

### **10/19/11 Bayfield Town Hall Bayfield School Board Candidate Forum:**

Faced with stiff competition from the first World Series game, approximately 20 energetic Bayfield citizens joined the League of Women Voters of La Plata County to hear and question the candidates for the November 1 School Board Election in District 10 JT-R. Candidates included an involved mother of four – Janie Hoover, a product of Bayfield schools and local



business owner – Levi Mead, a local network administrator – Timothy Stumpf, and a local entrepreneur and 1-year incumbent on the Bayfield School Board – Mike Derrickson. Don Mooney, running unopposed for a two year term, was not present. The four candidates present are running for three contested 4-year seats.

The evening involved 18 probing question ranging from “if the school budget were to be reduced by \$300K, what is the first thing that you would cut?” to “Do you believe in teaching science in the schools including origination of the universe and evolution?” Answers from the candidates were thoughtful but often lacking in direct experience with Bayfield school policies, with the exception of the incumbent.

When asked their opinions on Proposition 103 (Raising Taxes for Public Education), the candidates uniformly worried about actually receiving the promised funding although they agreed that the needs were real and the idea a sound one. Being allowed to direct and use this funding locally was important to all candidates. Likewise, when asked about teacher evaluations and tenure, they agreed with the need for evaluations but desired to strongly link evaluation results to teacher performance as it relates to their measured impact on students. The candidates had little admiration for teacher tenure preferring merit based compensation plans. On the question of controlling the practice of bullying among students on the playground, with one exception, they preferred to not get parents directly involved but to rely on specially trained teachers and school administrators. Regarding the ability to provide alternative schooling in Bayfield including charter schools, home schooling and on-line education, they agreed that the parents should have a choice and that competition might be healthy with the main goal being education for all.

On being asked about their specific experience and qualities to contribute on the Bayfield School Board, they most often cited pride in their community, their experiences as a parent and their strong business backgrounds. One candidate envisioned a community in which Bayfield students upon graduation have a strong desire to return as adults to Bayfield, to start a local business, and to raise a family. The candidates agreed that Bayfield should strengthen its vocational-tech schooling as not all students are on a path to excel in a standard curriculum. As Bayfield will soon be revising its strategic plan for schools, it was evident that the direct parenting experiences and communication skills of these candidates would be a key to success.

All candidates declared their desire to grow the Bayfield School District, to step up their community involvement, to consider the student first, and to approach the position with integrity and transparency. It does indeed appear to be a strong and eager candidate slate to be presented to the School District of Bayfield for their voting choices on November 1.

Ellen Park, LWVLPC Legislative Chair, moderated this forum with Trish Pegram, LWVLPC President and Connie Jacobs, LWVLPC member, screening questions. Maria Baker, LWVLPC member, timed the responses. Deb Ruddell and Marilyn Sandstrom, LWVLPC members, also assisted.

Respectfully submitted, Ross Park, LWVLPC Webmaster 10/20/11