

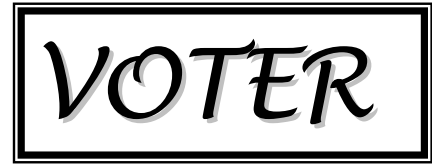


November 2015

Membership: 35

[www.montrose.co.lwvnet.org](http://www.montrose.co.lwvnet.org)

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®**  
*Serving Montrose and Delta  
Counties*



Follow us on **Facebook**: <https://www.facebook.com/VoteMontrose>

**2015 Coordinated Election on November 3**

Aren't we fortunate to live in Colorado, a state that received a most excellent report card for access to the ballot! Our state is noted for having the election model of an all mail-in ballot process, plus same-day voter registration. Plus, of course, we have online voter registration.

Be sure to have your voice heard---EVERY VOTE COUNTS!



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**SUPPORT YOUR LIBRARY**

The League of Women Voters of Montrose County supports the Montrose Library District's Ballot issue requesting voters approve a 0.8 mil levy increase to restore those services that were cut due to the decrease in property tax revenue and to rebuild the reserve fund that was depleted over the past few years. Advocacy, based on these positions, is an important part of League activity.

We support this ballot issue based upon the following LWVCO positions:

1. LWVCO fiscal policy position: "Support raising revenue which incorporates social, environmental and economic goals."
2. LWVCO education position: Support "...a system (that) leads to life-long learning for all students – We believe that "...the education of a young child is a shared responsibility." And "We support measures which promote, help and encourage families to prepare students to meet academic standards."

The library is an integral part of our community, and with the passage of the mill levy increase it will be able to restore lost services.

**Vote "yes" on or before November 3 to support your library!**

**PROPOSITION BB**

The League of Women Voters of Montrose County, serving Montrose and Delta counties, supports Proposition BB to allow the state to retain and spend the taxes collected on marijuana sales in the first year after they were approved by the voters in Proposition AA.

To support using the collected taxes for public school construction (\$40 million) and programs such as substance abuse treatment, youth mentoring and local government marijuana impact grants (\$12 million), **vote "yes" on or before November 3.**

## **LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS**

### **FAREWELL, JEAN**



Unhappily for our League, Jean Aaro and her husband have sold their farm in Hotchkiss and will be re-locating to Durango effective mid-November. Jean will be greatly missed on both the local and state levels, having served as our vice-president for two terms, as forum moderator in both counties, and as a member of the LWVCO Legislative Action Committee tracking gun legislation and state budget/financing, all the while bringing a western Colorado perspective into the discussions.

Many thanks, Jean, and best of luck! If Durango does work out for you, please consider Montrose!!!

### **WELCOME, KALENA SCHERBEN**

Kalena joined our membership roll in October, however, her busy schedule precluded an interview in time for this issue. Look for it in the next edition of the *Voter*.

### **NOVEMBER MEETING**

#### **"Amending the Constitution" Meeting #2**



#### **Thursday, November 5 at noon, Montrose Library Community Room**

Let's **finish up** our participation in the LWVUS study with a robust discussion on this important and timely topic!

The study guide e-mailed to you on October 21 with the background, consensus questions 3 and 4, and their pros and cons gives provides the preparatory information you will need.

Susan Chandler Reed will be chairing the meeting. Mark your calendars! See you there!

## **"Amending the Constitution" Meeting #1, October 8** **Consensus Questions 1 and 2**



Karen Connor commenced the meeting held in the Community Room of the Montrose Regional Library at noon. Also in attendance were Sharron Baldwin, Diane Balk, Nancy Ball, Bob Connor, Robin Flom, Barb Krebs, and Susan Chandler Reed.

Heading up the discussion on Part 1 "Considerations for Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals" with Question 1 and its five sub parts, Karen began by providing background on the study reiterating the facts that general interest in the amendment process has heightened due to the gridlock in Congress and that LWVUS currently has no position on amending the U.S. Constitution as to content or process. She continued, saying today we would be talking about what the shared values and beliefs within the League are and what consensus do we have regarding the circumstances that might allow or compel the League to endorse a constitutional amendment or an Article V convention. If there is consensus in League across the nation on some of the principles that should guide us, then League would mobilize to advocate for or against a particular amendment under the established protocol; however, just because League position might support the proposed amendment doesn't mean that it would support any particular constitutional amendment on that issue because other factors have to be weighed.

Question #1 deals with those factors and considerations by asking "**Which of these should or should not be a consideration in identifying an appropriate and well-crafted amendment?**" and setting out five sub-sections: topic substance---is it of such acute and abiding importance that it requires an amendment; as written is there a mode of enforcement and effectiveness in achieving a policy objective; whether or not it would create a more democratic system of government or protect individual rights; whether the objective could be better achieved through a legislative or political approach rather than an amendment; and, the reverse whether the policy objective is more suited to a constitutional and general approach. After a scintillating discussion, **a consensus was reached on each of the five sub-sections that all should be considered.**

Nancy headed up Part 11 "Aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention" with Question #2 and its seven sub-sections and began by quoting the section of Article 5 of the U.S. Constitution deals with a convention: "**The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments.**" Background showed that this is one of the few provisions of the U.S. Constitution that has never been implemented, and there are no other guidelines for this alternative! Currently, 2/3 of the states would be 34. Part 11 considers whether the League would support such a convention, and if so, under what circumstances.

Question #2 asks "**What conditions should be in place for an Article V Constitutional Convention initiated by the states?**", and its seven subsections deal with the following issues: transparency vs. secrecy; representation by population or one state, one vote; delegates---elected or appointed?; voting by delegate, not by state; limiting the convention to one topic; considering only one topic when determining the 34 required state resolutions; and, as there is not a set time limit should states be able to rescind their "calls"? **A lively discussion resulted in consensus on all seven parts,** although there was not unanimity on the issue of voting at the convention.

We also crafted comments to be included in the consensus report, one of our concerns being that the state delegates must be elected at large in a statewide election.

## **Delta County Ballot & Candidates Issues Forums, October 12**

by Jean Aaro

On Monday, October 12 about 20 people gathered at the Hotchkiss High School to hear a combined School Board Candidate forum and ballot issues forum. Jean Aaro moderated the candidate forum with two candidates, Jill Jurca and Genevieve Novinger, competing for District 2. Delta County School District Superintendent Caryn Gibson was also present to welcome attendees and encourage everyone to vote. Although the turnout was small, the forum was videotaped and posted on the school district website [www.deltaschools.com](http://www.deltaschools.com).

Gretchen Nicholoff presented the statewide and local ballot issues. In addition to statewide Proposition BB, local ballot issues primarily focused on re-establishing the right of the county and municipalities to provide high-speed broadband services.

## **Montrose County Ballot Issues Forums, October 15**



Two forums were held, one at noon and one at 6:30 pm, and president, Karen Connor, gave the PowerPoint presentations on the one statewide ballot issue and the one local ballot issue. The program covered the pros and cons on Proposition BB regarding retail marijuana taxes (provided by the Colorado Secretary of State's office) and the pros (provided by the office of the Montrose County Clerk and Recorder) of Ballot Issue 5A asking for a .8 mil levy increase by the Montrose Regional Library District. There were no organized cons submitted to that office.

Additionally, as a memory refresher, background information was given on Amendment 64 passed in 2012 legalizing recreational marijuana; Proposition AA passed in 2013 approving its taxation (10% on users and 15% on growers); and on the T.A.B.O.R Amendment requiring tax refunds to filers under certain state revenue thresholds. The latter is the basis for the state legislature putting forth Prop.BB this year, and why we may have a similar proposition again in 2017! The point was also made that property tax revenue has decreased over the past several years, and that those taxes are the only source of revenue for operating expenses for the library district were also presented.

## **VOTER SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

Nancy Ball, Bob and Karen Connor, Cheryl Gibson, and Barb Krebs are serving as election judges for the November 3 election in Montrose County.

**It's *that* time of year again – Time to Renew Your League Membership!**

Thank you for past support and for renewing **NOW** so we can continue to have the impact you've come to expect from the League! We need your renewed membership to ensure that we can accomplish our ambitious schedule of activities in the coming year. We continue to hold our base dues at \$55 annually to encourage maximum participation from the community. Of course, please feel free to build upon your dues to include either a contribution toward our general fund or a tax-deductible to LWVCO Education Fund.

In this time of heightened partisanship, gridlock between policy makers and increased frustration among the public, there has never been a more urgent need for the reasoned, factual and civil voice the League of Women Voters brings to our community. **As a member, you are a crucial part of our non-partisan, hands-on work to safeguard democracy and create lasting change.** See Page 8 or go to [www.montrose.co.lwvnet.org/](http://www.montrose.co.lwvnet.org/) and click on "Join League" for more information.



**IT'S ALSO ALMOST TIME FOR  
OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GALA!**

**December 3 at The Bridges from 5:30pm to 7:30 pm  
Cash Bar. Appetizers will be provided.  
Cost per member tbd at next board meeting; one guest is free.  
We'll keep you updated!**

**Great time to relax and enjoy the company of terrific people.  
RING IN THE HOLIDAYS! PLAN AHEAD--MARK YOUR CALENDARS**



**LEAGUE NEWS FROM AROUND THE NATION**

**League of Women Voters of Oklahoma Helps Bring State into Compliance with the National Voter Registration Act**

By: Stephanie Drahan 08/13/2015; **EDITORIAL NOTE:** *This guest blog post was written by Sheila Swearingen, president of the League of Women Voters of Oklahoma*

At the end of July, the League of Women Voters of Oklahoma (LWVOK) helped secure a big victory for voters in their state. Together with our voting rights coalition partners, we reached an agreement with the State Election Board and state agencies ensuring compliance with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993.

continued on next page

**The National Voter Registration Act requires that state agencies providing public assistance must ask clients whether they want to register to vote, offer them voter registration materials and help them complete registration forms.** This pivotal legislation has helped register millions of Americans to vote, yet there was strong evidence that Oklahoma's public assistance agencies were not in compliance. Nearly a year before our eventual victory, LWVOK and the League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Tulsa joined with the Metropolitan Tulsa Urban League and the YWCA Tulsa, to send a letter to Paul Zirix, Secretary of Oklahoma's State Election Board, notifying him of the evidence of noncompliance.

In our letter to Secretary Zirix we noted that the number of voter registration applications reported statewide by Oklahoma public assistance agencies had dropped by 81 percent since the initial implementation of the NVRA in 1995. At the same time, the average monthly participation in the SNAP program, just one of the programs covered by the NVRA, nearly doubled. Furthermore, only 61 percent of Oklahoma citizens in low-income households were registered to vote in 2012 compared to 81 percent of those in affluent households. In fieldwork investigations conducted at Oklahoma public assistance agencies on behalf of the community groups, a significant percentage of agency clients interviewed said that they received no voter registration services whatsoever when, under the NVRA, they should have.

In working with election officials in our state, LWVOK has found that they are committed to the goal of making voter registration available to all qualified citizens. Therefore, we were confident that Secretary Zirix would want to encourage compliance with the NVRA.

As soon as [the agreement](#) (PDF) was signed on July 30, 2015, the Oklahoma State Election Board published a [dedicated NVRA page on their website](#) that includes background on the National Voter Registration Act as well as a link to a complaint form and contact information for state assistance agencies. Beginning in September, the page will also include monthly NVRA statistical reports from each public assistance agency on the number of clients served, the number of clients offered the voter registration opportunity, the various responses to the voter registration opportunity, and finally the number of voter registration forms submitted to the State Election Board.

An agreement of this magnitude was the result of hard work and dedication by a coalition of advocates, and we are grateful for their help and support. The agreement was written on behalf of the League and the other advocacy organizations by Demos, and supported by Project Vote, the ACLU of Oklahoma, and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

For 95 years, the League of Women Voters has worked to help new voters engage with their government and to empower people to tackle the most important issues facing our communities. The Oklahoma League is proud to be a part of an initiative that honors the League's long and arduous fight in the early 1990's to demand passage of the National Voter Registration Act and will have a direct impact on improving voter registration across Oklahoma.

Because of the significantly lower percentage of low-income Oklahomans registered, and a relatively high number of individuals seeking some form of assistance, we are expecting a jump in voter registrations and updated voter registrations. Many low-income families move frequently and they will now be able to update voter registration record when they change information for receiving benefits. We also anticipate this victory will help improve not only our state's voter registration rates, but also improve voter turnout as a result. The League continues to be at the forefront of helping voters register to vote, cast their ballot and make sure that vote is counted.

We hope that LWVOK's success at bringing Oklahoma into compliance with the National Voter Registration Act will encourage other voting rights advocates to fight on behalf of those citizens who should be the beneficiaries of the provisions of the NVRA. **Actions like this are at the core of the League's work: advocating for systems that improve our democracy, allow everyone's voice to be heard and keep our elections fair, free and accessible to all eligible citizens.**



**WHEN WE VOTE, WE ARE ALL EQUAL!**

## ***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**

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

### **November**

**5** Noon Montrose Library  
**Amending the Constitution**  
Consensus Questions Part II

### **December**

**3** 5:30-7:30 pm The Bridges  
**Annual Christmas Party**

### **January**

**TBD** Noon Montrose Library  
**Money in Politics**

### **Check out our Website:**

[www.montrose.co.lwvnet.org/](http://www.montrose.co.lwvnet.org/)

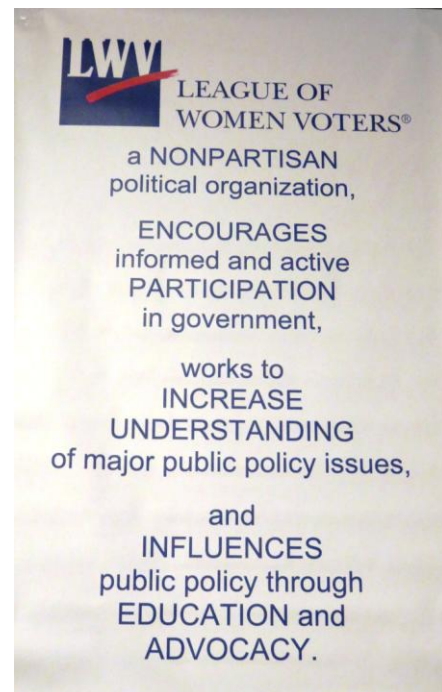
Our webmaster, Susan Chandler-Reed, is doing a terrific job keeping us updated on and linked to local, state and national activities, issues and websites.



### **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  
2015-2016  
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:** Jean Aaro, 970-872-4256,  
jean@dvywest.com

**Secretary:** Robin Flom, 249-8963,  
nancyball@montrose.net

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

**Membership:** membership information  
available at  
[http://montrose.co.lwvnet.org/join\\_form.html](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,  
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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.