



League of Women Voters
Of La Plata County

VOTER

Volume 8, Issue 7

Sixty-two Years Serving La Plata County
91 members

March, 2009

www.lwv.org

www.lwvlaplata.org

www.lwvcolorado.org

Inside this Issue

Upcoming meetings1

Coordinator’s Message2
CY&FMP at City Council ...2

Recent Action Alerts3

NPVC Study4

A/B 6% Limit5
LWVCO Fundraiser5

Legislative Lowdown6

Sen. Bennet’s Remarks7
LWVUS News7

United Nations Seminar8
CO Legislative Proceedings 8

Rep. Salazar Interview9
LPEA Round Up Fund9

Calendar10
Board of Directors10

Insert:

**City Council
Candidate Forum flyer**



Mark your calendars!

March Meetings

**Durango City Council
Candidate Forum**

**Thursday, March 19
6 – 8 p.m.**

Durango City Council Chambers

The candidates for three open seats will answer your written questions

* * *

**Building a Community for Children and Youth
in La Plata County**

**Saturday, March 21
9 – 11 a.m.**

Program Room 1, Durango Public Library

Panel: Vicki Coe, moderator
Jaynee Fontecchio-Spradling, District 9-R nurse,
Barbara Dodds and Marsha Porter-Norton, members of
It’s About Kids La Plata County Advocacy Steering Committee

Topics:

Childhood poverty in CO
Relevant bills in Legislature and how to advocate
How all citizens can build assets in children and youth
Why we have a Children, Youth and Family Master Plan
and what county and other local governments are doing

Coordinator's Message

This month our membership meeting is on kids! Vicki Coe has put together a panel to bring us up to date on what is happening with children and youth in our county. And, there's a lot going on! We're closing in on a Master Plan that is designed to support children and youth throughout the county area, in all of the cities and towns and with the tribe. There are issues occurring at the state level as well. There is concern about childhood poverty and behavior issues. Are we doing all we can to make sure that children, youth and families thrive?

Vicki Coe, a League member, and indefatigable worker for children through the years, has put together a terrific panel, whose members have particular expertise as they've worked for and about children and youth for years.

Vicki was with DEL ALMA starting with its inception, supporting kids in after school programs and many other activities. She will be joined by **Jayne Fontecchio-Spradling**, RN (District 9R nurse), and **Barbara Dodds** and **Marsha Porter-Norton**, both with It's About Kids (IAK) La Plata County Advocacy Steering Committee.

Our regular membership meeting this month will be on a Saturday as we did in January to provide an opportunity to those that cannot get there during the week. In addition, the public is invited! Come and bring your friends that wonder about what we're doing about kids.

-Sally Bellerue

Children, Youth and Family Master Plan Comes Before the Durango City Council

It's time for kids! This county has come together to draft a master plan for kids. That is, with its adoption by the county and the cities, it will serve as a guideline "when making funding decisions and creating meaningful youth engagement opportunities," according to Lauren Patterson, in her Letter to the Editor in the Durango Herald on 2/22/09. **Both the County and Ignacio Town Board of Trustees passed resolutions on Feb. 10th in support of the plan.** These two entities along with Bayfield, Durango, and the Southern Ute

Tribe have been involved. It was written with input from literally thousands of members of our communities.

The Durango City Council has it on their agenda for March 3. League members may want to support it as individuals when it comes up before the City Council, according to League member, Vicki Coe. (Since our LWV hasn't studied it in detail, we can support it only in a very general way based on our national positions.) It's possible that the City Council's resolution will be similar to the resolution passed by the county, which was worded as follows:

1. La Plata County government commits to being an organization in which the thriving of our families and their children is of primary importance and whose policies, infrastructures and the services, supports and opportunities to which we contribute are aligned to and supportive of the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan's thriving definition. We commit to this vital partnership with our citizens, other local governments, and the for-profit and not-for-profit businesses who serve our community.
2. La Plata County government also commits to:
 - a. Being a "developmentally attentive organization" by offering training to employees to learn how to meaningfully engage youth in decision-making that affects their lives.
 - b. Seeking alignment with the CYFMP, including the thriving definition, when making internal funding decisions.
 - c. Seeking alignment with the CYFMP, when making decisions to provide funding to non-profits and other external agencies. We will expect the agencies to demonstrate how it will use the funds to fulfill goals of the CYFMP and to show measurable results when requesting future funding.
 - d. Creating opportunities for meaningful youth involvement, such as youth internships, service on appointed boards or commissions, etc.

Recent Action Alerts

After some quiet months without any action alerts, this month we have had three: one at the national level on D.C. Voting Rights, one at the state level on SB 228, a bill to eliminate the 6% annual increase in the general fund of the state budget and one at the local level regarding the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) permit for the Desert Rock Energy Project. Our official statements are below:

D.C. Voting Rights –(Sen. Udall and Sen. Bennet)

The League of Women Voters of La Plata County urges you to vote for cloture on the District of Columbia Voting Rights legislation so the Senate can consider this vital issue. Democracy that all Americans have fought for across the world through the last 250 years must be extended to the citizens of the nation's capital.

Voters in our nation's capital are not afforded the same rights as voters in the rest of the country. They pay U.S. taxes, fight and die for the U.S. during wartime, and are governed by the laws that Congress passes. And yet they have no voting representation in Congress. The District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2009 (S. 160) will right this wrong by providing voting rights for District citizens without upsetting the partisan balance of the House or affecting the composition of the Senate.

District citizens deserve to have the same rights as other Americans, including voting representation in the body that makes their laws, taxes them and can call them to war. Only Congress can ensure that the democracy Americans have espoused and fought for across the globe becomes a reality in the nation's capital. Don't allow this legislation to die.

SB 228 – Eliminate the A-B 6% Limit to Annual Growth of the State Budget's General Fund- (Sen. Isgar)

The League of Women Voters of La Plata County urges you to support SB 228, which will allow the Legislature more flexibility in dealing with budget items, when it comes up for discussion in the Finance Committee and on the floor of the Senate. We understand that SB 228 addresses the Arveschoug/Bird statute that put a limit of 6% on the growth of General Fund Appropriations in the state budget and would remove the A/B 6% limit. We also understand that the TABOR growth plus inflation limit that covers the entire budget would remain in effect.

Desert Rock PSD (EPA Region 9)

We are writing to you in response to the United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 request for public comment on revisions to its basis for issuing a Prevention of Significant Deterioration permit (AZP 04-01) authorizing construction of the Desert Rock Energy Facility (Desert Rock) 1,500 MW coal fired power plant on Navajo Nation land southwest of Farmington, New Mexico.

The League of Women Voters of La Plata County, CO, urges the EPA to include limitations on carbon dioxide emissions in the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) permit for the proposed Desert Rock Energy Project, located some 100 miles from La Plata County. We believe that the Environmental Protection Agency has the authority to regulate greenhouse gases and should impose strict controls on the proposed Desert Rock emissions of 12.7 million tons per year of carbon dioxide. Please revise the entire Prevention of Significant Deterioration permit for Desert Rock to evaluate control technologies for carbon dioxide emissions. We are aware that E.P.A. Administrator Jackson has asked the agency to review the latest science and that a ruling by the agency in response to the directive of the Supreme Court is likely by April 2, the second anniversary of the Court's order.

Evidence has convinced a vast majority of scientists that carbon dioxide emissions from power plants are a major contributor to climate changes we are already experiencing. That this is no longer a matter of argument is gaining credibility on a daily basis. At some future point, emissions of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, will be subject to regulation by a carbon tax, cap and trade or other system. The EPA must take up the mantle bestowed upon it by the Supreme Court nearly two years ago to regulate emissions of greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act and exert leadership now before we are stuck with a third coal-fired power plant in our area using unenlightened technology and releasing tons and tons of carbon dioxide gas annually.

Proponents have declared that the plant will be 'carbon-capture ready'. This is not sufficient since we do not know how long before carbon-capture technology will be commercially feasible at our altitude and where the funds to implement will come from when/if the technology becomes available.

The League of Women Voters of the United States is advocating a 10-year moratorium on coal-fired power plants. We support such a moratorium, but if you choose to issue the PSD for this plant, please be sure that you regulate its carbon dioxide emissions along with all the other emissions that affect the health of our residents and the beauty of our area.

-Marilyn Brown

National Popular Vote Compact Study

The NPVC committee, consisting of Ann Flatten, Bev Wells, Trish Pegram, Mary Barter, Sally Belllerue, Suzanne Becker, Grace Deltscheff, Marilyn Sandstrom, Julie Ward and Marilyn Brown, continues its study of the National Popular Vote Compact in preparation for our consensus meeting April 22. In the February newsletter Trish Pegram eloquently described what the National Popular Vote Compact is and isn't. Recall that this study is not a referendum on the direct popular vote. The League already supports that and has for years. The question here is, is the National Popular Vote Compact an acceptable way to achieve our goal of direct popular vote?

The LWVUS task force has prepared a series of questions for us to discuss and answer during the consensus meeting. The study committee will present a summary of the material we have looked at but they will not make recommendations; each committee member will participate as an individual just like all other LWV members. A facilitator will keep us on track and a recorder will record the points on which we have agreed or on which we cannot agree and therefore do not have consensus. After the board has reviewed the results, they will be submitted electronically before May 1 to LWVUS to be tabulated along with the results coming in from the other local LWVs who have undertaken this study.

What is consensus? Consensus, in the LWV sense, is general agreement among the participating members. It isn't a vote and it doesn't have to be unanimous. It is a statement or series of statements that the discussion participants are comfortable with. In this case, since the seven consensus questions are multiple choice, we will need to pick choices that essentially everyone is comfortable with. We cannot re-word the answers; however, we are given 150 words at the end to explain any concerns or issues not covered by our answers to the questions.

Why should you be interested in this study? FairVote, www.fairvote.com, a supporter of NPVC, released a press statement December 4, 2008 that analyzed campaign events, spending for the 2008 election and the results. These facts show that because of our electoral college system and the 'winner-take-all' rules in all but two states, campaigns are focused on states with a

significant number of electoral votes and where those votes are up for grabs. The full document is available on our website www.lwvlaplata.com but their 'Facts in Focus' are offered here:

* Of all 300 campaign events by major party presidential candidates tracked by the Washington Post between September 5 and November 4, 2008, 57% took place in only four states, representing just 17% of the nation's eligible voters: Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

* 54.5% of all ads by the presidential campaigns, as tracked by CNN from September 24 to November 4, aired in those same four states.

* More than 98% of all campaign events and more than 98% of all campaign spending took place in only 15 states representing 36.6% of the nation's eligible voter population, effectively sidelining nearly two-thirds of all Americans.

*** Voter turnout in those 15 contested states was 67%, while turnout in the remaining states was 61%. Voter turnout declined in more than a third of states despite the public's high level of interest in the nation's first open-seat presidential election in half a century.** [emphasis added]

* Ohio and the 12 smallest states both have eight and a half million eligible voters, but Ohio had 62 campaign events (more than a fifth of all events) and the small population states had a total of 12, all in New Hampshire.

This press release for the 2008 election brings up to date the information in *Presidential Elections Inequality*, their book that provides detailed info on the last four decades of presidential elections and the impact of the current Electoral College system on the 2004 elections. The full text of the book is available on their website.

Legislation modifying the current Electoral College system has been introduced into Congress over 700 times without success. Does the National Popular Vote Compact provide a way to make the Electoral College consistently represent the popular vote? Put April 22 on your calendar now!

-Marilyn Brown

Arveschoug-Bird 6% General Fund Limit

[Editor's note: The LWVCO Board of Directors voted to support the effort to remove the 6% limit on state budget General Fund appropriations growth required by the Arveschoug/Bird legislation in accordance with the new interpretation of whether it was covered by TABOR or not. We also voted to join the coalition, anchored by the CO Fiscal Policy Institute, that is forming to accomplish this goal. Please recall that the 6% limit is one of the constraints that limits recovery in state budget after economic downturns. Phyllis Horney, LWVCO's long-time fiscal policy expert, wrote the following description and history of A/B legislation. SB 228, which would remove the A-B limit, is in the Legislature right now, see action alert, p. 3.]

The Arveschoug/Bird (A/B) is a statute passed in 1991 – a year before passage of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). It requires a limit of 6% annual increase on state General Fund (GF) appropriations. The statute limits how the GF can be spent but not by how much. When TABOR passed in 1992, it included a provision stating, “Other limits on district revenue, spending, and debt may be weakened only by future voter approval.”

Jean Dubofski, a former Colorado Supreme Court Justice, who is now on the Board of the Fiscal Policy Institute, had the following to say: After TABOR passed, a single line in a non-binding Office of Legislative Legal Services (OLLS) memo made the assumption that A/B was a SPENDING limit that had been “constitutionalized” by TABOR and could not be changed by the Legislature. The OLLS also stated: “A court would PROBABLY CONCLUDE that, for purposes of (TABOR), the A/B limit is a limit on spending” because spending and appropriations are closely related concepts...” By accepting this restriction on its authority, the Legislature has allowed its hands to be tied when it comes to fixing Colorado’s fiscal mess. Why did recognition of this interpretation take so long? Because Legislators believed that the OLLS memo was a ‘ruling’ not an ‘opinion’.

Because Arveschoug/Bird is statutory and is NOT a spending or revenue limit, Jean Dubofsky and some of Colorado’s most respected legal minds have interpreted that if the Legislature sees fit, it can vote to change it. Modification will not need to go to a vote of the public.

The General Fund’s revenue, which comes from income taxes, sales and use taxes, and a few excise taxes such as the cigarette tax, is used for the operation of the state. User fees, such as the gas tax, and federal funds fund the rest of the budget. TABOR does not apply to federal funds.

Presently the General Fund base is limited to a 106% increase over the previous year’s base. If there is revenue over and above the 6%, it becomes the GF Surplus. Presently the GF surplus (if any) is being spent on the required 4% budget reserve and for transportation and capital construction. If the Legislators choose to pass a bill to eliminate Arveschoug/Bird, all GF revenue, including the GF surplus, (no matter how much or how little—good times or bad) will be incorporated into the GF base.

If A/B is eliminated, the GF 6% limit will be removed, but the TABOR growth plus inflation rate limit that covers the entire budget will remain. A change to this limit will require a vote of the people.

DOES ELIMINATING THE ARVESCHOUG/BIRD 6% PROVISION RAISE TAXES? NO, but it allows flexibility with existing taxes. With this change and economic recovery, the state will be better able to fund its needs adequately.

WILL THIS TURN INTO A LAWSUIT? There is that possibility, but if there is a challenge, the interpretation of the 6% limit will be settled.

-Phyllis Horney

LWVCO Fundraiser

Sunday, April 19 at 1:30 p.m.: a *Stories on Stage* presentation in the Stage Theatre, Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

Theme: *Great Expectations*

Shishir Kurup will read *Nawabdin Electrician* by Daniyal Mueenuddin

Robert Gossett will read *La Conchita* by T.C. Boyle
Romi Diaz will read *Wicked Girl* by Isabelle Allende

Order tickets (\$25.00) from: LWVCO
1410 Grant Street, B-204, Denver, CO 80203
303-863-0437, info@lwvcolorado.org

Tickets will be distributed in the lobby prior to the performance, and there will be milk and cookies following the readings.



Rep. Ellen Roberts addressing crowd of nearly 100 at Legislative Lowdown at Durango Public Library.

Legislative Lowdown

Ellen Roberts, our Colorado State Representative for House District 59, spoke with constituents on February 7 at the Durango Library. It was a full house and taught us to have a bigger room next year! Senator Isgar was not able to get back to town from Denver in time to attend. We missed him but learned lots from Rep. Roberts. She was open, candid, and informative and showed her sense of humor.

The district includes Montezuma County (including Cortez but not Dolores), San Juan, Archuleta and La Plata Counties. She has two FLC student Interns, Dross Martin and Sal Placencia, and a CSU student, Janes Stout. They've learned quickly and adapted. **Her assignments are Judiciary and Finance Committees**, where they look at tax policies, tax credits, for example, donation of water rights. She was on the Health and Human Services Committee, but is not now because it meets at the same time as Judiciary.

Her Republican assignment includes the Economic Task Force with four other members to look at a billion dollars to be cut from this year's budget, with more next year. K12, Medicaid and prisons have consistently been the biggest part of the budget while **the legislature controls only 24% of the budget. This is why Higher Ed has taken such cuts.**

Three bills she has sponsored **are moving along**. These are the San Juan Technical College merger with Pueblo Community College (where she gave credit to Senator Isgar), her Colorado Youth Advisory Council where she is co-chair, and hospice care to do better in care and save on end of life costs.

Three bills she is **sponsoring** include (1) one bill to create the ability for certain young offenders to seal records under certain circumstances, (2) a bill allowing more juveniles into youth offender programs to cut down on the recidivism rate, and (3) another bill to make Advanced Medical Directives more effective. (90% of ones medical costs are in the last 6 months of life).

Audience questions started with the bill to **increase Vehicle Registration Fees**. The increased fees would go to roads and bridges. It has passed the Senate and is now at the House. (An informal vote of those in the room, 34 would accept \$20 increase, 33 a \$40, and 6 \$0). Among other questions was one on **OGGCC's rules (oil and gas)** brought her comment that she is inclined to support (but is going to listen, Isgar has concerns) because the committee had a broad base, with all respected, with her goal to "preserve the quality of life we have here." There was a question about **undocumented students attending CO colleges at in-state tuition rates**. Ellen said she'd be surprised if it got out of the Senate. On **Health Care Reform** she said, let's find the common ground,, that she was not for a single payer system. Look to our website www.lwvlaplata.org for health care principles she says we need to agree to before progress can be made in solving health care issues in our state.

We enjoyed Ellen Roberts' powerpoint presentation and talk. Her sense of humor showed. In fact she said, one needs a "serious sense of humor," and that "common sense is mutilated at times in the Legislature." Now that's openness! Thank you, Ellen! And thanks to all the Leaguers who helped arrange and host this event, especially Marilyn Sandstrom!

-Sally Bellerue

A new climate change white paper 'LWVUS Fact Sheet on Climate Change – Effective Cap and Trade System' is available at www.lwv.org, click on Global Climate Change. View all the other resources developed by the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force while you're there.

Q/A with our Newest U.S. Senator

Michael Bennet, CO's junior (by 16 days) Senator, visited Durango February 15 and spoke to a crowd of constituents at the Durango Library. Sen. Bennet serves on the Agriculture, Homeland Security, Aging and Banking Committees. He doesn't serve on the Education Committee because the Education Committee is the Education, Health Care, Labor and Pensions Committee and by the time they got to the 97th Senator, there were no seats left on it.

Sen. Bennet described his former careers in both the public and private sectors: as a turnaround manager of failing companies, campaigner for Mayor John Hickenlooper, superintendent of Denver Public Schools. He has three daughters, 9, 8, and 4.

His philosophy parallels President Obama's; he wants to solve problems pragmatically.

He noted that the stimulus package just passed includes \$2.7 billion over a couple of years for CO. About \$50 billion of the package as a whole will go toward assisting folks with shaky mortgages.

He spoke about 'generational theft' indicating that although he doesn't like it, we don't have much choice right now. President Obama has indicated that his next budget will contain the beginning of ways out of this big debt.

He supports closure of Guantanamo Bay prison and analysis of each prisoner's situation individually. He acknowledged some folks' complaints about some of the dangerous prisoners ending up at Supermax at Canon City. He says this will be 'sorted out.'

A representative of the Conservation Corps thanked him for his support of the stimulus bill indicating that his organization will be able to hire 1000 people as a result. It is estimated that the stimulus bill will created/preserve 59,000 CO jobs.

A 74-year-old attendee indicated that his 403b account in retirement has lost 55%. Sen. Bennet indicated that the stimulus bill doesn't address this but that a speedy recovery of the economy is the best therapy for this situation. He said he would investigate relaxation of the rule that withdrawals from retirement savings result in taxation of social security benefits for many people.

He said he plans to play a leading role in energy and health care, particularly in support of Sen. Udall, who is on the energy committee. He favors the new energy economy even though it may seem like not enough appeared in that category in the stimulus package. He noted that renewable energy jobs can't be outsourced.

Although he admits he doesn't know a lot about health care, he agrees with President Obama that a single-payer system isn't doable right now but we must design coverage for the uninsured folks while preserving what we have that works. Both CO senators will fight for Medicare funding.

In closing, Sen. Bennet said he will be back again, and again, and again until we tell him not to come.

-Marilyn Brown

LWVUS News

The LWVUS Board announces Global Climate Change and Health Care to be the top legislative priorities for the upcoming year. Top priority issues are ones on which major congressional action is expected and on which the LWVUS will seek to be an active player. Tier two priorities, Election Reform and DC Voting Rights, will be acted upon if significant success is possible, though top priorities will take precedence. Tier three issues could be subject for LWVUS action only if good opportunities present themselves, and there is no pressing action on top priority and tier two issues. Tier three issues we are watching are: Campaign Finance Reform; CEDAW (the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women); Civil Liberties; Ethics; and Redistricting. The LWVUS prioritizes legislative issues for advocacy in order to focus limited resources on those issues where it is considered the League can have a meaningful impact and there is member interest and opportunity for progress.

In an attempt to cut expenses in view of reductions in donor and investment income, LWVUS has decided to suspend publication of the National Voter for the time being and to conduct a 'virtual' national Council this June. The benefit of the latter decision is that all of us will be able to tune in to hear the discussions if we choose, whereas physical attendance in past years had been limited to state board directors.

-Marilyn Brown

United Nations Seminar

The highlight of this year's UNA-USA's United Nations seminar, of which LWVCO was a co-sponsor, held February 21 at the University of Denver, was an inspiring and frequently humorous address by Shashi Tharoor, former undersecretary general. Dr. Tharoor, a 29-year veteran of service to the U.N., was expected to be named successor to Kofi Annan. However, following U.S. indication that it would oppose him, he resigned and is now chairman of Afras Ventures, based in Dubai, a firm which seeks international investment in his home state of Kerala, India. Frankly, it's too bad he didn't get the job.

He reviewed the vision for the U.N. as stated by FDR, whom he considers the most important visionary of the U.N., and endorsed by Truman. However, he noted that the structure of the organization reflects the world powers post-WWII, and needs change to reflect current power distribution and to deal effectively with 'problems without passports', such as weapons of mass destruction, disease, climate change, human trafficking and population displacement. As far as FDR's and Truman's vision for the organization, Dr. Tharoor affirmed that most recent U.S. presidents wouldn't have recognized those visionary statements as coming from any of their predecessors.

He reminded us that the U.N. can only be as active in a issue as its members allow by providing both the mandate and the means. Lack of both resulted in inaction on Rwanda, for example, and subsequent blame. He quoted Kofi Annan's famous remark that S. G. not only stands for secretary-general but also for scapegoat. The U.N. is both a stage and an actor.

In response to questions, he said that as of yet there is no legal definition of terrorism. Moslem countries have presented exceptions with which the rest of the world cannot agree. Hence, much more work to be done. He's not sure the new Human Rights Council is working any better; however, it is an example of sincere effort to make the U.N. function better. He heartily endorsed the new U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Susan Rice, whom he knows, as a very good choice. As for the relevance of the U.N. today, he quoted Adam as saying to Eve when she was showing lack of interest, 'Is there someone else?' The answer with regard to the U.N. is no, there

isn't another option. We must improve and build on what we have because he isn't sure the world today could start from scratch and develop an organization even as imperfect as the United Nations is.

Four workshops followed his talk: international law, climate change, human rights and the U.N. agencies: are we paying our fair share. I attended the second and third. The second was facilitated by Leslie Glustrom of Clean Energy Action based in Boulder. Leslie, a biochemist by training, has taken up the goal of moving away from coal as an energy source and has had considerable success working with Xcel to get them to focus more on renewable energy sources and has filed a challenge to the Desert Rock Energy Project. She is willing to come to the Four Corners and work with us. The human rights workshop covered basic ground, including treaties that need to be signed.

All four workshops came up with resolutions which were endorsed by the entire body of seminar attendees and will be sent on to the president and Congressmen as the output of our interesting and challenging Saturday.

-Marilyn Brown

CO Legislative Proceedings

Don't forget that you can listen in to the Legislative Proceedings and committee hearings. Rep. Ellen Roberts handed out a little pamphlet with complete details of how to do it. In lieu of hard copies for everyone, here are some basic instructions:

Go to www.leg.state.co.us and click on 'Audio Broadcasts of Current Legislative Proceedings' at the top of the screen, then on the room with the proceeding you wish to hear.

To find bills from the current session: click on 'Current Regular Session Information'

If you know the bill number, type the bill number (3 or 4 digits) in the box

If you don't know the bill number, click on the 'Search' at the top of the page and type in key words, then choose 'All bills' in the options below the search box.

Our LWV Interviews Rep. Salazar

On Saturday, January 31st, *Representative John Salazar* was in town and spoke to a packed Anasazi Room in the Courthouse. His main topic was the proposed stimulus bill and he explained what was happening in Washington and why he was supporting it. After the session, he agreed to give us (Sally Bellerue and myself) some time so that, as requested by the national League, we could ask his opinion on three main issues. His responses can be summarized as follows:

1. Health Care

Representative Salazar believes health care reform will come incrementally. He did not expect a single payer system but more an expansion of what we have and changing it incrementally to get closer to universal coverage. He supports making some version of the coverage now given to all federal employees (including Congresspersons) available to everyone.

2. Capping Green House Gases

He believes we need scientific models supported by continuous funding. He is interested in developing clean coal technology.

3. Bipartisanship

He gave us a very good example of how his working across the aisle, when he was in the Colorado State Legislature, achieved his objectives much more efficiently than would have been possible otherwise. He believes in continuing to reach across party lines whenever feasible.

A summary of the interview will be emailed to LWVUS and added to the responses other LWVs received on these topics from their Congressmen for use in lobbying Congress on issues of interest to the LWV. Please recall that health care and climate change are at the top of our list for advocacy in 2009-2010. Thanks, Rep. Salazar, for talking with us!

-Jill Patton



LPEA Round Up Foundation

If any time in the past few years you have looked at the back page of the LWV La Plata Ballot Issues Pamphlet you will have seen the logo of the La Plata Electric Association Round Up Foundation. This organization has provided grants for the printing of this valuable booklet which many La Plata County residents depend on to understand the pros and cons of Colorado's complicated and often contradictory ballot issues.

The Round Up Foundation is funded through the generosity of those customers who agree to round up their monthly electric bills to the next whole dollar amount. With an average cost per consumer of only 50 cents a month, the Foundation is able to provide grants to worthy non-profits in its La Plata and Archuleta Counties service area. The Round Up Board of Directors meets monthly to review applications and provide grants. In addition, the Round Up Foundation contributes to the Community Emergency Assistance Coalition (CEAC) - a collaborative effort of several groups including the Round Up, Salvation Army, Housing Solutions of the Southwest, Department of Human Services, Advocacy for La Plata, United Way, and Volunteers of America Durango Community Shelter. The CEAC committee meets weekly to review screened applications and disperse funds to families in our community with emergency needs.

As a recently appointed Board member of the Round Up Foundation, I am witnessing the human face of the impact of this recession: requests from non-profit organizations and families in distress are mounting, and contributions from all sources are dwindling.

Our League has been a frequent recipient of a Round Up grant, and I encourage League members who are not already in the program, and are able to round up their bills, to sign up by calling LPEA at 970.247.5786 or on-line by clicking on

http://www.lpea.coop/programs_services/Round%20up.htm

-Ellen Park

LWVUS Convention 2008's panel "**The State of Climate Change - What We Know and What We Don't**" is available at http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Schedule_of_Events&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=11310. The panel featured V. (Ram) Ramanathan, Victor Alderson Professor of Applied Ocean Sciences and Distinguished Professor of Climate and Atmosphere Sciences, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC-San Diego, and Heather Kaplan, Senior Policy Advisor on Climate Change, Oxfam America. The videotaped discussion covered a review of our state of knowledge on climate change as well as its impact on the developing world.

Calendar



LWV La Plata County
www.lwvlaplata.org
 296 Highland Hill Drive
 Durango, CO 81301

March	
Tue 3*	Great Decisions: The Arctic Age
Tue 3	Mail-in Ballot Process Cmte, 2:15-4, C.R. W6 Christ the King Church, 495 Florida
Thu 5*	Great Decisions: The Arctic Age
Wed 11	NPVC Committee, 9-11, Marilyn Brown's home
Thu 12	Team Meeting, 1-4 p.m., Bellerue home
Tue 17*	Great Decisions: Egypt
Thu 19*	Great Decisions: Egypt
Thu 19	City Council Candidate Forum, Council Chambers, 6-8 p.m.
Thu 19	Adventures in Afghanistan, Spkr: Dennis Aronson, LLL, 7 pm, 130 Noble Hall, FLC
Sat 21	Building a Community for Children and Youth, panel, 9:30-11:30, Durango Library Program Room 1
April	
Thu 2	Empowerment – One Heart at a Time, Ellen and Ross Park, LLL, 7 p.m., 130 Noble Hall, FLC
Tue 14*	Great Decisions: Cuba After Castro
Thu 16*	Great Decisions: Cuba After Castro
Wed 22	National Popular Vote Compact Consensus, 9-11, Durango Library Program Rm. 1
Tue 28*	Great Decisions: Universal Human Rights?
Thu 30*	Great Decisions: Universal Human Rights?
May	
Sat 9	Annual Meeting, time/venue TBD
Fri-Sat 16-17	LWVCO State Convention, 9:45 Sat – 12:45 Sun, The Golden Hotel, Golden

*All Great Decisions programs are held in Program Rm. 1, Durango Public Library; Tuesdays: 11:45-1:45, Thursdays: 12:30-2:30. Bring a brown bag lunch.

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.

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.

Team Members

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spokesperson/Newsletter
Marilyn Brown, 259-3593
marilbrown@aol.com | Team Coordinator
Sally Bellerue, 385-0848
bellerue@frontier.net |
| Director-at-large
Grace Deltscheff, 259-3040
holgnd@frontier.net | Treasurer
Nadine Ancel, 259-3675
ancelnm@yahoo.com |
| Secretary
Suzanne Becker, 375-1533
srahmberg@aol.com | Voter Service
Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596
mjschilli@bresnan.net |
| Director-at-large
Jill Patton, 385-4061
jgpatton@frontier.net | Director-at-large
Ellen Park, 247-8116
gellenpark@aol.com |
| Natural Resources Co-chair
Deanna Collins, 259-7845
dcdurango@msn.com | Speakers Bureau/NR Co-chair
Stephanie Huss, 259-7263
Stephanie@frontier.net |
| Publicity
Ross Park, 247-8116
lwvlpc@aol.com | Membership
Sue Herbst, 382-9446
sue_herbst@frontier.net |
| Great Decisions
Pat Chatfield, 247-1692
patchwork@gobrainstorm.net | |