



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

- September 15 Lunch with a Leader, David Puddu, publisher of the *Monitor*, Mesa Public Library, 11:45
- September 17 Emile Nakhleh, "ISIS, the Middle East, and US Policy," Fuller Lodge, 7 p.m. (6:30 for refreshments)
- September 24 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- October 20 Lunch with a Leader, Robert Gibson, Future Energy Resources Committee, Mesa Public Library, 11:45 a.m.
- October 22 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon

Lunch with a Leader September 15, David Puddu

This month's Lunch with a Leader will be held on Tuesday, September 15, at 11:45 a.m. in Mesa Public Library. The speaker will be the publisher of the *Los Alamos Monitor*, David Puddu. Puddu has been a newspaper publisher for 28 years. Originally from Pennsylvania, he earned a degree in journalism from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He spent fourteen years publishing newspapers in ski resort communities in Colorado and then worked for thirteen years as VP/COO of Number Nine Media, Inc., a subsidiary of the Albuquerque *Journal*. Puddu has been in Los Alamos for just one year.

Puddu is a past president of the New Mexico Press Association (2005) and has served as a Regional Director for the National Newspaper Association, overseeing the states of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. He also served on the executive committee, Congressional Action Team, and as Marketing/Membership Co-Chair for the National Newspaper Association. He will be talking about the changes he and his team have made to the *Monitor* and current issues in newspapers.

At the October LWW, Robert Gibson will report the findings of the Future Energy Resources Committee, which have been delivered to the Board of Public Utilities. League members Ed Birnbaum, Don Machen, and Kathy Taylor, who also served on the committee, will add to the discussion.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

LWVLA Board 2015-2016

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Middle East Expert Nakhleh to Speak on ISIS and US Policy on September 17

"ISIS, the Middle East, and US Policy: Regional Reflections Since the Iran Agreement" is the subject of Emile Nakhleh's talk on Thursday, September 17, at Fuller Lodge at 7 p.m., with refreshments at 6:30. The League of Women Voters and American Association of University Women are sponsoring the talk, which is free and open to the public.

Dr. Nakhleh is a government consultant on national security issues, particularly Islamic radicalization, terrorism, and the Arab states of the Middle East. He is a retired Senior Intelligence Service Officer, a Research Professor and Coordinator of national security programs at UNM, a National Intelligence Council/IC Associate, and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

The talk will highlight the continuing threat from ISIS, the factors that drive it, and its apparent resiliency. The presentation will also focus on

U.S. regional policy and the threats and challenges it faces in the coming decade in light of the Iran agreement and the integration of Iran into the international community.

As an expert on an area that is so volatile and changing, Dr. Nakhleh can help shed light on a complex topic. If you have been wondering how to untangle these complexities, this talk will provide timely insights.

Rebecca Shankland

Report of July LWL: Sanders Moore

Sanders Moore, Director of Environment New Mexico, noted that her organization is state-wide and citizen-based. Much of their current effort is focused on fighting climate change through research and education as well as lobbying on the related issues.

As an example of the research, Moore cited "Path to the Paris Climate Conference," which documents the expected carbon pollution reductions resulting from existing state-level and federal policies by 2025, including renewable energy standards and energy efficiency. Environment NM is fighting to further increase the authorized reductions by publicizing the advantages of renewable energy for our economy as well as for the climate. Moore noted that although we are the second sunniest state in the country, we get less than 3% of our electricity from the sun; we are the 12th windiest state, but are 18th in wind production.

Moore advised League members to write to the Governor and our legislators to ask for an extension for solar tax credits. The credit is scheduled to terminate at the end of 2016. A bill to extend it passed during the 2015 legislative session but was vetoed by the Governor.

Barbara Calef

Observer Corps Report

At the July 28th County Council meeting, Council approved the San Juan Generating Station (SJGS) Settlement Agreement. This sets up a new structure that complies with the EPA requirements for a reduction in air pollution from the power plant. Two of the four units of the plant will be shut down, and Selective Non-Catalytic Reduction (SNCR) technology will be installed on the remaining two units. In addition, four of the nine original owners of SJGS requested to withdraw from ownership, and this required a further restructuring of the agreement among the nine original owners. With the agreement in place, the SNCR will be installed on units 1 and 4 by January, 2016; and units 2 and 3 will be shut down by December, 2017.

At this same meeting, Council approved a contract with Boutique Air, Inc. to provide air service between Los Alamos and Albuquerque. There will be three round-trip flights per day, and Los Alamos County will provide a subsidy of \$544,418 per year to Boutique for this service. There is hope of an eventual Los Alamos to Denver flight. The county will be advertising the Albuquerque service once it begins.

At the August 25th meeting, the Department of Public Utilities recommended that the county sign on to an agreement to participate in the Carbon Free Power Project Study Phase Siting Agreement. This is an agreement with Utah Associated Power Systems. The "Project" is a 600 MW Small Modular Reactor (SMR) facility that is being designed to hold up to twelve 50 MW nuclear power modules. The agreement that Council approved is simply to research siting of the Project at the Idaho National Laboratory. There is no further commitment from the County at this time. DOE is footing 50% of the total siting research costs. Los Alamos County ends up with about \$30K in costs for the agreement, and a possible future replacement for the power from the SJGS (see above) after 2022.

The County Council is in the process of deciding which Capital Improvement Projects to put forward for the next budget year. A special

session will be held at 6 pm in Council Chambers on September 10. The list is long right now and must be pared down. It includes items such as golf course improvements, a leisure pool, a ski hill water project, ice rink improvements, a conference center, mountain bike trail building and many more. Now is a good time to make your preferences known.

Lynn Jones

Plastic Bags

At the August 14 Council meeting Environmental Sustainability Board Co-Chair Sarah Terrell presented a report detailing how the board had fulfilled the direction from Council regarding single use bags. (For details, see the June and July Updates.) In response to questions from Council about their education program, Environmental Services Manager Angelica Gurule noted that her department had improved the blue magnet listing items that go into the blue (recycle) bin and also created a new commercial that is being shown at the Reel Deal Theater.

After some discussion and two failed motions Council passed a motion made by Rick Reiss "that Council acknowledge the excellent work of the Environmental Sustainability Board in gathering public information regarding plastic bags, further, that Council acknowledge the education efforts of merchants regarding recycling, and acknowledge, and encourage the continuing education efforts of the County Solid Waste Department and finally, take no further action."

The commercial is very good. Unfortunately the new bin-shaped magnet (and the webpage <http://www.losalamosnm.us/gogreen/Pages/RecyclingandSolidWaste.aspx>) still includes plastic bags, although the words "recycle at Smith's" have been added in small print. The list no longer includes tin cans, although they are still recyclable. Gurule says that pots and pans and electronics without glass components can be placed in the bins, but they are not mentioned in the list, either.

The department should correct the list and also should publicize the type of plastic bags and related objects that can be placed in the bins at Smith's. To see that information, go to http://cvwma.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Plastic_Bag_Recycling.pdf

Barbara Calef

Call for a New Mexico Ethics Commission

Last week the League of Women Voters of New Mexico formally requested that the governor add legislation for a state ethics commission to the agenda for the legislative session that begins in January. Since 2016 is a short session, just thirty days, any non-budget topic must be approved by the governor.

In her message to Governor Martinez LWVNM President Meredith Machen wrote that the League has long advocated for a commission designed to be “independent, impartial, and free from conflicts of interest. An Ethics Commission would oversee and enforce ethics rules, campaign finance, and lobbying laws. This commission would receive allegations and complaints and conduct investigations according to established, detailed standards. If the allegations were proven beyond a reasonable doubt, the commission would determine disciplinary action. This independent office would be as removed as possible from partisan politics. NM is one of 8 states without an Ethics Commission. This action would demonstrate your commitment to transparency, accountability, and integrity.”

Even if the Governor grants the League's request, the creation of an ethics commission is far from assured. Proponents have been fighting for years to get the Legislature to support their goal.

Barbara Calef

LWVUS Constitutional Amendment Study

At the LWVUS Convention held in Dallas last year the delegates approved two new national studies. One was for an update of the position on campaign finance, which many League members and others feel is necessary following the Supreme Court decision in the Citizens United case. We will be discussing more about that study in the next couple of months.

The second study concerns constitutional amendments. The broad question is when should the League endorse a constitutional amendment or support a call for a constitutional convention. Obviously the answer is likely to affect the League's approach to supporting campaign finance reform. Here is the link for all of the documents listed for the study: <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/our-work/constitutional-amendment-study>

At the August LWVLA board meeting four members – Kathy Taylor, Rebecca Shankland, Akkana Peck, and Dave North – offered to serve on our local constitutional amendment committee to plan how to present the study to our League. The committee has decided that, using the readings listed by LWVUS, they will give some background information as well as pros and cons for the consensus questions to be published in the October Update. At the September 24 board meeting we will schedule the consensus meeting for an evening in October. We hope that many of our members will attend.

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: _____ 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.

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