



The Voter

League of Women Voters of Arapahoe
And Douglas Counties

March 2015

Membership 103

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March is almost here and the time for the “wearing of the green.” Lets hope by then we’ll be able to spot some green though all the white stuff we are currently experiencing. Here’s wishing a Happy St. Pat’s to all.

Except for the March 18th lunch all LWVACD activities are set for the end of the month, so please list them on your calendar now so you won’t forget. We’ve also included a short article about amending the U.S. Constitution, which needs new committee members. If you are interested see page 5.



Monday, March 9, 2015

LWVACD Program Meeting
10 a.m. @ Milano’s Coffee
9602 E. Arapahoe Rd., Centennial

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

Administrative Committee
10 a.m. @ Southglenn Library
Streets of Southglenn, Centennial

Friday, March 13, 2015

Great Decisions
Brazil’s Metamorphosis
9:30 a.m. @ Castlewood Library
6739 S. Uinta St., Centennial

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

LWVACD Lunch Bunch
Hong’s Chinese Restaurant
11:30 a.m. @ 10333 E. Costilla
Avenue, Englewood, 80112

Friday, March 20, 2015

Great Decisions
Privacy in the Digital Age
9:30 a.m. @ Castlewood Library

Monday, March 23, 2015

LWVACD Management Team
6:30 p.m. @ Castlewood Library

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

**All Member Meeting on
Special Districts
6:30 p.m. @ Southglenn
Library
Streets of Southglenn**

Monday, March 30, 2015

Movie Night
Title to be announced
6:30 p.m. @ Lone Tree Library
8827 Lone Tree Parkway,
Douglas County

MARCH IS WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

Recently Gerry Cummins and I appeared in a short video about the League and Susan B. Anthony for a history project being developed by a Douglas County middle school student. In reviewing information about Anthony and her involvement in the early suffrage efforts, I was again impressed with the tenacity and passion exhibited by these women during the 72 years it took to gain women’s right to vote.

March is Women’s History Month and the efforts of the suffragettes and many other exceptional women will be highlighted at various celebrations, exhibits and historical programs. These women deserve their honors, but so do you. As League members you lobby at the Legislature, monitor city and school board meetings, testify before governmental officials, analyze ballot issues, register voters, host candidate forums, and spend endless hours researching issues. You also do it with tenacity and passion. So this month celebrate your history and your League efforts. Who knows, someday your picture may be on a U.S. coin!

MARCH PROGRAM

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Have you looked at your property tax bill lately? Depending on where you live you may be paying a large sum of property taxes to fund more than one special district. And how much you spend again depends on what kind of services they provide, what purpose they serve and what they do.

We know we pay for school and library district services, but what about those that we don't even know exist? And, exactly how many special districts operate in Colorado? And are they unique to just Colorado? And here's the big question: Have you ever voted in a special district election?



Ann Terry

By definition a special district is a political subdivision established to provide a single public service within a specific geographical area. They are independent units that exist as separate entities with substantial administration and fiscal independence from general purpose local governments.

Ann Terry, Executive Director of the Special District Association of Colorado (SDA), will answer these questions and more at an all LWVACD member meeting Tuesday, March 24 at 6:30 p.m. at Southglenn Library in the Streets of Southglenn.

According to its website, SDA exists to provide communication, research, legislative input, administrative support and educational opportunities for member districts. It helps special districts serve the public in the most efficient and economical manner possible. It also advocates on behalf of special districts before the Colorado General Assembly.

Ms. Terry is a practicing attorney, who has been active in Colorado legislation and public policy for 20 years. Previous experience included Deputy Director for the Colorado District Attorneys' Counsel and as the Legislative Liaison for the Colorado Department of Public Safety. She was also an adjunct professor at the University of Denver Law School and taught at the University of Iowa Law School trial advocacy program. She was appointed by then Mayor Hickenlooper in 2004 to serve on the City and County of Denver Board of Ethics and served until 2013.



APRIL PREVIEW

LWVCO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2013 members of several Colorado Leagues suggested the state League study mental health issues and the possible correlation of such issues to gun violence. A LWVCO Task Force was formed to review this issue and representatives from Leagues throughout Colorado joined to research Colorado resources, support agencies, legal practices, policies and procedures and medical procedures and training. Their findings were significant.

So significant, that the task force agreed the research emphasis on mental health should be changed to include behavioral health issues since substance abuse and mental health issues are often intertwined.

Research also revealed that Colorado's prison system is the largest in-patient provider of behavioral health services; the state is ranked 48th nationally in funding public behavioral health services, and the growing number of people with mental health challenges in Colorado and nationally now number 1 in 5 individuals.

The April unit meetings will cover this report and their subsequent recommendations.



NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

LWVCO CONVENTION May 16 & 17, 2015

Five members of the LWVACD Management Team will represent our League as voting delegates at the State League Convention May 26 & 17 in Boulder Colorado.

Delegates will be asked to vote on the LWVCO budget, Board of Directors, program and any bylaw changes. Additional activities will include informational speakers, a silent auction, and tours of interesting Boulder events and businesses.

As you remember at our January program planning meetings members considered several suggestions for state study. They included an update to the LWVCO's Task Force on behavioral health, additions to the current LWVCO fracking position, a study about different voting methods and a concurrence with the Boulder League on wage issues. The state board has recommended delegates adopt the update of the Behavioral Health study as the state-wide program, but it is expected the other leagues will lobby for their suggested programs.

LWVACD delegates are Jo Ann Feder, Sonya Pennock, Alice Ramsey, Deb Armbruster and Maggie Markey. Marlu Burkamp will also attend as a member of the state board.

LWVCO ADVOCACY AGENDA 2015

This agenda reflects the priority issues that will be addressed by the state League in both the legislative and citizen education activities in Colorado.

- **Elections & Voting.** State will continue to be active in Colorado voting methods to ensure voter accessibility for all.
- **Environmental Quality & Land Use Planning**
The now-healthy economy reminds us a balance must be maintained between using natural resources for growth and ensuring the quality of life for urban and rural communities.
- **Fundamental Needs of Colorado's Future** Practical policies for education, helping those afflicted with behavioral health issues and ensuring the state's Infrastructure should be appropriately funded.

LWVUS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2015

Every year, the state and national leagues set priorities for the year. In doing so, the LWVUS and state boards consider a number of factors to determine what is most important and where League believes its efforts have the greatest impact. The state's priorities are on page three. The LWVUS positions are presented here in two sections.

The first tier priorities are **voting rights, election administration, and money in politics**. The league believes that much of the inequality, economic and otherwise, that exists in our society results from uneven and unequal access and participation at the ballot box and beyond.



The second tier priorities are **climate and environmental protection, immigration and health care, including reproductive choice**.

LWVACD OIL & GAS COMMITTEE



The Committee met last month with

Stephen Rodriguez, Aurora's Local Government Designee (LGD) to learn how the city works with the oil and gas industry.

Currently the city has an ordinance containing oil add gas development regulations on landscaping, structure, height and fencing. If, for example, the proposed well site is 1,000 ft. from the nearest edge of the footprint of the nearest structure it is approved by the Planning Department. If it exceeds 1,000 ft. a public hearing is required.

The ordinance also includes a provision that property owners within one half mile of the proposed well must be notified, and an requirement that an agreement must be reached on road damage and repair. Other requirements deal with site plans, drilling and production site information and the haul route for trucks coming and leaving the production site. There is, however, some leeway allowed for developments located far from urban and residential developments.

The city also has an Oil and Gas Committee which meets every two months to gather and exchange information about current oil and gas development in Aurora and make recommendations to the city on such issues. This could develop into a more formal committee soon as its members are currently meeting to refine its organizational structure, membership, and mission. Meetings are open to the public.

Committee members are Gladys Hodges, Sandy Blackstone, Sonya Pennock, Alice Ramsey, Deb Armbruster and Marlu Burkamp.

LWVACD LUNCH BUNCH



We're trying our Chinese lunch date again this month. And if the Gods of Winter stop us once more we'll appeal to the Chinese deities. Or St. Patrick if you're Irish!

So please join us at our March lunch bunch, Wednesday, March 18 at 11:30 a.m. at Hongs Chinese Restaurant, 1033 E. Costilla Avenue, Englewood, 80112. For directions call 303-792-5528.

Members new to League are cordially invited to share a meal (and a fortune cookie) with other league members. Nothing formal, just interesting talk and discussion about everything under the sun. For information contact Vicki Harimon, 303-770--8738

vickiharimon@aol.com

PS: there really are Chinese deities. I looked it up.

THE LEAGUE NEEDS YOU

We're looking for league members to join our management team, issues committees, program, voter service, communications and membership committees and to work on the many League projects and events. If you notice, you will find the same names on many of the committees and we need additional members with new opinions and ideas to inspire and lead.

A nominating committee has been appointed and committee members may be calling you, but please help us by considering a volunteer opportunity with League. We will work with you to ensure you are not overwhelmed. Contact Marlu Burkamp and she will connect you with the right person.

marluburkamp@gmail.com

POPCORN, SNACKS AND MORE AT OUR MARCH MOVIE NIGHT



Our movie night this time is late in the month but will be a welcome relief after the busy days of March. Please join us for snacks, wine and a great movie, Monday, March 30 at 6:30 p.m. at the Lone Tree Library, 8827 Lone Tree Parkway in Douglas County.

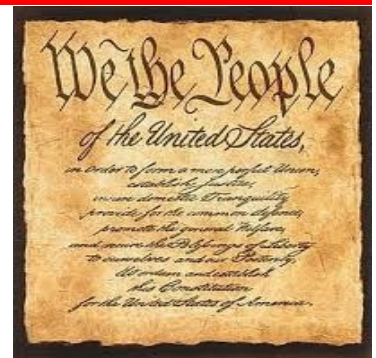
The movie title will be announced later, but please understand it takes time to hire directors, set designers and interview Academy Award winners before announcing our latest pick. OK.... Not true, but we're pursuing a list of interesting titles and will report back soon.

MANAGEMENT TEAM NOTES

The February Management Team reviewed the water, oil and gas, voter service and program reports, and an update from the Legislative Action Committee. The nominating committee was appointed and delegates to the state convention were noted. The new League name has been changed on the LWVCD website and Facebook, submitted to the Secretary of State and the IRS and new stationary is available. New bylaws are also being developed for member review at the June annual meeting, A voter service committee was also formed to develop a plan for the 2016 election. The meeting ended with a brief review of the LWVCO's decisions made during the state's Board meeting conducted earlier that day .

THE U.S. CONSTITUTION: TO AMEND OR NOT TO AMEND? THAT'S JUST ONE OF THE QUESTIONS

The LWVACD will consider this and other questions and seek consensus on a LWVUS study regarding the process of amending the U.S. Constitution this fall. We need your insight and opinions to look at the this process and present the information to League members at unit meetings possibly in September. If you'd like this short time project, **contact Sonya Pennock, Program Chair, sonsu@earthlink.net. 303-794-0430. In the meantime here's some background.**



The League of Women Voters has long supported the Voting Rights Act and legislation limiting the role of money in politics. Supreme Court rulings have negated important sections of the Voting Rights Act and gutted Campaign Finance laws. Whatever else it may or may not have done, the Court's rulings have galvanized a huge groundswell of citizens to act. New civic organizations have sprung up across the country, proposals for Constitutional amendments proliferated and action was demanded from regulators and Congress. What to do? Given Congress's unwillingness or inability to propose Constitutional changes, some are advocating using other tools provided in the Constitution for amending the Constitution.

Article V of the U.S. Constitution provides two ways for proposing Constitutional changes: Congress, by a two-thirds vote of both chambers, may propose constitutional amendments to the states for ratification. OR, the legislatures of two-thirds of the states (34 at present) may ask Congress to call a national convention to propose amendments to the Constitution. Amendments proposed by either of these methods must be ratified by three-fourths of the states (38 states) either by state legislative action or through state conventions called expressly for the purpose of voting on ratification.

League of Women Voters study of the Constitutional Amendment process will seek member agreement on the path we should advocate for amending or nation's Constitution. How would the Article V Convention process work? What would be the role of the states? Who would decide the topics to be considered in the Convention? How would delegates be selected? How would delegates be apportioned? How would the ratification process work if the Convention proposes multiple amendments? Would the Convention's action be reviewable in federal or state courts?

These questions will be part of the study. Interested?



The League of Women Voters
of Arapahoe and Douglas
Counties
5776 S. Crocker Street
Littleton, Colorado 80120
303-730-2356

www.lwvarapahoedouglas.org

email: lwvarapahoeinfo@gmail.com

LWVAC MANAGEMENT TEAM

Sonya Pennock
Program
303-794-0430
sonsu@earthlink.net

Alice Ramsey
Secretary & Key Contact
303-841-7839
alice@ramsisle.com

Marilyn Ayers,
Treasurer
303-471-8301
mk303@comcast.net

Jo Ann Feder
Membership
904-608-3932
jolvs10s@gmail.com

Marlu Burkamp
PR/Communications
303-798-2939
marluburkamp@gmail.com

Karen Hart
Voter Services
720-234-5303
larkspurkaren@hotmail.com

Fern Black, Member At-Large
303-793-0807
blackwatch5@hotmail.com

Deb Armbruster, Member At-Large
303-770-5505
darmbr@aol.com

Maggie Markey, Member At-Large
704-661-9072
maggimarkey@mindspring.com

Barbara Dungey, Member At-Large
720-253-6629
Barbara.b.dungey@gmail.com

Gladys Hodges, Member At-Large
915-525-4982
hgladys5066@yahoo.com

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, jolvs10s@gmail.com

League Links

League of Women Voters/Colorado
1410 Grant, B-204
Denver, Colorado 80203
303-863-0437 or 1-800-863-8683
info@lwvcolorado.org
www.lwvcolorado.org

League of Women Voters/US
1730 M Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036-4508
202-429-1965
lwv@lwv.org
www.lwv.org