



# UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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[www.lwvlosalamos.org](http://www.lwvlosalamos.org)

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**CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING**  
**April 21, 2020 at Mesa Public Library**  
**(Please bring this newsletter to the Annual Meeting.)**

## Calendar

March 9	Fund Drive Party, 1372 47 <sup>th</sup> St., 7 p.m.
March 17	Lunch with a Leader, Maire O'Neill, Mesa Public Library, 11:45 a.m.
March 23	Voices of Los Alamos, DPU Manager Philo Shelton, Unitarian Church, 6:30 p.m.
March 24	Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
April 21	<b>Annual Meeting:</b> Lunch with a Leader, Harry Burgess, County Manager; LWVLA annual business meeting, Mesa Public Library, 11:45 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
April 28	Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon

## Lunch with a Leader: Maire O'Neill

In March, appropriately on the 17th, St. Patrick's Day, our leader will be Maire O'Neill. Maire founded the *Los Alamos Reporter* in September of 2019 as a forum for news from Los Alamos and beyond. Born and raised in Ireland, Maire spent several years working and traveling in Europe before coming to the United States in 1983. She is a naturalized U.S. citizen. Her

husband, Mike, and daughter, JoAnna, moved to Los Alamos in 2005.

On April 21 the speaker will be County Manager Harry Burgess. Burgess has been in that position since October of 2011. He will be addressing issues of housing, upcoming County projects, and the Los Alamos economy. This Lunch with a Leader will begin, as always, at 11:45. The Annual Meeting will follow immediately after the program.

*Karyl Ann Armbruster*

## ***Co-President's Message: Women Suffragists: Polite Petitioners or Firebrands?***

As we prepare for the Mesa Public Library gallery exhibit (May 22-June 21) on suffrage and the League of Women Voters, our research has been fascinating. We've turned up a few surprises that have made us think about how female activists have been perceived over the years.

A symbolic event was the night that the suffragist demonstrators outside the White House were rebranded from "Silent Sentinels" to criminals. For months in 1917 the group had picketed every day, deliberately saying nothing but holding signs, including one that was addressed to "Kaiser [Woodrow] Wilson." They were arrested for "obstructing the sidewalk." Once jailed, they were beaten, tortured, force-fed, and otherwise brutalized. The phrase "Iron-jawed Angels" came to characterize the contradictory views people held of them.

When the issue of women's suffrage was up for discussion in New Mexico in 1915, Senator Thomas Catron's view was headlined as "Women of Low Morality Likely to Dominate Feminine Vote; Hardly Fitted by Temperament and Otherwise to Cope With Stern Duties of Saving State and Purifying Politics." \*

Nina Otero-Warren, New Mexico's suffragist leader, was superintendent of the Santa Fe Public Schools, a prominent patron of the arts, and a candidate for US Congress. Yet, to be accepted as a community leader, she had to disguise being a divorcée by calling herself a widow.

In 1947 Walt Disney, testifying before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (infamously run by Sen. Joseph McCarthy) about

a protest against his labor practices, complained that the strikers "included the League of Women Voters among the Communist front organizations." \*

And if that weren't enough, LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase, speaking at the LWVNM legislative reception on February 5, cited an attack on the League as being a bunch of "Marxist harpies."

Which do you choose: "Marxist harpies" or "Silent Sentinels"? Choose your label—or find another.

*Rebecca Shankland*

\*This and other newspaper articles discovered by David Izraelevitz—thanks!

## ***Welcome, Renewed Members!***

Last month's membership list was missing a few important members: one that I missed while typing and five whose renewals came in just at or after the *Update* deadline. So please add to the honor roll:

Carroll Thomas  
Nona Girardi  
Howard Barnum  
Antonio and Shelby Redondo  
Janet Gerwin

## ***League Dues Are Due in April!***

Reminder: Our tradition is to renew our memberships at our April Annual Meeting, so we encourage you to bring your completed membership form with a check when you come on April 21.

Several people have already renewed and if you prefer to do that now, please know that no matter when you renew, your membership will stay in force until April 2021.

## **Observer Corps Reports**

### **County Council**

#### **February 4**

At the February 4 County Council meeting, Council issued a Proclamation Honoring the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos on their 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary, and Commemorating the League of Women Voters of the United States on their Centennial Anniversary, as well as the Centennial for Women's Right to Vote (published in the February *Update*). The Council also approved their updated Strategic Leadership Plan.

*Lynn Jones*

#### **February 18**

Do you compost your food waste? Are you interested in recycling costs and improving environmental conditions for future generations? Then this was the County Council meeting for you! There was a lengthy presentation by Anne Laurent, Public Works Director, and Angelica Gurule, Environmental Services Manager, regarding the feasibility of food waste recycling in Los Alamos County (LAC).

It seems that 1,322 tons of food waste is produced in LAC every year, out of the almost 8,000 total tons of trash produced (business and residential). How can this be captured and redirected? Why should it be? Apparently, the LAC trash is trucked to a landfill which is filling up. The County officials want to compost the food waste, so that it can be reused/recycled right here in LAC. This could save \$10,000 to \$25,000



*Proclamation Honoring the LWVLA: l to r: Jody Benson, Addie Jacobson, Karyl Ann Armbruster, Ellen Mills, Barbara Calef, County Councilor Katrina Martin, Wendy Swanson, Becky Shankland,*

annually and divert some of the trash from the landfill. The presenters proposed a Food Waste Prevention Education Campaign, a Composting Feasibility Study, and a Composting Pilot Project. They presented detailed budgets and timelines. The County Council must now decide whether to proceed with this project. The cost is estimated to be \$405,000.

The County Council also briefly discussed the plastic bag ban. The local grocery store will implement a ban on plastic bags by 2025, so it makes sense for other businesses, restaurants, etc., to join in. Councilor Pete Sheehey is very invested in this project.

County Manager Harry Burgess briefly discussed a project to establish a capital projects fund for members of the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities. The program consists of an anticipated yearly budget set-aside from the LAC General Fund of \$500K-1M to be invested in a segregated fund, the income to be used for regional capital projects.

*Leslie Wallstrom*

## February 25

During public comment, a representative of UnQuarked reported that someone altered a document they had submitted to the CDD permitting office, adding a comma and a zero to increase the value of sidewalk repairs tenfold, from \$800 to \$8,000. The representative says UnQuarked has video evidence that the document said \$800 when they submitted it, proving that it was altered while it was in CDD custody. The county has declined to investigate, and UnQuarked is calling for an outside investigator to be brought in.

The Council voted to modify the code related to property transfers, to make it more compatible with LEDA and the Metropolitan Redevelopment Act and allow more flexibility in use of sale proceeds.

They tabled a proposal to let the county offer incentives to new businesses as long as they don't compete with any existing business here. Several Councilors wanted the rewritten ordinance to require a cost-benefit analysis and other changes. The matter will be discussed again at the March 31 Council meeting.

The Council voted to amend Chapter 31 rules on Procurement to align better with state procurement codes and allow for longer term contracts on software and long-term assets. Councilor Pete Sheehey noted that the change includes a "green purchasing preference," which he likes, but it removes the definition of "environmentally preferable purchases." He was assured that the green preference would be defined in each solicitation, even though the ordinance doesn't say so.

Most of the remainder of the meeting covered three related resolutions regarding Transfer of Operating Profits from the Department of Public

Utilities, covering issues like being able to leave money paid to the DPU there, rather than transferring it to the County's general fund and then back to the utility. The hope is that this would allow more flexibility for long-term planning regarding utility infrastructure investments. There was debate over the details, and over how much flexibility the County charter allows, but all three resolutions were approved in the end.

In the County Manager's report, Harry Burgess commented that we don't know yet what the budget might be for future plutonium work at LANL; the report the day before the meeting said one thing, the news the previous week said something different.

*Akkana Peck*

## Board of Public Utilities

The Board of Public Utilities (BPU) held its monthly meeting on February 19th. A presentation on the replacement wastewater treatment plant in White Rock was presented by the consulting firm, Bohannon Huston. The estimated project cost is \$16 million with the replacement plant producing class 1A effluent; processing compost; repurposing existing facilities as much as possible, and optimizing the facility design for functionality and operation and maintenance costs. Design work is underway. The project will be bid in the fall of 2020 and construction will begin late winter 2021. It is anticipated that the replacement plant will be completed and brought online by the spring of 2022. A preliminary presentation and discussion for the Department of Public Utilities fiscal year 2021 and 2022 budget was also on the agenda. The final budget will be presented to the BPU on March 18th for approval.

*Julie Williams-Hill*

## ***Fund Drive Party***

On March 9 we will meet at 7 p.m. at Rosmarie Frederickson's home at 1372 47<sup>th</sup> St. (off Sandia in the Western Area) for the annual **Fund Drive Party** where we stuff envelopes with a copy of a letter asking non-member residents and businesses of the community to make donations to the League. This is an opportunity to catch up on local news and have fun getting to know fellow League members.

## ***League Days at the Legislature, February 5-6***

Los Alamos League members gathered in force to meet the CEO of LWVUS and celebrate the League's hundredth birthday. The legislative reception was held at the Rio Chama. Once again the business of the legislature and a flurry of parties meant that only a couple of senators were able to attend. However, it was an excellent opportunity for networking and for mingling with the members of our own League. LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase gave an excellent speech about her activist background and her stressful first months working for the League.

The next day, dressed in white to honor the suffragists, we rushed to the Roundhouse to set up the LWV Los Alamos table for League Day at the Roundhouse. (LWVNM had reserved twelve



*At the legislative reception: back row l to r: Rebecca Chaiken, Ellen Mills, Lynn Jones, Joyce Zaugg, Barbara Calef, LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase, Becky Shankland, Rosmarie Frederickson, Joyce Nickols, Kathy Taylor, Leslie Wallstrom (in back), LWVNM Past President Meredith Machen; front row: Karyl Ann Armbruster, Akkana Peck. Photo by Steven Machen.*



*League Day at the Roundhouse: l to r: Vicky the Voter, Barbara Calef, Karyl Ann Armbruster, Joyce Zaugg, State Representative Christine Chandler, Rebecca Chaiken, Becky Shankland, Lynn Jones, Joyce Nickols, Addie Jacobson. Photo by Dody Richardson.*

tables in the West Gallery for the Leagues and friends.) Ellen Mills had sewn 52 sashes to commemorate the occasion. Some of us visited our legislators' offices and attended committee hearings while others remained at the table to talk to the throngs of visitors. Late in the morning Becky Shankland sat on the rostrum in the House while I sat in the Senate with other League leaders to be recognized when the chambers passed the memorials honoring the centennials of the League and the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

The highlight of the day was the midday gathering in the rotunda where Santa Fe Prep student Fionnuala Moore sang songs she had written about women's suffrage and the Governor read a proclamation celebrating the two

centennials. Virginia Kase spoke again, followed by Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver and many of our colleagues, including NAACP 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Pamela Herndon, Senator Daniel Ivey-Soto, and other legislators.

*Barbara Calef*

## **NM Legislative Session**

The LWVNM Action Committee was lobbying for two bills, HM 8 and SB 134 to improve the redistricting process during the session that ended on February 20. Neither of them passed, but the Fair Districts Coalition is working on strategy to

make the process fairer and more transparent for the 2021 post-census redistricting.

Successful legislation included HB 83, an appropriation to start an Early Childhood Permanent Fund; SB 4, an appropriation for the census; SB 29, the Solar Market Development Tax Credit; SB 75, Wildlife Trafficking; SB 5, the Red Flag Bill; and HR 1 Publication of Votes to Table Bills. None of the bills that we opposed were passed.

## ***February Lunch with a Leader: NM Money Out of Politics*** [www.NMMOP.org](http://www.NMMOP.org)

Debbie Helper, a League member from Santa Fe, began the presentation by explaining that New Mexicans for Money Out of Politics (NMMOP) is affiliated with American Promise, a national organization and that John House, the president, could not attend because of illness. Helper went on to say that NMMOP is a non-partisan organization working to reform democracy through six goals:

1. Establish public campaign financing for all federal, state, and local elections;
2. Enact a 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to impose reasonable limits upon political campaign contributions and expenditures and provide greater disclosure and transparency;
3. Enact lobbying reform at the federal, state, and local levels so we are fairly represented, and eliminate the “revolving door” between government and business;
4. Eliminate gerrymandering of congressional districts;
5. Protect and enhance the right and ability to vote by eliminating tactics aimed at restricting voting and restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965;

6. Enact anti-corruption, ethics, and conflict of interest laws applying to federal, state, and local executive officials, legislators, and judges.

NMMOP also supports other democracy reform initiatives such as the National Popular Vote, open primaries, ranked choice voting, and reform of the appointment process for federal judges. They lobby for reform of the Federal Election Commission, which is totally dysfunctional. There are supposed to be six commissioners with no more than three from one party. Currently three of the seats are vacant.

The organization is supporting HR 1, the For the People Act, which was passed by the US House last March but has not been heard by the Senate. They are lobbying for the Senate version of the bill, SB 949, sponsored by Udall. In New Mexico this year they supported HM 8, the memorial requesting the NM Legislative Council to set up a redistricting task force, and SB 134, which would have convened a task force to make recommendations for how to implement an independent redistricting commission. In the past NMMOP has lobbied for same-day voter registration and felons’ voting rights. They supported the creation of the NM Ethics Commission and passage of the National Popular Vote bill. (The League also supported all of those bills.) Helper remarked that reversing Citizens United is a long shot. It has been ten years since the Supreme Court ruled that money is speech and corporations are people. Ishwari Sollohub continued the presentation, remarking that NMMOP is trying to expand to other parts of the state. They are approaching the NAACP and hope to expand to southern New Mexico and Grants. She listed other legislation the group is supporting, including HJR 2, proposing an amendment to the Constitution “relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.” Another proposed

amendment, HJR 48, would limit the rights extended by the Constitution to “natural persons only.” It would also require federal, state, and local government to regulate election contributions and require that any permissible contributions and expenditures be publicly disclosed. Both pieces of legislation have been referred to the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties. Sollohub noted that 85% of Americans believe campaign finance needs reform. Nevertheless, she said, “This is a long game. If you don’t have a lot of tolerance, work on something else.”

Los Alamos League member Addie Jacobson continued the presentation, explaining that she became active in 2016 after hearing Bruce Berlin speak about how to get big money out of politics. She has asked Councilor Pete Sheehey to introduce a County Council resolution calling on

Congress to set reasonable limits on money. Sheehey attended the meeting and voiced his support. Jacobson noted that Representative Chandler had said her election cost about \$120,000. Who can afford that? What are we getting for it?

*Barbara Calef*

## ***Voter Services***

A committee composed of Voter Services Director Lynn Jones, JoAnn Lysne, and Akkana Peck is preparing for our first pre-primary Voter Guide. It will be online at [vote411.org](http://vote411.org) and will be printed as a pull-out section in the Los Alamos Daily Post on April 30. Plans for candidate forums will be announced after the March 10 candidate filing deadline.

*Barbara Calef*

## ***Annual Meeting***

Following Lunch with a Leader on April 21, we will hold our Annual Meeting. It will begin at 1 p.m. and end at 2:30. During the Annual Meeting we will review our positions, decide on the program for the coming year, approve the budget, and elect a new board. Please mark your calendars!

### ***Agenda***

**1:00 p.m. Business Meeting begins**

**Minutes of the 2019 Meeting (see June 2019 Update)**

**President’s Report**

**Membership Report**

**Treasurer’s Report**

**Adoption of Local Program (positions, plans for action)**

**Adoption of the FY 2021-22 Budget**

**Election of Officers and Directors**

**Please bring this newsletter to the meeting!** And bring your checkbook or mail in your dues. Dues are now completely tax-deductible.

**Dues for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, which begins May 1, will be accepted anytime, but at the Annual meeting is convenient for the treasurer and the membership chair.** Please fill out the membership form in this newsletter, even if you are already a member.

## ***LWV Los Alamos Positions***

*At the Annual Meeting members will be asked to re-adopt our local League positions.*

**SUSTAINABILITY** (Adopted 1995; Revised 1997, 2004, 2008, 2015) The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos endorses the concept of a sustainable society as a preamble for all of its current and new positions. We define a sustainable society as one that satisfies its own needs without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations. We aspire to make our society more sustainable by preserving and respecting its interdependence with the natural world. A sustainable society protects nature. Our society should offer all individuals a clean environment including pure water, unpolluted air, and sufficient sources of renewable energy to provide for their physical needs. Our society should distribute scarce resources equitably so that conflicts over them are minimized. Every working person should be paid a living wage.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION** (Adopted 1965; Revised 1991, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2013)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos believes that public transportation is an essential element of a sustainable society in so far as it conserves natural resources and decreases pollution. Public transportation is also important economically and socially as an alternative to the current norm of one commuter per car. Public transportation can benefit all citizens including workers, students, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Public transportation should be affordable, convenient and reliable. The County should extend the existing County system and continue to subsidize and support the expansion of the regional system.

In order to sustain clean air and healthy ways of living, an emphasis should be placed on developing infrastructure to encourage pedestrians and cyclists. Land use decisions should support this emphasis by promoting higher density mixed-use development.

**ENVIRONMENT** (Adopted 2012, Revised 2014, 2017)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos believes that our natural environment is integral to our community's unique sense of place and to our well-being and prosperity.

- We support protection of this environment, including the canyons and other open space, vistas, wildlife habitat, and dark skies.
- To improve ecosystem health and community livability, we support wherever possible “Green Infrastructure.” EPA defines this as “... an array of products, technologies, and practices that use natural systems – or engineered systems that mimic natural processes – to enhance overall environmental quality.... Green Infrastructure techniques use soils and vegetation to infiltrate, evapotranspire, and/or recycle storm water runoff.”

## Further Guidelines

The LWVLA supports the implementation of the Open Space Management Plan, which develops a system of designated open space to protect scenic vistas and memorable landscapes; recreational, natural and cultural resources; and significant wildlife corridors and habitats.

- We support adoption of a Rendija Canyon master plan that reserves the transfer land for recreational uses only.
- We support adoption of a storm water management plan that employs green infrastructure strategies, such as infiltration planters, vegetated swales, tree boxes, and rain gardens.
- We support adding green spaces in the downtown with landscaped road edges, medians, parking lots, and pocket parks.
- We support limiting the use of herbicides in open space areas, as well as along roadsides where mowing and planting native grasses can be as effective.
- We support a policy of zero increase in run-off beyond the natural rate for commercial and private property.
- We support implementation of all the policies in the Protect the Environment section of the LAC Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Council in 2005.
- We support implementation of the goals in the Open Space section of the LAC Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Council in 2016.
- Execution of the actions suggested in Further Guidelines will improve the quality of our air and water.

## SUSTAINABLE WATER (Adopted 2009; Revised 2012, 2014, 2017)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos (LWVLA) believes that the goal of our county should be to use no more water than can be produced from our aquifer without depleting it. In order to achieve this goal, decisions about growth must consider water use. Even with the current population in Los Alamos, conservation is essential.

For the sake of the public welfare, the County should be guided in all decisions by the following policies:

- Encourage conservation and efficiency of use.
- Preserve riparian ecosystems and wetlands.
- Preserve public lands, water, and open space.

## Further Guidelines

To reduce per capita consumption, we support:

- economic incentives,

- codification of standards for all new construction,
- encouraging conservation practices for existing homes.

We support the County's efforts to apply water efficiency standards in new construction, to reduce leaks, and to irrigate the parks with wastewater effluent. The Department of Public Utilities (DPU) should educate consumers about best irrigation practices, including how to use gray water, and should provide economic incentives to conserve. We support the inclined block rate ordinance.

Residential conservation and vigilance on the part of the DPU will not suffice to achieve sustainability. The LWVLA advocates:

- requiring growth or development to be compatible with the availability of water for the indefinite future without requiring the diversion of the San Juan-Chama water;
- careful monitoring and continuing study of the aquifer;
- increased efforts by the County to participate in and assure that regional and state plans are sustainable;
- engaging the public in the water budget process.

The LWVLA recommends that the County continue to maintain its quota of San Juan-Chama water until a decision is made to build the infrastructure needed to utilize it, and that any plans for use of the water be designed to minimize the impact on White Rock Canyon.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING** (Adopted 1996; Revised 2003, 2008)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos supports the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing in the county. LWV Los Alamos believes that affordable housing units should be integrated into neighborhoods throughout Los Alamos County. New developments should have a mix of market-rate and affordable units.

We acknowledge that some type of subsidy by the county is required to achieve affordable prices.

Effective methods to keep these units affordable when they are resold must be in place if we are to retain a stock of affordable housing. For instance, land provided as a subsidy could be retained in a trust.

### **FULLER LODGE** (Adopted 1992, Revised 2004)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos believes that Fuller Lodge should be used primarily for civic and cultural activities. Activities not open to the general public should be charged at a rate comparable to that charged by local businesses for equivalent space. Activities open to the general public should be charged at a lower rate.

The County should continue to be responsible for the maintenance, restoration, and protection of the Lodge.

### **MEDICALLY INDIGENT FUND** (Adopted 1988; Revised 2004, 2008, 2017)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos supports the County ordinance establishing the Indigent Health Care Fund, which funds the county's Health Care Assistance Program through designated GRT monies. Desirable features of such an ordinance include:

- A limit for the amount of reimbursement.
- Provisions for changes in this limit because of changing medical costs or demands on the fund.
- Possible reimbursement of costs beyond hospital and ambulance services.
- Consideration of for-profit health care providers, but with non-profit facilities given first consideration.

## **LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**

(adopted Oct. 31, 2013)

LWVLA supports the development of residential neighborhoods that are sustainable and livable. To achieve those goals, we believe that new and redeveloped neighborhoods should be designed to minimize sprawl and impact on the natural environment. Neighborhoods should support a diverse population with inviting streets and public spaces as well as access to public transportation.

### **Further Guidelines:**

#### **1. Where to build (efficient use of land that minimizes sprawl)**

- Neighborhoods near the downtown should be compact.
- New development should not consume or fragment important natural habitats or wildlife corridors; it should be avoided on steep slopes or in canyons.
- Redevelopment of "brownfields" and infill are preferred over new development in pristine landscapes. However, existing small neighborhood parks should be maintained or enhanced to reflect the unique character of the neighborhood.
- Neighborhoods should be situated along available public transit lines and within easy access of daily activities.

#### **2. What to build (neighborhood pattern/design)**

- Cluster homes to make transit more viable and to create walkable neighborhoods.
- Design streets and pathways for safe and pleasant walking/biking within neighborhood.
- Include a range of housing types/sizes to support diverse neighborhood population; include a mix of affordable housing within each neighborhood.
- Encourage ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) designs in individual homes to accommodate all ages and abilities.
- Encourage the preservation of the positive character/architecture unique to each neighborhood.

- The developer should include quality parks, trails, and public spaces within each neighborhood; the option of allowing payment in lieu of parks provision should be restricted.

### 3. How to build (how to manage environmental impacts)

- Reduce storm water runoff and eliminate pollution sources.
- Emphasize energy and water efficiency of streets and buildings; plan orientation of buildings to optimize solar gain.
- Reuse older buildings to reduce energy and resource use as appropriate.
- Encourage building materials that support high indoor air quality and are sourced sustainably.
- Encourage appropriate landscaping based on native and xeric plants; create a streetscape with shade trees appropriate for our climate.
- Minimize light pollution.

## **EDUCATION** (Adopted 2015)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos believes that a strong, collaborative relationship between K-12 education leaders and citizens must exist in order for the school district to successfully deliver education services meeting community standards. This belief is consistent with the League of Women Voters expectations for the relationship between citizens and all government entities.

As an elected body, the School Board should actively solicit and weigh heavily community input when making strategic planning and funding decisions. In order for citizens to provide educated and meaningful feedback, they need to be involved in the strategic planning process and have access to information about the district's direction, the issues it faces, and its financial situation.

The strategic plan describes how the School Board addresses the needs of the children, including but not limited to academic goals, class size, enrichment programs (i.e., art, music, and athletics), vocational training, special education, and counseling. The strategic plan also discusses the facilities plans, enrollment trends, current financial budget, 5-year financial forecast, community involvement plan, and public communication plan.

In order for the School Board to solicit and incorporate community input into their strategic planning and annual budgeting processes, communication mechanisms need to be created and maintained as an essential part of the board's business activities. Examples of communication mechanisms that achieve this objective are: community surveys; a formal strategic planning process that incorporates citizen input; an Open Forum-type online feedback service; Facebook and other social media; and smaller district meetings between school board members and constituents.

In order for the community to learn about and participate in strategic planning and funding decisions, the School Board needs to routinely provide relevant information to the public as a normal part of the board's business activities. That information would include: issues, options and data provided in advance of decision-making deadlines; reporting on decisions made; and access to key policy documents like budgets and the strategic plan. The LAPS website should be the board's primary communication

vehicle. To be effective, it needs to have the following characteristics: easily found, accessible 24x7, and possessing a robust search capability. Examples of other communication mechanisms that can be utilized include: broadcasting board meetings on PAC 8; sending email newsletters to subscribers; using smart phone apps to share information with community members; and using local media to communicate open issues and final decisions. The information presented should be in a format that is understandable to the typical citizen, and be timely and relevant to the issues.

## ***Program Planning for 2020-2021***

League members gathered at Rebecca Chaiken's home on February 11 to respond to requests from LWVUS and to discuss our local League's plans for the next year.

The national League asked if we support continuing the Campaign for Making Democracy Work. We said we do. However, at the February board meeting, in response to requests from LWVMA and LWV Lee County, Florida, the board also supported making Climate Emergency an additional program item. The board also concurred with most of a new position on Election Process proposed by a number of local and state Leagues.

For the local program, two studies were suggested and subsequently recommended by the board.

### **Alternatives to Landfills**

Study proposed by Dave North, recommended by the LWVLA Board

It should be apparent to Los Alamos residents that landfills are a growing problem, partly because we don't have one, additionally because our transport costs are about to go even higher when the Bernalillo site closes. Indications are this is also both a state and national issue.

Currently the only obvious alternative is incineration, but there may be other lesser-known options. While diversion (recycling) and avoidance (not buying unneeded stuff) are to be preferred, there is no reason to believe compliance to these ideals is going to sweep either Los Alamos or the nation any time soon. Some forms of composting are also excellent but too limited in scope as currently practiced.

Incineration at high enough temperature completely dissociates plastics and other organics (ex: food). This avoids microplastics in the environment and the nearly unavoidable generation of methane in landfills.

Almost all landfills are government owned or leased, and methods of refuse collection and disposal are almost universally regulated by government, making this an issue where public input to government could be crucial.

The League may want to spearhead this because the issues are not generally being addressed by local (or any other level of government) with any urgency, and there is little evidence that most legislators are aware of the growing problem, its magnitude, implications, or possible solutions.

This one-year study should, at this point, be confined to Los Alamos. We will try to determine if there is a financially feasible, environmentally acceptable alternative to shipping the majority of raw trash elsewhere.

If we get the county and -- even peripherally -- LANL interested in a better solution to this problem, it could be a significant seed for development of a better alternative on a larger scale.

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

Study proposed by JoAnn Lysne and recommended by the LWVLA Board

As communications and services move further into the digital realm, individual privacies have become more vulnerable through the involvement of third-party services that include tracking practices and targeted marketing. In some situations, such as a mailing list from an alumni group, the risk of contributing to one's digital footprint is a well informed and conscious choice by the consumer. In the context of a relationship with the government, however, the element of choice is not always clear or even available. When mailing lists, mobile applications, and other types of digital technology used by the local authorities do not include appropriate security measures and transparency, citizens using these platforms may unwittingly be exposing their private data.

In this study we propose to:

- Explore the extent to which third party software, mobile apps, service platforms, and other digital technologies used by the county collect (or have the potential to collect) user data, or are otherwise inconsistent with good "digital hygiene."
- Identify if any of these digital platforms are the only means by which a resident can access certain information or engage in day-to-day interactions with the county, or if other less intrusive options are also available.
- Survey other Leagues' positions related to digital privacy and determine whether LWVLA should consider adding a such a position.

This one-year study will concentrate on platforms that are integral to the relationship between residents of Los Alamos and the elected officials, county government, and government sub-contractors in Los Alamos County.

## ***LWVLA Nominations for 2020-2021 and Budget: Coming soon!***

## **LWVLA Board of Directors 2019-2020**

### Officers:

- Co-presidents: Barbara Calef and Rebecca Shankland
- 1st Vice-President: Ellen Mills
- 2nd Vice-President: Leslie Wallstrom
- Treasurer: Kathleen Taylor
- Secretary: Rebecca Chaiken

### Directors:

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

### Off-board Directors:

- Arrangements: Wendy Swanson
- Membership: Rebecca Shankland
- Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill
- Director of Special Projects: Addie Jacobson
- County Council Observers: LWVLA Board
- Newsletter Editor: JoAnn Lysne
- Nominating Committee Chair: Ellen Mills
- 2nd Nominating Committee Member: JoAnn Lysne
- Budget Committee: Julie Williams-Hill, Ed Birnbaum, and Kathleen Taylor

If you would like to join the League, fill out and submit the membership form on page 16.



*LWVLA Board of Directors 2019-2020: (top row, left to right) Leslie Wallstrom, Julie Williams-Hill, Akkana Peck, Lynn Jones, Amy Birnbaum, Karyl Ann Armbruster, Ellen Mills, Jody Benson; (bottom row, left to right) Kathleen Taylor, Barbara Calef, Rebecca Shankland, and Rebecca Chaiken. Courtesy photo.*



## 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): \$65

\_\_\_\_\_ 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, DPU, 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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