



# 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](http://www.lwvlosalamos.org)**

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## ***Calendar***

- September 19 Lunch with a Leader, Jennifer Sublett & Lynn Bjorklund, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m.
- September 28 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- October 17 Lunch with a Leader, Naomi Maestas & Gloria Maestas, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m.

## ***Lunch with a Leader: Jennifer Sublett & Lynn Bjorklund from USFS***

On September 19 we will have two fabulous people coming from the US Forest Service. LWVNM is conducting a study of the transfer of federal public land (to the State of NM). As a part of that study, we have asked Lynn Bjorklund and Jennifer Sublett to talk about the Forest Service - its history, management, goals, budget, etc.

Lynn Bjorklund grew up in Los Alamos and majored in toxicology at NMSU before she went on to get her MS in Biology. She returned to Los Alamos in 2010 to work in the Espanola District of the Santa Fe National Forest as a Reclamation Team Leader.

Jennifer Sublett is currently a District Volunteer Coordinator in the recreation and trails program with the Santa Fe National Forest. She has held this position since 2009. Prior to that she was a Program Director for the Girl Scouts and an environmental educator. From 2007-2009 she served as Assistant Volunteer Coordinator in the Shawnee National Forest. Her education background includes an undergraduate degree in Parks and Recreation with an emphasis in Program Management and a Master's Degree in Outdoor Education. Sublett is originally from Normal, Illinois, and currently lives in White Rock with her husband, Joel, and cat, Moonshadow.

*Karyl Ann Armbruster*

# **BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-18**

## **Officers**

Co-Presidents: Barbara Calef and  
Rebecca Shankland

1<sup>st</sup> VP: *not filled*

2<sup>nd</sup> VP: *not filled*

Treasurer: Kathy Taylor

Secretary: Rosmarie Fredrickson

## **Directors**

Reservations: Amy Birnbaum

Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster

Membership: Becky Shankland

Voter Services: Lynn Jones

Board of Public Utilities Observer: Julie  
Williams-Hill

Publicity: Jody Benson

Directors at Large: Akkana Peck, Tarin Nix

## **Off-Board Directors**

Arrangements: *not filled*

Fundraising: Suzie Havemann

Webmaster, Social Media: Julie Williams-Hill

Assistant Webmaster: Barbara Lemmick

Observer Corps: Lynn Jones

Newsletter Editor: Waine Archer

Nominating Committee: Carroll Thomas, Tarin  
Nix

## **Co-President's Message: Meet the Voices of Los Alamos!**

That's what Barbara Calef, Akkana Peck, and I did recently--along with several other League members, two County councilors, and 30 or so other concerned citizens. Here's their statement of purpose:

*Voices of Los Alamos is a progressive political activism group aligned with the national Indivisible movement, and was born out of the Women's March on Washington in response to the new administration. Our local advocacy group was 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 level) and give people a space to gather together, discuss, and form action plans.*

Christina Olds and Elena Georgi are the co-organizers along with Becky Oertel, and the group meets monthly to discuss issues of interest and then hear from speakers. They begin with announcements and discussions about issues like the immigration proclamation at County Council, the sheriff's office and gun control, and other timely issues. They shared opinions in an open and accepting manner. I enjoyed the fact that there was no specific agenda for the first part of the meeting, so that current issues could be addressed informally.

The rest of their evening is devoted to speakers, in this case, the League of Women Voters. We gave some historical background about the national League's origin (when women got the right to vote in 1920), the Los Alamos League's origin (when Los Alamos had its first Town Council in 1947), and the issues we have studied and lobbied for over the years.

The League, of course, is more formal in setting agendas, though our board meetings are very free-ranging because we are all interested in discussing local, state, and national issues. So, it was enjoyable to see so many people thoughtfully engaged and involved in many of the issues the League cares about. We urge people who are interested in their work to follow them on Facebook at Voices of Los Alamos. They usually meet on the fourth Monday of each month at the Unitarian Church at 6:30 p.m. We hope to have them come speak to us at a Lunch with a Leader program in a few months.

*Becky Shankland*

## **Observer Corps Reports**

### **County Council**

At their August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting the County Council voted to use some of the existing Capital Improvement Funds (CIP) to fund a splash pad in White Rock (\$720K), golf course improvements (\$4.5M), improvements to the existing ice rink (\$1.2M), and a warm-water pool (\$5M). Since the pool was underfunded in this motion, and the ice rink improvements were not wanted by the hockey folks, this vote left both citizens and councilors unhappy.

At this same meeting, Council voted to approve sewer rate increases of 8% and potable water rate increases of 8%.

They also appointed a charter review subcommittee to “determine a path forward” regarding the role of the sheriff versus that of the police department in our county. The three members appointed to the subcommittee are James Chrobocinski, Pete Sheehey, and Chris Chandler.

At the August 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Council heard public comment and voted on a Proclamation Celebrating the Contributions and Just Treatment of Immigrants and Refugees in the County of Los Alamos. Public comment ran about 20 to 2 in favor of the proclamation, and Council voted 7 – 0 in favor.

Harry Burgess, our County Manager, reported that code enforcement inspectors were currently monitoring the county and had issued 223 Notice of Violations (NOVs). Councilors were amused that the Department of Public Utilities received an NOV addressing the exterior condition of the pump house on the corner of Diamond Drive and North Road. The cause, water infrastructure problems, has since been corrected and the pump house has been re-stuccoed. It looks nice.

*Lynn Jones*

## **Board of Public Utilities**

At the August 16<sup>th</sup> Board of Public Utilities meeting, the Board members approved a proposed county code ordinance to raise the non-potable water rates from \$1.15 to \$2.50 per 1,000 gallons. Non-potable water is used primarily by the Los Alamos County Parks and Recreation Department for purposes of irrigating the golf course, the North Mesa ball fields and Overlook Park in White Rock. The ordinance will be considered for adoption by the County Council on September 26th. The Board also heard a presentation on the results from the Department of Public Utilities customer satisfaction survey conducted last May. A copy of the survey is available on the County website at [https://rebrand.ly/2017\\_DPUCustomerSurvey](https://rebrand.ly/2017_DPUCustomerSurvey).

*Julie Williams-Hill*

## ***Udall Talk Highlights Need for US Global Leadership***

Barbara Calef and I attended an Albuquerque luncheon sponsored by the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC) on August 14. As we looked at the guest list and participating organizations, we were puzzled by a curious mixture:

- business groups like Chambers of Commerce
- faith-based groups like Catholic charities
- former ambassadors
- university presidents
- numerous NM senators, representatives, former governors
- non-profits like the Anti-Defamation League
- military personnel

What mission connects these disparate groups? Udall's talk gave us the answer: investments by the U.S., NGOs, and non-profits in international aid, sometimes supported by military assistance in areas of danger, can make the world safer and thus make the US more secure. If countries are lifted out of poverty by improved education and health care, they will become more stable and economically viable. Ultimately, we all benefit as those countries become trade partners. To read more about their activities, go to <http://www.usglc.org/>.

Because this meeting was focused on the advantages accruing to New Mexico from the USGLC, several speakers emphasized NM's dependence on foreign trade—15,000 jobs for our labor force and 20% of our economy are based on trade.

A major theme of the meeting was the importance of diplomacy as well as foreign aid and investment. James Mattis, current Secretary of Defense, was quoted: "If you cut the budget of the State Department, I will have to ask for more money for ammunition." Udall said that foreign policy should not be partisan; he felt that the Administration's effort to slash the budget of the State Department had bipartisan pushback.

Udall concluded that we are truly one planet facing issues like climate change and refugees together—this awareness should enable the U.S. to use calm diplomacy to enhance the stability of societies, provide for the rule of law, raise populations out of poverty, and trade with other countries equitably.

My only disappointment was that not a single mention was made of the United Nations as a mechanism for creating a global perspective that could focus all these groups on cooperative rather than competitive solutions.

*Becky Shankland*

## **Report of August Lunch with a Leader: Douglas Carver**

Douglas Carver is the first executive director of New Mexico Ethics Watch, which was incorporated in April 2016. Prior to that position, he was a staff attorney for the New Mexico Legislative Council Service, where he worked with the Legislative Ethics Committee and served on the impeachment subcommittees for Jerome Block and Dianna Duran. He was also the lead staff for the Courts, Corrections and Justice Committee and the Criminal Justice Reform Subcommittee and worked for the New Mexico Judicial Standards Commission. Carver noted that he has “had a hand in the removal of people from all three branches of government.” He asked to speak to the League about the possibility that New Mexico will finally have an ethics commission.

For years the League of Women Voters has advocated for the creation of an independent state ethics commission. During the 2017 session New Mexico legislators passed House Joint Resolution 8, calling for a constitutional amendment to create an Ethics Commission “with jurisdiction to investigate, adjudicate, and issue advisory opinions concerning civil violations of laws governing ethics, standards of conduct, and reporting requirements as provided by law.” The electorate will decide in 2018 whether to adopt the amendment.

Carver explained that he had supported a very detailed joint resolution (constitutional amendment bill) in the 2016 session, but it did not pass. HJR 8, in contrast, leaves many issues to be resolved by the legislature. The legislators “pulled the powers and the scope” from the amendment. They plan to pass enabling legislation, but even if they do, they can also revoke it. As an example, he cited the experience of Wisconsin, which had the model

Ethics Advisory Board before “Scott Walker dynamited it,” which he could do because it was not grounded in the constitution. In this state, Carver noted, there have been efforts to weaken the Inspection of Public Records Act.

Currently Carver is working to assure that the enabling legislation does get written and passed. He explained that the proposed amendment, HJR 8, gives more power to legislators than the previous iteration. It calls for one member to be appointed by the governor, four by various entities in the legislature, and two by the appointed by the four legislative appointees. He cannot change that but believes that there is still an opportunity to restrict who can serve to avoid conflicts of interest. Furthermore, the enabling legislation must provide funding for the commission and, Carver said, it is essential that the commission be given investigatory subpoena power, not just the right to interview. The commissioners need jurisdiction over legislators. Loopholes in current legislations, such as the Financial Disclosure Act, need to be tightened. Carver would prefer that action to flesh out the commission’s powers and to correct these deficiencies be taken during the 2018 session and has asked the governor to message the enabling acts. The Interim Committee on Courts and Corrections also said they will look into the matter.

Carver’s fear is that, if the enabling acts are not passed in a timely manner, we will have an impotent ethics commission. He noted that in the Legislative Ethics Committee, all complaints go into the ethics process, but nothing goes public until the committee holds a hearing. Even the number of complaints is protected by confidentiality. That committee has held no hearings since it was created in 1994!

*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(s): \_\_\_\_\_ 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 in hard copy.
Check here if you'd like to receive electronic Friendly Reminders of League events.

Membership Categories (Make membership checks payable to LWV-Los Alamos)

- 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

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
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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