



UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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Calendar

May 4	Candidate Forum, Zoom, 6:30 p.m.
May 5	Early voting begins in Council Chambers
May 5-30	Same Day Voter Registration in County Clerk's Office
May 19	Lunch with a Leader, Maire O'Neill, Zoom, 11:45 a.m.
May 26	Board Meeting, Zoom, noon
June 2	Primary Election Day

Lunch with a Leader: Maire O'Neill

In May our speaker will be Maire O'Neill. O'Neill founded the *Los Alamos Reporter* in September of 2019 as a forum for news from Los Alamos and beyond. Born and raised in Ireland, she spent several years working and traveling in Europe before coming to the United States in 1983. She is a naturalized U.S. citizen. We had to cancel O'Neill's talk in March due to the pandemic and are pleased that she has agreed to appear in May on Zoom.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Co-President's Message: Two Sides to a Crisis

First, the good news. As the ability to gather in person disappears, the Los Alamos League of Women Voters has risen to the challenge. Thanks to JoAnn Lysne, whose technological magic is beyond the understanding of most of us, we ramped up our Zoom capabilities and held local board meetings, our Annual Meeting, and no less than three candidate forums online. The state League, meanwhile, held the Council and state board meetings online, too.

We received compliments from a Santa Fe League member: "In some ways it was even better than the forums we usually sponsor. The

lack of distractions from the questions and answers was very refreshing.”

Now the frightening news. A veil over our society has been lifted and we are face to face with the injustices we have ignored too long.

So many low-wage workers turn out to be our saviors—grocery clerks, truck drivers, food harvesters. How is it that they’re paid so poorly? Yes, the CEOs of the corporations that control our food supply have college degrees, but the disparity between their salaries and those of these workers is unjustifiable.

So many of the poor turn out to be at greater risk of disease; the statistics are mind-numbing. The instruction to wash your hands for 20 seconds doesn’t work well if you have no running water. How many of the disproportionate number of people dying who have “underlying conditions” have regular medical care? Is this just?

Why are so many of the medical statistics so unreliable? Why does the federal government not know how many people need ventilators? Why are the states competing with each other to get medical equipment?

Why is the air so clean now and our carbon footprint suddenly smaller? The actions we have taken in response to the pandemic have unexpectedly improved the climate. But will we break our old habits when the crisis ends?

Above all, why are we now seeing so much poverty that was hidden when the economy was functioning? Or was the economy functioning? Did it not rather include many low-wage workers working pay check to pay check, often working two jobs, doing the necessary work to keep us all fed and clothed, and a billionaire class where 0.1 percent owns as much as the bottom 90 percent?*

Many issues that the League cares about are now facing us more clearly than before this crisis. Let’s use our new awareness to tackle the problems that have been revealed.

Becky Shankland

*Many ways of calculating these statistics can be seen on Politifact. I’ve chosen Elizabeth Warren’s well-known estimate. (<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2019/jan/31/elizabeth-warren/warren-top-01-own-about-much-bottom-90/>)

Join the League for 2020-2021!

Quite a few of you have already rejoined the League for our new year. If so, read no further! If not, please find the membership form at the end of this newsletter, fill it out, add a check, and mail it to our PO Box 158. OR try out our new DONATE button on our website LWVLosAlamos.org.

Fund-Raising Report

On March 9th, nine members of the League met at 1372 47th Street in Los Alamos to stuff envelopes with letters written by Barbara Calef requesting donations from both businesses and “Friends of the League.” There were 82 letters sent to “Friends of the League” and 41 letters were sent out to businesses. These were mailed on the 10th of March, and we are hoping for a good return. By the end of the month we had received \$754 in donations.

Rosmarie Frederickson

Los Alamos Voter Guide 2020

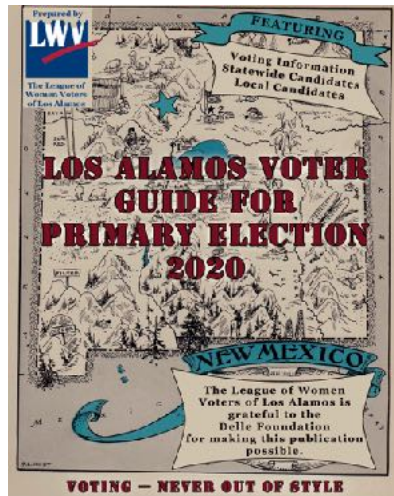
The Voter Guide came out in the *LA Daily Post* on Thursday, April 23, and is also available on our LWVLA website in PDF format.

This year we created the Voter Guide within the online website hosted by LWVUS called VOTE411. It was a steep learning curve, but with lots of participation, we completed it. There is always a great deal of interaction with the candidates in this process. We asked questions of all candidates for the VOTE411 website, although the printed version shows only the questions and answers of contested candidates. To see answers from the uncontested candidates, go to vote411.org.

Candidates were sent an invitation letter about two weeks before the print edition needed the data; those candidates who hadn't responded (the vast majority) were sent a reminder letter about one week later, followed by a telephone call a few days later still. Then, the opposed candidates were called a second time and finally received a personal reminder email on the last day. If you are ever a candidate, please respond promptly!

Extra copies of the printed guide are available in Council Chambers at the Municipal Building where the Clerk's office is setting up the early voting location, or possibly in the Clerk's office. Early voting begins May 5.

Lynn Jones



Philippa Fung Wins the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos Essay Contest

Philippa Fung, a freshman at Los Alamos High School, is the winner of the League of Women Voters essay contest celebrating the centennial of women's right to vote. She won the award of \$400, and the League judges were delighted to acknowledge her grasp of the history that led to the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

The essay topic asked "What Were Challenges That Women Faced in Gaining Voting Rights? What Obstacles Do Potential Voters Have Today?" The League's history began on February 14, 1920, when it was officially founded--six months before the 19th amendment was ratified to grant women the right to vote. It was created by suffragists who wanted the newly enfranchised women to cast educated votes.

But Philippa went beyond this simple history. She told the League that as she got deeper into her research on those "challenges that women faced," she was surprised to learn, "It wasn't just men who opposed women's right to vote for a hundred years; many women did, too. [Women fighting for the vote] is something different from what you might usually think of. That resistance was an important part of not getting the vote—you heard that men resisted, but you hadn't heard about women resisting."

Philippa said that understanding the history of women's suffrage is a topic that's still relevant in our lives today. "Most people want to vote, and with women's suffrage, it's cool how we've changed our point of view over the years." But the importance of having a vote is still a critical civil rights issue.

As she researched these voting rights, she discovered that in 19 states felons who have served their full sentences still have no right to vote. “I think on balance, felons, under certain conditions (especially those who are improving their lifestyle)—should be allowed to vote again. I think every citizen of voting age should be allowed to vote.”

It’s not surprising that Philippa won the LWV Voting Rights essay contest. Along with multiple music competition awards, she won a Rotary Essay Contest when she was in middle school, and her sixth-grade design on the side of one of the County waste trucks reminds people to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. She also plays the piano and viola, is active in her church youth group, and is a member of the LAHS Speech and Debate Club.

When asked how her brain works, she said, “It depends on what subject I’m doing—writing and memorizing stuff clicks more easily than math. I’m interested in current events and I like watching to see what happens. I enjoy seeing what other people think about current events. I think it’s cool to see how the system works. My favorite subject depends on the year—this year it’s history.” It’s no surprise that she also “likes writing a lot” and leans toward becoming an author of children’s books.

The League of Women Voters is honored to reward Philippa for her thoughtful essay. As she says, “We, as Americans, must push past these barriers to create free and equal voting rights for everyone across the country.”

Jody Benson



League members present the award for the essay contest celebrating the centennial of women’s suffrage: (from left to right) Karyl Ann Armbruster, Jody Benson, Becky Shankland, contest winner Philippa Fung, Barbara Calef, and Addie Jacobson. Photo by Elizabeth-Sharon Fung.

Challenges Women Faced in Gaining Voting Rights and Obstacles Potential Voters Have Today

By Philippa Fung

Women across the United States fought for decades for the right to vote, finally achieving this goal in 1920. They encountered numerous obstacles across their long journey, both from other women and from more preeminent national affairs. But such struggles did not end in the early 1900s. Since then, groups such as African Americans and Native Americans have fought in turn for voting rights, and now, Americans convicted of felony are trying to cross a legal bar as they fight to regain their voting rights as well.

Once the battle cry was sounded and Americans realized that women were capable as well as deserving of voting rights, there were still countless hurdles that women fighting for suffrage had to face. First, many women themselves opposed their own suffrage for reasons such as were held by dissenting men too. They stood firmly in line with the belief that a woman's place was in the home and community, not the national public. Some distrusted politics altogether and thought that, when given the right to vote, male politicians would take advantage of and manipulate them. Already, because of a woman's involvement in their community, women did have a political sphere of influence.

Anti-suffragists claimed that this subtle reform was a solely feminine way of changing politics, and that the states depended on it, so there was no need to change. On a different note, many women opposed suffrage just because they enjoyed the domestic role of a woman and because they felt that it was a man's job to vote and act in public positions. Society ran on the order of separate gender roles, and, if women gained the right to vote, it would disrupt this order. One anti-suffrage pamphlet said that, "it is a fatal mistake that these excellent women make when they conceive that the functions of men are superior to theirs and seek to usurp them."

Furthermore, higher-class women were against their right to vote because they believed it would take away some of the political power and privilege that being wealthy and powerful naturally came with. According to an 1894 *New York Times* article, "to give women the suffrage would only increase the ignorant vote and bring refined women into contact with an element that should not be brought into their lives."

Second, the issue of women's suffrage lost its long-lasting interest when the Civil War began in 1861. Most suffrage activity was suspended and women waited for the war to end; however, others, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, immediately began to support the abolition of slavery because they calculated that it could lead to universal (and therefore women's) suffrage. Besides that, individuals such as Frederick Douglass and Lucy Stone believed that the 1860s was the time for African American freedoms and privileges; adding women's suffrage into the equation would ensure that neither happened. Women such as Stanton were determined to prove them wrong and established the

Woman's Loyal National League, which petitioned President Abraham Lincoln to broaden his emancipation of slaves into emancipation for *everyone*.

The Fourteenth Amendment, which was implemented as a result of the Civil War, only gave voting rights to *male* citizens, however, and the Fifteenth Amendment extended that right to African Americans (males). This left many women suffragists outraged, as they had been fighting for their right to vote for so long and - suddenly - America's male former slaves had achieved it before they had. In short, because America was focused on the Civil War and giving African Americans rights (which is a right and good thing), women suffragists had a delay in gaining their own voting rights.

Today, many potential voters have obstacles too. Felons are one such example. From the beginning, felons lost the right to vote during and even after their prison sentence was over; now, however, the United States is rethinking this statute and many states have given ex-felons back their voting rights. Because the right to vote is fundamental for a country like the United States, which is grounded on democracy and equality, a felon who has paid the price for their actions should be allowed to vote again. Taking this right away both (1) violates guaranteed rights as an American citizen and (2) widens the racial divide that the United States has.

Unfortunately, racism is one of the many barriers that felons have to face as they look to gain back their voting rights, which traces back to the disproportionately high number of African Americans in the justice system. Today, even though African Americans only make up 13 percent of the population in the United States, they make up 38 percent of all the Americans who have had their voting rights taken away because they are a felon. Vera.org states that, "These laws [taking away felons' voting rights] have a significant disproportionate impact on black people, who are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. An estimated one in 13 black Americans does not have the right to vote due to past convictions—four times the rate of other Americans."

This systemic racism began in the Reconstruction Era, just after the Civil War ended. First, the Fourteenth Amendment made it clear that, while all male citizens could vote, those who had been convicted of a crime could not. Some states, as a result, formulated their laws so that they applied to crimes that African Americans supposedly committed more often, and not to crimes that Caucasians engaged in more often; states such as South Carolina, with a higher population of African Americans, also enacted harsher laws. Now, while many states are beginning to reform, felony disenfranchisement still exists and revision is incomplete.

In conclusion, throughout American history, different people have had challenges in gaining the right to vote. Women, for instance, faced opposition from other women as well as distraction during the Civil War. Even now, felons across America who have fairly borne the consequences of their criminality are facing obstacles as they fight for their rights. We, as Americans, must push past these barriers to create free and equal voting rights for everyone across the country.

Observer Corps Reports

County Council

March 3

Representative Chris Chandler gave a well-received report of the last legislative session. Several Councilors requested information on the status of bills in which they had a particular interest.

The Council approved a grant request to FEMA for replacing the firefighters' self-contained breathing apparatus. The Council also approved the bid to Contreras Construction for the improvements to lockers and bathroom at the ice-skating rink.

Harry Burgess gave a review of the preparedness plans for various disasters that might strike Los Alamos. He especially reviewed how the plans might be used during a coronavirus pandemic. There was work on finalizing Los Alamos County's federal agenda, which will be presented to various federal agencies when some of the councilors travel to Washington. The items to be addressed were the chromium plume, disposal of radioactive waste to WIPP, and improvements to State Route 4.

The plans were approved after being amended. Counselor Sheehy presented a recommendation regarding the bag ban from the Environmental Sustainability Board. The Council was not enthusiastic about it. Instead they proposed to issue a proclamation about the importance of living sustainably. The Environmental Sustainability Board is to draft this proclamation, to be presented on Earth Day.

Rosmarie Frederickson

The **March 17** meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19.

March 31

- Harry Burgess reviewed the county's response to the COVID-19 outbreak: two weeks ago many employees were sent home, reducing those at work each day by 70 to 75 percent; social distancing is to continue until the end of April to be consistent with federal and state guidelines; emergency operations are planned and a pandemic annex has been prepared; six locations for shelters have been identified if needed and they will be reviewed by the Red Cross; this event is different than other emergencies like the fires, so we do not anticipate homes not being available for shelter; the Governor has asked for an Army field hospital and the state has acquired former Lovelace hospitals.
- The CDC is now advising people in public to wear masks, but Los Alamos does not have the authority to require the wearing of masks.
- Police are investigating recent break-ins of local businesses; summer events will be contemplated as they are oriented to large gatherings; the fire station on DP Road has been identified to segregate fire personnel; a mobile testing site has been scheduled for Thursday and several hundred tests are available.
- Internet hot spots are being identified; Smith's has set aside hours for senior shoppers; drive-through meal pickup is now available through LARSO and many restaurants are offering deliveries; the State is considering a mail-in election for the primary; the peak could be May 2, but this is based on continuing social distancing until the end of August; 43 tests have been sent in by LAMC and results will be available within 7 to 10 days; the county has 4 ventilators and the fire department has 5

ventilators; LAMC has a pandemic plan and all OR nurses have been transferred to ER with triage areas in front of hospital if needed.

- The 2019 market study (a survey of what is being done regarding employee salaries--these studies are conducted every four years): no action was taken on this during the meeting.

Rebecca Chaiken

April 7

The Council meeting was again conducted online. Viewers see only the carving at the back of the Council chambers, so councilors are asked to identify themselves when they speak. During the meeting, County Manager Harry Burgess reported on the steps taken to safeguard the community. LAC Emergency Manager Beverly Simpson is holding multiple briefings each day with county staff. She prepares a daily situational report which summarizes multiple daily briefings she has with the Laboratory, Los Alamos Medical Center and local entities as well as the surrounding communities.

Burgess reported on the County's efforts to obtain additional masks and to assure that points of contact were cleaned frequently. He mentioned that traffic has been reduced considerably since LANL advised telecommuting. He said that the County assisted in the testing for COVID-19 at Overlook Park. About 200 residents were tested; so far four have been diagnosed with the virus.

The schedule for the County budget hearings has not been changed, but they will be held online. Plans for cancelling other events or conducting them online are being discussed. Among those events are the Bandelier shuttle service, Sciencefest, and the summer concert series. Burgess announced that the golf course irrigation project is going ahead and the North Central

Economic Development District is providing meals for seniors.

Paul Andrus, director of the Community Development Department, explained two amendments to the Homebuyer Assistance Program Policies and Procedures having to do with non-conforming loans. He said that in 2018 fifteen loans were approved; four of them used an adjustable rate mortgage. Council approved the amendments.

Barbara Calef

April 20

This was the first of probably four budget sessions planned by the County Council for finalizing the FY 2021 Los Alamos County Budget. Harry Burgess, County Manager, introduced the session covering material that he also covered in our Lunch with a Leader the following day. To summarize, we will not be hard hit by the COVID-19 shutdown, largely because LANL is maintaining full operations and much of county revenue is realized from LANL Gross Receipts Taxes. The County Council provisionally accepted the base budget as presented and then moved forward to review the first set of optional additions to the budget. Burgess had ranked additional budget options into A, B, C, and D groups according to his take on their impact on serving county needs. Council reviewed the A set of options and provisionally accepted all but two of the options; those two options were placed in the "parking lot" for further discussion after the remaining options were considered. The meeting was then recessed until the next evening.

Lynn Jones

April 21

This meeting was the second of up to four budget sessions planned by the County Council for finalizing the FY 2021 County budget.

Following up on the previous budget meeting, during which the base budget and the A set of options were tentatively approved, Burgess reviewed additional options for the proposed budget. These options were grouped into categories B, C, and D in order of their importance to the needs of the county. Each line item was described by Burgess, followed by questions or comments by County Councilors. All of the option B line items were tentatively approved by a roll call vote. All but three of the option C items were tentatively approved by a roll call vote. Items C47, C51, and C52 were deleted from consideration. Only three of the option D items were tentatively approved by a roll call vote. Two of the remaining eight items were deleted from consideration (D59 and D66) and six others were placed in the "parking lot" for further consideration.

Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Manager Philo Shelton then reviewed the DPU accomplishments along with his proposed budget, schedule of funds, and budget options. Following a roll call vote, the DPU proposed budget, schedule of funds, and budget options were tentatively approved.

Rebecca Chaiken

April 27

The County Council continued the review of budget items for the FY 2021. The Council discussed and voted on the remaining items in the Options B, C, and D. The base budget had been tentatively approved at a previous meeting. The budget A options had been accepted with items 2 and 13 deleted. The Budget B items were all approved.

The following budget C options were discussed: 51, 52, 47. Item 51 was the hangar project at the airport. Item 52 was funding bins for home backyard composting. Item 47 was funding to plant trees at the golf course to provide extra protection for balls going off course. The Council voted 5 to 2 to plant trees at the golf course. They voted to provide \$50,000 for composting and to provide funds for home compost bins and to provide funds for reusable trays and utensils for the school district.

These option D budget items were deleted: 67, 62, 60, 59, 66. All other items on the D budget were accepted. The DPU budget was accepted.

The Council also discussed establishing a minimum wage for county employees. Item A2 was the implementation of a prevailing wage, which would raise the salaries of certain employees and help with recruitment retention. The vote to accept was unanimous.

Further discussion to determine the process and investment for the recently purchased historical building occurred. The Council agreed to budget \$350,000 to include public input regarding design options. The vote was unanimous to accept.

Later in the evening, the FY 2021 Budget was accepted; therefore the April 28 Council meeting was cancelled.

Ellen Mills

Board of Public Utilities

Due to the Public Health Emergency issued by the NM Dept of Health in response to COVID-19, the Board of Public Utilities met virtually on April 22 for its regularly scheduled monthly meeting. Board members and staff joined the meeting by telephone, calling into Council Chambers to stream the discussion live

over the county's live-streaming software. The agenda included only items deemed time sensitive. The Utilities Manager, Philo Shelton, justified staffing levels that were included in the two-year budget the BPU passed the previous month. Specifically, he stated that staffing levels would not decrease, as previously thought. Rather, they would increase by one full-time employee (hiring a conservation officer) and some limited-term employees to assist staff with the increased construction activities planned for Los Alamos. BPU voted to support the additional staff.

Julie Williams-Hill

League of Women Voters NM Council April 25

The meeting was called to order at 11:46 A.M. A quorum for the board and the delegates was established.

The guest speaker was Maggie Toulouse Oliver, New Mexico Secretary of State. Her talk was about providing the process to vote absentee, including the application for a ballot, receiving and completing the ballot, and returning the ballot to be counted. The deadline for applying is May 28, but the Secretary urged voters to apply earlier due to the expected demand for absentee ballots for the primary election.

Polling places will be available and training for poll volunteers is in place. Absentee ballots will be mailed out May 5th. Voters can go to: <http://nmvote.org/> to check the status of their application and voter registration. When returning the ballot, a signature on the envelope is required; if the signature is relatively close to how the voter is registered, the ballot will be accepted. For example, if a voter used a full first name, a full middle name, and a full last name to register, but signed the ballot with a full first

name, middle initial, and full last name – the ballot will be accepted. However, if the voter is registered as “Jane Doe” and the signature is written as “John Smith” on the envelope, the ballot will not be accepted.

After Toulouse Oliver concluded her discussion, the Council heard reports from various committees and from each League president. LWVNM President Hannah Burling announced that the LWV National Convention will be held electronically from June 25 to June 2. Registration for the convention will begin in early May and there is no fee.

Ellen Mills

April Lunch with a Leader: County Manager Harry Burgess

Harry Burgess spoke to League members and friends via Zoom. He reported that the annual budget hearings began the previous night and would continue for three more nights, ending on April 28. But, he said, the hearings are just the tail end of a process that began last December. At that time each department developed a base budget consistent with what was in place, removing one-time approvals. He said the



Los Alamos County Manager Harry Burgess speaks via Zoom.

proposed base budget is 0.6% higher than last year's.

The total proposed budget is about \$26 million higher, Burgess noted, but most of that is due to the need to include \$21 million to pay for replacing the White Rock Wastewater Treatment Plant. The first two of the Council's budget meetings were to focus on the General Fund discretionary expenses. Burgess presented 65 budget options to the Council, ranked A, B, or C according to his perspective on their importance. On the first day, Council had considered all of the A's, adding \$4.9 million to the basic budget of \$61,524,000.

Discussing the County's anticipated revenue, Burgess said that gross receipts taxes comprise 72% of the County revenue. and, of that, 95% comes from LANL. Because the Laboratory is continuing to operate during the pandemic, revenues are still expected to increase over 3% in the next year. Los Alamos County's financial policy requires keeping 20% of the revenue in reserve.

The budget must be submitted to the state and to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) by June 1. Burgess remarked that the GFOA has given the County an award for an excellent budget every year for 27 years! Asked about COVID issues, he said that the county has no jurisdiction to force residents or workers to wear masks. They did persuade Smiths to set up special hours for seniors. There will be more COVID testing for eligible people at the retirement homes as well as by appointment every Monday and Wednesday morning at the

Public Health Office. Burgess said that he had sent many County personnel home to telecommute, but he had to go in to work to sign documents. Many other county departments are still active, including solid waste, parks, utilities, fire, and police. Construction activity continues.

Asked whether the Council could influence LANL about their mandate to produce plutonium pits, Burgess said that the County had no influence on Lab policy. He does, however meet Mike Weiss, the NNSA Site Manager, and Thomas Johnson, who is the Site Manager on the Environmental Management side. "Director Mason is a contractor to the federal government and they work obviously at their direction," he said. "Our Council chair interacts with Mr. Mason on a regular basis to keep those lines of communication open. We also travel to Washington, DC multiple times a year to promote County and community interests."

He does meet with NNSA officials to discuss areas of mutual interest such as community safety, clean-up, traffic, and housing. He said that in 2018 the Council passed a resolution supporting the pit production mission. Construction projects at LANL contribute to the county's revenue.

Regarding President Trump's plan to cut the budget for clean-up at the Lab, Congress can change that, but he does not expect it to happen before the General Election. Meanwhile, they are functioning under a continuing resolution.

Barbara Calef

MINUTES OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/LOS ALAMOS ANNUAL MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020
VIA ZOOM

Call to Order

Barbara Calef called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. There was a quorum with 22 members attending.

Agenda

The agenda was published in the March 2020 Update. No amendments were proposed. Becky Shankland moved to approve the agenda and this motion was seconded by Judy Buckingham. All members present voted in favor.

Minutes

The 2019 Annual Meeting was held on April 16. Kyle Wheeler and Lynn Jones were appointed to read the Annual Meeting minutes. The minutes were reviewed by the Board and published in the June Update.

Ellen Mills and Becky Shankland have volunteered to be the readers for the minutes of this year's Annual Meeting. Rebecca Chaiken is our secretary.

Reports on 2019-2020 Activities

Centennial Activities *by Becky Shankland*

2020 is the centennial for two linked events: the 19th Amendment was ratified by the requisite number of states and became part of our Constitution; and the League of Women Voters was created out of groups that had been working hard, even going to jail, to gain women's right to vote.

We began celebrating these events beginning with the 2019 rodeo parade. Here about 20 members dressed in white with sashes made by Ellen Mills and carrying historic posters from 1920 and 1997.

On October 1, a party at Janice Trujillo's celebrated our own LWVLA's history. Some past events and past leaders were recognized: Judy Machen described the founding of the Farmers' Market (the first in New Mexico); Allene Lindstrom talked about her days as League president (1972-73) and becoming a County Councilor; Hedy Dunn (and Skip) reminisced.

On February 4, the County Council proclaimed the year 2020 as the 100th year of women's right to vote, the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters, and the 73rd anniversary of the LWVLA. The proclamation was drafted by Addie Jacobson, Barbara Calef, and Becky Shankland, and it was accepted by eight League members in suffragist garb.

February 5 and 6 were League Days at the Legislature. The evening of February 5 was the legislative reception during which Virginia Kase, CEO of LWVUS, spoke. The next day, all four Leagues sent delegations with displays to the Roundhouse. LWV leaders were honored in the Senate and House as proclamations were read. In a mid-day celebration in the Rotunda, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham read a proclamation, and Virginia Kase and many others spoke. The white suffragist costumes were everywhere and gave a dramatic effect.

In honor of the centennial, we sponsored an essay contest. Leslie Wallstrom created the topic “What Were the Challenges That Women Faced in Gaining Voting Rights? What Obstacles Do Potential Voters Have Today?” Philippa Fung, a high school freshman, wrote an accomplished and informative essay and won the prize of \$400.

Earlier we talked with Liz Martineau about joining the Historical Society’s Community Day in June, dressing as suffragists and interacting with the attendees with information about the suffrage movement. We have scheduled a Chautauqua with Deborah Blanche impersonating Nina Otero Warren, an early New Mexico leader in politics and the arts, for that day. We hope these events can be rescheduled.

The heavy lifting has been planning a library gallery exhibit to show the history of suffrage and the League in the United States, then in New Mexico, and then in Los Alamos. We have spent many hours in the Historical Society archives, reading old scrapbooks and newspapers. It has unveiled a world we had little idea about. The early Los Alamos League in 1947 became instantly involved in helping Los Alamos become a part of New Mexico, eventually a separate county, and gaining the right to vote in New Mexico elections. Addie Jacobson, Barbara Calef, Jody Benson, Becky Shankland, and others worked on photographing the important documents—we were hard at work until COVID-19 shut us down. Akkana Peck and Dave North also helped document early United States and New Mexico milestones for the League. For the exhibit, we plan a mock jail with a cardboard Alice Paul inside waiting for visitors to take selfies with her, mannequins dressed as suffragists (created by Ellen Mills and Addie Jacobson), and old ballot boxes that will give viewers a chance to vote on a current topic. This exhibit had been scheduled for May-June, but the date is now unknown.

Other local Leagues and the state League have planned several other events to celebrate the Centennial of women’s right to vote in New Mexico. If they can be scheduled safely, our League will participate.

Zero Waste by Jody Benson

What is Zero Waste? *Each of us living where we reduce our consumption, reusing what we have, and recycling what has been used up until we can’t use it anymore; and an official County group affiliated with of the Environmental Sustainability Board focusing on EDUCATION to teach people how to reduce, reuse, recycle.* Since our 2019 Annual Meeting and until the COVID-19 shutdown, the County and schools have been stuttering along trying to green up the County and schools, as well as trying to educate restaurants.

COUNTY

Education and on-the-ground efforts

- Education is the means by which the Zero Waste Team hopes to change people's hearts and minds and thereby change behavior. Members of the team submit one or two articles per month about reduce and reuse, much of it focusing on food waste.
- The Team also presents talks for organizations.
- Three big functions targeted for fourth and fifth graders have been rescheduled: Earth Day activities, Water Day at PEEC, and Recycle Day at PEEC.
- The biggest effort, with hundreds of volunteer hours and a substantial monetary investment by the County, was the Zero Waste Summer Concert Series where all garbage cans were removed or taped shut while volunteers at stations took and separated trash, recyclables, glass, and compost.
- The LAHS EcoClub decided to work with Councilors Pete Sheehey and Katrina Martin to mandate a 10-cent fee on single-use plastic bags; however, this "tax" did not make it through the County Council.
- The County is working on curbside pickup of compost, but it is expensive and our market is too small for an excellent program such as Reunity in Santa Fe.
- The bad thing about curbside composting is that people waste more food because they don't feel as guilty throwing it away.
- Save As You Throw is tabled.

Food waste

In America, 40% of our food is wasted before it even gets to the store. The Zero Waste team started working with Smiths in Los Alamos to track its waste and donate before they toss, but the effort has been intermittent at best. A sub-team is working to coordinate donors with those in need, including students, but this is more complicated than we have talent to organize. If some of you are members of nonprofits, please contact us so we can work more efficiently with you.

RESTAURANTS

- The Zero Waste Restaurant Team, led by Katie Myers Leonard, Julia Ying, and Jody Benson was working to develop a Los Alamos-specific Green Restaurant Certificate (many of the restaurants interviewed were interested in what a Certificate would entail).
- Chamber President Ryn Herrmann was working with the team for the rollout that was to have been at a Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce breakfast in April; this effort will resume when the COVID-19 crisis ends.

SCHOOLS

The Green Earth Club

- In May 2019 the 8th Grade Green Earth Club (established only in December 2018) accomplished their goal—to reduce waste in the cafeteria by replacing styrofoam with reusable trays and plates.

- Laurence Peña, the Manager of Los Alamos Schools cafeteria vendor Chartwells, was delighted to agree to reduce waste and the LAPS Board unanimously voted to budget for the increased costs.

The Green Schools Task Force

- The Task Force and its energetic teacher volunteers (mentored by Susan Hettinga) are organizing Green Teams in every elementary school - small stipends are being provided.
- Laurence Peña of Chartwells continues to increase the use of reusables rather than styrofoam in the cafeterias.
- The Piñon PTO raised money to buy reusable cafeteria trays for their school.

Green Schools Design Team

- In December the Green Schools Task Force morphed into a Green Schools Design Team.
- This team was initiated by Superintendent Kurt Steinhaus--this is a huge deal because it institutionalizes environmental sustainability by developing policies, procedures, and best practices to make environmental sustainability an integral part of everything, including changing behaviors, making environmental studies part of the curriculum, and ensuring school construction is optimally "green."
- *"The goal is to prepare our students to lead the world toward a healthier, cleaner, more sustainable future. Every LAPS school will do its part to make the whole waste-free, reduce, and reuse system work efficiently."*
- The educational framework includes changing human behaviors, improving physical spaces, and developing an organizational culture that supports sustainability.
- The goal of the LAPS Green Design Team is to make our schools as green as those in Santa Fe which, within the past ten years, has built two geothermal schools, substantially reduced water and energy consumption, requires recycling at every facility, and has installed 2.0 megawatts of solar PV on 11 campuses.

LWVLA General Activities *by Barbara Calef*

Last May, Los Alamos hosted the state League convention. Mike and Kyle Wheeler hosted the pre-convention reception for the delegates. Sara Scott, Los Alamos County Council Chair, welcomed the delegates to Los Alamos. Christine Chandler spoke about her first session as a legislator. Our LWVUS Liaison, Liz Bander, spoke about the value of anger as motivation. The banquet was held at Pig + Fig where the speaker was State Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard. We received much praise from the delegates for organizing the meeting.

In August, five board members met with Brian Blalock, Secretary of CYFD to learn about the responsibilities of his department: early childhood services, behavioral health services, juvenile justice services, and protective services for foster care, adoptions, child abuse and neglect.

The state and national Leagues are leading an effort to diversify our membership. Our board voted to waive membership fees for students. We invited the staff of the County Clerk's office and members of the high school iVote Club to our October membership party. Two of the students attended.

In September, League members participated in training for third-party voter registrars. The County Clerk explained how voter registration has changed as a result of recent legislation. On National Voter Registration Day, Charlie Sartor, Mark Jones, Lynn Jones, Karyl Ann Armbruster, and Ellen Mills registered voters at PEEC and other locations.

In October we conducted a forum for the school bond, and the candidates for school board and UNMLA Advisory Board. Even though it was an off-year election, more than 100 voters attended.

Dick Mason, the LWVNM Action Chair, visited our League twice in the fall. The first time he came to explain the League's redistricting goals and strategy. Last November, Dick, Hannah, and I met with House Speaker Brian Egolf to discuss our redistricting objectives. The Speaker said he was opposed to an Independent Redistricting Commission, but he agreed to support the creation of a redistricting task force that would include members of the public. A task force would be able to discuss all of the issues of concern.

In December, Dick returned to Los Alamos to brief League members about the League's advocacy plans for the 2020 legislative session, and our state representative, Christine Chandler, spoke at Lunch with a Leader about her hopes and expectations for the short session.

The LWVLA-AAUW Legislative Preview in January was the first opportunity for many in our county to meet Senator Roberto Gonzales, who was appointed by Governor Lujan Grisham to replace Senator Cisneros. Also speaking at the forum were Representative Christine Chandler, Senator Richard Martinez, and New Mexico Voices for Children Deputy Director Amber Wallin.

Many of the bills we supported were passed and signed by the Governor. They included the solar tax credit, early childhood fund, and wildlife trafficking. However, the redistricting bills and the memorial to form a task force to study legislative process did not pass. We continue to work on those issues.

With the suspension of ordinary life due to the pandemic, we were busy learning how to use Zoom so that we could use it for our scheduled meetings when, at 12:10 p.m. on April 1, an email arrived from the Clerk of the NM Supreme Court asking the League of Women Voters of New Mexico to submit a brief as *amicus curiae*, friend of the court, in support of the petition from 27 of the state's county clerks, including our own Naomi Maestas. The petition asked the Court to permit them to send primary election ballots to all voters who have registered with a major political party. The deadline for submission of briefs was April 8.

After a discussion with the other state League leaders about whom to consult, I called Los Alamos League member Felicia Orth on April 2. She was shocked when I told her the deadline, but agreed to help and requested various pieces of information. I spent the next few days gathering that information. Meanwhile, Common Cause New Mexico offered to participate with the League. Their attorney, Levi Monagle, ended up carrying the heavy load with Felicia's support and the brief was filed on time. Sadly, the Court did not rule in our favor. Instead of permitting the county clerks to mail ballots to all eligible voters, the justices directed them or the Secretary of State to mail applications for absentee ballots to all eligible voters.

During the past year the Los Alamos League published ten newsletters. We are very grateful to JoAnn Lysne for relieving Sandra West of the responsibility months after she moved to Albuquerque. JoAnn does an excellent job in a minimum amount of time.

The newsletter includes reports from our Observer Corps: Julie Williams-Hill summarizes the meetings of the BPU; Wendy Swanson lets us know about the Planning and Zoning Commission meetings; the members of the Board now take turns to report on County Council meetings; and Ann Le Page has reported on the meetings of the Complete Count Committee (census). The pandemic is making follow-up very difficult and the census deadline has been extended.

Membership Report by Becky Shankland

At the national League's reporting time last year, we counted our membership at 90 members. This year we stood at 90, but quite a few late sign-ups raised our numbers by mid-February to 95. These members break down into 4 categories:

Single memberships: 36

Single sustaining memberships: 11

Household memberships: 26

Household sustaining memberships: 22

Student memberships: 2 (one college student at home; one HS student, our essay winner)

Life member: 1

Our one life member, our esteemed Ann Beyer, comes faithfully to our Lunch with a Leader programs.

A financial note: Although we have a fund drive for people whom we call "Friends of the League" (people who want to support the League without joining) and a business fund drive, we gain much financial support from our members who join at a higher level (sustaining members), as well as 14 of you who made a donation on top of your memberships. We thank all of you who chose to do this—it enables us to keep our basic dues low.

Thanks to Julie Williams-Hill's indefatigable work, we are now able to use the donation button on our website to link to PayPal for those who prefer to pay online rather than write a check. We are delighted that Julie has advanced us into the 21st century.

Lunch with a Leader Report *Barbara Calef*

In the past year, we had eleven Lunch with a Leader programs. Attendees included Friends of the League, the press, and the general public. Attendees were invited to purchase lunch from the Co+Op or bring their own. Karyl Ann Armbruster does a masterful job organizing these events. The next Lunch with a Leader program will be on May 19 with Maire O'Neill, our newest League member and the founder of the *Los Alamos Reporter*, as the speaker.

Treasurer's Report *Barbara Calef*

Our treasurer, Kathy Taylor, is unable to attend today, so I will briefly summarize her report for March. As of the end of March, we had \$4,028.69 in our checking account.

Our recent expenses included a prize of \$400 to Philippa Fung for her 100th anniversary essay. Receipts included \$754 in donations in response to our March fund drive.

We have \$35,787.82 in our savings account. In January we received a very generous donation of \$15,000 from the Delle Foundation to help fund our voter service activities.

Voter Services *Barbara Calef*

At the December 3 meeting, the LWVLA Board decided to commit to compiling a voter guide for every general election in response to numerous requests prior to the November 2019 local election. Also, because there are so many candidates this year, we have produced a voter guide for the primary. It will arrive in the mail in the *Los Alamos Daily Post* on Thursday, April 23. It will also be posted on our website. The Voter Guide team was, as always, led by Lynn Jones, with invaluable assistance from JoAnn Lysne, Akkana Peck, Rosmarie Frederickson, Judy Prono, and a little help from me.

We had already made that decision when the state board voted to produce an interactive online voter guide for the whole state for both the primary and general elections this year. It is posted at [Vote411](https://Vote411.org). If you put in your address, you will see information about the candidates on your ballot. To read about candidates in another part of the state, put in an address for that region.

We will hold three primary candidate forums by Zoom. The first one will be from 6:30-8:00 Wednesday, April 29, for the seven Democratic candidates for Congressional District 3. The second one will be from 7-8 on Thursday, April 30, for the Republican candidates for Congressional District 3. The third one will be from 6:30-8:30 on Monday, May 4. We have invited the Democratic candidates for Senate District 5, PRC, District Attorney, and County Council. None of the Libertarian or Republican candidates are facing opposition in the primary. They will be invited to participate in the general election Voter Guide and forums.

League members and Friends of the League will receive invitations to attend the virtual forums. They will be recorded to share with the general public.

Following the Supreme Court's verdict, we are trying to get the word out about the importance of applying online for an absentee ballot. If you are registered as a Democrat, Libertarian, or Republican and have not done so, please go to nmvote.org and apply for a ballot. Do not wait for the application from our County Clerk. If you are not registered with one of the major parties and wish to vote in the primary election, you can change your registration through May 5, also at nmvote.org.

Adoption of Local Program *Barbara Calef*

During program planning every year we review our positions to see if any of them need to be updated or if we need to undertake a new study. There were no recommendations for changes to any of the positions. They were published in the March *Update*.

Sustainability is the basis for our actions on zero waste.

Public Transportation

Environment – We called on the County Council to preserve the easement along the canyon rim behind the new hotel (15th – 20th streets) for a wildlife corridor.

Sustainable Water

Affordable Housing

Fuller Lodge

Medically Indigent Fund

Land Use and Transportation: Residential Neighborhoods

Education

Recommended Program for 2020-21: The Board recommends the following two studies.

Alternatives to Landfills

Dave North

Landfills produce methane and waste, both of which are unavoidable. The landfill used by Los Alamos County is filling up and will not be available to us once that occurs. The question then becomes: what are the alternatives? One such alternative is incineration. While better than landfills, there are downsides as well. Incinerators produce a small amount of acid residue and the garbage still needs to be shipped. A study into landfill alternatives could lead to the League lobbying the County Council to investigate small-scale incineration methods. Incineration could be cost neutral if it produced electricity, but it could also be more efficient than a coal plant. There are currently incinerators in use in Europe, on the east coast, and the Denver area. This is a local issue but it could be applied more broadly.

Besides Dave, Akkana Peck, Judy Buckingham, Charlie Sartor, Barbara Calef, Becky Shankland, Jody Benson, and Rosmarie Frederickson volunteered to participate in this study.

Digital Privacy in the Relationship Between Residents and the Los Alamos County Government

JoAnn Lysne

We know that tracking practices are common in the digital realm. Even when scheduling this Zoom event, JoAnn had the option of attaching a tracking pixel. When citizens interact with the County, they do not have the option to opt out of such tracking and data skimming tools. The Los Alamos County newsletter, *The County Line*, is an example of this. It is operated by Constant Contact which has an unsavory history (which is why these newsletters often end up in junk mail folders). When citizens click on the link to visit the county's website, Constant Contact collects location, demographics, browser type, and click information. The disclosure provided is vague and no alternative exists. The County also uses

a number of other digital platforms. Not all citizens can or will use these platforms and those that do may not be making an informed choice. JoAnn is not taking an adversarial position but instead suggests that the County could benefit from more citizen interaction. The County and its citizens would benefit from transparency and privacy, not data skimming. The League of Women Voters of Oregon has undertaken a similar cyber security study.

Besides JoAnn, Becky Shankland, Rebecca Chaiken, Barbara Calef, Akkana Peck, Dave North, Lynn Jones, Amy Birnbaum, Donald Machen, Addie Jacobson, Joyce Nickols, Jeffrey Howell, Jody Benson, and Judy Buckingham volunteered to participate in this study.

Leslie Wallstrom moved to adopt our current positions and undertake the two proposed studies. This motion was seconded by Kyle Wheeler and all members present voted in favor.

Fiscal Year 2021 to 2022 Budget

Julie Williams Hill worked with Kathy Taylor and Ed Birnbaum in the preparation of this budget. Because there are different expenses in odd years (related to elections and the national convention), the columns are color-coded (blue signifies odd, orange signifies even, and white signifies the current budget).

Expenses for 2021/2022 are expected to be higher than in the past because of significant changes including: the 100th Anniversary; the more expensive Website; Per Member Payments; position support; League meetings; the State convention in Las Cruces; and the need for two voter guides and multiple forums (for both the primary and general elections). Because the national convention will now be held virtually and there will be no travel-related expenses, such expenses were deleted from the proposed budget, dropping total expenses from \$17,292 to \$15,592. Income is based on 90 members. In most cases, the PMP due to the State and National Leagues leads to a low income balance for our local league. While our net operating income is negative (income less expenses) our cash position remains strong.

Discussed at an earlier board meeting was the dues for Household Members which, after PMP payments, leads to a negative balance. Becky Shankland moved that we increase the dues for Household Members from \$65 to \$70 and this motion was seconded by Rosmarie Frederickson. All members present voted in favor.

Election of Officers and Directors

Ellen Mills presented the nominations for 2020-2021. Officers included Co-Presidents Barbara Calef and Becky Shankland; 1st Vice President unfilled; 2nd Vice President Ellen Mills; Treasurer Kathy Taylor; and Secretary Rebecca Chaiken.

Directors included Amy Birnbaum - Reservations; Karyl Ann Armbruster - Lunch with a Leader; Lynn Jones - Voter Services; Julie Williams-Hill - Board of Public Utilities Observer; Jody Benson and Leslie Wallstrom - Publicity; Akkana Peck - Director at Large; and Rosmarie Frederickson - Fundraising.

Karyl Ann Armbruster moved to adopt the nominations of the board and the motion was seconded by Leslie Wallstrom. There was one abstention and the remaining members present voted in favor.

Off-board Directors do not require a vote, but they include Wendy Swanson - Arrangements; Becky Shankland - Membership; Julie Williams-Hill - Webmaster; Addie Jacobson - Special Projects; JoAnn Lysne - Newsletter Editor; LWV Board - County Council Observers; and Ellen Mills, Leslie Wallstrom, and JoAnn Lysne - Nominating Committee.

Announcements

State Council will take place via Zoom on Saturday, April 25. 11:30-2:30. Maggie Toulouse Oliver will be the speaker. Becky and Ellen will be the Los Alamos delegates.

The LWVUS Convention will take place online in June. Leslie Wallstrom and Ellen Mills will be the Los Alamos delegates

Barbara Calef adjourned the meeting at 2:58 p.m.

Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary

LWVLA Board of Directors 2020-2021

Officers:

- Co-president: Barbara Calef
- Co-president: Rebecca Shankland
- 1st Vice-President: *Unfilled*
- 2nd Vice-President: Ellen Mills
- Secretary: Rebecca Chaiken
- Treasurer: Kathleen Taylor

Directors:

- Reservations: Amy Birnbaum
- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Voter Services: Lynn Jones
- BPU Observer: Julie Williams-Hill
- Publicity: Jody Benson and Leslie Wallstrom
- Director at Large: Akkana Peck
- Fundraising: Rosmarie Frederickson

Off-board Directors:

- Arrangements: Wendy Swanson
- Membership: Rebecca Shankland
- Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill
- Special Projects: Addie Jacobson
- Newsletter Editor: JoAnn Lysne
- County Council Observers: LWVLA Board
- Nominations: Ellen Mills, Leslie Wallstrom, and JoAnn Lysne

If you would like to join the League, fill out and submit the membership form on page 22.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS

MEMBERSHIP FORM



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

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____ E-mail _____

____ Check here to receive our local newsletter Update as an electronic file, saving us postage.

____ OR Check here if you prefer the newsletter mailed in hard copy.

____ Check here to receive occasional friendly reminders of upcoming events by e-mail.

Membership Categories: all checks for memberships and contributions should be payable to LWV-Los Alamos and all are now tax-deductible. Let us know if you'd like a tax-deductible statement.

____ Single membership: \$45

____ Household membership (two+ people at the same address): \$70

____ Single Sustaining membership: \$75

____ Household Sustaining membership (two+ people at the same address): \$95

____ Student membership: \$0 (must be 16 or over)

____ Contribution to support League work: \$_____

Interests and Ways to Help the League (check as many as apply)

Topics of Interest

- ____ Affordable Housing
- ____ Local Government
- ____ Education
- ____ Elections, Voting Rights
- ____ Water Issues
- ____ Land Use
- ____ Health Care
- ____ Money in Politics
- ____ Sustainability
- ____ Living Wage
- ____ Public Transportation
- ____ Environment
- ____ Other topics (please suggest):

Ways to Help with League Activities

- ____ Set up Refreshments at Forums
- ____ Observer Corps (County Council, BPU, etc.)
- ____ Nominating Committee
- ____ Voter Guides Committee
- ____ Voter Registration
- ____ Publicity
- ____ Website, Social Media
- ____ Newsletter
- ____ Membership
- ____ Fund-raising
- ____ Budget Committee for LWV
- ____ Lunch with a Leader (assistance)
- ____ Fund-raising Committee for LWV
- ____ Participate in board meetings or join board

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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