



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

League of Women Voters
of La Plata County

VOTER

Volume 9, Issue 8 Sixty-four Years Serving La Plata County
94 members

April, 2010

www.lwv.org

www.lwvlaplata.org

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Mark your calendars!



Upcoming Meetings

Bayfield Town Board of Trustees Candidate Forum

Thursday, April 1, 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Bayfield Town Hall

Seven candidates for four seats (April 6 Election)

Health Care Meeting

Wednesday, April 28, 12 – 2 pm, brown bag lunch

Bowman Hall, Unitarian Fellowship, 419 San Juan Drive

Julie Thompson, consultant to local Health Services Steering

Committee, will discuss her recommendations

for improving health care locally. (See article on page 2)

Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 15, 9-12 am

Potluck Brunch, Ann Flatten's home

Speaker: Kellie Hotter, County Commissioner and LWV member

Agenda, proposed budget, slate of officers, proposed program

to be mailed on or before April 15

For more information on our committees, meetings, Colorado's fiscal crisis, the LWVLP calendar and easy links to pertinent articles, check out our website at www.lwvlaplata.org.



La Plata County Commissioners declared Tuesday, March 16, 2010, "Making Democracy Work Day" in honor of the League's 90th Anniversary. Board chair Wally White presented the proclamation to six Leaguers present. From left, Marilyn Sandstrom, Sally Bellerue, Grace Deltscheff, Marilyn Brown, White, Stephanie Huss and Ellen Park. The proclamation may be read at <http://www.lwvlaplata.org/about.html#Recognition>

President's Message

One of the wonderful things about our State League is their annual Leadership Retreat in Frisco. It has become a model for leagues throughout the country. The Retreat is a great place to learn about league, board management, voter service and when advocacy is appropriate. The LWVCO Education Fund sponsors most of the cost and our league covers the rest. The 19th Annual Leadership Retreat will be held June 25-26th. Let me know if you are interested in attending.

Mark your calendars for our annual meeting Saturday, May 15 at the home of Ann Flatten. Feel free to contact me if you have questions, suggestions or want to get involved.

-Stephanie Huss

Census 2010 CCC Needs Your Help!

Our LWV Census 2010 committee has volunteered to assist the La Plata County Complete Count Committee staff a booth near the Durango Railroad Station during the Durango Bluegrass Meltdown April 16-18 as part of the Census 2010 March to the Mailbox effort. We will welcome any of you who have an extra couple of hours. Prior knowledge is not needed; we will provide information and instructions. Call or email Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 or marilbrown@aol.com.

If you would like to follow La Plata County census form return rates and compare us to other counties, check out this website
<http://2010.census.gov/2010census/take10map/>.

Nadine Ancel was interviewed by Victor Locke for *Durango Soundbytes* on CitySpan10. If you don't catch it on Channel 15, check it out on the City's website, <http://www.durangogov.org/cityspan10/streaming/index.cfm?eventtype=Durango%20Sound%20Bytes>

Our LWV committee has moved its focus up to Fort Lewis College. We have delivered bags and informational materials to El Centro and to the Native American Center at the college. We will deliver other materials to the college this week as soon as our contacts let us know what they can use. They have been busy picking a new president!

Incidentally, if you see one of our fabric grocery bags over in Archuleta County, it's because San Juan Basin Health asked if they could distribute some of the materials we gave them over there. -Marilyn Brown

Recommendations of Local Health Care Study

One year ago, Julie Thompson was hired by the local Health Services Steering Committee (HSSC) on an 18-month Colorado Health Foundation grant to review efforts to date to improve health care outcomes locally as well as similar efforts being made elsewhere, and to come up with recommendations for this community.

Her report is now complete and she will present it to our membership on **Wednesday, April 28th**, at Bowman Hall, Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship, 419 San Juan Drive (just past Needham School). The meeting is from noon to 2 pm so bring a brown bag lunch and prepare to listen closely. Julie has developed eight recommendations, some of which are interrelated. Now that we have a start on national health care reform, it will be good to see how we can maximize these effects locally. -Jill Patton

[Ed. Note: Julie is now serving as interim director of San Juan Basin Health Department.]

National Health Care Reform Finally Happens!

Well, at least it is a very good start. And despite the attacks, we now have something to work with that, I believe, won't go away. This is truly a historic event.

Some provisions of the bill, HR 4872, will happen immediately, some will be phased in over a number of years. Despite what you may have heard, Medicare *benefits* will not be cut. The "doughnut hole" of Medicare Part D will begin to be closed. Long-term care will be more easily available. Small business owners will get tax breaks. Individuals will be able to purchase insurance from an "exchange" which will give them access to a much wider range of options than is currently available to any one person. There is so much that is an improvement over what we have had to deal with for so many years.

The Kaiser Foundation has developed a very good timeline for what is in the bill and when it will be implemented, and there is a good 9-page overview of the bill itself. For both of these, go to our website www.lwvlaplata.org and look under "What's New".

Additionally, the LWVUS Health Care Task Force has issued another 'white paper' called *Health Care Information Technology: A Key to Quality and Cost Issues*. Find it on our website at <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=15150>

-Jill Patton

Mail Ballot Primary Elections

On March 16, the County Board of Commissioners authorized the County Clerk to conduct primary elections by mail. Testimony by County Clerk Linda Daley provided interesting facts and justification for conducting La Plata County primaries by mail starting this summer.

Certainly a major reason is to save time and money. Instead of twenty polling locations to be supplied and manned, the clerk's office would be the only drop site, with all other ballots coming in by mail. Only two or three voting machines would be needed instead of 44. Fewer election judges (10-12) would be required, instead of 300, and those judges would be working under the direct supervision of the elections staff of the clerk's office who can address questions on the spot.

Another source of savings is the reduction in ballot styles (types) needed for a mail-in election as opposed to a polling place election. The law requires different ballots to be printed for each precinct, for each party and for each method of voting (mail ballot, early voting, election day voting and provisional) resulting in 240 different ballot types, whereas a primary election conducted entirely by mail requires only two ballot types, one for each party. This quantity of similar ballots (mailed to active and inactive-failed-to-vote affiliated voters) lends itself to use of bulk mailing options, not practical for mailings related to polling place elections.

Additionally, new rules this year allow mail ballots to be returned to any polling place on Election Day, as opposed to the clerk's office only. This will require additional judges in polling place elections.

Colorado counties have had the option of conducting odd numbered year elections by mail since 1992. La Plata County has conducted 10 such elections successfully. In 2007 the law was changed to allow voters to vote by mail permanently. Voters here seem to be ready to expand mail ballot voting. In the 2008 election almost twice as many voters voted by mail as in person on election day:

Mail ballot	14,246
Early voting	5,711
Provisional	476
Polling place	7,684

Clerk Daley emphasized that fraud may be a concern to the public but in many ways a mail ballot election is more secure and less error-prone than a polling place election due to sorting of ballots prior to mailing to ensure the voter receives the correct ballot, fewer voting machines to program and keep secure, centralized counting under the direction of on-site election staff, among other things. Poll watchers will be welcome to watch the process as usual.

Stephanie Huss, our president, testified that while we have no position specific to the mail ballot primary, our extensive review last year of election processes, including mail ballot processes, indicated that the public can expect the mail ballot primary to go just as well. An election judge also testified in support of mail ballot primary, and no one testified against it. However, our report did present two recommendations to improve the tabulating of mail-in ballots: the first is to apply the same process for recruiting mail-in judges as is used for polling place judges; currently, there is little transparency in the way in which judges are selected for mail-in processing. The second is to inform political parties and the public about the need for watchers and observers during the verification of mail-in ballot. The purpose of poll watchers (partisan or non-partisan) is to apply oversight to the way in which ballots are counted, and while the process allows for poll watchers, information is lacking as to how to participate, and hence they are rarely in attendance during mail-in ballot tabulating. For the full text of our report click on http://www.lwvlaplata.org/Studies_Archive.html#Mail_in_09 Clerk Daley's full testimony is on our website www.laplata.org under What's New-Voter Services.

-Marilyn Brown and Ellen Park

Immigration Reform

Let's hope immigration reform rises to the top of President Obama's list now that health care reform has been passed. Take this opportunity to review the national immigration position we worked so hard on back in 2008: <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=14211>. And look over the University of Denver's 2009 report *Architecture for Immigration Reform: Fitting the Pieces of Public Policy* <http://www.du.edu/issues/>. Richard Ballantine, publisher of The Durango Herald, was one of 20 panel members. The panel's recommendations are on pages 45-46.

Then to get a picture of how things really are, in Denver at least, read Helen Thorpe's new book *Just Like Us*, the story of four very bright Hispanic immigrant girls, two of whom are legal residents, two undocumented, and their trials and tribulations through advanced placement classes in high school and then college. You'd be surprised at the problems undocumented students have; one student could have received a full scholarship to Whittier College in California but she would have had to travel by ground transportation to the interview and back and forth if she were accepted because she did not have paperwork needed to board a commercial plane. Journalist Thorpe is Mayor Hickenlooper's wife and in that capacity was able to include in the book the girls' stories as well as a unique perspective on legislative and political thinking during the period.

-Marilyn Brown



George Whitt (incumbent mayor), Ena Millich (mayoral challenger), Brad Egger (Trustee candidate), Ray Larsen (incumbent Trustee), Tony (Mark) Blevins and Tom Atencio (both Trustee candidates). Incumbent Trustee Lawrence Bartley was unable to attend. Carol Blatnick, moderator, is at left.

Ignacio Town Board Candidate Forum

Our League held a Town of Ignacio mayoral and trustee candidate forum for Ignacio voters on Tuesday March 23 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm in the Ignacio Community Library. The moderator, LWV member Carol Blatnick, opened the forum by welcoming the participants and the audience of about twenty and set the ground rules for the discussions, whereupon the participants gave a short background of their experiences, what they believed were their qualifications for the office and what they hoped to accomplish. These opening statements were followed by a Q&A session with eight written questions provided by the audience with each participant giving in turn their answers.

On some of the questions everybody agreed, such as no medical marijuana dispensaries in town and maintaining a good working relationship with the Southern Ute Tribe. Most agreed that the biker rally is good for the town's business and that it is advantageous being a member of various government coalitions.

Some differences existed as to property rights and some of the other questions. When asked what they see as the future of Ignacio, the unanimous answer was: the town to stay a nice, small community, with good schools and a good place to raise children. Carol ended the forum by asking the participants why the voters should vote for them.

Thanks to Moderator Blatnick, Timer Nadine Ancel, and the preparations by Marilyn Sandstrom, Stephanie Huss, and Jill Patton, the event was a success. Thanks also to Anne Kernan, Ignacio Library Board, for the room arrangements.

-Grace Deltscheff

LWVCO Sustainability Principle

LWV LPC reached concurrence on the LWVCO Sustainability Principles Statement. A common theme throughout the presentation was that sustainability allows us to meet the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Before the discussion, we reviewed what a League principle is and how it is used. The 25 League members in attendance heard how sustainability fits into local, state, and national positions and how a principle statement would require us to look at positions and advocacy decisions in a different light.

We reviewed the position areas in which sustainability is inherent – government, natural resources, social policy and international relations. We also reviewed the LWV of California, LWV of Estes Park and Jeffco LWV studies that have been done on sustainability resulting in an action policy and positions.

Concerns and questions that were expressed during the discussion were primarily about the process for implementation and the impact it would have on decision-making. It was asked if principle statements are guidelines or policy mandates. Discussion points were forwarded to the LWVCO Sustainability Study Committee for response. Members agreed that Sustainability is an important enough issue to move ahead with concurrence but suggested word-smithing of the final Sustainability Principles Statement to be listed in the Program for Study and Action.

-Deanna Collins

County Comprehensive Plan

If you weren't able to attend any of the March strategy planning sessions, take the time to fill out the Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles, Vision, Goals and Strategies survey before April 30. Go to www.laplatacountyplan.com and click on the first item on the right under Latest News. Be prepared to spend 45 minutes to an hour to give it your best. If you do it online, you can just click **Submit** at the top; if you download it to complete at your leisure, email it back to project leader Jason Meininger MeiningerJL@co.laplata.co.us. Thanks to Sally Bellerue for representing our League through this process.

-Marilyn Brown



Barbara Cristol (Our 60-year LWV member!)

When I joined LWV in 1950, my mother was pleased, as she had fostered civic awareness from my early childhood. Her efforts had included helping establish LWV in Connecticut in early 1930s. Upon moving to Boulder I found LWV a great way to make friends, the membership being primarily wives from academia. Initially, within weeks, I was up to my neck in local water issues requiring a quick study and resulting in attending City Council and Planning Board meetings.

The famous Blue Line brought me in to active politicking for its proximity to my house (40 yds) and the urgency of controlling proposed development. This line, adopted in 1959, was an elevation of 5750 ft., above which the city would not supply water. This land became Open Space and is part of the backdrop to the town. Open Space acquisition became a ballot issue and required LWV's cooperation with PLAN BOULDER and many other groups. LWV was respected so as a member I frequently was asked to supply background information and history of issues.

This experience stood me in good stead as I became a registered lobbyist for LWV in K-12 at the Capitol. La Raza was active; ESL was new; and there was much to learn, and a small bit I could say. Serving as the LWV lobbyist gave me a broader appreciation of problems in school districts statewide. LWV's positions were not helpful because the LWV had no position that could be used to promote equity in school funding among school districts. During those 15 years as LWV lobbyist I tried to find ways to be effective at the Capitol and Dept of Education always supplied me with School Finance figures I sought. I worked with LWVs in other states, on committees at state level. It became an obsession. Staying in the gallery for a midnight vote on the Long Bill became a tradition. I also served on LWVCO Board for a short time.

Lots of meetings, many great friendships and much learned sums up my sixty years in LWV.




Marilyn R. Holland – New Leaguer

I was born in Port Arthur, Texas on October 20, 1935. Upon graduating from high school, I attended The University of Texas. After moving to Houston, I worked for Exxon Corporation as Secretary to the Chief Petroleum Engineer and in 1972, I married Warren E. Holland.

I left Exxon in 1980 and traded commodities for 3 years. Later, I worked as a Docent for the Houston Zoo. My husband retired in 1986 from Exxon and in 1987, we moved to Durango. I joined the Durango Arts Center shortly after moving, served as President for 1 year, and was on the Board for 4 years. I was one of the founding members of the Durango Friends of the Arts. I also served for 2 years on the Board of the Durango Choral Society. I regularly participate in various activities at the First United Methodist Church. I am also an Amateur Radio operator and belong to the Durango Amateur Radio Club. Currently, I trade stocks during the week, and spend as much time as possible outdoors hiking or skiing. We both love animals and enjoy taking our pet cat with us on our travels. I wanted to join the League of Women Voters to broaden my knowledge about local and national political issues.

[Ed. Note: Marilyn and Warren are mainstays of the Senior Fitness class at Durango Sports Club, where she is shown above.]

***Have you mailed your census form in yet?
If you haven't received one, go to a
Question Assistance Center and pick one
up.***

<h2>Calendar</h2>			LWV La Plata County www.lwvlaplata.org 296 Highland Hill Drive Durango, CO 81301												
April Thu 1 13 and 15* 16-18 27 and 29* Wed 28	Bayfield Town Board Candidate Forum, 5:30-7:30 pm, Bayfield Town Hall <i>Persian Gulf</i> , Great Decisions March to Mailbox Census Booth, Blue- grass Meltdown, DGO RR Station <i>Peacebuilding/Conflict Resolution</i> , GD Local Health Care Proposals, 12-2 pm, Unitarian Fellowship, 419 San Juan Dr	<div style="text-align: center;"><u>Board of Directors</u></div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> President Stephanie Huss, 259-7263 stephanie@frontier.net </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Vice President Trish Pegram, 382-8248 trishpegam@bresnan.net </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Secretary Grace Deltscheff, 259-3040 holgnd@frontier.net </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Treasurer Nadine Ancel, 259-3675 ancelnm@yahoo.com </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Health Care Jill Patton, 749-0311 jgpatton@frontier.net </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Membership Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 mjschili@bresnan.net </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Env, Energy, Sustainability Deanna Collins, 259-7845 dcdurango@msn.com </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Legislative Action** Ellen Park, 247-8116 gellenpark@aol.com </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Great Decisions** Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 patchwork@gobrainstorm.net </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Website** Ross Park, 247-8116 eandrpark@aol.com </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Ex Officio** Sally Bellerue, 385-0848 bellerue@frontier.net </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Newsletter Editor** Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 marilbrown@aol.com </td> </tr> </table>		President Stephanie Huss, 259-7263 stephanie@frontier.net	Vice President Trish Pegram, 382-8248 trishpegam@bresnan.net	Secretary Grace Deltscheff, 259-3040 holgnd@frontier.net	Treasurer Nadine Ancel, 259-3675 ancelnm@yahoo.com	Health Care Jill Patton, 749-0311 jgpatton@frontier.net	Membership Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 mjschili@bresnan.net	Env, Energy, Sustainability Deanna Collins, 259-7845 dcdurango@msn.com	Legislative Action** Ellen Park, 247-8116 gellenpark@aol.com	Great Decisions** Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 patchwork@gobrainstorm.net	Website** Ross Park, 247-8116 eandrpark@aol.com	Ex Officio** Sally Bellerue, 385-0848 bellerue@frontier.net	Newsletter Editor** Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 marilbrown@aol.com
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May Sat 1 Thu 6 Sat 8 Sat 15 Fri-Sat 21-22	Celebrate CO's Merit-based Judicial System Board Meeting, 12-2 pm, Deanna Collins' home LPEA Annual Meeting/Election, Fort Lewis College LWVLP Potluck Brunch, Annual Mtg., 9-12 noon, Ann Flatten's home LWVCO Council, 12:15 Friday-12:15 Sat, Lake Shore Lodge, Estes Park														
June 11-15 25-26	LWVUS Convention, Atlanta Leadership Retreat, Best Western Hotel, Frisco														
*All Great Decisions sessions are held in Program Room, Durango Library, brown bag lunch Tuesdays 11:45-1:45 Thursdays 12:30-2:30		**Off-board													
<p>League Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.</p> <p>Join the League! Anyone of voting age may join the League of Women Voters. Others may be associate members. Discounted household memberships are available. Call Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596, for more information.</p>															