

**EMPOWERING VOTERS, DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**

**THE VOTER**

April 2020    Membership 52

**DUE TO THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, THE EVENTS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL AND MAY HAVE BEEN CANCELLED.**

**OUR ANNUAL MEETING, USUALLY HELD IN MAY, HAS BEEN DELAYED. WE'LL KEEP YOU UPDATED!**

**AS MARCH IS **WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**, CHECK OUT THE CALENDAR SECTION ON PAGE 8 FOR SOME INTERESTING READING!**

**AND,**

**DO RESPOND TO THE CENSUS**

See page 4

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## Local League News

Fortunately, two of our three candidate forums took place before Covid-19 changed our scheduling and the scheduling of many other group events. About 70 people attended the Montrose City Council forum and roughly 25 attended the Delta City Council forum that we co-hosted with the Delta County Independent. Both forums had Q & A sessions that brought up local concerns on vital issues affecting the two cities, where sales taxes should be directed, and brought out the perspectives of the candidates for which the League received many thank yous from the appreciative attendees. Thank you to the City of Montrose and the DCI for helping the League to assist voters in making informed voting decisions on April 7, and a big thanks to Tanya Ishikawa for skillfully moderating both events and to Rod Britten and Cyndi Holman for serving as timekeepers.



All 11 candidates participated in the Montrose forum, although Ed Ulibarri is not pictured as he was late.



4 of the 5 Delta candidates participated. Mark Broom running unopposed, and who was ill, did not.

### **The Paonia Mayoral Forum by Gretchen Nicholoff**

The Paonia mayoral candidate forum scheduled for March 14 at Paonia Public Library was cancelled on March 13 due to concerns from one of the candidates about transmission of coronavirus. The other candidate agreed, and that same day the libraries announced that they would be closed and the meeting rooms no longer available. So, what to do?

Hearing of the cancellation, the Town of Paonia offered its streaming service via YouTube for the mayoral candidates, so I called Paonia Town Hall, and in collaboration with both candidates, we ultimately settled on Thursday, March 19, using that online method. So now that we would have no live audience, how best to move forward with the forum?

After extended discussion with both candidates, we decided on a most un-League-like format--- something that resembled a conversation between the candidates. People tuned into the livestream could submit questions online; however, because the audio was not satisfactory, we had to switch to the town's Facebook page and livestream to it.

Ultimately, we, apparently, had an audience of 42 people, which is probably about the number we would have had if we were holding a forum with a physically present audience. People stayed tuned in and engaged, and the candidates seemed pleased that they were able to elaborate on their issues, which pleased me because although I have moderated many forums this was brand new to me. I had no timer and only my instincts to guide me when a candidate was going on too long or a topic had been exhausted. But it was an interesting exchange of ideas between the candidates, and I hope helped voters determine whom to support.

Thank you to Penny Heuscher and Marjorie True for being willing to work on this forum. They would have been timekeeper and question collector. I appreciate their willingness to help!

**And, the League thanks you too, Gretchen, for your perseverance and willingness to be a talk show hostess with no preparation! The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly impacted our everyday lives, but the League adjusts and forges ahead with patience, dedication and grit! That's why we have endured for 100 years!!**

**CITY AND TOWN RESIDENTS: BE SURE TO VOTE BY APRIL 7**

**DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT!**

**REMEMBER, EVERY TIME YOU VOTE YOU SHAPE HISTORY!**

**Interested in joining our local League's Board of Directors?**

With the 2020-2021 League year fast approaching and with what promises to be a **full** fall agenda, help is sorely needed. A new board will be elected at our annual meeting in May, so please do consider stepping up. Should you want additional information about particular positions and/or at-large members, please get in touch with one of the current board members. Their contact information is shown on page 9.

Your participation helps to keep our League vital!  
You will find League more interesting when you are involved. Time commitments can be brief, moderate or more involved. We value any level of participation.

## The 2020 Census is Here! April 1 is the official 2020 Census Day!



### IT'S IMPORTANT, IT'S EASY, IT'S SAFE!

The U.S. Census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution to occur every 10 years and is the process of counting **every** resident (citizens and non-citizens) in the country. The count is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, a nonpartisan government agency. The official US Census Day is April 1, and, basically, what the US Census Bureau wants to know is who is living in your household as of that date. One person should respond for an entire household.

By now, you should have received your invitation to respond and noted that the Census does not ask for a Social Security number, bank account information, or information about political party affiliation, or questions about a person's religion or citizenship status. **It has never been easier to respond on your own, whether online, over the phone, or by mail—all without having to meet a census taker. Want to avoid a census taker coming to your door? Respond promptly! As of March 28 Self-Response from Montrose and Delta counties is just over 34%.**

Census takers plan to conduct the non-response follow-up operation, which starts across the country on May 13. **However, households can still respond on their own during this phase (online and phone response is available through August 14.** The Census Bureau will closely follow guidance from public health authorities when conducting this operation.

The census data is used to:

- Reapportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives
- Redraw congressional, state, and local district boundaries ---redistricting
- Determine the need for new roads, hospitals, schools, and other public sector investments
- Distribute more \$675 billion in federal funds for states and local communities annually
- Inform businesses about the changing needs of the U.S. population

The Montrose County CCC and its partners (including the League) are working diligently to spread the word to educate and encourage our populace to participate in the census, which is not easy with the Covid-19 shelter in place situation. If there is a good participation rate, Colorado would receive about \$2,300 per person per year!!!

Speaking state-wise, with a good response it is estimated that Colorado will receive an additional seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, and the data from the census will help to avoid gerrymandering of the re-drawing of Congressional and CO General Assembly district maps.

**Please spread the word to your spheres of influence! Every person in Montrose and Delta counties counts!**

**Questions? Be sure to check out [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov) for more info.**

## Welcome, New Members



**Susan Werner and Bruce Ackerman**

Susan spent her early years through high school in Tucson, Arizona, and earned her BS degree at University of California at Berkeley in biology. She then began her lifelong career working with wildlife, first in Glacier National Park, where in 1975 she and Bruce worked on a fire ecology project; she then worked for the BLM as a temporary technician in Montana and in Montrose. During her five years (1978-1982) as a seasonal worker in Montrose she grew to love the location and the community. She found that it was difficult to transfer to the area because biologists rarely left. In 1982 she went to work for the Colorado Division of Wildlife where she was a District Wildlife Manager in Denver and Evergreen; she was then promoted to be a supervisor (Area Wildlife Manager) and lived in Steamboat Springs for 11-1/2 years. Upon retiring, she moved to Boise, Idaho to be with Bruce. Susan knew she wanted to live in Montrose and she and Bruce built a home south of town which was finished in 2016 when he retired.

Susan's hobbies are bird watching, camping, and quilting. She is a substitute teacher for water aerobics at the Montrose Rec Center in normal times. She also has a tiny business making harnesses to attach radios to sage grouse. As she feels informed voters are vital to our local, state and national elections, she joined the League to support education on a non-partisan basis.

Bruce spent his early years in Maryland and graduated from high school in Rockville. He attended MIT for his undergraduate work and has graduate degrees in wildlife from Utah State University and the University of Idaho. He worked as a wildlife biologist for 40 years, serving in many locations, including researching and managing manatees in Florida. He spent the last 12 years of his career in Boise, Idaho, where he worked for the Idaho Fish and Game Department asking people about their interactions with wildlife. His adult daughter lives in Boise. Once he moved to Montrose, he became the president of the Black Canyon Audubon Society. He has been president of an Audubon chapter in three different states! Additionally, Bruce is a part-time professor at Colorado Mesa University in Montrose where he teaches an introductory class on environmental science.

Needless to say, his hobbies are bird watching and camping and he has strong interests in rafting, history, astronomy and photography. Bruce revealed that he had been a League member in various areas over the years and when he and Susan attended our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the LWV in February, he decided that this was the time to re-join and support the League's efforts.

Referring to the photos above, Susan and Bruce have just returned from a 3-1/2-week trip to Argentina, the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and Antarctica.

## **LWVCO NEWS**

### **President's Letter – March 14, 2020 – From Ruth Stemler**

The League of Women Voters of Colorado is closely following state-, federal-, and industry-issued updates and guidance regarding coronavirus (COVID-19). The health and safety of our members is our number one priority. We encourage our local Leagues and our members to put their health and comfort first and to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations. We understand that the work the League does defending democracy and empowering voters is vital, particularly in this high-interest election year, and we encourage the use of videoconferencing rather than face-to-face meetings during this pandemic crisis.

### **From Board Briefs of the March 14 LWVCO Board Meeting**

**Fair Tax Colorado, Initiative 271 (TABOR reform)** – the Board voted to **support** Initiative 271 by asking Local Leagues to pass petitions and collect signatures to get this initiative on the November ballot. The initiative is designed to increase state revenue by instituting a graduated income tax. For details on the content of the initiative, please see <https://fairtaxcolorado.org/>.

From Fair Tax CO: Initiative 271, Policy Changes Pertaining to State Income Taxes, is a response to the financial log jam created by TABOR, the tax and spend limitation section of the Colorado Constitution. Because Colorado's tax code is in the state constitution, any change must go to voters in the form of a ballot measure. Basically, Initiative 271 establishes a graduated income tax (not a flat tax, as we have now) that reduces taxes for many yet is structured to bring in more revenue for state services.

**Redistricting** – Toni Larson is heading up redistricting efforts for the League in Colorado. The goal is to educate voters on the next steps involved with redistricting following the 2020 census and to encourage qualified individuals to apply for positions on the redistricting commissions – included is an exciting project with Colorado College and the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs to participate in the an April 3-5 "Drawing the Lines" conference. Toni is writing a PowerPoint presentation and paper which will be made available when completed.

**Legislative Letter** – the Legislative letter is now online and has been substantially reformatted to make it more useful and informative. Please see LWVCO Legislative Letter for the current letter, for information on legislation and help with contacting your legislators.

### **2020 Council – May 30-31 – Grand Junction – Doubletree Hotel**



Might you want to serve as a representative from our local League? Contact Jan Edwards. Keep tuned re the impact of Covid-19 on whether or not the Council is held.

## **Interested in Joining the LWVCO Board of Directors?**

Qualifications: Passion for the League; Belief in Democracy for All; Energy & Enthusiasm  
Applicants from outside the Denver metro area are encouraged to apply! Contact Ruth Nurenberg at [nurenberg24@outlook.com](mailto:nurenberg24@outlook.com) for more information.

## **LWVUS NEWS**

3/21/2020 - The League joined the effort led by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights urging Congress to include funding for voting rights in the COVID-19 package. Here's part of the letter...from Virginia Kase, president.

The implementation of comprehensive policies that expand voter registration, in-person early voting, no-excuse absentee voting by mail, voter education, and safe in-person voting on Election Day, is critical to assisting states' preparation for upcoming elections, given the severe and ongoing threat posed by COVID-19. Congress must act now to provide funding and policy mandates so that all states are sufficiently prepared to administer an election that both protects the American public and also enables full participation by all eligible citizens, even – and especially – during a time of national crisis. As outlined in our March 16, 2020 letter, any package addressing election assistance must require that states adopt a number of practices including the following:

- an extended early in-person voting period (allowing citizens to vote over an expanded period rather than in a cluster on Election Day),
- no-excuse absentee voting-by-mail (including a number of options through which to request and return ballots),
- expanded voter registration options (including online voter registration and same-day voter registration),
- prohibition of polling place adjustments that disproportionately impact vulnerable populations such as people of color, limited-English proficient citizens, and students),
- voter education (informing the public of new practices and immediately quashing disinformation as it arises).

Any legislative package on elections must include these reforms and practices if it is to be maximally effective. Officials must take into consideration accessibility for voters who have historically faced barriers to the ballot including Black, Latino, Asian, and Native American voters; voters with disabilities; and students. Now is the time for Congress to unite across differences to make sound policy choices that provide funds and voting policy guidelines that ensure equal access and participation. We do not have to, and indeed we must not, choose between public health and a functioning democracy.

The \$2T stimulus package bill just passed by Congress contains a provision for \$400M to protect safe voting if the Covid-19 pandemic has not ebbed in November. It is far short of the \$2B advocated by the League and many voting rights advocates to ensure a fair and accurate general election: to ensure that every voter received a mail-in ballot, and to hire staff and to process the ballot count

## **Contact info for the Colorado U.S. Congressional Delegation**

Sen. Cory Gardner | [303-391-5777](tel:303-391-5777)

<https://www.gardner.senate.gov/contact-cory/email-cory>

Sen. Michael Bennet | [303-455-7600](tel:303-455-7600) / [866-455-9866](tel:866-455-9866)

<https://www.bennet.senate.gov/?p=contact>

## **Contact info for the Colorado U.S. Congressional Delegation**

Rep. Diana DeGette (CO District 1) | [303-844-4988](tel:303-844-4988) <https://degette.house.gov/contact/send-me-an-email/email-me>

Rep. Joe Neguse (CO District 2) | [202- 225-2161](tel:202-225-2161) <https://neguse.house.gov/contact>

Rep. Scott Tipton (CO District 3) | [970-241-2499](tel:970-241-2499) <https://tipton.house.gov/contact/email>

Rep. Ken Buck (CO District 4) | [970-702-2136](tel:970-702-2136) <https://buck.house.gov/contact/email>

Rep. Doug Lamborn (CO District 5) | [719-520-0055](tel:719-520-0055) <https://lamborn.house.gov/contact/leave-a-comment.htm>

Rep. Jason Crow (CO District 6) | [202-225-7882](tel:202-225-7882) <https://crow.house.gov/contact/>

Rep. Ed Perlmutter (CO District 7) | [303-274-7944](tel:303-274-7944)

<https://perlmutter.house.gov/forms/writeyourrep/>

## **Contact Info for Colorado General Assembly**

Rep. Marc Catlin (CO House District 58) [303-866-2955](tel:303-866-2955)  
[marc.catlin.house@state.co.us](mailto:marc.catlin.house@state.co.us)

Sen. Don Coram (CO Senate District 6) [303-866-4884](tel:303-866-4884)  
[don.coram.senate@state.co.us](mailto:don.coram.senate@state.co.us)

Rep. Matt Soper (CO House District 54)  
[matthew.soper.house.state.co.us](mailto:matthew.soper.house.state.co.us) [303-866-2583](tel:303-866-2583)

Rep. Julie Mc Cluskie (CO House District 61) [303-866-2952](tel:303-866-2952)  
[RepMcCluskie@gmail.com](mailto:RepMcCluskie@gmail.com)

Sen. Kerry Donovan (CO Senate District 5) [303-866-4871](tel:303-866-4871)  
[kerry.donovan.sd5@gmail.com](mailto:kerry.donovan.sd5@gmail.com)

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**

### **2019-2020 LWV Community Support**

The League of Women Voters of Montrose County, serving Montrose and Delta counties, thanks these local businesses, organizations and individuals who have donated financial and in-kind support.

Please **add your thank you** when you patronize these businesses or visit with these individuals.

**Alpine Archeological      Bank of Colorado  
Coffee Trader      Horsefly Brewing Company  
The Montrose Mirror**

**Dennis Olmstead    Alicia Conroyd**

### **Calendar**

**Programs cancelled until further notice; however, as March is Women's History Month, check out online**

**Four Times Colorado Women Got There First**

and

<https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/famous-firsts-in-womens-history>

The League of Women Voters of the Montrose County is pleased you are joining us in helping to Make Democracy Work for our community and our country!

**Check out our Website:**

<https://www.lwvmontrose.org>

Our webmaster, Tanya Ishikawa, keeps us updated on and linked to local, state and national activities, issues and websites.

**Check us out on Facebook too:**

<https://www.facebook.com/VoteMontrose>

Tanya has set up an LWV Instagram account too!

**EMPOWERING VOTERS, DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**

**Join League of Women Voters of Montrose County  
serving Montrose & Delta counties – 2019-2020  
Not for Women Only!**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ **Individual \$60** - Of this amount \$32 goes to National League; \$20 goes to State League; \$8 is retained by the Montrose League

\_\_\_ **Household \$90** – Two members in one household (National League receives \$48; State League \$30; \$12 is retained by the Montrose League)

\_\_\_ I understand that I can join without being active, and this is my intent at the present time.

\_\_\_ I would like to make a contribution beyond regular dues and understand it will go directly to our local League (Thank You!).

\_\_\_ **Sustaining Member \$100** - Of this amount \$32 goes to National League; \$20 goes to State League; \$48 is retained by the Montrose League

\_\_\_ I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Montrose League. Write a separate check to **League of Women Voters CO Education Fund. Write "Montrose" on the check's memo line.**

Please make checks payable to **League of Women Voters of Montrose Countv.** Mail to P.O. Box 3321. Montrose. CO 81402

**2019-2020 Officers & Board**

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[janmsw96@icloud.com](mailto:janmsw96@icloud.com)

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1-909-556-8118, [cholmaneee@uia.net](mailto:cholmaneee@uia.net)

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**The League of Women Voters, a  
non-partisan 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.**



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MONTROSE COUNTY  
SERVING MONTROSE AND DELTA COUNTIES  
P.O. BOX 3321, MONTROSE, CO 81402

**CREATING A MORE PERFECT DEMOCRACY**