



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

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Calendar

- May 4 Thank-You Note Party, 1615 Sereno (Quemazon), 7-8:30 p.m.
- May 16-17 LWVNM Convention in Albuquerque
- May 19 Lunch with a Leader, Ellen Mills, Mesa Public Library, 11:40
- May 21 Environmental Sustainability Board Meeting, Municipal Bldg. Room 110, 5:30 p.m.
- May 28 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon

Lunch with a Leader May 19: Ellen Mills

On May 19 American Federation of Teachers (AFT) of Los Alamos President Ellen Mills will speak about “the other side of the picture.” In most aspects the school district and the Union strive to work collaboratively to ensure that the teachers are professional and the students are learning. The Union steps in when there is a disagreement that involves the negotiated contract. Mills is currently a teacher and contact person at Mountain School.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Thank-You Note Party, Reminder

As we said in March, League members will gather at 7 p.m. on May 4 at Suzie Havemann’s home to write thank-you notes to local contributors to our fund drive. Please plan to join us.

Suzie’s address is 1615 Sereno, in Quemazon. To get there, turn off North Road onto Quemazon, then turn left onto Brisa del Bosque. Take the first left onto Tranquilo. The street will bend to the right and become Sereno. The house is on the left.

President's Message

Bag Ban

Prior to the April 14 Council meeting, I sent a letter to the Council that read in part, "The League of Woman Voters of Los Alamos has been actively working to promote the bag ban in Los Alamos for over a year, believing that the consumption of single use carryout bags is not characteristic of a sustainable society. We define a sustainable society as one that satisfies its own needs without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations; a society that protects nature." During the meeting, I read the following comments to Council:

The LWVLA joins the Sierra Club in requesting Council to direct the Environmental Sustainability Board to hold one or more public hearings on the question of whether and how to reduce the distribution of single use bags in the county.

Please note that we are not asking for your vote on a plastic bag ban tonight. The approach of the League is to study all sides of an issue and then seek consensus on a position. We hope that the public hearings will lead to consensus in the community on this issue. But even if they do not, they will inevitably raise consciousness.

There are a number of misperceptions among the general public that we hope to dispel. Among those is the belief that plastic bags can be dropped into the blue bin to be recycled for another shopping trip. In fact, when I visited the Friedman Recycling Center, where the contents of our blue bins are sent, I saw the plastic bags being removed from the conveyor belt and dumped in the trash. Occasionally the machines that do the sorting had to be stopped when a plastic bag jammed the gears.

Another misperception is that our preferred alternative is to reinstate the paper bag as the receptacle of choice at the store. That is the current state of affairs in Santa Fe, but it is not a good solution. Our goal is to make it automatic for shoppers to carry reusable bags every time they shop.

The Council voted 4 to 3 to direct the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) to conduct two public meetings regarding an ordinance to ban or otherwise reduce the distribution of single use bags in Los Alamos County and to return to Council with options and/or a recommendation for action.

The issue will be on the agenda of the ESB at their next meeting, which will be held in Room 110 of the Municipal Building at 5:30 on Thursday, May 21. Please plan to attend. Meanwhile, write to Council (countycouncil@lacnm.us)

And add a comment to the Open Forum: <http://www.losalamosnm.us/gov/Pages/PublicCommentForum.aspx>

Open Space Management Plan

While you are contacting Council, please express your support for the Open Space Management Plan. Stress that it is a conceptual plan; all zoning changes must be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Council. The plan will not hinder economic development in Los Alamos. In addition to the multitude of empty buildings, there are currently 190 acres of undeveloped land available for development that are level, not in the flood plain, and with no deed restrictions.

Barbara Calef

Environment Position Revised

Following the 2014 Annual Meeting, Mark Jones and I responded to questions from members by re-writing the second bullet in the LWVLA Environment position. The older version was mistakenly used in the March Update. Here is the complete position with the revision underlined.

Barbara Calef

ENVIRONMENT (Adopted 2012, Revised 2014)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos believes that our natural environment is integral to our community's unique sense of place and to our well-being and prosperity.

- We support protection of this environment, including the canyons and other open space, vistas, wildlife habitat, and dark skies.
- To improve ecosystem health and community livability, we support wherever possible "Green Infrastructure." EPA defines this as "... an array of products, technologies, and practices that use natural systems – or engineered systems that mimic natural processes – to enhance overall environmental quality.... Green Infrastructure techniques use soils and vegetation to infiltrate, evapotranspire, and/or recycle storm water runoff."

Further Guidelines

The LWVLA supports final review, adoption and implementation of the current draft Open Space Plan, which develops a system of designated open space to protect scenic vistas and memorable landscapes; recreational, natural and cultural resources; and significant wildlife corridors and habitats.

- We support adoption of a Rendija Canyon master plan that reserves the transfer land for recreational uses only.
- We support adoption of a storm water management plan that employs green

infrastructure strategies, such as infiltration planters, vegetated swales, tree boxes, and rain gardens.

- We support adding green spaces in the downtown with landscaped road edges, medians, parking lots, and pocket parks.
- We support limiting the use of herbicides in open space areas, as well as along roadsides where mowing weeds and planting native grasses can be as effective.
- We support a policy of zero increase in runoff beyond the natural rate for commercial and private property.
- We support implementation of all goals in the Protect the Environment section of the LAC Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Council in 2005.

Execution of the actions suggested in Further Guidelines will improve the quality of our air and water.

Observer Corps Report

The County Council discussed the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (MPNHP) at both the March 24th and the March 31st Council meetings. A great deal of time and effort by the MPNHP committee went into the recent successful passage of the legislation creating this park. The National Park Service is looking to inaugurate this park sooner rather than later, and so the pressure is on for the county to accommodate and welcome the new, potentially large influx of tourists. Decisions need to be made regarding the need for a new visitor center in the downtown; how to handle transportation; what kind of signage we need; whether there are adequate venues for eating and lodging; bathroom facilities; and whether Los Alamos should be a gateway to all three parks. County Manager Harry Burgess responded quickly to the need for staff support for this project by establishing a position that will be responsible for it; he did this by redefining the position of a departing staff member. Councilor Kristin Henderson is currently forming an ad hoc committee to address these issues.

At the March 24th and 31st meetings, Councilor Susan O'Leary convinced the other members of the Council that they needed a strategy to better communicate to the public the Council's priorities, discussions, decisions, and accomplishments. In a timely follow-up on this strategy, the County Council web page now has a "Council Corner" section that includes Councilor David Izraelevitz's two recent articles about the budget process. Staff will be returning to Council in the future with further strategies for better communication with the public.

The Open Space Plan was revisited on March 31st, but a couple of councilors were concerned about a few parcels of land and whether or not they could be easily developed. This topic will be brought back to Council after some revisions.

The April 14th meeting saw two citizen petitions brought before the Council, and there was lengthy public comment on both. The first was

the petition requesting the construction of a Leisure Pool at the Larry R. Walkup Aquatic Center. Many parents urged this construction because there is no place in Los Alamos to teach a child to swim. Children need both shallow and warm water in order to learn, and the cost of the private pools is too high for many families. The second petition was brought by the Pajarito Group of the Sierra Club and the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos. It asked the Council to remand the question of banning single-use plastic bags in Los Alamos to the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) for broad public input and discussion before bringing a possible ordinance back to the Council.

Lynn Jones

LWVNM Convention

Every two years delegates from the four local Leagues in New Mexico meet with the State Board to plan a program, adopt a budget, amend the bylaws, and elect a new board for the State League. This year the convention will take place in Albuquerque at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The guest speakers will be NM Chief Justice Barbara Vigil, speaking at lunch on May 16, and women's issues expert Martha Burk, speaking at the banquet that evening. The delegates from our League will be Barbara Calef, Tarin Nix, Akkana Peck, and Julie Williams-Hill.

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting was very well attended with over a third of our LWVLA members present. Despite the large turnout, the business meeting was remarkably brief, lasting less than an hour. The most exciting moment came during the nominations when Wendee Brunish volunteered to serve as First Vice-President, a position that has been vacant since 2006. The First Vice-President takes the position of President the following year. Here is the newly elected board:

President: Barbara Calef

1st VP: Wendee Brunish

2nd VP: Rebecca Shankland

Co-Treasurers: Rosmarie Frederickson and
Kathy Taylor

Secretary: Julie Williams-Hill

Directors

Reservations: Amy Birnbaum

Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster

Membership: Tarin Nix

Voter Services: Lynn Jones

Director at Large: Anne Nobile

Report of March LWL: David Izraelevitz

“What can you do for your community?” was the way Councilor David Izraelevitz introduced his presentation. He went on to make the point that with the decline of income from gross receipts taxes due to the decrease in LANL activities, it's time for citizen-driven investment in our town.

A group of citizens including Izraelevitz, Kristy Ortega, Bill Enloe, Katy Korkos, Ken Milder, Morrie Pongrantz and many others has been meeting twice a month to make plans for an umbrella organization with multiple goals such as providing a corporate memory, highlighting the needs of the county, and assisting the 200 volunteer organizations in the county with fundraising, bookkeeping, etc. The Los Altos (California) Community Foundation could serve as a model for us. Santa Fe, Las Cruces, and many other cities have such an organization.

The steering committee wants to set up a board of directors with representation across the community, but they have many decisions to make before the Los Alamos Community Foundation is established, such as whether it will be independent or part of the LANL Foundation.

Izraelevitz did not seem to think that the initial funding would be a problem. He said that if one hundred residents would give \$1000 a year for three years, the foundation would succeed.

Barbara Calef

Report of April LWL: Dale Lyons

Dale Lyons, Director of Freshwater Programs at The Nature Conservancy, told the group that wildfires cause severe erosion and impact the quality and supply of the water supply due to sedimentation. Thunderstorms following the 2011 La Conchas Fire created massive debris flows including the one that destroyed the Dixon Apple Orchard. Water managers in Albuquerque and Santa Fe were forced to halt withdrawals from the Rio Grande because there was so much ash in the water.

According to the Nature Conservancy, of 1.4 million forested acres in northern New Mexico, 600,000 are “treatable.” Treatment could include thinning, flood mitigation, and stream restoration. Treatment could also extend to removal of materials to a biomass or wood products manufacturing plant. Lyons said that removal of those materials would lead to improved soil formation. The project would be good for the economy because it would generate jobs and also reduce the ultimate cost of recovery from the inevitable future wildfires.

The Nature Conservancy, together with diverse stakeholders, has created the Rio Grande Water Fund to carry out the project. The plan is to treat 30,000 acres a year, up from the existing watershed restoration programs that treat 3,000-5,000 acres a year. To achieve this goal, an additional \$15 million a year is necessary. The cost is only a fraction of the expense of fires in untreated areas.

The stakeholders include cities, pueblos, the acequia association, LANL and Sandia National Laboratory. Lyons is meeting with Councilor Pete Sheehey, seeking LA participation. There are bylaws, an advisory board, a charter, and technical and review panels. The comprehensive plan is available at NM.Conservation.org.

Lyons expressed regret that the Governor had vetoed the Forest and Watershed Restoration Act, which was meant to support the Nature Conservancy’s program. Governor Martinez does not oppose the goals, but felt that the act would have created an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy.

Barbara Calef

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

	Adopted FY15 Budget		Actual Expenses 03/01/14 to 2/28/15		Adopted FY16 Budget 5/1/2015 to 4/30/2016 - CORRECTED	
	General	Ed Fund	General	Ed Fund	General	Ed Fund
EXPENSE						
A. Administration						
1. President's Funds	\$40.00				\$40.00	
2. Secretary	\$0.00				\$20.00	
3. Treasurer	\$30.00				\$30.00	
4. Board tools	\$25.00		\$92.00		\$100.00	
5. Communications						
a. Newsletter	\$100.00				\$100.00	
b. Webpage	\$200.00		\$200.00		\$200.00	
6. Other Administrative	\$150.00		\$85.00			
c. Refreshments					\$20.00	
d. Travel					\$150.00	
e. Miscellaneous						
Total Administration	\$545.00	\$0.00	\$377.00	\$0.00	\$660.00	\$0.00
B. Per Member Payment (PMP)						
1. State	\$793.00		\$780.00		\$793.00	
2. National	\$1891.00		\$1,860.00		\$1,936.00	
Total PMP	\$2,684.00	\$0.00	\$2,640.00	\$0.00	\$2,729.00	\$0.00
C. Committees						
1. Fundraising	\$100.00		\$123.03		\$100.00	
2. Membership	\$100.00				\$100.00	
3. Lunch with a Leader	\$150.00		\$200.00		\$150.00	
4. Arrangements	\$50.00		\$286.90		\$50.00	
Total Committees	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$609.93		\$400.00	\$0.00
D. Position Support						
1. National	\$20.00				\$20.00	
2. State	\$20.00				\$20.00	
3. Local	\$20.00				\$20.00	
Total Position Support	\$60.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$60.00	\$0.00
E. Convention, Council, & other travel						
1. National Convention	\$1325.00		\$2192.16			
2. State Council	\$70.00		\$44.00		\$50.00	
3. State Convention	\$200.00				\$650.00	
4. LWVLA Annual Meeting	\$225.00				\$0.00	
Total Travel	\$1,820.00	\$0.00	\$2,236.16	\$0.00	\$700.00	\$0.00
F. Program						
1. Voters' Services	\$100.00	\$3,200.00		\$2,074.15	\$100.00	\$500.00
2. Sustainability	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$700.00		\$0.00	\$300.00
3. Local Government	\$200.00		\$89.00		\$0.00	
4. Land Use	\$100.00	\$300.00				\$300.00
5. Citizens United	\$150.00				\$0.00	
6. Other Program	\$150.00				\$150.00	
Total Program	\$700.00	\$3,800.00	\$789.00	\$2,074.15	\$250.00	\$1,100.00

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos						
	Adopted FY15 Budget		Actual Expenses 03/01/14 to 2/28/15		Adopted FY16 Budget 5/1/2015 to 4/30/2016 - CORRECTED	
	General	Ed Fund	General	Ed Fund	General	Ed Fund
G. Other						
1. Ed Fund pass-through	\$0.00	(\$600.00)	\$95.00		\$0.00	0.0
2. Memorials	\$0.00				\$0.00	
3. LWVNM state convention	\$0.00				\$0.00	
Total Other	\$0.00	(\$600.00)	\$95.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.0
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,209.00	\$3,200.00	\$6,747.09	\$2,074.15	\$4,799.00	\$1,100.00
INCOME						
A. Dues						
1. Regular	\$585.00		\$1,170.00		\$1,260.00	
2. Sustaining	\$2,025.00		\$900.00		\$975.00	
3. Household	\$910.00		\$325.00		\$390.00	
4. Household Sustaining	\$1330.00		\$950.00		\$665.00	
Total Dues	\$4,850.00	\$0.00	\$3,345.00	\$0.00	\$3,290.00	\$0.00
B. Contributions						
1. Members	\$300.00	\$600.00	\$485.00	\$200.00	\$300.00	\$600.00
2. Non-members	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	\$935.00	\$845.00	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
3. Businesses		\$500.00		\$15,550.00		\$500.00
Total Contributions	\$800.00	\$2,100.00	\$1,420.00	\$16,595.00	\$800.00	\$2,100.00
C. Miscellaneous						
1. Ed Fund Reimbursement	\$1,441.50	\$2,700.00	\$475.36		\$1,100.00	\$0.00
2. LWVNM convention						
3. Interest	\$1.00		\$0.59		\$1.00	
4. Forum partners	\$60.00		\$89.50		\$90.00	
Total Miscellaneous	\$1,502.50	\$2700.00	\$565.45	\$0.00	\$1,191.00	\$0.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$7,152.50	\$4,800.00	\$5,330.45	\$16,595.00	\$5,281.00	\$2,100.00
INCOME-EXPENSES	\$943.50	\$1,000.00	(\$1,416.64)	\$14,520.85	\$482.00	\$1,000.00



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 March 17: Ellen Mills	1
Thank You Note Party, Reminder	1
President's Message	2
Environment Position Revised	3
Observer Corps Report	4
LWVNM Convention	5
Report of March LWL: David Izraelevitz	5
Report of April LWL: Dale Lyons	6
Adopted/ Corrected Budget FY16	7
Membership Form	9