



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

League of Women Voters of La Plata County

VOTER

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

May, 2010

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Mark your calendars!



May Meeting

League of Women Voters of La Plata County 2010 Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 15

9 – noon

Ann Flatten's home (directions to follow)

Speaker: Kellie Hotter, La Plata County Commissioner – 9:15

Business meeting – 10:00

Potluck luncheon – ~11:30

(Fork and finger foods, please)

R.S.V.P. to Ann at flatten@gobrainstorm.net or 970-259-0971 by May 12

The annual meeting mailing is on our website at

http://www.lwvlaplata.org/about.html#Upcoming_Events

Bring a copy to the annual meeting

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



Ed Morlan, Debbi Renfro, Philip Abbott and David Black (l. to r.) answer audience questions at the Bayfield Town Board Candidate Forum, April 1 at the Bayfield Town Hall. Tom Au, Gabe Candelaria, and Monty McMinn were unable to attend. Morlan, Renfro, Au and Candelaria ultimately won the four contested seats. See article on page 3.

President's Message

Our annual meeting will be held on Saturday, May 15 from 9-noon at the home of Ann Flatten. Bring your questions for our speaker, County Commissioner Kellie Hotter. Our business meeting will follow. We will vote on the budget and bylaw changes and will also give direction to our National Convention delegates. Trish Pegram and I need guidance for Convention in Atlanta in June. Topics include Arms Control, an increase in our payments to National, a study of the Federal Role in Education, a study of a Department of Peace, Criminal Justice/Sentencing Guidelines and Safe Drilling and Mining.

I'd like to thank this year's board and team members and everyone who was involved in making this an outstanding year. Thank you for your contribution to our League.

-Stephanie Huss



Thompson Describing Her Recommendations

21st-Century Health Care in La Plata County

On April 28, Julie Thompson gave a presentation on "The Community Health Care Capacity Project" to approximately 20 LWV members. Ms. Thompson is the Interim Director of the San Juan Basin Health Department and a member of the Citizens Health Advisory Council. The presentation was densely packed with information and some of the more salient points are described here.

1. Form a regional Health Care Alliance, which will identify issues throughout the County and connect resources with needs through collaboration with high-level decision makers from key organizations.
2. Open a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). An FQHC would provide a full range of services and would serve all patients regardless of whether or not they have health insurance. An application has been made for such a Center.
3. Create a Health Information Exchange. A patient's medical records will be electronically stored and will be available to other physicians when needed. The Veterans Administration implemented such a system almost 15 years ago. The pay-off at the VA, in better health care at lower cost, has been enormous. Physicians can rent the necessary software to do this for about \$200 per month.

4. Public Health/Private Health Teams in a Community Partnership. Patients will be visited in their homes by various types of caregivers and their physicians will monitor their status. This was tried in Vermont in an attempt to control spiraling medical costs. Additional nurses were hired by the state to keep in close contact with patients. Physicians in private practice monitored their work. The program resulted in a measurable improvement in the health of the population that was served, and a corresponding drop in the cost of care per patient. Reduced expenditures paid for cost of the additional nurses within a year, and the program showed a profit in a few years.

5. Create a Health Access Plan for small employers and their employees. Two thirds of uninsured people in La Plata County are employed. This plan would provide basic health insurance to those who cannot afford it. The cost would be shared in equal parts by the employee, the employer, and some organization (could be governmental or non-governmental). The cost to the employee would be substantially less than \$100 per month.

6. Formalize a Donated Care Program. Professional caregivers agree to a reduced fee for their services for low-income patients. The decision of amount of the reduction is completely up to the caregiver.

7. Create a non-profit program. Private donations would create a fund that would pay for some of the needs of low-income families, such as well-child care.

8. Single Source of Eligibility Determination. The County has many programs that are aimed at providing economic assistance. Each has an eligibility requirement to which a person is subjected. This proposal would have a single place where one could go in order to have their eligibility determined. Once eligibility is established, one could go to the appropriate places for the types of care that is needed. This would eliminate the duplication of clerical time and money.

The full 41-page text of this report is available at <http://www.chaclaplata.org/>

-John Lyons

Great Decisions 2010

The Great Decisions discussion series very successfully concluded at the end of April with participation of nearly 300 people or an average of 19 people per session. It has been a very interesting series of topics, sometimes depressing, but always interesting. One difference in the program this year is that Ross Park is in charge of the program on Thursdays; his help is greatly appreciated. Also, much appreciated are the people who gave their time and effort to moderate and promote discussion. The volunteer facilitators this year have been Glen Rodey, John Lyons, Curt Johnson, Gail Harris, Dennis Lum and Ross Park. Thanks to each one of them. Thanks also to the Durango Public Library for providing the meeting room and to the Maintenance Staff who set the room up for each session. Thanks to everyone who participated, we look forward to seeing you again next year.

-Pat Chatfield



2010 Ballot Issues - Heads up

Three of the ballot initiatives certified so far for the 2010 general election in November are Proposition 101, Amendment 60 and Amendment 61 – click on www.lwvlaplata.org/elections.html#Ballot_Initiatives or type into your browser (blank spaces are underbars). (Note that starting this year, nomenclature has been clarified such that initiatives designated as “Propositions” change state law, while “Amendments” change the Colorado Constitution.) If passed, these three initiatives will have a serious impact on the state, the state’s schools and colleges, transportation funding and local governments across the state. To learn more, click on www.thebell.org/node/1231 to read the preliminary analyses by The Bell Policy Center.

Locally, a committee has been organized in La Plata County to analyze specific impacts to our community and to educate voters so that they have this information when deciding how to vote. Our local League is represented on this committee, and the state League is officially on record as opposing these initiatives at the state level.

As yet, we do not know exactly who is behind these initiatives but a complaint has been filed with the Colorado Secretary of State’s office to disclose the funders, as required by law; this will not change the fact that they are certified for the election.

This is an early warning, and you will be hearing more from us in the upcoming months.

-Ellen Park, LWV LPC Legislative Chair

It’s Voter Registration Time Again

Don’t look now, but there are elections just around the corner. And if elections come, voter registration must come first.

The La Plata League is gearing up for its biennial voter registration drive. We have our official Voter Registration Drive number, now we need you to volunteer to help as a circulator, or registrant, of voter forms. It only takes you about an hour of training in how to complete the registration form and basic voter registration regulations, which the League will provide in early May.

We have a booth at the Durango Farmer’s Market July 3 and September 25 definitely and hope for several more Saturdays during the summer and will need people to work that booth. There will be other opportunities during the summer, such as drives at Senior Centers, libraries and anywhere we can find

space and need for registration. Our volunteers will also be a resource for locating these opportunities.

If you’re interested in helping with voter registration, contact Trish Pegram (382.8248 or trishpegram@bresnan.net) for information on training. It’s easy and fun, and an important way the League contributes to making the democratic process work.

-Trish Pegram

Bayfield Town Board Candidate Forum

A “Meet the Trustee Candidates for the Bayfield Town Board” forum was held April 1 by the LWV LPC at the Bayfield City Hall. The election was to be held April 6. About 17 townspeople attended in addition to League personnel. President Stephanie Huss served as moderator, Deanna Collins was the timer, Marilyn Brown and Ellen Park screened questions presented by the audience, Suzanne Becker passed out question cards and photographed the event, and Marilyn Sandstrom was the overall coordinator.

There were seven candidates for the four trustee positions being determined by this election. Four candidates, Phillip Abbott, David Black, Ed Morlan, and Debbi Renfro (incumbent) were present for the forum, and one, Monty McMinn, who was not able to attend, had a statement read in his behalf. Incumbents Tom Au and Gabe Candelaria were not represented. After Stephanie welcomed those who were gathered, and set the ground rules and format for the discussion of the forum, the candidates introduced themselves. Each spoke briefly about who they were, why they were running for this office, and why they thought they would be a good Trustee, describing what skills and hopes for the future they, if elected, would bring to the table.

Questions from the audience followed. The thirteen questions discussed covered a broad range. Several focused on the budget and how to raise additional revenues or what services would need to be cut or changed to help balance the budget. Concerns about how to continue building a thriving small town community were also common, as were questions about how candidates would make difficult decisions during their tenure, and what were their priorities. The forum concluded with each candidate given time for some closing thoughts.

Audience surveys at the conclusion of the discussion indicated that many thought that the candidates could have been better informed on the issues discussed, but that overall the forum was helpful and worthwhile, though the scheduling of the event could have been improved with spring break interfering.

-Julie Ward, LWV LPC reporting

SWCD Water Seminar

Although an era of range wars and “monkey-wrenching” isn’t totally bygone, a new era appears to be emerging. An era of consensus and collaboration. That was the theme – “Common Causes” -- of this year’s Southwestern Water Conservation District’s (SWCD) 28th annual water seminar on April 2.

Featured speakers were conservationist and photographer John Fielder and T. Wright Dickinson, a board member of the Colorado Cattleman’s Association and owner of the Vermillion Ranch in NW Colorado. Fielder and Dickinson were once opponents in how best to conserve land and water.

Fielder said that over his 20 years of nature photography he has learned that cattle are a substitute for the once dominant ungulates (i.e., buffalo) in our state that disturbed and fertilized the soil of the riparian lands that protect our water. Dickinson proclaims a “conversion” that has left him an advocate of conservation easements and friend of Fielder who included Vermillion in his book “Ranches of Colorado.”

Representatives from organizations such as the Animas Stakeholders Group, Dolores River Plan Working Group, and the River Protection Work Group spoke about consensus building among diverse and apparent opposing interests. These groups are involving the public, industry and government in protecting our waterways while allowing for some level of development. The “balancing act” is between private rights and conservation. Environmental organizations, agriculture, industry, governmental agencies, tribal governments, recreational companies, property owners, and others all have conflicting interests relating to the protection and use of water and legislation to secure those interests.

However, the past does not equal the future. It was agreed that organizations might more effectively preserve and protect our water resources and the biodiversity of our ecosystems by consensus rather than conflict. Fielder said that Colorado needs to protect its farms and ranches if for nothing else than to protect its water.

We can only hope that consensus in planning and decision-making is an emerging trend that will bring disparate parties together to protect *all* of our natural resources.

-Deanna Collins

Observing the DHS Election

This morning, April 14, I was at Durango High School for about 2 hours assisting with the Student Council election. This was the result of an invitation from new LWV member Tiffany Lee when Trish and I did her orientation. The freshmen, sophomores, and juniors each had their own campaign and election. For about 45 minutes before the voting, the students heard campaign speeches from the candidates for their grade.

There were two electronic voting machines for each grade. Two or three students checked the voters in and oversaw the voting process. The students showed their student ID, waited in line to vote, voted, and received an “I Voted” sticker. Donna Elder and Tiffany Lee were there from the County Clerk’s office as well as: Amy Phillips, Durango City Clerk; Susan Hakanson, Administrative Staff for La Plata County; and myself, representing our LWV.

It was a lot of fun. I told Donna we really appreciated the invitation and would love to help out with similar events in the future. She assured me she would let us know whenever we are able to help.

-Marilyn Sandstrom

Final Report – Census 2010 Committee

The weather foiled our attempt to staff a booth at the railroad station during Durango Bluegrass Meltdown Festival April 16 and 17 as our county’s Complete Count Committee’s contribution to the March to the Mailbox Census 2010 national effort and our swan song. Our eight volunteers had prepared to take 2-3 hour shifts to hand out T-shirts, hats and the remainder of our fabric grocery. Instead, our bags went with the T-shirts and hats, trinkets and flyers to a few local schools, to boost participation of our hard-to-reach minorities.

Our op ed piece on the redistricting process following the decennial census was printed in The Durango Herald Sunday April 25 (http://www.lwvlaplata.org/Census2010.html#Census_News). The article precipitated emails about how to get a census form now that the QACs are closed. **The only way to be counted now if you didn’t get a form is to call the Grand Junction Census Office at 970-361-3712, give them your name and address, and a census worker will call on you.**

Thanks to committee members: Nadine Ancel, representative to the La Plata County Complete Count Committee, Trish Pegram, Nancy Mead, Marilyn Sandstrom, Elena Cuevas and Don Gordon for all their hard work. Our final report and our op ed piece will be posted on our website.

-Marilyn Brown, Census 2010 Committee Chair



Cherry Miloe, New Member

I came to be when my mom and dad went to Manitou/Colorado Springs on R&R, before he went to Europe at the end of WWII! Ever since, I have been vacationing in that area, later went to U of Denver, and lived in Denver a couple of times. My family homesteaded in SE Colorado in the 1800's. I am a fourth generation Oklahoman, where many relatives still live. I moved to Los Angeles in 1947 and grew up there. I was an avid sports person: Surfing, Body Surfing, Tennis, Skiing, Volleyball, and Swimming. I grew up in the Christian Science Church, which has colored my outlook on life and others, and made me who I am.

I have a son with a pregnant wife in Denver! He is third person down in the city manager's office of Boulder. My daughter and husband have been with the DOE in the nuclear and non-proliferation sections. She is now a staffer with the Appropriations Committee for the House, being an informed source in the nuclear, banking, elections, Secret Service, TSA, transportation, Homeland Security, etc. fields! My kids amaze me, but I raised them to be responsible, curious, and well-informed, so why am I so surprised at their accomplishments?

I have two cats and three Chocolate Labs who keep my life full and outdoors a great deal, which is where I am most comfortable!

I am naturally interested in many areas of life and am a protector of all living beings, especially those who cannot stand up for themselves. I am an environmentalist, sustainability supporter, "recyclist", California teacher who has taught 5 - 65 year-old students, CA Realtor, and love to learn. Hence, joining the League is a natural step in my growth! The Great Decisions class has provided interesting learning for me!

At this time, I enjoy being a volunteer with the American Red Cross, the La Plata County Democratic Party on the Executive Board, the League of Women Voters, the Southwest FireWise Council, and the Women's Resource Center!



Dorothy Newell, President March 1975 – April 1977

My League Life

In 1958 a neighbor who was Jefferson County LWV president came to my door and asked me to accompany her to a LWV meeting. Up until then I had been quite active in party politics but didn't know all that much about world politics. The meeting was about Aid and Trade and I was hooked. After moving to Durango the LWV continued to be an important part of my life. I was elected president before long and what a dizzying ride that was. I was hosting people like Nancy Dick, the lieutenant governor, in my home and introducing people like Joe Shoemaker, chair of the State Budget Committee and considered the most important man in Colorado. Community leaders called me for LWV opinions regarding various issues. I spent at least 40 hours a week on League and of course did not have the benefit of a computer or even a copier - except for that horrible mimeograph machine.

Soon there were male members, one of whom was to become my second husband. He was editorial page editor of the Herald and Morley wanted him to be informed as to our concerns and activities. I was able to go to the National Convention in New York City (still my only time being there) where one of the highlights was having Mark Russell, the political comedian, in our midst all of one day. His speech was a riot. I was one of the few chosen to be interviewed by one of the major columnists of the time – John Barbour.

Some important issues were: Saving the old post office building (we lost), implementing a river trail (we won), supporting a bottle bill (we lost), writing a new city charter (some Leaguers were elected to the Charter Commission – including me). A special accomplishment was our sponsorship of the Energy Center with member Susan Dahl as executive director.

-Dorothy Newell

<h1>Calendar</h1>			LWV La Plata County www.lwvlaplata.org 296 Highland Hill Drive Durango, CO 81301
May			
Sat 1	Celebrate CO's Merit-based Judicial System		
Thu 6	MSI's San Juan Air Quality Forum, 8:30-5, FLC Student Union, tours: May 7		
Sat 8	LPEA Annual Meeting/Election, Fort Lewis College		
Tue 12	Board meeting, conf. room, Durango Doughworks, 2411 N. Main, 9:45-12, plan to order		
Sat 15	LWVLPC Annual Mtg., potluck lunch 9-12 noon, Ann Flatten's home		
Fri-Sat 21-22	LWVCO Council, 12:15 Friday-12:15 Sat, Lake Shore Lodge, Estes Park		
June			
11-17	LWVUS Convention, Atlanta		
25-26	Leadership Retreat, Best Western, Frisco		
Summer			
July 3	Voter Registration, Farmers Market		
Sept 25	Voter Registration, Farmers Market		
<p><i>Farewell to Granny D! The tireless campaign finance reformer and supporter of public funding of campaigns, who hiked across the country from Pasadena to Washington, D.C., at the age of 89 in 1999, died March 9 at age 100. According to her obituary in <u>The Economist</u> (March 27, 2010), at the time of her death she was in the midst of drafting a letter to the nine 'bastards' who recently gutted the McCain-Feingold law.</i></p>			
<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>			
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