



League of Women Voters
Of La Plata County

VOTER

Volume 7, Issue 5

Sixty-two Years Serving La Plata County
82 members

January, 2008

www.lwv.org

www.lwvlaplata.org

www.lwvcolorado.org

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Inserts:

Membership roster to those without email addresses (Roster is being emailed to all members with email addresses.)

Immigration Study Worksheet for everyone



Mark your calendars!

January Meetings

Happy New Year!

LWVCO Legislative Conference

Monday, January 7

Old Supreme Court Chambers, State Capitol, Denver

Call or email the LWVCO state office:

303-863-0437 or info@lwvcolorado.org

Immigration Study Consensus

Wednesday, January 16, 10-12 a.m. and

Wednesday, January 23, 10-11:30 a.m.

**Christ the King Lutheran Church,
495 Florida Road**

See article on page 3 and worksheet insert to prepare for consensus questions, half of which will be discussed on the 16th and the remainder on the 23rd. Attendance at both sessions is encouraged but not required.

Celebrate Your Heritage!

Potluck lunch following second consensus session: 11:30 – 1 p.m.
Bring a dish to pass representing your heritage. Traditional dress optional!

2008 Great Decisions begins January 22 and 24

See calendar for details and contact Pat Chatfield at 247-1692 if you haven't already ordered your briefing book!



President's Message

First, I want to wish everyone a healthy and happy new year. We are pleased to welcome to the La Plata League 17 new members who joined in 2007. We are also fortunate to have 2 lifetime members, Morley Ballantine and Barbara Cristol, each of whom has been a League member for over 50 years.

Voter Service activities will be the focus of 2008, but we also will be planning other events on topics important to our membership. Our web site www.lwvlaplata.org and monthly newsletters will be the sources of information as these plans unfold. The culmination of our part of the nation-wide Immigration Study will occur in January with two consensus meetings. This is the first major grassroots study conducted by the League since 1994 and the topic could not be timelier. Once the results of the consensus of each local league have been rolled up into a national position and approved by our national board, the position will be presented at the National Convention to be held in Portland, Oregon June 13-17. From this, we will be able to advocate as a voice for immigration policy at all levels of government.

Although many of us are already suffering from campaign fatigue it is time to take a deep breath and get ready to participate in American democracy: the Colorado caucuses are on February 5, and locations for your precinct will be posted on the web site as soon as they are available. If you have not previously joined a caucus, this is an opportunity to have a say in your party's choice of nominee; unless you have been visiting Mars, you cannot have escaped the fact that polls have been swinging widely and inevitability seems to have gone with the wind for both the Democrats and the Republicans. In Colorado you must be affiliated with a party to participate in the caucus, and the deadline for affiliation has passed.

Check out the Elections page on our web site for information about Colorado voting (see Marilyn Sandstrom's article opposite).

Controversy has started up again regarding electronic voting with the decertification of several machines by the Colorado Secretary of State. Many county clerks are now urging an all mail-in election, which of course has its own disadvantages. We plan to follow this closely and present a follow-up presentation in April on the status of electronic machines. Please contact Marilyn Sandstrom, our Voter Services Chair, at mjschili@bresnan.net if you would like to help with candidate forums and other election-related activities.

Our local goals for the next few months are to continue the League's core mission of non-partisan voter education, to organize informational meetings that are relevant to our membership, and to make our voice heard in the community. Thank you for your support and for being part of this important organization.

-Ellen Park

Election Information on our Website

With implementation of the upgraded website, www.lwvlaplata.org, new information has been added over the past few weeks concerning elections in La Plata County. The site contains general information on Federal, State, and County officers who will be on the ballot for La Plata County voters, contingent upon the election cycle. There is information on which officers will be on the ballot in 2008, as well as important dates in the 2008 election cycle. Our webmaster, Ross Park, has also established links to maps of varying districts and ways to contact incumbents. As time allows, special districts in La Plata County will be added, including city/town councils and school districts.

In working with the County Clerk, Linda Daley, and her staff we have been able to provide this information and the Clerk's office has stated they will be referring voters to our website. Please check it out from time-to-time and pass on its address to those interested. Also, if you have any suggestions or comments on this information, please let Marilyn Sandstrom, our Voter Service director, know (764-4596 or mjschili@bresnan.net).

Immigration Study Consensus

We encourage as many of you as possible to attend our two consensus sessions January 16th (from 10-12) and 23rd (from 10-11:30) at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 495 Florida Road, across from the skating rink. We want a good discussion of all questions, with as many views from our members as possible. If you cannot attend both sessions, don't worry, come to the one that you can make and at least be a part of the discussion of the questions taken up that day. We are hoping for a representative sampling of views of all our members, so that our consensus truly represents statements that our members are comfortable with.

The second session will be followed by a potluck luncheon of dishes you bring, celebrating your heritage from 11:30 to 1. If you can come in traditional costume, we would love it.

In preparation for our consensus, please review, as much as you can, the resources on our local website www.lwvlaplata.org and on the website www.lwv.org. Read the consensus questions with background provided http://www.lwvlaplata.org/current_studies.html click on the link 'consensus questions (full)' in the second item under LWVUS References. Then fill out the worksheet insert and bring it to the sessions. WE WILL NOT BE VOTING; however, recording your initial thoughts regarding the questions, will jump-start our discussion. Remember: consensus is not a majority vote, consensus is the collective opinion of the group, a statement that everyone is comfortable with. The strength of our consensus will depend on how solidly it represents the views of our membership. If we do not come to consensus after open-minded discussion, that is okay; we are not forced to reach consensus on every question. Our results will be sent directly to national to be blended with the results from LWVs across the nation and formulated into a position statement, which represents the consensus of our national membership.

At the consensus sessions we will adhere to articulated ground rules, starting with the following and reviewed and possibly added to at the beginning of each session:

- Keep an open mind
- Listen thoughtfully
- Encourage everyone to voice his/her thoughts
- Respect all views
- Differ with dignity, no personal attacks or emotion-charged remarks
- Do not interrupt
- Speak in turn, don't speak a second time until everyone who wants to speak has spoken
- Keep comments short
- Stay focused, no digressions
- No sidebar conversations

The immigration study is the first national study we've had since 1994. It's important to come to these consensus sessions if for no other reason than to experience the LWV consensus process!
-Marilyn Brown

New Board Members

The Board welcomes Marilyn Sandstrom, Voter Service, and Ross Park, Publicity/Public Relations and Webmaster, and has accepted with regret the resignation of Doreen Hunter, Legislative Issues Director, who has decided to take a sabbatical from the board. We are most grateful to Doreen for her time and effort expended on the Legislative Issues portfolio.

Monthly board meetings will be held on the second Thursday morning from 9:30 to 12:30 in the classroom of the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Durango, 419 San Juan Drive, diagonally across from Needham School on the corner of Columbine Street. All members are invited to attend board meetings.

National Program Planning

It's time for our biennial program planning effort. Boring! At least that's what I used to think, until I went to the LWV National Convention in 2006 and learned how important this process is. So, for those of you who thought as I did, here is what happens.

Leagues around the country consider and review our current positions. Each League then reaches consensus as to whether, in the opinions of their members, any of these positions need updating (requiring further study) and/or whether a completely new study is warranted. These needs are weighed against feasibility, timeliness, etc. Each league then sends the results on to the National League.

And here is where it gets interesting. At the 2006 Convention, members from many Leagues (including myself, with bells on!) wanted the Convention to make Health Care a top priority and to recommend a study to update the current position so it could be used for advocacy. HOWEVER, only 7 Leagues from around the country had recommended Health Care as a top priority on their Program Planning forms. I discovered that even the Larimer County League, which has been extremely active in promoting health care reform, had not even sent in a program planning form. SO, even though there was a great deal of activity at the Convention promoting Health Care for further study and advocacy, the Immigration Study was adopted *because more Leagues had included it on their forms*. (Not that the Immigration Study wasn't worthwhile and very timely.)

So, if you want to see the League move in a particular direction, you should participate in this process as much as possible. This year, since we understand that not everyone can come to meetings, and now that we have a marvelous new website (kudos to Ross Park), we plan to use the site to allow all of you to give us your thoughts. In January, we will include on our site www.lwvlaplata.org links to all relevant program planning material for your quick access and reference. LWV national positions

can be found by clicking on http://www.lwvlaplata.org/Action_and_Advocacy.html#s04. We plan to include a form for you to optionally fill out with your particular preferences, and these forms will be used as input to our program planning meeting on February 14. At this meeting we will reach a consensus to be sent to the National League, *and included in recommendations to the 2008 convention*.

-Jill Patton

FutureGen: Clean Coal Technology Project

On December 18th, Mattoon, IL won the four-way contest for location of the \$1.8 billion FutureGen power plant. To be completed in 2012, FutureGen is a cutting-edge initiative to test whether coal can be used to make electricity with little pollution, burying greenhouse gases deep in the earth. The project, designed to supply electricity to 150,000 homes, is a partnership of coal and utility companies and the U.S. Dept. of Energy, which is picking up most of the development costs. China, India, South Korea and other rapidly developing Asian nations have also become involved with FutureGen in hopes that it could be an answer to their energy problems. But Energy Department officials threw a note of uncertainty over Mattoon's selection by citing rising costs and proposing a redesign. Environmentalists are divided on the project, some questioning whether the greenhouse gases will stay buried.

Instead of burning coal, the plant is designed to use a proven process called gasification that breaks the fuel down into chemical components while releasing energy. Gasification still releases great quantities of carbon dioxide, a major contributor to global warming. But instead of releasing the greenhouse gas into the atmosphere, plans call for it to be liquefied and pumped deep into the earth, where experts believe it will remain harmlessly trapped under a thick layer of sandstone. The major test of FutureGen is to prove that the gases won't percolate back to the surface.

-Marilyn Brown

United Nations Seminar

The topic of the second U.N. seminar in 2007, held in November, was ‘United States Foreign Policy and the United Nations: Conflict or Cooperation?’ The seminar was purposely scheduled for this timeframe so that we all could be apprised of what questions about U.S. foreign policy needed to be asked of the presidential candidates of both parties during the run-up to the party caucuses and primaries after the first of the year. The agenda for the meeting included speakers focusing on specific areas of the world: Middle East, Africa, Asia and South America.

David Harwood, public affairs vice president of the U.N. Foundation, steward of Ted Turner’s generous gift, reminded us of the world’s most pressing problems: environmental degradation, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and persistent poverty, all ‘problems without passports’, and emphasized that our success is linked to the success of humanity and the world. Globalization is simply not working for the ‘bottom billion’.

He outlined needed changes in U.N. architecture: increased transparency and efficiency and necessity of moving away from the power structure set up after WWII to include new power centers, such as India, Brazil, Japan and Germany, in the Security Council. The U.N. needs a rapid deployment force, considering the tremendous expansion of U.N. peacekeeping efforts and the Bretton Woods financial system (World Bank and IMF, principally) needs overhaul. He expects that correcting the balance of power in the Security Council will be part of the bargaining for other management changes.

Former CO senator Gary Hart, chair of the Livable World Council, outlined the current thinking regarding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and indicated that it wouldn’t happen without us. He endorsed the two state solution with Jerusalem as capital of both states and special

arrangements for access to the holy sites there. The refugee problem needs a solution consistent with the two-state concept. Security mechanism would be the responsibility of the Israelis while respecting Palestinian sovereignty.

He mentioned that ‘national interest’ has been a code word for ‘oil’ but that ‘when you go to war for oil, you get war, not oil!’ He opined that the war on terror should not have been called a war and that terrorists should be treated as criminals.

Managing failed states should be an international obligation so that we can manage disintegration, if it cannot be avoided.

The other speakers similarly discussed the background of the issues in their areas of expertise and noted failures and suggested improvements in our recent foreign policy. Co-chair Lorie Young, former LWVCO president, has written a more detailed summary of the seminar, which can be viewed on our website www.lwvlaplata.org under Global Outreach.

-Marilyn Brown

Membership Roster

Our fall membership drive has netted 17 new members, bringing our total membership to 82! In addition we have five newsletter-only ‘members’. Our membership consists of 64 regular members, 14 household members, 2 national members, 11 male members and 2 life members (those who have been Leaguers at least 50 years, Morley Ballantine and Barbara Cristol). Congratulations to chairman Sue Herbst and everyone who helped with our drive.

Sue has updated our roster, which is being emailed to all members with email addresses. Rosters have been mailed to members without email addresses with this newsletter. If you would prefer to receive a paper copy of the roster, please call or email Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 after January 8, or marilbrown@aol.com for a hard copy.

Alternatives to Desert Rock

Dailan Long, a representative of Dine Care, a group of Navajos who oppose the Desert Rock Energy Project (DREP), presented a report prepared for them by Ecos Consulting on Alternatives to the DREP on November 8 at Fort Lewis College. The full report will be available 'soon' on the Dine Care's blog: www.desert-rock-blog.com but doesn't appear to be there as of December 26.

Main points:

Wind, concentrated solar power, efficiency and natural gas sources could produce over 3000 MW of power at a cost of 6.69 cents/kwh, produce 534 permanent jobs (2000 construction jobs) as compared with 200 permanent and 1000 construction jobs proposed by DREP.

The price of electricity proposed by DREP without carbon dioxide capture is 6.33 cents per kilowatt hour; the price if carbon capture is mandated would be 11.38 cents.

The proposed mine expansion of the Navajo mine is 17,000 acres; the acreage required to produce the same amount of energy proposed by DREP (1500 MW) from solar energy on the Navajo Nation would be 16,000 acres, according to Ecos Consulting. Also, there is wind power potential along the proposed Navajo transmission infrastructure.

Concern was expressed about the use of water for DREP since the residents of Burnham Chapter, where the plant will be located, now haul water for themselves and their animals.

Several renewable energy firms have indicated interest in developing projects on the reservation and Ecos Consulting suggested that the Navajo Nation hold a bidding forum, where interested parties would bid on the rights to develop projects and that the NN should build into such contracts the provision of power to homes and businesses of

tribal members. DREP has promised Burnham Chapter residents a community center and other amenities but no power, and most residents do not now have electricity. Check the Dine Care blog noted above periodically for the full report and updates of their other activities.

-Marilyn Brown

Our Nonpartisan League

(Editor's note: The following suggestion is taken from the December issue of League Lines, the newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Larimer County, and is worth our attention as well.)

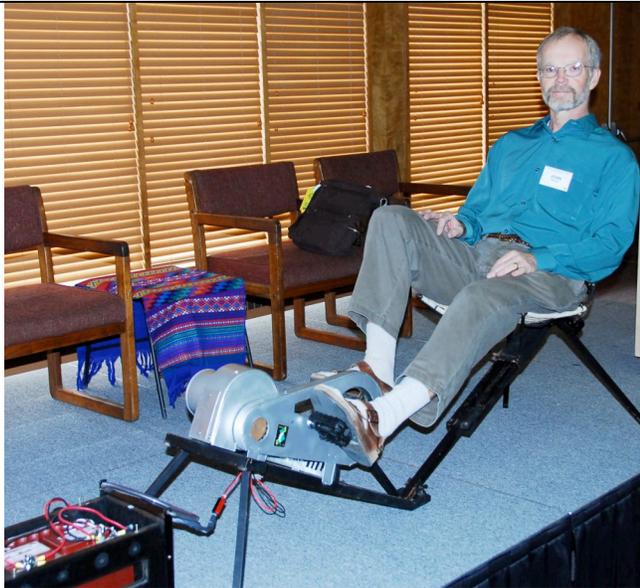
Although those of us who have joined the LWV come from different backgrounds, represent various age groups, and pursue a wide range of interests outside of the League, we are united in our desire to encourage the informed participation of citizens in the democratic process and to advocate and educate the community on matters of public policy. We join together to achieve these goals.

Since we are a diverse group, it is important for every one of us to recognize and respect the fact that not all League members share the exact same political views or support the same political party. It is also important to remember that the League's nonpartisan policy is a major contributor to our credibility in the community.

The Administrative Team [their officers] would like to ask all members to be mindful of our nonpartisan policy as we strive to make everyone feel welcome and included at every League meeting, from our larger meetings to our monthly [board] meetings at the team level.

Betty Lazo's New Address

LWV member Betty Lazo has moved to North Carolina to be nearer to her daughter Melanie. She wrote that she and the dogs are settling in after a difficult move. Note her new address, phone number and email address on our latest roster.



John Mahan, Fort Collins, demonstrating his Pedal Power System



Diane Wilson, left, author of 'An Unreasonable Woman', with interviewer Brigitte Irish of FLC



Chairman Ross Park interviewing Dentist Tom Grams on his work in Afghanistan



Connie Jacobs, speaking, with Jan Williams and Linda Barnes, from left, awaiting their turns.

The Safer, More Compassionate World Community Forum, held November 10 at Fort Lewis College, was a tremendous success with attendance of over 225 people. The speeches and testimonials were heartfelt and inspiring. A DVD of the forum can be obtained from Ross Park, 247-8116. Many thanks to the committee for all its hard work and to the co-sponsors, for their support. To blog about this event, access our blog site at <http://www.lwv-blogger.blogspot.com/>

Tekla Miller, Author, to Speak

On Saturday, February 9, Tekla Dennison Miller, one of our LWV members, will speak at the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Book and Author Luncheon. Tekla is the author of three books; The Warden Wore Pink, A Bowl of Cherries, and Life Sentences. Her books will be available at the event – and she will autograph them! Or bring in the copies you own for her to sign. The Book and Author Luncheon, an annual fundraiser for the AAUW Educational Foundation, will be held from 11:30 – 2 p.m. at the Student Memorial Lounge, College Union, Fort Lewis College. The tickets (\$25) will include luncheon: Buffet Italiano. For further information or to make reservations early, contact Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 or mjschili@bresnan.net.

–Marilyn Sandstrom

<h1>Calendar</h1>			LWV La Plata County www.lwvlaplata.org 650 Hermosa Cliffs Road Durango, CO 81301				
Happy New Year!							
January							
7 Mon	LWVCO Legislative Conference, State						
	Capitol, Denver						
10 Thurs	Board meeting, 9:30-12:30, Classroom,						
	Unitarian Fellowship, 419 San Juan Drive						
10 Thurs	Immigration Cmte Meeting, 1:30 p.m.,						
	Barbara Cristol's home						
16 Wed	Consensus I, Immigration Study, 10-12,						
	Fellowship Hall, Christ the King Church						
22 or 24	Great Decisions, 11:45-1:45, Twilight Room,						
	Durango Rec Center, 'Iraq: Endgame'						
23 Wed	Consensus II, Immigration Study, 10-11:30,						
	Fellowship Hall, Christ the King Church,						
23 Wed	Celebrate Your Heritage Potluck, 11:30-1						
	Fellowship Hall, Christ the King Church						
February							
5 Tue	Political Party Caucuses						
5 or 7	Great Decisions, 11:45-1:45, Twilight Room,						
	Durango Rec Center, 'EU at 50'						
14 Thurs	Board meeting, 9:30-12:30, Classroom,						
	Unitarian Fellowship, 419 San Juan Drive						
14 Thurs	Nat'l Program Planning, 12:30-1:30 Classroom,						
	Unitarian Fellowship, following board meeting						
19 or 21	Great Decisions, 11:45-1:45, Twilight Room,						
	Durango Rec Center, 'Talking to our Enemies'						
23 Sat	Legislative Lowdown: Rep. Roberts, Sen. Isgar						
	9:30-11:30 a.m., Peaks, Durango Rec Center						
28 Thurs	"They Take Our Jobs", Historical View of						
	Immigration, John Baranski, 7 p.m.						
	LLL Program, 130 Noble Hall, FLC						
March							
4 or 6	Great Decisions, 11:45-1:45, Twilight Room,						
	Durango Rec Center, 'Russia'						
13 Thurs	Board meeting, 9:30-12:30, Classroom,						
	Unitarian Fellowship, 419 San Juan Drive						
18 or 20	Great Decisions, 11:45-1:45, Twilight Room,						
	Durango Rec Center, 'U.S. Defense/Security'						
<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 Sue Herbst at 382-9446 for more information.</p>		<p>Board of Directors</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>President Ellen Park, 247-8116 gellenpark@aol.com</p> <p>Newsletter Ed/Secretary Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 marilbrown@aol.com</p> <p>Publicity/Public Relations Ross Park, 247-8116 eandrpark@aol.com</p> <p>Membership Sue Herbst, 382-9446 sue_herbst@frontier.net</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Vice President Jill Patton, 385-4061 jgpatton@frontier.net</p> <p>Treasurer Nadine Ancel, 259-3675 ancelnm@yahoo.com</p> <p>Webmaster Ross Park, 247-8116 lwvlpc@aol.com</p> <p>Voter Service Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 mjschili@bresnan.net</p> <p>Off-Board Members</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Recording Secretary Suzanne Becker, 375-1533 srahmberg@aol.com</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Great Decisions Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 patchwork@gobrainstorm.net</p> </td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> </table>		<p>President Ellen Park, 247-8116 gellenpark@aol.com</p> <p>Newsletter Ed/Secretary Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 marilbrown@aol.com</p> <p>Publicity/Public Relations Ross Park, 247-8116 eandrpark@aol.com</p> <p>Membership Sue Herbst, 382-9446 sue_herbst@frontier.net</p>	<p>Vice President Jill Patton, 385-4061 jgpatton@frontier.net</p> <p>Treasurer Nadine Ancel, 259-3675 ancelnm@yahoo.com</p> <p>Webmaster Ross Park, 247-8116 lwvlpc@aol.com</p> <p>Voter Service Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 mjschili@bresnan.net</p> <p>Off-Board Members</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Recording Secretary Suzanne Becker, 375-1533 srahmberg@aol.com</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Great Decisions Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 patchwork@gobrainstorm.net</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Recording Secretary Suzanne Becker, 375-1533 srahmberg@aol.com</p>	<p>Great Decisions Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 patchwork@gobrainstorm.net</p>
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