



League of Women Voters  
of La Plata County

# VOTER

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Sixty-six Years Serving La Plata County  
92 Members

January, 2012

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## ***January Calendar***

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!**

### **LWV Political Action: What Are Our Priorities?**

**Wednesday, January 11, 2 – 4 pm,**

**Conference Room (upstairs), Pine River Valley Bank, 1701 Main Avenue**

Delicious treats are on order!!

Here is your opportunity to explore the advocacy side of LWV activities: what is the meaning of our nonpartisan policy? What are our current [national positions](#)? To see our public policy positions in brief click on the last downloadable document 'Public Policy Positions.pdf' [here](#). How were these positions developed? Which ones should the national LWV focus on in 2012? What ideas do you have for national studies for 2012-2014?

What needs to be studied at the local level? Here's a link to our current [local positions](#).

This session will be very informative for new members and a good review for not-so-new members! We look forward to hearing your questions and suggestions and to using our new sound system (see article below).

**Board meeting, Thursday, January 12, 9:30-11:30 am, Trish Pegram's home** (All members welcome.)

### **Great Decisions – Middle East Realignment**

**Tuesday, January 17, Thursday, January 19, 11:45 – 1:45 pm.**

**Program Room 2, Main Floor**

*ALERT: The briefing books already ordered are at the Reference Desk, second floor, of the Durango Library. Pick yours up at your convenience during library hours.*

Contact Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 or [patchwork@gobrainstorm.net](mailto:patchwork@gobrainstorm.net) for information or to purchase a briefing book for \$22. [Click here](#) for the flyer for this year's topics and dates.

### **LWVCO Legislative Conference**

**Monday, January 23, 9 – 2 pm**

**Old Supreme Court Chambers, State Capitol, Denver**

Another great opportunity to hear various members of the legislature and staff folks discuss topics of current interest, as well as hear our always entertaining lobbyist Chris Watson and her views of what the political climate in the 2012 legislative session will be like and what issues might come up this session. Contact Trish Pegram, [trishpegram@bresnan.net](mailto:trishpegram@bresnan.net), to register or to carpool.

*There is a CHANCE that all or parts of the session will be webcast or videotaped for distribution. Stay tuned for further details!*

### **Great Decisions –Promoting Democracy**

**Tuesday, January 31, Thursday, February 2, 11:45 – 1:45 pm.**

**Program Room 2, Main Floor**

**Republican Caucus – February 7 (Affiliation date has passed)**

**Democratic and American Constitution Party Caucuses – March 6 (Affiliate by January 6 at [www.govotecolorado.com](http://www.govotecolorado.com) or at County Clerk's office)**

### **February Calendar**

#### **LWV Legislative Lowdown**

**Saturday, February 25, 9:30-1130**

**Durango Public Library Program Room**

Our state legislators, Sen. Ellen Roberts and Rep. J. Paul Brown, will fill us in on their legislative priorities for the 2012 session and answer all your questions. Mark your calendar!

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### ***Articles of Interest***

#### **Privatization Study**

We invite YOU to join our study committee consisting so far of Nadine Ancel, Herb Brodsky, Ellen Park, Sheree Volrab, Trish Pegram, ex officio, and Marilyn Brown, facilitator, to study the transfer of government services, assets or functions to the private sector. We will begin the study some time in January. The study must be completed with our results forwarded to national by May 1, so this is a short term commitment. The study committee will prepare our members to weigh in on what questions should be asked, what process should be used when considering privatization at the local, state and national level. Former LWVCO president, Toni Larson, PhD, who has studied privatization in the realm of higher

education and hospitals, has given us a generous head start. Find several papers she has written based on her research [here](#) as well as a link to the background papers produced by the national study committee. We welcome anyone with any amount of available time to hit the reply key to this emailed newsletter to indicate interest in participating.

### **Public Address System Challenge**

Looking ahead to our 2012 programming we see two stimulating studies (privatization of government services and hydraulic fracturing) as well as a busy campaign season of voter education activities. To improve our outreach as well as increase our flexibility in terms of La Plata County venues around these events, we have decided to invest in a portable public address system so that we can make our meetings and forums more meaningful for all. These systems can be very costly, but we were able to score an excellent system with two microphones at a discounted price. The total cost of this equipment is \$528.39 with free shipping, a 2 year warranty and lifetime technical support. We are grateful to Ellen Park, working with LWV friend Victor Locke, for finding and closing this excellent deal.

To pay for this equipment an anonymous donor has put forward a matching grant for up to 50% of the cost, and now we are trying to raise the other half from you, our members. Please let me know if you are able to pledge any amount....just \$10 from 27 members will make this happen. In order that we do not have to reserve the use of the system to voter education uses, your donation will not be tax-deductible. Please contact me via return email.....then come to our January 11 meeting to see this new equipment in action.

Trish

### **Holiday Potluck**

Following another feast of fantastically tasty dishes, about 20 LWV members enjoyed our La Plata County Clerk and Recorder (and LWV member) Tiffany Lee Parker's insights into the November election and several other current issues of critical importance to her and thus to us. She came armed with thick packets of voting data and election year information and dates for all of us. [More...](#)

[Click here](#) to see Suzanne Becker's photos of the fun event...

### **Marilyn Sandstrom Report**

Marilyn Sandstrom and Ann Flatten participated as election judges in the counting and recounting of mail ballots for the November General Election, which turned out to be quite exciting. Marilyn has written up a first person account of the interesting experience. Check it out [here](#).

### **Bill of Rights Day**

Did you see our president Trish Pegram's op ed piece in the Durango Herald Sunday, December 11, celebrating Bill of Rights Day December 15? Thanks to the Herald for helping remind us of the rights and responsibilities we all share as a result of the incredible foresight of our founding fathers. Her remarks are [here](#).

### **Federal Role in Education Study**

Our consensus session on the Federal Role in Education national study was an immense success. A patient and persistent group of 22 members and three guests stuck with it while our hardworking committee presented background information and we all worked through all the consensus questions in just over our allotted time! No doubt a beautiful table of tasty goodies helped! Our results have been submitted to national and we will hear the final position sometime in March. At that point we can begin advocating based on the new national position.

### **Mary Barter Receives Special Award**

The study committee (Mary Barter, Carol Blatnick, Barbara Cristol, Ann Flatten, Connie Jacobs, Sandra La France, Bev Wells, and Marilyn Brown, facilitator) was recognized for their very hard work on this challenging topic. Mary was awarded (in absentia) a special gift, which will be mailed to her, for her generosity in providing her expertise to the study committee and to the consensus session. Specifically Mary was commended for calling together a number of area educators to discuss the consensus questions, thereby educating the committee, and for taking on presentation of the difficult material on common core standards. Her gracious willingness and ability to clearly explain the controversial concepts to committee members and consensus participants made our results are better. Mostly, her willingness to spend such a large amount of time on this project shows a real belief in LWV process and in the value of the LWV itself. Our thanks to you, Mary, and please enjoy a relaxing stay in Florida.

### **Ruth Shur Fellow Relates Occupy Wall Street to the LWV**

*[Ed. Note: Eileen asked me to note that these are strictly her own views. Her remarks appeared on the LWV Leaders List. As a Ruth S. Shur Fellow, she joins our monthly CO state coaches' conference call, part of the Membership Leadership Development project, in which your editor participates.]*

‘The Occupy Movement is a quintessential form of grass-roots activism and democracy...spurred now worldwide by the amazingly democratic medium of social networking and the web.

It has a platform.

I believe the League's beliefs align closely if not completely with this platform.

I am disappointed that so many of us seem to be put off by this most "modern" approach to an amazingly flexible, up-to-the-minute and modern grass roots organization, which (terrifyingly for some) must resemble a pure democracy...and the accompanying bits of messiness and inconvenience democracy entails.

I feel guilty that mainly youth are taking the hit, and paying, and will continue to pay the price for us all...as we continue to debate and reflect. I feel guilty that we as an organization are not officially supporting this honest, outspoken, and brave democratic movement--very much in line with our own beliefs and positions.

Eileen Burke-Trent  
Ruth S. Shur Fellow  
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League of Women Voters, U.S.’

Unsubscribe: Please let me know at [marilbrown@aol.com](mailto:marilbrown@aol.com) if you no longer wish to receive our newsletter.