

A Look Ahead

Thursday May 6 – Saturday May 8

Holiday Inn, Fargo

3rd Annual Building Racially Inclusive Communities Conference

Hosted by the Upper Midwest Regional Network of Race Relations and Racial Justice Organizations

For more information or to volunteer at this conference, contact Mary Davies at 233-2175 or by e-mail at marbob7@aol.com.

Friday May 7, 2004

12:00 noon

(lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)

First Friday, Sons of Norway,

722 2nd Ave N, Fargo

The Status of Women in the Fargo-Moorhead Area & the Role of the Women's Fund

Speakers: Representatives of the Fargo Moorhead Area Foundation's Women's Fund and the role of the Women's Fund.

Wednesday May 19, 2004

West Fargo City Hall Commission Chamber,

800 4th Ave E, West Fargo

West Fargo School Board Candidates' Forum

6:45-7:45 PM

West Fargo City Commission & Park Board Candidates Forum- 8:00 PM

(Sponsored by the League and the West Fargo Chamber of Commerce)

Thursday May 27, 2004

Fargo City Commission Chamber,

200 3rd St N, Fargo

Fargo City Commission Candidates' Forum

5:30-6:45 PM

Cass County Commission Candidates' Forum

7:00-7:45 PM

(Sponsored by the League and the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce)

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.

Thursday June 3, 2004

Fargo City Commission Chamber,

200 3rd St N, Fargo

Fargo School Board Candidates' Forum

5:30-6:30 PM

Fargo Park Board Candidates' Forum

6:45-7:45 PM

(Sponsored by the League and the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce)

Tuesday June 8, 2004

7 AM-9 PM

North Dakota Primary Elections

Cass County Area Local Elections

LWVRRV Annual Meeting

The 2004 League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley Annual Meeting and brunch was held on March 27, 2004 at PD's on First in Fargo.

At this meeting the following local program for 2004-2005 was adopted:

A study of fees and costs charged to public school students in Fargo, West Fargo and Moorhead, and how they impact students and their families

The scheduled speaker for this meeting, Gabriel Aher, was unable to attend. There were two excellent impromptu presentations by persons present at the meeting.

Diane Briggs, who has known Gabe Aher for several years, gave a short talk describing some of the challenges and experiences that Gabe had faced in his life. He was separated from his family in the Sudan at the age of 10 and spent many years wandering through northern Africa as a part of a large group of boys. Many of his companions perished during the journey, but Gabe survived and finally settled in Fargo. He is now a college student, and would like one day to return to his homeland, as an American citizen who would be able to use his knowledge to help his former country and its people. He has regained contact with family members who are still living in the Sudan, and he has been sending them some of the small amount of money that he has to live on.

Jean Hannig, a candidate for District Court Judge in East Central Judicial District of North Dakota, spoke about the statutory qualifications and restrictions that apply to those running for that office. Since judicial candidates are not allowed to answer many of the questions that might be posed in a candidates' forum, due to these restrictions, the League has rarely conducted such forums. An explanation of the qualifications and restrictions is printed below. Although this explanation applies specifically to North Dakota, similar rules apply in Minnesota.

North Dakota Primary Election, June 8, 2004

On June 8th, 2004 from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM a Primary Election will be held in Cass County, North Dakota. The ballot will be very complicated. If you vote in person at your neighborhood precinct, you will need to be sure which school district and township you are in and which candidates you can vote for. Rachael Disrud and I, Lois Altenburg, presented a Brown Bag Seminar at NDSU in April to discuss the Primary Election Ballots in Cass County. The audience was surprised at the number of choices voters will have in this election.

Four people are running for three county commission seats. Senate and House candidates are running as Republicans and Democrats in districts 20, 22, 44 and 46. Several cities in Cass County, including Fargo and West Fargo, have elections for City Commission or Council, Park Board, School Board and special measures. State races will include both partisan and non-partisan races. Municipal judges are on some ballots and several candidates will be on the ballots for three different East Central District Judgeships. As in every primary election, your vote in partisan contests will be discarded if you cross party lines. Sample ballots from Cass County will be available for your perusal at the LWV First Friday meeting on May 7. Ballots will also be available for study at the Cass County Auditor's office and in the newspapers. June 8th at dawn will be the first Transit of Venus in 122 years.

Grab your eclipse glasses and come join the FM Astronomy Club for a view before you go to vote!
Lois Altenburg
Volunteers Needed for Candidates' Forums

Many volunteers are needed to help the Voter Service chairs conduct Candidates' Forums this spring. If you would like to participate in this important League activity, please contact Jackie Brodshaug in West Fargo at 277-0077, or Rachael Disrud in Fargo at 293-1505.

North Dakota Constitutional and Statutory Qualifications for Judicial Office

A judge for election in the East Central Judicial District must possess the following qualifications:

must be a citizen of the United States
must be a resident in one of the counties included within the East Central Judicial District (Cass, Traill, and Steele counties comprise the judicial district)
must be learned in the law
must be admitted to the bar of the State of North Dakota by the North Dakota Supreme Court
must have a current license to practice law issued by the Board of Law Examiners

In addition to the qualifications above, it is desirable for a judge to possess:

a high degree of legal knowledge and ability
good judicial temperament
good experience in areas of the law that come before the district court
good moral character
good writing ability

Restrictions on Judicial Candidates under the North Dakota Code of Judicial Conduct

The Preamble to the Code of Judicial Conduct states:

Our legal system is based on the principle that an independent, fair, and competent judiciary will interpret and apply the laws that govern us. The role of the judiciary is central to American concepts of justice and the rule of law. Intrinsic to all sections of this Code are the precepts that judges individually and collectively, must respect and honor the judicial office as a public trust and strive to enhance and maintain confidence in our legal system. The judge is an arbiter of facts and law for the resolution of disputes and a highly visible symbol of government under the rule of law.

Canon 1 states:

An independent and honorable judiciary is indispensable to justice in our society. A judge should participate in establishing, maintaining and enforcing high standards of conduct and shall personally serve those standards so that the integrity and independence of the judiciary will be preserved. The provisions of this Code are to be construed and applied to further that objective.

Canon 5 states:

Section A provides that candidates for judicial office shall maintain the dignity appropriate to the judicial office and act in a manner consistent with the integrity and independence of the judiciary

This section also provides that candidates for judicial office shall not:

- (1) act as a leader or hold an office in a political organization or be a delegate to a political convention;
- (2) publicly endorse or publicly oppose another candidate for public office;
- (3) seek or accept an endorsement or letter of support from a political party;
- (4) solicit funds for, pay an assessment to or make a contribution to a political organization or candidate; or
- (5) purchase tickets for and attend political gatherings (except as permitted under section C);
- (6) make pledges or promises of conduct in office other than the faithful and impartial performance of the duties of the office;
- (7) make statements that commit or appear to commit the candidate with respect to cases, controversies or issues that are likely to come before the court; or
- (8) knowingly misrepresent the identity, qualifications, present position or other fact concerning the candidate or opponent;

Section C provides that a candidate for judicial office may:

- (1) at any time publicly speak on behalf of his/her own candidacy whether or not at a gathering sponsored by a political organization;
- (2) at any time speak on behalf of measures to improve the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice, whether or not at a gathering sponsored by a political organization;
- (3) appear in newspaper, television, and other media advertisements supporting his/her candidacy;
- (4) distribute pamphlets and other media advertisements supporting his or her candidacy;
- (5) publicly endorse or publicly oppose other candidates for the same judicial office in a public election in which the judicial candidate is running

Section C also provides prohibitions on candidates concerning campaign activities and campaign contributions

a candidate shall not personally solicit or accept campaign contributions or personally solicit publicly stated support.

A candidate may, however, establish committees of responsible persons to conduct campaigns for the candidate through media advertisements, brochures, mailings, candidate forums and other means not prohibited by law. Such committees may solicit and accept reasonable campaign contributions, manage the expenditure of funds for the candidate's campaign and obtain public statements of support for his/her candidacy. Such committees are not prohibited from soliciting and accepting reasonable campaign contributions and public support from lawyers.

Volunteers and Facilitators Needed

LWVMN has asked if any of our League members could volunteer to be table facilitators at the 3rd Annual Building Racially Inclusive Community Conference. Facilitators are needed to lead table discussions on video clips that will be shown following dinner on Friday, May 7, at the Fargo Holiday Inn. The video is part of the New Americans series shown recently on PPTV. The session is from 6-9 PM and your dinner will be provided. People attending the conference are from MN, WI, ND, SD and IA.

Also, volunteers are needed to help with registration, odd jobs, etc. throughout the conference that runs from Thurs. evening, May 7 (reception) through noon on Saturday, May 8.

If you can help, call Mary Davies, 233-2175 or email at marBob7@aol.com

There are some wonderful sessions you can attend if you volunteer.

Board Briefs

At the February 2004 meeting of the League Board, final preparations were made for the 2004 Annual meeting. It will be held on Saturday, March 27, at 10:00 AM, at PD's on First restaurant. A mailing will be sent out shortly containing all relevant information.

March For Women's Lives

On Sunday, April 25, 2004, approximately one million people participated in the March For Women's Lives in Washington, D.C. The League of Women Voters of the United States was one of the cosponsoring organizations for this march. In January of 1983, the League announced the following Statement of Position on Public Policy on Reproductive Choices:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

The March was well covered by the national media, but as a participant, I'd like to comment on some of my own observations.

The marchers were an extremely diverse group, in terms of race, religious background and sexual orientation. Men and women of all ages were there, including many multigenerational families marching together. The groups intermingled. Many of the organizations had created cleverly designed signs and buttons, and they freely passed them out to any marcher who wanted one.

The emphasis of the March was not only about the protection of abortion rights in the United States, but also about all aspects of women's health care and access to such care.

Although there was, of course, a great deal of sentiment expressed against the current presidential administration, there were participants from all political parties. Many speakers emphasized the importance of voting and of getting everyone involved in the political process at all levels.

For me, the most moving part of the experience was not really the March itself, but seeing and talking with people before and after the March. The women and men from all over the country, riding on the Metro, eating in restaurants and all wearing buttons and tee-shirts proclaiming that they were part of this movement. An unwritten law in large cities is to never interact with people you don't know, but this law was being ignored in Washington that weekend.

Carol Sawicki

Support the SAFE Act, S. 1709

February 26, 2004

The League believes that the SAFE Act would preserve broad authority for law enforcement officials to combat terrorism. At the same time, it would protect innocent Americans from unrestricted government surveillance.

TO: Members of the U.S. Senate
FROM: Kay J. Maxwell, President-LWVUS
RE: Support the SAFE Act, S. 1709

The League of Women Voters believes that basic civil liberties must be preserved and protected as the nation seeks to guard against terrorism and other threats to national security. We therefore ask that you support and sponsor S. 1709, the SAFE Act (Security and Freedom Ensured Act of 2003), sponsored by Senator Larry Craig (R ID) and Senator Richard Durbin (D IL).

For the past 84 years, members of the League have been steadfast in their conviction that the need to protect against security threats to America must be balanced with the need to preserve the very liberties that are the foundation of this country. There are fundamental principles that guard our liberty -- from independent judicial review of law enforcement actions to prohibitions on indiscriminate searches -- that must be preserved.

League members are particularly concerned about the impact of the Patriot Act, passed hurriedly by Congress in 2001. The proposed SAFE Act would address some of the most problematic provisions of the Patriot Act.

The new legislation would limit so-called "sneak and peek" searches, which allow secret warrants, to specific instances where there is a risk of flight or danger to life or physical safety. The SAFE Act would also increase reporting on the use of "sneak and peek" searches, thereby allowing for more meaningful oversight on the use of such searches.

In addition, S. 1709 would limit law enforcement requests for business records by requiring evidence that the records relate to a foreign power or an agent of a foreign power, and are not merely part of a "fishing expedition." Finally, the SAFE Act would extend the sunset provisions of the Patriot Act to include the sections on "sneak and peek" warrants and national security letters.

These are challenging times for all Americans. We recognize that there are real and serious terrorist threats. The League believes that the SAFE Act would preserve broad authority for law enforcement officials to combat terrorism. At the same time, it would protect innocent Americans from unrestricted government surveillance.

The League of Women Voters urges you to sponsor and support S. 1709.

2003-2004 LWVRRV Officers

President	Janet VanAmburg
First Vice President	(open)
Second Vice President	Lois Altenburg
Secretary	Erin Prochnow
Treasurer	Suzanne Dobbins

Board of Directors:
Nicole Bergeron, Peggy Jensen, Cindy Maritato,
Margaret Blue, Rachael Disrud, Lynne Olson, Sawicki

Nominating Committee (2005-2006)
Suzanne Dobbins, Audrey Richmond, Donna Chalimonczyk

The Board of Directors may appoint up to six additional directors to one-year terms.

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:

\$45.00	/individual
\$67.50	/household
\$15.00	/student

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

