



Red River Voter

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LWV Web Sites: www.lwvnd.org & www.lwvmn.org

DEC. 2011—FEB. 2012

A look ahead...

GUESTS are always welcome at League meetings!

- First Friday, December 2** **12 noon—1 pm**
 Sons of Norway-Ballroom, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo
 (Lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)
Topic: Child Care in the Fargo-Moorhead Area
Presenters: Linda Lemke
 Lakes and Prairies Community Action

- Wednesday, December 21** **Noon**
 Speakeasy Restaurant, 1001 30th Ave. S, Moorhead, MN
Moorhead LWVRRV meeting
Topic: Moorhead Area School District Bullying Policies
Presenter: Kristine Thompson, Moorhead School Board

- First Friday, January 6** **12 noon—1 pm**
 Sons of Norway-Ballroom, 722 2nd Ave N, Fargo
 (Lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)
Topic: Reprise on Redistricting Issues
Presenters: Barb Headrick and Carol Sawicki

- Wednesday, January 18** **Noon**
 Speakeasy Restaurant, 1001 30th Ave. S, Moorhead, MN
Moorhead LWVRRV meeting

- First Friday, February 3** **12 noon—1 pm**
 Sons of Norway-Ballroom, 722 2nd Ave N, Fargo
 (Lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)
Topic: The Anti-Voting Movement in America
Presenter: Barb Headrick

- Wednesday, February 15** **Noon**
 Speakeasy Restaurant, 1001 30th Ave. S., Moorhead, MN
Moorhead Area LWVRRV meeting

President's Letter

When I became co-president last spring, Lois Altenberg said she had some boxes for me. It turned into 3 boxes and a file cabinet. Within these boxes was a time capsule of the activities of the League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley over last 25 years. In rummaging through the papers that make up a bit of our history, I discovered that there have been some issues that the League has pursued that continue to get our attention.

The issues that our League has spent the most time on are the environment, reproductive rights, voting rights, government accountability and health care. If you go to the LWVUS website today (lwv.org), you will easily find these issues as targets for action today. This is not a sign of failure. This is a sign that some issues need the consistent attention of active citizens, such as those who make up the membership of League chapters across the nation.

Our responsibility as citizens includes adding our voices on matters being neglected by our government. The efforts by the League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley to educate and illuminate issues are a vital part of our mission. To do that we need each of you. We need your expertise, time, attention and voice. Is there an issue you believe the League should bring to public attention? Is there information you can provide to enhance a program by the League? Can you give us a handful of hours a year to add your voice to our discussions? We need you. Our community needs active citizens like you because too many of the issues that we have been discussing over the last 25 years will still be on our agenda for years to come.

Want to be heard? Here is my email: redbarbh@hotmail.com

Barb Headrick Co-President LWVRRV

Check out our website

During the month of November 2011 the city of Moorhead held elections for spots on the City Council, and the North Dakota Legislature held a special session. LWVRRV sponsored a Moorhead candidates' forum and a citizens' information forum about the special session featuring local ND legislators.

Links to videos of these forums were available for view through our website, <http://www.lwvnd.org/rrv.html>, along with other information about these two important government endeavors.

There will be a primary election in North Dakota on June 12, 2012 along with Fargo city and Cass County elections. We are planning on holding candidates' forums for these races and posting videos of those on the website. Back issues of the Voter are also available there, as well as links to voter's guides and other valuable resources.

News from the LWVUS

■ Elections: Voter protection results mixed

In this week's elections across the country, voter protection saw a mixed bag of results, including a win and a loss. WIN: In Maine voters rejected the new law that did away with Election Day registration. Congratulations and big thanks to the LWV of Maine (and its coalition partners) for initiating and securing a "Citizens' Veto!" LOSS: In Mississippi, voters approved voter photo ID. These mixed results emphasize the urgent need to continue defending our democracy at home.

■ Redistricting: North Carolina League files suit against state plans

The LWVNC joined with partners, including the NAACP, Democracy NC, the Randolph Institute and 27 individual voters, last week in filing a high-profile lawsuit against the state's approved House, Senate and congressional redistricting plans. The lawsuit claims legislators blatantly and illegally manipulated communities based on race and political makeup to achieve partisan gains.

■ Redistricting: Federal Court sides with league and others on Texas Plans

Following months of outcry by the League and other key groups that the Texas redistricting plans blatantly violate Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and intentionally

dilute the power of minority voters, the U.S. District Court in Washington, DC, this week denied fast-track approval of the state's congressional, House and Senate redistricting plans. This move ensures a federal trial over the widely challenged plans and will require a San Antonio judge to craft new plans for use during the 2012 elections. Congratulations to the LWVTX and all the others who worked to block the implementation of these discriminatory maps!

■ Letter from the President of LWVUS opposing termination of the Election Assistance Commission

November 2, 2011

TO: Members of the U.S. Senate

The League of Women Voters urges you to oppose efforts to terminate the Election Assistance Commission as part of the appropriations process. Instead of eliminating the EAC, we believe that Congress should strengthen the commission and expand its responsibilities. The League believes that elections are fundamental to a functioning democracy and that every effort should be made to elevate their administration to the highest importance. Congress should not turn its back on federal efforts to ensure election integrity, improve voter access to the polls, and improve election systems. The value of the EAC far outweighs its monetary costs; in fact, the costs of poorly run elections are intolerable. It is time for election administration to move into the 21st Century, not back toward the 19th.

Unfortunately, elections in our country are still not well-administered, and we are concerned that many states and localities are not doing a good job ensuring federally-protected voting rights. For example, a GAO report on the 2008 election said that there are significant problems for persons with disabilities in gaining access to the polls. Physical barriers remain in far too many cases. In fact, 31 states reported that ensuring polling place accessibility was "challenging."

There are many other areas of election administration that cause concern, including statewide voter registration lists, provisional balloting, list cleaning, voting machines and tabulating, access to registration, and meeting voter information needs. In addition, there are critical questions that must be addressed about the application of new technologies like the Internet to the voting and registration processes. Each of these areas would benefit from additional study, data gathering and information sharing among election officials at every level, the public, and concerned organizations.

With these continuing problems, now is certainly not the time to abolish the only federal agency that devotes its full resources and attention to improving our elections. Let us not go back to the 2000 election but go forward, improving each election over the last. We know what needs to be done; now let us devote the resources to what should be done.

—*Elisabeth MacNamara*
President, LWVUS

Third Wednesday Moorhead Area League Discussion Meetings

The Moorhead LWVRRV discussion meetings are held at noon at the Speakeasy Restaurant located at 1001 30th Ave. S., Moorhead. Members order off the menu.

Topics are varied and league members can suggest topics for future discussions.



Please contact Patti Kratky at 218-233-8382 or patty4st04@aol.com if you have an interest in helping make decisions about these discussion meetings.

North Dakota's public policy on children's issues

North Dakota has some incredible needs for our children in spite of our flush general funds. Currently, North Dakota:

Provides the **lowest level of health care coverage in the nation** for children living in low-income working families.

Is the **only state in the nation that does not provide any general fund money** to Head Start, even though 1,300 children are eligible but unable to access this successful program.

North Dakota ranks 49th in the nation in terms of federal and state spending on childcare. (2009)

North Dakota is 50th in the nation on total child care expenditures. (2009)

(Data from the Children's Defense Fund-North Dakota www.cdf-nd.org)

History notes—100 years ago

The first International Women's Day on March 8 produces rallies in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland to protest lack of representation of women in trade unions.

New York's Triangle Square Shirtwaist Factory burns on March 25. Killed are 146 people, most of them young sweatshop seamstresses who were unable to escape because the factory owner locked all exits so employees could not steal inventory. 500 women and 50 men worked from 7:30 am to 6 pm, mostly for \$6-\$8 per week.

Social worker Gertrude Barnum works to raise funds for the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union over the next 5 years.

—*The Women's Chronology*

To LWVRRV members and friends

Have you ever wanted to learn more about local issues or about how local government works? How do civic leaders draft budgets or what can be done about important issues facing your community? Maybe you'd simply like to enjoy lunch with some friends and listen to a thoughtful discussion about current issues. You can do all of these things at the LWV First Friday Public Meetings!

On the 1st Friday of each month from September through May, the LWV First Fridays are held at the Sons of Norway Lodge in downtown Fargo. Lunch is available to the public at 11:30 am and the guest speakers begin their presentations promptly at 12:00 noon. LWV members and non-members enjoy lunch and an engaging presentation and everyone is ready to get back to work at 1:00 pm! Monthly topics and guest speakers are announced in the local news publications and on the LWVRRV website and newsletters. If you have suggestions for topics of interest, please contact any League Board member or email us at lwwrrv@gmail.com

Bring a friend for lunch and join us at the next First Friday meeting – you'll be glad you did!

League is actively recruiting members to serve on committees.

The committees are:
special events, finance/fund-raising, communications, voter service (candidates' forums and more), programs for First Friday and Third Wednesday, membership, and historian.

**We can do more in this region if there are more people involved.
Your help is needed!**

If you are interested in serving on one or more of these committees, contact Barb Headrick (redbarbh@hotmail.com).

TIME TO JOIN THE LEAGUE!

Membership Dues:

Individual: \$50, students: \$15

Send your check to:

LWVRRV, PO Box 295,

Fargo, ND 58107-0295

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



2011-2012 LWVRRV Officers

Co-Presidents: *Lois Altenburg, Barbara Headrick*

Vice President: *DelRae Williams*

Secretary: *Patty Kratky*

Treasurer: *Carol Sawicki*

2011-2012 Board of Directors:

Jocie Iszler, Janice Jackson, Frank Kratky, Beverly Lake, Portia Smith, Mary Tintes

*League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley
P.O. Box 295
Fargo, ND 58107-0295*

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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.