



UPDATE

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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Calendar

- June 9 Lunch with a Leader: Acting CDD Director Steve Brugger, Central Avenue Grill, 11:45 a.m.
- June 14 Land Use Study Committee, Mesa Public Library, noon
- June 23 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon

Lunch with a Leader, June 9: Steve Brugger

On June 9th, Steve Brugger, Acting Director of the Los Alamos County Community Development Department, will be the last speaker for our monthly Lunch with a Leader until September 8th. In 1998 Steve began consulting on real estate projects in Los Alamos, first for the County and then for the Los Alamos Housing Partnership, Inc., developer of the Pinon Trails project. He then became the County Housing Programs Manager charged with completing the Pinon Trails development and fulfilling other housing-related tasks. Steve will be talking about the range of responsibilities charged to the Community Development Department and will also discuss streamlining the planning and building permitting process. As always, questions are welcome.

The lunch begins at 11:45 a.m. at Central Avenue Grill. All menu items are \$15 including tax and gratuity. Please let Karyl Ann Armbruster know you plan to attend via e-mail to [kaskacayman\(AT\)gmail\(DOT\)com](mailto:kaskacayman(AT)gmail(DOT)com), or call her at 661-6605. Even if you do not RSVP, you are welcome to attend.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Message from the President

Our Annual Meeting began on a sad note with the news that our state representative and long-time League member Jeannette Wallace had passed away the previous day. Only later did we learn that she had been ill for much of the legislative session, even as she continued to serve her constituents.

Following several days of e-mailing and phoning League members, we did have a quorum for the meeting. The group approved the proposed bylaws change so that next year we will need only 15% instead of 20% of the membership present. Other actions included approval of the study of land use and transportation and approval of our existing positions. The slate of board and off-board nominees was expanded when Jody Benson agreed to serve as Director of Publicity and Renate Zinn said she would lead the fundraising drive for 2012. The entire slate was then approved. The full minutes from the meeting will be published in the September Update.

Barbara Calef

LWVNM Convention

We in Los Alamos were pleased to host the LWVNM State Convention for the first time in over a decade. It gave us an opportunity to showcase some of the recent improvements to the town. About 30 League members came from around the state to attend the meeting. They enjoyed the amenities at the Holiday Inn Express, visited our new Coop, and were bowled over by the magnificent views of the mountains and canyons. Everyone had a good time at the pot-luck dinner at the Wheelers home, especially since the wind died down long enough to sit outside. The following morning Councilor Mike Wismer gave a warm welcome to the delegates before they got to work.

The Convention voted to adopt by concurrence a position on transparency based on the local position of the League of Santa Fe County. Also adopted were the three proposed studies. Members of the Santa Fe League will lead a study of the Public Regulatory Commission. Our League will lead a state study of land use (not to be confused with our local study of land use and transportation), and members of the Central New Mexico League will lead a study of alcohol. The slate of nominees was elected to serve as the new board. Finally, the Convention recognized outgoing president Kathy Campbell for her outstanding service to the League.

Lacking a president and vice-president, the new board met immediately following the convention and appointed former Vice-President Linda Moscarella to be Director of Election Issues. They also voted to create a Leadership Team to include Shelly Shepherd, co-president of LWVCNM, Judy Williams, president of LWVSFC, Barbara Calef, president of LWVLA, Linda Moscarella, Dick Mason, action co-chair, Meredith, education chair, and Joe Keefe, communications chair.

Barbara Calef

John Arrowsmith's Talk on Renewable Energy for LA

John Arrowsmith, Director of the County's Utilities Department (DPU), told League members at the Annual Meeting that abundant energy is important to the economy. LANL's electric demand is expected to double due to the use of supercomputers. The townsite currently uses 12 megawatts of electricity during the day. LANL owns the distribution system and uses 80% of the power.

Los Alamos has been developing sustainable energy since the 1980's, when the county built their first hydroelectric plant. But the community also depends on the coal-burning power plants in the Four Corners area for electricity. As the regulatory burden increases on coal plants, the utilities department must consider additional sources for electricity. Oil and nuclear power are out of favor. Gas plants are cheap to build, but the gas grid is not smart, as we learned last winter when many communities in the state were cut off.

At present, renewable sources are intermittent and expensive, but climate change and rising energy prices will drive the development of additional renewable energy sources. The cost can be reduced if renewables can be integrated with other sources and managed through smart grid technology.

Smart grids are electrical power networks that control and balance the supply and demand of power through digital information that integrates small- and large-scale energy sources.

A smart grid demonstration project is being planned by the DPU, working with the Japanese consortium NEDO (New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization), LANL, and DOE. The project includes a 2-megawatt photovoltaic solar array at the former landfill, a large-scale battery storage system to stabilize the intermittent photovoltaic output to keep it smooth, and a smart house to be built on Lavy Lane. The

house will have PV panels, smart appliances, heat pump, solar, and smart meters that will shut down appliances when power is expensive. It will be built using the latest energy-saving construction methods.

Arrowsmith noted that the market will determine what gets deployed. In 2015 Los Alamos will have paid off its debt for the coal and hydroelectric plants. At that point, he said, the county should invest in renewable energy.

Barbara Calef

Tim Keller's Talk to LWVNM on Healthy Communities

State Senator Tim Keller from Albuquerque was the guest speaker at the LWVNM convention dinner Saturday night at the Hilltop House in Los Alamos. Sen. Keller spoke about quality of life issues and the "built environment" (man-made, including roads and transmission lines). For instance, people who live near busy traffic corridors have to deal with the noise, stress, and other factors that result from having high-speed traffic traveling by their homes. Keller said that at present a person's zip code may be a better indicator of health than his or her genetic code! Governing bodies should care about making the built environment a healthy environment for all. He also spoke about the problems low-income families face living in a "food desert" where the only local place to shop for groceries is an Allsup's convenience store. To assure the creation of better developments, Keller advocates legislation requiring a health impact assessment.

Much of what the senator had to say applies to the Trinity Drive corridor. He mentioned the Nob Hill area of Albuquerque and how run down it was in the eighties. When bulb-outs and medians were built for pedestrian safety and the curb lanes were converted into extra parking, traffic was slowed down and the area became one of the desirable destinations in Albuquerque.

Kyle Wheeler and Barbara Calef

Land Use Study

The meetings for the Land Use / Transportation study will be the second Tuesday of each month from noon to 1:00 at the Mesa Public Library in the upstairs meeting rooms. The first meeting is Tuesday June 14th. The study will look at how Los Alamos can plan for a more sustainable future by making good infrastructure, land use, and other decisions now. It will look at how we can ensure that transportation infrastructure serves all users, that land use decisions promote the types of investment and development needed to increase the long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency of the community, and that energy and other infrastructure choices allow for innovation and promote conservation of scarce resources.

Our first meeting will include delving into the terminology used in the study description so we can better understand what the issues are. We will define what s meant by transportation infrastructure, multi-modal access, land use, types of development, sustainability...

All League members are welcome to participate in the study. For more information, e-mail Janie O'Rourke at [porjanie\(AT\)swcp\(DOT\)com](mailto:porjanie(AT)swcp(DOT)com) or call 663-0524.

Janie O'Rourke

Report of April 14 Lunch with a Leader: John Severance

John Severance, who has been the editor of the *Los Alamos Monitor* since last December, grew up in Washington and attended Penn State University and the University of Florida. He now lives in the Santa Fe area on a small ranch and enjoys training horses.

Severance commented that newspapers in general missed the boat on the Internet and predicted that eventually there will be no hard copy. To make the *Monitor* more appealing, he plans to publish month-long investigative series. Also, the staff will communicate with subscribers by means of blog, video, and on-line links for in-depth reports. Apparently the new approach has been successful. In the last 6 months there has been an 8-9% rise in circulation, for a total of 4500 copies.

Attendees at the lunch responded eagerly to Severance's request for comments. One recommendation was to re-start the Council Corner, for which County Councilors took turns writing about local issues. Another was that the "facts" cited in opinion pieces should be checked. In response to a question about the syndicated columns, Severance said that they are provided by the New Mexico News Service to which the *Monitor* subscribes. There seemed to be consensus that the newspaper should cover more local news. Severance replied that he would like to do all local stories, but when the staff is burnt out, they publish regional and even national stories.

Severance encourages letters to the editor as well as opinion pieces of 300-600 words. (Opinion pieces should be accompanied by a picture of the author.) Press releases are also welcome. He can be reached at [john\(AT\)lamonitor\(DOT\)com](mailto:john(AT)lamonitor(DOT)com).

Barbara Calef

Observer Corps Report

During a special session on May 17 the County Council interviewed the seven applicants vying for the nomination to replace State Representative Jeannette Wallace in District 43, which includes parts of the counties of Sandoval and Santa Fe County as well as all of Los Alamos. The candidates were Joan Ahlers, Vincent Chiravalle, Robert Gibson, Jim Hall, Jose Varela Lopez, Stephanie Richard, and Pete Sheehey. Council questions focused on their concern about the imminent re-districting process. In the end they chose Councilor Jim Hall, who had recused himself from the decision-making. Santa Fe County chose Jose Varela Lopez and Sandoval nominated Stephanie Richard. Governor Martinez will make the final decision.

On May 24 the Council considered two petitions regarding improvements to Trinity Drive. One asked for no changes to the road, another asked that Option C (two lanes of traffic in each direction plus a median) be considered as an alternative to Option A, which the Council had the consultant (MIG) to study further. Another petition, in favor of Option A, was also submitted. Over 200 residents were in attendance and many of them addressed the Council. Councilor Geoff Rodgers acknowledged the receipt of the petitions and deferred the discussion until MIG's final report is submitted.

Barbara Calef

Report of May 12 Lunch with a Leader: Randy Autio

Randy Autio served for 20 years as an assistant attorney for Albuquerque. After running two elections as interim city clerk there, he decided he would like to be in charge rather than assisting. In July 2010 he was appointed to be the Los Alamos County Attorney. Then in December he was appointed acting administrator when the administrator and assistant administrator were both dismissed.

Autio commented there are currently so many “acting” positions that he feels he is directing an actors’ guild. There has been a domino effect as staff members are temporarily promoted and their vacated positions must be filled. So we have an acting county attorney, two acting assistant administrators (Steve Lynne and Anne Laurent), and an acting director of the Community Development Department (Steve Brugger), among others.

The Council has hired a firm to search for a new administrator and hopes to fill the position in September. Autio reported that there has been some progress in the effort to develop Trinity Site. The contract will be negotiated over the next couple of months. The anchor store in the new shopping center will be run by Kroger. Unlike the current Smith’s, the store will sell general merchandise as well as food, and will occupy 110,000 square feet, about three times as large as the Smith’s in Mari-Mac. However, the developer still needs to obtain commitments from other retailers.

Discussing community affairs in general, Autio commented that, “The squeaky wheel plays a big role in this community.” It would be preferable if decisions on specific issues (including priorities for capital improvement projects) reflected an over-all plan for the county. Recently the Council engaged in a new strategic planning effort. They wrote a new vision statement to describe how the county should look in 2030 and worked on a

strategy for achieving the vision. Among the key goals of the strategic plan are to have the strongest possible education system and to make LA a destination in and of itself.

In conclusion, Autio said that he was enjoying his new role, but had not decided if he would apply for the position of administrator.

Barbara Calef

September Lunch with a Leader

In September, will be Tom Nagawiecki, who is the environmental services specialist for LA County. He coordinates public education and outreach for the County's Environmental Services comprehensive waste and recycling . Watch for much more about this as September approaches.

Karyl Ann Armbruster



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
Other (please suggest)
Medically Indigent Fund
Public Transportation
Sustainability
Water Issues
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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