



League of Women Voters
Of La Plata County

VOTER

Volume 8, Issue 4

Sixty-two Years Serving La Plata County
100 members!!!

November-December, 2008

www.lwv.org

www.lwvlaplata.org

www.lwvcolorado.org

Inside this Issue

Upcoming meetings1

Coordinator’s Message2
Paula Huntley2
CAI Totals2

Becker on Citizenship Path .3

Voter Service4

Dr. Averyt’s Visit5
Mock Elections5

RHA6

Photos of VS Successes7

Calendar8
Board of Directors8

Insert:

Great Decisions 2009 flyer

Welcome New Members:

Aline and John Schwob

Welcome New Citizen:

Suzanne Becker

Don’t forget to write that
check if you haven’t yet
renewed your
membership for 2009



Mark your calendars!

November and December Meetings

Kosovo: From the Ashes . . . Democracy?

The many impediments, historical and current, to the creation of a viable democracy in Kosovo - impediments we find, as well, in Iraq, Afghanistan and other troubled areas today – experiences and opinions of real people!

Paula Huntley

*Author of **The Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo***

Saturday, November 15

9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Bowman Hall, Unitarian Fellowship

419 San Juan Drive (corner San Juan and Columbine)

Holiday Celebration!!

Monday, December 8

9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Potluck Brunch and Conversation

Venue: TBD



A portion of a field of wind turbines in the waters of Oresund, the narrow straight between Sweden and Denmark. (Thanks, Suzanne!)

Team Coordinator's Message

By the time you read this, the election will truly be upon us. You may have very well voted absentee or during early voting. Or you may love the feeling of actually going to the polls on election day and voting in the booth. Whatever way, this is quite an election!

Our League was instrumental in providing ballot information, introducing local candidates to voters, and registering voters here in La Plata County. What a busy time we had! Thanks to Marilyn Sandstrom and everyone that was involved in Voter Service, our Education Arm. Thanks also to those that advocated for positions we support through our studies, our Advocacy Arm. These two sides of League confuse many. We present forums and develop the pros and cons of the ballot issues without taking sides; we produce the very respected Ballot Issues pamphlet. In fact, supporting these efforts financially comes under our 501c3 side. This is our Education side.

The other side is not tax deductible. That side is the one that has studied an issue, where we as a League, at the Local, State and/or National level has come to consensus and then has taken a position. You see our ads in the papers to express these positions. The state League took stands on eight of this year's ballot issues and we advertised our positions in the local papers.

In the midst of this busy month, League co-sponsored the Life Long Learning session with Dr. Kristen Averyt speaking on climate change. Marilyn Brown not only scheduled the event, but she got the grants, coordinated with LWVUS, acquired other sponsors, wrote an op ed piece that was in the Durango Herald October 19, helped coordinate her appearance as keynoter at 4CORE's launch of our county's Climate Action Plan and was a taxi driver for over 24 hours, accompanied by Deanna Collins!

Marilyn Brown and I have been sharing this job of coordination of our League this year, she as spokesperson and I as coordinator. Marilyn has had the yeoman's job since I was away in the summer and then off to Africa last month, just when things were getting very busy with the election. Wow!! Of course, now it's turn around while she goes off to Chile with her husband for a couple of weeks! Not quite a quid pro quo but Enjoy and Thank You!

We'll have a gathering in December for a brunch and conversation. Perhaps a little fun! Great Decisions is on the horizon for January. Until then let's relax and enjoy the rest of the fall and Thanksgiving.

-Sally Bellerue

Author Paula Huntley to speak!

Saturday morning, November 15th, Paula Huntley, the author of "The Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo" will speak to our League. Paula and her husband, Edwin Villmoare (both new members of League!) spent time in Kosovo after the war there. Edwin was tasked with helping set up a new legal system, and Paula taught English as a second language.

Since their return, they have helped several of Paula's former students obtain scholarships to study in the US and continue to be active in affairs in that area. Paula will speak about the ongoing challenge of democracy building in Kosovo and the role women are playing.

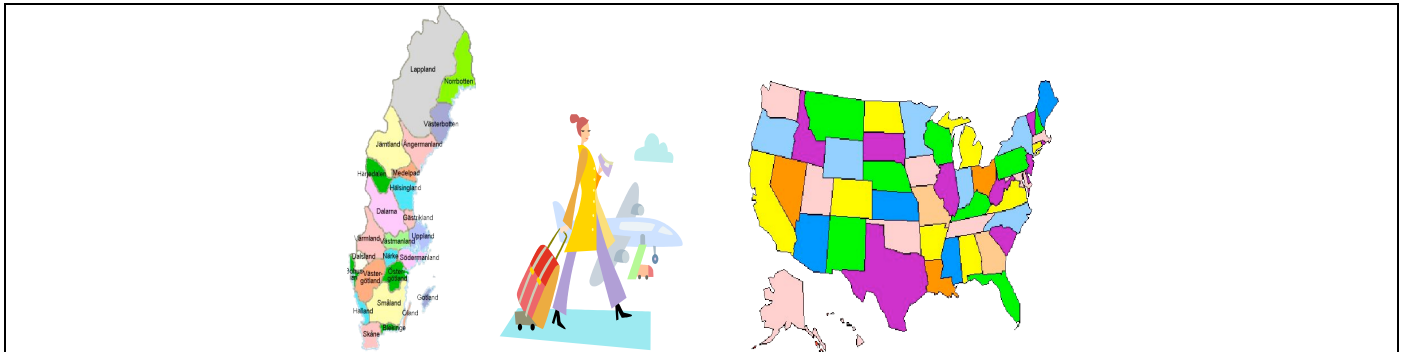
-Sally Bellerue

Totals for Greg Mortenson's Schools!!

Can you believe it?? Bob Chaput, treasurer for Committee for Central Asia Institute, reports that contributions from Durango exceeded \$180,000. David Relin, co-author with Greg Mortenson of 'Three Cups of Tea', thought it might be the largest fund-raiser CAI has ever had!



Eleanor Kuhl, Montezuma County LWV, Deanna Collins, and Jill Patton, l. to r., with Ballot Issues pamphlets loaded into Jill's Prius for return trip from Denver to Durango, September 27th.



Potholes in the Road to Citizenship

After 44 years and many “interesting” and sometimes very frustrating encounters with what was the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) and now (since shortly after 9-11) is the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security, I finally took a deep breath and sent in my application for citizenship in July of this year.

A bit of background – I came to the U.S. in 1964 when my father worked in New York for 6 years. All 5 of us in the family received “Green Cards.” They were a dime a dozen back then. I had to apply for a new card when I stayed in Sweden too long without returning to the U.S. in 1976. That took 6 months. In 1996 the Green Cards changed, and all permanent residents were issued pink “Green Cards.” Interestingly, many men received permanent cards, but all the immigrant women I know received cards good for 10 years only. I waited 12 hours to get to the counter to turn in my application for a new card only to be turned away because there was a “shadow” under my chin in the required photograph. There was no such thing as appointments for the renewal then, just long lines. I cried, but came back a couple of days later and had to wait only 9 hours. I had it easy; there were many families with small children who also had to wait all day.

In 2006 it was time to renew the card again. The procedures had changed a bit and the CID now had “processing centers” where they do fingerprinting and go through other procedures. And you get an actual appointment! The only problem was that they called me to the wrong Center. I had already moved here and, like the good girl I am, I had sent the CID a change of address. I was called to Phoenix. Dutifully I showed up, only to be told I should be “processed” in Colorado.

Luckily my husband and I still had an apartment in Phoenix then and the agent finally agreed that the new card could be sent there. I didn’t have to tear my hair out.

As a result of all the previous ups-and-downs I naturally was a bit nervous when I sent in my citizenship application. The application went out certified/return receipt mail on July 3. The return receipt came back a couple of weeks later. A couple of days after that an official government receipt arrived, and a week later a fingerprint notification requesting I show up in Albuquerque on August 1. In early September the notice to appear in Denver for my final interview came in the mail. Bang, bang, bang - I was flabbergasted.

On October 10, I went to the Immigration Center in Denver, had an easy interview, and then, to my surprise was asked if I wanted to be sworn in right then. Apparently the prompt swearing in is a service to those whose paperwork is in order and who also live far away. So, in front of the American and Colorado flags I was sworn in as a citizen of the U.S. by an immigration official. It went so quickly that I didn’t even have the presence of mind to ask Marilyn Sandstrom, who was so great to come with me to Denver, to come back from the waiting room and see the ceremony.

I am very happy to finally be a U.S. citizen (I can also keep my Swedish citizenship) and I can’t wait to vote. Being more active in the League is also one of my goals. Thank you all for all your good wishes, and a special Thanks to the friend who kept after (yes – nagged) me to send in my application and to Marilyn S. for giving up her weekend to come with me – we had a great time.

-Suzanne Becker

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

Six Successful Forums!!

In October LWV LPC had six forums. There were 3 forums with local candidates: unopposed State Representative Candidate Ellen Roberts; County Commissioner candidates Harry Baxstrom, Kellie Hotter, Peter Tregillus, and Wally White; and District Attorney candidates, Todd Risberg and Russell Wasley. These forums were held in Durango, Bayfield, and Ignacio.

There were also 3 forums describing the fourteen state ballot issues and 5 local ballot issues on the ballot in La Plata County. They were held in the same three venues.

A total of 95 people attended the candidate forums and 82 attended the ballot issue forums. The press coverage of these events was appreciated.

We received primarily positive responses on the evaluations, including comments such as:

“Thank you for providing such a great forum, this is the only way for me to learn what the candidates are about.”

“Excellent forum in accepting Q’s from audience.”

“Thank you. Wished they would write amendments in English we (without a law degree) could all understand.”

“Thank you for all the work you have done in preparing this info for us.”

“A little earlier, I have a family (children to feed) other than that this group is great.”

“Time should be at least 6 p.m. 5:30 too early.” (in Ignacio and Bayfield).

Thanks to the candidates, ballot issue speakers, Bayfield Town Hall, Durango City Hall, and the Ignacio Library for their part in these. And a special thanks to the following Leaguers who helped make these events a success:
Those moderating - Carol Blatnick, Ross Park, Missy Rodey, Virginia Miller Cavanagh, and Vicki Coe
Timing - Deanna Collins, Stephanie Huss, Nadine Ancel, Bill Collins, and Grace Deltscheff
Screening questions - Jill Patton, Trish Pegram, Judith Aitken, Ellen Park, and Marilyn Brown
Collecting questions - Bill Collins, Donna Hugg, Torrey Udall (FLC student), Joe Colgan, Gail Harris, Enid Brodsky, Ellen Park, Nancy Loftis, and Marilyn Brown
Taking photos - Jill Patton and Suzanne Becker.
Now we wait to learn who wins and what passes!

-Marilyn Sandstrom

Ballot Issue Pamphlets

We also distributed over 5000 Ballot Issues pamphlets in English and 800 in Spanish in the face of the greatest demand seen in recent years!

Our Voter Registration Efforts!!

October 6th was the last day to register to vote in the November 4th election.

Eighteen people volunteered to help with Voter Registration. They were Ann Flatten, Connie Imig, Deanna Collins, Enid Brodsky, Jane Marentette, Lois Carpenter, Marilyn McCord, Missy Rodey, Pam Patton, Sue Herbst, Vicki Coe, Ellen Park, Jill Patton, Marilyn Brown, Nadine Ancel, Ross Park, Sally Bellerue, and Stephanie Huss.

Working in pairs, these great people went to 30 events, turned in 154 registrations, and handed out another 270 mail-in registration forms. They were at the Farmers’ Market, Senior Centers, Rehab facilities, Bayfield Lions Breakfast and many other venues.

Thanks to all of you for your help in a successful Voter Registration Campaign.

-Marilyn Sandstrom

Ballot Issues Speakers Bureau

The speaker’s bureau studied each of the 14 state and 5 local issues on this year’s ballot, concentrating on effects in La Plata County. We spoke at 15 different locations to business groups, the Bayfield Rotary Club, neighbors, beauticians, students and retirees. We staffed a booth at the Durango Farmer’s Market, answered questions and handed out ballot issue pamphlets. Ballot issue forums were held in Ignacio, Bayfield and Durango. The Durango forum was broadcast on KIUP and CitySpan10. We spoke to almost 400 people throughout La Plata County.

Thanks to Marilyn Brown, Deanna Collins, Phil Huss, Connie Jacobs, Ellen Park, Ross Park and Jill Patton for studying the issues and presenting them to voters and thanks to Marilyn Sandstrom for her organizational abilities.

-Stephanie Huss



Stephanie and Phil Huss, Ellen and Ross Park represented our LWV at this FLC event October 25, which focused on getting out the native American vote.



Dr. Kristen Averyt chatting with City Councilor Michael Rendon at 4CORE Kickoff of County Climate Action Plan

Climate Change Issues Revisited

Dr. Kristen Averyt's visit to La Plata County on October 23 proved to be very productive and educational. Her talk as part of the Life Long Learning series, co-hosted by FLC Professional Associates, drew over 110 people and ended with a fast-paced Q/A indicating the impact of her data on the audience. (It can be found online at www.wva.colorado.edu.) Her participation in the La Plata County Climate Action Plan kick off, a working lunch, drew about 67 people.

Additionally, she was interviewed live by FLC Environmental Center director Marcus Renner on Making Waves, the KDUR weekly radio program. She met with Dr. Koren Nydick, director of Mountain Studies Institute, also working on climate change in the San Juan Mountains, and with three FLC students and an intern. One student, Zach Ray, is an Oxfam Change student, another, the chair of the EC climate action committee, which is working on a process and goals to bring FLC to carbon-neutrality.

Dr. Averyt spent October 22 in Montezuma County speaking with high school and middle school age students about science as a career and giving a talk to the general public in the evening that drew 43 attendees.

Her visit was funded by a grant from Oxfam America and co-sponsored by the Durango Herald and Cortez Journal, Sustainability Alliance of Southwest CO, San Juan Citizens Alliance and FLC Environmental Center.

The main thrust of her message is that for us in CO, water will be the delivery mechanism of the temperature increases resulting from climate change. These regional climate changes are linked to global changes and most likely anthropogenic. Her comments are derived from the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, for which she served as staff scientist for Working Group I, which focused on the physical science behind climate change, and

on the new report 'Climate Change in CO', of which she is one of three lead authors, and which was prepared for discussion at the Governor's Conference on Drought held in early October. See <http://cwcb.state.co.us/>.

In CO temperatures have increased about 2 degrees F. in the past 30 years. Climate models predict a further increase of 2.5 degrees F. by 2025, relative to the 1950-1999 baseline, and 4 degrees F. by 2050. Typical monthly summer temperatures will be as warm or warmer than the hottest 10% of summers that occurred between 1950 and 1999 and winter projections show fewer extreme cold months, more extreme warm months and more strings of consecutive warm winters. No consistent long-term trends in annual precipitation have been detected, partly because variability is high. Although an increase in precipitation falling as rain rather than snow has been detected throughout the West, these changes are much less significant in CO due to our altitude, where winter temperatures will remain well below freezing, helping to preserve the snowpack.

Between 1978 and 2004, the spring pulse (the onset of streamflows of melting snows) has shifted earlier by two weeks. The timing of runoff is projected to be earlier in the spring and late summer flows reduced.

The report concludes that climate change will affect CO's use and distribution of water and these conclusions are consistent with broader conclusion in other important studies. In a nutshell, this report suggests a reduction in total water supply by the mid-21st century. 'When combined with temperature increases and related changes in evaporation and soil moisture, all recent hydrologic projections show a decline in runoff for most of CO's river basins by mid-21st century', including a 6-20% decline in the CO River Basin.

Dr. Averyt's current work involves calculating the amount of water used in energy production in CO and the amount of energy expended in the transport of water in CO, topics of vital interest to La Plata County since we have significant reserves of natural gas.

We are grateful to the LWVUS and to Oxfam America for helping us bring Dr. Averyt to La Plata County.

-Marilyn Brown

Mock Election in the Schools

Mock elections will be held on Nov. 3 at Ignacio HS. Jane Marentette will take voter booths to Ignacio for them to use, then they will pass the booths on to the Jr. High next door to be used in the real election on Nov. 4. Durango HS is going to do their mock election on Nov. 4 without booths. There has not been a report from Bayfield as to their plans for a mock election.

-Ann Flatten



Many of us recall the enthusiastic and informative talk given by the staff of the RHA - Jenn Lopez, Julie Levy and Ophelia Wilkins - at our 2008 Annual Meeting in May, and so much has happened since then that an update is in order. At that time, the RHA had just received the \$1,100,000 grant from BP America, with ½ payable in 2008 and ½ in 2009. All but \$100K of these funds are targeted specifically to help people get into homes by providing mortgage and down payment assistance (the \$100K was designated to assist with RHA operational expenditures).

To-date, of the \$500K received this year, \$172K has been closed with assistance to 6 families, including Courtney and Mickey who just purchased their new home, and \$330K is committed to people out shopping for homes. With the market turmoil nationally, many people are wondering how affordable housing is going to be affected locally. So far, we have seen a new opportunity for people interested in purchasing under \$300k homes in the County. It is programs like the RHA's that help educate and inform consumers to make wise decisions that will support our local economy and community in the coming years.

The most anticipated news is that the Town of Bayfield has joined the RHA, completing the circle of La Plata County governmental sponsors of the RHA. Their primary motivation was the source of down payment assistance that the RHA was able to obtain, and they are a welcome addition to the Board of Directors. A new Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) including La Plata County, the City of Durango, and the Towns of Ignacio and Bayfield will be in place for 2009.

Another bit of good news is that the RHA's new web site is now live! Click on www.rhalpc.org to learn more about the RHA and its partners, and see the answers to many FAQs. Please provide this link to friends or family members who may want to contact the RHA.

A new organization called the La Plata Homes Fund has been created to help raise new resources for mortgage assistance loans. This new group is in the process of applying for 501(c)3 non-profit status and for

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) certification. CDFI is a part of the U.S. Treasury Department, and through monetary awards and the allocation of tax credits, the CDFI Fund helps promote access to capital and local economic growth in urban and rural low-income communities across the nation. As a government agency, the RHA is not eligible for this certification, but Homes Fund is poised to do so. This will make more sources of home-buyer grants and funds available to residents of La Plata County.

The RHA has been working closely for several months with the City of Durango to implement a Fair Share Policy (click Resources on the RHA web site for a description). The City and RHA have been holding information meetings for the Council and the public, and participating in public discussion meetings. A draft of the policy is under review.

Green is the color of choice these days, and the RHA has implemented a consulting program designed for builders of affordable/attainable homes that will help produce sustainable structures that are cheaper to maintain, and easy on the eye, the pocketbook and the environment.

As you know I have been a member of the Board of Directors of the RHA for several years, and while the challenges we face are huge, and more present themselves every week (think home mortgage availability these days) the progress being made is inspiring and is due to our committed and competent staff, the support of our local governments, our partners, and our community, the LWV of La Plata County included.

-Ellen Park

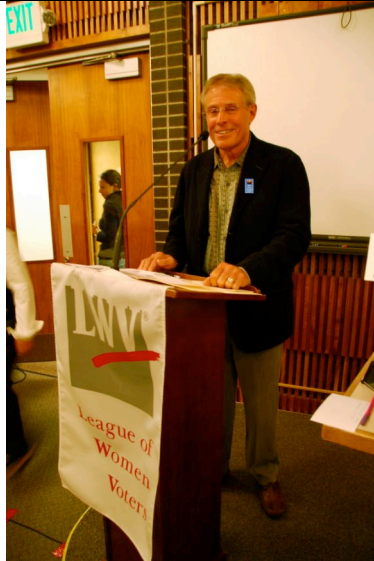


Courtney and Mickey



Peter Tregillus, Kellie Hotter, Wally White, Harry Baxstrom, county commissioner candidates, (from left)

Candidate Forum in Durango



Ross Park, Moderator



Crowd at Durango Candidate Forum



Nadine Ancel, timer, Ignacio Candidate Forum



Missy Rodey, moderator, Ignacio Ballot Issue Forum



Bayfield Ballot Issue Forum, Carol Blatnick, moderator



Deanna Collins, Marilyn Brown, Stephanie Huss, Ellenn Park, Ross Park, (from left)


Durango Ballot Issue Forum



Virginia Cavanagh, moderator, Durango Ballot Issue Forum



Ellen Park, Suzanne and Harvey Becker, Marilyn Sandstrom, (from left) Farmers' Market Booth Ballot Issue Information

<h1>Calendar</h1>			LWV La Plata County www.lwvaplata.org 296 Highland Hill Drive Durango, CO 81301
November			
Tues 4	ELECTION DAY!		
Thurs 6	Team Mtg., Marilyn Brown's, 1:30-4		
Mon 10	60th Anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights		
Sat 15	Nation-building, Role of Women in Kosovo, Paula Huntley, 9:30-11:30, Bowman Hall, Unitarian Fellowship, 419 San Juan Drive		
December			
Mon 8	Holiday Celebration! Potluck Brunch, 9:30-11:30, venue TBD		
January			
Thu 8	Team Mtg., venue TBD, 1:30-4		
<p style="text-align: center;">LWVUS Climate Change White Papers www.lwv.org (click on Global Climate Change)</p> <p>Cities Take Action to Curb Global Warming Coal – The Great Hope, The False Promise Or a Disaster In the Making? Do A Little. Change A Lot: A Biographical Sketch On Energy Economic Effects of Not Taking Action on Climate Change State Actions Address Climate Change</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>			
<u>Team Members</u>			
Spokesperson/Newsletter Marilyn Brown, 259-3593 marilbrown@aol.com		Team Coordinator Sally Bellerue, 385-0848 bellerue@frontier.net	
Director-at-large Grace Deltscheff, 259-3040 holgnd@frontier.net		Treasurer Nadine Ancel, 259-3675 ancelnm@yahoo.com	
Secretary Suzanne Becker, 375-1533 srahmberg@aol.com		Voter Service Marilyn Sandstrom, 764-4596 mjschilli@bresnan.net	
Director-at-large Jill Patton, 385-4061 jgpatton@frontier.net		Director-at-large Ellen Park, 247-8116 gellenpark@aol.com	
Natural Resources Co-chair Deanna Collins, 259-7845 dcdurango@msn.com		Speakers Bureau/NR Co-chair Stephanie Huss, 259-7263 Stephanie@frontier.net	
Publicity Ross Park, 247-8116 lwvlpc@aol.com		Membership Sue Herbst, 382-9446 sue_herbst@frontier.net	
Great Decisions Pat Chatfield, 247-1692 patchwork@gobrainstorm.net			