



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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Newsletter Editor: Kathy Taylor *kathytaylor1000(AT)msn(DOT)com*

Calendar

- May 10 Early Voting Begins
- May 10 Thank-you Note Party, 1855 Los Pueblos, 7 p.m.
- May 12 Candidate Forum, UNM/LA, 7 p.m. (6:30 for refreshments)
- May 14 Louise White Memorial, PEEC, 4:30 p.m.
- May 17 Lunch with a Leader, Meredith Machen, Mesa Public Library, 11:40 a.m.
- May 21 LWVNM Council meeting, NM Consortium, 11:45 a.m.
- May 26 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- June 7 **Primary Election Day**

Lunch with a Leader: LWVNM President Meredith Machen

During the last Legislative session LWVNM President Meredith Machen asked the Legislative Finance Committee to introduce a bill to place a moratorium on new charter schools until the state can improve academic achievement across the board and “ensure funding equity for all public school students. Her plea pits the League against New Mexico’s Cabinet Secretary of Public Education, Hanna Skandera, who supports the charter movement. Machen will discuss this topic at Lunch with a Leader in Los Alamos on May 17.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Message from the ex-President

The annual meeting started a little late due to the popularity of the LWL speaker, Gene Grant, but once begun it moved swiftly. The program was accepted without change and the new board and off-board members were elected. It has been my pleasure to serve as your president for the last six years and a few more before that. I hope more members will step up to serve on the board. We make a difference in the community and the state, and the work enriches our lives.

Barbara Calef

Here is the new slate:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016-17

Officers

President: Wendee Brunish

1st VP: *not filled*

2nd VP: Rebecca Shankland

Treasurer: Kathy Taylor

Secretary: Barbara Calef

Directors

Reservations: Amy Birnbaum

Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster

Membership: Tarin Nix

Voter Services: Lynn Jones

Board of Public Utilities Observer: Julie Williams-Hill

Publicity: Jody Benson

Director at Large: Akkana Peck

Director at Large: Rosmarie Frederickson

Off Board Directors

Arrangements: Mary Van Eeckhout

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

Candidate Forum May 12

The League will hold a pre-primary candidate forum on Thursday, May 12, in the Lecture Hall at UNM/LA. The forum will last from 7 to 9 p.m. Arrive at 6:30 for refreshments and to meet the candidates.

We have invited the candidates for office in northern New Mexico who face opposition in the primary.

They include Michael Lucero and Michael Romero, who are running for the Republican nomination for the U.S. House of Representatives District 3; Jennifer Lynne Padgett, Marco Peter Serna, and Maria E. Sanchez-Gagne, who are running for the Democratic nomination for District Attorney in the First Judicial District; and Antonio L. Maggiore, Peter T. Sheehey, Chris Chandler, and Kristin M. Henderson, the four Democrats running for three County Council seats. So far all of the candidates have accepted except for Michael Lucero. The Los Alamos Hilltalkers will once again be assisting us.

Barbara Calef

Primary Election Dates

The official primary election day is June 7. The polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The vote centers that day will be at the Municipal Building, the Golf Course Community Building, and the White Rock Library.

Ballots may be cast from May 10 to May 20 at the Municipal Building from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Early voting begins May 21 and continues through June 4 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Municipal Building and the White Rock Library. During that time ballots may be cast any day except Sunday or Memorial Day (May 30).

Absentee ballots may be mailed between May 10 and June 3.

Don't forget that democracy is not a spectator sport!

Thank-You Note Party

Many responses to our March 3 fund drive party have arrived. League members are invited to gather again on May 10 from 7 till 8:30 p.m. to write thank-you notes to the donors. Kyle Wheeler will be our hostess. Please plan to come for a relaxing evening with friends. Light refreshments will be served.

Kyle's address is 1855 Los Pueblos on Barranca Mesa. The house is on the right just before the cul-de-sac. Her phone number is 662-5577.

Louise White Memorial

Louise White was active in the League for many years beginning in 1969. She was one of the planners and organizers of the Los Alamos Farmers Market, which was started in 1970, the first in the state. On Saturday, May 14th at 4:30 p.m. there will be a memorial service for her at PEEC with a reception to follow. League members who knew her or knew of her work with the League are especially welcome to attend. If you do plan to go, please e-mail her son, Jeff White at [jeff.white\(AT\)post.harvard\(DOT\)edu](mailto:jeff.white(AT)post.harvard(DOT)edu) so he can inform the caterer.

Call to LWVNM Council

The state League of Women Voters is coming to Los Alamos on May 21 for its biennial Council meeting. Two delegates from each local League will attend as well as one delegate for the members at large and all members of the state board. All other League members are invited to attend as observers. Registration for the Council will extend from 11:30-11:45 a.m., followed by lunch and our speaker and then the business meeting. Registration, which includes the cost of the luncheon, is \$20. If you would like to attend, please send in the registration form in the new edition of La Palabra or download it from the LWVNM website.

The guest speaker will be Yvonne Flores. Her talk is titled "Immigration Law: How It Impacts Our Lives Living on the Border." It will touch on the history of immigration laws, immigration trends in application of the law, immigration law courts, and the terms in use by officials. Flores practiced law in California, where she was a prosecutor for the State Bar in the area of workers' compensation. She also was a lecturer in the History Department at California State University - Sacramento, and a Professor of Political Science in the Chicano Studies Department at California State University.

Flores retired from the practice of law in 2012 and moved to Las Cruces, where she joined the League. She now serves as co-chair of the Greater Las Cruces League's Immigration Committee, which sought to update the LWVUS Immigration position this year.

Report of April LWL: Tim Glasco

Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Manager Tim Glasco presented “Visions of Our Energy Future,” in which he outlined the department’s current electrical energy resources, the goals for the future, foreseeable prospects for meeting those goals, and the difficulties and unknowns confronting the utility. The utility’s most ambitious goal, adopted by the Board of Public Utilities in 2013, is to be a carbon neutral electric provider by 2040.

Our current resources include the San Juan Generating Station (coal), the Laramie River Station (coal), the El Vado and Abiquiu Hydroelectric Plants (hydroelectric), WAPA Allocation (hydroelectric), and the East Jemez Road Solar Farm (photovoltaic). Laramie River is currently our cheapest power resource and we have a life-of-plant purchase power agreement for 10 MW, but DPU must decide whether to sell it now while it is still a desirable resource, or later, when it may not be worth much.

Our El Vado and Abiquiu Hydroelectric Plants have served us extremely well for 30 years, but have been off-line for repairs for the past two years. With the drought situation in New Mexico, it is unclear what the prospects are for the electric generation from these plants, but in a good runoff year they could supply more than 40% of our county’s energy needs. Our 1 MW solar array produces approximately 1.6% of our energy needs. The DPU is investigating purchasing energy from solar arrays located in other communities.

DPU is a participant in the Carbon Free Power Project (CFPP), which is designing a small modular reactor (SMR) power station to be sited at the Idaho National Laboratory. Currently the final energy costs are anticipated to be too large for our continued participation, but there is some hope that the estimated costs will be reduced. If this project were to succeed, it would provide carbon-neutral energy for over half of our county’s needs, but would not be available until 2025 or later.

A major consideration in all these calculations has to be the Coordination Agreement established in 1985 between Los Alamos County and NNSA and renewed through 2025, in which they share generation and transmission resources, with costs shared according to power usage. LANL uses approximately 80% of the load, and Los Alamos County uses 20%. After 2025 the agreement will end, but both entities desire to continue it in some undefined form. This agreement and its unknown future complicate decisions such as when to pull out of the San Juan Generating Station.

So, DPU has a lot on its plate, and some difficult decisions to make with limited information. We know that the leadership of DPU is working hard to meet the carbon neutrality goal. Glasco says he believes it can be achieved in a way that is economically feasible for our county.

Lynn Jones

Observer Corps Reports

Board of Public Utilities - March

At their March 16 meeting the Board of Public Utilities adopted thirteen motions for strategic policy for distributed energy resources (DER) and rate structure. The motions were based on recommendations of the Future Energy Resources Committee. They included the completion of smart meter installation for all customers; development of an engineering model of the distribution system that will indicate how much DER generation can safely be absorbed; and Implementation of Time-of-Use pricing for both consumption and generation once smart meters are available to do so.

The board then directed the Utilities Manager to schedule and develop an integrated implementation plan for the adopted recommendations, giving him with a schedule for interim reports and requesting a complete plan by June 2017.

Lynn Jones

Board of Public Utilities – April

At the April 20 Board of Public Utilities meeting a presentation was made by Pat Longmire with the New Mexico Environment Department's Oversight Bureau on the history of the municipal water quality monitoring. Robert Westervelt briefed the BPU on a wastewater cost of service analysis. Results of the analysis demonstrated the need to increase the monthly service charge by 17 percent. However, the DPU is recommending that the rate increase be deferred since budget projections and the planned debt service associated with a new White Rock wastewater treatment plant suggest that a comprehensive rate adjustment is likely within the next year or two. Rather than go through two rate increases in a short period of time, DPU feels it would be better to include both adjustments in a single new rate at that time.

An action plan to address customer satisfaction survey results was discussed. It was noted that credit card fees were waived in response to

survey results and that focus is being placed on incorporating smart phone apps to better engage younger customers. The Abiquiu hydroelectric facility is off-line due to repair work to be undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the Abiquiu dam. The damage to be repaired is being attributed to the County's activities and therefore will be repaired at the County's expense. Costs are not known at this time; the DPU will come back in May with an estimate.

Applications are currently being accepted by the DPU for a BPU position that will open up on July 1st. Information about the BPU, where to get an application, and how to apply are available online at <http://goo.gl/XlxNPz> or at the Department of Public Utilities office located at 1000 Central Avenue, Suite 130, Los Alamos, NM.

Julie Williams-Hill

County Council

The County Manager reported at the March 22 County Council meeting that the Los Alamos Reservoir had been dredged and was filled with clean water. The current contractor is finishing up its work, and we hope that the road to the L.A. Reservoir will be open to public access soon. The Department of Public Utilities has applied for a FEMA grant to 'armor' the road against future flooding. If that comes through, the access will again be closed to the public while the road is strengthened, but that may not happen until 2017.

At the April 5 meeting, the County Council heard a citizen petition to stop the roundabout planned for Trinity Drive and Central. The planned roundabout had been vetted through eighteen public meetings and passed by a Technical Advisory Committee, the Transportation Board, and the County Council. Based on all this, the Council took no action on the petition. Subsequent Council meetings have been devoted to budget hearings.

Lynn Jones

Report of April LWL: Gene Grant

Gene Grant, host of the PBS program “In Focus,” began his talk at Lunch with a Leader by announcing that “LWV is holding the finger in the dike of democracy,” and warning that people take our organization for granted.

During the next hour he covered a range of topics from the legislature to his television program. He focused first on the sorry state of the New Mexico economy and the resulting departure of young adults, many of whom are moving to places like Denver, where they find excitement. He believes that we need to give them a reason to stay. According to Grant, one aspect of life in Albuquerque that young people do appreciate is the Rail Runner because it makes them feel as though they are living in a metropolitan area. He was pleased that he could reach Los Alamos via public transportation, taking the train and bus. Living in downtown Albuquerque, he does not need a car.

Grant voiced many concerns familiar to League members: worry about the low voter turn-out, a desire for a full-time legislature, and regret for the impact of money in politics. Election night is his favorite night of the year!

For the voter guide he recommended that we ask questions about the economy and taxes. He also encouraged the League to gauge candidates’ support for solar energy and hemp because those products can help to strengthen the economy.

In response to a comment that the state of the economy reflects the poor quality of our education system, Grant said that he believes the

problem originates with the families and expressed support for turning schools into family health centers.

Turning to a discussion of “In Focus,” Grant said he came to New Mexico 26 years ago from Boston. Initially he worked for the *Tribune* and the *Albuquerque Journal*. Now there are far more media outlets in the state, but he is happy working for PBS and enjoys the experimental nature of his show. He explained how he chooses the topics, searching for the emotional center and finding ways to bring emotion to fact-based situations. He mentioned that he has had difficulty getting guests from Los Alamos, “perhaps because they are afraid they will get in trouble.” Having aired a story, Grant said he tries to stay with it, “follow the arc.” A significant amount of his viewership is on-line, even including people from out of state who are curious about New Mexico.



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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