



A look ahead...

GUESTS are always welcome at League meetings!

- Second Friday, Sept. 9** **12 noon—1 pm**
 Sons of Norway-Ballroom, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo
 (Lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)

Topic: Budget process and the current state of finance in the City of Moorhead and in Clay County

Presenters: Mike Redlinger, Moorhead City Manager
Brian Berg, Clay County Auditor.
 - Tuesday, September 13** **6—9 pm**
 Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Ave. N., Moorhead, MN

Moorhead City Council Candidate's Forum
 - Tuesday, September 27,** **6:00—8:00 pm**
 Comstock Memorial Union, Room 227, MSUM

Draw the Line - Minnesota
- Go to <http://drawthelinemidwest.org/minnesota> for more information on this League of Women Voters' project that seeks to reform and improve the redistricting process in Minnesota.
- First Friday, October 7** **12 noon—1 pm**
 Sons of Norway-Ballroom, 722 2nd Ave N, Fargo
 (Lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)

Topic: Budget process and the current state of finance in the City of Fargo and in Cass County

Presenters: Pat Zavoral, Fargo City Administrator
Michael Montplaisir, Cass County Auditor
 - Thursday, October 20**

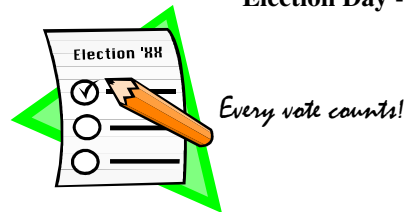
Planned Parenthood's Annual Progress on the Prairie

Time and place TBA - See article, page 1.
 - First Friday, November 4** **12 noon—1 pm**
 Sons of Norway-Ballroom, 722 2nd Ave N, Fargo
 (Lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)

Topic: Priorities of the United States Attorney's Office for the District of North Dakota

Speaker: Timothy Q. Purdon, U.S. Attorney, ND District
 - Tuesday, November 8** **7 am—8 pm**

Election Day - Moorhead City Council seats



Save the date! Planned Parenthood's annual Progress on the Prairie

2011 has proven a brutal year for advocates and supporters of reproductive health and freedom. From attempts to defund Planned Parenthood on the Federal level to the near passage of a Personhood law (granting protected human rights to a fertilized egg) in North Dakota, the anti-choice attacks are growing. Yet amidst the attacks big wins for women and families have been made.

Save the date and plan to join Planned Parenthood on **October 20th** to hear the stories and to recognize the passion of two local women as they receive our "Exemplary Leadership" and "Women on the Move" awards.

Check www.ndplannedparenthoodadvocate.org for details closer to the date or contact Amy Jacobson at 701-261-4858 ajacobson@ppmns.org.

North Dakota Redistricting Reform Initiative

In the summer of 2010 the League of Women Voters of ND sponsored a constitutional amendment initiated measure that, if passed, would have created an independent legislative redistricting commission for North Dakota.

Unfortunately supporters of this initiated measure were not successful this time in getting enough signatures to get the initiative on the ballot.

Those of us that carried petitions generally had success getting signatures, once we had a chance to explain the issue. However we found that most people did not know that legislative district lines are drawn by the ND legislators themselves.

We are interested in trying again soon to get redistricting reform on the ballot before the citizens of North Dakota. We believe that there will be increased interest in this issue once the latest round of district boundaries are presented and voted on at a special legislative session this fall.

—Carol Sawicki-LWVND

Help Wanted

Moorhead City Council Candidates Forum

Volunteers are needed to help with the September 13 candidates' forum to serve as the moderator, timer and question screener. **Contact: Patti Kratky, 218-233-8382 or patty4st4@aol.com**

Voting rights under attack

In October 2007, the *National Voter* had an article entitled “Voter Fraud?” (You can read it on the lwv.org website) In it you read how the cries of voter fraud are not backed up by any facts, but are a powerful message to create calls for restrictions on voting.

In 2011, restrictions have been put into place with Texas, Alabama, Kansas, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Wisconsin leading the way with new voter ID laws that require a “government issued photo ID” to vote. However, there are rules on what IDs are allowed. In Texas, a state concealed-weapons ID is okay, but a student ID from a state university is not. If citizens cannot provide a birth certificate to satisfy the requirements to get a state photo ID, they cannot vote. This is true even for people whose citizenship is recognized by national and state programs including Social Security. Also, if you have never asked for your official birth certificate from the state where you were born, it isn’t free. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, it costs \$26 in Minnesota and \$22 in Texas to get a copy of your birth certificate that you may need to get the required government issued ID. This means states are asking people to pay to vote. Sound familiar? That is a poll tax in my view and that is unconstitutional.

One of the worst examples is in Florida. A new voting law not only requires a state approved voter ID and reduces early voting; it also requires “third party organizations,” like the LWV of Florida, to submit a voter registration application within 48 hours or face fines and prevents Floridians who move from one county to another from changing their address at the polls. The latter does have an exception for military members and their families. The rest of Floridians would only be allowed to vote on a provisional ballot which are rarely counted. As for the 48 hour rule, how does it apply to long weekends?

Do you remember not so long ago when

the push was on to make it easier to register and vote as the concern was lack of participation? Are you like me and find it interesting that this fear of “voter fraud” follows a 2008 presidential election of a Democratic president who gained substantial backing from newly registered minority and young voters? And since when is the US so rich with voters that we think it is time to treat the **RIGHT TO VOTE** like a privilege to be earned?

The League of Women Voters was built on the efforts to bring the right to vote to women. We have backed efforts to bring more people to the polls and use the power of government to guarantee that the right to vote is not hindered. Now, in a new century we face an old battle — restrictions on voting that will target those with less money and less political power to “solve” a non-existent problem. The history of the United States does have examples of political parties in numerous places using a variety of forms of voter fraud to gain and retain power. These tales led to voter registration laws in 49 of the 50 states. However, neither party has the organization or skills needed for successful voter fraud. A quick Google search shows only 6 states still close the bars on election day to prevent the use of that once very popular means of buying votes. Every election year we hear of the need for more election judges and the need for them to be better prepared and better paid. High turnout in a state often brings reports of a lack of ballots and long lines that discourage some voters from participating. These are legitimate problems that need to be addressed. People voting under a fraudulent name simply is not a problem.

Why make it harder to vote? Because, unfortunately, there are too many people in this country who do see voting as a privilege that should be withheld to prevent “others” who “don’t know the truth” or “will just vote based on [insert some identify trait or belief

that is seen as somehow illegitimate]. And then there is the fact of the political game. Each side knows detailed descriptions for voters who are more likely to vote for their candidate/party. Each side wants those voters to show up on election day and don’t really care if other types of voters do so. So, if early voting and same day registration is seen as enhancing Democratic candidates, then Republican elected officials have no problem with reducing or ending these efforts to get more people to vote. The Democrats would probably be no less stingy if the roles were reversed.

The League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley and everywhere else wants everyone who is eligible to vote.

That is all we want. Because of this commitment to the **RIGHT TO VOTE**, I encourage all of our members and anyone else to call, write, email state legislators; do what you can to support lawsuits challenging these new restrictions on voting; or simply correct anyone you hear complaining about “voter fraud.” In fact, let us know you want some voter registration forms, we’ll get them to you. Register people and get them to the polls. There is no stronger way of saying “NO” then through greater participation in the face of these calls for restrictions and hurdles to our constitutionally guaranteed right to vote.

No right in the US Constitution or any state constitution is invulnerable. We must stand for ourselves and our fellow voters. The LWV of the Red River Valley will always stand for more voters, not less.

PS: The one state without any registration is North Dakota. Anyone think it is rampant with voter fraud?

This letter was originally written by LWV of the Red River Valley Co-President Barb Headrick on our new blog at <http://lwvredrivervalley.wordpress.com/>

Third Tuesday Moorhead Area League Discussion Meetings

No Moorhead area discussion meeting has been scheduled for September 2011.

The group will be evaluating possible dates and times for the future of these meetings.

Please contact Patti Kratky at 218-233-8382 or patty4st4@aol.com if you have an interest in helping make decisions about these discussion meetings.

**■ League of Women Voters
Launches Clean Air Promise
Campaign**

*New TV Ad Calls for Elected Officials,
Citizens, and Community Leaders to Protect
Public Health*

Washington, DC – The League of Women Voters today launched a months-long campaign, including a significant national advertising effort, seeking to renew America’s promise to protect clean air and public health embodied in the highly successful and popular Clean Air Act.

"Americans from all walks of life will be asked to make the 'Clean Air Promise,'" said Elisabeth MacNamara, president of the national League of Women Voters.

"We are deeply concerned about attacks on EPA and health protections. Any action to block the EPA from updating Clean Air Act protections, or any delay on behalf of the Administration to avoid implementing new clean air and industrial pollution requirements, is an attack on the health of our children and families, plain and simple," she said.

The Clean Air Promise Campaign will call on citizens, elected officials and community leaders around the country to join in making this simple promise to protect the health of our children and families:

"I promise to protect America's children and families from dangerous air pollution.

"Because toxics and pollutants such as mercury, smog, carbon, and soot, cause thousands of hospital visits, asthma attacks, and even deaths.

I will support clean air policies and other protections that scientists and public health

experts have recommended to the EPA to safeguard our air quality."

Through the Clean Air Promise campaign, the League of Women Voters hopes to inform and engage Americans on the issue of clean air and to demonstrate what is at stake. Some public officials are trying to undermine the Clean Air Act and to strip the Environmental Protection Agency of its ability to limit air pollution and emission of toxics like mercury, arsenic and other dangerous substances which threaten public health. The League will ask its members to make the promise to protect clean air and will actively work to engage the public and our leaders to make the promise as well. Other clean air advocacy groups are expected to join the campaign in the coming days and weeks.

"We have to promise each other to protect our air. So the League of Women Voters is asking our communities to stand up and demand that our elected officials promise to keep us safe from the pollution that we cannot control ourselves," said MacNamara.

"This is a social commitment that we make to each other and which we depend on our elected officials and Congress to carry out and safeguard. Clean air saves lives, and we need to ensure clean air for our children and families in the future. We look forward to working with others to renew the clean air promise," MacNamara said.

"Air pollution causes thousands of asthma attacks and emergency room visits – but that’s not all. Air pollution is also responsible for debilitating lung disease; heart attacks; damage to infants’ and children’s developing brains, robbing them of IQ; cancer, and deaths," said Dr. Peter Wilk, executive director of Physicians for Social

Responsibility. "That is too high a price for the American people to pay.

"We can and we must clean America’s air. We can’t let politics stand in the way. Speaking on behalf of doctors and health professionals across the country, Physicians for Social Responsibility deeply supports the Promise Campaign," Dr. Wilk added.

"As the mother of an asthmatic child, I have seen firsthand the effects of poor air quality and air pollution," said Alexandra Allred, a mother of an asthmatic child and an advocate for clean air. "My son has been battling this painful and debilitating disease for years, and it’s time that our political and government leaders took the common-sense steps to control the air pollution that hurts him. We need stronger public health protections so other families and children aren’t forced to suffer. I say 'thank you' to the League of Women Voters for dedicating their organization’s time, talent and resources to fighting dirty air," she said.

For decades, the League of Women Voters has put the health of families ahead of other concerns. The League was one of the first environmental organizations to speak out for the Clean Air Act and the EPA. Today’s announcement included the release of a new television ad supporting the Clean Air Promise campaign. The ad, featuring a voice over by Alexandra Allred, asks viewers to make their own promise to support clean air and ask others to do the same. The ad features several asthmatic children conducting everyday tasks and being treated for asthma.

**To learn more about the
Clean Air Promise, visit:
<http://peoplenotpolluters.org/>**

TIME TO JOIN THE LEAGUE!

Membership Dues:

Individual: \$50, students: \$15

Send your check to:

LWV RRV, PO Box 295,

Fargo, ND 58107-0295

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



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◆ **This issue of the Voter, along with archived issues dating back to 2000, is available online on the lwvnd.org/rrv.html website**

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.