



# UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

**League of Women Voters of Los Alamos**

**P. O. Box 158, Los Alamos, NM 87544**

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

Volume 71, Number 8  
January 2019

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## Calendar

- January 15 Lunch with a Leader, Mary Feldblum and Tyler Taylor, Mesa Public Library, 11:45 a.m.
- January 22 Roe v. Wade Day celebration, NM Capitol Rotunda, 1 to 2 p.m.
- January 22 Board meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- January 28 Voices of LA, Danny Katzman and John Horak on the chromium plume,  
Unitarian Church, 6:30 p.m.
- February 6 LWVNM Legislative Reception, Rio Chama, 414 Old Santa Fe Trail, SF, 5:30 p.m.
- February 7 LWVNM League Day at the Legislature, State Land Office,  
310 Old Santa Fe Trail, SF, and Roundhouse, 10:15 a.m.
- February 19 Lunch with a Leader, Sue Barns, Mesa Public Library, 11:45 a.m.
- February 20 Program Planning Meeting, 140 Aspen Dr., 7 p.m.

## ***Lunch with a Leader: Mary Feldblum and Tyler Taylor***

This month's Lunch with a Leader will be at 11:45 a.m. on January 15 at **Mesa Public Library**. Mary Feldblum and Dr. Tyler Taylor will be speaking on the Health Security Act that will be presented again to the Legislature this year.

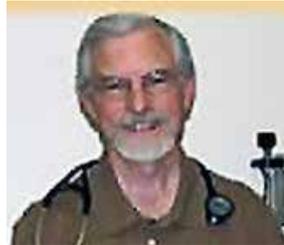
Mary Feldblum, who has a PhD in sociology, is the former director of Hofstra University's Institute of Applied Social Science. She has lived in New Mexico since 1986. Feldblum has over two decades of experience working on a variety of health-related issues of concern to New Mexicans, including patient protection, hospital and health plan sales and



*Eleanor Bravo of Food & Water Watch and Mary Feldblum of the Oil & Gas Accountability Project speak with commissioners about not delaying the SandRidge vote. Photo and caption by Jim Thompson with the [Albuquerque Journal](#)*

conversions and different approaches to providing health care insurance coverage. For ten years she headed the New Mexico Health Care Project for Consumers Union, the publisher of Consumer Reports magazine. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Health Security for New Mexicans Campaign, a broad coalition of over 160 organizations that support the Health Security Act.

Tyler Taylor grew up in Birmingham, Alabama during the civil rights era and learned first-hand about injustice for those who cannot fight for themselves. He attended Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia and then returned to Virginia after seven years of medical training at the University of Alabama to work as a family physician. He worked with two or three other doctors in the only practice in a town of 4,500 people. In 2000 Dr. Taylor moved to Los Alamos to work as a primary care physician. Now retired, he is on the Executive Committee of the Health Security for New Mexicans Campaign.



Tyler Taylor courtesy of [ladailypost.org](http://ladailypost.org)

In February Sue Barns, who serves on the County's Environmental Sustainability Board, and the Zero

Waste Team will be speaking about their activities and what we can do to help achieve the goal of zero waste.

*Karyl Ann Armbruster*

## ***December Lunch with a Leader: Ellen Ben-Naim, Manager of First Born Program***

Program Manager Ellen Ben-Naim discussed the First Born program at Lunch with a Leader in December. Kristine Coblenz, working in association with the Los Alamos Medical Center, initially introduced the program in Los Alamos in 2008, but it was terminated due to lack of funding. Re-started in 2014, First Born Los Alamos is now a stand-alone non-profit. Since then, the program has served 215 families; 70% of the county's eligible families in 2017. Currently 53 families are enrolled. Ben-Naim noted that the organization needs a lawyer for their board.

First Born is a free, voluntary home visiting program open to any family expecting a first child. Families can sign up any time during pregnancy or until the baby is two months old and continue until the baby is

three years old. It is also open to families with foster



*Members and partners of the Zero Waste Team from left to right: Sue Barns, Jane Bias, Angelica Gurule, Jody Benson, Heather Ward, Zoe Hemez, Sandra West, and Dorothy Brown. Photo by Kirsten Laskey with the [Los Alamos Daily Post](http://LosAlamosDailyPost)*

or adopted children.

First Born Los Alamos currently has a staff including four home visitors (two of whom speak Spanish and one who speaks Hindi), one lactation counselor, and one program manager. The home visitors must live in or have strong ties to the community. They carry no more than 20 cases each. Referrals are provided by physicians, the medical center, and word of mouth.

Home visitors, Ben Naim said, “partner with families to promote child development and confident parenting by supporting relationships in the family, with the home visitor, and in the community.” They are not judgmental. They can connect families to resources as needed. Many families in the county are far away from their extended families, she explained.

An important part of the program is screening for developmental progress as well as depression and other concerns. One third of the adult clients suffer from depression, 12% of the families are experiencing substance abuse, and 14% are not native English speakers. The home visitor can refer parents to health care providers or community resources. They are HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) compliant and need a signed release of information to share assessments with others. However, if there is a suspicion of child abuse or neglect, every adult in the state is required to report to Child Protective Services.

First Born Los Alamos has a grant from the Children, Youth and Families Department, which provides 90-95% of their funding. New Mexico is encouraging the development of home visiting programs with an



*Ellen Ben-Naim at Lunch with a Leader. Photo by Becky Shankland*

evidence-based curriculum across the state. There are currently 40 programs in 32 counties.

Home visitors in Los Alamos use an evidence-based curriculum based on Rand Corporation research, which is continually updated. The University of NM also provides consultants. The curriculum is adjusted to the reading level of the parents and includes early literacy and dental education, starting in pregnancy. Free books, toothbrushes and toothpaste are supplied.

The visit may take place in the home or in a park. It is usually weekly after the birth, but may be bi-weekly if both parents work, and generally lasts about 45 minutes. First Born is tailored to fit the family’s needs.

*Barbara Calef*

## **Meeting with Senator Carlos Cisneros**

Nine members of the Los Alamos LWV met on December 4 with one of our state senators, Carlos Cisneros, to discuss the LWVNM priorities for the 2019 legislative session. We were especially interested in hearing his opinions about tax reform since he is Vice-Chair of the Senate Finance Committee.

Cisneros said that he will have a tax bill, as will Senator Sharer, Rep. Harper, and Rep. Jim Trujillo. His bill reduces the gross receipts tax by 1% (\$650 million) to encourage industries to move here. He admitted that there was no guarantee the bill would accomplish that goal, but it is supposed to generate some



*NM State Senator Carlos Cisneros courtesy of [nmlegis.gov](http://nmlegis.gov)*

revenue by 2020. To compensate for the loss of revenue, the GRT would once again be applied to food as well as to hospitals. Proceeds from taxing hospitals would be used to fund Medicaid. The bill also raises the personal income tax rate for high earners, reduces tax breaks for capital gains income, and extends the state gross receipts tax to all internet sales.

The Harper bill contains many of the same measures as Cisneros's, but would also require out of state corporations to pay tax on New Mexico profits. Sharer's bill increases the tax on gasoline to generate funds for highway improvement. Trujillo's bill does not impose the tax on food. Cisneros said that his bill could not include raising taxes on tobacco and alcohol; that would be considered logrolling and would require a separate bill.

Cisneros said that the tax code is huge and complex. He thinks he can reduce loopholes by ensuring that any tax credit is specific. Poorly written statutes have resulted in court challenges to extend deductions beyond the original intent of the legislators. New deductions will have an automatic sunset provision to make sure they are accomplishing their purpose before they are renewed.

He wants to put the bulk of the new revenue in reserves, but there will be \$600 million for capital projects. There will also be funds to raise teachers' salaries, for universal Pre-K, and to meet the demands of the Yazzie ruling that said that NM does not fund education adequately.

Cisneros supports voting rights legislation and passage of enabling bills for the State Ethics Commission. He was unfamiliar with the Iowa redistricting model, which the League supports. He supports reproductive rights and will probably vote to repeal the statutes that criminalize abortion, but was concerned about "basement abortions."

He is carrying the Health Security Act. He said \$5 billion is spent on health care in the state; most of it is paid by Medicaid, but a large percentage is wasted in payments to third party providers and administration. He envisions a health care co-op to replace the Affordable Care Act in New Mexico.

The group subsequently met with Senator Martinez and Representative Chandler, both of whom expressed support for the League's priorities.

*Barbara Calef*

## **Help AAUW Train a Million**

*(Each year the AAUW [American Association of University Women] and the LWV work together on voter education. We are including this article in order to support their effort to improve conditions for working women.)*

AAUW has set a challenging goal: close the gender pay gap by 2030. As one step toward this goal, it is offering a free salary-negotiation course, Work Smart Online. With this online training, it aims to instruct a million women on how to better their financial futures.

The gender pay gap is real: on average, women working full time in the US are paid only 80% of what men are paid. For women of color, the gap is even greater. AAUW continues to advocate legislation at the state and federal levels to outlaw gender pay bias and improve employer practices. Through Work Smart Online (<https://salary.aauw.org/>), it wants to empower women to negotiate their own futures.

The two-hour online training teaches women how to

- find the market value of their skills and experience,
- determine an equitable target salary, and
- develop strategies to ask for—and get—the pay they deserve.

This new e-tool is based on AAUW's Start Smart and Work Smart workshops that have been held at universities and work sites across the country—and have proven successful.

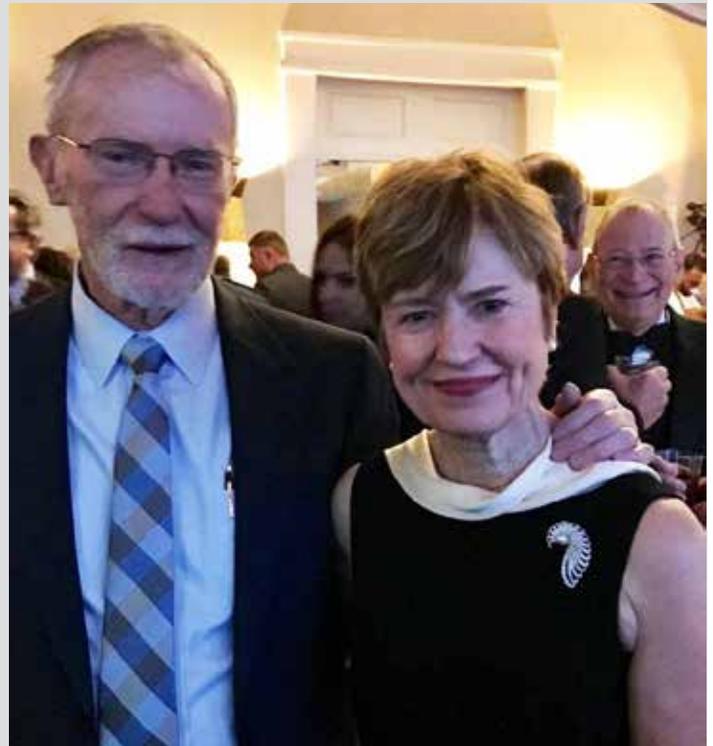
Help spread the word about this free, online training by encouraging family, friends, and colleagues to take it and share it with their networks as well. Working together, we can ensure that women get paid what they deserve.

*Judy Prono*

## **Five LWVLA members at the Inaugural Ball on January 1**



*LWVLA board members Karyl Ann Armbruster (left) and Ellen Mills (right) accompany State Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard. Photo by Pat Davis*



*NM House District 43 Representative Christine Chandler and George Chandler. Photo by Karyl Ann Armbruster*

## **Observer Corps Reports**

### **County Council**

This brief report is based on a detailed summary by Becky Oertel. Please see the Los Alamos County website for the agenda packets and video: <http://losalamos.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. [You can also read Becky's more complete summary of the meeting on the [Voices of Los Alamos Facebook page](#).]

On November 27 the County Council repealed the panhandling ordinance because it conflicted with the First Amendment. The County attorney determined that aggressive behavior by panhandlers is covered by other ordinances. County Manager Harry Burgess reported that the long-planned construction on NM 502 at the east end of town will begin in March.

At their December 4 meeting the County Council heard a lengthy (and very interesting) panel discussion

titled "Promoting a Healthy Community." The presentation and eight attachments are available on the County's website. Speakers included Kristine Coblenz, Sylvan Argo, Police Chief Sgambellone, and Social Services Manager Donna Casados. Councilor Maggiore requested a presentation to the new Council that would include students. The RFP for a new public health nurse was due to be completed by the end of the year with responses due by the end of February and an additional three months for evaluation.

During their December 18 meeting, the last of the year, the County Council authorized the donation of Tract A-8-b at 135 DP Road to Bethel Development for the construction of an affordable housing project for seniors. The plan is for a four-story building on the 2.79-acre site. The donation is conditional to county approval of the project, called "The Bluffs."

*(continued on page 6)*

The Council also considered approving an agreement with Ferguson Inc. for advanced metering equipment and services. Bob Westervelt, speaking for the Department of Public Utilities, said that this smart meter project will increase efficiency and cost benefits. Customers will have real-time information to adjust use. However, Councilor Maggiore expressed concern about the lack of an opt-out policy. Ultimately, Council adopted a motion that postpones the signing of the contract until they have signed an opt-out policy.

*Becky Oertel and Barbara Calef*

## Board of Public Utilities

Members of the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) closed out 2018 with a self-evaluation at the December 19 meeting. The next BPU meeting is scheduled for January 16 when a new chair and vice chair will be elected. Also on the agenda, BPU members will consider policy and procedures for customers to opt out of the advanced metering infrastructure project.

*Julie Williams-Hill*

## League Days at the Legislature: February 6 and 7

Rooms are available at Garrett's Desert Inn for \$79 plus tax (free parking). The Garrett's Desert Inn is located at 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87501. Call (505) 982-1851 and ask for the League of Women Voters block. The rooms will be held only until January 16, 2019.

**Legislative reception: Rio Chama, 414 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, Wednesday, February 6, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.** Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver will speak on voting rights priorities for the session.

**League Day at the Legislature Thursday, February 7, 10:30 a.m. to noon**, State Land Office, Morgan Hall, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail, across from Garrett's Desert Inn.

Morning Schedule:

- Welcome from State Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard
- Enabling legislation for the State Ethics Commission: Former Representative Jim Dines, sponsor of constitutional amendment
- Taxes and Funding for Essential Services: Amber Wallin, Deputy Director, New Mexico Voices for Children

The afternoon can be spent visiting with other league members, attending hearings, and visiting legislators at the Roundhouse.

## LWVLA Board of Directors

Officers:

- Co-presidents: Barbara Calef and Rebecca Shankland
- 1st Vice President: *unfilled*
- 2nd Vice President: Leslie Wallstrom
- Treasurer: Kathleen Taylor
- Secretary: Rosmarie Frederickson

Directors:

- Reservations: Amy Birnbaum
- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Director-at-Large: Ellen Mills
- Director-at-Large: Akkana Peck
- Webmaster and Social Media: Julie Williams-Hill
- Newsletter: Sandra West
- Publicity: Jody Benson
- Voter Services: Lynn Jones

Off-board Directors:

- Arrangements: *unfilled*
- Fundraising: *unfilled*
- Membership: Rebecca Shankland
- Nominating Committee: *unfilled*
- County Council Observers: Lynn Jones and Becky Oertel
- BPU Observer: Julie Williams-Hill

If you would like to join the League, fill out and submit the membership form on page 7.



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 if you wish 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.)

- 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
Contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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 Guide 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 the 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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