

## **Highlights from October NW Abq PAG Meeting:**

### **Facilitator: Karl Horak**

**Introductions:** Two new members: Judith Rosenstein & Beth Redstone. Beth is particularly interested in ending Citizens United. Judith Rosenstein reports that she has been registering people at UNM campus; thinks they've registered 200 folks since starting there. She also discussed Voter Registration Agent training (She will provide details on next training dates). She also described her work at last Legislative Session and will be interested in working with our Legislative Team during the next session. Diana Koster will also provide more information regarding organized events being planned for upcoming Legislative Session.

**Spontaneous Group Discussion** re: Stress associated with current political environment, feelings of fatigue, anxiety, and of being overwhelmed by all the important issues that are under assault. Valerie brought up point that Trump is fixated on undoing everything Obama did. There was discussion regarding taking high road in our opinions and viewpoints, especially when communicating with others of different points of view. Dotty and Caro mentioned the benefits of being at our meeting with other like-minded folks where it's safe to vent and exchange thoughts without editing.

**Trish O'Connor (reported on Jeff McConaughy's work today for Tim Keller)** Approximately 150 people at Tim Keller's volunteer training workshop earlier today. Jeff also spent time canvassing today. Early voting 10-25 til 11-10, Mon-Friday. Voting Day 11-14. Keller's team has multi-prong and ambitious goals for its volunteers. More volunteers needed.

**Karl discussed City Council District 5 (Rio Rancho) run off vote,** which could give the Council a 6-3 Democrat majority. Also, referred to Terry Storch's posting on demographics of ages of voters in initial mayoral election - showing increase in votes with age. Young people not voting in large numbers and older folks with highest voting numbers.

**Caro Beaty - Day of Action - Matthew Meadow Garage Sale for Duranes Elementary School teachers** - Made \$1,265.00. Thanked Bob Jones, Jeff McConaughy & Trish O'Connor, as well as Diana Koster and Nelly Blacker-Hanson, for their hard work. Mentioned that several neighbors in MM donated items and assisted with the Garage Sale. Gloria Manzanares also mentioned that Road Runner is providing food packs for students in need, including packets for them to take home for the week-ends.

**Caro Beaty- T-Shirts** - (Noted that several attendees were wearing their t-shirts) More can be ordered. Cost \$18.00 each.

**Karl Horak - Environmental Pod Report** – Deb Martin has been working on bridging our group with 350.org, which is very active locally on issue of fracking near Chaco, focusing on upcoming Rally for Science in Santa Fe, working with UNM and Concerned Scientist groups, and preparing for upcoming legislative session.

**“How To Stay Sane if Trump Is Driving You Insane: Advice From a Therapist” Hand-out and brief summary provided by Caro Beaty** - Article describes our current dark political environment as a “post-positive world.” States that neither optimism (a coping devise) or pessimism serves us in these times. Article focuses on Radical Acceptance, which distinguishes between pain (which cannot be avoided in life) and suffering (which is driven by fighting against pain). Article suggests accepting, but not condoning, what is happening; i.e., “It is what it is.” Need to focus on the work of fighting for human rights and accountability. The article discusses the concept of “Mindfulness.” and Dialectical Thinking.

**Caro Beaty - Mindfulness Training being offered at Albuquerque Insight Meditation Center** for free, on three successive Sundays 10-22, 10-29, and 11-5 from 5:15-6:15 pm.

**Diana Koster - Women’s Reproductive Health Pod Presentation - “Facts About Abortion Restrictions - Parental Notification Mandates & 20 week Abortion Ban (The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act--HR36).”** (Hand-Out Provided)

Diana’s background: Physician, Medical Director of Planned Parenthood for 24 years, abortion provider for 15 years.

Re Parental Notification - It is the law in all but 11 states & DC; not in NM. In her practice, Diana saw young people come to NM from all surrounding and other states to obtain abortions. Important point: Teens will talk with their parents if they can. These mandates do not decrease abortion rates, cause teens to travel to other states for abortions, and often result in later procedures and poorer (or no) follow-up. Good family communication cannot be legislated. Judicial bypass, which would require a pregnant teen to go before the court to obtain permission for an abortion, is not a viable option that teens will subject themselves to. Notes that abortion is a safer procedure than giving birth with 0.05% complications that require hospitalization. Previous famous case in a state requiring parental notification: Becky Bell, went to non-skilled abortionist and died rather than tell her parents she was pregnant as she didn’t want to disappoint them.

All abortion restrictions disproportionately burden economically disadvantaged women. Approx. 1.5 million abortions per year in America. One in three women in America have abortions, yet there is so much shame around abortion. Also, U.S. has a rising rate of maternal mortality; highest rate for a developed country - we are between Afghanistan and Chad. Maybe partially due to poor sex education in our schools, ineffective pre-natal care, and lack of insurance coverage. Also, need for continued improvements in family planning and contraception.

Re 20 week Ban - Bill passed the House, now going to the Senate. (We need to make our voices heard with our Senators.) - Why do women wait 20 weeks? Hard to get off work and not lose job, have to get the money together for the procedure, may have travel expenses if going to another state, not initially aware they are pregnant, might not have amnio test results at 20 weeks. Despite the Bill’s title, there is no good science that shows 20 week fetus feels pain as we know it. The Bill has no exception for the mother

developing serious health issues when a pregnancy needs to be aborted after 20 weeks. Only 1.3% of all abortions in U.S. are post 20 weeks.

Men are trying to legislate women's reproductive issues. Why not **Trust Women** to manage their reproductive health?

**Caro Beaty - Brief Discussion on Gun Violence** - Wants to become more knowledgeable about gun laws. Read NM laws re gun control: No state permit required, no firearm registration, no assault weapon law, no magazine capacity restriction, no owner license require, open carry permitted, vehicle carry permitted. Background check only required on guns sold by federally licensed dealers, leaving private sale & gun show loopholes. Thinks term "gun safety" would be more conducive to discourse rather than "gun control." Better background check legislation introduced in last Session of our legislature, but was tabled. Tim Keller has several gun safety proposals, including background checks on all firearm purchases within city limits and closing gun show loopholes in Abq. Caro plans to do more research on this issue and wonders if any other group members are interested in forming a study group.

**Karl Horak - Keller -v- Lewis Handout** - The handout is a comparison chart of each candidate's position on numerous major issues: Crime, Education, Gun Control, Jobs, Women's Rights, Immigrant Friendly Status, Community, Community Health, Open Space/Recreation, A.R.T. project, Taxes. Caro notes that the only endorsement listed by Lewis is NRA. Also, Lewis had **no stated position** regarding Women's Issues, Community Health, Open Space/Recreation. There are several other issues listed on Keller's web page that were not summarized and are not listed on Lewis' web page.

**Karl Horak - Upcoming Run Off Election** - Volunteer for Tim Keller, Vote early to avoid lines. Our next meeting will be right before the run-off election.

**Karl Horak - Next Meeting - Volunteers to Facilitate Next Meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in November)** - Beth Redstone volunteers to be a facilitator along with Karl and/or Jeff. Immigration Pod to give a presentation at next meeting. There was discussion re changing meeting times during the winter months to earlier in the afternoon. More to follow.

**December Meeting will be a pot-luck!!!**