



# The Voter

League of Women Voters® of Arapahoe County

November 2013

Membership 85

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## We're Back

Apologies for the lack of an October newsletter, but the last two months have been rather busy as per the summary on page 3. Without your enthusiasm and help we couldn't have done it, so applause applause to all.

This month is much slower, but we are working on several PR activities including an updated web site [www.lwvarapahoe.org](http://www.lwvarapahoe.org), a LWV facebook page (finally) and twitter. The League website is also now on all smart and iPhones. Look up us.

### Tuesday, November 5, 2013 ELECTION DAY

**Friday, November 8, 2013**  
LWVAC Discussion Group  
9:30 a.m. @ Castelwood Library  
6739 S. Uinta St., Centennial

**Monday, November 11, 2013**  
Unit Meeting: Colorado Problem Solving Courts  
5:30 p.m. @ Garcia's Mexican Restaurant, 5050 S. Syracuse St. Centennial

**Thursday, November 14, 2013**  
Unit Meeting: Colorado Problem Solving Courts  
9:30 a.m. @ Castlewood Library  
6739 S. Uinta Street

**Thursday, November 21, 2013**  
Movie Night:  
*Last Call at the Oasis*  
6:30 p.m. @ Koelbel Library  
5955 S. Holly St., Centennial

**Monday, November 25, 2013**  
Management Team Meeting  
6:30 pm @ TBA

**Thursday, November 28, 2013**  
Thanksgiving

**Thursday, November 28, 2013**  
Hanukkah

**December 4, 2013**  
Holiday Party

## LWVAC HOLIDAY PARTY



Join us in celebrating the season at the annual LWVAC Holiday Party, Wednesday, **December 4, 2013 6:30 p.m.** at the Heritage Greens Community Room, 4814 E. Links Circle, Centennial.

We will provide the beverages; you can bring an appetizer. Prospective members always welcome. Additional information will be sent later, but please save the date on your calendar.

# NOVEMBER UNIT MEETINGS



## PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS

### A NEW APPROACH TO THE TRADITIONAL COURT PROCESS

To us, the standard court process goes like this: An individual is arrested, goes to court and if he/she is found guilty receives a sentence. Depending on the sentence, the individual is sent to jail/prison or some other detention/placement facility. Probation may be required, but further involvement with the court only occurs if the individual is brought back for another violation.

**Problem Solving Courts are vastly different.**

A new concept for Colorado, Problem Solving Courts emphasize treatment rather than punishment. These state courts rely on close collaboration with multidisciplinary teams, whose members represent the judicial and treatment communities, to provide accountability and treatment services to offenders to reduce substance abuse and recidivism. Included under this state network are Adult & Juvenile Drug Courts, DUI Courts, Family and Dependency/Neglect Courts, Veteran's Treatment Courts and Adult & Juvenile Mental Health Courts. The latter, many believe, is a more innovative and humane way to handle those with mental health problems. .

Arapahoe County (the 18th Judicial District) has adapted their own program called The Wellness Court. It provides similar services as the state's Problem Solving Courts but works primarily with offenders with mental illness and drug problems. It is supported by the District's Attorney's office, the Public Defender's office, the Probation Department, Arapahoe County Sheriff's department and the Arapahoe Douglas Mental Health Network. Their mission: to help those offenders who have drug abuse and mental health illness

**The November unit meetings will explain the new programs, how they work and what we as leaguers can do to spread the news of these remarkable programs.** This program is in response to suggestions from several Colorado Leagues for a study on mental health issues in relation to gun violence. In response, the LWVCO established a mental health task force last March to gather information about Colorado's Behavioral Health system. As part of their research, task force members met with Brenidy Rice last month to talk about the new court program. LWVAC members Janice Green, Chris Angle and Nancy Jackson are members of this task force.

**On Monday evening, November 11, at 5:30 p.m. at Garcia's Mexican Restaurant,** Janice Green and Chris Angle will talk about the Colorado Problem Solving Courts. Nancy Jackson, who is also an Arapahoe County commissioner, will present her first-hand experience with the Wellness Court.

**On Thursday morning, November 14 at 9:30 p.m.** Brenidy Rice, the Colorado State Problem Solving Court Coordinator will further explain the state's program and the Wellness Court. Please come to one or both programs. Guests are always welcome.

# SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER WRAPUP

**PUBLIC PROGRAMS, CANDIDATE FORUMS, UNIT MEETINGS AND VOTER REGISTRATIONS, OH MY!**

There's an old proverb that cautions people not to bite off more than they can chew. Alas, LWVAC ignored that proverb. By a conservative count, we conducted or participated in more than 20 events during the last two months as evidenced by this countdown. Thanks to all who participated in the planning and development. Without you, we couldn't have done it.

## Public Programs

- **Navigating Health Care Reform**  
Featuring speakers from The Bell Policy Center & Connect for Health Colorado
- **Amendment 66: State Funding for Education**  
The pros and cons with Senator Mike Johnson, former state Senator, Steve Durham, and representatives from Great Education Colorado and Colorado for Real Education Reform.
- **State Ballot Issues:**
- The pros and cons from Great Education Colorado, the Independence Institute, and representatives from two Marijuana organizations.
- **The Effects of Oil & Gas Development on the Air We Breathe**  
Speakers from CU Boulder INSTARR Institute, Environmental Defense Fund, American Society of Pediatrics and an oil and gas attorney

## Voter Registration Programs

- National Register to Vote Day
- Arapahoe Community College
- Daniel Oaks Alternative School, Castle Rock

## Candidate Forums

- Two Littleton School Board forums
- Moderated AAUW Douglas County School Board forum
- One Englewood City Council forum
- Aurora City Council Candidates forum and TV filming in conjunction with Aurora Sentinel, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Aurora Business Women and Aurora Election Commission.
- One Littleton City Council forum
- Two Centennial City Council & Mayoral forums
- Douglas County School Board forum

## Member Unit Meetings

- Two September meetings on the "Making Ends Meet" National Issues Forum
- Two October meetings on state and local ballot issues

## LWVAC Movie Night

- *The United States of Alec*



# MEMBERSHIP BRIEFINGS

## *Thank You*

To all who have renewed their LWVAC membership, thanks so very much. We're gratified for your continued support and appreciate your interest in our programs and activities. If you haven't renewed, please do so. Your dues allow us to sponsor public programs, voter service activities, unit meetings, movie nights and other events for you and your community.

Please join us.

Memberships are \$60 for individuals; \$85 for households and \$25 for students. Send you check to Jo Ann Feder, Membership, 2363 Primo Rd., Unit E, Highlands Ranch, CO 80129.

*Thanks also* to members for their additional contributions: Rudy & Alice Ramsey, Barbara Schulmeister, Sonya Pennock, Monique Hea, Janice Green, Vicki Harimon, Gerry Cummins, Sara Jane Barru, Deb Armbruster and Billy Day. Education fund donations included those from Deb Armbruster, Carolyn Melphy, Monique Hea, Sara Jane Barru, Barbara Barlow and Betsy McBride.

### *Welcome to new members:*

*Toby Lear* is a retired postmaster from Burchard, Nebraska. Although she grew up in Denver, she married a farmer and lived on a farm in Kansas for 38 years. Burchard, NE was just 3 miles away across the state Line from their farm. She moved back to Denver when her husband's health needs required a change. She has two sisters who live in Denver; a son who is a scientist at Los Aamos New Mexico, and a daughter who is a nurse in Grand Junction.

*Diann Miller* is a recycled Leaguer. She was active in the Denver League and served on their board of directors. When economic conditions required her to go to work she dropped out of League, but now that she is retired she came back. She also teaches bridge, sings in a choir, and participates in dog rescue programs, the majority of which are Bichons from Garland, Texas.

*Welcome too* to new members Suzanne Baldwin, Dori Corley, Priscilla Kissick and Linda Rinehart. Suzanne, is a former LWVAC member, who moved to Cannon City several years ago. While she still lives in Cannon City, she renewed her LWVAC membership to maintain her contact with League activities and programs.

Priscilla, Dori and Linda joined LWVAC in October and all three live in the Highlands Ranch area. We are excited to see new members from Douglas County and hope they will assist us in promoting and developing League activities in that county. Their bios will be published in December.

# NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

## LWVAC DISCUSSION GROUP

The group will discuss the movie, *Inequality For All* - a film previously shown at the Mayan Theater, featuring Robert Reich discussing the “disappearing” middle class. Attendees are also asked to bring a “Hot Topic” for additional discussion..

Friday, November 8 at 9:30 a.m., Castlewood Library, 6739 S. Unita St., Centennial

Contact Monique Hea, 303-220-9273  
[heamph@hotmail.com](mailto:heamph@hotmail.com)

## FOOD STAMP CUTS AFFECT U.S. & COLORADO FOOD BANKS

As of November 1, 2013, more than 47 million Americans who receive food stamps (SNAP) have seen their benefits decrease. This is because the 2009 stimulus money Congress temporarily increased for SNAP during the recession has expired.

According to the Department of Agriculture this decrease of \$5 billion equals 21 fewer meals a month for a family of four or 16 fewer meals for a family of three.

While the Agriculture Department calls SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) the “cornerstone of the nation’s program for reducing food insecurity and hunger,” Congress is currently meeting on developing a new farm bill to establish new agricultural policies and the SNAP benefits. SNAP funding is nearly 80% of all spending in the Farm Bill

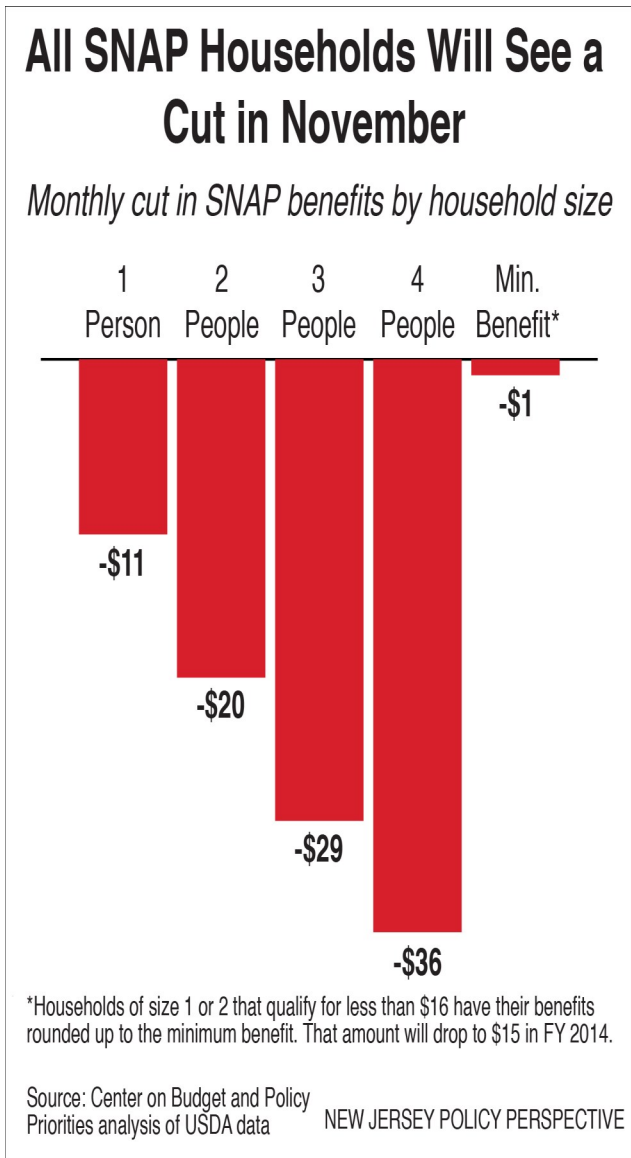
Republican House leaders have asked that an addition \$40 billion in SNAP cuts be enacted over 10 years. A bipartisan Senate plan passed this summer requested about \$2 billion in cuts.

Currently over 74 million Americans participate in SNAP, around an 80% increase since 2007. Despite the escalating costs – from \$35 billion in 2007 to \$80 billion in 2012, food banks throughout the US say there is still a strong need for higher SNAP benefits due to high number of low income and unemployed Americans who are coping with limited incomes. According to the Agriculture Department the average SNAP payment is \$133 a month and each benefit is means-tested.

**Hunger Free Colorado**, a major food bank/service organization in Colorado says that more than half a million Coloradans will lose a portion of their benefits – the across the board cuts will reduce the Colorado program by \$55 million.

At our July retreat LWVAC Management Team voted to adopt two issues as LWVAC’s advocacy for 2013-2014: Hunger in Arapahoe & Douglas County and oil and gas development, including fracking, in the two county area. To this end, we are suggesting our members consider donating a portion of their holiday giving to Hunger Free Colorado. The debate may go on, but the need is immediate.

**To help and or donate call the Hunger Free Hotline, (855) 855-4626).**



# NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Did you know Thanksgiving and Hanukkah are on the same day this year? We wish all a wonderful holiday.

## OIL & GAS ADVOCACY TEAM REPORT

As mentioned on page 5, the LWVAC also adopted as part of it's advocacy focus, the development of oil and gas, including fracking, in Arapahoe & Douglas Counties.

Activities thus far include sponsoring, with the LWVAC program committee, the October 7th public program on the effects of oil and gas development on air pollution; developing an email contact list for citizens interested in following the advocacy efforts, setting a meeting with the Arapahoe County Local Government Designee, setting a separate meeting with Jeannette Hillery, LWVCO chair of the Hydraulic Fracturing committee, and an initial review of the draft Air Quality Regulations to prevent air pollution from oil and gas development as released by the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division. The formal regulations will be released November 21. Stay tuned.

## LLWVAC WEB SITE [www.lwvarapahoe.org](http://www.lwvarapahoe.org)

Amid all the fall programming, we also established a comprehensive **Election Central** section with information on voting, ballot issues, candidates, etc., and brought back last year's **InThe News** section to highlight power points and videos from some of our programs, as well as summaries of today's news items.

While Election Central will be retired until mid 2014, we would like suggestions for the *In the News* section. Would also appreciate some help writing copy for this section. Any takers? Just choose your subject and send it in.

Thanks to Barbara Dungey for maintaining the web site and to Karen Hart and Barbara for the Election Central copy.



## LWVAC NOVEMBER MOVIE NIGHT LAST CALL AT THE OASIS

*Last Call at the Oasis* starring Erin Brockovich, is what the Washington Post calls "filmmaking at its most urgent, timely and stylistically smooth best. Water, or the lack thereof, is the issue here. Beginning in Nevada, the movie delivers the alarming news that if that city continues to irrigate its dancing fountains and casino tourists at current rates, the nearby Lake Mead will be depleted, rendering the Hoover Dam unable to generate electricity in four years. The movie then moves to California farmers fighting fishermen on the right to water the Central Valley, where most of our produce is grown, vs maintaining a fragile marine ecosystem. But wait, there's more. Texas polluted wells.... Michigan cattle feeding lots..... a California ad Agency that wants to market distilled waste water as drinking water..... the movie takes viewers through scientific environmental and geopolitical issues. Their message: If the glass winds up empty, don't say we haven't been warned.

**Thursday, November 21, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.**  
**Koelbel Library, 5955 S. Holly St., Centennial.**

**Snacks & beverages available**



**The League of Women Voters  
of Arapahoe County**

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## Mission

*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.*

## Join Us

Join the League to help make your community a strong safe and vibrant place to live. Help shape the important issues that affect you and your family.

Memberships are \$60 per individual; \$85 for households and \$25 for students. For more information call Jo Ann Feder, 904-608-3932  
[joluvs10s@gmail.com](mailto:joluvs10s@gmail.com)

## League Links

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