



League of Women Voters of Montezuma County

VOTER

Montezuma County, Colorado

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, promotes informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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Membership Renewal

Don't delay ---

Fill out the membership form attached to
this Newsletter
and return it with your check to:
Denis Boon, 14030 Rd 21, Cortez, CO
81321

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 Llois Stein at 564-9565 for more information.

Mark Your Calendars

Next General Meeting
Thursday, October 18, 2007
2 to 4 PM at the Cortez Library
 Immigration Study Kick-off will be a video of the presentation of a 3 person LWVUS panel on Immigration. Llois Stein and Jodi Foran to present and lead the discussion.

Board of Directors

President.....	Jodi Foran 882-240 jodi@foran.net
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Committee Chairs

Membership.....	Llois Stein 565-9565 llois@msn.com
Health Care.....	Eleanor Kuhl 564-0708 ekuhl@frontier.net
Voter Services.....	Roberta Conway 565-3121 rdowntain@yahoo.com
Environment.....	Eric Janes 533-1051 ejanes@frontier.net

Dues are Due

Here is the list of new and currently renewed members. If your name isn't on the following list, you haven't renewed your membership. Please do so soon using the form attached to this newsletter.

Have Renewed:

Jodi Foran, Chris Foran, John Hoover, Louetta Hoover, Eric Janes, Betty Janes, Eleanor Kuhl, Jack Schuenemeyer, Judy Schuenemeyer, Betty Snair, Susan Thomas, Marcia Boon, Denis Boon.

President's Message

September 22 was an eventful day for our League.

We voted to begin the journey from a Colorado Member-at-Large League to a nationally recognized Chartered League by May 2008. Much of the infrastructure to do so will be created by the Board with the approval of the full membership. This infrastructure includes policies and by-laws for our local League. We're fortunate to have Judy Schuenemeyer on the Board as she brings broad experience helping with that effort. The national organization's flexibility allows us to define our league in terms of local needs and resources.

We voted to change the name of our League from LWV Cortez-Montezuma to LWV of Montezuma County to reflect more inclusiveness. We can refer to our League as LWVMC.

Interim officers were elected at the September 22 general meeting to serve until the Spring 2008 Annual meeting. We can thank the following for stepping up to create a solid organization for LWVMC. Thanks to Judy Schuenemeyer, Vice-president; Eric Janes, Secretary; Denis Boon, Treasurer; Chris Foran, Newsletter editor and Webmaster; Roberta Conway, Voter Service Co-Chairman; Lois Stein and Marcia Boon, Membership Committee Co-Chairmen; Eleanor Kuhl, Health Care Committee Chairman; Eric Janes, Air Quality and Environment Committee Chairman; Betty Snair, Publicity and Media Coordinator. This group brings talent and experience that will enhance and strengthen our League's programs and activities. In the short time since last meeting, it's been a pleasure to work with such a cooperative Board!

Lois Stein and I are facilitating the LWVUS study of Immigration Policy. We've been attending the LWVLP immigration study committee meetings in Durango as they organize their study. You'll find more information regarding the immigration study

elsewhere in this Voter as well as in subsequent LWVMC Voters.

Eric Janes, Air Quality and Environment Committee Chairman, and I mailed to the Montezuma County Board of County Commissions the letter sent by LWVMC to the BIA regarding deficiencies of the Desert Rock Energy Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Environmental Committee's effort was super A++ in reviewing the huge 1600 page document and producing eleven pages of deficiencies. Desert Rock is not a done deal and LWVMC is very fortunate to have knowledgeable members keeping us informed regarding environmental issues! The deadline date for submittal of written comments to the BIA regarding the Draft EIS is **October 9**.

Please write Senator Ken Salazar and Representative John Salazar urging them to pressure other Congressional members and the White House to force the EPA to act quickly to define and implement a process for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from various sources including current and future power plants.

Jodi Foran

League Day, October 6, 2007 in Denver

By Jodi Foran

Attending League Day in Denver was an energizing and informative experience! After a beautiful drive to Denver on Friday, Marcia Boon and I, at the invitation of Gerry Cummins, attended a small reception that night for LWVCO Board members honoring Mary G. Wilson, President of LWVUS, who was the keynote speaker for League Day. Also present was Carolyn Jefferson Jenkins, former LWVUS President from Colorado and Marlys Robertson, LWVUS 1st Vice President from Boulder. It's been a long time since I've attended a meeting where homemade deserts were ignored for interesting and informed conversation, friendship, and networking.

Attendees (130 including Marcia, Chris and Jodi) overflowed the ballroom at the Saturday meeting which was run with precision and provided time for six different speakers. I was also able to meet at a luncheon roundtable gathering those chairing the immigration study for their respective Leagues.

Mary G. Wilson, President LWVUS, centered her talk on the "Three M's of Membership, Media and Money". She reviewed the five pilot programs being supported

to increase membership and emphasized the need to incorporate membership in everything a League does. She thanked the heavy response to the recent LWVUS alerts regarding health care for children and the vote for residents of D.C.

Toni Larsen, Executive Director, independent Higher Ed of CO, spoke on Post Referendum C and emphasized that the underlying problem of TABOR still exists and that Ref C only allowed us to catch our breath. While breathing fast, we must address the real problem of state funding.

Senator Chris Romer of Denver, son of a former Governor, and an investment broker spoke about Global Warming and the need for renewable energy. He believes that only a grass roots initiative can overcome the status quo of a fossil fuel based economy and foreign policy. He stressed the need to force the cost of putting carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to be part of the equation in determining the most cost effective means of generating electrical energy. The era of cheap electrical power is over!

Heidi Van Genderen, Climate Change Advisor to Governor Ritter, spoke about the vision of a New Renewable Energy Economy for Colorado and the state becoming an important exporting state to the rest of the nation. She complimented Romer's presentation well.

Monica Griego, legislative director of the Colorado Consumer Healthcare Initiative www.cohealthinitiative.org gave a fast-paced talk regarding SCHIP and the different plans that the 208 Commission is now considering.

Last was a very interesting talk by Ann Allott, Esq., Allott Immigration Law Firm, who shared her thirty year legal experience in immigration policy and statutes. Did you know that Native Americans are not citizens by birth but by statute?!! Her presentation was videotaped and hopefully will be made available soon to CO Leagues.

Air Quality Task Force

The Four Corners Air Quality Task Force wraps up its work on November 7 in Durango. Time and location have not been announced yet.

Judy Schuenemeyer

Concurrence Approved by LaPlata LWV With Our Desert Rock Position

The LaPlata League has voted to concur with our position on Desert Rock. This is quite an honor for our hard working Environment / Air Quality committee members.

League Lingo

Consensus?

Consensus is the process the League uses to reach member agreement on study issues, and is neither a simple majority nor unanimity; instead it is *an overall sense of the group*. In other words, consensus results from answers to questions on which members can find common ground and agreement. Group discussion that allows an exchange of ideas and opinions is the preferred way to achieve consensus.

It is easier to say what consensus is not, than what it is. Consensus is not a vote - rather, consensus is mutual agreement of League members arrived at through discussion. During discussion, everyone has the opportunity to express their viewpoints, and the issue is examined from all sides. Consensus questions, created by the appropriate study committee and approved by the Board provide structure for the meeting, as members discuss the pros and cons until it becomes apparent whether or not consensus has been reached on each question. The study committee analyzes the consensus responses and using this information, creates a position statement. Once approved by the Board, the statement immediately becomes the League's position and is the basis for action on the issue. This type of member involvement in the organization and its consensus process tends to ensure member commitment to the resulting positions. In addition, members have the opportunity at each Annual Meeting or Convention to decide whether or not to re-adopt these positions.

Suggested norms for consensus meeting as well as suggestions for any well run meeting:

- Listen thoughtfully
- Keep an open mind
- Do not interrupt
- Speak in turn
- Keep comments short - do not monopolize the discussion
- Differ with dignity – no personal attacks
- Stay focused – no digressions
- No sidebar conversations

Health Care

We want to help you stay informed regarding Health Care reform. The 208 Commission will be holding a hearing in Durango, Wednesday, October 10. Phone Jodi if you'd like to carpool. The 208 Commission website is: www.colorado.gov/208commissio

LWVMC Calendar

- 10/10 208 Colorado Commission on Health Care Reform
5 – 8 PM Doubletree Inn, Durango
Last public hearing in SW Colorado
- 10/18 LWVMC General Meeting
2-4 PM at Cortez Public Library
Kick-off of national Immigration Policy Study
- 10/25 LWVLPC General Meeting
2-4 PM at Christ the King Church, 495 Florida Road, Durango
Kick-off of national Immigration Policy Study
Carpool from Cortez
- 11/6 Election Day – Mail in only
Term limitations
Law Enforcement District in unincorporated areas of Montezuma County
- 11/10 LWVLPC Safer, More Compassionate World Forum
9 AM – 3 PM FLC CUB Ballroom
- 11/12 LWVMC Board Meeting
9-12 AM at Colorado Welcome Center
- 11/15 LWVMC General Meeting
6:30-8:30 PM at Empire Electric, Calvin Denton Room
Continuation of National Immigration Policy Study
- 12/10 LWVMC Board Meeting
10-12 AM at Colorado Welcome Center
- 1/10 LWVMC General Meeting
6:30-8:30 PM at Empire Electric, Calvin Denton Room
Consensus 1 meeting on National Immigration Policy
- 1/24 LWVMC General Meeting
6:30-8:30 PM at Empire Electric, Calvin Denton Room
Consensus 2 meeting on National Immigration Policy

Immigration Study

The following is taken from the LWVUS Guidelines for the LWVUS Immigration Study at the Local Level.

HOW WE DO STUDY?

Studies are part of League Program, and, in League parlance, League Program includes all of the positions the League uses to affect public policy, as well as the procedure for adopting these positions (see [Impact on Issues](#) for a complete list of LWVUS positions). Program is such an integral part of the League that, according to the League publication, *In League*, "Program is the League's reason for being."

Program is three tiered and includes (1) selection of an issue, (2) study of that issue and consensus, and (3) use of the resulting position to affect public policy. This discussion of how to do a study is limited to the first two steps and is also limited to doing an LWVUS study at the local level.

The purpose of the study is to educate members so that they can be informed participants in consensus and provide necessary data for formulating the ultimate position. The process is a grassroots process.

BACKGROUND TO THE LWVUS STUDY OF IMMIGRATION POLICY

First Step – Selection of an issue (Program Planning)

League Program begins with the grassroots process, Program Planning. Every two years, local Leagues participate in LWVUS Program Planning and identify issues of interest for study at the national level - issues on which the LWVUS has *no position*, and, consequently, is unable to take action to affect public policy in that area. *The League cannot take action without a position.*

For instance, during 2005-2006 LWVUS Program Planning, local and state Leagues suggested numerous important issues for study. By far the largest number of Leagues participating in LWVUS Program Planning expressed interest in immigration. The LWVUS Program Planning Committee

recommended, and the LWVUS Board approved immigration as a three-year study. Delegates at Convention 2006 in Minneapolis concurred, and for the first time since 1992 (Health Care) a new LWVUS study was underway.

Second Step – Study of the issue and consensus

The Role of the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee

At the outset, the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee defines the scope of the study, educates Leagues and League members about the study process, provides background information on the issue, suggests resources, and publicizes the study to Leagues and the public. Later in the study, the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee will write consensus questions for local Leagues and use their responses to create an immigration position statement. The LWVUS Board is responsible for final approval of the scope, consensus questions and position.

As soon as Convention was over, the LWVUS Board named a Chair for the Immigration Study Committee, solicited applications for membership on the committee, and finally selected and approved the final composition of the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee.

Scope of the Study

The committee's first task was to create a scope for the study. A scope delineates the limits of the study, describes areas to explore and often includes focus areas. The Immigration Study scope is broad and imposes few limits on immigration study, but consensus questions will focus on the items specified in the scope. In other words, the culminating position will address only those issues delineated in the scope. The scope of the Immigration Study was approved by the LWVUS Board and distributed to local Leagues to give them direction during the study process.

Background Materials

After establishing the scope, committee members

began to research and write about various issues included in the scope, and to compile resource lists. The first resource list – [Immigration 101 – the Basics](#) – is on the Web site. The committee's background writings will be posted on the LWVUS Web site by February 1, 2007, and provide material for local Leagues to use during the study process. An article written by a committee member is the cover story in the February 2007 *National Voter*.

Immigration Discussion List

An Immigration Discussion List started on January 1, 2007. This list is intended for League members to discuss the study process as well as ideas and questions about how to best educate members and communities during the initial phase. Because the study is strictly educational, discussion on the pros and cons of the immigration issue will not be an appropriate topic for the list.

The Role of the Local League Board

The local League Board appoints a chair and/or a study committee to help educate members and the community about immigration issues. In smaller Leagues a chair often carries out all of the duties of a committee, although this is not recommended. A committee is always preferable, if for no other reason than because it gives new and/or less experienced members an opportunity to serve in a short term capacity and learn about the League and its processes. Ideally, committee members will have a grounded interest in the issue, but some may simply have an interest in learning about the issue.

The Local League Board's responsibilities include oversight of the study committee, providing guidance as necessary, scheduling public/member information meetings, and conducting the culminating consensus meeting.

The Role of the Local League immigration Study Committee

The local League Immigration Study Committee will divide the workload - interviewing, reading, researching and writing – in order to cover and share information more effectively with each other, its League and its community. The local League Immigration Study Committee is responsible for:

- Providing, publicizing and distributing materials and utilizing opportunities for League members and their community to educate themselves about a variety of aspects and perspectives of the issue, including the impact of immigration on their community. Some topics will be of more interest than others and will provide a natural focus, but in all cases Leagues should at least help provide an overview of the issue.

The LWVUS Immigration Study Committee will make materials available to local Leagues. In addition, the local League study committee may research and produce its own materials, and publicize and distribute this information, along with the LWVUS information, to members as well as to the community where appropriate. In many instances, the committee will look for information regarding immigration and its impact on their own community, as well as on the nation as a whole. Although immigration is regulated at the Federal level, impact is local. Learning about immigration at the local level will help members understand the relationship of the Federal law and local impact.

The committee assumes responsibility for immigration issue programs at public forums and membership meetings, identifying and utilizing local experts to present different viewpoints on the issue. Local immigration experts may include, among others, immigration attorneys, political science teachers and professors, law enforcement personnel, people from agencies or groups that provide services to immigrants, representatives of the school district, and health care providers.

The committee may also identify groups with similar immigration interests for collaboration.

The committee writes pertinent *educational* articles for the local *Voter*, and, with local Board approval, publicizes the issue in a variety of ways, including Op-Ed pages and Letters to the Editor. *As with all other efforts*

during the study process, these are educational efforts that are unbiased and present all viewpoints. Precautions should be taken to ensure that materials and/or presentations cannot be perceived as taking a stand on any part of the issue.

- Establishing and adhering to the study timeline.

Depending on the complexity of the issue and available resources and personnel, studies require varying amounts of time to complete – generally from one to three years, although two years is most common. The LWVUS Immigration Study was adopted as a three-year study – the first two years for study and education and the third year for consensus.

- Serving as resource persons.

Committee members make themselves available to present League and public programs and lead discussions and dialogues as needed.

The Role of Members

Last, but certainly not least, League members have a tremendous responsibility to take advantage of every possible opportunity – attend meetings, read publications, and follow the issue in newspapers and news magazines, for instance – to educate themselves during a League study. Ultimately, League members must come to some sort of broad agreement on the values they hold related to immigration. *The League calls this consensus.* From this consensus will come a position that the League will use for years to come to affect national policy. Helping to form Program in this manner may be League members' most important role.

LET'S GET STARTED – TIMELINE

Because the issue is so complex and so large, the Immigration Study is a two-year study.

September 2006 to January 2008

Local Leagues help educate members and communities about immigration issues

September 1, 2007

The LWVUS distributes a Leader's Guide that includes consensus questions

September 2007 to January 2008

Local Leagues take consensus

February 1, 2008

Deadline for the LWVUS to receive consensus response forms

February 1, 2008 to March 20, 2008

Using consensus responses, the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee formulates the position

Late March/early April 2008

The LWVUS Board adopts the position

Why do national studies so infrequently?

The infrequency of LWVUS studies is the result of several factors. One reason is because the LWVUS already has so many public policy positions. Most positions are written broadly enough to cover a great variety of specific issues, as well as changing circumstances. In addition, since the last study in 1992 (Health Care), no single issue had the widespread interest and attention until this last biennium, when immigration sparked interest in

Leagues nationwide. Another reason for the rarity of LWVUS studies is the high cost with respect to staff time, publication of materials and other activities associated with such a broad undertaking. The LWVUS is addressing the problem of cost with the Immigration Study by using members more, as well as utilizing technology for communication (e-mail and free conference calls) and distribution of materials (background materials on Web site.). Even though this study will cost less than past studies, it will use League resources. Outside funding for studies is difficult, if not impossible to obtain. To commit the organization to a study without identifying funding is unrealistic.

The following articles are from the LWV Larimer County League Lines

THE MOTIVATIONS BEHIND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Historically and currently immigration to the United States is fostered by a number of social, economic and political causes. There are global trends in today's highly mobile world that increase migration. Trends in economic disparities between countries, liberalization of trade policies, need for more mobile labor forces and worldwide communication technologies ensure that the international migration flows will become even more significant in this century. Critics of current public policy view the period from the mid- 70's to now as one of migration mismanagement. Illegal migration has become a major issue of our time. Migrant smuggling now matches drug trafficking as a major source of income for organized crime. According to the US State Department between 45- 50,000 people (primarily women and children) are smuggled to the US annually. In Europe an estimated 50% of illegal immigrants are trafficked by organized criminal syndicates (International Organization for Migration, 2007). The reasons people migrate are varied and complex, often entailing considerable sacrifice. The factors to migrate include those that "push" individuals out of their own country and factors that "pull" them toward a particular destination.

Refugees:

Since the Refugee Act of 1980 more than 2 million refugees have settled in the U.S., forced from their countries by war, political change, and social, religious, and ethnic persecution. Depending upon the availability of funds, the government plans to provide resettlement in the US for 50% of UNHCR

refugees. In the last two decades 72% of refugees coming to the US have been received in only 30 US areas. Colorado has received a total of 553 refugees from October 2006 through July 2007. (Refugee Processing Center, Department of State) More than half of any refugee population consists of children (Adams and Kerova, 2007).

While war-ravaged countries increase refugee populations, wars the US have been directly involved with bring special obligations to help significantly with the resettlement of those individuals who are vulnerable because of their support of our efforts. Following the US exit from Vietnam an estimated 130,400 refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia came to the US in 1975, with more than one million following in the decades since. Ellen Sauerbrey, Asst. Secretary of State for Refugees and Migration provided Congressional testimony that 466 Iraqis have been admitted to the US since 2003, while 2 million sought refuge in Jordan and Syria. The State Department has currently set aside 70,000 slots for refugees worldwide (5,500 of those designated for the Middle East and South Asia) , with 20,000 of those slots "unallocated" as to region. Thousands of Iraqis who aided Americans will be at risk in the event of a US withdrawal from Iraq; but, Congress has failed to release funding to even meet the stated allocations (Sandler, Congressional Quarterly, 2007)

Immigrants:

In the last half of the 20th century immigration figures reveal almost a four-fold increase in the number of immigrants entering the US. Colorado's immigrant population was relatively small until the mid-1990's, accounting for only 4% of the total population of the state. Recently though the immigrant population in Douglas County (20 times greater) and Boulder /Larimer Counties (tripled) have shown major increases. What factors impel people to leave their homes and family/friends? A poll of citizens of El Salvador found the principal motivation (2/3rds of respondents) to immigrate was lack of work opportunities at home and that the quality of living was better in the US (CID-Gallup Public Opinion Poll, 6/2007). But in addition to the desire to find work and hope for a better life, research indicates a large range of additional motivations. For a few the motives are to avoid their criminal justice system, the draft, or to engage in criminal activity here. For the vast majority a range of motives are found that fall under the general drive to improve one's own or one's family's opportunities and quality of life. Some examples are:

- A longing for a fresh start (Americans going to Canada)
- Religious freedom (Russian-Jews in the

1990's)

- Health Concerns (AIDS victims leaving home due to discrimination against them or to seek better health care)
- Catastrophic events
- Ethnic repression or cleansing (Armenia, Sudan)
- Fleeing political violence (Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala)
- Development-induced displacements (construction of dams, conservation schemes, urban renewal)
- Professional desires (to study a particular field unavailable at home or because of the lack of jobs using the specialty they were trained for)
- Family reunification
- So children may have better educational opportunities (immigrant children, as an entire group, study more, achieve more, and drop out less than the norm. Jacoby, 2004)
- So child could be a US citizen (2/3rds of children of illegal immigrants are born here and therefore are US citizens. Washington Post Weekly Edition, May 7-13,2007)
- Seasonal migration of farm workers (Agricultural workers with no right to land must follow the crops where labor is needed)

A new research issue focuses on the still unknown reasons behind the shift toward the greater number of women immigrating – the so-called "feminization of migration" along routes that have previously been primarily male avenues. Of legal immigrants to the US in 1998 54% were women. While the majority of these women are moving for family reunification, increasingly females are immigrating on their own and are the principal wage earner for self and/or family (Gibney and Hansen, 2005).

Since the reasons behind people's desire to immigrate in order to improve their lives are varied and complex, any policy changes that are to be effective must recognize and address these motivating factors. The International Organization for Migration notes that it is not difficult to understand why people from poorer regions of the globe wish to migrate to more prosperous countries; this has always been the case both within a nation and across nations. But our modern transportation and communication options make such moves more easily seen as desirable and more easily accomplished than earlier.

Overpopulation, Immigration and the Environment

In 1970, when the first Earth Day was held

spearheaded by Senator Gaylord Nelson, the population of the United States was 200 million people and there was general agreement among the populace that our nation had enough people. The nation's and world's environment were straining under the weight of the mass of humanity, which had reached 3.7 billion worldwide. In 1972, The Report of The Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, chaired by John D. Rockefeller III, stated "Recognizing that our population cannot grow indefinitely, and appreciating the advantages of moving now toward the stabilization of population, the Commission recommends that the nation welcome and plan for a stabilized population.

In the ensuing 37 years, we have added another 100 million people to the United States, a remarkable 50% increase in population. Approximately 70% of this increase has been due to mass immigration (both legal and illegal) and the descendants of those immigrants. According to the Census Bureau, at the end of 2004, the U.S. had a record 34 million foreign born residents (some think the number is much higher than this due to uncounted illegal immigrants). If immigration had been kept at pre-1965 levels of less than 200,000 per year, the population of the United States would have peaked at about 250 million people.

If immigration continues at the level of last several years at 2 million per year (around 1-1.2 million legal per year and .5 – 1 million illegal immigration) the population of the United States will be at 420 million by 2050 and easily double to 600 million by 2060 and be more than 1 billion by the year 2100 – with almost all of the increase due to mass immigration.

The United States is one of the few developed nations with a growing population and it is clear that this is due to mass immigration. Birth rates of native born Americans are at or below replacement level. The United States is not only the 3rd largest country in the world, we are also voracious consumers of resources, with the largest per capita ecological footprint. While we have only 5% of the world population, we consume 25% of the world's energy, and in general, consume many times more resources per person than the world average.

A recently released [U.S. National Report on Population and the Environment](#) by the Center for Environment and Population reveals what many acknowledge, but few respond to: the United States population's disproportionate consumption of the world's resources has had destructive environmental consequences *both* at a national and international level.

Our high levels of consumption and our rapid population growth are clearly unsustainable. Global

warming is a major issue and the United States is the *leading* contributor of greenhouse gasses. While many believe the U.S. needs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% below 1990 levels, it is expected that the U.S. will need to add another 1500 – 1900 power plants over the next 20 years to meet increased population demand. Urban sprawl, driven equally by U.S. population growth and other factors, resulted in the development of 34 million acres of land between 1982 and 2001 and is converting another 2 million acres *per year* in development. Many areas of the country are facing water shortages, underground aquifers are being depleted, and massive new water storage and diversion projects are being proposed. A myriad of other environmental issues, including unprecedented drilling for natural gas, poor water quality, air pollution, continued species extinction, and the impact of reaching "peak oil" all indicate that we have exceeded our country's carrying capacity.

In addition, our growth has placed tremendous strain on all types of infrastructure, increased crowding in our cities, and helped result in the U.S. being a net importer of agricultural products, instead of the large exporter we have traditionally been.

Most Americans see the connection between our rapid population growth and a deteriorating quality of life and a stressed environment. According to a poll by The Polling Company Inc./Woman Trend, sixty-six percent of voters agree with the statement, "The population increase caused by the present level of immigration will negatively impact the quality of life in America, such as causing more congestion, overcrowding and pollution.

"When informed that U.S. population is projected to grow to 420 million by 2050, fifty-seven percent of respondents believed that the present U.S. population of 300 million or less would be best for the country in the long run. (Roper/ASW Poll). The U.S. population is rapidly growing as a result of historically high levels of immigration. The growth and related increases in consumption is negatively impacting the environment. Americans would prefer a stable population of under 300 million people and would like to return to more sustainable level of immigration. To make progress on improving the environment and being sustainable, population in the US needs to become stable. This could be attained by eliminating illegal immigration through attrition by enforcing laws against those who hire illegally and returning legal immigration to traditional levels of around 200,000-300,000 people per year. It is critical for the American public to discuss US population and the amount of immigration allowed in this country. Without this, the discussions about sustainability and

environmental goals will be irrelevant.

Immigration: Diversity and Inclusion

Since its birth (and before) the United States has had two contradictory stories concerning the diverse groups of people who have immigrated here. On one hand, we celebrate the arrival and contributions of the different racial and ethnic groups. On the other, we fear the immigrants and blame them for economic difficulties and other problems in our country.(1)

Since 1965, our immigration policies have favored diversity of country of birth, and these policies have capped the number of immigrants from a given country. In spite of this, Mexican-born immigrants accounted for 30% of the foreign-born population in the U.S. in 2000. (Since then, this percentage has grown.) All other countries accounted for 4% or less of the foreign-born immigrants in the U.S. that year. (2)

Different communities around the country have different mixes. In LA, Hispanic immigrants make up 40% of the metro area. In New York City, Dominican Republic immigrants accounted for 12% of the immigrants, China for 7%, Jamaica for 6%, Mexico for 5%, Guyana for 4%, Ecuador for 4% and all other countries accounted for less than 3 percent of the immigrants. In Miami, immigrants from Cuba account for 40% of the immigrants.(3)

In Larimer County, CO, Hispanic, Black and Asian populations are growing, but the Hispanic growth-rate outpaces all of the others, According to Census data, in 2000 there were 20,811 Hispanics in Larimer County; in 2006, there were an estimated 26,579 Hispanics here. There are fewer than 2,500 Black residents here.(4)

The Poudre School District (PSD) in Fort Collins has about 2,300 students who do not speak English as their first language. 85 different languages are spoken by English Language Acquisition (ELA) students, but the vast majority of ELA students are Spanish-speaking. Other languages include Chinese, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese and Arabic. A couple of elementary schools in PSD have a number of ELA students because their parents attend Colorado State University (CSU) and are from other countries.(5) CSU has about 900 students from nearly 100 countries and close to 300 visiting scholars and researchers from other countries.

One industry attracting a lot of immigrants to Northern Colorado and to other Plains states in our country is the meat-packing industry. A number of communities here have experienced a great deal of growth from immigrants because of this. In Morgan County, CO, Cargill operates a slaughter house and employs about 20% of Fort Morgan's population.

Morgan County's Hispanic population doubled in the 1990's.(7)

Many of the communities with meat packing plants were affected by the raids of these plants in December, 2006. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raided six Swift & Co. meatpacking plants, including one near Greeley, CO. Joseph Hanson, president of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, said more than 12,000 workers were herded together at gunpoint and stripped of their rights. Workers were denied access to telephones, to bathrooms and legal counsel. ICE says due process was given to everyone.(8) Government, communities, and churches are trying to guard against future acts of this sort.

Inclusion

Immigrants settling into a new country begin the process of being accepted into their new community. Experts say that much immigrant assimilation is complete by the 3rd generation, but the 4th generation is still not free of concerns.(9) Housing, employment, education and cultural adaptation are all part of these concerns.

A study begun in 1999 in the New York City area found that 2nd generation young adults—children of Russian Jew and Chinese immigrants—in the area compared favorably to native whites with regards to the percentage of them obtaining a college degree. (73% of the Chinese second generation young adults in the study had a college degree, 61.2% of the Russian Jews had one, and 63.6% of the native whites had a degree.) Other adult children of immigrants from other countries were not doing as well with regards to obtaining a college degree. 30% of second generation South Americans had received a degree, 25% of Dominicans had, and 32.7% of those from the West Indies held a college degree. (Sadly, these numbers for the second generation groups are better than the numbers of native Blacks and Puerto Ricans who had obtained a college degree.) (10)

This study also looked at those who dropped out of high school. 1.1% of Chinese 2nd generation young adults, 2.4% of the Russians, 5.8% of the West Indians, 11.9% of the South Americans, and 14.6% of the Dominicans had dropped out. This contrasts to 5.2% of the native Whites, 14.6% of the native Puerto Ricans, and 16.3% of the native Blacks.(11)

The same study also showed these groups making their way upwards in the labor force. While their parents often worked in restaurants or in health care, the adult children of these immigrants often held

jobs in retail sales, clerical work, finance, insurance, or real estate.

The study also found that the second generation was less likely than their parents to live in segregated neighborhoods, but many did still live in first generation immigrant neighborhoods. In Northern Colorado there are a number of programs to help immigrants assimilate. Churches are often one place people can turn to for help and various institutions offer English classes. In Morgan County, community leaders established a group called One Morgan County to help newcomers learn about health care services, community resources and law enforcement - and to ease fears among long-time residents.(12)

Catholic Charities Northern had a program in Greeley, CO, funded by a three-year grant which provided a comprehensive approach for immigrants to learn basic living skills such as shopping, health care, schools, work, and to acquire English. It also helped build community, and though funding has now expired for this program, many members of the group still support each other and newcomers to the community.(13)

Poudre School District provides English Language Acquisition programs in about 18 of its elementary schools. It also has a bilingual immersion school for Newcomer Program to help students with survival language and communication skills.(14)

- (1) Frank Wu, *Illegal Immigrants--Opposing Viewpoints*, p. 54
- (2) Deborah Macmillan, LWV/ "Immigration and Inclusion"
- (3) Ibid
- (4) Jason Kosena, Fort Collins Coloradoan, August 9, 2007
- (5) Interview with Mary Beth Solano, ELA teacher at Timnath Elem., PDS, Aug. 10, 2007
- (6) CSU website--Office of International Progress
- (7) AP article, published Aug. 19, 2007 in the Reporter-Herald
- (8) AP article by Oskar Garcia, published Aug. 16, 2007 in Forbes
- (9) Deborah Macmillan, LWV/ "Immigration and Inclusion"
- (10) "Becoming American/ Becoming New Yorkers: The Second Generation in a Majority Minority City," by Philip Kasinitz, John Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters, and Jennifer Holdaway
- (11) Ibid
- (12) AP article, published Aug. 19, 2007 in the Reporter-Herald
- (13) Interview with Ernest Giron and Penny Gonzales-Soto, July 13, 2007
- (14) Interview with Mary Beth Solano

Meeting Time Survey Results

The consensus on possible meeting times with least conflict boiled down to Thursday evening about 6:30pm.

New Members

Susan Thomas

Susan spent seventeen years in Southwest Colorado working in land use planning, community development and resource management. During that time she worked for tribal, federal and county government as well as several small businesses. In her years in Virginia, Susan was a planner for the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, where she focused on long range and neighborhood planning. She recently returned to the southwest, and now lives in McElmo Canyon. Susan holds a B.A. in Political Science/Economics from Duke University and a B.S. in Geography (Land Use Planning) from Northern Arizona University.

Susan is currently Montezuma Programs Coordinator for San Juan Citizens Alliance based in Cortez.

Montezuma Climate Action Network

The Montezuma Climate Action Network (Montezuma-CAN or M-CAN) has initiated an effort to increase the number of folks served by Empire Electric Co-op who are buying blocks of renewable energy. To buy such a "Green Block" is essentially to vote for more of your electric power to be generated by renewable energy. The goal is to increase the number of their approximately 15,000 meters who are buying green blocks from 98 to 750. It's relatively cheap – about a \$1.25 / 100 kilowatt hour block increase to your monthly bill. You determine how many 100 kilowatt blocks you want to buy a month. It's an easy phone call to Empire Electric to have yourself included in the group supporting renewable energy.

Attachment List

Membership Form

Print and fill out the form. Mail it with your dues check to Denis Boon, 14030 Rd 21, Cortez, CO 81321.