



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

- April 18 Lunch with a Leader, Sandra Fish, New Mexico in Depth, 11:40 a.m.-1 p.m.
LWVLA Annual Meeting Mesa Public Library, 1:10-2:30 p.m.
Be sure to bring your March Update: Call to Annual Meeting!
- April 27 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- May 4 Thank-You Note Party, 1615 Sereno (Quemazon), 6:30-8 p.m.
- May 16 Lunch with a Leader, Recreation Bond Discussion, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m.
- May 20-21 LWVNM Convention, Santa Fe Hilton, noon-5:30 p.m. on Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-noon
Sunday

Lunch with a Leader: Sandra Fish

Our April 18, Lunch with a Leader will feature Sandra Fish of NM in Depth. She received undergraduate degrees in journalism and political science, and a master's degree in political science from Iowa State University. She has worked for newspapers in Iowa and Florida. In the mid '90s, Fish moved to Boulder, Colorado, where she worked for the Daily Camera as an editor and reporter for 11 years.

Fish will be speaking about the legislative session, especially good government type initiatives and how they fared, and how that relates to the work that she does.

Plan to stay for the League's annual meeting immediately after the talk! Bring your March Update with your questions and comments.

On May 16, a representative will be speaking for the Recreation Bond that is being voted on in May. Ballots come out the first week in May, but since so many of us wait until the last minute to vote, this presentation will help us look at both sides of the issue and give us an opportunity to ask questions before we cast our ballot.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016-17

Officers

Co-Presidents: Barbara Calef and
Rebecca Shankland

1st VP: *not filled*

2nd VP: *not filled*

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Fundraising: *not filled*

Webmaster: Barbara Lemmick

Assistant Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill

Observer Corps: Lynn Jones

Newsletter Editor: Kathy Taylor

Nominating Committee: Carroll Thomas, Tarin
Nix

Thank-You Note Party

The responses to our March 1 fund drive party are arriving. League members are invited to gather again on May 4 from 6:30 till 8 p.m. at the home of Suzie Havemann, our new fundraising director, to write thank-you notes to the donors. Please plan to come for another relaxing evening with friends. Light refreshments will be served.

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. Carpooling is encouraged.

Co-President's Message Suggested Tweets for Political Activists

Winston Churchill: To jaw-jaw is always better than to war-war.

Mahatma Gandhi: An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.

Benjamin Franklin: You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

The basic principle of human relations expressed by these wise people is one we badly need to apply now: bluster and threats are less effective than engagement. Parents and teachers learn that aggressive confrontation makes children fight back, whereas engaging them in discussion (well, little ones may just need distraction) can resolve the matter.

Sig Hecker, former head of LANL, recently lectured about dealing with North Korea, where he has spent considerable time visiting from 2004 to 2010. Despite the North Koreans' nuclear saber-rattling, Hecker still thinks our best strategy is engagement. He suggests offering some kind of assistance to defuse the antagonism and build relationships. "Talking works; the North Koreans would talk 'nuclear' with us," he said. The message: Use talking, not tweeting.

Bill Richardson famously became a negotiator for releasing hostages. He described his successful negotiations with the North Koreans as beginning by discussing families, sports, and other ordinary, personal aspects of life. Eventually a relationship developed and a deal was brokered—but with benefits on both sides, rather than one side winning and the other losing face.

The present administration has proposed huge cuts to foreign aid and the State Department, effectively disengaging with friends and enemies alike. Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell's comment was that "many times diplomacy is a lot more effective—and certainly cheaper—than military engagement."

My suggested tweet for the current political moment: “Don’t conquer the world; befriend the world.”

Becky Shankland

Report of March Lunch with a Leader: Chief Justice Charles Daniels: Bail Reform and Judicial Spending

NM Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Daniels spoke at Lunch with a Leader on March 21. He began by thanking the League for helping citizens make informed choices (and avoid uneducated choices). As a judge, he himself is relegated to being a “political eunuch” who cannot speak out on political issues. However, he described the judiciary as having to make human decisions: we wouldn’t trust a computer to make judicial decisions.

What is the Supreme Court? Its five justices are the court of last resort in the state. The Court of Appeals takes most appeals, but the Supreme Court chooses the cases it will hear in order to resolve important issues like the death penalty and gay marriage. It also oversees the lower courts: funding, discipline, rules of evidence, procedures, ethical rules for lawyers. As part of this oversight role, they set up committees to study issues and suggest solutions.

The Bail Reform Movement. Justice Daniels led this study after realizing that our justice system often releases dangerous people and detains non-violent people before trial because the only criterion for release is whether one can raise bail. Instead of deciding whether the accused is a flight risk or a danger to the community, the justices only determine how much bail the accused can raise—their only means of keeping someone in prison till trial is to set an extremely high bail. The study committee decided that this needed to be changed and proposed a

Constitutional Amendment that went before the voters in 2016—and passed.

The Amendment read: “...to protect community safety by granting courts new authority to deny release on bail pending trial for dangerous defendants in felony cases while retaining the right to pretrial release for non-dangerous defendants who do not pose a flight risk.”

Judge Daniels did extensive research on the origins of the concept of bail; he found that Anglo-Saxon tribes adjudicated by considering the victim’s camp versus the perpetrator’s camp. A sanction of money or property was levied against the guilty party as compensation—this was the origin of the family’s or tribe’s bond, an assured payment. Once England became a kingdom, the crime was deemed to be against the king, but the accused was kept in prison and released only with a bond guarantee. Eventually, these bonds were issued by a bail bondsman—but this was only done as a commercial transaction in the USA and the Philippines.

More history: The government of Pennsylvania in 1682 decreed that citizens had an absolute right to bail except in capital cases because of the constitutional presumption of innocence; this idea was adopted into many state constitutions, including ours. But that meant that judges had no discretion to detain people. In 1970 the US Government passed a statute for the District of Columbia saying that a judge could detain anyone found by clear and convincing evidence to be a flight risk or dangerous to public safety. As a result, the District of Columbia now detains only 15% of suspects, while NM detains 40%, because until now judges were required to hold anyone who was too poor to raise bail.

Other states have been contacting NM and some are adopting our language. Even though the NM bail study committee included two bail bondsmen, the proposed Constitutional Amendment was bitterly contested in the legislature by bondsmen lobbyists. Nevertheless, when it went to the voters, the voters passed it 87-13%.

What's next for the Committee? They are writing rules that will help judges decide on relevant evidence and publishing public comments on those rules. Judge Daniels is stepping down from his position as Chief Justice early in order to help expedite the shift from bail-based procedures to this new way of doing business.

Funding of the judiciary. The judiciary represents only 3% of the cost of state government, but it is essential to a functioning society. The fiscal year ends June 30, but this year the funding for jury trial would have ended March 1, for court-appointed attorneys on March 15, and shortly thereafter the Supreme Court would have had to close and send staff home. They are already extremely frugal—Judge Daniels illustrated with anecdotes of dumpster-diving for usable paper and never asking for mileage reimbursement despite having to drive all around the state. The legislature did provide funding through fiscal 2017, but the budget for 2017-18 is still in limbo. He asked for our support for adequately funding this critical third branch of government.

Becky Shankland

Observer Corps Reports

County Council

Steven Thomas, our Library Manager, has left Los Alamos for a new job as Regional Library Manager at the King County Library System in Seattle, Washington. This is a career move for Steven, and we wish him well. He had a successful five years here in Los Alamos.

At the March 14th County Council meeting, Paul Andrus, our Community Development Director, reported that the Building Permit process has been modified to better serve contractors and citizens. There are shorter wait times and easier access to expert advice.

We reported last time that our League is very concerned about the closing of the Public Health Office (PHO) here in Los Alamos. At the March 14th Council meeting Becky Shankland read the following letter from our league:

Dear County Council,

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos is very concerned about the curtailing of hours of our Public Health Office (PHO). We invited Andrea Cunningham to speak to us about this at a meeting on February 21, 2017. Andrea reported on the effective closing of the PHO, the services that this office previously provided to the citizens of Los Alamos, and the lack of replacement services. We understand that Council, too, is concerned and that councilors, staff, and personnel from the Department of Health met to discuss the matter. It seems that the burden for these services has been shifted entirely to the county.

Our concern is for our teens, our children, and all our citizens. These missing services are irreplaceable if we want a healthy community. The existence of the Española office is an inadequate substitute.

We urge you to take immediate action to provide continuity in these services. While we understand that staff is looking into

alternative ways to achieve these ends, the County is in a position to take responsibility for these services and provide the nurse and clinician needed to staff the office. The existing office is in an ideal location to serve our teens and our community, and we hope you preserve it.

Please consider taking whatever action is needed to reopen this critical office.

Barbara Calef and Rebecca Shankland, co-presidents
Board of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

At the March 21st Council meeting, Councilor Susan O’Leary spoke regarding the closing of the PHO. She wanted to reassure citizens that councilors were meeting with the county staff regarding the closing, and that staff was developing a report of possible paths forward. Hopefully the county will find a way to provide these vital services to our citizens.

Councilor Pete Sheehey’s intention to propose a resolution regarding the treatment of immigrants and refugees was in the news prior to the April 4 Council meeting. At that meeting Council voted to table the motion and form a committee to bring a revised resolution back to the Council that would meet the needs of more people. Chair Izraelevitz indicated that this committee would consist of Councilors Sheehey, Maggiore, and Chrobocinski.

Lynn Jones

Board of Public Utilities

The Board of Public Utilities (BPU) met on Wednesday, March 15 in the County Council Chambers. Members of the Board approved the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) fiscal year 2018 budget, which will be forwarded to Council for adoption in April. A high level summary of the DPU FY18 budget includes a decrease to the natural gas rate and an 8% increase to water and wastewater rates, as well as an increase to the non-potable water rate, from \$1.15 to \$2.50 per thousand gallons. The FY18 budget includes a water-well replacement project, as well as some non-potable water projects, pending the approval of a partial grant/loan from the NM Water Trust Board. No San Juan Chama project funding is included in the 10-year financial forecast or capital plan. Lastly, the project to replace the White Rock wastewater treatment plant that was previously scheduled for FY18 has been postponed. At their April 19th meeting the BPU will discuss when to reschedule this project.

A revised Long-Range Water Supply Plan was also approved by the Board and forwarded to the County Council for adoption. The plan was revised to reflect current population and water demand projections, evaluate potential climate change impacts and risks, as well as assess various water supply options, including the timing for the development of the County’s San Juan-Chama water rights. The Board-approved plan was not adopted by the Council at the March 21st meeting and will be sent back to the BPU to consider recommended changes. The Council requested that they replace “Los Alamos County Water Utility” with the “Incorporated County of Los Alamos” and the “Department of Public Utilities” where appropriate and that they indicate that the San Juan Chama water right will be developed only as a last resort.

Julie Williams-Hill

Come to the LWVNM State Convention!

****May 20-21 at the Hilton Santa Fe Historic Plaza Hotel, 100 Sandoval St., in Santa Fe**

The League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County invites all League members to attend the 2017 LWVNM State Convention May 20-21. To reserve a room at the Hilton for \$130.00 + tax per night at the Hilton Hotel, call Reservations at 505-988-2811 and use the group reservation code LWV. **This rate is only good until April 19, 2017.**

The Los Alamos League will send four delegates to the meeting, but all League members are invited to participate as non-voting observers, who are welcome to participate in the discussions. Registration including luncheon is \$75 before April 20. Banquet tickets are \$50. Please send your check to LWVSFC, 1472 St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505. Questions? Contact league@lwvsfc.org or 505 982-9766.

On Friday, May 19 there will be a reception at President Meredith Machen's home beginning at 5 p.m. If you plan to attend, RSVP to Judy Williams at [jkwilliams24\(AT\)gmail\(DOT\)com](mailto:jkwilliams24(AT)gmail(DOT)com)

Registration and a silent auction will begin at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 20. The convention will open at noon with a buffet luncheon. The speaker is Henrietta Saunders, our liaison from LWVUS. Her topic will be "The League from a National Perspective: Where We Are and Where We are Going."

At the first plenary session following the luncheon the proposed budget, program, and nominations will be presented as well as amendments to the bylaws and other business of the LWVNM. The session will adjourn at 5:30 p.m.

There will be a no-host bar opening at 6 p.m., followed by the banquet at 7 p.m. Friends and family are welcome! Valerie Plame, noted activist and anti-nuclear proliferation expert will speak about "The Nuclear Threat in Our New Trumpian World."

The second plenary session will begin at 9 a.m. on Sunday morning following a half hour for registration. At that meeting there will be discussion and votes on the matters introduced the previous day. It will end at noon.



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 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

____ Study of Transfer of Public Lands

____ 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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