



AAUW Hilltopics April 2012

"Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at LAPS"
Speakers: Dr. Gene Schmidt & Ms. Bernadette Lauritzen
Tuesday, April 17, 7:30 p.m.
First United Methodist Church

Last year AAUW published new research, "Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School" building on a long tradition of studying bullying and sexual harassment in American public schools. The recent findings show that 48% of students surveyed said they experienced some form of sexual harassment during the 2010-11 school year and the majority of these students said it had a negative affect on them. Superintendent Gene Schmidt of the Los Alamos Public Schools will speak to us about the current school district policy on bullying and sexual harassment. Following Dr. Schmidt, Bernadette Lauritzen will speak about a program she teaches in the Los Alamos Middle School called "Change of Heart: Improving School Climate". Please feel free to bring guests with school age children to this very timely discussion.

Branch News

The Spring Membership Tea will be on May 18th from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Hearth Room in the Unitarian Church, 1738 N. Sage St. The speaker, Sharon Snyder, is the author of a new book about the life of Peggy Pond Church entitled At Home on the Slopes of Mountains. We will celebrate Peggy Church's era by dressing in the 40's, 50's style in hat, gloves, pearls if you desire.

We need people to serve on the council next year. Please phone Nina or Natalie to volunteer.

Out'n About

May 23, Allan Houser Sculpture Garden: the sculpture gardens were first created in 1985 following the construction of the Visitor's Center, and have evolved into approximately 10 acres of trails which display 85 outdoor works.

This is a Wednesday and entry fee is \$18; we will meet at 9 a.m. at United Church parking lot and 9:15 at the Y. Please let Denise George know if you plan on attending (672-9688, georgeje@acm.org)

August 29, Bandelier Night Walk, designated leader, Marilyn Thayer.

October 10, Jemez Springs and Jemez State Monument, the leader is Jill Forman.

Book group:

The April book is The Beast in the Garden by Erik Larson. On April 9th at 7:30 p.m., we will meet at Chris Sierk's, 4640 Ridgeway; Mary Jane Giesler will review. On April 10th at 1 p.m., we will meet at Marilyn Doolen's, 713 Meadow; Sue Watts will review. Please let Chris (662-3194, acsierk@att.net) or Marilyn (672-3571, mtdoolen@aol.com) know if you plan on attending.

Non-fiction Book Group:

The group will meet on June 4 at 7:30 p.m. at Marilyn Doolen's, 713 Meadow. The book is My Beautiful Genome by Lone Frank, and the reviewer is not yet determined. Let Marilyn (672-3571, mtdoolen@aol.com) know if you are coming,

Great Decisions

The topics for great decisions are:

- 1 Middle East Realignment
- 2 Promoting Democracy
- 3 Mexico
- 4 Cybersecurity
- 5 Exit from Iraq & Afghanistan
- 6 State of the Oceans
- 7 Indonesia
- 8 Energy geopolitics

The schedule for the morning meetings is:

| Date | Topic | Presenter | Location |
|--------|-------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Apr 9 | 1 | Angela Coop | library |
| Apr 23 | 7 | Ginnie Tan | library |
| May 14 | 6 | Thelma Hahn | Marilyn Doolen's 713 Meadow |

Carroll Thomas is organizing the morning Great Decisions group. Carroll's contact information is 672-1937, ctgb@earthlink.net. All meetings are at 10:00 a.m.

Helena Whyte is organizing the evening great decisions group. Helena's contact information is 672-9153, mozden08@aol.com.

All discussions begin at 7:30 p.m. and end at 9 p.m.

| Date | Topic | Hostess | Leader |
|------------------|-------|---|---------|
| Thurs. Apr 12 | | | |
| Wed. Apr 25 | | | |
| Thurs. May 10 | 4 | Natalie Markin 505 Oppenheimer #419 Los Alamos | Natalie |
| Thurs. May 24 | 5 | Mona's Barranca Mesa | Mona |

State News

The Las Cruces branch is hosting the **AAUW-NM Spring Convention** and LTM on April 27-29; the theme is "100 Years of New Mexico Women." Natalie plans to attend and is willing to carpool; contact her if you're interested in going.

Other News

A public symposium, "From Inside and Outside the Barbed Wire: New Mexico's Multicultural World War II Internment Stories" will be held in Santa Fe on April 21 and 22. For more information see <http://nmcentennial.org/events/from-inside-and-outside-the-barbed-wire/>

Biography of the Month

For 20 years until she retired in 1979, Dr. Nancy Grace Roman was NASA's chief astronomer, and also the first person to hold that title. As part of that job she helped design the Hubble Space Telescope, earning her the unofficial title of "Mother of the Hubble." And now NASA has honored her by creating the *Nancy Grace Roman Technology Fellowships in Astrophysics*.

That puts her in good company. NASA's three other astrophysics fellowships are named for Edwin Hubble, Albert Einstein, and Carl Sagan.

She had the good fortune to be born to parents in 1925 in Nashville who shared their love of science and nature with her. Her father was a geophysicist who encouraged her scientific questions. Her mother, a teacher, introduced her to birds, plants, and constellations. Roman grew up loving the stars. At age four her favorite thing to draw was the moon. At 11, she organized an astronomy club with her friends. In school she read everything she could find about astronomy in the Baltimore library. She studied it at Swarthmore College, then got her PhD in it at the University of Chicago in 1949. She joined NASA in 1959, a few months after its formation, to set up a program of astronomy from space. As part of her job she traveled around the

country trying to learn what astronomers wanted from NASA. She knew they wanted space observations from above the atmosphere, because “Looking through the atmosphere is somewhat like looking through a piece of old, stained glass,” she said. But how did they want to use NASA’s early capabilities? She set up a committee of astronomers, plus NASA engineers, to decide how to get those observations. The Hubble was a result. It was carried into orbit by a space shuttle in 1990 and remains in service.

Dr. Edward Weiler, who was chief scientist of the Hubble Space Telescope from 1979 to 1998, described Roman’s role “. . . history has forgotten a lot in today’s Internet age, but it was Nancy in the old days before the Internet and before Google and email and all that stuff who really helped to sell the Hubble Space Telescope, organize the astronomers, who eventually convinced Congress to fund it.”

Roman has had no shortage of honors over the years. In 1962 *Life* magazine named her as one of the 100 most important young people in America. In 1987 an asteroid, Roman 1987, was named for her.

She is currently writing her autobiography. “I hope it will be an inspiration to young girls to think about a career in science,” she said. Roman added, “I think that the fact that my willingness to buck tradition, especially when people told me science was not a role for women, as they often did when I was young, may have been influenced by the fact I had been brought up to think away from tradition. Unitarianism got me thinking independently and perhaps gave me the courage to fight tradition.”

(extracted from an article by Donald E. Skinner printed in UU World, Spring 2012)

Branch Calendar

| | | |
|-----|----|---|
| Apr | 2 | Book group |
| Apr | 3 | Book Group |
| Apr | 9 | Great Decisions |
| Apr | 12 | Evening Great Decisions |
| Apr | 23 | Great Decisions |
| Apr | 23 | Council meeting, 7:15, Pat Mendius’s home |
| Apr | 25 | Evening great decisions |
| May | 14 | Great Decisions |

Coordinating Council for 2011-2012

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|--|
| Rozelle Wright | Treasurer/Membership | 662-5490 | rozelle@losalamos.com |
| Mary Ann Lindahl | Publicity | 663-0995 | moonbeamx@comcast.net |
| Judy Prono | AAUF Funds | 662-2691 | djprono@msn.com |
| Bev Cooper | Secretary | 672-9696 | mcooper@cybermesa.com |
| Natalie Markin | Facilitator | 662-9399 | natalie@lanb.com |
| Nina Thayer | Public Policy | 662-6835 | gnthayer@cybermesa.com |
| Dorothy Donnelly-Shaner | International Affairs | 672-2224 | fivesigma@comcast.net |
| Maryjane Giesler | University Representative | 662-5574 | mgiesler@unm.edu |
| Non-council positions | | | |
| Jane Sherwood | Hospitality | 662-3194 | jane.sherwood@att.net |
| Denise George | Newsletter | 672-9688 | mozden08@aol.com |
| Marilyn Minshall | Historian | 672-3499 | fsminc@losalamos-nm.com |
| Helena Whyte | Nominating Chair | 672-9153 | mozden08@aol.com |

Do-Nothing Legislature leaves Education Hanging

The end of the 30-day legislative session produced little to cheer about in terms of educational progress for our state. A total of only 77 bills was passed by both houses to be sent to the governor, and who knows how many of those she will, or should, sign? Walter Rubel, a columnist for the L.C. Sun-News, estimates that the cost to NM tax payers for each of those 77 bills was more than \$261,000. Was it worth that money to:

1. NOT schedule a confirmation hearing for the second year in a row of acting Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera, who has already been in that job for more than 14 months? For two consecutive legislative sessions, no confirmation hearing has been scheduled for Skandera.
2. NOT pass a pension solvency bill to ensure that the NM Educational Retirement Board has the funds to pay its current and future retirees? Currently, the ERB has only 63% of the funding needed to meet its obligations. Although a bill passed the House, it died in the Senate. The ERB had proposed raising the minimum retirement age to 55; increasing years of service for retirement eligibility; and reducing future COLA increases to a percentage of national COLA adjustments. These recommendations were rejected by legislators because of objections from educators and retirees. So, no action was taken. Failing to address this "messy" issue will mean eventual decisions that will cause much more pain down the road.
3. NOT pass at least some of the components in bills attempting to end social promotion of public school third graders? HB69, sponsored by Rep. Mary Helen García (D-Doña Ana), was a popular compromise to Governor Martinez's educational plan. It passed the House but never reached the Senate floor. Focused on reading capabilities, the bill would have provided for early reading assessments of kindergartners, the use of reading coaches, and continual teacher-parent dialogue about the child's progress in reading. It also gave the State the right to retain a 3rd. grader if (s)he could not read at grade level, and provided for 6 exceptions for students with learning disabilities or English Language issues. There was even an appeal process for parents to protest retention, provided the child's attendance was 95% or better and (s)he had completed prescribed remediation efforts. A similar social promotion bill (HB53), sponsored by Rick Miera (D-Albuquerque), included intervention in math, as well as reading; and, the question of social promotion vs. retention was left up to the parent. So, there were several pieces of legislation that could have been used to develop a sound compromise on this thorny issue. Instead, nothing was done. Expect this matter to resurface in next year's 60-day session.

While all the above "non-action" was occurring in the Round House, rather ironically, on Feb. 15, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan granted the state of New Mexico a waiver from No Child Left Behind (NCLB), based upon the State's willingness to seek educational reform, as evidenced primarily by the State's new system of grading schools via letter grades A - F [Skandera is largely responsible for this plan]. Federal approval of NM's flexibility plan means the State's schools will not have to meet NCLB's 2014 targets. The state will move to an accountability system that will reward high performing schools and set interventions for low performing schools to follow.

The federal waiver was granted to NM for its willingness to seek reform, not necessarily for specified educational achievements that can currently be documented.

- Mary Berry, Ph.D. AAUW-NM Academic Chair