



ND Women's Voice

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From the Director's Desk



July marked an important time for the Women's Network when we released a white paper on women's leadership in North Dakota. You can read more about the report on pages 4 & 5 of this newsletter. I also urge you to read the full report for a stronger sense of the topic. The report, "Where are the

Women?" is on our website, www.ndwomen.org. You can download it for free. This information is a call to action for the state.

We see this report as another step in the direction towards full equality for women. To continue this journey, we need your support. To push for more progress, we need to continue to monitor the state's current status as well as implement recommendations.

Your financial support is vital to these efforts. Please consider an additional donation, as well as your continued membership support, so that the North Dakota Women's Network may continue these bold endeavors. Improving the lives of women in the state of North Dakota requires investment. I hope you will consider a tax deductible donation to the North Dakota Women's Network.

Member's Corner: Featuring Mary Mitchell

As a statewide organization, the North Dakota Women's Network is comprised of a talented and remarkable group of individuals across the state with limited opportunities to meet one another.

The Member's Corner was created for you to become acquainted with a fellow member of the Women's Network. Say "hello" to this issue's featured member...



My name is Mary Mitchell and I have served on the board of the North Dakota Women's Network (NDWN) for 2 years and have been a member since 2007.

I recall learning that my sister had wanted to go to college after she graduated from high school back in the mid-1950s.

According to our dad, her two options were to either become a teacher or a nurse. Lucky for me, change came on like a house afire in the 1960s.

In high school, we were one of the first freshman classes not to have to wear dresses to school. I joined Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and helped produce an underground newspaper. I marched against the war in Vietnam and served on the board of a non-profit that raised money to fight hunger around the world. I saw the world begin to change as women and minorities fought and won battles on so many fronts.

Moving to North Dakota from the Twin Cities in 1980 was an eye opener for me. It was disturbingly clear that North Dakota was about 20 years behind the times in many respects.

Today, North Dakota is being

pulled and pushed into the 21st century by young adults who are returning home to raise their families; by the oil boom, which is attracting a more diverse population; by the internet, which exposes us to a complex stew of thoughts and ideas every day, and, by those of us who insist on equal rights and equal pay for all people, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation.

I am beginning to glimpse the kind of "brave new world" I want for North Dakota. We still have a long way still to go, and NDWN is needed for this journey. NDWN is a vehicle for sharing information and taking action on issues that impact women on local, state and federal levels. I am proud to be a board member for this amazing organization.

A Major Victory in North Dakota

Amy Jacobson

North Dakota earned a major victory for human rights on June 12th—impacting the whole country positively. Measure 3, an unprecedented and sweeping power grab by the North Dakota Catholic Conference and the North Dakota Family Alliance, was soundly **defeated by voters 64%-36%**!

If passed, Measure 3 could have allowed a person to take advantage and use personal religious beliefs to claim the right to break important laws that are meant to protect all of us, like laws against child abuse, domestic violence and discrimination. As a result, Measure 3 could have dramatically increased the number of lawsuits and clogged our courts, costing taxpayers even more money.

Yet proponents of this misguided effort have little regard for the public voice by vowing to carry on. Sponsors will continue to press for this unnecessary and costly measure—at the expense of the North Dakota pocket book. Christopher Dodson, the Measure’s spokesperson and Executive Director of the North Dakota Catholic Conference said he will not rest, “the outcome of the vote on Measure 3 will not distract us from that task.”

With 64% of the vote, North Dakotans overwhelmingly agreed that freedom of religion is a fundamental right, protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, as well as North Dakota’s state constitution. Unlike our existing religious freedom protections, Measure 3 placed an individual’s religious beliefs ahead of the common good of all North Dakotans.



North Dakotans Against Measure 3 Canvassers

For these reasons all five major newspapers in North Dakota urged readers to vote ‘no’ on the Measure. The Fargo Forum stated “*The spiritual lives of North Dakotans who choose a spiritual life – as most do – are sound and secure. Measure 3 threatens that honorable heritage and history. It’s a self-serving scheme that has the potential to deeply divide people of faith, and thus undermine religious liberty, not protect it. Vote ‘no.’*” [Fargo Forum, 6/6/12]

The North Dakota Western Synod of the Evangelical

Lutheran Churches of America stated their “grave concerns” about Measure 3. The Northern Plains Conference of the United Church of Christ also opposed Measure 3.

In a press conference announcing their opposition, Tim Hathaway, Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota said, “We are urging a ‘no’ vote on Measure 3 because it will seriously undercut protection for children in our state by opening the door for people to claim religious freedom as a justification for maltreatment.”

The campaign was endorsed by the North Dakota Council on Abused Women’s Services, the National Association of Social Workers-North Dakota, the North Dakota Women’s Network, Planned Parenthood

MN,ND, SD and the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition.

To repeat—it was a 64%-36% defeat! With such a strong and resounding outcome from North Dakota voters the issue should be laid to rest. While the work to defeat this ballot measure is done, the work is clearly far from over.

Jacobson served as the Organizing and Field Director for North Dakotans Against Measure 3 and is a NDWN Board Member.

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Our delegates have offices in multiple locations, improving the access for constituents. When you reach out to any of them, you will first speak with their staff. Most often, that is the most reasonable approach. For example, if you want to let the Senators or Representative know your preference on a particular piece of legislation, calling the office and voicing your opinion through a staff member is quite effective. The staff will record the information and pass it along to the office holder. There is no need to have detailed talking points for this call. Your call can be as simple as "I would like him to vote no" with perhaps a small mention of the reason: the bill disregards the needs of women, etc. In a few weeks you will receive a follow up letter from the Senator or Representative sharing his perspective on the issue.

As a constituent you can also request an audience with a Congressman. Because of their busy schedules, it is important to be prepared and concise in your discussions. These meetings require more preparation and details. Meeting with the office holder can be the most influential form of contact, followed by postal letters, then calls and finally email. If you mail a letter to the Washington office, it will take a good length of time to get to him due to the mail sorting process in DC, so plan accordingly.

Being an active participant in the legislative process is really quite simple and effective. Go out there and let your voice be heard. That is how we collectively improve the lives of women.

The vision of the North Dakota Women's Network (NDWN) is to encourage more women to run for public office. In this process we have seen that women are guaranteed equitable rights and opportunities in North Dakota. In all that we do, NDWN addresses our core mission of improving women's lives through communication, legislation and increased public activism. As NDWN works toward our vision, women's leadership skills and confidence must be nurtured. We've been conducting Ready to Run trainings with women to

encourage more women to run for public office. In this process we have anecdotaly seen how women view stepping up to run for office as quite intimidating. Listening to these women, and learning from women in leadership positions, **we wanted to highlight how serving on boards and commissions can be a great opportunity to raise women's confidence and dive into public service.** To take this on, we needed more information on the topic. So, the

NDWN commissioned Linda Johnson Wurtz to give us a snapshot of where we are now and what the research tells us about service of women on boards and commissions. This rich report provides all the impetus we need to move forward with women's leadership. North Dakota was once on the forefront of women's leadership – we can be again.



Where Are the Women?

Linda Johnson Wurtz



In North Dakota, we often ask, "Where are the women?" Currently, North Dakota has one woman holding a statewide elective office (a woman has been appointed to a 5-month temporary position on the Public Service Commission). The state legislature has only 14.9% women, giving North Dakota a ranking as 45th in the nation regarding women in the legislature. One woman sits on the Board of Higher Education (two as of June 19, 2012, when Kathleen Neset was appointed to fulfill Claus Lembke's unexpired term). None of North Dakota's eleven state-supported colleges and universities has a woman as president. Just 22% of township officers are women and a mere 6% of county commissioners are women (2011).

"Where Are the Women" is a white paper that argues it's about more than women's rights. There is a business case for having women in positions of leadership. Research and corporate experience have shown that companies with women at the top

rate better in profitability, creativity, and performance. Research of legislators shows that women are more likely to work across the aisle, listen to their constituency, and promote transparency.

The evidence is clear that the benefits are great. Yet case studies, anecdotal evidence, and highly visible examples show that North Dakota is behind the curve in bringing women into full participation in the state. Women looking for the leadership track and ways to contribute their ideas to the greater good continue to encounter obstacles. Issues such as career breaks for parenting and the "anywhere anytime" performance model continue to plague women trying to advance their careers.

While experts agree that one of the prime training grounds for professionals is serving on boards and commissions, North Dakota's gender balance of state boards and commissions is just 35% women. Although this is better than the percentage found in corporate America, it does not meet the requirement of North Dakota statute which states, "Appointments...should be gender

balanced to the extent possible and to the extent that appointees are qualified to serve on those boards, commissions, committees, and councils" (NDCC 54-06-19). Twenty-three state boards have no women.

"Where Are the Women" includes recommendations by experts such as using gender diversity indicators as part of management performance reviews and having a woman on every short list for appointment or promotion. Specifically in North Dakota, we should strengthen our statute and then include those directives in the appointment process. Women should be recruited for appointments, particularly in nontraditional careers. Non-profit and for profit organizations should analyze their gender balance and consider the many benefits that women bring to the table.

A decade of research and worldwide organizational experience is showing the benefits and the need for diversity in the board room and in leadership. "Where Are the Women" argues that North Dakota needs to recognize the challenge and purposefully plan to meet it.

A decade of research and worldwide organizational experience is showing the benefits and the need for diversity in the board room and in leadership.

Putting ND Women's Leadership in Historical Perspective

By Bonnie Palecek

Women have always used the vehicles at hand to participate in leadership roles in their communities. North Dakota has been no different.

I lived through the 60's and 70's as part of what was known as the "Women's Liberation Movement," particularly involved with the emergence of a network of services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

I speak from the perspective that, as Audre Lourde said, "Revolution is not a one time event." Everything important has to be done over and over again. Or as William Faulkner famously said, "The past isn't dead; it isn't even past."



Laura Eisenhuth

North Dakota has a rich history of integrating women into the leadership of our state: Laura Eisenhuth as the first Superintendent of Schools (1933); Brynhild Haugland as the longest serving woman legislator in the country; Josephine Gates Kelly, as the first tribal chairwoman in the country (1944); Rose Crows Flies High, the first tribal chairwoman of the Three Affiliated Tribes (1974-78), and Minnie Craig as the first woman Speaker of a state House of Representatives in the country (1933).

More recent attention to women's leadership came in 1963, when Gov Bill Guy established the ND Commission on the Status of Women by Executive Order. **The Commission became the vehicle for women's leadership for several decades to come, and the original goals included putting forward qualified women to serve on boards and commissions.**

In 1965, the Governor's Council

on Human Resources was established by statute, but a commission on women was not included. There was a major effort on the part of women's groups to reactivate the Commission and include it in the Governor's Council. Funding was requested for the '73-'75 biennium. This was controversial, and there was a move to eliminate the Commission entirely by proposing to establish a "Commission on Men" and also to take out the statutory reference to "other committees with related interests to human resources." However, the Commission on Women survived and became very active in a variety of efforts throughout the 1970s-1990s.

In 2004, the current North Dakota Women's Network was launched. The public announcement of its reactivation coincided with the release of the national Institute for Women's Policy Research document entitled "The Status of Women in North Dakota." The Institute published similar documents on every state in the Union. That document indicated that ND was 2nd in the nation in women turning out to vote, although we were 40th in terms of women elected to public office in 2004 (now 45th).

In the framework of the past, the question begs to be asked: "Why should there be new attention drawn to women's place in our North Dakota community in 2012? Can't women do anything they want to if they have the ambition and skills to do it? Is anything still holding us back?"

Some measures indicate we are not there yet. And now is the perfect time in this state to surge ahead with defining what the "there" might look like and how we might keep moving toward a place which is richer, more productive, safer, and more sustainable for the next

generations. **For all who value participatory democracy, inclusiveness has to be a shared value.**

We should act now, in all kinds of ways, **first because we can.** We are fortunate to be able to act out of an environment of abundance right now in North Dakota. We would not be acting out of desperation, but with bold creativity to break some of the old molds, to search out what John Kennedy articulated and Governor Guy reiterated when he established the first Commission on the Status of Women, "the prejudices and outmoded customs" which continue to hold women back from full participation in our society.

And secondly, we must act now **because we must.** North Dakota is in the midst of significant, serious change. We hear much talk of the urgent need to attend to the physical infrastructure of the western half of our state. I would submit that we must pay equal attention to the social infrastructure of our state, the fabric of our families and the well being of our state's children. Women need to be a part of building and maintaining that infrastructure. After all, they comprise half of our citizenry. We need to be intentional about how we include women of all classes, races, educational, and cultural backgrounds, because inclusion and diversity do not happen by accident or by osmosis. Supporting, encouraging the diversity of all state boards and commissions is a relatively simple, realistic place to start. Too much is at stake for us to delay, and we have ample evidence that it is a prudent and productive choice.

North Dakota has a rich history of integrating women into the leadership of our state.

NDWN Annual Meeting and Woman of the Year Celebration

September 29th at the Kelly Inn in Bismarck, ND

Register to attend at our website: www.ndwomen.org

**Annual Meeting and Conference: 1pm-5pm
North Dakota Women: Past, Present, and Future**

Featuring: Coline Jenkins, Linda Johnson Wurtz, Lorraine Davis, and The Group that Opened the Box.

Woman of The Year Celebrating Connie Hildebrand

**5pm-6pm: Social
6pm-9pm: Celebration Dinner**



NDWN's 2012 Woman of the Year Connie Hildebrand

Connie Hildebrand—NDWN's 2012 Woman of the Year

Kathi Osteen

In 2007 the ND Women's Network began what we hope will be a very long tradition – honoring a Woman of the Year. We start the process early in the year, putting out the word across the state seeking nominations. The board collects and sorts through all the nominations received, then we take the first vote by secret ballot. Most years it takes more than one vote for the final candidate to emerge. So many great nominations come in – one year we even had a group of women nominated! It's a wonderful process and that final candidate knows she has been nominated and selected by her peers who recognize not only her work that year, but her work up to that point and her accomplishments not yet

achieved. As you look at our growing list of Women of the Year, you will see what I mean: 2007, Ellen Chaffee; 2008, Bonnie Palecek; 2009, Nancy Johnson; 2010, Cheryl Bergian; and 2011, Judy DeMers. **Now we add another name to this illustrious group, the 2012 Woman of the Year – Connie Hildebrand.** If you know Connie, you know she'll fit in well with this group of women and the ND Women's Network is honored to be part of acknowledging Connie for all she has done. Connie is a dynamo working tirelessly for women, for their rights, their needs, seeking justice and equality for each one, never settling for less, she goes the full distance. Connie is energetic and it suits her, she has a great sense of humor, is a world traveler, well read, and is

someone thoroughly engaged in living life. She's fun to be around and her laugh is infectious.

If you know Connie send her a note to congratulate her on this honor or better yet, come celebrate this event with us and Connie's friends and family on September 29th in Bismarck at the Kelly Inn. It's going to be a fun evening with some special guests and Connie's friends sharing stories about the Connie they know. We'd love to have you join us. You can contact the ND Women's Network for reservations.

In honoring Connie and the other women in this group, the ND Women's Network also honors and acknowledges all women and their efforts to level the playing field for all of us.

Connie is a dynamo working tirelessly for women

The North Dakota Women's Network is made possible through the generous support of the Chambers Family Fund and member support.

Women's History comes to North Dakota

The North Dakota Women's Network is extremely pleased to announce the upcoming visit of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's great-great granddaughter, Coline Jenkins carries on a long family tradition of women's activism. She is coming to North Dakota as part of the Women's Network annual meeting on September 29, 2012. Her family's story will surely inspire any listener.



A brief biography of Coline Jenkins

The great, great granddaughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Coline Jenkins is a legislator, author and television producer. Through the years, she has used her talents to inspire both awareness and pride in women's history. Coline is co-founder and president of the

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Trust, a collection of 3,000 objects of women's suffrage memorabilia that has been lent to museum exhibits, book publishers, documentary film producers, presidential libraries, popular magazines, television programs (both domestic and international) and Congressional testimony. The Trust's lending practice fulfills its mission: To preserve the history of the women's rights movement, to educate the public on this history, and to promote the advancement of women's rights.

Coline firmly believes equality is attainable.

Ms. Jenkins is a resident of Greenwich, Connecticut, where for twenty years she has served as a municipal legislator. She co-authored a book, *33 Things Every Girl Should Know about Women's History*, and produced the television documentary, *An American Revolution: Women Take*

Their Place. Her 2009 testimony before the U.S. Senate contributed to the passage of federal legislation creating a national trail of historic sites, coordinated by the Women's Rights National Historical Park.



Ms. Jenkins comes from a long line of women activists. In addition to her great, great grandmother Elizabeth Cady Stanton, her great grandmother Harriot Stanton Blatch, worked as a major organizer of New York State women's suffrage during the Militant Period of 1913-1915. Jenkins' mother was born one month prior to the passage of the 19th Amendment of the U. S. Constitution in 1920. Jenkins grew up in an atmosphere of suffrage and women's rights campaigning. She firmly believes equality is attainable.

Feminist First Friday takes Root in Minnesota*

Kathy Magnuson

Minnesotans might like to think we are a more progressive state than North Dakota, but Pauline Wahl would disagree. She has taken on the task of helping Minnesota catch up.

"I moved to Minnesota from North Dakota," she explained. "I had no friends here and started looking for people and groups ... all the people I got to know shied away from discussing issues. I didn't realize that my thoughts were so much different than a lot of the people I worked with until I started asking questions and bringing up issues. Women seem so shy to talk about issues that might cause them to disagree with each other and so those issues

didn't come up a lot."

Undaunted in her search for connections, she started going to political candidate forums but found them pretty empty. She joined a national women's organization that claimed to have a Wright County chapter near her home, but found none. She felt that another women's group in her area was just a junior version of the partner men's organization.

"I just decided that I would start inviting the women I knew to come out and get together," Wahl said. She asked the director of the North Dakota Women's Network she had belonged to if she could copy their name and format of Feminist First Friday. With a green light from them she was on her

way.

Her idea launched in spring of 2010 and after a break in the summer, it began rolling in the fall.

"There should be a place for women to get together and discuss issues without someone else telling them what they should think. A lot of women don't know where to go for information on issues that would affect their lives or their daughters' or sons' lives," Wahl stated.

There are no dues or required meetings for Feminist First Friday, which meets in a local bar and restaurant. "There is no responsibility other than being responsible for yourself and your community. I think it's the simplest thing ever," Wahl said.

You can see, hear and meet Coline on September 29th in Bismarck, ND at the Kelly Inn Register to attend at our website: www.ndwomen.org

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*Reprinted with Permission (Full article at: womenspress.com)

North Dakota Feminist First Fridays are at Minerva's in the Kelly Inn in Bismarck at 5:00pm and the Radisson's Perspectives Lounge in Fargo at 5:30pm.



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Return Service Requested

NDWN Membership Information

Name: _____ Organization (if applicable): _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: __ Zip: _____
 Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Individual membership:

- \$10 Student Membership
- \$30 Standard Individual Membership
- \$31-\$199 MOVER Level Membership
- \$200-\$499 SHAKER Level Membership
- \$500+ EQUALITY MAKER Level Membership
- A financial contribution isn't possible at this time but count me as a member.

Organization membership (based on operating budget):

- \$100 for a budget under \$100,000
- \$150 for a budget between \$100,000 and \$500,000
- \$200 for a budget over \$500,000

Your membership contribution to NDWN: \$ _____
 Additional donation to NDWN: \$ _____
 Total enclosed: \$ _____

I support the mission of the North Dakota Women's Network and commit to the common purposes of NDWN to achieve full equality for women.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Make checks payable to **North Dakota Women's Network**. Memberships are requested on an annual basis. Send to:
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