

A LOOK AHEAD...

GUESTS are always welcome at League meetings!

Friday, April 13, 2007

12:00 noon (lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)

First Friday Sons of Norway, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo. (Note that the meeting date has been changed from the First Friday due to Good Friday)

Fargo – The City on Stilts

Speaker: Dr. Donald Schwert, NDSU

Friday, May 4, 2007

12:00 noon (lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)

First Friday, Sons of Norway, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo

Immigration Issues in the United States – Facts & Figures

CLAY COUNTY AREA LEGISLATIVE FORUMS

Due to the fact that the Minnesota Legislature may have to stay in session in St. Paul over the weekend, one or both of the following Legislative Forums may be cancelled. Check The Forum newspaper in the days preceding each event for the latest information.

Saturday, March 31, 2007 9:00-11:00

Moorhead City Council Chambers, 500 Center Ave, Moorhead

Clay County Area Legislative Forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters & the FM Chamber of Commerce

Speakers: Sen. Keith Langseth, Rep. Morrie Lanning and Rep. Paul Marquart

Saturday, April 21, 2007 9:00-11:00

Moorhead City Council Chambers, 500 Center Ave, Moorhead

Clay County Area Legislative Forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters & the FM Chamber of Commerce

Speaker: Sen. Keith Langseth, Rep. Morrie Lanning and Rep. Paul Marquart

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Spring & Fall

We've just gotten through our annual "spring forward" with the clocks, and it's certainly spring weather, melting and wet, so it's not the time I'd generally be thinking of fall. But, with all the talk in the national news about who the '08 presidential candidates will be, my thoughts have turned to our fall elections. And, I was thinking about last year's St. Patrick's Day parade, when we decked out our dogs with green placards for one of the mayoral candidates.

This brings me to our 2007-2008 local program: a study of voter turnout and voter involvement. Every election we read about voter turnout, and the League has decided that it's time to address the number of people who vote with a study. Out of a study can come a consensus on an avenue to address a problem – the reality of low voter turnout is a problem that I think many of us want to see changed.

For our democracy to be strong, we need to have as many of us participating in the selection of our decision-makers as possible, and the League of Women Voters is a place to begin developing that strength. It's our primary identity, and we can bring people together to start a process of change.

We'd like to hear your thoughts, and have your participation in this study process. If you're interested in getting involved, call me at 793-2002, or send me an e-mail at cherylbergian@cableone.net - join us in seeing what develops!

—Cheryl Bergian, President-
LWVRRV

WHEN ONE WOMAN SUCCEEDS, WE ALL BENEFIT

by Crystal Dueker

Since joining the League of Women Voters years ago, I've often heard a theme which has meant so much to unify all members and all women in politics, business, and in life: "When one woman succeeds, we all benefit." That is as true today as it was in the days of Susan B. Anthony (activist for women's rights), to Billie Jean King (star athlete), to Geraldine Ferraro (1984 vice-presidential candidate), to the various women who have served in upper management and CEOs of corporations and small business owners.

As League President Mary G. Wilson stated, Nancy Pelosi becoming the first female-speaker of the House of Representatives is an example of our representative government and it shows that hard work pays off in the political arena. It was a dramatic feeling when she became Speaker and it was a historic moment for all League members. Speaker Pelosi is proof that having a strong message and being organized are key factors in getting elected to office.

Wilson also mentioned the ever-increasing diversity of public officials. A record 71 women were elected in 2006 from both sides of the aisle in the House, and another 2 added to the Senate for a record of 16 women. More women are

currently holding office as governors, and Lt. governors, plus as elected and appointed state officials. It means that the voices at the political table are truly more inclusive than at any other time in our nation's history. On the topic of racial diversity in the past 8 years, there has been an overall increase of people of color in Congress, in the Senate and in the current White House administration.

Rather than a quota system to gain parity, I believe that women's success in 2006 has been based on each woman's past experiences, having a good message, her hard work with the grassroots, and fundraising to level the playing field. And as I see the possible selection of women for the Democrats and the Republicans on the 2008 White House ticket, it will be based on each woman's experience in the Senate or as a Cabinet member or as a governor which will put her on the ballot. It will be based on merit. It will be proof that women are full partners in governing our nation and ready to make the hard decisions as either president or vice-president. The vision of one or more women on the 2008 ballots fills my heart with pride.

President Mary Wilson said that we need to take "big money" out of campaigns. So let's be honest about it: I am disgusted with Rudy Giuliani getting up to \$100,000 for his speeches as a private citizen while he has set up an "exploratory committee" to test the water to run as president. Equally, I am also disgusted

with Bill Clinton raising millions for his speaking engagements which can now be used for Hillary's official White House race. It reminds me of Ross Perot spending over \$18 million from his own pocket in 1992 and Steve Forbes reaching into his family fortune for \$30 million back in 1999. It just makes it sound as if voters are FOR SALE; and the presidency goes to the highest bidder.

When Howard Dean raised over \$50 million in 2003, it was a true example of "populism"; he worked to raise those campaign funds, donations came because of drive and determination by the people, not just millionaires buying their way into the White House.

While it may be legal, it has the appearance of being unethical when a candidate is able to mortgage the family home for \$6 million to finance a campaign and remain viable. Do we as a nation really want only millionaires to be considered as presidential timber? Being a self-made man (or woman) has more value to me than making tons of cash from inheritance or whatever. The American Dream is that any US citizen born (man or woman) in our country can become President and we all need to look at their worthiness, their experience, along with the battle of ideas rather than who has the most millions in their bank account for 2008.

To see the LWV-US position on Campaign Finance Reform and Presidential Public Financing, go to the www.lwv.org website

LEAGUE FINANCIAL NEWS

Of the \$45 that each LWVRRV individual pays as annual dues, about \$10 is paid to each state League (ND & MN) and \$26.30 is paid to the national office as Per Member Payments (PMP). This leaves only \$8.70 per member for the local chapter.

At our March Annual Meeting, we discussed the fact that we need to increase our membership numbers, as well as more actively pursuing other sources of revenue, such as fundraisers and seeking donations from local businesses.

—Diane Briggs,

Treasurer-LWVRRV

LWVRRV ANNUAL MEETING

The 2007 LWVRRV Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, March 3, at Mosaic Foods in Fargo. The League elected new officers to the board, including a new president. We voted to continue our current local study program on Voter Turnout and Voter Involvement for 2007-2008.

After the meeting was adjourned, LWV-ND President Lois Altenburg led a discussion of the history of the Equal Rights Amendment in North Dakota. It was first ratified by the ND Legislature in 1975 and was scheduled to be re-affirmed by this year's Legislature. We also discussed some of the issues that are involved in the current LWV-US study of immigration.

LWV-ND ANNUAL MEETING

The League of Women Voters of North Dakota 2007 Biennial Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 17 at 6:00 PM in Bismarck at the AARP Office, 107 W. Main Ave. Suite 125.

At this meeting the State League will be electing officers and Board members. We will also be selecting a State study topic for 2007-2008. There will be a Legislative update by Connie Hildebrandt.

All League of Women Voters members are welcome and encouraged to attend this Annual Meeting. The cost for the event is \$10/person for dinner. If you are planning to attend, please RSVP to Stacy Dibbell at sdibbell@gmail.com

WELCOME! TESS ELIZABETH RUTH REISENAUER

On March 19, 2007, Amy Jacobson Reisenauer & her husband Todd welcomed their new baby girl into the world. Amy is our League Past President.

We wish them all the best, and hope that young Tess knows that we're all looking forward to the day that she joins the League of Women Voters!

NEWS FROM THE LWV-US

A Letter from Mary G. Wilson, President, League of Women Voters to Sen. Patrick Leahy, Judiciary Committee, United States Senate

The League of Women Voters is pleased to endorse the OPEN (Openness Promotes Effectiveness in our National) Government Act of 2007. We appreciate your leadership in introducing this legislation which will expand the accessibility and accountability of the federal government by strengthening the Freedom of Information Act and making information more readily available to the public.

For decades, the League of Women Voters has supported broad citizen participation in government and the citizen's right to know. We believe that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by making information and records accessible to the public.

The OPEN Government Act addresses these concerns by establishing a presumption of openness in government. It will strengthen the Freedom of Information Act and assist citizens receiving timely responses to their requests. At a time when citizens are apprehensive about the accessibility and accountability of government, the OPEN Government Act addresses these concerns.

We look forward to working with you to pass the OPEN Government Act.

Join the League!

Individual —	\$45.00
Household—	\$67.50
Student—	\$15.00

Send your check to:

*League of Women Voters of the
Red River Valley
PO Box 295, Fargo, ND
58107*

**Include your name, address,
telephone number and e-mail
address.**

2007-2008 LWVRRV Officers

<i>President:</i>	<i>Cheryl Bergian</i>
<i>First Vice President</i>	<i>Carol Sawicki</i>
<i>Second Vice President</i>	<i>Mary Tintes</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Alberta Dobry</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Diane Brigg</i>

Board of Directors

*Margaret Blue, Barb Headrick, Amy
Jacobson, Patti Kratky, Sherri Seeba and
Carol Zielinski.*

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy

The League of Women Voters values diversity in its members. In principle and in practice, the League knows no barriers on the basis of age, creed, disability, gender, national origin, race or sexual orientation, and encourages full participation in and contribution to the organization by all its members.

League Vision, Beliefs and Intentions:

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political membership organization which:

Acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels.

Builds citizen participation in the democratic process

Engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.