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President's Message

Greetings !

It's all part of our goal to improve outreach and education. LWVBC will be participating in many community events this year!



Living Wage for Boulder

Our Social Policy Team held a breakfast on Oct. 14th to educate and advocate for a Living Wage for Boulder municipal contract workers. This was an informative and well attended event. Many community leaders attended and learned of the League's leadership on this issue. Read more details in Mary Ann Wilner's article!

Ballot Issue Presentation at CU

Intern Jessica Yan conducted a ballot issue presentation on the CU campus on Oct. 22nd that was well attended by CU students, League members and citizens from the community.

Networking with Non-Profits

Judy Burris attended the Wells Fargo Volunteer Expo on Oct. 22nd in Longmont. She informed those attending about volunteer opportunities for the League, met many other non-profit leaders and submitted our information for posting on the internal Wells Fargo website.

continued on the next page





The Boulder County Voter

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President's Message

(continued)

Grant Writing Efforts and Rewards

Lois Linsky and Louisa Young, Fund Development Co-Directors, are hard at work on grant writing. On Oct. 28th I attended a community breakfast and received a check from Wells Fargo for \$500 to purchase Chromebooks for Voter Service. Thank you Wells Fargo!

Voter Services on CU Campus

Jeanine Pow and Jessica Yan were on the CU campus prior to the R.N.C. debate on Oct. 28th. They proudly wore their LWV buttons and distributed Voter Service information.

Networking with Community Partners

On Oct. 30th I attended a Community Partners Breakfast at Front Range Community College to network with other organizations and learn how we can better collaborate with the College.

Thanks to all. These events and our continued efforts to reach out to our community will underscore our impact in Boulder County! Continue to check our website www.lwvbc.org for the latest updates.

Hope to see you at the November Consensus Meetings and at our December 5th holiday luncheon!

Ruth

League of Women Voters of Boulder County
Box 21274, Boulder CO 80308
www.lwvbc.org

Membership: 183 as of October 2015

President: Ruth J. Stemler
president@lwvbc.org

Membership: Liz Black
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Boulder County Voter
10 issues per year
Editor: Rionda Osman
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Mark Your Calendars

3 November 2015:

GENERAL ELECTION

Last day to Vote is November 3
Voter Service & Polling Centers open by October 26 and remain open through November 3rd, except Sundays. Mail-in ballots will be sent to all registered voters who registered on or before October 26th.

9, 10, 11, 12 November 2015:

Amending the Constitution Consensus Meetings

Bring questions from this issue of the Boulder County Voter.

5 December 2015:

Holiday Luncheon

Saturday, December 5, 2015, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Boulder Country Club, 7350 Clubhouse Road, Boulder

Register by 30 November.

League Positions

While the League is non-partisan (we do not support or oppose any political party or candidate), the League advocates on issues, and, as a result, the League may choose to take supporting, opposing, or neutral positions on various ballot issues.

The League can support or oppose ballot issues only if our members have established a Program Position directly relevant to the question before the voters. To arrive at positions, members prioritize a public policy area and study it in depth. Then members discuss the study findings, identify the points around which members are in broad agreement and write a position summarizing members' points of agreement. Positions are reconsidered annually and affirmed, revised or dropped.

LWVBC Positions on 2015 Ballot Issues

City of Boulder Issue 2N

The LWVBC **remains neutral** on the issue of short-term rentals because we have no position to support a stand in favor or opposed. We do feel enforcement of an undescribed "short-term rental program" would be difficult.

City of Boulder Question 2O

The LWVBC **remains neutral** on the Utility Occupation Tax extension.

City of Boulder Question 2P

The LWVBC **supports** the 2nd continuation of the CAP tax based on the LWVUS Natural Resources/Energy position: to support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

City of Boulder Question 2Q

The LWVBC **supports** the charter amendment re: the Library Commission responsibilities and uses of the Library Fund based on the LWVUS Principle: that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government. In addition, the LWVCO position on the state constitution supports clarity of language and suitability of topic and detail in constitutional amendment proposals. Boulder's home rule charter is in essence its constitution.

City of Boulder Question 2R

The LWVBC **takes a neutral position** on the issue of City Council compensation.

City of Boulder Question 300

The LWVBC **opposes** the amendment of the City's Home Rule Charter based on the LWVBC position: to promote a better balance in the region and support of only that growth which enhances opportunities for people of all ages, races and economic levels to live and work in the Boulder County area. Planning and decision-making should be guided by the best interests of the region, rather than that of an individual or group.



The Boulder County Voter

1 November 2015

League Positions

(continued)

City of Boulder Question 301

The LWVBC takes a **neutral position** on the amendment of the City's Home Rule Charter to prevent City Council approval of development that does not fully pay or offset its burden on city services as measured by standards to be developed and accepted.

BVSD Issue 3A

The LWVBC **supports** the authorization of the Boulder Valley School District to lease its excess internet capacity based on the LWVBC position: School districts should manage their funds responsibly and transparently, allowing for periodic citizen input through both district-sponsored public forums and elections.

Lafayette Ballot Question 2J

The LWVBC takes a **neutral position** on the amendment of the charter regarding the membership criteria for boards and commissions.

Lafayette Ballot Question 2K

The LWVBC takes a **neutral position** on the question to establish an ordinance for collective bargaining with firefighters.

Membership Update

From Liz Black

The good news is that just over 50% of our members from the 2014-15 year have sent in their renewals, and many of you have filled out the short survey to help us know your interests and how we can serve you better. Thank you!!

On 22 Oct, Louisa Matthias and I assembled and mailed out letters inviting the remaining 71 individuals or households to pay dues and continue their affiliation with the local league through the fall of 2016. Since June nineteen people have joined the LWVBC. Some are new in the league and others are transfers who've moved to Boulder County. I have not yet had the opportunity to talk with all of them, but look forward to doing so and will feature more of their stories in upcoming issues of this newsletter.

Recently I talked to Deborah Smith. She majored in political science and has known about the League for a long time, joining our organization after retiring from her work as a psychologist in the St. Vrain Valley School District. She has become quite involved with the Campaign Finance Reform Team and is using her networking skills to offer high school social studies teachers the opportunity to schedule a presentation on Money in Politics for their students. About her decision to join the League, she says that she appreciates that the League has a grounded perspective on the issues, setting out pros and cons, and she feels this balance is especially helpful now with candidates already campaigning for the 2016 presidential election.

League Members in Action



Taking Action: Voting Methods Team Looking to Expand

From Celeste Landry and Cecilia Ruffing

Our LWVBC Voting Methods Team presented a hands-on demonstration and analysis of alternative voting methods at League Day in September. The presentation was limited to single-seat elections and covered approval voting, score (or range) voting, and instant-runoff voting.

At League Day we expressed our hope for the League to conduct a state study on voting methods. A couple of local Leagues have since contacted us to help them start educating their members. We have posted information on our LWVBC website to do just that!

At League Day Toni Larson, LWVUS Vice President, spoke about three LWVUS study updates: Money in Politics, Constitutional Amendments, and Redistricting. Our guest Voting Methods speaker, Clay Shentrup, pointed out that simply changing a voting method could achieve some of the League's goals in these areas without relying on the long process of amending the constitution.

The Voting Methods Team also received an invitation to repeat our presentation at a November 14th Voting Methods and Election Integrity Symposium in Glendale, CO sponsored by Free and Equal. Celeste Landry attended the free symposium last year and highly recommends it to anyone interested in just about any election or voting issue. Celeste would like to carpool to the symposium (and can drive) with another League member. You can get more details about the symposium at

<https://www.freeandequal.org/2nd-annual-voting-methods-election-integrity-symposium-announced/>.

With all this activity around voting methods, our team would like to expand its membership and have you join us. No prior knowledge of voting methods is needed, just a belief in the importance of "having voices be heard" – the theme of this year's League Day – and a willingness to do some good LWV research in order to encourage informed and active participation in alternative voting method discussions. Please contact the [Voting Methods Team](#) if interested or you have questions.



Taking Action: Living Wage in Boulder

From Mary Ann Wilner

The LWVBC hosted a breakfast on Wednesday October 14 in Boulder to inform the public about advocating for livable wages for all Boulder municipal employees.

More than 45 people attended including city council members from Boulder and Longmont, candidates for Boulder city council, the Boulder City Manager and Assistant City Manager, several Human Relations Commissioners, city staff and local leaders from the non-profit and interfaith communities as well as League members. The Longmont city staff and a council member asked us to expand our campaign to their city.

Ruth Stemler, the League President, welcomed the group, confirming the League's leadership in this important local issue. Tracey Jones, a launched leader from the Circles Program, gave an emotionally compelling speech about living on a minimum wage. Speaking in poetry and prose she described what poverty looks like in everyday life. She aptly described herself as a survivor, having lived through 12 years of bussing to white suburban Boston schools, the murder of too many childhood friends, her escape from an abusive spouse and supporting three children on a minimum wage. She currently works as a certified nursing assistant for TRU hospice care.

Julie Van Domelen, the new Executive Director of EFAA, spoke about "Why Wages Matter." In response to her own realization of the multiple challenges EFAA staff experienced living on insufficient wages, Julie and the EFAA board raised their minimum hourly wage to \$15. She explained how high wages have to be in Boulder County for a family to be self-sufficient without reliance on public benefits (over \$60,000 for a family with an infant and pre-school child).

Mary Ann Wilner, Social Policy Team Leader, explained the League's current policy campaign to improve wages and benefits for Boulder's seasonal, part-time and contract workers who are paid with city funds, yet working at minimum wages without benefits. The LWVBC invites citizens to learn the scope of this problem and be prepared to advocate for better wages at the upcoming Human Relations Commission (HRC) meeting in December and City Council in February.



Our Next Consensus Meetings: Amending the US Constitution

Monday, 9 November 2015:

2:30 to 4:00 pm at Frasier Meadows Retirement Community
350 Ponca Place in Boulder

Tuesday, 10 November 2015:

10:30 am to 12:00 at The Egg & I
255 Ken Pratt Blvd in Longmont (arrive at 10 am to order food)

Wednesday, 11 November 2015:

6 to 7:30 pm, Double Happy Restaurant
740 Main St in Louisville (arrive at 5:30 to order food)

Thursday, 12 November 2015:

11:30 am to 1:00 pm, Arapahoe Room, Main Library
1001 Arapahoe Ave in Boulder

Consensus Review

The League of Women Voters of the United States has provided this definition of 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 an opportunity to express their viewpoints, and the issue is examined from all sides. Consensus questions, created by the study committee and approved by the Board, provide structure for the meeting. Members discuss the pros and cons until it becomes apparent that consensus has or has not been reached on each question. A committee will analyze the consensus responses, look for areas of member understanding and agreement and, using this information, will create a position statement. (see: <http://lwv.org/content/what-consensus>).

The League of Women Voters takes action on an issue or advocates for a cause when there is an existing League position that supports the issue or speaks to the cause. It is the consensus statement – the statement resulting from the consensus questions – that becomes a position. Firm action or advocacy can then be taken on the particular issue addressed by the position. Without a position, action/advocacy cannot be taken.

A useful resource is the *Handbook for Successful Consensus Meetings*, available at on the [LWVUS website](#).

Amending the Constitution

Background

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010) said that political contributions and spending were protected as "free speech" under the First Amendment. Specifically:

- ◆ The 1st amendment free speech guarantees prohibit bans on political speech based on the speaker's corporate identity.
- ◆ Government may not impose limits on corporate funding of independent political broadcasts in candidate elections.
- ◆ Disclosure requirements are legal.



The result of this decision is a huge influx of unidentified dollars into political campaigns.

In 2012, Colorado citizens approved Amendment 65 that instructed Colorado's congressional delegation to propose and support, and the members of Colorado's state legislature to ratify, an amendment to the United States constitution that allows congress and the states to limit campaign contributions and spending. The amendments passed by 74%.

In early 2012, the LWVUS Board appointed a Campaign Finance Task Force to examine legislative and constitutional efforts to achieve campaign finance reform. Convention 2012 reaffirmed the League commitment to campaign finance reform by passing a resolution that called for advocating strongly for campaign finance measures including but not limited to constitutional amendments.

During 2015, the LWVUS Constitutional Committee conducted a study on amending our nation's Constitution. The League study explored the process for proposing an Article V Convention in order to determine whether LWVUS would support such a convention and if so, under what circumstances. The League currently has no positions on amending the Constitution. Although the *Citizens United* decision was the impetus for this study, any position adopted would apply to any proposed constitutional amendments.

Process for Amending the U.S. Constitution

Article V of the U.S. Constitution provides two ways to amending the Constitution:

Option 1

Congress, by a two-thirds vote of both houses, may propose amendments to the states for ratification. This procedure has been used for all 27 current amendments.

Option 2

If the legislatures of two-thirds of the states apply (currently 34), Congress shall call a Convention for the proposing Amendment. Once an Article V Convention has proposed an amendment or amendments, then the amendment or amendments would have to be ratified by three-fourths of the

states (38 states) in order to become part of the Constitution. This alternative, known as an Article V Convention, has yet to be implemented.

An Article V Convention is the focus of this study. The League is looking at forming a position on issues in three areas:

- ◆ Congress's Constitutional duties in the Article V Convention process
- ◆ The role of the states in the Article V Convention process
- ◆ When resorting to a Constitutional amendment is appropriate

Briefly

Congress's Constitutional duties

Most scholars agree that Congress is obligated to call an Article V Convention on the receipt of sufficient state applications. But, there are factors concerning state applications that might be used to rule state applications invalid. Also, there are questions about the type of convention that is authorized, and whether Congress is required to propose ratification of amendments approved by a convention.

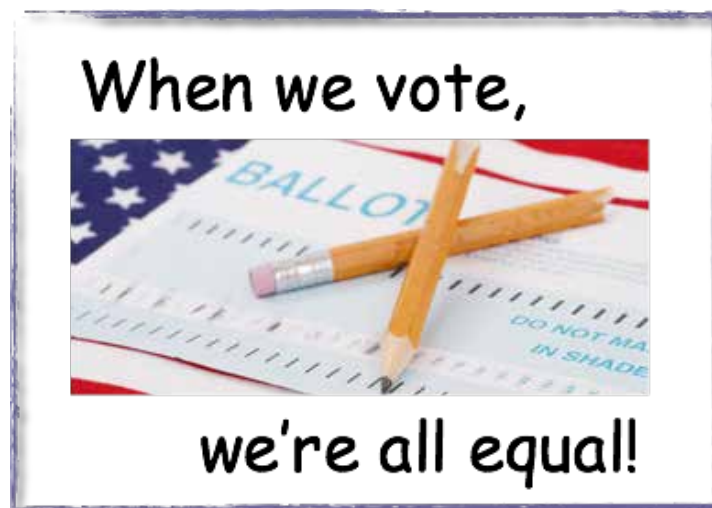
Role of the States

There is general agreement that a state application, in order to be valid, must be approved by the joint or concurrent action of both of state legislative chambers. There are a number of other unanswered questions about the validity of state applications.

When appropriate

Eight guidelines have been identified to use to determine if a proposed Constitutional amendment is appropriate and ensure all relevant concerns are fully debated.

These issues will be discussed at consensus meetings. Members are encouraged to read the study materials at <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/our-work/constitutional-amendment-study>.





The Boulder County Voter

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Consensus: Amending the Constitution

The LWVBC will hold consensus meetings on November 9, 10, 11, and 12 to discuss the questions about amending the Constitution. Bring this list of questions with you to consensus meetings.

Consensus Questions

Answer each question, regardless of your answers to other questions.

Part I - Considerations for Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals

1. Which of these should or should not be a consideration in identifying an appropriate and well-crafted amendment?

a) Whether the public policy objective addresses matters of such acute and abiding importance that the fundamental charter of our nation must be changed.

PRO: Amendments are changes to a document that provides stability to our system and should be undertaken to address extreme problems or long-term needs.

CON: When public sentiment is overwhelmingly in favor of change, restraint based on veneration of the document is misplaced.

Should Should not No consensus

b) Whether the amendment as written would be effective in achieving its policy objective.

PRO: Amendments that may be unenforceable, miss the objective or have unintended consequences will not work to achieve the policy objective.

CON: It's all right to deliberately put something in the Constitution that will need to be interpreted by courts and legislatures over time.

Should Should not No consensus

c) Whether the amendment would either make our political system more democratic or protect individual rights.

PRO: Most amendments have sought to make our system more democratic by extending voting rights, for example, or to protect the rights of minorities from powerful interests.

CON: What has been typical in the past is not a good measure of what's appropriate or necessary today or in the future, especially since there have been relatively few amendments.

Should Should not No consensus

- d) Whether the policy objective can be achieved by a legislative or political approach that is less difficult than a constitutional amendment.

PRO: Due to the difficulty of amending the Constitution, it is important to consider whether legislation or political action is more likely to succeed than an amendment, in order to achieve the objective and to expend resources wisely.

CON: Important policy objectives should sometimes be pursued through a constitutional amendment even though it may be difficult for it to be enacted and even when other options are available.

Should Should not No consensus

- e) Whether the public policy objective is more suited to a constitutional and general approach than to a statutory and detailed approach.

PRO: It is important to consider whether the goal can best be achieved by an overall value statement, which will be interpreted by the courts, or with specific statutory detail to resolve important issues and reduce ambiguity.

CON: Getting action on an issue is more important than how a policy objective can best be achieved.

Should Should not No consensus

Part II - Aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention

2. What conditions should or should not be in place for an Article V Constitutional Convention initiated by the states?

- a) The Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret.

PRO: The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on.

CON: The lack of public scrutiny and the ability to negotiate in private may enable delegates to more easily reach agreement.

Should Should not No consensus

- b) Representation at the Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote.

PRO: The delegates represent citizens and should be distributed by U.S. population.

CON: The U.S. is really a federation of states that must agree by state to any change in the Constitution.

Should Should not No consensus

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c) State delegates must be elected rather than appointed.

PRO: Delegates represent citizens and therefore need to be elected by them.

CON: Appointment allows for experts who wouldn't run in an election.

Should Should not No consensus

d) Voting at the Convention must be by delegate, not by state.

PRO: As at the Articles of Confederation Convention, delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by individual votes.

CON: Because any amendment proposal will go to the states for ratification, voting by state blocs—however the delegates are originally chosen—reflects the probability of eventual ratification.

Should Should not No consensus

e) The Convention must be limited to a specific topic.

PRO: It is important to guard against a “runaway convention”.

CON: The convention alternative was provided for a time when Congress was not listening, so the delegates should not be constrained.

Should Should not No consensus

f) Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Convention must be called.

PRO: Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a convention, and enhances citizen interest and participation in the process.

CON: There is no requirement for Congress to count state requests by topic and when enough states are unhappy enough to ask for a convention, it should happen.

Should Should not No consensus

g) The validity of state “calls” for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission should be respected by Congress.

PRO: A state legislature should be free to determine its position in regard to an Article V Constitutional Convention. A rescission should be equally acceptable to Congress as a state's call for a convention.

CON: A state legislature's call for a Convention can not be overturned because the process may never end.

Should Should not No consensus



3. Should the League oppose an Article V Constitutional Convention to propose amendments to the U.S. Constitution because of unresolved questions about the powers and processes of such a convention?

PRO: The Constitution is too important to trust an unknown or uncontrollable process. It is unclear whether conditions or safeguards regarding powers and processes for a convention can be successfully put in place.

CON: A convention is intended to be an unrestrained process to propose amendments to the Constitution.

Should Should not No consensus

Part III – Balancing Questions

1. Should the League consider supporting a Constitutional amendment that will advance a League position even if:

a) There are significant problems with the actual amendment as proposed?

PRO: Our positions have been studied and agreed to. If other organizations are supporting an amendment in a policy area we also support, we might participate even though it is inconsistent with the evaluation guidelines we support under Part I.

CON: If the League has a consensus on the evaluation guidelines outlined in Part I, then the League should not campaign on an amendment when it is inconsistent with those standards, even though the League supports the policy outcome.

Should consider Should not consider No consensus

b) It is being put forward by a procedural process the League would otherwise oppose?

PRO: Our positions have been studied and agreed to. If other organizations are supporting an amendment in a policy area we also support, we might participate even though it is inconsistent with the process criteria we support under Part II.

CON: If the League has a consensus on the process criteria outlined in Part II, then the League should not campaign for an amendment when the process being proposed is inconsistent with those standards, even though the League supports the policy outcome.

Should consider Should not consider No consensus



Grocery Store Gift Card Fund Raiser

Help us raise money for the Boulder County League by shopping for groceries at King Soopers and/or Safeway with a reloadable gift card!

How does it work?

- The League will purchase \$10 gift cards from King Soopers and Safeway and sell them to members at face value. The cards are redeemable for full face value.
- You retain the gift card and continually reload it with whatever amount you want up to \$500.
- Use the card every time you purchase groceries.
- The cards will be linked to the Boulder County League, and we will receive 5% of all reloads made by members.
- Cards can be reloaded at the store customer service desk or at the register.
- If you want to use the reloaded gift card to pay for your purchases, the reload must be in a separate transaction prior to your groceries being scanned.
- Your balance will print at the bottom of your receipt.
- Gift cards can be used to purchase anything except services. Services include Western Union, money orders, stamps, lottery tickets and gift cards.
- The card must be purchased from the League in order for it to be linked to our organization.

Yes I want to help! How do I buy a gift card?

- Complete and mail the order form below.

Questions??

- Contact Lynne Wegley, 303-772-3523 or weggers1@aol.com

League of Women Voters of Boulder County Rechargeable Grocery Store Gift Card Order Form

Name: _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

King Soopers

of cards _____ @ \$10.00 = _____

Safeway

of cards _____ @ \$10.00 = _____

Total amount enclosed _____ (checks payable to LWVBC)

Mail to: Lynne Wegley, 2935 Bow Line Pl, Longmont, CO 80503



Holiday Luncheon

Saturday, December 5, 2015
11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Boulder Country Club, 7350 Clubhouse Road, Boulder

Make your reservation now for our annual holiday luncheon! Mail the registration form below (also available on-line at www.lwvbc.org) to be received by November 30, 2015.

Lunch: Mediterranean themed buffet at \$26.00

Speakers: *Communications and Technology for the 21st Century League*
Deborah Hayes, Laura Coates, Yasi Taylor, and Susan Saunders
Report from 2015 League Intern, Jessica Yan

Our presentation will include the latest innovations on our website, www.lwvbc.org.

We will demonstrate essential communication tools like Facebook and Instagram.

Learn how LWVBC uses SpinGo?

What's Vertical Response?

How does www.VOTE411.org work?

Bring your laptop, iPad or smart phone to learn new skills!!

Jessica Yan will brief us on our internship experience this year and discuss Young People Engagement.

**LWV of Boulder County
Holiday Luncheon/ General Meeting**

Registration Form

When: Saturday, December 5, 2015, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Where: Boulder Country Club, 7350 Clubhouse Road, Boulder
Cost: \$26.00
Deadline: November 30, 2015

Please mail this form and check payable to LWVBC to **Frieda Holley, 830 Columbia Pl, Boulder, CO 80303.**

Number of persons _____ X \$26.00 = \$ _____

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Yes, I would like a ride to the event _____



LWVBC Fall Calendar

3 November: GENERAL ELECTION

9 – 12 November: Constitutional Amendment Consensus Meetings

30 November: register for Holiday Luncheon

5 December: Holiday Luncheon

League of Women Voters of Boulder County
P.O. Box 21275
Boulder CO 80308