



League of Women Voters  
Of La Plata County

VOTER

Volume 9, Issue 4

Sixty-three Years Serving La Plata County  
97 members

November-December, 2009

[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

[www.lwvlaplata.org](http://www.lwvlaplata.org)

[www.lwvcolorado.org](http://www.lwvcolorado.org)

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*3 Flyers:  
Great Decisions  
Empowerment:  
One Heart at a Time  
Census 2010 Meeting*

**9-R School District  
constituents:  
Have you turned in your  
ballot yet? Deadline is  
November 3, 7 pm**

**Have you sent in your  
membership renewal? We  
need every one of you...  
Call Marilyn Sandstrom,  
[mjschili@bresnan.net](mailto:mjschili@bresnan.net) or  
764-4596. Our goal is 100  
members for the LWVUS’s  
90<sup>th</sup> year!**



*Mark your calendars!*

**November and December Meetings**

*Don’t forget Ellen and Ross Park’s ‘**Empowerment: One Heart at a Time**’,  
an FLC Life Long Learning program,  
Thursday, November 12, 7 pm, 130 Noble Hall*

\* \* \*

**Census 2010 in La Plata County and  
the Reapportionment and Redistricting Processes**

**Tuesday, November 17  
12 – 2 pm**

**Christ the King Church, 495 Florida Road, Durango  
Brown bag lunch – coffee, tea provided**

What La Plata County and the LWV are doing – Nadine Ancel  
Current Reapportionment and Redistricting Processes – Trish Pegrum  
Relevant LWVCO and LWVUS Positions – Marilyn Brown  
(see article on page 2)

\* \* \*

**Holiday Potluck Social**

**Saturday, December 5  
11 – 1 pm**

**Deanna Collins’ home  
Speaker: our own Gail Harris, retired Navy captain**

Gail’s memoir, A Woman’s War: The Professional and Personal Journey of the  
Navy’s First African American Female Intelligence Officer,  
will be released December 28.

**Come for a sneak preview!**

(Invitation to follow at the end of November with driving directions.)

### President's Message

One of the most fascinating aspects of our community is the people who choose to live here. The diversity of experience - fifth generation rancher, retired nuclear scientist, indigenous Native American, recent city refugee – is amazing. Our League consists of men and women from all over the country and people who grew up in La Plata County.

Leaguer Gail Harris is a new Durangoan who was raised in the ghettos of Newark, New Jersey. Her dream was to be a Naval Intelligence Officer. She didn't know about the federal law that prohibited women in combat, so she forged ahead. In 1973, she became the first woman in Naval History to serve as an Intelligence Officer in a Navy aviation squadron and, at her retirement in December 2001, she was the highest ranking African-American female in the Navy.

Gail's new book, [A Woman's War: The Professional and Personal Journey of the Navy's First African American Female Intelligence Officer](#), will be released on December 28<sup>th</sup>. This inspirational memoir follows her career as she provides intelligence support to military operations while battling the status quo, office bullies, and politics.

Our December membership meeting is a potluck social. Join us at the Skyridge home of Deanna Collins on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> from 11-1. Bring a dish to share and we'll provide beverages. After social hour, we will hear Gail speak about the U.S. Intelligence community as she provides insight on the National security affairs arena while weaving stories from her book. Invitations and directions will be emailed later in November. Hope to see you then,

-Stephanie Huss

### Census 2010 and Redistricting

We're sure you have heard that the reason to be sure to send in your census form is to enable the county, tribe, state, etc., to get as much money as possible back from the federal government. But do you know why the Constitution requires a decennial census and (hint) what the difference between reapportionment and redistricting is? Do you know where the LWV stands on these issues?

Three Leaguers, Nadine Ancel, Trish Pegram, and Marilyn Brown, have prepared an informal discussion to bring you up to date on what's going on in the county, what we as a LWV are doing, what current apportionment and redistricting processes are and what our state and national LWV positions on these issues are.

Join us Tuesday, November 17, 12-2 pm at Christ the King Church for a review and Q/A where you can ask all the questions you want and see the literature that will be going out, including a sample of the actual form. We also have a very interesting map of the results of the 2000 census. Spend your lunch hour with us, then go out into the community and spread the word.

-Marilyn Brown

### Morley

Durango lost an icon on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Morley Cowles Ballantine, chairman and editor of *The Durango Herald*, was the La Plata County League's first 50-year member, having joined in 1954. She served on the LWVCO state board in the 1960's and was an early advocate for running efficient meetings. In the mid-70's she served on the state Land Use Commission. "Let's ask Morley" was a rallying cry when we needed to know how to get something done.



Our first 50-year member, Morley C. Ballantine, editor of *The Durango Herald*, shown here with her husband Arthur, dining with President Kennedy and other newspaper businessmen in the early 1960s, died recently.



**Pat Cummins, Western Governors' Assn., speaks while Bob Thompson, left, retired ASU Faculty associate, and Mike Silverstein, center, CO's Air Pollution Control Division, await their turns.**

### Air Quality Forum

Over 80 people attended the *Four Corners Air Quality and Our Health* forum held on October 8<sup>th</sup> as part of the Life Long Learning Series at Fort Lewis College.

During the two-hour event, Mike Silverstein, Deputy Division Director for Colorado's Air Pollution Control Division, discussed toxins in our air that are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and air monitoring in our area by the State of Colorado. He said the Four Corners is currently under the EPA ground level ozone standard but if the standard is lowered, our region, along with most of the country, could be in non-attainment.

Pat Cummins with the Western Regional Air Partnership of the Western Governors' Association described the Four Corners Power Plant in NW New Mexico as the dirtiest coal-fired power plant in the U.S. in terms of tons of nitrous oxides (NOx) emitted each year. The Four Corners region is downwind from that power plant and the San Juan Generating Station, which has the 18<sup>th</sup> highest NOx emissions in the country. NOx is a precursor for ground level ozone, which reduces visibility along with dust and causes respiratory problems such as asthma.

Bob Thompson, retired faculty associate from Arizona State University and Chair of the Applied Sciences Department at Glendale Community College, said that coal-fired power plants are the major source of mercury in our air, one of the three most toxic substances on the planet according to the EPA. Mercury is a neurotoxin that affects the brain and can cause autism, ADHD and Alzheimer's among other disorders. Unborn fetuses and infants are the most susceptible.

(continued next column)

All three speakers referred to proposed EPA tightening of regulations for air toxins with the current White House administration. While technologies on new cars and controls on oil and gas wells have helped reduce air toxins, increases in industrialization, catastrophic wildfires, and dust from drought, overgrazing and dirt roads to wells, and a proposed coal-fired power plant have heightened concerns over air quality and health of residents and visitors to the Four Corners area.

Thanks to San Juan Citizens Alliance and Mountain Studies Institute for co-sponsoring this event with the LWV.

-Deanna Collins

### 9-R Candidate Forum

What with the CitySpan10 simulcast of the October 15th 9-R School Board Candidates Forum and with only one contested seat (that for District E), the audience of 30 was about equally divided between League members and others. League member Ross Park ably moderated the forum, which was organized by Ellen Park.

All four candidates present at the forum cited extensive personal and professional experience with education and were clearly committed to making Durango's schools worthwhile and successful. Ellen Park ably impersonated the fifth candidate, Julie Levy, who was out of town on business, reading her statement as rapidly as Julie might have delivered it herself.

After their initial statements, Bill Bowlby and Joe Colgan, vying to represent District E, Andrew Burns, and Jeff Schell, both running unopposed, fielded questions about such issues as nutrition in the schools, national standards, the ideal and practical teacher-student ratio, ways to empower teachers, the budget, the appropriate roles of non-college and college bound tracks and the focus on day care.

As a parent, former elementary and special education teacher, and as tradesman (he's a stone mason), Bill Bowlby cited his "boots on the ground" perspective and his desire to see a diverse Board. The Board's goal, he said, must be to foster curious, creative students who love learning and can engage in critical thinking.

Joe Colgan stressed his background in finance and education, as well as his work on the strategic plan. Implementing it, he said, will be tough and some strategies may have to be delayed or abandoned. He stressed that 21st century students will need to do much more than memorize facts. They'll need to be able to think, to communicate and compute.

Our thanks to the Latina Initiative for co-sponsoring the forum and helping us with card distribution and collection.

-Shaila Van Sickle



**Election judges, Donna Burr, right, and Carol Bynum, count ballots while Marilyn Sandstrom watches. Donna Elder, center, is elections official. Carol Mayes has her back to the camera.**

### **Poll Watching for 9-R School Board Ballot Counting**

On October 23, Marilyn Sandstrom served for two hours as an official poll watcher for the counting of the ballots returned so far in the 9-R School Board election, which is run by the county. Seven election judges were counting ballots that day in the vault downstairs in the County Courthouse. She has written a detailed account of the process and of the criteria for serving as poll watcher. Look for more information in the January newsletter.

Her initial reaction was ‘The whole process made me very comfortable with the ballot counting process. My opinion is that no one casting a ballot is being improperly disenfranchised. The Judges were very informative, open, friendly, and industrious!’

*-Marilyn Brown*

### **Great Decisions 2010**

This popular discussion series, co-sponsored by Durango Public Library, begins January 19 (the Tuesday session) and January 21 (the Thursday session). Topics this time include Special Envoys, Kenya and R2P, Global Crime, U.S.-China Security Relations, Global Financial Crisis, Russia and its Neighbors, the Persian Gulf and Peace-building and Conflict Resolution, all incredibly relevant. Order your briefing books now! The deadline is December 28<sup>th</sup>. Post your attached flyer on your fridge!



### **Stress-Free Moderating**

Have you watched certain televised political debates and thought they were less than fair? Attended our local forums and wondered if you too could moderate in the non-partisan, clear and organized fashion that is promoted and implemented by the League?

An excellent webinar on “Stress Free Debates Moderating”, offered by the League of Women Voters of the United States on October 6, was attended by seven LWV LPC members- Stephanie Huss, John Lyons, Gail Harris, Trish Pegram, Connie Jacobs, Missy Rodey and Ellen Park. The presenters were Marcia Merrins and Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti of LWVUS and Cheryl Graeve, Sr. Director, LWVUS Field Support Staff, was the organizer. What is a webinar? It is an internet (web) based conference (seminar) accessed by pre-registering, then clicking on the web site set up for this particular conference. This one required a computer, Wi-Fi internet access and a telephone line (thanks to San Juan Citizens Alliance for making their wired conference room and phone line available). The webinar included the presentation of PowerPoint charts followed by polling and Q/A session, allowing full participation between local and state LWV audiences scattered around the US, and the presenters in DC. The presenters spoke over a standard telephone line, referencing the information onscreen and the audience responded, in our case, using speakerphones.

The presentation addressed issues ranging from managing questions (for example, written or live from the audience), preparing for what could go wrong (for example, no-shows) or dealing with difficult situations such as overtime (thank you, your time is up) or obstreperous (you are not being fair to others) candidates, and unruly attendees. Questions such as how to publicize a forum, what personnel are needed or can we ask people to join the League (yes!) were answered. Practical information for the moderator included making sure candidates names are correctly pronounced, having a prepared written script with pertinent information, and remaining completely impartial while recognizing that the moderator controls the event. We learned that FCC rules require that forums for federal candidates must be rebroadcast only in their entirety, and that states may have their own rules regarding video broadcast (our very own attorney member will check this out for us). We also learned that we can also structure forums as informal debates, with candidates addressing each others’ answers.

All this material is available on the LWV website For Members section (you must login first) by visiting [www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Voters\\_Service\\_Chair](http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Voters_Service_Chair) and looking at the Toolbox. Included are the PowerPoint presentation, FAQs, and a sample moderator script.

If you would like to be trained to moderate a local forum, please contact Stephanie Huss.

*-Ellen Park*

### **Workshop on Dealing with Drought**

Recent warming in Colorado is much greater than is being seen globally, according to Western Water Assessment climate scientists. They held a one-day workshop, attended by about 30 stakeholders, in Durango on October 22<sup>nd</sup> focused on *Dealing with Drought: Adapting to Changing Climate*. The goals of the workshop were to understand fundamentals of climate change, to discuss lessons learned from the most recent drought period, and to talk about challenges Colorado will face in the future as a consequence of climate change. The workshop brought together a group of people working in sectors that are directly affected by drought and climate to discuss vulnerabilities, adaptation measures and barriers to implementation.

Colorado is a mid-latitude location so we experience large seasonal changes in solar input due to the earth's rotational axis. Our state is also in an interior continental location far from oceans and other atmospheric moisture sources. These facts combined with our high elevation and complex mountain topography add up to a climate that is unlike that of any other state. Colorado has warmed 2°F since the 1970's. Current projections are that it will warm an additional 2.5°F by 2025 and 4°F by 2050 (relative to the 1950 – 1999 baseline). However, according to 22 model projections, we will experience little change in annual precipitation.

### **Membership Renewals (as of October 25)**

If your name is not on this list, you know what to do!?!)

Judith Aitken	Barbara Cristol
Nadine Ancel	Tom Darnell
Helen Bair	Grace Deltscheff
Mary Barter	Lou Falkenstein
Harvey Becker	Ann Flatten
Suzanne Becker	Don Gordon
Sally Bellerue	Sharon Gordon
Daniel Black	Sue Griffith
Carol Blatnick	Gail Harris
Mary Ruth Bowman	Sue Herbst
Enid Brodsky	Marilyn Holland
Marilyn Brown	Doreen Hunter
Candice Carson	Paula Huntley
Virginia Cavanagh	Phil Huss
Pat Chatfield	Stephanie Huss
Vicki Coe	Bridget Irish
Joe Colgan	Connie Jacobs
Bill Collins	Steve Jacobs
Deanna Collins	Susan Koonce

With the same amount of precipitation projected, why are we concerned about drought and an increase in the number of more severe droughts? Even if the level of precipitation remains relatively constant, temperatures are rising, which causes increased evaporation of water in lakes and rivers and of moisture in the soil. Current warming trends are already impacting drought effects.

Colorado's water resources are sensitive to climate change, which poses new challenges to managing water. We need to examine our social/political/legal systems and ecosystems and determine how they will behave in unusual conditions. Climate is no longer stationary and projections of climate based on historic trends are becoming less reliable. Sectors ranging from agriculture to tourism to forest management will be affected. Water systems managers must look at sources of drinking water should a long and extended drought occur.


-Deanna Collins

### **New White Paper on Rural Health Care**

The LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force has put out a new paper of great interest to us: 'Rural Health Care: Where the Needs are Great and the Resources Are Few'. Go to [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org), click on Health Care in left panel, then click on Background Papers in right panel.

***Goal: 100 members in 2010, LWVUS's 90<sup>th</sup> Year***

Ed Lehner	Trish Pegram
Nancy Loftis	Steve Phillips
Jennifer Lopez	David Rich
John Lyons	Missy Rodey
Jane Marentette	Marilyn Sandstrom
Kim Martin	Barbara Shore
Phyllis Max	Elaine Slade
Marilyn McCord	Shaila Van Sickle
Messel McHugh	Edwin Villmoare
Nancy Mead	Julie Ward
Leigh Meigs	Beverly Wells
Tekla Miller	David Wright
Carolyn Moller	Karen Zink
Lynda Morris	Sidny Zink
Dorothy Newell	
Ellen Park	
Ross Park	
Jill Patton	
Pam Patton	

<h1>Calendar</h1>			<b>LWV La Plata County</b> <a href="http://www.lwvaplata.org">www.lwvaplata.org</a> 296 Highland Hill Drive Durango, CO 81301
<b>November</b>			
Tue 3	Durango 9-R School Board Election (Mail-in Only) 7 pm deadline		
Thur 12	Empowerment: One Heart at a Time, Ellen/Ross Park, Life Long Learning, 130 Noble Hall, 7 p.m.		
Tue 17	Census 2010 General Meeting, 12-2, Christ the King Church, brown bag lunch		
Tue 17	Membership Cmte Mtg, 2-3:30, Christ the King Church		
Thur 26	<b>HAPPY THANKSGIVING!</b>		
<b>December</b>			
Sat 5	Holiday Potluck Social, 11-1, Collins home, speaker: Gail Harris		
	<b>HAPPY HOLIDAYS!</b>		
	<i>See January newsletter for January Meetings...</i>		
<b>February</b>			
Sat 20	Legislative Lowdown, 9:30-11:30, Peaks Room, Dgo Rec Center, <b>Save the Date!</b>		
<p><i>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 <a href="http://www.lwvaplata.org">www.lwvaplata.org</a>. Contact Ross Park, webmaster, for a tutorial at <a href="mailto:eandrpark@aol.com">eandrpark@aol.com</a>.</i></p>			
<p><b>League Mission Statement:</b> 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><b>Join the League!</b> 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>			
		<b><u>Board of Directors</u></b>	
		<p><b>President</b> Stephanie Huss, 259-7263 <a href="mailto:stephanie@frontier.net">stephanie@frontier.net</a></p>	<p><b>Vice President</b> Trish Pegram, 382-8248 <a href="mailto:trishpegram@bresnan.net">trishpegram@bresnan.net</a></p>
		<p><b>Secretary</b> Grace Deltscheff, 259-3040 <a href="mailto:holgnd@frontier.net">holgnd@frontier.net</a></p>	<p><b>Treasurer</b> Nadine Ancel, 259-3675 <a href="mailto:ancelnm@yahoo.com">ancelnm@yahoo.com</a></p>
		<p><b>Health Care</b> Jill Patton, 385-4061 <a href="mailto:jgpatton@frontier.net">jgpatton@frontier.net</a></p>	<p><b>Membership</b> Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 <a href="mailto:mjschili@bresnan.net">mjschili@bresnan.net</a></p>
		<p><b>Env, Energy, Sustainability</b> Deanna Collins, 259-7845 <a href="mailto:dcdurango@msn.com">dcdurango@msn.com</a></p>	<p><b>Legislative Action*</b> Ellen Park, 247-8116 <a href="mailto:gellenpark@aol.com">gellenpark@aol.com</a></p>
		<p><b>Great Decisions*</b> Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 <a href="mailto:patchwork@gobrainstorm.net">patchwork@gobrainstorm.net</a></p>	<p><b>Website*</b> Ross Park, 247-8116 <a href="mailto:eandrpark@aol.com">eandrpark@aol.com</a></p>
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		*Off-board	