

The Santa Fe Voter

Published by the League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County

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President, Jody Larson
982-0776

Membership Chair, Jane Gaziano
989-8353

Voters Service Chair, Meredith Machen
988-4523

CALENDAR

May – No Units

- 28 Voter Registration.....Santa Fe High School8:00 AM to 11 AM
31 Voter RegistrationSanta Fe Farmers' Market, PERA Parking Lot8:00 AM to NOON
31 Board OrientationSanta Fe Association of Realtors, 510 N. Guadalupe, Suite E.....1:00 to 4:30 PM

June – No Units

- 3 Primary Election Day.....Various Polling Places.....7:00 AM to 7:00 PM
11 Board Meeting..... League Office4:00 PM
14 Voter RegistrationSanta Fe Farmers' Market, PERA Parking Lot8:00 AM to NOON
13 – 17 LWVUS Convention.....Portland, Oregon.....
Dates To Be Announced.....Forums for US Senate and 3rd Congressional District Candidates

We will be co-sponsoring three forums with the Council on International Relations:

Two for US Senate race, and one for the US Representative race

See inside for more information, and watch our web site for details!

VOTERS SERVICE EVENTS – WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

Voter Registration: Please note above that we will be registering voters twice at the Saturday Farmers' Market and at the graduation exercises for Santa Fe High School (Capital is being covered separately this year), and we do still need volunteers! In addition, we are welcome to come to the Tuesday Farmers' Market any time, and we will be happy to have volunteers for that as well.

If you are able to participate, please call Meredith Machen at 988-4523 right away.

Voters Service on Election Day: We need volunteers to staff the office on primary election day, June 3. We will have access to a database with voter registration information, so it will be very enjoyable and easy to respond to callers.

If you are able to participate, please call the League office, 982-9766, and leave a message for Becky or Jody.

Many thanks!

MISSION STATEMENT

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

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy New Year!

No, it isn't January, nor yet the lunar new year, but with our Annual Meeting behind us, we have indeed begun a new League year. In addition to approving the budget and program, and taking care of other usual business, we spent a portion of the meeting on the beginnings of strategic planning. Nearly 40 members got us started on a strategic view, with an all-too-brief exercise in SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and goal-setting. Your new board will build on the ideas and insights provided in this exercise, and we will keep you posted as our strategic planning continues. Our budget is very tight, but we are determined to use what resources we have to best advantage, and this means we need a solid basis for prioritizing. There is so much need for the kinds of service only League can provide – read the rest of this VOTER for descriptions of some of our projects!

Our nominating committee provided us with a stellar new board, and I am honored to be able to work with them for this coming year. We will try to include profiles of the board members in future VOTERs. Meanwhile, our board orientation on May 31 is open – so show up if you want to provide some input. We welcome your suggestions.

I hope you will read about our exciting County Transparency Project, and volunteer to serve on the project. Please see the article elsewhere in this issue, and consider devoting just a few hours in the coming months to supporting an assessment of Santa Fe County's efforts to provide access to information and services to all constituents. This kind of opportunity does not come along very often, and we are lucky to be able to participate.

Jody Larson, President

NATIONAL UPDATE – CONSENSUS ON IMMIGRATION APPROVED

The LWVUS board has approved the League's national position on immigration. You can read the full position at the national web site, www.lwv.org. It reflects our local consensus to a great degree. Here are a few highlights:

The position addresses goals for federal immigration policies, including promotion of the reunification of immediate families; meeting the economic, business and employment needs of the US; and responsiveness to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises.

The League supports an efficient, expeditious system for legal entry, with minimal or no backlogs. The position specifies criteria for legal admission and includes standards for administration and enforcement with an emphasis on due process for all persons.

The final section deals with unauthorized immigrants already in the US, supporting a system that allows them to earn legal status including citizenship, and stating that the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

If you do not have access to the internet but would like a hard copy of the full position, please call the office and we will mail or deliver one to you.

COUNTY CONJUNCTIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The often-stated goal of the Buckman Direct Diversion (BDD) is to allow us to rest our aquifers, conserving our groundwater for use in dry periods when surface flows cannot meet our needs. Perversely, the imminent development of the BDD is now being used to justify the County's proposal to add a number of new wells to the County water system. The County has drafted a Conjunctive Management Plan for the Santa Fe Basin whose major purpose appears to be to justify the need for these wells.

The Plan points out that flows on the Rio Grande are variable, and that when they are sufficiently low, diversions of native Rio Grand water from the BDD will be curtailed. It states that in the past seven years, flows were low enough, for several days, to trigger some curtailment. It speculates that climate changes may make the Rio Grande more susceptible to droughts in the future, and points out that if there were much lower flows than any seen in recent years, such curtailment could occur for several months at a time.

The Plan concludes that wells are needed to back up variable surface water supplies. It proposes that the total amount that may be diverted in any year from the County's proposed wells be based on a 10-year average of pumping. For example, on the basis of the 200 AF annually of rights the County believes will be available to its water system, it would be allowed to pump 620 AF in each of three years, plus 20 AF in each of 7 years. In any year, pumping would be distributed among the wells in whatever way is considered best in that year.

The Plan is correct in stating that some backup is needed for the water the County expects to get from the BDD. What is missing from the Plan is any realistic discussion of alternatives to drilling new wells in the local aquifer.

Such a discussion should begin with an accurate assessment of the County's need for backup. Short term curtailment of native Rio Grande water from the BDD can be met either by drawing on the 500

acre feet annually already promised by the City water system or by diverting the County's San Juan-Chama water, which is not subject to curtailment, during that period. No new wells are needed for that.

Real long-term disaster (horrible accident, no water at all from the BDD for a long time) will require the use of groundwater. How much? If the County follows the wise policy of considering 10% of its 2200 acre feet of total water supply to be a reserve, and if, in the case of a complete failure of the BDD, it asks its customers to reduce use by 10%, existing agreements with the city will supply all but 432 acre feet annually of the water needed by the County system.

There are several possible alternatives for obtaining 432 acre feet of groundwater in the event of complete failure of the BDD. For example, the County could contract with the City to deliver 432 acre feet a year for the duration of the disaster. There may be other acceptable solutions. The purpose of this letter is not to urge a particular solution, but rather to point out that a more accurate description of the need for backup could lead to a better solution than the Conjunctive Management Plan proposes.

Hearings on the Plan will be scheduled in the near future. They should provide an opportunity to discuss ways to provide a more economical groundwater backup, and better protection for the local aquifer, than drilling new wells for the County water system.

-Neva Van Peski

PLEASE CONSIDER AN OFFICE JOB

Part-time job opening for volunteers in the office of the Santa Fe League of Women Voters. Help needed 1 morning a week or 1 morning a month. Job duties include answering the phone and occasional stuffing envelopes. Duties begin September 1, 2008. Holidays and vacations included. Apply: Becky Frenkel, 984 2520.

SANTA FE COUNTY TRANSPARENCY PROJECT

After our general meeting in March with county officials, Santa Fe County announced a transparency initiative that includes asking the League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County to lead a five-member transparency advisory body; among its duties is conducting transparency audits. This is a great opportunity for our local League to help a local government to provide better access to its records and meetings, and to throw some sunshine on its operations in general. Stan Rosen, our board member who maintains a close liaison with county government, is heading this project.

Stan and Jody met in April with county manager Roman Abeyta to discuss the general goals of the project. A few initial volunteers are meeting in May to firm up the project's goals, identify other organizations to invite to sit on the advisory body, and to identify some possible models or templates for the audit. Jody put a request out online to the LWVUS Leaders' Listserv, and received some interesting responses, from Ohio to San Diego. Many Leagues are very impressed with our project and wish us good luck, and they want us to keep them posted.

We need more volunteers in order to make this project a success. **Even if you can spare only a few hours to devote to it, please do join us. Call Stan Rosen at 473-4454, or Jody at 982-0776, to let us know your availability.** The more people we have, the less any one person will have to do.

A LOOK AHEAD...

Candidate Forums: Please look for our newspaper ads in June for a series of candidate forums we will co-sponsor with the Council on International Relations. Our current plan is to hold two separate forums for the US Senate race, one for each candidate from the major parties (at this time, we know of no independents running). The candidate will give a major address on US foreign policy, then we will take a short break, then we will reconvene for questions from the audience, in the standard

League format. League will provide a moderator and timekeeper, and both League and CIR will provide screeners for the questions.

We will hold one forum for all of the candidates for the 3rd Congressional District seat. Because the House of Representatives plays a smaller role in foreign policy than the Senate, we will ask for only a ten-minute address for the first part of the program, and all candidates will participate in the same event.

Program Planning: Saturday morning, July 12, we will hold our annual calendar planning meeting. The exact time and location will be announced in the July-August VOTER, but please mark your calendars now! As we did last year, we will discuss program-related feedback from members, and allocate hot topics to unit and general meetings throughout the active League year, September 2008 through April 2009. Last year we had a lively discussion that resulted in many interesting meetings and other kinds of events.

FAIR REPRESENTATION STUDY REPORTS AVAILABLE

The LWVNM Fair Representation Study Committee has produced a lot of information regarding redistricting, vote-counting, and other fascinating alternatives to current practices. Study reports include [A Brief History of Redistricting in New Mexico](#) by Lisa Franzen 9/2007); [Alternative Electoral Systems](#) by Katherine Campbell (1/2008); [Snapshot of Three State Leagues Pursuing Redistricting Studies](#) by Judith Binder (12/2007); [Counting Votes: Who Wins](#) by Cheryl Haaker; [Electoral System Criteria](#) by Katherine Campbell; and [New Mexico Redistricting 2001 - What Went Wrong?](#) by Lisa Franzen.

We will be coming to consensus around these issues in the Fall, so be sure to read up ahead of time in order to be able to query the study team and provide informed input to consensus. Download at <http://www.lwvabc.org/fair/index.html>. For a hard copy, call the office, 982-9766.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Welcome to our new members:

Elaine Carson
175 E. Chili Line Rd
Santa Fe 87508
438-3186
bandecharson@yahoo.com

Mary Goodman
PO Box 31636
Santa Fe 87594
474-7996
maryegoodman1@yahoo.com

Jane Robinson
147 Gonzales Rd #9
Santa Fe 87501
992-0028
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Rosemary Romero
1350 San Juan Dr.
Santa Fe, 87505
982-5061
romero.rosemary@gmail.com

Paul White
94 Camino Chupadero
Santa Fe 87506
988-1082
white@grappawireless.com

Condolences to the family and friends of long time League member Doris Braunstein, who recently passed away.

Jane Gaziano, Membership Chair
Jeg7@aol.com

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS – APRIL 9, 2008 DONNA REYNOLDS, SECRETARY

At its regular monthly board meeting held at the home of President Jody Larson on April 9th, the LWV-SFC Board of Directors:

- Finalized all Annual Meeting arrangements noting that the Lunch Speaker will be Denise Lamb presenting “The Making of an Election”;
- Noted that two members can attend the State Council being held on May 17, 2008 in Los Alamos;
- Announced a new project with the County of Santa Fe to conduct transparency audits;
- Reviewed a report on the Civic Engagement Event to assess its success;
- Discussed a collaboration with the Council on International Relations to host U.S. Senate and 3rd Congressional District Forums;
- Announced that New Board Orientation will take place on Saturday, May 31st; and
- Thanked President Larson for a successful year as LWVSFC’s leader and for hosting a delightful end of the year reception for board members!

The next Board Meeting will be at 4:00 p.m. on June 11, 2008, at the LWV-SFC Office. Board meetings are open to all members.