

## A Look Ahead

### Friday, January 9, 2004

**12:00 noon**

(lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)

Note date change

First Friday, Sons of Norway,

722 2nd Ave N, Fargo

#### *Panel Discussion on Community-Based Services for People with Mental Illness.*

Presenters: Donna Baker-Lakeland Mental Health; Nancy McKenzie-SouthEast Human Services Center; and Susan Helgeland-Mental Health Association of North Dakota.

### Monday, January 19, 2004

**7:00 PM**

Fargo Public Library Meeting Room,

102 3rd St N, Fargo

#### *The North Dakota Presidential Preference Caucuses on February 3rd . What Does Your Vote Mean?*

### Tuesday, February 3, 2004

#### *Presidential Preference Caucuses in North Dakota*

Fargo-West Fargo Democratic-NPL caucuses will be held at the Ramada Plaza Suites in Fargo, from 2-7 PM. The times and places for the Republican caucuses will be announced

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.

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.

### Friday, February 6, 2004

**12:00 noon**

(lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)

First Friday, Sons of Norway,

722 2nd Ave N, Fargo

#### *The United Nations-Its Role Today.*

### Saturday, February 28, 2004

**9:00-10:30 AM**

Moorhead City Hall Council Chambers

#### *Legislative Meeting featuring the Legislators from the Clay County area.*

### Sunday, March 7, 2004

**7:00 PM**

Hjemkomst Heritage Center, Moorhead, MN

#### *Fargo Moorhead Commiversity-Freedom Lecture: The US Patriot Act and other post 9/11 issues*

Presented by Professor C. Peter Erlinder of the William Mitchell College of Law



## *Minnesota Legislative Forums*

The League, along with the Chamber of Commerce and Moorhead Community Education, are planning two legislative meetings during the 2004 Minnesota Legislative session. The first will be Saturday, February 28th and the other will be Saturday, April 3. Both meetings will be held from 9-10:30 a.m. in the Moorhead City Hall Council Chambers.

This is an opportunity for constituents to find out what is happening in St. Paul. State Senator Keith Langseth and Representatives Morrie Lanning and Paul Marquart will report on what they see as the key actions of the Legislature and will then respond to audience questions.

## *Women at Work -- in North Dakota Communities*

The AAUW-ND (American Association of University Women) and the LWVRRV will be partnering at the AAUW-ND State Convention on April 16-17, 2004 at the North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton, ND.

There will be several different speakers and workshops at this convention. They will focus on the many challenges that women face in the workplace in today's rapidly changing world.

More details about this convention and the League's part in it will be in upcoming issues of the Voter.

## *New Americans' Day*

On November 10, 2003, the LWVRRV, along with the People's Diversity Forum and the City of Fargo, put on a New Americans' Day at Fargo City Hall.

The participants toured City Hall, and met with Mayor Furness and City Commissioners Jean Rayl and Thomas Lane. They also met with the Fargo Police Chief, Chris Magnus and with other police officers.

About fifteen persons attended. Some were New Americans and others were people who work with refugees in the community. Those who submitted evaluation forms indicated that they found the program interesting and informative. Many said that they would come to such events in the future, since they would like to learn more about other parts of local government, such as the court system.

## *Board Briefs*

At the November 2003 meeting of the League Board, a date and location were set for the 2004 Annual meeting. It will be held on Saturday, March 27, at 10:00 AM, at PD's on First restaurant. There was discussion of the need to have better publicity and attendance at First Friday meetings. It was decided that we should continue to send out postcard reminders.

The Silent Auction that was held in conjunction with the December First Friday meeting took in \$579. The Board decided to hold such an event again next year, and to try to make it more profitable by collecting a larger amount of items to sell.

## *A Local League position and the FargoDome Authority Hold Ticket Controversy*

At its 2002 Annual Meeting, the LWVRRV adopted a position on local boards and commissions. Among other suggestions, the position contains the following statements:

The League believes that our cities should help strengthen the effectiveness and integrity of its boards and commissions through:

- Training sessions for new members on board policies, procedures and ethics.

- Publishing a code of ethics for board/commission members to follow.

The city of Fargo has had an official ethics policy in place for several years. This policy applies to board and commission members as well as city employees. However, at the November 10, 2003 City Commission meeting, there was discussion whether this ethics policy had been violated by members of the FargoDome Authority in regards to "hold tickets" to Dome events. The management contractor for the FargoDome, Global Spectrum, had been making "hold tickets" available to some to current and former members of the FargoDome Authority, and this practice appeared to violate several provisions of Fargo's ethics policy. There was some uncertainty about whether all current board members were fully aware of this code of ethics and of the fact that it applied to them. This month, as a result of this controversy, all appointed boards in Fargo have met with Mayor Furness, and each member was asked to read and review the ethics policy.

## *3rd Annual Building Racially Inclusive Communities Conference*

### **May 6-8, Holiday Inn, Fargo**

This conference will be hosted by The Upper Midwest Regional Network of Race Relations and Racial Justice Organizations.

Conference topics include: anti-racism training and assessment tools, human rights and racial justice, outreach to immigrant and refugee communities, regional "best practices: in anti-racism work, youth-led anti-racism projects, faith-based anti-racism initiatives.

For more information contact Mary Davies (marbob7@aol.com).

## *News from the League of Women Voters of the United States*

### *Did You Know?*

Among all voting-age people, women have voted at a higher rate than men in every presidential election since 1984. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 61% percent of voting-eligible women cast a ballot in the last presidential election, compared with 58 percent of their male counterparts.

## *The People Speak: America Debates Its Role in the World*

The LWV-US has joined the United Nations Foundation as part of an alliance of national organizations in a public education campaign entitled, "The People Speak: America Debates its Role in the World." The objective is to facilitate a national discussion of foreign policy issues. Leagues in selected areas will be asked to cosponsor these dialogues this fall.

## *League Targets Young Voters with Smackdown Your Vote!*

The LWV-US, in partnership with World Wrestling Entertainment's (WWE) and others, aims to get 2,000,000 more 18-to-30-year-olds to vote in 2004 through the Smackdown Your Vote! (SYV!) Two Million More in 2004 campaign. Check to see if there is an event near you at: <http://www.wwe.com/liveevents/calendar/>. Contact [jsenecal@lww.org](mailto:jsenecal@lww.org) for more information.

## *Local League to sponsor educational session about upcoming Presidential Preference caucuses*

Four years ago the Republican candidates for the Presidential nomination were flooding North Dakota with information. This year the Democratic candidates are doing the same. These high profile candidates hope to influence the votes of the people attending the party precinct caucus meetings on Tuesday February 3, 2004.

North Dakota is one of seven states holding caucuses or primaries on February 3rd. This date is early enough in the primary season that most of the announced candidates will still be in the running for the eventual party nominations. That means that the results of the party caucuses in North Dakota are important to these candidates, in terms of momentum and bragging rights.

These caucus meetings are strictly party events, no independent candidates will be considered. The State of North Dakota, through the office of the Secretary of State, has set the date for the Presidential Preference Caucuses and left the rest of the work to the individual parties, Republican or Democrat. Both parties will use this date to gather together party members and conduct other party business. There may be presentations from the Presidential campaigns. Candidates for other offices and ND State officials will address the caucuses. Each party will decide how to handle the Presidential Preference votes. These votes must all be recorded and results released to the public.

Any North Dakota citizen who is at least 18 years old may vote. A voter may participate in the caucus for either the Democratic-NPL or Republican Party. The citizen must affirm that he or she voted for that party in the last general election or plans to vote for that party in the next election.

This is a new and confusing process, especially for the person who is involved in party politics for the first time. Many of these new people are supporters of a particular Presidential candidate. Unless they understand what steps they must take to make the vote for their candidate count, they may be frustrated and unhappy. The LWV of the Red River Valley will be having an informational meeting on the Presidential Preference Caucuses in the Fargo Public Library on Monday January 19, at 7:00 PM. Representatives of both political parties and representatives from Cass County government will be present. These representatives will make short presentations and answer questions.

## Presidential Candidates Urged to Sign Campaign Pledge

Along with other public interest organizations, the League of Women Voters of the US urged all candidates running for the presidency to commit to fixing the presidential public financing system.

"The presidential financing system has served the country and candidates well during its existence... We believe the system is in serious danger of collapse for future elections unless it is repaired... In order to help build faith in the political process and breathe greater meaning into the principle of "one-person, one-vote," comprehensive strengthening of the presidential financing system is needed."

This is an example of the pledge that all candidates for President were urged to sign:

### *Presidential Candidate's Pledge To Reduce the Role of Special Interest Money in Presidential Elections*

#### **Preamble**

I recognize that the most effective means for preserving the integrity of our electoral process, reducing undue special interest influence over officeholders and creating a fair playing field for qualified candidates is public financing of elections. I also recognize that the soft money ban enacted in 2002 is an essential prerequisite to having an effective and meaningful presidential public financing system and that now we must repair this system. Public financing for candidates seeking the office of the Presidency has been a landmark system for our democracy since the Watergate scandals, and it is vital that we restore this system for the future.

#### **Pledge**

I pledge to preserve the integrity of Presidential elections and the office of the Presidency by making reform of the presidential public financing system a priority for my Administration and by working to promptly enact legislation that would:

Provide qualified candidates with public financing necessary to wage meaningful and competitive campaigns without having to rely on wealthy contributors.

Allow candidates to spend more time communicating with voters by providing qualified candidates with public financing much earlier in the election season.

Supply additional public funds to match excessive spending by non-participating candidates.

Promote full participation by presidential candidates in the public financing system by appreciably increasing funding for an expanded program.

Require a candidate at the outset either to opt in or out of the entire public financing system for both the primary and general elections.

I agree that by restoring the presidential public financing system, we will help insure that those seeking the Presidency are free from the constraints of special interest funding. In our democracy, no candidate who seeks to represent all Americans should have to depend on wealthy contributors to be elected President.

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*Pledge Sponsored By: Common Cause, Democracy 21, League of Women Voters, Public Campaign, Public Citizen, USPIRG*

### *Join the League*

Send your check to the League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley, PO Box 295, Fargo, ND 58107

Current annual dues:

\$45/individual

\$67.50/household

\$15/student.

Be sure to include your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address.

### *Voter Feedback Wanted!*

Please fill out this form and mail it to the

LWVRRV  
PO Box 295  
Fargo, ND 58107

or e-mail the editor:  
csawicki@corpcomm.net

As a LWVRRV member and a reader of the Voter,  
I am interested in:

- Articles about recent League events, i.e. First Fridays, candidates' forums, etc.
- News about LWV-US events
- News about LWV-US positions
- News about local League members
- Observer Corps articles (which local government meetings in particular?)
- Listings of upcoming events
- Other (please list as many as you wish!)