



League of Women Voters of Montezuma County

VOTER

Montezuma County, Colorado

www.lwvmontezuma.org Total Membership: 26

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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June, 2008

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Mark Your Calendars

General Meetings

- June 7 (Sat) 8:30am LWVMZC annual meeting at the Colorado Visitor's Center in Cortez. Breakfast food and fun!

Board Meetings

- June 9 (Mon) 10am Colorado Visitor's Center in Cortez.

Other Events

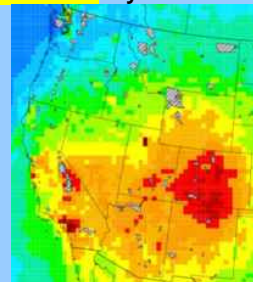
- July 14, (Mon) Last day to register for Primary.
- July 24 (Thurs), 7pm, LWVMZC Candidate Forum, EEA Calvin Denton Room, Cortez.

Join the League!

Anyone of voting age may join the League. Discounted household memberships are available. Call Lois Stein at 564-9565 or Marcia Boon at 565-7668 for more information.

See the Air Quality Forum report in this issue and particularly Gordon Pierce's presentation showing that

WRAP's projections from computer modeling indicate **most of Colorado will be exceeding 90ppb of ozone by 2020.** This contrasts with EPA's predictions that California will have the **ONLY** regions exceeding the **75ppb standard by 2020.**



President's Message

May has been a very active month!

We had a second informative Health Care Forum thanks to the organization of Eleanor Kuhl. At national convention LWVUS will undoubtedly choose to update its present health care position in the next year and will be providing study material. Leagues in Colorado have been very active in elevating health care issues to the national level, are collaborating and have assumed a very active leadership role in Health Care for all Colorado. The Larimer County League has been especially active in keeping Health Care Reform on the front burner of leagues around Colorado.

Eleanor Kuhl and I attended the State Council meeting held in Durango a couple of weeks ago. The twenty-four hour meeting was fast paced and very informative. I will certainly encourage greater attendance in the future knowing that observers attend all meetings. Unfortunately, in the coming years the state meetings probably won't be held on the West Slope and we'll have a day's drive to attend.

Several of our members attended the Air Quality Forum for the Four Corners and San Juan Mountains sponsored by Mountain Studies Institute. Read about it further along in this issue.

I'll be attending the national League convention in Portland, and I'm sure will have much to share after returning.

— *Jodi Foran*

Annual Meeting

Circle Saturday, June 7, 8:30 AM on your calendar as the date the Board voted to hold our League's annual business meeting at the CO Welcome Center. At the meeting the membership will elect officers and vote to approve the annual budget, and proposed program, (strategic programs/issues to study, advocate). Bring the materials specific to the meeting which you should have received by email. Let's not make it all business, but a time

to gather in friendship and celebration. Eric Janes is heading up the Nominating Committee with two non-Board members. In addition to names submitted by the Committee, nominations are welcomed from the floor. Various breakfast items will be served.

Health Care Forum

Kudos to Eleanor Kuhl for bringing together a very interesting group of presenters for the second Health Care Forum this year. The forum was specifically about rural health care issues. We were very fortunate to have the following people speak to us.



1. Dr. Ricardo Velásquez represented Valley Wide Health Systems of Alamosa, an organization specializing in rural health clinics and which operates the Mancos Clinic. Such clinics receive a greater reimbursement from Medicare if they serve a specified percentage of Medicare / Medicaid patients in a "rural" area. He served on the 208 Commission's Rural Health Committee and talked about many thoughtful ideas for rural health care reform. I'm sure we'll be revisiting those ideas next year as LWVUS delves more deeply into possible healthcare reforms.



2. Nelson Toebee, Interim CEO and Dan Jessup, CFO, at SWMH.
- They reviewed the scope of medical services provided by SWMH
 - A vast list of regulatory agencies the hospital deals with
 - Manpower issues: demand, supply, distribution, education
 - Reimbursement for services provided and the economics of managing SWMH.



3. Dr. Karla Demby, local internist, who spoke on the following:
- The need for Primary Care health care reform and reimbursement
 - Problems of recruiting primary care physicians to Montezuma County and how it can be differentiated by the few who choose to enter primary care arena instead of medical specialties where reimbursement is better.
 - Dr. Demby emphasized that recruitment must become a community commitment.



4. Laura Rice, Director of Southwest HealthNet PHO, spoke about the difficult business environment for primary care physicians wanting to establish economically viable offices in our rural area. She pointed out the pressures of a small PCP business. In general:
- 31.7% of the patient population bring in less revenue than it takes to “keep the lights on”
 - 31.2% of the patient population breaks even
 - 37.1% of the patient population bring in more revenue than it takes to “keep the lights on”
 - Family Practice has the highest overhead of any specialty – at 59.19%.

Colorado League Activities

Outlined by Marjory Beal, LWVCO, President

Marjorie Beal, state League president, outlined several LWVCO activities at the Council meeting.

- The Larimer League, she commented, can be credited in part with adoption by LWVUS of support for single pay, total health coverage. Talks and lobbying need to keep going on this complex issue.
- The voting machine debacle in our state appears settled. LWVUS has always supported a verifiable paper trail.
- After 40 years of merit selection of judges in Colorado, the process may be threatened by an initiative in November.

Recent polling indicates 43 per cent of voters support incumbents, but the remainder vote no or ignore the question.

- Internally, membership recruitment has become a national priority with workshops scheduled at Retreat. A focus is to recruit newly retired.
- The Colorado League website has been revised and enlarged. Ballot issue pros and cons will appear there as well as in printed form. She encouraged local sponsors for funding local handouts.
- LWVCO's Legislative Action Committee has been active during the Legislative session following efforts to modify TABOR and measures regarding education.
- Regarding needs of the transportation system, she reported State Treasurer Cary Kennedy is actively working on the budget problem. The gasoline tax initiated in 1919 was regularly raised thereafter to cover roads and bridges until the "tax" became victim to TABOR. Consequently the general fund has been drained to meet critical needs at the expense of other critical needs.
- League opposes the ballot issue on affirmative action presented by an out-of-state initiator and often described erroneously by signature gatherers. A similar issue has been killed in Oklahoma.

LWVMZC Nonpartisan Policies

A Primer for Political Activity

As evidenced by the interest in the various political campaigns and potential presidential candidates, many leaguers have questioned whether the League's nonpartisan policy would limit them from engaging in political activity. To this end we'll review our local nonpartisan policies at our Annual meeting. If you're the President or Voter Service Director, constraints apply. LWVMZC Board of Directors also must

practice some discretion. All other LWVMZC members can participate in political campaigns and other political activity, however, there are a few things to remember. Here's a primer:

"The Purpose of the League is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League of Women Voters is nonpartisan in that it does not support or oppose any political party or candidates; it is political in that it takes positions on selected governmental issues after member study and agreement.

The League recognizes the role of the political parties in our form of government and believes that participation in the activities of the political parties is an essential ingredient of citizen responsibility. While the League urges its members to be politically active, certain constraints are necessary in order to maintain the nonpartisanship of the organization."

According to the LWVMZC non-partisan policy these constraints include:

- Board members may not run for any partisan elective office.
- If a Board member plans to engage in political activity, that member must seek a Board decision as to whether the activity would affect the community's perception of the League's nonpartisanship.
- The President or Co-Presidents and Voter Service Director may not take an active, visible role in a campaign for a political candidate or for a non-League issue.

There is more to the policy but these statements pertain directly to political parties and to candidate campaigns. In reviewing these positions, the President(s) and Voter Service Director must adhere to these positions, and that the rest of the Board should, when participating in a political activity, be circumspect in their activities.

All other LWVMZC members may freely participate in political candidate campaigns and their issues, (write checks, display yard signs, buttons, etc) but only as individuals, not as representatives of the League. Additionally when

campaigning they should not infer that they are representing the League of Women Voters. When you attend a campaign event or party, leave your league badge at home. When working on LWV voter service activities, however, (voter registration, candidate/issue forums, ballot issues, etc.) wear your LWV badge but refrain from expressing your political views.

LWVCO Council Meeting



COURTESY OF JILL PATTON

From left, Jodi Foran, president of the League of Women Voters of Montezuma County; Ellen Park, the immediate past president of the La Plata LWV; and Marilyn Brown, spokesperson for the La Plata LWV, enjoy dinner in the Pullman Room at the Strater Hotel on Friday during the League of Women Voters of Colorado Council.

Eleanor Kuhl and I attended the State Council meeting in Durango a couple of weeks ago. As expected it was very interesting and more than met my expectations! It is always a pleasure to network with League leaders from various areas of the state, and to meet those with whom I've corresponded.

Michelle Olguin, vice chairwoman of the Southern Ute Tribal Council, delivered the official welcome and talked to the group about the Tribe, its accomplishments and concerns. She set the tone of speakers who focused heavily on SW Colorado.

Our League was recognized and received a framed congratulatory letter for being recognized as a fully chartered league. I sat at the head table with leaders from the hosting league: LaPlata's Ellen Parks, President; Jill Patton, VP;

and Marilyn Brown who has been our liaison to LWVCO as well as newsletter editor of LWVLPC. We sat with Marjory Beal, LWVCO, President and the keynote speaker, Troy Eid, US Attorney, District of Colorado.

Troy Eid reviewed what he oversees and manages regarding federal justice. Colorado is the largest single federal district in the states and includes jurisdiction for federal lands including four national parks, five national monuments and twelve National Forests. The United States Attorney's Office regularly works with the various land agencies addressing a host of issues relating to the management and preservation of Colorado's natural resources.

Colorado also has several major military installations, including NORAD, the Air Force Academy, the Pueblo Chemical Depot, Fort Carson Army Base and Buckley and Peterson Air Force Bases. The United States Attorney's Office works closely with the Department of Defense and its Inspector General's Office to prosecute those who interfere with military operations. The office also represents the Department of Defense in all federal court actions where the military is party to a lawsuit.

The Bureau of Prisons also has a significant presence in Colorado. The complex in Florence includes the country's highest security prison, Supermax, as well as a penitentiary, a correctional institute and a prison camp. There is also a correctional institute, a prison camp, and a detention center in Englewood.

Denver is the regional headquarters for numerous federal agencies. There are nearly 35,000 federal employees who work in Metro Denver. The headquarters of the United States Attorney's Office is located in downtown Denver, Colorado. In addition to the Denver office, the United States Attorney's Office has staffed offices in Grand Junction and Durango.

Our state is home to two Indian Reservations, the Southern Ute and the Ute Mountain Ute. The United States Attorney's Office has jurisdiction to prosecute felonies occurring on these two reservations. The branch office in Durango handles many of the cases that come from the two reservations. Eid justified the need to establish a second Federal Court in Southwest

Colorado.

In addition, Eid teaches Tribal Law at CU, is married to a CO Supreme Court Justice, father of two children and the son of Sandy Eid, office manager of LWVCO. He possesses a superior intellect and memory - he spoke for an hour without notes.

I had no idea of the major differences in the Southern Ute and Mountain Ute Tribes in terms of self government – enforcement and judicial systems. It's something I want to learn more about as it impacts us tremendously. Attorney Eid was very complementary of Chief Roy Lane of the Cortez Police Department and Sheriff Gerald Wallace regarding the participation of their organizations in the training program he conducted for members of both departments to help with law enforcement on the Mountain Ute Reservation. My understanding is that the Mountain Ute's enforcement officers as well as those of the Cortez Police Department and the Montezuma Sheriff's department have been commissioned after the training as federal law enforcement officers.

State Board members presented the League Membership Initiative which I'll be sharing with the Board and members.

The group was honored to welcome Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, a past president of the LWV of the United States from 1998-2002. She is the League's representative to Colorado Unity, a coalition organized to fight proposed constitutional Amendment 46, which would eliminate most affirmative-action programs in Colorado. She also presented background about the status of minorities in Colorado.

Also included in the agenda of the fast-paced, well-organized meeting was a legislature update and review by League lobbyist, Christine Watson. Other than Chris who is paid nominally for her work, other Leaguers on the Legislative Action Team are amazing volunteers.

Christine gave us a detailed picture of what our legislators did during this past legislative session. Among the many bills and topics Christine highlighted were:

- a. Colorado's financial worries as Referendum C comes to an end

- b. Higher Education's financial plights
- c. Capital construction money for K-12 schools
- d. Improvements in the judicial review process
- e. Health care
- f. A ballot issue proposal to change the initiative and referendum process

The list of potential ballot issues presentation by Gerry Cummins was particularly interesting. These issues change from day to day, and some think many are too complicated and confusing. Remember to THINK BEFORE YOU INK, meaning be very judicious about signing any petition to get issues on the ballot if and when you are approached. (Read the reminder in this issue).

La Plata County's LWV past-president and our Mentor, Marilyn Brown, was elected to a two-year term of secretary to the state board.

It was an exhilarating State Council meeting for Eleanor and me!

— *Jodi Foran*

Air Quality Forum

The Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) sponsored an "Air Quality Forum for the Four Corners and San Juan Mountains" in Durango on Thursday, May 29.

The forum was well attended by LWVMZC. Audience members included Jack Schuenemeyer, Bill Hendrickson, Eleanor Kuhl, Chris and Jodi Foran of the League as well as Sue Whitehead of Montezuma Climate Action Network (M-CAN) and Sylvia Oliva, former LWVMZC member and environmental contractor. Jack and Sylvia are also Four Corners Air Quality Task Force members.

Presenters from across Colorado and New Mexico represented a broad cross section of air quality knowledge and interests.

Mary Uhl gave an update on the status of the Four Corners Air Quality Task Force (4CAQTF) work. The task force will reconvene August 20th.

- San Juan basin produces 6% of US Nat. Gas (1 trillion cuft per year)
- 17.6 million tons per year (TPY) coal
- 7 Class I areas within 250 km
- 3840 MW coal fired power creates
 - 28.7 MTPY CO₂
 - 68.8 KTPY NO_x
 - 28.9 KTPY SO₂
 - 1341 lbs/yr mercury
- 19,000 oil and gas wells
- 12,000 more O&G wells in next 20 years

James Tempte with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe talked about air quality jurisdiction issues in the Four Corners and specifically SUIT.

- Tribal land history
- Air quality control in checkerboard land jurisdiction
- Intergovernmental Agreement P.L. 108-336
- Progress toward reservation air code
- Addressing acute issues

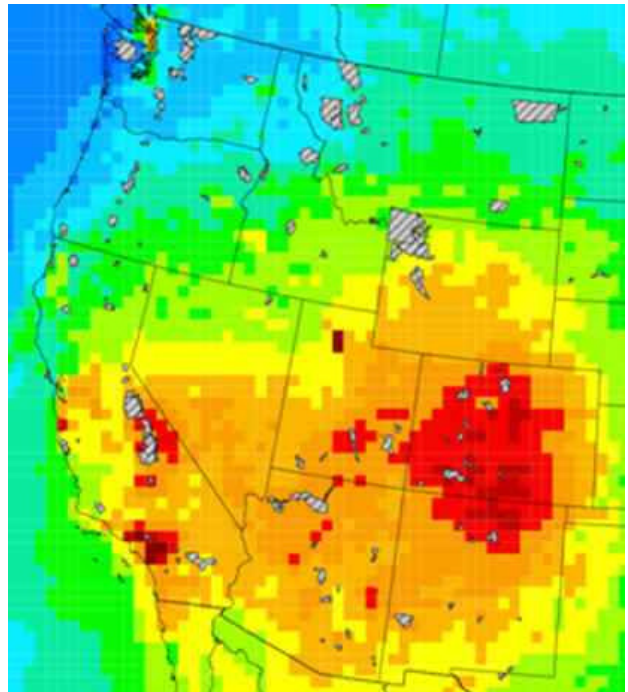
Mary Uhl of the Air Quality Bureau of the New Mexico Environmental Department discussed mercury issues in New Mexico including;

- Public health concern
- Source types
- NM hotspots
- Mercury cycle and deposition

- NM mercury policies and priorities

Patrick Cummins of Western Governors Association Western Regional Air Partnership (WRAP, which is the successor organization to the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission) talked about the growth in coal fired power plants, their emissions and the effects on measured air pollutants including NO_x, ozone and particulates.

WRAP's **projections** from computer modeling indicate most of Colorado will be exceeding 90ppb of ozone by 2020. This contrasts with EPA's predictions that California will have the **ONLY** regions exceeding the 75ppb standard by 2020.



WRAP's computer projections.

Mark Sather of U.S. EPA Region 6 Air Quality Analysis Section out of Dallas discussed;

- NO_x, ozone and gaseous ammonia data and trends from sites such as
- NM: Substation, Bloomfield, Ignacio, Bondad
- Mesa Verde, Grand Canyon, Canyonlands, Petrified Forest

With the National Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) ozone limit set at 75ppb, Mesa Verde is 73ppb with an upward trend since 1994.

Five gaseous ammonia passive sampling monitor stations operating in the Four Corners area (one on

Mesa Verde operated by Sylvia Oliva) during 2007 have provided baseline data that will be helpful in managing haze. Based on three week samples in January 2007 and 2008, Mesa Verde was 0.3ppb compared to 1.5ppb in Farmington.

Mark Sather also presented for **Gordon Pierce** of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Air Pollution Control Division, focused on Ground Level Ozone in the Four Corners Area during 1990-2007.

Ground level ozone forms from NO_x and "Volatile Organic Compounds" (VOC's) in the presence of sunlight. NO_x is mainly from fossil fuel combustion while VOC's have many sources, some man-made and some natural.

Ground level ozone increases respiratory problems and damages trees and other plants (including crops).

Gordon's data showed that ozone in the Four Corners hovers just under the 0.075ppm (75ppb) limit and in some NM sites is exceeding that level. This means that New Mexico's Navajo Lake site will probably be in violation of the new NAAQS this summer. This will mean non-attainment designation for part or all of San Juan County in New Mexico and maybe into Colorado.

Cortez is due to get a continuous ozone analyzer by June 30, 2008.

Ellen Porter of the NPS Air Resources Division presented Atmospheric Deposition of Nitrogen in Colorado and the Four Corners Area. Her talk included Nitrogen Deposition, Sources and Transport, Monitoring, Trends and Ecosystem Effects.

Sources include combustion (NO_x from factory, power, auto, etc), organic nitrogen from lightening and NH₃ (ammonia) from agriculture.

Nitrogen can cause acidification which leaches nutrients from the soil. It also causes undesired enrichment favoring exotic and invasive species.

Environments most sensitive to nitrogen enrichment problems are those with short growing seasons, thin soil, sparse vegetation and low productivity such as alpine, arid (deserts, and certain grasslands. The east slope of the Rockies are having nitrogen problems.

Ellen Porter also presented for **Bud Rolofson**, who was not able to attend. His subject of Visibility

and its measurement was very well presented by Ellen.

A significant point is that particulates 2.5 microns or smaller (PM_{2.5}) have the greatest health effects and visibility effects which means that visibility measurements have direct implications for health.

Koren Nydick of MSI (the forum organizer) presented a mercury overview (also prepared by Win Wright of Pine River Watershed Group) including;

- Mercury deposition,
- Precipitation (including snow)
- Environmental cycling
- Four Corners hotspots and fish advisories
- Regional monitoring data and trends (Mesa Verde, Molas Pass, Vallecito and Pine River Watershed)
- Trends (mostly increasing) at Crater Lake, Clear Lake, White Dome and Big El Dorado
- Zooplankton as long term monitoring tool

More information is available at www.mountainstudies.org

THINK BEFORE YOU INK

LWVCO is encouraging the public to be cautious during this period of circulation of initiative petitions.

Voters will be asked to sign a variety of initiative petitions "just to get it on the ballot so people can vote on it". The League is telling voters: "**Your signature is very valuable**, considering that far fewer signatures are required to qualify a petition for the ballot than voters to pass it on the ballot. **Only sign an initiative petition that you believe belongs on the ballot.**"

In 2006 the largest number of initiatives, 14, appeared on the ballot. This number could go even higher in 2008, a presidential year.

Consider six questions voters can ask themselves to help determine whether or not to sign an initiative petition:

Is it complex? Some issues can be decided by a simple **yes** or **no** vote. Complex issues may need to be thoroughly examined and debated in a legislative arena.

Is it confusing? Some initiatives are not well written or contain conflicts that may require court resolution or interpretation. This costs the taxpayers additional money to resolve these issues.

Does it belong in the Constitution? If an initiative amends the Constitution, consider whether it really belongs there. Is it a fundamental law that should be protected from change? Correcting a constitutional amendment requires another constitutional amendment – another vote of the people – and is cumbersome and costly.

How will it be funded? Is it an “unfunded mandate” that would require the Legislature to take funds from other essential programs? Consider the effect on the overall flexibility of a government budget with already limited revenue. An initiative should generally create its own revenue source, and not earmark, restrict or obligate a specific percentage of the General Fund revenues.

Who is behind it? You can find out who are the real sponsors and opponents of a petition drive. Contribution and expenditure reports are available through the Election Center at the Secretary of State’s Office at 303-894-2200 or at <http://www.sos.state.co.us>.

Before you sign, ask to see identification of the signature gatherer. All signature gatherers are now required to wear a badge that identifies them as a “volunteer circulator” or a “paid circulator”. If the signature gatherer is a paid circulator, his/her badge should also give the name and phone number of who hired him/her. If the petition signature gatherer is not wearing a badge, do not sign the petition.

The League of Women Voters of Colorado is a grassroots, nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government in order to build better communities statewide. More information can be found on the website at www.lwvcolorado.org

Marge Fisch, LWVCO Communication Director

LWVUS Proposed Program for 2008-2010

The LWVUS Board is recommending to the national convention delegates the following to be adopted by the delegates as a program for 2008-10.

Based on Program Planning responses received from local leagues by March 1, the LWVUS Board recommends retaining all current LWVUS Positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy. The LWVUS Board recommends a Health Care program to educate members and communities in order to be better prepared to do health care advocacy as needed. The Board also recommends the following proposed concurrence to amend the LWVUS Principles: ‘The LWVUS believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: executive, legislative and judicial.’

Board

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