



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 20 Lunch with a Leader, Steve Foltyn, Mesa Public Library, 11:45 a.m.
- September 29 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- October 6 1st Candidate Forum, UNM/LA 7 p.m. (6:30 for refreshments)
- October 13 2nd Candidate Forum, UNM/LA 7 p.m. (6:30 for refreshments)

Lunch with a Leader: Steve Foltyn

Steve Foltyn will be the speaker on September 20 at Mesa Public Library. Steve is the former chair of Art in Public Places and will explain the program and several of the committee's projects.

Foltyn was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and grew up in the suburbs northwest of the city. After a four-year tour in the U.S. Air Force, he attended the University of Missouri-Rolla, where he received a master's degree in physics in 1979. As a graduate student he worked at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory during the summers of 1978 and 1979, and he became a technical staff member at the lab in 1980. Foltyn's research interests, which include lasers, thin films, and laser-material interactions, supported several different isotope separation, laser fusion, and defense projects, and eventually led to his joining the Superconductivity Technology Center, where he worked for 20 years before retiring in 2008.

Foltyn first became aware of the county's Art in Public Places board in 2010, but paid little attention to the public art in town until he was encouraged by a friend to apply for a board vacancy. He served on the board from 2013 to February 2016, and was involved with public art projects at the White Rock Visitor Center, the Nature Center, the Aquatic Center, Overlook Park, the Municipal Building, the White Rock Branch Library, and the State Road 4 corridor in White Rock. Foltyn will discuss the county's public art ordinance, where the money comes from, and the art board's role in converting the funds into public art. He also will discuss several projects, with emphasis on the most recently completed one – the San Ildefonso pottery replicas in White Rock – as well as art projects in the works and the board's plans for the future.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016-17

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President's Message

Last month I had the honor of attending an event sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League of New Mexico (ADL). The purpose of the event was to raise awareness about voter suppression measures being enacted in a number of states since the Shelby decision in 2014.

ADL Director Suki Halevi included leaders from a very diverse cross-section of the New Mexico community. All these leaders understand the deleterious effects of voter ID laws on the voting participation of lower income populations, seniors, and student voters. These groups are the least likely to have the kind of photo identification required. The time, transportation

and funds required to get a valid photo ID may be prohibitive for them.

As the LWVUS position that opposes voter photo ID laws states, analyses of voter fraud by former law professor Stanley Feldman found about 31 instances of voter fraud in a study of 10,000,000 votes cast – that amounts to 0.003%. The voter fraud argument is clearly not a real concern, but is being used falsely by voter suppression advocates to advance their agenda.

Ever since the United States Supreme Court ruling on *Shelby County v. Holder* in 2013, voting rights advocates have no longer been able to rely upon the preclearance process to block discriminatory election practices. Since the ruling, for instance, there have already been at least six lawsuits in jurisdictions formerly covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. These lawsuits, prompted by recent voting restrictions, could have been handled administratively by the Justice Department but now must be addressed through more expensive and less efficient litigation.

However, the tide now seems to be turning as state and federal judges and federal appeals courts have started to overturn discriminatory voting laws. The most important of these is the [unanimous decision](#) in July by a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit that North Carolina's legislature enacted new voting restrictions in 2013 to intentionally blunt the growing clout of African American voters.

Other recent decisions overturning rules and laws in Wisconsin, Kansas, and North Dakota that were designed to disenfranchise students, the poor, and Native Americans, respectively, have also been big victories for voting rights advocates. For more information, visit the website of the Brennan Center for Justice at www.brennancenter.org.

The recent ADL event included leaders from the NM Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the NAACP, the Mexican American Legal Defense & Education Fund, the Native American Voters Alliance, Common Cause NM, the NM

Islamic Center, and the SW Women's Law Center. And I was very happy to be there, representing the League of Women Voters of New Mexico. We look forward to partnering with these groups in voter advocacy and voter registration efforts in the future.

It was truly inspiring to be at a gathering where people of different religions (Christians, Jews, and Muslims), different ethnicities, and different races (whites, African-Americans, Muslim-Americans, Hispanic-Americans), all came together to voice their concern about any laws that restrict access to voting and to support efforts to fully reinstate the provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Wendee Brunish

Bylaws Amended

As stated in the July Update, at the LWVUS Convention in June the LWVUS Bylaws were amended to remove the requirement that full members be citizens and to reduce the age for full membership from 18 to 16. The bylaws of state and local Leagues are required to conform to those of the national League. Therefore, at the August 25 meeting the LWVLA Board unanimously approved the following wording for Article III. Membership Section 2. A:

Voting members shall be persons at least 16 years of age.

Barbara Calef

Report of August Lunch with a Leader: Karen Kendall and Tim Morrison, Los Alamos Co+op

Rumors of financial difficulties at the Los Alamos Cooperative Market led to an invitation to Co+op board member Karen Kendall. For the LWL program, Kendall was accompanied by General Manager Tim Morrison. In an upbeat presentation, Kendall began by reminding the audience about the progress that has been made since 2006, when a group of residents began talking about starting a cooperative store in Los Alamos. The Co+op was incorporated in February 2007 with 100 members and a mission that included promoting awareness about food, nutrition, health, and cooperative values like fair trade and sustainability.

After a fruitless search for a downtown location, the Co+op's organizers accepted a proposal in 2009 from Rick Reiss and Sam Gardner to move into the Entrada Business Park. Following a fund drive that raised over a million dollars, the store opened in March 2011. Kendall noted that the business was able to join the National Cooperative Association (NCA), which generally accepts only established co-ops, because the NCA was so impressed by the community investment. Membership in the NCA is very advantageous since it has the buying power of 200 stores.

In the first ten months after the Co+op opened, it made \$2.3 million. In July of 2014 Smith's Marketplace opened and sales at the Co+op were expected to fall. Instead, they rose, in part because during the transition the availability of merchandise was variable at Smith's. In 2014 the Co+op made \$3.8 million and was able to purchase the building, getting a guarantee from the state for a portion of the loan. They have never missed a payment.

2015 was a bad year for the Co+op. The store lost just under \$200,000 net. The loss can be attributed in part to the new Smith's, but there were many other factors. Following the

departure of Steve Watts, who had been the General Manager since the opening, there were four interim managers and two permanent. Some bad hiring decisions were made and the interim managers did not know about the financial side of the business. Morale was low, leading to rumors that the store was going to close.

The Co+op Board sets long-term goals, but is not involved in day-to-day operations; they only hire the general manager, so they do not get involved in personnel issues. In response to the losses, they reached out to NCG and La Manzanita, who provided substantial advice. The staff has now been reduced from a high of 38 employees to 27, and discounts have been cut, as has inventory.

The board is trying to change the targets to be more realistic. In June board member and former employee Tim Morrison was hired to be the new general manager. Sales are better now, but there is room for improvement.

The Co+op has changed its product mix, introduced a hot bar, built a sandbox for kids, and begun a community arts program in the café area. Another innovation is the Sunday omelet, cooked to order from 10:30-2. Currently, freshly roasted chile is available and later this month the popular Shop with a Chef program will resume.

Thanks to Los Alamos County the Co+op is easier to reach now that the Atomic City bus stops there every half hour on weekdays.

Kendall and Morrison stressed that non-members as well as members are welcome to shop there.

Barbara Calef

Observer Corps Reports County Council

At the August 23rd County Council meeting, Mark Rayburn, Chair of the Fuller Lodge Historic District Advisory Board, reported on the east patio upgrade to Fuller Lodge. The project exposed the original stone steps, enlarged the patio, and added an ADA compliant ramp. The area is now attractive and large enough for outdoor event space; and the huge log roof

supports should be safe from further water damage.

The Pig and Fig Bakery and Café in White Rock applied for a liquor license. At the August 30th meeting, the County Council was in unanimous agreement that this was a good addition to dining in White Rock. So, in the near future you should be able to get beer and wine with your meal. Enjoy.

Lynn Jones

Board of Public Utilities

The Board of Public Utilities held two public hearings on August 17th to consider two proposed ordinances to adjust rates for water and natural gas. Both rates were approved and will go to the Council on September 27th to be considered for adoption.

The proposed ordinance for water will increase both retail and wholesale rates across the board by ten percent. The proposed ordinance for natural gas will decrease rates and remove language related to the "sunset clause" associated with the pass-through rate.

Both topics are on the Los Alamos County's Open Forum page and citizens are invited to provide feedback that will be shared with the County Council.

http://www.peakdemocracy.com/portals/119/forum_home?active_forum_id=345&active_issue_id=3972&phase=Open.

Also at the August meeting the Board voted to not allow customers to "opt out" for smart meters. During the test period when smart meters were introduced to only a portion of the community, opt outs were allowed. But allowing opt outs to continue would require that two trained meter readers be retained for a small number of users. Additionally, these users would not be able to participate in future potential rate structures involving time of use or demand rates.

Julie Williams-Hill



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
Membership
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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