

# The Rockies New group wants voters to choose state's judges

**Associated Press**  
DENVER — A conservative state senator and several prominent lawyers have joined forces in a statewide drive to give Colorado voters the power to elect judges.

Their organization, Associate to Reform Colorado Courts in the People's Hands, wants to do away with a system of judicial selection approved by the voters 18 years ago.

Under the current system, the governor chooses a judge from three candidates submitted by a nominating commission.

The Colorado Bar Association lobbied the selection process as one of the best in the nation, claiming it replaced a politically charged system in which judges were elected in partisan elections.

But Sen. Hugh Cole, R-Littleton, and the lawyers involved in the new group claim that politics have remained in the selection system while Colorado citizens have been excluded.

Joining Cole are Edward H. Sherman, who was the first head of the

Denver Public Defender's office, former U.S. Attorney for Colorado Charles E. Lohr, and Denver lawyer William R. Lohr.

The courts are now more involved in politics than they ever were, argued Sen. Cole, the politics are those of commissions and the governor rather than the politics of the people, Sherman said.

Vigil and Sherman emphasized that they aren't advocating a return to the old partisan political election system.

They said their intent is for judicial candidates to run in non-partisan elections, with political parties banned from participating in the campaign.

The also propose that a legislative committee from the state House of Representatives be selected to publicize the qualifications and background of the candidates.

Colorado Bar Association President Lester Ward expressed surprise and "disappointment" when informed of the non-profit organization, which filed with the

secretary of state's office on Friday.

He described those involved as "good, solid" lawyers, but said he believed their views represented a "definite minority of the bar."

"I'm disappointed that they feel that the current selection system is not representative of, and responsive to the people," he said. "It has been in place 18 years and it is recognized as a model. Many of the new selection systems in other states are copied after ours."

Ward — who said he was speaking for himself and the "great majority" of members of the Colorado Bar Association — added that the current judicial selection and retention system has "plenty of safeguards to make the system responsive."

"Changing the system is not in the best interests of the people."

Among the problems with the old system was that some judges and their employees would directly solicit lawyers and litigants, who appeared before them for campaign support.

# Man with white supremacy ties sought as witness in Berg death

**Associated Press**  
DENVER — A man sought for questioning in connection with the murder of John Berg last week also is being sought by Boise, Idaho, authorities in their investigation of the April bombing of a synagogue, police report.

David Lane, of Denver, long active in anti-Semitic, white supremacy organizations in Denver and elsewhere, was believed to have been seen in Boise four days before the bombing of the Congregation of Ahavath Israel Synagogue, Boise police told the Denver Post.

Lane is not a suspect, but is wanted for questioning about the still-unexplained explosion, said Boise Detective Robert Bana.

Denver police also describe Lane

as a possible witness, but not a suspect, in the June 18 gangland-style slaying of Berg, a well-known radio personality. Berg was Jewish.

Lane is being sought because of his past involvement with the Klan activities in the Denver area, police said.

Police began questioning former and present Klan members immediately after Berg died in a hail of machine bullets in the driveway of his east Denver home.

So far, no evidence has been found to implicate the Klan, or any of its members, in the murder, detectives emphasize.

The white supremacy organization remains under scrutiny.

Police note that the Denverpost KOA radio personality had a history

of confrontations with the group, including a well-publicized 1973 incident in which Berg accused a Klan member of pulling a gun and threatening to kill him while he was on the air in studio.

Boise authorities have uncovered evidence linking Lane to the April 29 bombing, Bana said Tuesday.

The explosion shattered windows and buckled the floor in the kitchen of the 34-year-old synagogue, but no one was injured, Bana said.

The group, he said, had been affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan in Colorado, and had been active in the Denver area, an ultra-conservative religious organization based in Hayden Lake, Idaho.

# Wire check

**Denver**  
**Brokerages backed in fraud case**

Two giant brokerage houses — Shearson Lehman American Express and Blythe & Co. — can't be held liable for a convicted securities swindler, a U.S. District Court judge has ruled. The decision Thursday by Judge John W. Carlson from the firm's claims of as much as \$70 million in connection with their dealings with Thomas D. Childress.

Former Republican U.S. Rep. James P. Johnson, the court appointed receiver in the case, said the decision will almost certainly be appealed. Childress was convicted in 1982 of lying between \$30 million and \$70 million from investors through a fraudulent commodities investment scheme. He is serving a 12-year prison sentence.

Johnson claimed the brokerage houses acted as accessories by allowing Childress to market his commodities fund through their offices. Childress received discounts on transactions from Blythecher, which listed him as an agent.

# State schools 'lag' in reform of finances

**Associated Press**  
DENVER — It is "striking" how far Colorado is lagging behind the latest wave of school finance reform, according to a Stanford University professor and school finance expert.

Addressing the Coalition to Improve School Finance, Prof. Mitchell K. Katz said Thursday that Colorado still seems preoccupied with achieving financial equity among school districts, an issue he described as a relic of the 1970s.

The state coalition he spoke to represents about 20 organizations, including school boards, teachers and administrators, parents, business, and farm groups.

Unlike California, Colorado is far from achieving equity in financing public education, he said.

But rather than focus solely on that issue, he suggested that Coloradoans who want better-financed schools must stress the need for efficiency and cost-effectiveness in public schools.

Katz, a former president of the California state board of education, said these recommendations should be published in states from California to New York have found that legislators aren't responsive to pleas for more money for schools, based only on the need for equity.

However, when the push to California legislators was based on promises of better performance, Katz said "the game opened" last year, and \$2 billion in new funds poured out to finance some \$0 separate reform programs.

In practice, he said, better performance has meant more homework, improved writing skills, advanced sciences and math courses, higher graduation standards, and more students able to meet higher entrance requirements for public colleges and universities.

# Wirth, Lamm leading Hart whips

**Reg. The World, D-Colo., and Gov. Richard Lamm lead a list of nine "Super Whips" designated by the Hart for President campaign during their operations at past week's Democratic National Convention in San Francisco. The whip list was released Thursday.**

The Hart whips will be involved in delegate persuasion, direction of the delegation floor leaders and coordination with the senator and his campaign strategists.

# Mechanic, 70, glad street is busy

**After his station wagon rolled off some ramps and pinned him to the ground, 70-year-old Tony Bourg was glad of one thing — he lives near a busy intersection. A banker of strong-baked good humor — among the 17,000 that regularly pass by Bourg's house — responded to the 70-year-old Bourg's wish, Betty, and lifted the car off his back on Tuesday.**

After being pronounced OK by a nearby hospital, Bourg returned home, noting that he'd never "getting under the car" more of them.

Bourg, a retired mechanic for the Adolph Coors Co., said he ran the front wheel of his 1981 station wagon on steel ramps and "was just tinkering with it," before the incident occurred.

It was working in the engine compartment when he dropped a wrench and crawled under the car to get it. Just as he got underneath the car, it "just rolled away slowly down off the ramps. I heard underneath the car, Bourg said there was great pressure on his chest. "I couldn't get out and couldn't get my breath."

# Boulder

**Researchers planning Mars trip**

More than 200 space researchers are meeting here to design a plan to put humans on Mars by the year 2020. "The Case for Mars II" will focus on a permanent manned scientific research station on the red planet, said Carol Bohrer, a researcher at the National Center for Earth and Space Science, a researcher at the Five-day conference which opened Thursday.

"Mars is the only planet besides Earth in our solar system which could possibly sustain life," Bohrer said. "It has a thin atmosphere, but it has stable weather conditions, sunlight, water and evidence of water. For decades the prospect of traveling to Mars has captured humanity's imagination."

Scientists and engineers will present lectures, papers, posters and attend workshops designed to collectively arrive at solutions to problems for manned exploration of Mars, Bohrer said.

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