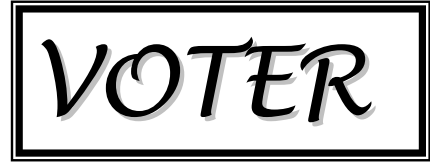




May 2016

Membership: 43

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
Serving Montrose and Delta
Counties



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"Immigrant to U.S. Citizen: the long road"



Naturalization, citizenship classes, tests, fees! Discussion by local League and community members who have been through the processes...

**Tuesday, May 10, 12:30
Colorado Mesa University
Montrose Campus Room #106**

Guest Speakers/Panelists: Grand Junction immigration attorney Imelda Mulholland, Martin Valdez Gonzalez, and Judy Kittson

See you there and do spread the word ...

LWVCO Council - May 21-22

Making Democracy Work in Colorado
is the theme this year

Karen Connor, our president, Rex Swanson, our mayor, and Don Coram, our State Rep from District 58, will welcome the LWVCO board members and delegates from across our state to Montrose on May 21 at the Holiday Inn.

Sharron Baldwin and Katherine Carson will be the Montrose delegates, and Wonder Wachara, a C.M.U. student, will be the keynote speaker on Saturday evening at The Bridges dinner. **To show our local members' enthusiasm and support for this event, join in for the Saturday night dinner.** Cost is \$35.00. R.S.V.P. to Karen Connor asap.

A city walking tour by the Montrose Historical Society & a tour of the Museum of the Mountain West have been arranged for delegates Saturday late afternoon.

Volunteers are still needed to assist with this important event. Again, contact Karen Connor.

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Annual Meeting Date Change

Because of our busy May calendar, the annual meeting will be held on Thursday, June 2. Our venue will be Vista Charter School, and box lunches will be provided by Camp Robber for \$12.00. Beverages will be provided. R.S.V.P to Nancy Ball 249-8963 re attendance and menu choices by May 23. See Page 3, paragraph 4.

LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS

WELCOME New Member, Suze Gingery



Suze has actually re-joined League, and we are pleased to have her as a member once again. Born and schooled near Rotterdam, Holland, it was while working for an American container shipping company that she met and married a naturalized U.S. citizen from Holland who lived in Cedaredge. They moved to Montrose in 1969, and she soon after received her permanent residency card.

Suze worked for the local hospital as a medical transcriber, saying that having a knack for learning languages---she speaks four: Dutch, English, German and French and began studying them in elementary school---she learned the medical terminology quite easily. Following the births of her son and daughter and then a divorce, she met and married Dr. Richard Gingery. Their three children now reside in Georgia, California and Ohio, and they have four grandchildren. Foreign travel, walking and hiking, reading, and politics are her current interests, and she used to do long-distance running.

Suze became a naturalized citizen in 2005 on Flag Day, registered to vote the next day, and voted for president for the first time in 2008. She was a League member for a number of years, but her membership lapsed when the Gingerys moved to California in 2008 to assist with her daughter's medical issues. They returned in 2010 and currently live in Ridgway. Suze has re-joined League because she feels it does important work, citing voter registration and voter education, and hopes in the 2016-2017 year League will concentrate on campaign finance reform and voting rights.

WELCOME New Member, Karen Richardson, whose profile will appear in the June Voter,

A Few Good Men, as they say

Our League is pleased and proud to announce we now have **8** male members!

D.M.E.A. Board Candidate Forums

D.M.E.A. has once again asked our League to moderate its candidate forums scheduled on May 17 at its Montrose offices at 11925 63.00 Road and on May 19 at the Hotchkiss Senior Center, 276 West Main Street. Both forums will start at 6:00 P.M. Sharron Baldwin has volunteered to serve as moderator for both forums. Did you know that Sharron is the president of the Board of Directors for the Montrose Center for Mental Health? What a busy lady!

Concluding 2015-2016 and Looking Ahead to 2016-2017 - April 6 meeting

Our one-hour meeting held at the Montrose Library Community Room was devoted to the structure and management of our league, the specifics of our requirements as host of the LWVCO biannual council to be held in Montrose May 21-22, the possibility of changing our annual meeting normally held in May to June, and to financial matters such as banking, our current balance status, and budgeting.

Regarding our first topic, league management, Karen contacted the state league and was assured that we can deviate from our bylaws with a one-year trial with an administrative team. Responsibilities to be covered are spokesperson and treasurer, and secretarial, membership, program, fundraising, voter service, Voter editor, and electronic/digital duties, resulting in a team of at least eight members. Bob Connor and Barb Krebs have volunteered to be the nominating committee and will make the necessary telephone calls to all members. Karen stressed that in this extremely important presidential/general election year with the country so divided on a partisan basis, the role of the League of Women Voters as a non-partisan political organization is more vital than ever. She reiterated that democracy is not a spectator sport so now is the time to step up and serve in this exciting new management structure!

Karen related the specifics of the LWVCO Council as to the welcoming ceremony, the business agenda, meals, tours, goody bags, etc. and the number of volunteers required as greeters, registrars, transportation providers, etc. Yea for Katherine Carson who put in her name as the second delegate and the members who volunteered. Still, a fair number more are needed.

As to our annual meeting, what with a May program, two D.M.E.A. board candidate forums, and Council, it was agreed to move it to the month of June. The nominees for the administrative team and the proposed 2016-2017 budget will be voted on at the meeting.

Lastly, a hearty happy birthday to our president of four terms, Karen Connor, was celebrated with a cake, greeting cards, and lots of best wishes.



Congratulations to Barbara Bynum!

Her appointment to the Colorado Land Board by Governor Hickenlooper was approved in mid-April. The Board was established in 1876 to manage the three million acres of land and four million acres of mineral rights given by the federal government to generate revenue for public education and school construction and other state institutions. Barbara will serve a four-year term and her specialty is education, and she is traveling to Denver monthly for meetings, serving as a voice for the Western Slope.

Delta Partners "Girl Talk" - April 14 Photo and article by Kalena Scherben



I had a unique opportunity to connect with some wonderful young women participating in the area's Partner program on April 14, 2016. I arrived at their meeting room in Delta and was greeted by the smell of fresh bread and lasagna! Betsy and Mary (Partners employees) were making the final preparations for "Girl Talk." "Girl Talk" brings in guests to interact with the girls on a variety of subjects. We talked about the theme for previous week, Social Media.

After enjoying our dinner I talked to the girls about voting. We covered a wide range of topics related to voting and our political system. I talked to them about how the system works to address things that we want to change or regulate. We talked about our vote and the power that it has. I handed out A Short History of Suffragists, and we had a short discussion about women gaining the right to vote and why that was so important. I was surprised at the level of knowledge they already had on women gaining the right to vote. Our schools have done well! The girls were all interested in registering to vote and we went over what age they could register and how to register.

After I was done speaking each of the girls in attendance spoke about any questions they had and something that they are concerned about that could be changed using our political process. Some of the concerns that were discussed were:

- The cost of school sports and poor students not being able to participate
- Child abuse and the protection of children
- College entrance requirements
- The cost of college
- Racism
- Double standards for students participating in school sports
- The treatment of disabled students

The discussion on each of the topics was enthusiastic, lively, interesting and thoughtful. I was so impressed with these strong, intelligent young women and I enjoyed spending the evening with them! It was a privilege!

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK!

Income Inequality: how does it affect our democracy? - April 20



Paul Janzen, a local mortgage broker and a self-professed numbers man, thoroughly engrossed the audience that included seven League members and Paul Wahl of the *Montrose Press* with his economic case illustrating minimum wage vs. living wage and how the numbers affect our economy and our democracy. As 70% of the U.S. economy is based on consumer spending, the fact that the current federal minimum wage for the past several decades has not kept up with the buyer power it had in the 1970's so has had a stiflingly negative effect on our economic growth.

Mr. Janzen used as an example the 3.6 million fast food workers earning the minimum federal wage of \$7.25 (\$15,080/year for full-time employment of 40 hours/week and working 52 weeks), 52% of whom are on some form of government assistance, costing taxpayers \$153 billion each year. In essence we are subsidizing employers paying low wages! He figured that increasing the minimum wage of these workers by \$3/hour would result in raising their combined wages by \$22.5 billion a year, or \$120/week (to \$21,320/year) that would be spent locally and on which taxes would be paid, thus benefiting every part of the economy. People live better. If people live better, the economy improves. Tax dollars increase, and our tax burden for assistance programs is reduced.

In the past three decades, U.S. executive compensation has risen dramatically to the point where today the average C.E.O. makes more than 300 times the average worker, yet while the average worker pays about 25% in federal taxes on their income, the wealthy, whose income stems mainly from investments, pay 20% on capital gains and benefit from the step up basis in inheritance rules. Tax rules currently favor the wealthy and corporations.

Not since the Gilded Age of the 1920's has income inequality been so high. A video included in the presentation showed that we Americans have a distorted view of the amount of wealth held by the top 10%, particularly the top 1/10 of 1%. Money talks. About 100 people are providing the vast portion of election campaign funding. From 1998-2010 business interests and trade groups spent \$28.6 billion lobbying the government while unions spent \$492 million.

Are we headed to oligarchy? Financing election campaigns and lobbying government officials to pass laws favorable to corporations and the wealthy diminishes your voice and your vote!

Mr. Janzen offered the following quotation: "We can either have democracy in this country or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both." -Louis Brandeis, US Supreme Court Justice

A stimulating discussion followed that focused on questions about the demographics of the minimum wage law as to how it applies to employees in various geographical locations with various costs of living, the age and skill levels of employees (teens), hours worked, and in non-profits. Mr. Janzen pointed out that there is a comprehensive list of exemptions. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a complicated one!

As an aside, your *Voter* editor found that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report on April 13, 2016, revealing that at least 2/3 of active U.S. corporations paid zero federal income taxes between 2006 and 2012. The report also found that large, profitable corporations only paid 14% of their profits in federal income taxes on average from 2008 through 2012, while approximately 1/5th of them paid nothing at all. And in a report from U.S. Public Interest Research Group Education Fund and Citizens for Tax Justice, nearly 75% of Fortune 500 companies tucked away \$2.1 trillion in accumulated profits offshore to avoid paying U.S. income taxes.

STATE LEAGUE NEWS AND NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

Behavioral Health Concurrence

LWVCO's Board Liaison from the national Board informed Barbara Mattison that the LWVUS Board has recommended Colorado's Behavioral Health Concurrence as an agenda item at the national Convention in June. This is wonderful news and it will make our lobbying effort at the Convention a bit easier because the process will only take one vote.

Following up on our ColoradoCare Yes program on March 23....

Grassroots Ballot Initiative Faces Well-Financed Opposition *Copyright © 2016 Public News Service*

DENVER - An initiative on the November ballot to make Colorado the first state to establish public, universal health coverage is facing well-financed opposition from business and conservative groups.

As former head of corporate communications at the health insurance giant Cigna, Wendell Potter says he led campaigns to defeat efforts similar to Amendment 69 to protect company profits. With millions of dollars at their disposal, he says industry positions can be broadcast repeatedly and many people end up believing them. "They know that if you can create doubt, if you can get people to fear something, they're much more likely to oppose it and vote against it," says Potter. "So, that's what you'll see and most of the arguments are just, unfortunately, not based on real evidence."

According to the liberal news site Truthout, the Koch Brothers' group "Americans for Prosperity" and at least six other rightwing organizations have been actively campaigning against Amendment 69, using what reporters found to be misleading videos, ads and social media.

Governor John Hickenlooper also opposes the initiative, citing concerns by insurance companies saying they won't move their headquarters to the state if voters approve the measure.

Potter says proponents of Amendment 69, known as Colorado Care, face an uphill struggle simply because they can't compete financially. He notes industry money typically flows into third-party groups because consumers would connect the dots if insurance companies came out openly against single-payer health care. "What we need is much greater transparency," Potter says. "We need to know who is actually writing the checks. Where is the original source of the money coming from in these campaigns? And we just simply don't have the ability to find that out in many cases, in today's world."

Campaign Finance Reform March 2016 - Keep Your Eye on Senate Bill S2611 -

LWV of Boulder County & Shirley Jin's "Campaign Reform Blast"

U.S. Senator Tom Udall introduced legislation on March 1 to abolish the broken Federal Election Commission (FEC) and replace it with a new agency empowered to crack down on campaign finance violations. The new Federal Election Administration would be established to avoid the partisan gridlock that currently prevents the FEC from doing its job and enforcing election laws.

Udall's Federal Election Administration Act would abolish the FEC and create a new agency composed of five members appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. A chair would lead the agency, and the remaining members would equally represent both political parties. The bill is modeled after a bipartisan proposal previously introduced by Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) and former Senator Russ Feingold (D-Wis.).

The commission was created after the Watergate scandal to ensure that money given and spent in federal elections is disclosed so voters know who is trying to influence the outcome.

Ann Ravel, Vice Chair of the FEC, has described in detail the deadlock of the current commission. Republicans and Democrats each nominate three commissioners, but four votes are needed to adopt new rules, start investigations and impose penalties.

NATIONAL LEAGUE NEWS

Take Action: Fix the Federal Election Commission

By: Elisabeth MacNamara, LWVUS president 04/27/2016

The agency that is tasked with overseeing federal laws governing money in politics, the Federal Election Commission (FEC), is broken. Paralyzed by its own structure, with four commissioners who regularly cast tie votes on a partisan basis, the FEC has failed to enforce and properly interpret the nation's already weak campaign finance laws.

It's time to reform the FEC. Tell Congress to support the Federal Election Administration Act of 2016.

The League has endorsed legislation by Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) and Representative David Price (D-NC) that would create a new independent agency to replace the FEC. The new Federal Election Administration (FEA) would be comprised of five commissioners, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, where only two members can be from the same political party. The fifth commissioner would be appointed on a nonpartisan basis from a list of candidates selected by a blue-ribbon panel of retired federal judges, former law enforcement officials or individuals with election law experience. With this five-member structure, the new legislation would end gridlock at the commission and put the public's interests over partisan interests.

Take action – tell Congress to establish a new, effective enforcement body to oversee the nation's campaign finance laws.

The new Federal Election Administration will still have the responsibilities previously held by the FEC to administer campaign finance laws and the presidential public financing system, as well as to issue regulations and advisory opinions. The FEA also would have the authority to conduct investigations of possible violations. However, the legislation sets up a new system of administrative law judges with jurisdiction over individual enforcement cases in order provide for consistent and impartial enforcement.

The League believes in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy. That's why we've been leading the charge for campaign finance reform at the state, local and federal levels for more than four decades - but we need you to join our fight.

Join the fight to end gridlock at the Federal Election Commission.



Election Day 2016 is coming!

EDUCATE, ADVOCATE, IMPACT!

2015-2016 LWV Community Support

The League of Women Voters of Montrose County, serving Montrose and Delta counties, thanks these local businesses, organizations and individuals who have donated financial and in-kind support.

Please add your thank you when you patronize these businesses or visit with these individuals.

Dennis Olmstead
The Montrose Mirror
Horsefly Brewing Company
Shirley Ela
Dalby, Wendland & Co.
Alpine Bank
Altrusa International of Montrose
Alpine Archeological
Karen & Bob Nicholson
Snow Fox Sushi - Van Bawi- City Market

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

May

- 10 Immigrant to U.S. Citizen**
12:30 Colorado Mesa University
Montrose Campus, Room #106
- 17 D.M.E.A. Board Candidate Forum**
6:00 11925 63.00 Road, Montrose
- 19 D.M.E.A. Board Candidate Forum**
6:00 Hotchkiss Senior Center,
276 West Main Street, Hotchkiss
- 21-22 LWVCO Council**
Holiday Inn Express & The Bridges

June

- 2 Annual Meeting- Luncheon & Election of 2016-2017 Administrative Committee**
Noon Vista Charter School



**LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®**

a NONPARTISAN
political organization,

ENCOURAGES
informed and active
PARTICIPATION
in government,

works to
INCREASE
UNDERSTANDING
of major public policy issues,

and
INFLUENCES
public policy through
EDUCATION and
ADVOCACY.

Check out our Website:
www.montrose.co.lwvnet.org/

Our webmaster, Susan Chandler-Reed, is doing a terrific job keeping us updated on and linked to local, state and national activities, issues and websites.



Check us out on Facebook too:
Google "League of Women Voters of Montrose County, Colorado" and then click "Like us" on Facebook

Susan is handling this site as well!

**Join League of Women Voters of Montrose County
serving Montrose & Delta counties - 2016-2017
Not for Women Only!**

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone (H) _____ (Cell) _____

E-mail _____

___ **Individual \$55** (Of this amount \$31 goes to National League; \$18 goes to State League; \$6 is retained by the Montrose League)

___ **Household \$90** – Two members in one household (National League receives \$46.50; State League \$27; \$16.50 is retained by the Montrose League)

___ I understand that I can join without being active, and this is my intent at the present time.

___ I would like to make a contribution beyond regular dues and understand it will go directly to our local League (Thank You!).

___ Sustaining Member \$100

___ I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Montrose League. Write a separate check to **League of Women Voters CO Education Fund. Write "Montrose" on the check's memo line.**

Please make checks payable to **League of Women Voters of Montrose County**. Mail to P.O. Box 3321, Montrose, CO 81402

2015-2016 Board Members

President: Karen Connor, 249-2135,
kconnor1941@gmail.com

Vice President:

Secretary: Robin Flom, 605-660-940
rlf44@me.com

Treasurer: Rod Britten, 240-1119,
rodbritten@montrose.net

Membership: membership information available at
http://montrose.co.lwvnet.org/join_form.html

Voter Newsletter: Nancy Ball, 249-8963
nancyball@montrose.net

Website & Facebook Page: Susan Chandler-Reed, 249-1076,
susan.chandler.reed@gmail.com

At Large:

Rosemary Murphy, 249-3925,
mmurfh@hotmail.com

Barbara Krebs, 249-3989,
stukrebs@hotmail.com



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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.