



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

Volume 67, Number 3
September 2014

President: Barbara Calef *bfcalf(AT)yahoo(DOT)com*
Newsletter Editor: Kathy Taylor *kathytaylor1000(AT)msn(DOT)com*

Calendar

- September 16 LWVNM Candidates' Forum in Santa Fe, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- September 18 Candidates' Forum, Fuller Lodge, 7 p.m. (6:30 for refreshments)
- September 25 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- October 2 Candidates' Forum, Fuller Lodge, 7 p.m. (6:30 for refreshments)
- October 7 Forum on Utilities Charter Amendments, Fuller Lodge, 5:30-7:30
- October 7 Absentee Voting begins
- October 9 Structure-of-Government Charter Amendments, Congressional Candidates' Forum, Fuller Lodge, 5:30-7:30
- October 21 Lunch with a Leader, Kurt Steinhaus, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m.

Lunch with a Leader October 21: Kurt Steinhaus

We will not have a program in September because the meeting rooms have been reserved by another group. The October Lunch with a Leader will be on the third Tuesday, October 21, at Mesa Library. Kurt Steinhaus, Director of Community Programs at Los Alamos National Laboratory, will speak about education and workforce development.

Steinhaus, who grew up in Los Alamos, has masters degrees in music and computer science and a doctorate in educational leadership and organizational learning from the University of New Mexico. His work is focused on: (1) STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education, (2) technical assistance for small businesses and helping entrepreneurs start new companies, and (3) partnering with non-profit organizations to advance their strategic goals. His prior experience includes serving as Deputy Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Public Education Department and as professor of Graduate Education at the University of New Mexico.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

President's Message

Every two years our local League organizes candidates' forums to give voters the opportunity to see and hear the candidates from northern New Mexico in person. This year the LWV of New Mexico set out to hold forums in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Las Cruces for the candidates for state-wide office. As a result, on Tuesday, September 16 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. there will be a forum at the Santa Fe Community College in the Jemez Rooms. Participating will be the candidates for Attorney General Susan Riedel and Hector Balderas and, for Secretary of State, Dianna Duran and Maggie Toulouse Oliver.

If you would like to carpool to this event, please contact Lynn Jones at [jonesmm1\(AT\)comcast\(DOT\)net](mailto:jonesmm1(AT)comcast(DOT)net) or 662-9443.

The League's local election activities this season include production of the Voters' Guide, voter registration, work on a mailer about the County Charter Amendments, and four forums. Here is a summary:

Voter Education Activities

Voters' Guide

Lynn Jones, our Director of Voter Services, has been hard at work on the Voters' Guide. In early August Jones and I met with Monitor publisher Ben Carlson to discuss the publication plans. The Voters' Guide will be distributed to all County residences by the Monitor on Wednesday, October 1, and will be available on our website. The questions approved by the board were sent out to the candidates. The responses have been received and are currently being compiled.

Voter Registration

Voter registration is one of the League's traditional activities. We set up a table at the farmers' market on Thursday mornings and offer to register voters and answer questions about the election. Kathy Taylor has been leading the League's effort, and would welcome assistance. If you would like to volunteer, even for a brief time, please contact Kathy at [kathytaylor1000\(AT\)msn\(DOT\)com](mailto:kathytaylor1000(AT)msn(DOT)com) or 672-

0152. Gloria Maestas in the County Clerk's office will gladly provide training and registration forms; it takes about 10 minutes.

September 18 Candidates' Forum

Our first forum of the fall will be held in Fuller Lodge from 7 to 9 p.m., with refreshments at 6:30. We will hear from the candidates for County Assessor, Sheriff, Magistrate Judge, Municipal Judge, and State Representative, District 43.

October 2 Candidates' Forum

The second forum will also be held in Fuller Lodge from 7 to 9 p.m. (with refreshments at 6:30) for the County Council candidates. Also invited are the unopposed candidates for Probate Judge and Public Education Commission, who will make brief statements, and the County Clerk, who will explain the election procedures.

Charter Amendments

On the November ballot there will be two questions concerning proposed amendments to the County Charter. The County asked the League to review a mailer about the amendments that will be sent to all registered voters the last week of September. *The review has been completed; please read the mailer when it arrives!*

In addition, the League will be facilitating the two forums described below.

Utilities

On October 7, 5:30-7:30 p.m. in Fuller Lodge the County will present a forum on the proposed changes to Article V, the section of the County Charter that addresses utilities. Susan O'Leary and Ed Birnbaum, both of whom served on the Charter Review Committee that focused on the Department of Public Utilities, will speak in support of the amendment. Robert Gibson and Chris Ortega will speak in opposition.

Structure of Government, Third Congressional District Candidates' Forum

On October 9, 5:30-7:30 p.m. in Fuller Lodge the other ballot question, concerning Structure of Government, will be addressed. Kyle Wheeler and Larry Warner, both of whom served on the first Charter Review Committee, will explain the

proposed changes. Because no one has opposed the changes so far, Wheeler and Warner will also address potential problems with the changes.

The Structure of Government discussion will take an hour or less, but the League has been able to organize a forum for the congressional candidates for the second hour. After refreshments at 6:30, the second program will begin at 6:45 with Ben Ray Lujan and Jefferson Byrd in attendance.

Barbara Calef

Report of July LWL: Police Chief Dino Sgambellone

Chief Sgambellone came to Los Alamos seven months ago from Mansfield, Ohio, where he grew up. As a young man, Sgambellone, the son of a fireman, took the joint police/fire exam, scoring better on the fire section. However, his first job offer came from the police department, determining the course of his career. He rose to the position of Chief of the Mansfield Police Department before retiring and moving to New Mexico.

Sgambellone told the group that, despite some recent turmoil, Los Alamos is well served by its police department. He also praised the County government and relations with LANL and the fire department. Los Alamos has far more resources than the rust belt town he was used to. For example, Mansfield has a force of 102 that was down to 71 and its band-aid approach to problems was the norm. Now he feels he can focus on being proactive where a lack of resources doesn't drive all solutions.

The Chief said that the crime rate in Los Alamos is low and 60% to 70% of the crimes can be solved, which speaks well of staff and resources. The most common crimes are theft and drug-related offences, especially consumption of heroin and prescription drugs. The community does not speak openly about its problems, but we have them.

Speaking of specific issues, Sgambellone said he would like to expand the teen court to hear more serious offenses. He would like to see more special courts here to deal with social issues. Jail isn't the answer for many drug and alcohol users. He also supports programs to educate youth about drugs.

Chief Sgambellone said that he is conducting an intense review of police policies and procedures. He will be making some organizational changes such as the appointment of a deputy chief. He plans to increase the number of bicycle safety officers, and to work with schools on safety planning, drug awareness and staff. He wants to revisit the issue of police academy training and to have one trained narcotics officer rather than rotating four detectives.

Michelle Poling

Report of August LWL: Monitor Publisher Ben Carlson

Ben Carlson began by expressing appreciation for the League's non-partisan stance on politics. In answer to a later question, he said that Landmark Enterprises, the Kentucky-based owner of the Monitor, preferred that its small-town papers not endorse candidates, although he understands that larger newspapers see that as an obligation. He says that the diversity of opinion has to come from the various columnists on the editorial page. He also pointed out that attending and covering political candidates' events is tricky: if they cover one candidate, they must be sure that they can cover his or her opposition or they'll be accused of favoritism.

Carlson gave a statistical analysis of what media people watch or hear. According to those statistics and assuming that each Monitor is read by one to three people, the Monitor has a good circulation. This helps to raise revenue from advertisers. A questioner asked whether any newspapers were non-profit and the answer was no (except for one run by a foundation).

An amusing fact is that some people only care about the news in the paper and some only care about the advertising, especially the supplements that are stuffed in each edition. For legal reasons, the paper is required to destroy all supplements; one coupon-hungry reader used to appear behind the Monitor office to try to nab the supplements from the Sunday paper before they were destroyed.

One trend in newspaper publication is that much of the news is presented by organizations that are strongly right or left politically. This is one reason that small-town newspapers try to avoid political slants and editorials of their own. Several people commented appreciatively on the lengthy, clear articles about county meetings that are written by Arin McKenna.

Carlson said letters to the editor were his favorite part of the paper. Finally, he explained that he would be leaving the Monitor at the end of the month due to personal reasons.

Rebecca Shankland

Observer Corps Report

At the July 8th County Council meeting there was a public hearing on tiered water rates that was presented by Bob Westervelt, Deputy Utilities Manager. The tiered water rates had been approved by the Board of Public Utilities at a previous board meeting, and the County Council concurred with that conclusion after hearing both pros and cons from the on-line public and the audience. Those rates were to go into effect already, so you should see this reflected on your utility bill soon.

That same evening Council heard a report from Tim Glasco, Utilities Manager, and Jack Richardson, Deputy Utilities Manager, regarding plans for utilizing the Los Alamos allotment of San Juan Chama water. One interesting piece of information was that the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) had formally requested access to DOE land to investigate the possibility of drilling three wells there. This request was denied, leaving the DPU with the original three

well locations in White Rock. Given the decline in anticipated population growth in Los Alamos, the DPU decided to postpone further decisions until the completion of a 40-year Water Plan that has been contracted out. That plan should be completed sometime next year.

At the July 29th County Council meeting, Council passed the ordinances putting the Los Alamos County Charter Review Committee recommendations on the November 4th ballot. The County is close to completing an information document for the public explaining the two ballot questions and presenting both pros and cons. Be sure to read this document carefully so you bring a thoughtful consideration of the issues to your vote.

At the August 26th meeting, Council heard from Tim Glasco and Steve Cummins, Deputy Utilities Manager for Electric Production, regarding the San Juan Generating Station (SJGS) Fuel and Capital Funding Agreement. With the retiring of two of the four units at SJGS, four of the original nine owners are withdrawing, leaving five owners, including Los Alamos County. This restructuring requires a new agreement on the disposition of the existing coal inventory and the sharing of the costs of the required modifications to the remaining units. Council voted to approve the preliminary agreement.

Lynn Jones



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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