



UPDATE

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

P. O. Box 158, Los Alamos, NM 87544

Website: www.lwvlosalamos.org

Volume 63, Number 4
October 2010

President: Barbara Calef [bfcalef\(AT\)yahoo\(DOT\)com](mailto:bfcalef(AT)yahoo(DOT)com)
Newsletter Editor: Kathy Taylor [kathytaylor1000\(AT\)msn\(DOT\)com](mailto:kathytaylor1000(AT)msn(DOT)com)

Calendar

- November 2 Election Day, Polls open 7 a.m.- 7 p.m.**
November 4 Unit Meeting on Transparency, Aspen Ridge, 7 p.m.
November 9 Lunch with a Leader: L.A. Community Service Coordinator David Brooks,
Central Ave. Grill, 11:45 a.m.
December 2 Forum on the Structure of Government, Fuller Lodge, 7 p.m.
December 9 Lunch with a Leader: County Councilor Ralph Phelps, Central Ave. Grill, 11:45 a.m.

Lunch with a Leader, November 9, with David Brooks

Lunch with a Leader will continue on the second Tuesday of each month at Central Avenue Grill. November 9 will feature David Brooks, Los Alamos Community Service Coordinator for our local court system. We learned about his position during the discussion at Lunch with a Leader in August. Pat Casados, Magistrate Judge, mentioned Brooks and the role he plays in the justice system in Los Alamos during our discussion.

The lunch is from 11:45-12:45 at Central Avenue Grill. As always, you will be able to choose from a wide variety of items on the menu. The cost is just \$15, which includes an entrée; iced tea, lemonade, or water; and gratuity. Please e-mail me ([kaskacayman\(AT\)gmail\(DOT\)com](mailto:kaskacayman(AT)gmail(DOT)com)) or call 661-6605 by November 8 to let me know if you are coming. Although you may certainly come without a reservation, it is quite helpful for Central Avenue Grill if I can give them the approximate number of guests.

On December 14 outgoing County Councilor Ralph Phelps will speak about his experience on the Council and the outcome of the Charter Review Committee's December 2 forum on the structure of the Los Alamos County government.

President's Message

Lynn Jones did an excellent job of assembling the Voters Guide this year. Our two candidate forums were also a great success. PAC-8 recorded them, if you were not present and wish to hear what the candidates had to say. Now, early voting is in full swing. Did you find your Voters Guide in the Monitor on October 6? If not, it is available on-line at lwvlosalamos.org and in the libraries and senior centers. You can find the full text of the proposed Charter amendments on the County website, and can look at a sample ballot by going to www.sos.state.nm.us and clicking on your precinct. Don't forget, "Democracy is not a spectator sport!"

Barbara Calef

Unit Meeting on Transparency

All Los Alamos League members are invited to a meeting in the community room at Aspen Ridge, 1010 Sombrillo Court, from 7 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, November 4. Please read the following article by Jody Larson, past president of LWV Santa Fe County, to learn about the program.

Barbara Calef

LWVNM Transparency Concurrence Project

In related projects lasting about two years, the League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County audited Santa Fe County government for its compliance with two state statutes related to transparency, presented a report with findings and recommendations to the governing body, and developed a position on transparency that applies to all of its local governments. In the original project, LWVSFC partnered with the northern NM branch of the ACLU and the NM Foundation for Open Government to conduct the audits, perform related research, and present findings and recommendations. The position, developed by LWVSFC alone through the usual consensus process, addresses compliance with the two statutes, the NM Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the NM Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA), and also recommends that local governments exceed the requirements of those laws in some very specific ways.

This past May, delegates to the LWVNM State Council meeting approved a project to propose this position for concurrence at the state level. This came as a surprise to the presenter, your correspondent, who thought she was giving the history of the LWVSFC project and inviting other local Leagues to concur at the local level if they so desired. In any event, although the League's concurrence process does not entail as much study as a ground-up consensus process, all delegates expressed a preference for a strong education element.

Thus I find myself engaged in visiting other local Leagues to discuss the position and its background, and encouraging feedback from all of you on whether and how LWVNM might adopt a state-level version at Convention next year. To comply with the educational requirement, I recommend that you read the position, available from our website, http://lwvsfc.org/hot_topics_news.html. The original report to the Board of County

Commissioners is also available from the same page. You may want to read the two articles we presented in our VOTER before our consensus meeting, as well: you can find them in our VOTERs for February and March of 2010, available at <http://lwvsfc.org/voter.html>. To review the League's concurrence and consensus processes, please see League Basics, pages 12-13; this is available for download from www.LWV.org, in the members-only section.

I have spoken at length with Sarah Welsh, Director of NMFOG (isn't that an ironic acronym?), regarding the relevance of the position at the state level, and she is quite enthusiastic about it. We could use the position for advocacy relating to many state agencies that hold regulatory hearings subject to the OMA, and also when we or other nonprofits concerned about good government are unable to inspect documents subject to the IPRA. If you have been reading about the Public Regulation Commission lately, you have an idea about possible infractions; on the other hand, the Environment Department and other state agencies could well be commended for transparent processes. We would increase our opportunities for the League to be visible and work for good state government. Is this the way to do it?

Please review these materials and join us at the unit meeting on November 4. I look forward to discussing this with you and getting your input.

*Jody Larson, LWVNM
Transparency Concurrence Project Leader*

Forum on the Structure of Government

Soon the election will be over and the voters will have determined which proposed amendments to the County Charter have been accepted or rejected. The next goal of the Charter Review Committee is to hold a community discussion about some basic questions regarding our form of government. Do we want an elected mayor instead of a council of seven? Do we want non-partisan

elections? Should some of the boards and commissions be non-partisan? Do we want the county to be divided into districts, each with its own representative? On Thursday, December 2 the League will host a forum at Fuller Lodge from 7 to 9 to review those issues. Watch for a Friendly Reminder with more details.

Barbara Calef

Observer Corps- Transportation

As part of the NM502 Transportation Corridor Study, the County is holding its second community meeting regarding possible design improvements of NM 502/Trinity Drive from the County line to Diamond Drive. The public meeting will be on Tuesday November 16th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Crossroads Bible Church, located along the NM 502/Trinity Drive corridor at 97 East Road. The purpose of the meeting is to review and provide feedback regarding the community-generated design concepts that were developed at the first NM 502/Trinity Drive community workshop held on October 6th. At the October 6th meeting, between 50 and 60 people turned out to listen to transportation planners and engineers from MIG, the consulting team hired by the County to perform the corridor study, as they explained general transportation information and presented their analysis of existing conditions related to NM 502/Trinity Drive. Lots of fascinating facts/findings were discussed. One fact that I found interesting was that the crash rate on Trinity Drive is more than twice as high as the state average. So, not only are pedestrians and bikers poorly served by Trinity Drive, it appears that commuters in cars are also ill served.

During the October 6th meeting, participants were divided into three groups to identify issues and potential solutions throughout the corridor. These are the design concepts that will be further discussed and refined at the upcoming November 16th meeting. All interested community members are encouraged to attend this meeting whether they attended October 6th or not, as time will be

spent describing how the public input from the October 6th meeting will be incorporated into this next step. The ideas and concepts that come out of the November 16th meeting will be further developed by MIG into one or more conceptual designs to go before the County Council for approval in January. For information regarding the NM 502 Corridor Study, including the presentation and analysis of the October 6th meeting, go to the Los Alamos County website: on the left bar click on “Projects”, then on the left bar click on “Public Works Project, and on that page under Active Projects, click on “NM502/Trinity Drive Corridor Study.”

Update of the Street Standards Policy

There was a special meeting of the Transportation Board on October 14th at which the Policy for Street Design Guidelines was again brought for review and action. Rick Bohn, Community Development Director, recommended two approaches. One was to send to Council a very short policy that included just the four principles that had been under the Purpose and Vision of the previous proposal. The second idea was to resubmit the previous policy with minimal changes that reflected some of the County Council comments. The T-Board took a hybrid approach and made a motion to send to council a modified version of the previous document that included the Purpose and Vision, Applicability, and Implementation. The more specific Design Elements section was omitted.

Janie O'Rourke

Dick Mason Explains Health Care Reform

Dick Mason, LWVNM Action Committee Chair and Legislative Chair of Health Action New Mexico, explained to the attendees at the October 12 Lunch with a Leader the ramifications of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) passed earlier this year.

The need for legislation is clear. The number of uninsured Americans has risen from 34 million in

1990 to 47 million Americans in 2009. During the same period, health care spending increased from 12% of the GDP to 17%. Yet the share of our premiums the insurance companies spend on actual health care has decreased from 91% to about 80%.

Mason stated that this is the most important social program since Medicare. Yet, many details of the implementation must be worked out at the state level. New Mexico is off to a good start, having created the Federal Health Care Reform Working Group to implement and supplement the PPAC.

The PPAC will:

- Create a safety net for job loss;
- Cap out-of-pocket-costs;
- Provide subsidies for low-income people to buy insurance;
- Focus spending on care, not profit;
- Abolish annual and lifetime limits;
- Improve Indian Health Services, currently funded at 52% of need;
- Extend the life of the Medicare trust fund.

The new law will cover most, not all, of the uninsured by 2019. It will not cover undocumented residents. The high-risk pool has been covered since July 1. Since October health care insurers have not been allowed to deny coverage for children with pre-existing conditions. By 2011, 50% discounts will be available to help with drug costs for some seniors.

In 2014 Medicaid will be offered to low income adults without children.

Also that year the individual and business mandate begins. There must be universal participation for the plan to work. Currently the insured are paying for the uninsured. There will be a catastrophic plan for people under 30. Congress and staff will be required to purchase health care coverage with the rest of us.

To facilitate the purchase of insurance policies by individuals and companies, a health insurance exchange will promote choice and control by consumers by standardizing plans on a website. Participating insurers will be required to provide

prevention and wellness services, hospitalization, and many other benefits to all subscribers.

A 2009 Dartmouth study found that there is no correlation between spending and outcome in medical procedures. Cost containment can be achieved without affecting the quality of medical care. It is estimated that implementation of the PPACA will reduce the federal deficit by \$138 billion through 2019, with a further reduction by \$1.2 trillion from 2019-2029.

For more information about national health care reform, go to www.healthactionnm.org.

Barbara Calef

Chick Keller Describes PEEC at Lunch with a Leader

On September 14, Chick Keller, president of the Board of Directors of PEEC (Pajarito Environmental Education Center), gave League members and friends a talk about PEEC's mission, history, current programs for the community and schoolchildren, and initiatives with the County.

PEEC prefers to think of itself as a nature center, but chose its fancy name ten years ago when told that grantors liked to have "environmental education" in the title of organizations to be funded. Since PEEC knew that grants would be necessary for its survival, the name PEEC (think: "Take a peek into nature") got the prize.

Ten years ago, just before the Cerro Grande Fire, interested citizens began meeting to consider the idea of a nature center in Los Alamos. Hikes, talks, celebrations of Earth Day took shape, and eventually we came to the notice of the schools, who had extra space in the form of Little Valley School on Orange Street. PEEC signed an agreement with LAPS to use two rooms of the building and gradually built up a nature center with exhibits and gardens, paying LAPS for the

utility costs and a token rent.

Ultimately, the anti-donation clause of the NM State Constitution required that PEEC and LAPS sign a formal lease ensuring that PEEC would provide services to the schools that would offset the building's rental value--or would pay the requisite rent, appraised at \$36,000 a year.

[Note: Drafting an acceptable lease was difficult, but the lease has just been approved by the State Board of Finance on October 19.]

As PEEC expanded, it became necessary to hire an administrative assistant to answer the phone and keep membership and other records. And in the last few years, PEEC added a program director to organize programs for adults and kids and to write grants to keep us running.

What PEEC can offer the schools is programs to get kids outdoors in nature, whether in Bandelier for the Park Flight bird-banding program or on the recently opened nature trail down into Pueblo Canyon. Research shows that kids' academic performance improves as they use outdoor classrooms--math and science make more sense when they are taught in context rather in separate classes. Richard Louv's book "Last Child in the Woods" argues for the need for kids to connect with nature, not computers and TV sets.

Besides water-wise garden and lawn demonstrations, PEEC now has the Sunflower Kids' vegetable garden and a new butterfly garden, inspired by the Kinnikinnick Club kids.

PEEC's hope is to get kids to learn about the environment so that they'll care about it. (Think about the plants you know--until you name them, they don't exist.) Ultimately, such beginnings can lead to careers as well as sustaining relationships with nature.

PEEC is continuing its hikes and talks but focusing more on the LAPS and Pueblo school projects: field trips to special places (including the farmers market for kindergarten kids), winter

ecology programs, monitoring pika populations in the Jemez, restoration of burned landscapes around Los Alamos.

But all this takes money to organize. We're happy to have our 250 or so single or family memberships, and our grants have allowed us to run some programs, but we are always hurting for money to pay our two very part-time and overworked staff. So this fall we asked the County for some support for salaries. [Note: the Council recently agreed to help PEEC with \$25,000.] And our next big step is joining the CIP (Capital Improvement Project) process to ask for a new or renovated building. Letters of support are welcome. The hope is to house our classroom and library, our exhibit room full of animals, and our herbarium in a green building that could demonstrate energy efficiency.

We still hear people say they didn't know that PEEC existed--we need signage and increased awareness by the community. Come visit!

Becky Shankland

Musings from the Treasurer

Our fiscal year May 1, 2009, through April 30, 2010, was very successful. It was not an election year, so our financial needs were few. We had no one able to attend the convention, which helped our bottom line. A successful fund drive also helped our budget stay in the black. (See attached accounting the spread sheet).

Many generous people remembered Elizabeth Best by making a memorial contribution. All \$1010 was turned over to the LAPS Foundation and was paid out in three mini-grants to fund projects that would help teach elementary school children about the environment and sustainable living.

We had a successful fundraising campaign in March of 2010 that brought in \$1475 to help fund election education during the 2010-2011 fiscal year. We held two candidate forums during the primary season, published a good Voters Guide, and hosted two more candidate forums in October. At the end of April there was a balance of \$7511.26 in the operating fund at LANB.

At the end of April there was \$4871.66 in the Education Fund. We were able to fund all necessary expenditures from the operating capital in LANB. There was also \$2135.47 in the local savings account.

All requisite forms have been filed and accepted. The books were audited by Rozelle Wright and Denise George and have been found to be in order.

Rosmarie Frederickson

2009-2010 LWVLA Treasurer's Report

LWV of Los Alamos	2009-2010	Ed Fund 2009/2010	Combined 2009/2010	YTD	Remaining
EXPENSE					
A. Administration					
1. President's Funds	\$50.00		\$50.00	\$10.42	\$39.58
2. Secretary	\$20.00		\$20.00	\$0.00	\$20.00
3. Treasurer	\$20.00		\$20.00	\$8.80	\$11.20
4. Board tools	\$100.00		\$100.00	\$9.94	\$90.06
5. Communications					
a. Newsletter	\$200.00		\$200.00	\$27.17	\$172.83
b. Webpage	\$360.00		\$360.00	\$192.00	\$168.00
6. Other Administrative	\$100.00		\$100.00	\$70.00	\$30.00
Total Administration	\$850.00		\$850.00	\$318.33	\$531.67
B. Per Member Payment (PMP)					
1. State (43 + 12 1/2 members)	\$490.00		\$490.00	\$618.00	-\$128.00
2. National(43 + 12 1/2 members)	\$1,372.00		\$1,372.00	\$1,498.80	-\$126.80
Total PMP	\$1,862.00		\$1,862.00	\$2,116.80	-\$254.80
C. Committees					
1. Fundraising	\$150.00		\$150.00	\$0.00	\$150.00
2. Membership	\$100.00		\$100.00	\$60.98	\$39.02
3. Lunch with a Leader	\$150.00		\$150.00	\$152.15	-\$2.15
Total Committee	\$400.00		\$400.00	\$213.13	\$186.87
D. Position Support					
1. National	\$25.00		\$25.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
2. State	\$25.00		\$25.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
3. Local	\$25.00		\$25.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
Total Position Support	\$75.00		\$75.00	\$0.00	\$75.00
E. Convention, Council, & misc. travel					
1. National convention	\$300.00		\$300.00	\$0.00	\$300.00
2. State council	\$50.00		\$50.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
3. State Convention	\$400.00		\$400.00	\$443.90	-\$43.90
4. Other travel	\$40.00		\$40.00	\$0.00	\$40.00
Total Travel	\$790.00		\$790.00	\$443.90	\$346.10
Other					
Council Meeting	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$50.00	-\$50.00
Donations to Ed Fund	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$95.00	-\$95.00
Memorials	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$1,010.00	-\$1,010.00
Total Other	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$1,155.00	-\$1,155.00
F. Program					
1. Voters' Services	\$100.00	\$300.00	\$400.00	\$334.05	\$65.95
2. Sustainability/Water	\$50.00	\$300.00	\$350.00	\$0.00	\$350.00
3. Local Government	\$50.00		\$50.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
4. Child Care	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
5. Affordable Housing	\$50.00		\$50.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
6. Election Reform	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00
Total Program	\$250.00	\$600.00	\$850.00	\$334.05	\$515.95

2009-2010 LWVLA Treasurer's Report

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,227.00	\$600.00	\$4,827.00	\$4,582.58	\$244.42
League of Women Voters of Los Alamos	General Fund	Ed Fund	Combined		
INCOME			\$0.00		
A. Dues			\$0.00		
1. Regular (20@45)	\$900.00		\$900.00	\$765.00	\$135.00
2. Sustaining (11@\$75)	\$825.00		\$825.00	\$1,150.00	-\$325.00
3. Household (6@\$65)	\$520.00		\$520.00	\$455.00	\$65.00
4. Household Sustaining (6@95)	\$570.00		\$570.00	\$855.00	-\$285.00
Total Dues	\$2,815.00		\$2,815.00	\$3,225.00	-\$410.00
B. Contributions					
1. Members	\$200.00	\$290.00	\$490.00	\$145.00	\$345.00
2. Non-members	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,067.50	-\$67.50
4. Business Contributions	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$52.50	\$447.50
Total contributions	\$1,200.00	\$790.00	\$1,990.00	\$1,265.00	\$725.00
C. Miscellaneous	\$25.00		\$25.00	\$0.00	
Elizabeth Best Memorial Fund			\$0.00	\$325.00	-\$325.00
2. Interest			\$0.00		\$0.00
Total Miscellaneous	\$25.00		\$25.00	\$338.13	-\$313.13
			\$0.00		
TOTAL INCOME	\$4,040.00	\$790.00	\$4,830.00	\$4,828.13	\$1.87
			\$0.00		
INCOME - EXPENSE	-\$187.00	\$190.00	\$3.00		\$3.00



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF LOS ALAMOS
MEMBERSHIP FORM 2010-2011**

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

Check payable to LWV Education Fund
enclosed (separate check please):

_____ Tax-deductible contribution: \$ _____

Name:

Address:

Phone:

e-mail:

_____ Check here if you do NOT want to receive
electronic notification of upcoming
League events

_____ Check here if you are willing to receive
our local newsletter Update as an
electronic file, saving us postage.

Check payable to LWV - Los Alamos enclosed
to include:

_____ Sustaining membership: \$75

_____ Regular single membership: \$45

_____ Household sustaining membership (two+
people at the same address): \$95

_____ Regular household membership (two+
people at the same address): \$65

_____ Unrestricted contribution (not tax
deductible): \$ _____

Interests (check as many as apply):

_____ One-time activities (unit meetings, fund-
drive mailings, "Lunch with a Leader,"
etc.)

_____ Affordable Housing

_____ Membership

_____ Arrangements (refreshments, etc.)

_____ Newsletter

_____ Budget

_____ Observe County meetings

_____ Public Relations

_____ Election Reform

_____ Sustainability

_____ Fund Drive

_____ Voter Services

_____ Voters Guide

_____ Local Government

_____ Website

_____ "Who's in Charge" publication

_____ Not sure (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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