos County and/or the state.

Cristina Olds, the second speaker, said she found the group "through the magic of social media." Voices is aligned with the national Indivisible movement, which grew out of the January 21, 2017, March on Washington. Members organized and participated in that event as well as the March 8 "A Day Without a Woman" and the March for Science.

During the past year Voices has hosted speakers on gun safety, civil discourse, affordable housing, and the chromium plume as well as the League of Women Voters. The third representative of Voices, Becky Oertel, said she had not previously been politically active but went to the March on Washington in search of ways to make a difference. Her role at Voices is to take the minutes and moderate. She asked for suggestions of issues for discussion.

The final speaker was Lindsey Conover, who planned the Women's March in Santa Fe last January. She noted that the marches on January 21 were a springboard to action; over five million people participated world-wide. As a result of her involvement, Conover joined the AAUW and has applied to join the Santa Fe Community Development Commission to fight for housing for the homeless. She advised her audience to "find out what it is you are passionate about and figure out how to get involved."

January Lunch with a Leader: Denise Fort

Denise Fort resigned her position as a Professor of Law and Director of the UNM Law School's Utton Center to focus on climate change and environmental advocacy. Fort is the current Chair of the Energy Committee for the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, a self-described convener of activists. The topic of her presentation was "what we want from our government."

Today the environmental movement is fighting the repeal of the progress we have made over the last 50 years. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* led to a cascade of environmental laws. In 1970 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was founded. In the years that followed, acid rain was reduced, lead was removed from gasoline, emissions standards were created, waste management was improved, and the Energy Star program lowered the nation's energy use.

To date the administration, under the effective leadership of Scott Pruitt at the EPA and Ryan Zinke at the Department of the Interior (DOI), has rolled back or repealed some 80 rules. Zinke lifted the moratorium on coal and rolled back the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Fort said that the DOI has issued a ruling that businesses are in violation of the MBTA only if they intentionally kill nongame migratory birds. Incidental killing is no longer a violation of the law.

Fort stated that environmental law is under attack from two forces, industrial powers like the Koch brothers, and people like Steve Bannon who are opposed to the regulatory state in principle and seek to cut down the size of the government.

She said there are many ways to fight back. There is the Administrative Procedure Act, which governs the process by which federal agencies develop and issue regulations and makes it subject to judicial review. New legislation requires passage by the Senate, although politicians are using riders to avoid the 60 votes needed to pass new legislation. Cities and states can enact progressive policies. The decline of coal in the marketplace is due to falling natural gas and renewable energy prices and will not be reversed by changes in government rules. And noisy protest can also be effective.

More specifically, Fort said the League has a unique role because of our history and non-partisan stance. We can write letters to the editor. We can fight for civil penalties for contamination of water by the oil and gas industry. The Oil Conservation Division, which is responsible for enforcement of environmental regulations in New Mexico, has *never* made a referral to the office of the Attorney General! We can call for regulation of methane releases and support a strong renewable portfolio standard. We need a state NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) to assess the environmental effects of proposed actions prior to making decisions. Fort called it the "stop and think act."

Fort also listed some goals for environmental protection at the federal level: amend the Clean Water Act; give the EPA the authority to protect groundwater as well as surface water, update existing regulatory laws, close loopholes. Most important, we must hold onto our conviction that the country can do better than this by expanding environmental protections.

Barbara Calef

Program Planning Meeting for LWV Issues

In preparation for our Annual Meeting in April and the LWVUS Convention in June, we will hold a program planning meeting on Monday, February 12, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Becky Shankland's home, 6 Mariposa Court in White Rock. All League members are invited to the event. Each League member has the opportunity to influence the selection of issues on which the League will focus for the next year. To keep League program vital, it is important that a large number of League members participate in the League program planning.

At the meeting we will consider whether there are local issues that should be addressed based on our League's current positions (on our website at <http://lwwlosalamos.org>). We also ask members to consider whether any of our positions need to be updated or whether there are other studies to be undertaken.

In addition, we will discuss the issues that are the focus for "The Campaign for Making Democracy Work" in the national League.

Barbara Calef

Welcome, New Members!

We are pleased to welcome Janice Trujillo, JoAnn Lysne, and Pat McCormick as new members.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-18

Officers

Co-Presidents: Barbara Calef and Rebecca Shankland

1st VP: *not filled*

2nd VP: *not filled*

Treasurer: Kathy Taylor

Secretary: Rosmarie Fredrickson

Directors

Reservations: Amy Birnbaum

Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster

Membership: Rebecca Shankland

Voter Services: Lynn Jones

Board of Public Utilities Observer: Julie Williams-Hill

Publicity: Jody Benson

Director at Large: Akkana Peck

Off-Board Directors

Arrangements: *not filled*

Fundraising: Suzie Havemann

Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill

Assistant Webmaster: Barbara Lemmick

Observer Corps: Lynn Jones

Newsletter Editor: Wayne Archer

Nominating Committee: *not filled*

League Board Nominations Are Open for Business!

The Los Alamos League is happy to welcome a number of new members and we hope some will join our stalwart group of leaders--either on board or off board. You'll see the current board list on page 7 of this newsletter. Please note that our Arrangements chair, Mary Van Eeckhout, has moved away, so filling that position is imperative.

Here is information about the board and off-board positions:

Officers

Co-Presidents or President: prepare the agenda and run the board meetings, officiate at forums, oversee the publication of the Update, write the fund drive letter.

1st VP: assist president(s) and serve as president the following year

2nd VP: assist the president(s)

Treasurer: deposit checks, pay bills, help with preparing budgets each year

Secretary: take minutes for each board meeting (about 10 a year)

Directors

Reservations: make reservations for public rooms for events and board meetings

Arrangements (either on or off-board): bring equipment for refreshments to public meetings (about 3 a year, more in election years)

Lunch with a Leader: contact suggested speakers, publicize in media. Bring supplies (cups, pitchers) to events; introduce speakers. (This is a large responsibility, so an assistant would be great for Karyl Ann.)

Membership: keep track of members for the local list and national database, bring membership materials to events, welcome new members

Voter Services: prepare Voter Guide at each election; help with Candidate Forums

County Council Observer: attend either in person or on line; report to board and membership on topics relevant to League positions or interests

Board of Public Utilities Observer: same as Council observer

Publicity: prepare articles and ads for public events for two newspapers

Directors at Large: attend and participate as voting members at board meetings; assist where needed

Off-Board Directors

Fundraising: host mailing and thank-you events

Webmaster, Social Media: post on Web site and Facebook

Assistant Webmaster: assist above activities

Newsletter Editor: format material for each newsletter; print and mail hard copies to some members

Nominating Committee: establish board slate in February in preparation for the Annual Meeting in April

Many of these positions could have assistants or committees that would help, so feel free to volunteer to help, either on board or off-board. (On-board members need to attend board meetings once a month.)

We hope that you'll let the Nominations Chair (Becky Shankland, 672-9106, 412-0776, rebecca.shankland(AT)gmail(DOT)com) know if you are interested or would like information. We are proud to have an active, engaged, friendly board, and we welcome additional members.

Becky Shankland



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS
MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Name: _____ 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
___ 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
___ Just support the League

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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