



June 2014

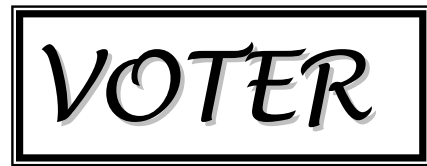
Membership: 28

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
Serving Montrose and Delta Counties

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PRESENTING THE 2014-2015 EXECUTIVE BOARD



From left to right: Caitlin Switzer, president; Nancy Ball, secretary; Rod Britten, treasurer; Jean Aaro, treasurer

Most League members are familiar with the names and faces of Nancy Ball and Rod Britten, but may not be with our new president and vice president; so, the following are short bios to better acquaint you with their personas.

Caitlin Switzer is a writer, journalist and outreach specialist with more than 31 years of experience. Caitlin specializes in non-profit public relations and community journalism, and has served as publicist for the Region 10 League for Economic Assistance & Planning since 2004. Other clients have included The Gathering Place (Denver's only day shelter for woman and children); Public Art eXperience (PAX) and San Miguel County. Caitlin has worked as a staff writer for the Delta County Independent, Montrose Daily Press, and Telluride Daily Planet and has published countless freelance pieces in national and area publications. She has also served as editor at the Mountain Valley News, and briefly ran her own startup newspaper in the Surface Creek Valley. Today she owns the online publication The Montrose Mirror. She is married to attorney Brad Switzer and has three children.

Jean Aaro has lived in Colorado for more than 25 years. She moved to Hotchkiss in 2004 where she owned and operated Dry West Nursery until 2011. Her interest in state and local government led her to the Big Horn Policy Center, where she was a fellow. She has also been active with the League of Women Voters participating in the Legislative Action Committee in Denver and conducting non-partisan voter education programs in Delta County. She has over 20 years of experience as a human resources strategist and educator working with large corporations and start-up businesses. For the past six years she has been a board member of the North Fork Pool Park and Recreation District. With a deep love of the out-of-doors she continues to explore the mountains of Colorado along with other remote mountain areas around the world.

Additionally, Rosemary Murphy and Barb Krebs have volunteered to again be at-large board members and Susan Chandler-Reed has agreed to remain the Website manager.

OUR ANNUAL MEETING - MAY 1



The annual meeting brought thirteen League members and three non-League attendees---our guest speaker, Franklin Eccher, his mother, Lori Tucker Eccher, and Re1-J School District Superintendent, Mark MacHale---to our luncheon held at the Dragon Wall restaurant located in Montrose. All were warmly welcomed by Karen Connor, president, and after a tasty lunch she introduced our honored guest.

Franklin, a junior at Montrose High School, spoke about his motivation for creating the "Western Slope Youth Voting Initiative", how it functions, and his plans for keeping the program viable following his graduation. The "why" was born of his feeling that government classes do not stress the right to vote as the very foundation of government by the people; or impress the importance of each individual vote in determining the future of a community, state and nation; or how to register; or provide students with any practical insight into the workings of the political party system and why civility and respect for differing views is so vital, leaving students ill-prepared and unmotivated to exercise their right to vote at age 18. The "how" depends on his ability to fill in those blanks by persuading government teachers to let him speak in their classes and by reaching students through social media. The "future" of his program depends on his ability to establish a training program for younger like-minded students. Franklin also thanked Karen and Nancy Ball for assisting with online registration of students at the high school in March and noted that about 100 students are now registered. He added that having a proposal on the April ballot concerning the building of a community recreation center certainly made his job easier because much of our local youth population was in favor of that measure and it was exciting to them that they would have their voices heard and could make a difference.

As Franklin was next telling us he had been accepted into a one-month summer program at Stanford University, the cost of which is quite stiff, Kathryn Carson, treasurer, surprised him with a check for \$300. This monetary support was made possible by remaining grant monies received from the LWVCO last year for the "Making Democracy Work Award"---he certainly fit the criteria. Mr. MacHale added the sentiment that he and the district are very pleased with and proud of Franklin's accomplishments.

Pursuant to our by-laws, the following business items accomplished were **review of our non-partisanship policy statement** and agreement that in view of it Tammy Theis had correctly resigned as Membership Chair and from the board as of the date of her declaration as a candidate for County Commissioner but Rosemary Murphy could remain on the board as an at-large member even though she is running for County Treasurer (unopposed) because that board position is not "sensitive"; presentation and **passage of the proposed 2014-2015 budget; election of new officers**, and representing the slate were Caitlin Switzer, president; Jean Aaro, vice president; Rod Britton, treasurer, and Nancy Ball, secretary. They were unanimously (and gratefully) approved. Also handled was passage of a proposed deletion of the Section III Membership Dues of our by-laws approved in 2009. This was done in order to gain flexibility by removing a fixed dollar amount.

A hearty thank you to the outgoing board members was then given by Karen, and she presented each one in attendance with a beautiful columbine plant. On behalf of the outgoing board, Nancy thanked Karen for stalwart leadership during her last (third) term as president and presented her with a gift of funds from the board to be applied toward an overnight stay at the Weisbaden Motel and Spa in Ouray so she can relax and recuperate from the ambitious year. Caitlin (Montrose County) and Jean (Delta County) gave short remarks, after which a big round of applause for the past and upcoming presidents and board members ended the enjoyable and productive meeting at 1:30.

JOIN THE 2014-2015 BOARD TO LEARN and TO ENJOY!

As can be seen from the list of Board Members on Page 8, there are still several positions to be filled. Fresh ideas are always welcome, and Caitlin and the other Executive Board members are anxious to hear yours! Open seats and basic job descriptions are shown below, and do rest assured mentoring is available!

Voter Publisher - responsible for compiling and issuing a 10 monthly newsletters

Voter Service Chairperson - in charge of the fall ballot issues and candidate forums to be held in early October

Membership Chairperson - works to increase membership, sets up and "mans" information table at monthly programs, works with treasurer

Program Chairperson - oversees and manages choice of monthly program topics, selects a committee to obtain guest speakers and handle publicity, works with Voter publisher and Website manager

Making Democracy Work Award chairperson: manages nominations and publicity, selects nomination committee, secures venues

Fundraising Chairperson - creates new ways to raise funds for MDWA and to publish ballot issues pamphlets and for other League activities

S T R E T C H yourself! It is really rewarding, and remember Democracy is not a spectator sport! Call Caitlin at 275-5791.

LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS

D.M.E.A. CANDIDATE FORUMS



Karen Connor, 2013-2014 president of the Montrose County League of Women Voters, serving Montrose and Delta counties, was contacted by Delta-Montrose Electrical Association and asked to once again host its pre-election candidate forums for board seats, and she again accepted. Karen moderated the DMEA candidate forums for three of nine seats---District #7 including Cedaredge, Eckert, and Orchard City, District #6, including much of Delta and the surrounding area and the North Region including all service territory North of the Delta-Montrose county line---on May 6 in Cedaredge and on May 13 in Montrose. Renegotiating the Tri-State contract to allow more renewable energy, hydro-power and broadband were the hot topics. The one-hour meetings attracted good audience attendance, and from the both the candidates introductory remarks and questions posed, the attendees came away with a better understanding of the positions of each of the eight candidates.



Many thanks to the Red Barn Restaurant for supporting our League by hosting the May 7 fundraiser!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

League fundraiser at Horsefly Brewing Company on Tuesday, July 15. \$1 will be donated for each pint sold from 6 pm to closing.

LWV (Walking) Team
No Barriers 5K/Run/Walk to benefit Welcome Home Montrose on Saturday, June 21 at The Bridges at 9am. \$30 tax deductible fee. Contact Nancy Ball 249-8963 if interested.

STATE LEAGUE NEWS

COUNCIL

The bi-annual meeting held this year in Grand Junction at the Doubletree Hotel on May 16-17 brought 34 delegates and several observers representing 13 state leagues, including our local League which sent five representatives: Nancy Ball and Kathryn Carson as delegates, Sheryl Clapton and Tammy Theis as observers, and Karen Connor attended as a LWVCO state board member.



Our host, the Mesa County League, arranged for a Mesa County Environmental Advocacy panel discussion featuring three members of the its League---Peggy Rawlins, Duke Cox, and Karen Sjoberg. Ms. Sjoberg, also a representative of "Citizens for Clean Air", spoke on the increasingly poor air quality of the Grand Valley, saying it has reached the point that retirees are no longer choosing the area for their "golden years". Mr. Cox, also representing the Grand Valley Citizens Alliance, spoke emotionally on the problems arising from the many oil and gas drilling rigs threatening the health and welfare of Grand Valley residents and enumerated what he feels are the three required tools for dealing successfully with the oil and gas industry: 1) Voices - let the local storytellers loose; 2) a Unified Message; and 3) a coalition of decision makers who can make Quick Decisions. A thoughtful line was "people may take many buses but to win they all have to be headed in the same direction". Ms. Rawlins, also representing the Western Colorado Congress, introduced us to the interactive website spillmapper.westernpriorities.org and brought six enlarged photos to illustrate her points on the many health issues being seen on Battlement Mesa and the surrounding areas connected to oil and gas drilling. She also spoke on the negatives of "split estate" whereby property owners do not own the mineral rights below their land.

Board elections, including a new state League president, adoption of the 2014-15 budget, the 2013-2014 Legislative Wrap-up, reports from the vice-presidents on their past year's activities, membership and leadership development, EZ grants, and November ballot issues were the order of business. An important feature of this year's Council was the presentation of the report of the LWVCO's Mental Health Task Force on Colorado's Behavioral Health System (mental health and substance abuse), including its relationship with gun violence, given by Barbara Mattison, task force chairperson. The report was accepted by the State Board, was well-received by Council members, is now posted on the LWVCO website, and will be forwarded to the LWVUS. Look for it on our local website too!



Barbara Mattison, second from the left in the front row, is the new president-elect

Two of the most enjoyable and worthwhile activities of LWVCO Council and Convention are the time spent talking with members of other Leagues in the state regarding their programming, structure, membership strategy, fundraising events, etc.; and, picking up nuggets of information on interesting topics, such as learning of **a Bill Moyers' video on campaign finance reform at www.publiccampaign.org/video** and the **interactive website spillmapper.westernpriorities.org**



Want to learn more? Posted on our local website are the full Behavioral Task Force report and an overview of the 2014 Legislative Wrap-Up given by our lobbyist, Chris Watson. Our own Jean Aaro is a member of the LWVCO Legislative Action Committee and focused on gun safety.

NATIONAL LEAGUE NEWS - LWVUS

National Women's History Museum in Washington, DC.

The League is a longtime supporter of the creation of a women's history museum in DC., and on May 8, 2014, by a vote of 383-33, the U.S. House of Representatives passed **H.R. 863**, legislation to create a commission to study the potential creation of a National Women's History Museum in Washington, DC.

Summary: H.R.863 — 113th Congress (2013-2014)
Reported to House amended, Part II (05/06/2014)

Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum Act - Establishes the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum.

Requires the Commission to: (1) report recommendations for a plan of action for the establishment and maintenance of a National Women's History Museum in Washington, D.C.; (2) develop a fundraising plan to support the establishment, operation, and maintenance of the Museum through public contributions; and (3) submit a legislative plan of action to establish and construct the Museum.

Directs the Commission's recommendations to address issues including the impact of the Museum on regional women history-related museums, whether it should be part of the Smithsonian Institution, and the cost of constructing, operating, and maintaining the Museum and acquiring its collections.

Prohibits federal funds from being obligated to carry out this Act.

LWVUS Position on Federal Agriculture Policies

It's official! On May 15, 2014, the LWVUS Board approved its new Position on Federal Agriculture Policies. The position is based on responses from 243 state and local Leagues, including our local League as you will recall.

Elizabeth MacNamara, LWVUS president, said "While we have experienced some bumps along the road to achieving this consensus the member experts on the study committee produced excellent materials and Leagues demonstrated amazing creativity in the process. We had widespread participation and very a clear consensus." This was a very complex issue, so we owe a large debt of gratitude to the study committee!

The complete updated position, a meaty but succinct two pages that all who participated in the consensus meeting will be particularly pleased with, is **available on our local website**.

Three Big Wins for Voters' Rights

Within the last two months we have seen three major victories for voters:

In Minnesota, a judge recently ruled to shut down the online voter registration system that the Secretary of State had implemented. Thanks to quick bi-partisan action by the legislature and the governor an online voter registration bill was passed and signed into law the very next day. LWV Minnesota testified in favor of the legislation.

In Arkansas, a state judge struck down the state's new voter ID law, saying it violates the state constitution by adding a requirement that voters must meet before casting a ballot.

In Wisconsin, a federal judge struck down Wisconsin's voter identification law, declaring that a requirement that voters show a state-issued photo ID at the polls imposes an unfair burden on poor and minority voters violating the US Constitution. A decision by the Wisconsin state supreme court on a case brought by LWV Wisconsin, arguing that the photo ID law is unconstitutional based on the Wisconsin state constitution, is still forthcoming.

Also, LWVUS is working to support passage of H.R. 3899, the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 (VRAA), which "modernizes the coverage formula for preclearance to ensure it is based on recent acts of discrimination and provides narrow mechanisms to prevent discrimination in voting nationwide. It also provides a national notification system to keep voters up to date on changes to upcoming elections. **The VRAA of 2014 is an important step forward for our democracy, where the right to vote is not about politics or the outcome of elections; it is about equality and justice.**" Elizabeth MacNamara, president. Write to tell your Representative to call for a hearing on H.R. 3899, the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 (VRAA).

2014-2015 LWV Community Support

The Montrose County League of Women Voters thanks these local businesses, organizations and individuals who have donated financial and in-kind support for the 2014 year. Please add your thank you when you patronize these businesses or visit with these individuals.

**Alpine Archaeological
Red Barn Restaurant
Julie Gleason
Dennis Olmstead
Ellie and Steve Dooley
Sarah Combs
The Montrose Mirror
Rod Britten
Horsefly Brewing Company**

League calendar

**No meetings in June,
July or August**

**See September Voter
for September
meeting info**

GET INVOLVED!

**Join League of Women Voters of Montrose
County
2014-2015
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

2014-2015 Board Members

President: Caitlin Switzer, 275-5791, caite@montrose.net

Vice President: Jean Aaro, 970-872-4256, jean@dvywest.com

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

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

Voter Newsletter:

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

Voter Service:

Membership:

Program Chair:

Fundraising:

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

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

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



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF MONTROSE COUNTY**
 Box 3321
 Montrose, CO 81402

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.

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.

