



UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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Calendar

- November 6 **Election Day**
- November 14 Action meeting with Dick Mason, 1372 47th St., Los Alamos, 7 p.m.
- November 27 Board meeting, White Rock Library, noon
- December 6 Transfer of federal public lands study consensus meeting, 6 Mariposa Ct.,
White Rock, 6:30 p.m.
- December 11 Lunch with a Leader, Ellen Ben-Naim of First Born, Graves Hall, United Church, 11:45 a.m.

Lunch with a Leader

There will be **no** Lunch with a Leader (LWL) program in November due to the lack of availability of a room and Thanksgiving. We will have LWL in December. It will not be the third Tuesday as usual but on the **second Tuesday, December 11**, when we will hear a presentation about the First Born program from Ellen Ben-Naim. There will be more information in the November *Update*.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Co-President's Message: Health Security Act Comes to the 2019 Legislature

At a meeting of Health Security Act supporters held on October 10, Dr. Tyler Taylor, a local physician,

and Mary Feldblum, Executive Director of Health Security for New Mexicans, outlined the strategy for encouraging the legislature to pass this bill.

First, the bill itself. It proposes to create a Health Security Plan that will cover almost all New Mexicans (federal retirees, active and retired military, and tribes would have the choice to continue with their current plans or switch to the Health Security Plan). All public and private money is pooled into one fund. Medicaid, Medicare, individual premiums (based on income), and employer contributions will all be combined into one pool. The idea is to spread the risk by insuring ALL of the population and reducing the administrative cost of having multiple plans.

The Plan would be run by an independent, non-governmental commission of fifteen members from around the state. Ten commissioners would represent consumer and employer concerns and five would represent provider and health facility interests.

Founded in 1992, the Health Security for New Mexicans Campaign is a statewide, nonpartisan coalition of more than 145 organizations (including the League of Women Voters) and numerous individuals. Its mission: “to establish a publicly accountable system of guaranteed, comprehensive, and affordable health care coverage for all New Mexicans.”

Numerous studies (The Lewin Group, Mathematica Policy Research) have shown that this plan would significantly reduce health care costs while providing better coverage. With one overall plan, people would be free to choose their providers (no more networks). Also, with a single administration, overhead would be lower, drug prices could be negotiated, and providers could focus on health care rather than a tangle of plans, coverage, and options.

Many businesses support the Health Security Plan because they would no longer have to bear the burden of determining what, if any, health care insurance to offer. They would no longer need to consider a potential employee’s health when offering a job.

Second, the process. This proposal has been created, refined, and endorsed by 34 NM counties and municipalities. Mary Feldblum has been the lead lobbyist. Los Alamos may consider support in 2019 and a local group of supporters hope to make that happen; Councilor Pete Sheehey has said he will offer a resolution to that effect.

In Los Alamos, Dr. Tyler Taylor is leading a group of citizens (several are League members) to explain and lobby for the Health Security Act at local events (such as the Health Fair and Voices of Los Alamos) and out of town meetings. Carol Clark will publish an op-ed at the end of October.

Historically, NM is one of 22 states that in the 1990’s proposed single-payer health care legislation. In 2017, the NM House passed the Health Security Act, and there’s a chance that it could pass the Senate this year. Michelle Lujan Grisham supports it. Cities like Roswell and Gallup have endorsed it enthusiastically. This legislation will be pre-filed in December. For information and a look at the bill, visit www.nmhealthsecurity.org.

As League members discussed this plan, they raised numerous questions about how government plans would fit in, how insurance claims and payments would be made, the relationship to the Affordable Care Act, and the governing body’s authority.

The next meeting of the group of Health Security Act supporters (November 15 at the Unitarian Church, 7 p.m.) will feature Christine Chandler as the speaker.

Will this be the year for major health care reform?

Rebecca Shankland

League Scarecrow Urges Citizens to VOTE!

Leslie Wallstrom and Becky Shankland conjured up a scarecrow for the Central Avenue Hallowe’en celebrations. Please go check it out for the exquisite hair style, color coordination, sophisticated make-up, and provocative political buttons—and then go VOTE!



Lady League of Women Voters scarecrow created by Leslie Wallstrom and Becky Shankland greets passersby in downtown Los Alamos.

Meeting with LWVNM Action Chair Dick Mason

(Re-posted from the September *Update*)

Dick Mason, the leader of the state League's lobbying effort, is coming to Los Alamos on November 14 to explain the League's goals for the next legislative session. We will meet at 7 p.m. at Rosmarie Frederickson's house, 1372 47th St. in the Western Area, to hear Dick's presentation, ask questions, and enjoy a glass of wine or beer. These are the priorities chosen by the Action Committee for the 2019 session and approved by the state board:

- Tax reform and funding—tax reform is going to be a major focus of the 2019 session. We believe it is key to creating the funding structure that would enable action on many of our other interests, including education and health care.
- Automatic voter registration/same day voter registration/extend voter registration period.
- Ask the legislature to consider the Iowa redistricting model, which retains some legislative authority.
- Ethics Commission enabling legislation.
- Legislation to enshrine a woman's right to choose. Currently, if Roe v Wade is overturned, current state law criminalizing abortion will be the rule.

Barbara Calef

October Lunch with a Leader: Linda Daly, CEO of the YMCA

Linda Daly is retiring on October 31 from her position as the Chief Executive Officer of the Family YMCA, which she has held for nearly 20 years. At Lunch with a Leader, Daly explained the Y's history, mission, and current functions.

The Young Men's Christian Association or YMCA was started in London in 1844 by George Williams, who organized meetings for young men who had left their communities in rural England to move to the city during the Industrial Revolution. Eventually, Williams

added group fitness to the program, which had begun with Bible study and prayer meetings. The first YMCA in America was opened in 1851 in Boston. Women were not admitted until after World War II.

In 1955 a group of volunteers founded the Family YMCA in Los Alamos. It was the first Y for families. An act of Congress was needed to permit the transfer of a building from the Atomic Energy Commission to the new organization.

The Y's mission is "to focus on youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility." During Daly's time in office the organization's support from annual giving has increased from \$45,000 to \$172,000 to ensure that the Y remains accessible to all. In 2017, the Y served 8,000 individuals, including 3,700 youth and teens, at two membership locations, two teen centers, and five after-school program sites.

The Española Teen Center is in its tenth year; the Teen Center in Los Alamos is in its fourth year. During the summer, boys and girls in the Youth Conservation Corps build and improve trails. Last year, the Y provided 90 youth programs and 40 adult programs, and supported 300 people with financial assistance.

Daly spoke about the Y's policy of diversity and inclusion in response to changing demographics. The 15-member board is constantly looking for unmet needs in the community that the Y might address. Daly stressed that "it is not just a gym." They are providing services in lieu of government, including classes, but must raise sufficient funding to be stable. They apply for grants, receive some support from local and state government, and rely heavily on donations. Their goal is to raise \$167,000 this year.

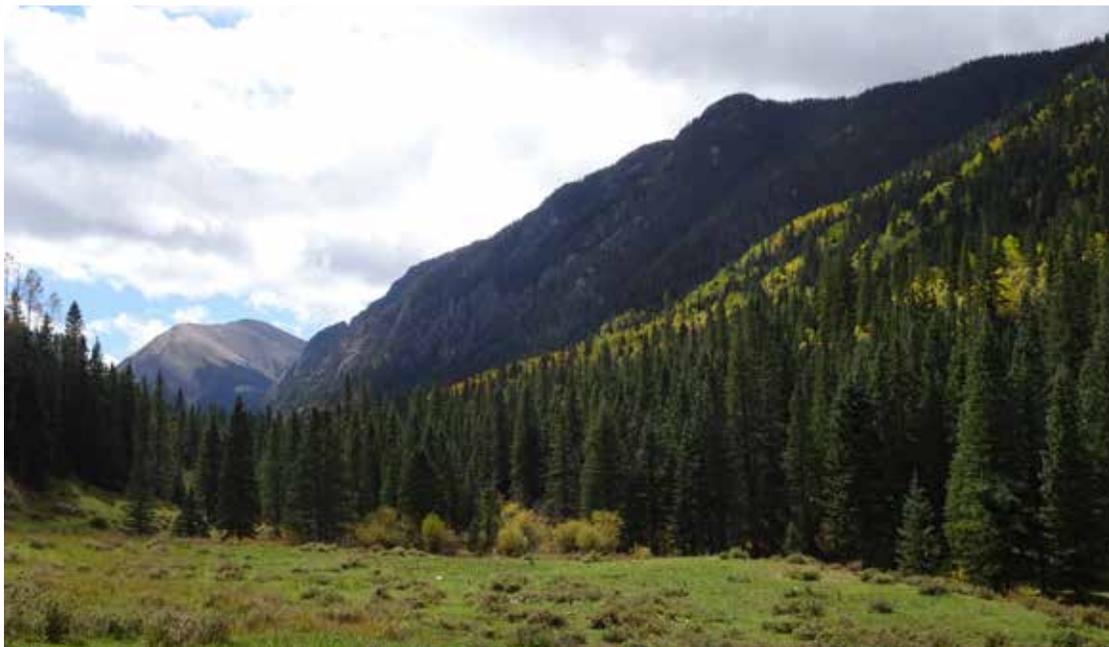
Barbara Calef

Transfer of Federal Public Lands Consensus Meeting

The committee has completed the study, which was begun in the summer of 2017. All Los Alamos League members are invited to attend the consensus meeting, which will be held at Becky Shankland's home

(6 Mariposa Ct., White Rock) on Thursday, December 6, beginning at 6:30 p.m. You can read a summary of the study findings in the Fall *La Palabra*. The consensus questions and pros and cons are there also, and will be re-published in the November *Update*.

Barbara Calef



Autumn near Rio Santa Barbara in the beautiful Carson National Forest.

Observer Corps Reports

County Council

This brief report is based on a detailed summary by Becky Oertel. Please see the Los Alamos County (LAC) website for the agenda packets and video: <http://losalamos.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

At their September 25 meeting, the Council voted to authorize the County to enter into a loan agreement with the New Mexico Environment Department for the construction of a wastewater treatment facility in White Rock. The County's plan is to design the plant in 2019, begin construction the following year, and complete it by 2021. Council also voted 6 to 1 to raise sewer rates to help finance the new plant. Councilor O'Leary opposed that motion because she felt it placed too much of a burden on residents with smaller incomes.

The Council approved a revision of the Cooperative Agreement with the LAC and the National Nuclear Security Act (NNSA) to provide fire department services for LAC and the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). They also changed the order and revised the budget for the development of a new water well in Los Alamos Canyon, action that was required after the driller encountered unexpected basalt layers.

At the October 2 meeting the Council voted in favor of two recommendations from the Art in Public Places Board. They approved the transfer of the sculpture "Spirit Dance" from Ashley Pond Park to the Columbarium at Guaje Pines Cemetery. They also voted to commission Artists Markow and Norris to create and install woven glass sculptures. A third motion failed to pass. It was to spend up to \$195,000 on a sculpture that would be designed by Evelyn Rosenberg and installed in the underpass planned to go under state road 502.

In response to a query from Councilor Pongratz about the Triad Gross Receipts Tax (GRT), County Manager Harry Burgess said that Triad had announced in public meetings and in the news that they would be paying GRT. However, Triad is still pursuing non-profit status. Apparently, they are required to do so as part of their contract with NNSA, which stipulates that they seek means to save money in any way possible. The State of New Mexico determined that Triad would be taxable, but if the IRS grants the application for 501(c)(3) status, the county may have to reimburse any GRT we have received.

At the meeting Burgess also reported that the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) work on the library will be delayed because Hurricane Florence damaged the facility in North Carolina where the fabricators are located.

At their October 16 workshop, the County Council voted to suspend their rules in order to vote on a way forward for the proposed bicycle flow trail. The consultant hired to rank eight possible locations for the bicycle trail was unable to make any recommendation. The best option, he said, was Los Alamos Canyon, but it is owned by LANL, and is not even accessible to the public. The Council expressed interest in a trail from the head of DP Canyon (which has been transferred to the county) and leading into Los Alamos Canyon. They directed staff to talk with Department of Energy (DOE) officials about accommodating the flow trail. The vote did not limit consideration to the option in DP and Los Alamos Canyons. An Acid Canyon/Walnut Canyon proposal was added in case the DOE was unwilling to talk.

Becky Oertel and Barbara Calef

Board of Public Utilities

The Board of Public Utilities (BPU) met on Wednesday October 17, 2018. Utilities Manager Tim Glasco briefed the BPU on the status of the environmental assessment that is being conducted for the Camp May potable water line project. A field survey of the Jemez Mountain Salamander is to be conducted in the project footprint sometime between May and July. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department will provide a biological opinion to the Forest Service. The BPU was also notified that the drilling of the new drinking water well in Los Alamos Canyon has reached its total depth at 2,500 feet. Completion of the well is anticipated to occur in December.

In light of the presentation made to the County Council by Doug Hintze of the DOE's Environmental Management Los Alamos Field Office on October 16, the BPU asked Mr. Glasco to reach out to Mr. Hintze about the RDX (Research Department Explosive or Trimethylenetrinitramine) contamination at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Mr. Glasco will return to the BPU in November with a report.

Deputy Utilities Manager Jack Richardson gave the quarterly presentation on the condition of the natural gas system.

Lastly, because the Thanksgiving holiday falls the day after the regularly scheduled BPU meeting this year, members decided to reschedule the meeting for Tuesday, November 20.

Julie Williams-Hill

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 6.



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.

<i>In This Issue</i>	<i>Page</i>
Calendar	1
Lunch with a Leader: Ellen Ben-Naim	1
Co-President's Message:	
Health Security Act Comes to the 2019 Legislature	1
League Scarecrow Urges Citizens to VOTE!	2
Meeting with LWVNM Action Chair Dick Mason	3
October Lunch with a Leader:	
Linda Daly, CEO of the YMCA	3
Transfer of Federal Public Lands Consensus Meeting	3
Observer Corps Reports	
County Council	4
Board of Public Utilities	5
LWVLA Board of Directors	5
Membership Form	6