

December 2020

Editor Jennifer Bales
communications@lwvbc.org



Elizabeth Crowe



Gaythia Weis

Presidents' Letter

by *Elizabeth Crowe*

Solstice and Strategy

Election 2020 is over and as of this writing, thanks to the strength and integrity of our election process and thousands of election workers from all political stripes, it appears we are headed for peaceful transition of power in January. LWV worked hard to make sure voters all over the country were well-informed about candidates, policy issues and the election process itself, and we should all be proud of our efforts! (Check out articles in this VOTER issue about LWVBC election activity details.)

Approaching winter solstice and the end of the calendar year – colder weather, shorter days – always makes me feel like hunkering down. Winter holidays are coming, but with the COVID-19 safer-at-home guidelines in place our celebrations will no doubt feel more subdued. And many of us are anxious about ongoing social injustice, health and economic challenges from the pandemic, and what new threats to our democratic process may be ahead.

This post-election season is also when League looks ahead to “what’s next.” Our 2020-21 Strategic Plan (available on our [website](#)) helps us focus on the positive impacts we want in our community: the activities we’ll undertake; and the diverse partnerships that will add value to our work and that of other organizations. We’ll be outlining an organizational Equity Plan, and inspiring members to help fill leadership roles in the areas of Advocacy, Voter Service and Operations. We’ll be exploring new ideas for programs and projects – like civil discourse, increased voter outreach – that members have raised on monthly Member Coffee discussions. The 2021 state legislative session brings opportunities to engage with the LWV Colorado Legislative Action Committee. And all those candidates who will now be serving as elected officials? It’s our job to hold them accountable.

So even as the days are shorter and darker, League has a bright year ahead! League leaders will continue to modify the Strategic Plan to include new ideas and details, and we look forward to your engagement throughout 2021.

YOU Can Deduct Your Year-End Gift to LWVBC - Eve if You Don't Itemize!

By Anne Bryan

The CARES Act has provided a way to support your League's important work, and it can benefit any donor who makes a gift in 2020.

Because the LWVBC is a 501(c)(3) public charity, you can make a gift up to \$300 to LWVBC and receive a deduction. ***Even if you do not itemize*** your deductions, but simply take the standard deduction as many taxpayers now do, your gift of \$300 will be deducted from your adjusted gross income. This gift must be made by check or credit card; stock gifts do not qualify – and you must make your gift before the end of December to earn the deduction!

This special deduction is a one-time opportunity to receive a tax benefit for your contribution in 2020. And your gift will help support the many activities that educate citizens and support democracy in 2021 -- pivotal year in so many areas of League investment. Send your gift by mail to the League office or go online [to our website](#) and use a credit card. Act now to help the League and gain a tax deduction!

NPV: We Won!

By Peggy Leech

Proposition 113, to affirm Colorado's participation in the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, passed statewide by over 146,000 votes (52.3% - 47.7%). In Boulder County, the margin was 76,000 votes (69.2% - 30.8%).

The National Popular Vote effort involved many volunteers during a 2-year span. Thanks to all who made a difference, in large ways and small. Some of you were not directly involved, but you were talking with your friends and neighbors to generate support. It all helped!

The effort started in late 2018/early 2019, as the NPV legislation was moving through the Colorado legislature. Our members testified at committee hearings and submitted letters to the editor. LWVBC also hosted two NPV workshops, which were open to the public. The legislation was passed and signed by the governor in 2019.

A group of citizens petitioned to get the NPV Compact on the 2020 ballot as Proposition 113, so we have been working throughout 2020 to educate voters and urge them to pass this ballot issue. Last fall, LWVBC hosted a Drinks and Dialogue on this topic, and we hosted a webinar in May 2020, continuing our efforts to help people understand how the compact works. The 2020 campaign has been a great opportunity for LWVBC members to become involved. We have worked closely with other Leagues around Colorado, led by Linda Sorauf, and with the group "Yes on National Popular Vote", led by Sylvia Bernstein.

LWVBC involved **over 100 volunteers** in writing about 10,000 postcards and getting them stamped, addressed, and mailed. We also distributed yard signs around the county, and some members wrote letters to the editor. By splitting the county into 3 areas (Holly Monkman Boulder, Ruth Stemler Longmont, and Peggy Leech Louisville/Lafayette), we were able to spread the workload out geographically and involve our volunteers in doing the next phases. The whole campaign culminated on Saturday, October 17, with an "Every Vote Equal" March.

Holly Monkman gave at least 2 media interviews, one with the Left Hand Valley Courier, and the other with Channel 7. In both cases, Senator Mike Foote also participated.

Post- election, the long, drawn-out process to determine a presidential winner and to start the transition process, despite a clear popular-vote result, has made many people aware of the perils of the current Electoral College system. The “270-by-2024” movement is now engaged in getting enough states to join the NPV Compact (totaling at least 270 electoral votes) so that it can be implemented in the 2024 presidential election. We currently stand at 196 electoral votes, including Colorado’s 9, so only 74 more are needed. This is a national coalition which includes LWVUS, Common Cause, National Popular Vote, and others. Sylvia Bernstein has been appointed to the LWVUS NPV Task Force.

Meanwhile, let’s all celebrate our victory in Colorado!

Voter Service - The 2020 Sign Project

By Jeanine Pow

Folks were so enthusiastic to register voters in 2020 that a total of 55 volunteers were trained at the January voter registration drive (VRD) training. Unfortunately, with the identification and spread of the Covid19 coronavirus, despite the implementation of extensive safety precautions, many volunteers felt working a VRD table posed too great a risk of exposure. Consequently, in September, with the expertise of artists Amy Metier, Jill Hadley Hooper, Dawn McFadden and Patricia Murphy signs containing 7 different get-out-the-vote messages were designed and printed. The signs were distributed to volunteers in Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, Lyons, Louisville, Superior and Broomfield.

The volunteers agreed to display their sign at a busy intersection in their community two-hours each week between October 3rd and November 3rd. Judging from the volunteer reports, the signs were well received by motorists, as evidenced by numerous thumbs up and honking horns. (I also received one middle-finger salute but that just indicates that the motorist read my sign)!

These dedicated volunteers racked up a total of 97 hours over the course of thirty days. Many felt that the Sign Project provided them with personal inspiration and a sense that they were able to ‘do something’ without risking personal exposure. Hope Steffens-Nett, who volunteered a total of 18 hours, said it best: “It was such fun being out there today, and I felt proud representing LWV and our democracy.” Photos of some of the Sign Project volunteers with their signs (from left to right: Hope Steffens-Nett, Ed Geary, Marilyn Leist, and Jon Corson-Rikert) are attached.



From Membership

By Debby Vink

From Membership:

Virtual New Member Orientation and Member Coffee on Saturday, January 16, 10:00/10:30 am-

New members, our next Member Coffee will begin at 10:00 am with a half hour orientation to LWVBC. To help prepare for the Orientation, new members will be receiving a .pdf copy of our Handbook via email. **Others**, join us to help with the orientation or sign into the Coffee at 10:30 am to meet new members and take part in our topic of discussion. Watch for an email with details. Non-members are welcome to come and find out about us.



To register for the January Virtual Member Coffee and any other LWVBC event:

1. Go to lwvbc.org and log in as a member, if a member.
2. At screen top, click on Events and then Events Calendar, or see the event listing on the right side of the home page.
3. Click on an event and register as needed. You will receive an email with a link to join the event.

Welcome to Our Newest Members!

Welcome to two new members since our last newsletter: Jennifer Knight and Vicki Ebner. Vicki is Homelessness Policy Manager for the City of Boulder. Jennifer, a Speech Therapist and Pilates Instructor, grew up with the League of Women Voters and is honoring her mother's 50 years of membership in another League, by becoming a member in ours.

Thanks to the Membership Team!

The Membership Team introduces our newest team member, **Lydia Linke**. Lydia just joined LWVBC last month, and will be helping to host our virtual Membership Coffees. The other Membership Team members have been keeping member renewals on track, in addition to their individual duties:

--**Cindy Outlaw** syncs our database with that of LWVUS.

--**Judy White** is responsible for the printable list of members that members can access on our website. Judy also sends thank you letters to our generous donors and to those honored by their donations.

--**Florence Fetterer** prints and mails copies of the *Voter* newsletter for those who do not access it electronically and helps with monthly board reports.

--**Mickey Greenberg** helps distribute copies of the *Voter*.

--**Mary Anne Davitt** updates our LWVBC Handbook. A .pdf copy is available on our website: After logging in as a member, go to **Member Info>Member Handbook**.

Updated Printable Member List Coming Soon: Watch for the latest printable member list with contact information which will be available by mid-December on our website. After logging in as a member, go to **Member Info>Member Contact List**.

Of course, you can always search for members by going to **Member Info> Membership Directory**. If you don't enter a name or location before searching, you'll find contact cards for all members. Click on the member's picture or where it would be to access their

address. When you see the members' cards with pictures, you'll see how nice it is to have the pictures there. Please add your picture, if it isn't already there.

Debby Vink, Membership Director
membership@lwvbc.org
Member count: 303

A Stellar Ballot Issues Team

By Peggy Leech, Ballot issues Coordinator

A big thank-you is in order to our 2020 Ballot Issues Team, composed of Catherine Brown, Marsha Caplan, Charles DuScha, Deborah Hayes, Lina Hird, Celeste Landry and the Voting Methods Team, Pat and Brian Long, Linda Mintzer, Holly Monkman, Anne Norwood, Sally Phillips, Angeliqe Sabo, and Mary Ann Wilner.

We first met (via zoom) on August 10, and our efforts were basically two-pronged:

- First, we had people researching and writing up the 8 local issues (5 Boulder, 2 Longmont, 1 Louisville). The editing process followed, and the results ended up on our website and on VOTE411, in both English and Spanish. We managed to meet all of our self-imposed deadlines, and I am sure that many voters used our online materials.
- Then, we turned our attention to ballot issue presentations, which included the 11 state issues and the 8 local issues. We did 2 webinars, on October 4 and October 11, which were well-attended. Approximately 100 people watched them live, and about 200 others viewed the recordings on YouTube. We had a few other requests for special presentations, and I was able to find volunteers for those, too.

I would like to thank Deborah Hayes, especially, for getting the local issues formatted correctly and posted on our website.

And, our webinars would not have been possible without the efforts of Mandy Nuku, our Operations Director. She moderated both webinars, and she arranged for Spanish translation of our written materials and of our October 11 webinar. Thanks to Rosabelle Rice for providing Spanish interpretation and to the Colorado Immigrants Rights Coalition for their help translating the slides.

Thanks to everyone! I know a lot of new people were involved this year, and I hope everyone learned more about the process. This is an important service that LWVBC provides to our community.

2020 Elections about Elections

By the LWVBC Voting Methods Team

In the November VOTER we reviewed elections that we and some other Leagues were closely monitoring. Here is a summary of the results with one addition – Alaska.

Directly Elect the Mayor

City of Boulder 2E – Supporters cast 42,784 votes or 78% to directly elect the mayor beginning in 2023 and to use instant-runoff (ranked) voting.

Littleton 3A – Supporters cast 21,803 votes or 81% to directly elect the mayor (using “regular” plurality voting).

Maine – Using Instant-Runoff (Ranked) Voting for Federal Elections

Senator Susan Collins won reelection with 51% to Sara Gideon’s 42.4%. Because Collins won a majority of #1 rankings, the contest defaulted to a plurality election and nobody’s #2 rankings were revealed. The margin of victory would probably have been smaller if Maine did not have ranked voting because more people would have voted exclusively for one of the frontrunners. Maine has two congressional districts. The Democrats won both seats, but some voters split their tickets to put Susan Collins over the top statewide and Trump over the top in the 2nd district. Neither congressional district had an instant runoff for Congress or US president.

Voting to Change the Way to Vote

Massachusetts Question 2 – Opponents cast 1,877,447 votes or 54.8% to reject instant-runoff (ranked) voting for statewide and state legislative elections.

Alaska Measure 2 – Supporters cast 173,725 votes (unofficial results) or 50.55% to adopt more campaign finance reporting and to change to an open primary – still with “choose one” plurality voting – but the top 4 vote-getters proceed to an instant-runoff (ranked) voting general election.

St Louis Prop D – Supporters cast 87,369 votes or 68% to change from a partisan to a non-partisan primary and use approval voting where you vote for as many candidates as you support. The top two vote-getters proceed to the general election.

Albany, CA, Measure BB – Supporters cast 7,154 votes (unofficial results) or 73.3% to adopt the proportional single transferable (ranked) vote to elect city council and school board members. Albany could provide a model for redesigning Boulder city council elections.

Voters Clearly Want More Say in Their Elections!

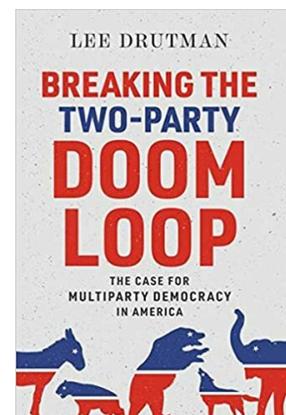
Breaking the Two-Party Doom Loop: The Case for Multiparty Democracy in America. By Lee Drutman

Book Review by Celeste Landry (of the Voting Methods Team)

Although the Founding Fathers were opposed to political parties and conflict, conflict is necessary in politics. If there is no conflict in an issue, then the issue is not political. Political parties provide a structure for organizing conflict.

The problem with having only two parties is that all choices are binary and often come down to the “lesser of two evils.” Americans want and need more options. With only two parties, gaining the majority is everything.

If we could have multiple viable parties – either actual or the “hidden” 4 parties that we had from 1950s to early 1990s – then we could have a more stable government with fewer wild pendulum swings. (Under the “4-party system,” liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats also had meaningful representation, and their representatives could be swing votes who would cross the aisle.) Congress could take more control from the president. Maybe our elected representatives could focus more on governing than on campaigning.



Drutman advocates single transferable vote (STV) to elect members of the US House via the Fair Representation Act and instant-runoff voting (IRV) to elect US Senators. These are both

ranked voting methods. (See the August 2018 VOTER article: “RCV: Two Better Ways to Vote.”) Although IRV is better than our current plurality system, we might want to consider other good single-winner options for electing US Senators.

The Fair Representation Act would create multi-member districts, each electing between 2 and 5 representatives whenever a state has more than one member in the US House of Representatives. Because the districts are larger, gerrymandering is reduced or eliminated entirely. STV is a multi-winner voting method that results in proportional representation. Republicans could get elected to Congress in Massachusetts, and Democrats could get elected in Arkansas. The city of Boulder used STV with 3-winner elections from 1917 to 1947.

Congressman Joe Neguse is a co-sponsor of HR 4000: The Fair Representation Act (FRA). Leaguers across the nation are encouraging their members of Congress to co-sponsor FRA. Our new LWVUS position on Voter Representation includes this statement: “The League supports electoral systems that elect policy-making bodies—legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards—that proportionally reflect the people they represent.”

STV would create fertile ground for the establishment of more parties where Americans could find a true home instead of registering as unaffiliated and tuning out politics. More parties in the House could reverberate to more parties in the Senate. Coalitions would be necessary because no party could gain a majority. Politics would be more fluid and responsive. Voting would matter more, and voter turnout would likely increase.

The 2020 Census: What will the Finish Line Look Like?

By Peggy Leech

The 2020 Census effort has had many hurdles to overcome, including the pandemic and various court battles.

Another Supreme Court case is imminent, being heard on November 30. It involves whether an executive order from July 2020 can be enforced. The purpose of the order is to exclude undocumented immigrants from the count. You may remember that there was a fight over including a Citizenship question on the Census, which was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2019. So, if the executive order is upheld, other methods will have to be used to determine how many undocumented immigrants are included in the counts.

This matters because representation in Congress is based on Census counts for each state. If the executive order is upheld, then states with high immigrant populations may lose representation in Congress, and they may receive less federal funding which is based on population. Complete Count Committees across the nation, including Boulder County, have worked hard to get a complete count of everyone, but now many could be excluded.

There is also some question as to whether the Census Bureau will be able to complete its work by the official deadline of December 31. That is the date that Census figures are due to be sent to the President. This date was never extended, although all other Census deadlines were extended by about 3 months due to the pandemic. The date to stop counting was another subject of uncertainty and court challenges, with dates ranging from October 31 to September 30 to October 5 and, finally, the Supreme Court ruled the count could end in mid-October.

The turmoil over the Census has led to questions about whether the data will be accurate, especially if the deadline remains at December 31. Stay tuned—it's not over yet!

Holiday Party!

Join us for a virtual Holiday Party on December 18th at 5:30pm to celebrate the holiday season together. Suggested donation: \$15 (however, any amount welcome--pay what you can). We'll have time to share some holiday cheer in small groups, celebrate our work and look ahead to 2021! Every registered attendee will be entered into a drawing for a gift basket from a variety of Boulder County small businesses! More details to follow. We look forward to seeing you there! Be sure to register at www.lwvbc.org. Zoom link will be provided in your registration email.



Membership: 303 Members as of December 2020

Co-presidents: Elizabeth Crowe and Gaythia Weis Boulder County Voter Editor: Jennifer Bales

League of Women Voters of Boulder County
PO Box 21274
Boulder, CO 80308
