



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

League of Women Voters
of La Plata County

VOTER

Volume 9, Issue 7 Sixty-four Years Serving La Plata County
94 members

March, 2010

www.lwv.org

www.lwvaplata.org

www.lwvcolorado.org

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Mark your calendars!



March Meeting

Sustainability Concurrence

Thursday, March 25

1 - 3 p.m.

Christ the King Church

495 Florida Road

Deanna Collins, discussion leader

Here's your chance to hear what our local sustainability committee has done with the LWVCO Sustainability Study and participate in our examination of the proposed statement on sustainability. If accepted by local LWVs across the state, the statement will be added to the *Program for Study and Action* book as a Principle to be considered when LWV of Colorado makes advocacy decisions.

See article on page 2.

Census Float a Success in Snowdown Parade despite frigid weather!

Join Trish Pegram and Nadine Ancel at U-U Fellowship Sunday, March 7 for a review of why Census 2010 is important to everyone. See calendar, p. 6
Look for our Census 2010 grocery bags. We'll be distributing them during the first two weeks of March!

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



Left photo: Rick Szmajter, GIS, Durango; Rob Bergstrom, GIS, La Plata County; Brian Meinhart, Census office, Grand Junction; and Manny Gonzales, Census office., Denver. Right photo: Jill Patton, Census worker Cathy Roberts

President's Message

The United States Senate designated February 14, 2010, the 90th anniversary of the LWVUS, as "League of Women Voters Democracy Day" noting "the enduring vitality and resonance of the League of Women Voters stems from its unique decentralized structure as a strictly non-partisan and wholeheartedly grassroots political organization." The state league has invited legislators to join them at the Capitol in Denver on March 15th for cupcakes to commemorate the occasion. Appropriate resolutions will be introduced into the state Legislature that day by legislators who are also LWV members. Locally, we celebrated the League's 90th anniversary at Legislative Lowdown on February 20th with scrumptious cakes from the Cake Café. We have forwarded several photos from our local celebration to the state office to be posted at the Capitol during the March 15 celebration.

Our League has been busy with education and advocacy. Wade Buchanan of The Bell Policy Center visited Durango to discuss Colorado's budget crisis and members Ellen Park and Mary Barter followed up by organizing community leaders to discuss fiscal reform. Deanna Collins continues to lead our effort to request an EPA liaison for the Four Corners area. [Check the Durango Herald this month for her op-ed on the subject.](#) We are working with the Montezuma County league to present the proposal to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and to all other interested parties. We've begun organizing voter service projects for a very busy 2010 election season. There are already three confusing ballot initiatives and a couple of others in process that will need to be explained to the voters.

Mark your calendars for our annual meeting Saturday, May 15th. Feel free to contact me if you have questions, suggestions or want to get involved.

-Stephanie Huss



Left: Helmet hair was the style at LWV Ski Day! Skiers included, from left, Marilyn Brown, Sally Bellerue, Ross Park, Trish Pegram, Ellen Park and Stephanie Huss. Marilyn Sandstrom, hiding in the back, and Jill Patton, taking the photo, were kibbitzers.

Check out LWVUS United Nations Observer Doris Schapira's report of the 2009 Session:

http://www.lwvplata.org/global_outreach.html#References

Sustainability Concurrence

On Thursday, March 25*, you can help our local League decide if sustainability is implicit in League positions and if we concur with the proposed Principles Statement. At the 2009 LWVCO state convention, a study item was adopted for the coming biennium on sustainability. During this meeting, LWVLCPC members will discuss the proposed Principles Statement that illustrates the interconnectedness of our many positions in government, natural resources and social policy. The proposed Principles Statement is:

Sustainability is a way of life which seeks to balance environment, economic and human needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet the same goal. The concept of Sustainability is implicit in the Principles of the League of Women Voters. League positions are in compliance with the fundamental principle of sustainability, recognizing the interdependency among issues of public policy, and the impact of current decisions on the global welfare of future generations.

We will review the history of the sustainability concept, the LWV of California sustainability study, the LWV of Estes Park Sustainable Community position, the Jeffco LWV Sustainability position, and local sustainability activities. Discussion will revolve around where the League fits and how sustainability works into League action.

-Deanna Collins

*1 p.m., Christ the King Church Fellowship Hall

Nuclear Energy: Two Perspectives

[Ed. Note: On the day of the symposium, Obama announced loan guarantees of up to \$8 billion for two new reactors in Georgia built by the Southern Co.]

More than 60 people were actively engaged in listening and questioning the joint presentations of Dave Nulton, Durango energy consultant, and Travis Stills, attorney with Durango's Energy Mineral Law Center, February 16 at the Center for Southwest Studies. The educational program was co-sponsored by San Juan Citizens Alliance and the FLC Environmental Center. The *Durango Herald* coverage February 18th was excellent, requiring only a few comments from a conflicted LWV listener.

According to Nulton, nuclear energy has the following advantages:

- environmentally acceptable (no harmful releases, no carbon footprint during operation, minimal land requirement)
- no dependence on oil imports
- high capacity factor (>90%) [meaning that plants operate on average 90% of the time] and low operating costs
- reliable, base-load capable [meaning that the plants can operate 24:7 and therefore, can be counted on to supply a consistent amount of electricity all the time]
- global non-proliferation advantages
- help dispose of decommissioned nuclear weapons by reprocessing into fuel

Comments by either or both speakers led me to the following observations:

Politics plays a major role in the acceptance of nuclear energy and of uranium mining and milling in our energy mix.

Generation 3 nuclear reactors, now the standard, are much safer than earlier versions, including the twelve remaining nuclear plants of the Chernobyl design functioning in modified form in Russia and Lithuania but still considered dangerous. Regulation (in the U.S.) appears to be adequate.

Operating nuclear power plants have essentially no carbon footprint; however, their construction process has a carbon footprint, which must be considered.

We must evaluate total life-cycle, i.e., 'economic' costs of all competing energy sources before agreeing on the role of each in our future energy picture. Comparative data must exclude all government subsidies.

With improving efficiency in the permitting process, nuclear plants are projected to take as little as 4-7 years to build and get online. However, this fact shouldn't reduce our interest in the use of renewables, which we may be able to get on line more quickly and which have other advantages.

With Yucca Mountain now a dead issue, spent fuel reprocessing, although expensive, can and must be employed to reduce waste to manageable amounts with reasonable half-lives (100-300 years v. tens of thousands of years). Research funding is needed to develop new technologies for reprocessing. While this reprocessing of waste is touted as a solution, lobbying power of opponents, including the mining industry, is a major factor in the failure to seriously consider reprocessing.

If we reprocessed the fuel from decommissioned U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons and from nuclear waste now in storage as fuel for nuclear plants in the U.S., we wouldn't need to mine uranium for 30 years. However, politics has dictated that we bring fuel from nuclear weapons on line slowly in order not to 'destroy the mining industry'. Reprocessing waste is not widely done due to the expense and proliferation concerns.

In recent years many of us have focused our concern on nuclear waste issues; however, both speakers admit that uranium mining and milling should also be of major, possibly equal, concern. Regulation of new uranium mines and mills dictates stiff and possibly adequate standards; however, consideration must be given to what legacy materials still exist at the site of the new mines from earlier mining efforts. Lessons learned from the past much be incorporated into the permitting process.

Resurrection of old uranium mines must be held to current standards and treated like new mines, rather than being allowed to simply resume mining under the rules in force and permits obtained when they were originally approved. House Bill 1348, Uranium Processing Accountability Act, which has just been introduced into the state legislature, addresses several of these issues around mining. LWVCO has no position on it yet.

-Marilyn Brown



Rep. Ellen Roberts, Stephanie Huss, LWV President and Sen. Bruce Whitehead with delicious cakes.

Legislative Lowdown

On a snowy February 20th, with the Recreation Center parking lot covered with snow and cars – 65 hardy La Plata County residents turned out to hear the latest from Denver and our legislative team – Representative Ellen Roberts and Senator Bruce Whitehead (call us by our first names, they said, so we did). The theme of the day was the financial challenge that is top of mind and the backdrop of all legislative discussions. However, both Ellen and Bruce were eager to share the issues they were championing and to hear from attendees what topics were on our minds.

Ellen is a member of the Health and Human Services, Finance and Legal Services Committees. Her focus in H&HS this year has been on end-of life care. Bills HB1024 and 1025 have passed the house and are now in Senate Committee. Among the items addressed are:

- Expanding the criteria for eligibility for end-of-life (hospice) care from a doctor's prognosis of 6 months, to 9 months
- Increased focus on "MOST" (Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment), encouraging individuals to develop advanced directives to direct the management of their medical care.

Ellen co-sponsored a bill (HB1154) with Kathleen Curry (Unaffil. District 61) to work on better managing insurance mandates, the thrust being to ensure focus on cost/benefit of mandates, and awareness of federal efforts which could create fiscal impact. However, the bill also required a freeze of one year on all insurance mandates, and it ultimately was killed or, in Leg talk, PI'd (Postponed Indefinitely).

She shared that given the level of concern, Colorado residents should become familiar with the existing budget which spends 43% on K-12, 30% on Medicaid, and 9% on prisons, leaving

little else with which to work. The requirement to contain spending is so significant that the House is looking at negative supplemental actions (i.e. budget cuts), to help address the results of revenue shortfalls.

Bruce, an expert with a long career in Water Resource and Conservation prior to being appointed to fill Jim Isgar's Senate seat last year, is focused on ag and water issues. He is a member of the Agriculture, Natural Resources and Energy (A, NR & E) Committee and the Transportation Committee. He provided the following updates:

- Working with the Colorado Water Resource and Power Development Authority to deal with the new Federal conditions for matching grants for loans, passed the 3rd reading.
- House Bill 1051 sponsored by Representative Pommer – focus on increasing requirements for water providers' water efficiency plans now in Senate Committee.
- Supported taxing on-line and software sales to protect local business.
- Work underway on House Bill 1188 on the commercial boating restrictions: he is seeking comments from constituents and looking at both sides of the issue from landowners, and boating enthusiast perspectives.
- Working on House Bill 1001 (passed in the house), which increases the renewable energy standard from 20% to 30% by 2020, which should generate jobs, and contains a cap of 2% in rate increases.
- Working to bring fiber optics to San Juan County, and on eliminating small roadblocks such as providing video conferencing for workers' compensation appeals to avoid our local citizens traveling to Denver.

Varied audience questions ranged from PERA legislation to alternative methods of funding higher education, which will undoubtedly take the biggest hit, because it is one area not dictated by constitutional amendments passed by voters, or other mandates.

The attendees were interested in the future of TABOR, the legislature's reaction to 3 ballot initiatives voters will face in November, and the ballot initiative process in general. Both Bruce and Ellen agreed that the current challenging environment could provide the incentive to revisit the labyrinth of constitutional constraints to permit government to better manage the fiscal issues during a range of economic cycles. However, they agreed that, in a politically charged election year, it is difficult to make substantive change such as constitutional reform at this time.

The meeting concluded with the celebration of the League's 90th Anniversary, with scrumptious cakes baked for us locally by the Cake Café, and carved by two of our three 50 year members, Barbara Cristol and Mary Ruth Bowman (Dorothy Newell was snowed in)!

-Beverly Wells and Ellen Park

Membership Survey

Thanks to our members for renewing for 2009-2010!!! As of late February we have 94 members in our local branch. There are nine new members and eight who chose not to renew. We have not as yet received renewals from six additional members.

Nearly 62% of our membership responded to our survey giving us information on their interests and the manner in which they prefer receiving information about LWVLPC activities. About 21% of our respondents support our agenda but are unable to make additional commitments. We **truly** appreciate their support.

Respondents were particularly interested in the Voter Services; Health Care; Environment, Energy, Sustainability; and the 2010 Census groups. 12% to 16% of you expressed interest in participating in these efforts. As many as five of you expressed interest in other group efforts underway. Your names have been passed on to those coordinating the groups. Hope you will stay involved in these efforts. With regard to specific activities; one in five respondents wishes to help with Voter Registration.

One in four wishes to assist with Forums and other LWVLPC events. This offer to help will be beneficial in 2010 since LWVLPC will be busy with election activities and advocacy. Indeed, eight are willing to moderate candidate forums and attended a Webinar on the topic in November. Thirteen per cent wish to advocate with legislators; an important effort for LWVLPC.

The preponderance of respondents prefer to meet during the day.

Thanks so much for your participation!

Regarding preferences in receiving LWVLPC information, respondents clearly chose Email as the method of receiving *Voter*; reminders; and results of LWVLPC actions, events, and studies. A few chose the website www.lwvlaplata.org to receive this information.

Respondents did prefer to discuss LWVLPC actions, business, and advocacy during member meetings.

As many as 37% use the website for LWV and general information. Ross Park conducted a tutorial on how to use the website for many members in September. It was well-received. If you would like to participate in a tutorial, contact Ross at EandRPark@aol.com.

Twenty-two percent of our members preferred *Voter* on a monthly basis and the same number preferred it quarterly. It is the consensus of the Board that it would be difficult to plan that far ahead – but they are working on it!

Again, thank you so much for responding to the survey. Any of you who wish more information or a membership application, please contact Marilyn Sandstrom, Membership Chair, 970-764-4596, mjschili@bresnan.net.



Fifty-year Leaguer Mary Ruth Bowman cutting cake at our 90th Anniversary Celebration

How fifty years of the League of Women Voters helped make me a better citizen

The League has made me a better citizen because of the knowledge I have obtained about government, how legislative bodies work, needs of a community and how to help getting these needs met.

I have been on many study groups on local and state LWV studies such as recreation, housing, county and city planning, school issues such as elementary libraries, school buildings and curriculum, etc., and national studies. Coming to a consensus was hard at times but government works on this idea. Sometimes we do not get all we want yet we can make an informed vote.

One of the most helpful activities was the observing of the city council, school board, and county commissioners meetings. It is too bad more members don't participate in these activities now.


The League gave me an opportunity to make long lasting friends that I probably would not have at this time. I ran for Durango City Council and Durango 9R Schools in my early years with League and lost. I have had many successes such as the Durango Recreation Center.

A League member has more power to make changes in their local, state and national government as officials and citizens know we have studied the issues and they are interested in our opinions. Our strong push for everybody to vote and be informed has been one of our strongest strengths. After fifty years they say: 'here she comes again!'

-Mary Ruth Bowman

LWVUS 2010 Legislative Priorities:

Global climate change, health care reform, money in elections (campaign finance reform)

<h1>Calendar</h1>			LWV La Plata County www.lwvlaplata.org 296 Highland Hill Drive Durango, CO 81301		
March Mon 1 2 and 4* Sun 7 Mon 15 Tue 16 16 and 18* Thu 25 30 & Apr 1*	Board meeting, Collins' home, 2-4 pm <i>U.S.-China Security Relations</i> , Great Decisions Census and Importance to CO Residents, 12 pm, Bowman Hall, Unitarian Fellowship, 419 San Juan Drive, Durango LWVCO 90 th Anniversary Celebration, State Capitol, 8-10 am Republican and Democratic Caucuses+ <i>Global Financial Crisis</i> , Great Decisions Sustainability Concurrence, Christ the King Church, 1 pm <i>Russia and Neighbors</i> , Great Decisions	<u>Board of Directors</u> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> President Stephanie Huss, 259-7263 stephanie@frontier.net Secretary Grace Deltscheff, 259-3040 holgnd@frontier.net Health Care Jill Patton, 749-0311 jgpatton@frontier.net Env, Energy, Sustainability Deanna Collins, 259-7845 dcdurango@msn.com Great Decisions** Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 patchwork@gobrainstorm.net Ex Officio** Sally Bellerue, 385-0848 bellerue@frontier.net </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Vice President Trish Pegram, 382-8248 trishpegam@bresnan.net Treasurer Nadine Ancel, 259-3675 ancelnm@yahoo.com Membership Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 mjschili@bresnan.net Legislative Action** Ellen Park, 247-8116 gellenpark@aol.com Website** Ross Park, 247-8116 eandrpark@aol.com Newsletter Editor** Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 marilbrown@aol.com </td> </tr> </table>		President Stephanie Huss, 259-7263 stephanie@frontier.net Secretary Grace Deltscheff, 259-3040 holgnd@frontier.net Health Care Jill Patton, 749-0311 jgpatton@frontier.net Env, Energy, Sustainability Deanna Collins, 259-7845 dcdurango@msn.com Great Decisions** Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 patchwork@gobrainstorm.net Ex Officio** Sally Bellerue, 385-0848 bellerue@frontier.net	Vice President Trish Pegram, 382-8248 trishpegam@bresnan.net Treasurer Nadine Ancel, 259-3675 ancelnm@yahoo.com Membership Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 mjschili@bresnan.net Legislative Action** Ellen Park, 247-8116 gellenpark@aol.com Website** Ross Park, 247-8116 eandrpark@aol.com Newsletter Editor** Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 marilbrown@aol.com
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April Mon 5 Tue 6 13 and 15* Wed 21 27 and 29*	Last day to register to vote in Town Council elections: Bayfield, Ignacio Board meeting, Collins' home, 12-2 pm <i>Persian Gulf</i> , Great Decisions Local Health Care (Update), <i>tentative Peacebuilding/Conflict Resolution</i> , GD				
May Sat 1 Sat 8 Sat 15 21-22	Law Day-Celebrate our merit-based judicial system in CO LPEA Election, Fort Lewis College LWV La Plata Annual Meeting LWVCO Council, Estes Park				
*All Great Decisions sessions are held in Program Room, Durango Library, brown bag lunch Tuesdays 11:45-1:45 Thursdays 12:30-2:30 +Caucus sites available on our website under Elections		**Off-board			
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 Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596, for more information.					