



A look ahead...

GUESTS are always welcome at League meetings!

*First Friday meetings are held at the Sons of Norway Lodge, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo. Buffet lunch is available beginning at 11:30 a.m.

- ☑ May 14-16 LWVMN Convention Wilmar, MN
- ☑ May 18 NDSU Alumni Center 5 - 7:30 p.m.
Advancing Women's Issues
Renee Stromme, ND Women's Network
RSVP 701-297-6815 (LWV office)
Suggested donation: \$35
- ☑ May 19 Centennial Hall, Fargo, ND 5:30 - 9 p.m.
Metro Flood Study
Hosts: Corps of Engineers
- ☑ May 19 Third Tuesday 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Moorhead Public Library, main floor
Current Status of Churches United
Durk, Churches United for the Homeless
- ☑ May 20 Hanson Theater, MSUM 5:30 p.m.
Metro Flood Study
Hosts: Corps of Engineers
- ☑ May 23 Moorhead Public Library 9:30 a.m.
LWVRRV Board meeting
Lower level meeting room
- ☑ May 29 ND Naturalization Ceremony 10 a.m.
US District Courthouse
655 1st Ave. N., Suite 130, Fargo
Visitors will be searched; cell phone not allowed.
- ☑ June 16 Venue—TBA 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Homelessness and the Continuum of Care
- ☑ June 30 Fargo Special Election
1/2 cent sales tax for flood risk protection

President's letter

Recently the LWVUS finished their study of immigration issues and came up with a list of proposals and positions. Currently, the national league is applying for grant to conduct local studies on the effects of immigration, both legal and illegal, on local economies, cultures, and politics.

Since the beginning of civilization, governments have wrestled with issues of citizenship and immigration. The question always seems to come down to who is desirable and who is not. In the late 19th century we opened the door for those we needed, like homesteaders on the prairie, and closed the door on those we feared, like the Chinese. Today, we have corporations like Microsoft encouraging high-tech immigration from India and China, while others decry the influx of low wage workers from Mexico. The tug of war continues, often to the detriment of our economy, our culture, and the families of those who come to our great country to escape persecution or improve their economic position.

As the national debate continues to roil, hopefully we can come together to help settle the waters in our own communities. Immigrants, both legal and illegal, challenge our normal ways of thinking and change the look and feel of our community. Now is the time to take a serious look at the impacts of immigration in our communities, gather our thoughts and stories, and inform those, both locally and nationally, who are responsible for legislating and enforcing this very important policy.

—Lois Altenburg, President

WE Rise & ND HB1418

During the 61st North Dakota Legislative assembly the League of Women Voters participated in a historic event, WE Rise Women Empowered. WE Rise is a women's lobby day intending to bring the voices of North Dakota's women and families to the halls of the Capital.

The LWVRRV educated participants on House Bill 1418, a bill focusing on child care and development. The aim of HB 1418 was to build the child care

workforce, support programs, and implement a child care star rating system. The bill was a response to the statewide child care crisis affecting nearly every family with young children.

The women participating in WE Rise spoke to legislators and left messages in notebooks lobbying for increased availability, affordability, and quality child care. They waited and watched during the House floor session as HB 1418 was expected to be up for vote that day. Fortunately the Legislature recognized the

need for a focus on the child care dilemma and both houses passed the bill. *Disappointingly the fiscal note attached was slashed and funding to truly make the programs work is lacking.*

The LWVRRV is continuing to focus our efforts on helping to eliminate the child care crisis and advocating for our families.

If you are interested in participating in our Child Care Committee please contact Amy Jacobson at 701-261-4858 or amyljacobson@hotmail.com.

Notes, etc...

■ Observer Corps Report: Flood Insurance Meeting

By Barbara Headrick, LWVRR Vice-President

On March 4th, an informational meeting was held to inform citizens on FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Information is applicable for any homeowner concerned about flooding from a river, a broken water main, or an overwhelmed storm sewer system.

City and state employees explained the program to a packed crowd in a basement meeting room at the Fargo Civic Center. They reviewed what would and would not be covered by flood insurance and directed those in attendance to go to floodsmart.gov for more detailed information. In addition, they noted that any flood insurance purchased would not go into effect until 30 days after the purchase date.

A new flood map from FEMA could raise the homeowner's cost of flood insurance, but those owning flood insurance before the map is changed will pay less than those buying after the map is made official. A preliminary flood map is expected from FEMA in June and will include Clay County. Flood insurance can be transferred if the property is sold.

Audience concerns: Homeowner costs, particularly the need for separate insurance for each building on a property. Coverage in a furnished basement: the foundation and household operational mechanical equipment, including washer and dryer is covered, but not "finished structural elements such as paneling, rugs and furniture." Insurance does not cover mold

Homeowners should see their home insurance agent after consulting the information on floodsmart.gov.

Cass 23—time is running out!

Barry Nelson, Lutheran Social Services, is working with the Cass 23 issue and sent the following plea:

It has been a long time since you have heard from me.....unfortunately, no news is NOT good news in the case of the Cass 23. The Cass 23 and I have appreciated the many letters sent to Senators Conrad and Dorgan. It has been disappointing to see their lack of response...particularly Senator Dorgan seems intent to confuse the status of our Indian friends, and no amount of clarification seems to be making any difference.

The men are scheduled for their hearing on May 7 - a distinct possibility at that hearing is that they could be ordered deported. No more waiting for the T-Visa; no more witness for the human trafficking against Signal International; no more hope that they may be able to earn back the thousands of dollars their LEGAL trip to the U.S. cost them.

This is a call to arms. Now is the time to convince Senators Dorgan and Conrad (whose staff person actually seems to get it and is making efforts to advocate) that these men must be granted 'continued presence' - now. They do NOT have time to wait the average 9 months to 2 years for their T-visa. They are eligible for the Human Trafficking Victims Act, passed by Congress. Apply it NOW.

If there is a time to make those phone calls, write those letters, it is now. Ask Senators Dorgan and Conrad to intervene with U.S. Attorney Eric Holder, to grant the Cass County 23 continued presence.

Time is running out!

2009 LWVRRV Annual Meeting

Three new members were elected to serve on the board of directors: Portia Danielson, Nancy Jardine, and Frank Kratky who will fill the positions left vacant by Amanda Noce, Phyllis Emmel, and Jessica Clark.

Members voted to approve the 2009-2010 local program: Caring for Children with a focus on child care and unaccompanied homeless children.

The budget was approved in the amount of \$9,700 with the major portion going towards membership, grants, community meetings and publications.

Dr. Deb White, professor of sociology and chair of the Dept. of Sociology and Criminal Justice at

MSUM, discussed the political glass ceiling, and whether or not it is weakening. The number of women in the ND Legislature has declined, the number of women in the Minnesota legislature exceeds that of most other states. She stressed that we must continue to educate, encourage, and help

women in seeking public office.

She discussed the many factors contributing to women's persistent under-representation. A lively discussion ensued.

A big THANKS to Dr. White for her stimulating discussion!



Need for citizen voices as flood protection plans move forward

By Barbara Headrick
LWVRR Vice-President

As the water finally recedes to the banks of the Red, Wild Rice and Sheyenne Rivers, plans are underway for a flood protection plan to protect the Fargo/Moorhead area from future "flood events." The inspiring community response to fighting the flood of 2009 now needs to turn into activism in support of having this project properly planned, funded and implemented.

The decision process on how to protect the area from floods is underway at all government levels. Numerous public meetings have been held on a south side flood protection project and is looking for state funding. The Fargo City Commission will be asking voters to raise their sales tax by one-half percent to pay for a more comprehensive flood project.

Moorhead and the two county governments have just begun to consider their needs and what, if any, requests they will make to voters.

Both the North Dakota and Minnesota legislature have pledged to help with immediate needs. The members of the congressional delegations have also told local government officials to bring them

a plan when it is ready so they can pursue necessary federal funding. The Army Corps of Engineers is working on the comprehensive flood plan as you read this.

Elected officials and government agencies are working to eliminate the need for miles of temporary flood protection when another wet fall is followed by a long, wet winter and a rapid snow melt. No one can promise protection by next spring. These efforts will take a number of years. However, nothing will happen if we put our civic duty away next to our rubber boots and sand-bagging gloves.

I have attended meetings on flood protection prior to this year's flood. Local government officials have frequently been met with more skepticism than cooperation. Somewhere between 1997 and 2009, too many folks in and out of government became convinced that we could ignore the rivers that define so much of the region. Somehow we forgot that nature does not care how much we paid for our new homes in new neighborhoods. We must never forget again.

As it was our duty to respond to the needs of neighbors and communities while the water threatened, it is our duty to read, listen, attend, speak up and vote while the waters are calm. On May 19th and 20th, your first opportunity arrives.

The following comes from the Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District website.

Two public meetings will be held as part of the scoping process for an Environmental Impact Statement.

- ◆ May 19 at Centennial Hall in Fargo
- ◆ May 20 at the Hanson Theater on the Minnesota State University, Moorhead campus, in Moorhead.

Both meetings will begin at 5:30 p.m. with an open house, followed by a formal presentation at 7:00 p.m. and a question and answer period ending at 9:00 p.m. Anyone interested in the study is welcome to attend either meeting.

These will be just the first of such public meetings, talk radio discussions, city commission, city council and county commission meetings that will require public involvement to work. The improvements that need to be made will be done in our backyards, involving our rivers and roads, and will permanently change our cities and towns. If you stop participating, you will be allowing others to make those decisions without you. The decisions will be made. The changes will come.

Will you lend your mind and voice to these efforts as you lent your time and strength to the flood fight?

Meet a new board member

Frank L. Kratky is a licensed architect who retired from private practice in 2003, and has been teaching advanced architectural design at NDSU downtown renaissance building since January 2004.

Frank lives with his wife Patti in Oakport Township in the home they designed and built in 1977. Today, they are doing a complete makeover remodeling of the entire first floor that was damaged by flooding this spring.

He joined the LWVRR in December 2008 and was elected to be a member of the board in March 2009. He is interested in issues such as homelessness and the current flood protection problem.



2008-2009 LWVRRV Officers

Co-Presidents:

Lois Altenburg, Patti Kratky

First Vice President: Barbara Headrick

Second Vice President: Mary Tintes

Secretary: Amy Jacobson

Treasurer: Carol Sawicki

2008-2009 Board of Directors:

Sharon Benzel, Frank Kratky,
Donna Chalimonczyk, Portia
Danielson, Alice Hauan, Nancy
Jardine, Barbara Headrick,

■ **SPRING INTO ACTION: Advancing Women's Issues**

Renee Stromme, Executive Director of the North Dakota Women's Network, will be the featured speaker at the LWV RRV Gala event May 18 at the NDSU Alumna Center.

Ms. Stromme will update us on the 2009 ND Legislative session and issues that were voted up or down during the session affecting women, children, and families. She will lead us through a discussion on how we can advance women's issues during our everyday life and how to forward concerns that can only be solved through legislative action. Her action call may encourage women to seek political office and be in the forefront of change.



Call the LWV office (701-297-6815) now to make your reservation as space is limited.
A \$35 suggested donation can be made.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages an 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.