



League of Women Voters
Of La Plata County

VOTER

Volume 8, Issue 2

Sixty-two Years Serving La Plata County
95 members

September, 2008

www.lwv.org

www.lwvaplata.org

www.lwvcolorado.org

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September is
Membership Renewal
Month!!

Send in the inserted
membership form.



Mark your calendars!

September and October Meetings

LWV Fall Kick-off Gathering

Tuesday, September 16

9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Jane Marentette’s home

Pennies for Peace DVD, “Three Cups of Tea” – short book discussion
Update on LWV activities

**Safer, More Compassionate World 2008 presents
Greg Mortenson, humanitarian and author of
“Three Cups of Tea”**

Thursday, September 18, 7 p.m.

Whalen Gym, Fort Lewis College

Open seating, doors open at 6:15 p.m.

There is a waiting list for tickets. If you will be unable to use your tickets,
please let Ellen Park know (gellenpark@aol.com or 247-8116).

League members, their children and grandchildren are also invited to attend
the earlier presentation by local children of "Pennies for Peace", 1:45-2:30,
Hesperus Peace Park, Fort Lewis College.

County Commissioner and District Attorney Candidate Forums*

Wednesday, October 1 – Bayfield Town Hall

Monday, October 6 – Durango City Council Chambers

Tuesday, October 7 – Ignacio Library

Ballot Issue Forums*

Wednesday, October 15 – Ignacio Library

Thursday, October 16, Durango City Council Chambers

Tuesday, October 22 – Bayfield Town Hall

**All forums are 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.*

Coordinator's Message

We're launching LWV year 2008-09 with our 'Kick Off Meeting' on Tuesday morning, September 16 from 9:30 to 11:30 at Jane Marentette's home, 201 Hillcrest Drive, Durango.

We'll view a delightful 10-minute video of 'Pennies for Peace' that shows what's going on in schools to raise money for Greg Mortenson's work in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It's quite amazing, starring his very poised young daughter. We'll follow that up with a short review/discussion of Three Cups of Tea. This promises to be interesting whether you've read the book or not! We should be quite ready for the exciting evening of September 18 when Greg Mortenson will speak at the FLC gym.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all after the summer and hearing what's happening with League around La Plata County. What an Autumn!

Welcome back to the new League year!

-Sally Bellerue

Directions to the Marentette home (201 Hillcrest Drive)**From the South-end of Main Street:**

Take College Dr. across town past E. Eighth Ave.; College Dr. will then become Goeglein Gulch Rd. Take Goeglein for about 1 ½ miles up the hill, past the roundabout, past the Skyridge entrance, to Hillcrest Dr. Turn right up Hillcrest Dr. Jane's house is the 6th one on the left.

From the North-end of Main Street:

Take 32nd St. to E. Animas Rd. (C.R. 250). Turn right and go a short distance to Florida Rd. (C.R. 240). Go another short distance to N. College Dr. Turn left on N. College Dr. and follow College Dr. up the hill. College Dr. will become Goeglein Gulch Rd. The golf course will be on your right. Turn left onto Hillcrest Dr. and proceed up the hill. Jane's house is the 6th one on the left.

Membership Renewal Month!

September is membership renewal time for the League of Women Voters of La Plata County. We very much appreciate your past support, and we hope you will join us again this next year.

As a League member you are part of a grass-roots organization at work in La Plata County, the state of Colorado, and the U.S. levels of government. Locally, this has been a busy summer as 18 members have been registering voters throughout the county. This fall will find members staffing candidate forums, distributing and presenting information on ballot issues, and helping to help educate high school students about the November election. Other activities of the League in the next several months include co-sponsorship of a talk by Greg Mortenson, author of "Three Cups of Tea", and a presentation on climate change by Dr. Kristen Averyt, a research scientist from Boulder.

Membership in the La Plata County LWV has been growing in the past several years, and we now have 95 members. These numbers include 2 Life Members (members for more than 50 years) and 15 men. At any given time, some of our members are very active, providing splendid leadership and experience to the organization, while others support the League with their dues, contributions, and occasional attendance at meetings. We value the help of all our members in support of our goal to encourage the informed participation of citizens in their government.

Please renew your League membership before September 30. You will find a renewal membership form inserted in this newsletter. Please complete it and mail it to treasurer Nadine Ancel. *Members who joined at or after our May annual meeting do not need to renew. You have paid for the upcoming year. Those members include Kellie Hotter, Barbara Shore, Trish Pegram, Connie Jacobs and Steve Jacobs. Thanks!!*

-Sue Herbst

Newspaper in Education Project

The Herald has set a date in late August for printing 1500 copies of the sixteen-page version of our "Electing the President" booklet. 1200 copies are for La Plata County high school students and 300 are for Montezuma County students. Many thanks to the Herald! The teachers, Dale Garland at Durango HS, Barbara Fjerstad at Ignacio, and Derrick Martin at Bayfield have received email copies of the longer version with learning exercises so they can pick ideas from it to use with their students. The Herald has agreed to print 500 extra copies to be placed in libraries and at the front desk at the Herald. Sue Herbst will assist with Durango High, Jane Marentette with Ignacio, and Pam Patton with Bayfield. Hopefully, the booklets, along with copies of the books "Choosing the President 2008" and "Colorado, The State We're In", will be in the teachers' hands not later than the last week in August.

-Ann Flatten

Voter Registration Update

The day after the primary, those doing Voter Registration met to bask in their success so far. The group had been to 18 places, registered 99 voters, and handed out 98 registration forms to be mailed to the county clerk. Nadine Ancel was recognized for having gone to 5 or those places and participating in 27 registrations. Way to go, Nadine!

For the remainder of August and during September we will continue to register voters. Plans are in place to go to the Ignacio Library, Farmers' Market, Commons Building, Women's' Resource Center, Four Corners, and the Durango Senior Center.

-Marilyn Sandstrom



Nadine displays her award for registering voters while Sue Herbst looks on.

LWVUS Calls for Moratorium

The following letter was sent to our local papers pursuant to the announcement of LWVUS call for a 10-year moratorium on coal-fired electric power plants:

“The League of Women Voters of the United States has called for a 10-year moratorium on new construction of coal-fired electric power plants. The LWV believes that there must be immediate and aggressive action to halt

climate change and has carefully examined the many facets of energy policy before taking this stand.

Coal is the single largest source of global warming pollution in the U.S., with power plants responsible for 33 percent of carbon dioxide emissions. This new action by LWVUS reinforces the LWV of La Plata County's consistent efforts to question the acceptability of the proposed Desert Rock Energy Project on Navajo lands in northwestern New Mexico, now going through the approval process.

Burning more coal now is too big a risk for too many people worldwide. Because of this pollution, we already face increasingly severe heat waves and droughts, intensifying hurricanes and floods, disappearing glaciers and more wildfires. If left unchecked, the effects will be catastrophic for our country and our planet. Unfortunately, the disastrous effects are often most severely felt by women in developing countries, whose responsibilities include procurement of water and food for their families.

Today, there is no environmentally sound use of coal. Many hope that carbon dioxide can be captured and stored underground but this technology has never been demonstrated on a commercial scale.

In the meantime, instead of coal, we must look to clean energy alternatives. Many states, including Colorado with Governor Ritter's New Energy Economy, are making great strides in energy conservation and efficiency, and development of renewable energy resources. California has been able to keep per capita energy consumption essentially constant for three decades while enjoying a growing economy. Wind and solar power are ready to make large contributions to economic growth.

Now it is time to stop building more coal-fired power plants. We must protect future generations, and we must protect ourselves, against the climate changes that are degrading our world. Please check our website www.lwvlaplata.org for a fact sheet on the moratorium, a list of Frequently Asked Questions and the press release announcing the call for the 10-year moratorium.”

San Juan Generating Station

Members of the Four Corners Air Quality Group toured the San Juan Generating Station in northern New Mexico August 21 and learned that Unit 2, the last unit to be upgraded to meet the standards agreed to in the consent decree resulting from the lawsuit by Grand Canyon Trust and Sierra Club, will be completed next spring. The larger units 3 and 4 have already been completed and work on Unit 1 is now in progress. This is a welcome development!!

-Marilyn Brown

<p>Ballot Issues Speaker's Bureau</p> <p>There may be as many as 19 state ballot issues and one local issue on the November 4 ballot. Many are very confusing and complicated. The education arm of the local LWV is ready to provide speakers to groups interested in hearing the pros and cons of each issue. Please call Stephanie Huss at 259-7263 or stephanie@frontier.net if you need a speaker. We will also hold ballot issue forums in Bayfield, Ignacio and Durango (see front page or our website).</p>	<p>The first meeting of the speaker's bureau committee will be held on Thursday, October 2 from 12-2 at the Common Sense Café. The second meeting will be held on Monday, October 6 from 1-5 at the same location. The pros and cons will be presented via PowerPoint.</p> <p>Following are the proposed state-wide ballot issues being researched by the state LWV, as of 8/15/08. You may read each of the issues and the draft analysis on the Legislative Council website www.leg.state.co.us.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">-Stephanie Huss</p>
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State Ballot Issues Scheduled to Appear on the Ballot in November (as of 8/15/08)

(Please note that this is a moving target until the Secretary of State certifies the ballot on September 8.)

Designation	Type*	Title	Description
Issues referred by the Legislature:			
Ref. L	C	Qualifications for Serving in the Legislature	Lowers the age from 25 to 21 to qualify for serving in the state legislature
Ref. M	C	Obsolete Constitutional Provisions Relating to Land Value Increases	Repeals a planting exemption that says hedges, orchards and trees are included in assessing lands for taxation
Ref. N	C	Obsolete Constitutional Provisions Relating to Alcoholic Beverages	Repeals laws pertaining to spurious and drugged liquors
Ref. O	C	Citizen-initiated State Laws	Increases the number of signatures needed for a citizen initiative to get on the ballot as a constitutional amendment to 6% of last general election for Governor. Decreases for statutory initiative to 4%. Also, 8% of signatures would have to come from each congressional district. Protection from change by legislature for statutory initiatives for 5 years.
Citizen Initiatives:			
Amend. 46	C	Discrimination and Preferential Treatment by Governments	Would prohibit discrimination or preferential treatment based on race, sex, ethnicity or national origin in public education, hiring and contracting.
Amend. 47	C	Prohibition on Mandatory Labor Union Dues (Right to Work)	Prohibits requiring workers to join and pay dues to a union as a condition of employment.
Amend. 48	C	Definition of a Person	Defines a person as any human being from the moment of fertilization and protects the rights of such a person in the state Constitution. Does not define moment of fertilization.
Amend. 49	C	Limit Deductions from Public Employee Paychecks	Would allow deductions from payroll checks for governmentally required items such as Social Security, Medicare, etc. and charitable contributions. Union dues would not be allowed.
Amend. 50	C	Limited Gaming in Central City, Black Hawk and Cripple Creek	Increases bet limit from \$5 to \$100 with 22% of revenues over that collected in fiscal year 2007 going to gaming towns and 78% to financial aid and to higher education.)
Amend. 51	C	State Sales Tax for Services for People with Developmental Disabilities	Sales tax increase in 2009 of \$.01 per \$10 purchase and another \$.01 per \$10 in 2010 to fund long term services for those unable to care for themselves.

*C = Constitutional amendment; S = statutory law

Possible Ballot Initiatives Pending Certification by Secretary of State in early September

*C=Constitutional amendment; S= statutory law

Designation	Type*	Title	Description
Init. #59	C	Campaign Contributions from Government Contractors	Would bar companies and shareholders of more than 10% of shares, unions and officers and extended family from contributing to parties or political candidates for the duration of and two years after the contract, if they have a sole source—non- bid- contract—over \$100,000 to any governmental entity in Colorado.
Init. # 74	S	Criminal Accountability of Business Executives	Establishes criminal liability of Business Entities & their Executive Officials found guilty of criminal conduct.
Init. #76	C	Allowable Causes for Employee Discharge or Suspension	Establishes allowable reasons for employee dismissal or suspension.
Init. #82	C	Discrimination and Certain/Preferential Treatment by Colorado Governments	Defines Preferential Treatment and allows some affirmative action programs not based on quotas or only points for sex, race, etc.
Init. #92	C	Employer Responsibility for Health Insurance	Would require employers with 20+ employees to provide health insurance for employee and dependents or offer participation in a new state authority plan and requires the legislature to set up a state medical authority to administer the program.
Init. #93	S	Safe Workplace	Employers must maintain a safe and healthy workplace.
Init. #113	S	Severance Tax- Oil and Gas	Would eliminate property tax credit for those producers paying Severance Taxes on oil and gas. Redistributes severance tax revenues to create Severance Tax Stabilization Trust Fund-56%, Severance Tax Trust Fund- 22% and local government severance tax fund-22%, 60% of stabilization fund going to higher ed scholarships, rest going to wildlife habitat, clean energy, impacted area transportation projects, drinking/wastewater projects.
Init. #120	C	Severance Tax – Transportation	Creates the Colorado Transportation Trust Fund from state's share (50%) of the severance taxes collected. 90% of monies in excess of revenue collected over the previous year's total, adjusted for inflation will go to fund. First priority goes to relieving I-70 congestion.
Init. #126	C	Education Funding	Changing education funding and ending TABOR refunds. Creates an education fund through a 0.33% tax on all Federal taxable income and requires education funding at 1% plus inflation through 2012 and no less than inflation thereafter.

Vote 18 Project

Another project discovered by Marilyn Sandstrom at the National Convention is "Vote 18". It is an active exercise that takes only one class period and demonstrates how important each vote is. Kim Martin (FLC professor and League member) is going to train her honors class students how to lead this exercise and, hopefully, the teachers will want to take advantage of this opportunity to use FLC students as role models, not only this election year but each semester as part of their civics/government or social studies classes. Each teacher has received email copies of the manual, summary and lesson plan and when we deliver their "Electing the President" material, they will also receive a DVD that demonstrates the lesson with a class of students.

Esther Chapman, from Fort Lewis College's Center for Civic Engagement, who attended a recent meeting with Kim, Marilyn, Ann and others to discuss ways to get FLC students involved in the election process, is very excited about the Vote 18 project and will accompany us to meet the teachers to see if there is a way her students can assist the schools or classes with Vote 18 or in any other way. Those of you who signed up to help with the project have not been forgotten. You will be contacted as soon as we know just what help the schools need.

–Ann Flatten

Nuclear Power Primer**by LWV member Bill Collins**

[Author's Note: This article is an attempt to provide some background information to assist in making informed judgments with regard to nuclear power. This is a very emotional and political topic so most of the available information is biased and conflicting. Much of the negativity is driven by the fear of radioactivity which dates back to the atomic bombs dropped in WWII, followed by the Chernobyl and Three Mile Island accidents and finally the controversy of how to deal with the nuclear waste. Against this is the need to increase the availability of electrical power while reducing the use of fossil fuels because of their effect on the environment and dealing with the security and economic concerns from importing seventy percent of our oil. I have tried to provide information without opinions and left it up to the references to present different sides of the issues.]

Nuclear Power Basics

Like fossil fuel power plants, nuclear power plants produce electricity by heating water to make steam that is used to drive turbines. A nuclear power plant produces the heat in the reactor core through the fission (splitting) of uranium and plutonium atoms. Naturally occurring uranium is a mixture of Uranium 235 (about 0.7%) and Uranium 238 (about 99.3%). Fuel rods in the reactor core must have the Uranium 235 enriched to a concentration of three to five percent. When a Uranium 235 atom captures a neutron the atom will fission releasing substantial amounts of heat energy and two or three neutrons. The neutrons from the fission are "slowed down" so they are more easily captured by Uranium 235 atoms. Control rods that absorb neutrons are lowered and raised to control the fission reaction rate. The Uranium 238 atom is more stable and when it captures a slow neutron it will be transmuted to Plutonium 239 that is fissionable by slow neutrons. By the time that the Uranium 235 in the fuel has been depleted to the point that it must be replaced, plutonium is contributing more than half the power the plant generates. For a "once-through" process where the spent fuel is treated as nuclear waste, only 1% of the potential energy of the mined uranium is used and a large amount of radiotoxic nuclear waste is created.

Essentially all commercial nuclear power plants worldwide utilize a thermal reactor where water is

circulated through the core to remove heat and to slow down the neutrons. In the pressurized water thermal reactor, water in the primary reactor loop is pressurized to around 150 atmospheres to prevent boiling when it is circulated through the reactor core that has an operating temperature of about 300 degrees Celsius. Heat is transferred to a secondary water loop that operates at a lower pressure and thus produces steam that is used to drive a power turbine. In the boiling water thermal reactor, water is at a lower pressure so steam is created in the core eliminating the need for a secondary water loop.

The reactor core is housed in a steel and concrete containment vessel that is typically three to four feet thick to protect against radiation leakage during normal operation or in case of an accident. Unfortunately the Chernobyl reactor, unlike the Three Mile Island reactor, was not in a containment vessel.

Reactors are categorized by generations. The prototype reactors built in the 1950s and early 1960s were Gen I. Most of the existing commercial reactors were built from the 1960s to the early 1990s and are called Gen II. Improved safety and efficiency resulted in the Gen III reactors built since then. Gen IV reactors are new designs that are currently being researched and in some cases prototyped, and are several decades away from significant commercial development. The Gen IV prototypes must undergo extensive testing to verify they are safe before approval by the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission. They also need to become cost effective to be accepted by the financial community.

Nuclear Waste

The first nuclear waste is created when the mined uranium ore is milled to separate the uranium from all the other elements in the ore. The tailings have significant radioactivity primarily from decayed isotopes of Uranium 238. In the early days of nuclear activity, these tailings were stockpiled at the mills and often used as road base and other fill applications, as was the case in Durango. Currently, mill tailing are regulated and stored in a controlled facility. The second type of nuclear waste consists of the Uranium 238 tailings left over from the enrichment process. Again, these tailings are radioactive and must be regulated and stored. These tailings are less radioactive than naturally occurring uranium.

Nuclear Power Primer (cont.)

The third type of nuclear waste is the spent fuel from the nuclear power plants and is a mixture of three types. About 94% is depleted uranium that resembles natural uranium. About 5% are products from the fission of the Uranium 235 that are highly radioactive and “hot” for several years and after a decade or so, the radioactivity is dominated by cesium and strontium that are water-soluble and must be contained for about 300 years. The remaining 1% is the real problem as it consists of a blend of plutonium isotopes and americium that have long half-lives and require safe storage essentially forever (tens of thousands of years). None of this nuclear waste creates a nuclear proliferation risk. The spent fuel contains plutonium but its separation is a complex and difficult process.

The “holy grail” of nuclear waste is reprocessing of the spent fuel to separate the uranium and plutonium from other elements and completely reuse them to eliminate most of the volume and the elements having long half-lives. France, Great Britain and Russia have been running large reprocessing plants for more than a decade. To date, France is the only country that reuses some of the separated uranium and plutonium. This reprocessing is very costly and appears to create more problems than it solves. The United States abandoned this approach in the 1970’s because of concern over the spread of plutonium and even after the ban was lifted in the 1980’s has not commercially reconsidered it for economic reasons.

Countries continue to pursue better reprocessing and reuse technologies to deal with the nuclear waste and to make more efficient use of the uranium. The United States Advanced Fuel Cycle Initiative has the goal of reprocessing the spent fuel from thermal reactors to create a uranium and plutonium fuel that can be burned in fast neutron reactors to produce more energy. No weapons grade plutonium would be produced at any step in the process. This initiative is described in the December 2005 Scientific American article, “Smart Use of Nuclear Waste”. Counter arguments are given in the May 2008 Scientific American article, “Rethinking Nuclear Fuel Recycling” and the article “Nuclear Recycling Fails the Test” www.fpiif.org/fpifxt/5351.

A second initiative is the research and development of GEN IV nuclear reactor technology which is described

in the January 2002 Scientific American article “Next Generation Nuclear Power”. The September 2006 Scientific American article “The Nuclear Option” discusses both these initiatives and I found it to be the most useful technical article that advocates nuclear power. The article was based on the 2003 MIT study “The Future of Nuclear Power” which can be found at web.mit.edu/nuclearpower/.

A third initiative is the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) launched in 2006 to encourage the worldwide expansion of nuclear energy while avoiding the need for non-nuclear nations to develop their own uranium fuel enrichment or reprocessing technologies. Up to date information advocating these three initiatives is available at the Nuclear Energy Institute web site www.nei.org and the Department of Energy web site www.ne.doe.gov.

The House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee recommendations for the FY 2009 Department of Energy funding bill decreased funding for the Advanced Fuel Cycle Initiative to \$120 million from the \$302 million requested by the Administration, increased the funding for demonstrating the GEN IV nuclear reactor technology to \$200 million from the \$70 million requested by the Administration and provided no funding for the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, which it called poorly designed and poorly executed. It is too early to predict what the final funding bill will be. The American Institute of Physics web site www.aip.org/fyi/2008/ gives up-to-date science policy news.

The nuclear power community is in general agreement that all nuclear power plants built in the next several decades will use Gen III thermal reactors. The only exception might be small (100 MW) Gen IV high temperature gas reactors. This being the case, nothing will change in the generation of nuclear waste except the accumulation rate.

The official position of the United States government and nuclear power industry is to proceed with the Yucca Mountain storage facility. On June 3, 2008 the Department of Energy filed a license application with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for Yucca Mountain to be used for nuclear fuel waste and high-level radioactive waste. So far over \$8 billion has been

Check out the national LWV’s website, www.vote411.org, for election information.

Nuclear Power Primer (cont.)

spent on research and development and the cost to completion is estimated to be over \$96 billion. Completion is defined as the time when the facility is sealed forever. At least part of this cost will be paid out of the Nuclear Waste Fund that was established in 1982 by taxing the electricity produced by nuclear power. The fund has collected \$27 billion from which the \$8 billion has been paid. Unfortunately the tax has not been adjusted for inflation. In the meantime the spent fuel is first stored in cooling ponds and then placed in large steel and concrete containers for storage at the power plants. Since Yucca Mountain did not open as scheduled, the government is spending about \$300 million per year for this temporary storage. It has been suggested that the storage containers be stored at interim (maybe permanent) regional sites away from population centers. This would make the spent fuel available if recycling becomes feasible in the future. Another option is an underground facility in the salt formations of southeast New Mexico where a facility for the storage of nuclear weapons waste already exists.

The Nuclear Renaissance

The nuclear power renaissance is driven by the increasing need for more electrical power especially if the future for transportation will be batteries and fuel cells and if a carbon tax makes other forms of energy more competitive with fossil fuels. Initially, the government will heavily subsidize new nuclear power plants to restart the industry in this country. The 2005 energy bill passed by Congress included an estimated \$18 billion in subsidies for the first few nuclear power plants that would be built including liability protection in case of a nuclear accident, a production tax credit estimated to be at least \$6 billion and promised reimbursement of all costs up to \$500 million apiece for the first two power plants for any government-caused licensing delays. It is possible that the government will have to guarantee 100 % of the financing for the first few plants built. Various estimates give the cost of building a new 1000 MW plant as \$4 billion to \$8 billion. To sustain the nuclear power renaissance the financial establishment will have to be convinced that nuclear power is a good investment and state regulators will have to raise electric rates to recover the construction costs. In addition to cost, the availability of materials, components and technical know-how will limit the number of plants that will be built worldwide

in the coming decade. Currently, the steel reactor containment vessel is only available from a company in Japan that produces four or five vessels per year.

I believe that efficiency, nuclear, solar, wind, co-generation, bio-fuels, fuel cells and carbon sequestration all need to be vigorously pursued in the coming years with the energy producing winners being determined by the marketplace and public opinion.

Additional information:

- Wall Street Journal article “The Case For and Against Nuclear Power”
online.wsj.com/public/article_print/SB121432182593500119.html
- MSNBC article “New Nuclear Power a Wave or Just a Ripple”
www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16272910/.
- World Nuclear Association website
www.world-nuclear.org/ contains information about how nuclear works from uranium mining through the decommissioning of nuclear reactors.
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission website
www.nrc.gov/ contains information about current and proposed nuclear reactors, nuclear waste, nuclear materials and nuclear safety.

[The author, Bill Collins, a member of our LWV, was an electrical engineer and worked twenty-six years before retiring from Los Alamos National Laboratory. For most of these years, he was in the Computing Division where he specialized in data storage and networking. We asked him to refresh us on this topic because nuclear power is being talked about seriously again.]



**Sunflower field near Lowry Pueblo
Somebody is doing his part for the environment!**

Two Constitutions: Keeping Colorado Free
The Colorado Courts Celebrate Constitution Day
September 17, 2008

*Message from Chief Justice Mary Mullarkey
(written in 2006)*

[The anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution, September 17, must be commemorated each year as Constitution Day by order of the U.S. Congress, enacted in 2004. Schools receiving federal funds must provide educational programs about the U.S. Constitution to mark the day.]

In 1787, after many heated arguments about what form the new American government would take, the delegates to the constitutional convention in Philadelphia finished their draft of a document so filled with compromises that it wholly pleased none of them. The new U.S. Constitution divided the powers of government among three independent branches – legislative, executive, and judicial – requiring them to compromise among themselves and empowering each branch to check and balance the powers granted to each of the others. Most importantly, the U.S. Constitution did not simply list what the national government would do. It specifically listed what it could not do, thereby protecting the freedoms of the people and requiring still more compromises as the new nation governed itself. The American democracy, designed to require the compromising of disagreements, was born in disagreement: Of the 54 delegates from 12 states who attended the Constitutional Convention, 40 signed the document. The remainder did not.

Nearly a century later, 39 delegates to the Colorado constitutional convention gathered on December 20, 1876, in Denver. For the 87 days, they worked to draft the document that would become the constitution of the new state of Colorado. The delegates modeled the state constitution on the U.S. Constitution, including a Bill of Rights and dividing the powers of government into three branches that would check and balance each other, preserving the freedoms of the people. All 39 delegates signed the new constitution, but when it was submitted to the citizens of Colorado Territory for approval, 15,443 voted in favor of it, and 4,062 were opposed.

The role of the judicial branch of government, under both the U.S. Constitution and the Colorado Constitution, is to peacefully resolve disagreements

while balancing the rights and freedoms of the parties that disagree. The Colorado courts are proud to celebrate the freedoms guaranteed by our two constitutions.

Preambles

Colorado Constitution

We, the people of Colorado, with profound reverence for the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, in order to form a more independent and perfect government; establish justice; insure tranquility; provide for the common defense; promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the "State of Colorado".

United States Constitution

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Climate Change Speaker October 23

Our climate change speaker, Dr. Kristen Averyt, former IPCC staff scientist, is now employed by CIRES (Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences), University of Colorado, NOAA, as part of the Western Water Assessment. Her current project is analyzing the available climate change data for CO in order to attempt to predict the impact of climate change on our state. The report is due in early October to Governor Ritter and she will be able to discuss her findings when she speaks here in Durango on October 23 on climate change as part of the Life Long Learning series at Fort Lewis College.

The committee is busy enlisting co-sponsors and planning her visit. To date co-sponsors include the grantors, LWVUS Education Fund and Oxfam America; The Durango Herald and Cortez Journal; San Juan Citizens Alliance; Sustainability Alliance of SW CO and the Environmental Center, FLC. Her talk is co-hosted by Life Long Learning series organized by Professional Associates, FLC. She will be speaking in Cortez, sponsored by the Montezuma County LWV, the night before.

-Marilyn Brown

<h1>Calendar</h1>			LWV La Plata County www.lwvlaplata.org 296 Highland Hill Drive Durango, CO 81301				
September							
Thurs 4	'Republican Environmentalist – Arthur Carhart' LLL series, 130 Noble Hall, FLC, 7 p.m.						
Tue 9	Voter Service Cmte, C.S. Café, 11:30-1:30						
Wed 10	Team Mtg., Marilyn Brown's, 9-12						
Sat 13	LPEA Election of Directors						
Tue 16	Kick-off meeting: 'Three Cups of Tea' discussion, Jane Marentette's, 9:30-11:30						
Thurs 18	Greg Mortenson, Whalen Gym, Fort Lewis College, 7 p.m. (Free tickets required)						
October							
	County Commissioner and District Attorney Candidate Forums*:						
Wed 1	Bayfield Town Hall						
Mon 6	Durango City Council Chambers						
Tue 7	Ignacio Library						
Thurs 2	Voter Service Cmte, Speakers Bureau, C.S. Café, 1-5 p.m.						
Mon 6	Voter Service Cmte, Speakers Bureau, C.S. Café, 1-5 p.m.						
	Ballot Issue Forums*:						
Wed 15	Ignacio Library						
Thurs 16	Durango City Council Chambers						
Tues 22	Bayfield Town Hall <i>*all forums 5:30-7:30 p.m.</i>						
Thurs 23	Impact of Climate Change, Dr. Kristen Averyt, 130 Noble Hall, FLC, 7 p.m.						
November							
Tues 4	ELECTION DAY!						
Thurs 6	Team Mtg., Marilyn Brown's, 1-4						
<p><i>The FLC Fall 2008 Life-Long Learning free lecture series runs September 4 through November 20. An electronic copy of the brochure is being mailed to all members with email addresses. Members without email addresses may pick one up at a lecture or call Marilyn Brown, 259-3593, for a hard copy.</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 Sue Herbst at 382-9446 for more information.</p>		<p>Team Members</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Spokesperson/Newsletter Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 marilbrown@aol.com</p> <p>Grace Deltscheff, 259-3040 holgnd@frontier.net</p> <p>Secretary Suzanne Becker, 375-1533 srahmberg@aol.com</p> <p>Director-at-large Jill Patton, 385-4061 jgpatton@frontier.net</p> <p>Natural Resources Co-chair Deanna Collins, 259-7845 dcdurango@msn.com</p> <p>Publicity Ross Park, 247-8116 lwvlpc@aol.com</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Team Coordinator Sally Bellerue, 385-0848 bellerue@frontier.net</p> <p>Treasurer Nadine Ancel, 259-3675 ancelnm@yahoo.com</p> <p>Voter Service Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 mjschilli@bresnan.net</p> <p>Director-at-large Ellen Park, 247-8116 gellenpark@aol.com</p> <p>Speakers Bureau/NR Co-chair Stephanie Huss, 259-7263 Stephanie@frontier.net</p> <p>Membership Sue Herbst, 382-9446 sue_herbst@frontier.net</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"> <p>Great Decisions Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 patchwork@gobrainstorm.net</p> </td> </tr> </table>		<p>Spokesperson/Newsletter Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 marilbrown@aol.com</p> <p>Grace Deltscheff, 259-3040 holgnd@frontier.net</p> <p>Secretary Suzanne Becker, 375-1533 srahmberg@aol.com</p> <p>Director-at-large Jill Patton, 385-4061 jgpatton@frontier.net</p> <p>Natural Resources Co-chair Deanna Collins, 259-7845 dcdurango@msn.com</p> <p>Publicity Ross Park, 247-8116 lwvlpc@aol.com</p>	<p>Team Coordinator Sally Bellerue, 385-0848 bellerue@frontier.net</p> <p>Treasurer Nadine Ancel, 259-3675 ancelnm@yahoo.com</p> <p>Voter Service Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 mjschilli@bresnan.net</p> <p>Director-at-large Ellen Park, 247-8116 gellenpark@aol.com</p> <p>Speakers Bureau/NR Co-chair Stephanie Huss, 259-7263 Stephanie@frontier.net</p> <p>Membership Sue Herbst, 382-9446 sue_herbst@frontier.net</p>	<p>Great Decisions Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 patchwork@gobrainstorm.net</p>	
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