



RRV VOTER

FEB.
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2007

A look ahead...

GUESTS are always welcome at League meetings!

Friday, January 26, 2007 3—8 p.m.
Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM)

**Conference—Confronting Controversy:
Finding Common Ground**
See article on page 2 for more information on this conference.

First Friday, February 2, 2007 12:00 noon
Lunch available beginning at 11:30 a.m.
Sons of Norway, 722 2nd Ave N, Fargo


**The History of the League of Women Voters
in the Red River Valley**

Speakers: Katherine Rogne & Bea Arett will talk about their experiences at the beginnings of the local League units in the early 1950s

First Friday, March 2, 2007 12 noon
Lunch available beginning at 11:30 a.m.
Sons of Norway, 722 2nd Ave N, Fargo

League of Women Voters study on Immigration Issues

Saturday, March 3, 2007 10 a.m.—noon
Mosaic Foods, 69 4th St. N., Fargo
LWVRRV ANNUAL MEETING

 **The official notification and program for this meeting will be mailed to all LWVRRV members during the month of February.**

Legislative Forums

See page 2 for more information

Saturday, February 3, 2007 9—11 a.m. Fargo
City Commission Chamber, 200 3rd St. N.

Fargo area legislators
Sponsors: LWV & the FM Chamber of Commerce

Saturday, February 10, 2007 9—11 a.m. Fargo
City Commission Chamber, 200 3rd St. N. **Fargo**

area legislators
Sponsors: LWV & the FM Chamber of Commerce

Saturday, March 3, 2007 10 a.m.—noon
West Fargo High School

West Fargo legislators
Sponsor: West Fargo Chamber of Commerce

Saturday, March 10, 2007 9 a.m.—11 a.m.
Fargo City Commission Chamber, 200 3rd St. N.

Fargo legislators
Sponsors: LWV & the Fargo Chamber of Commerce

Saturday, March 24, 2007 9 a.m.—11 a.m.
Fargo City Commission Chamber, 200 3rd St. N.

Fargo legislators
Sponsors: LWV & the Fargo Chamber of Commerce

Saturday, March 24, 2007 10 a.m.—noon
West Fargo High School

West Fargo legislators
Sponsor: West Fargo Chamber of Commerce

Help Wanted – at the League Legislative Forums

Volunteers are needed to help the Voter Service committee conduct Legislative Forums in both Fargo & Moorhead. If you would like to participate in this important League activity, at any one of these forums, please contact Amy Jacobson at 701-261-4858 or ajacobson@ppmns.org

These forums are free and open to the public. The panelists will answer questions that have been submitted by the audience, so we please help make them a success by attending and participating.

Join the League!

Individual — \$45.00

Household— \$67.50

Student— \$15.00

Send your check to:

League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley
PO Box 295, Fargo, ND 58107

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

Applause for the League from our newest board member

I will never vote again without attending the League's candidate forums. The forums helped me become a more informed citizen by introducing me to candidates and it gave a platform to ask them about the issues I care about in my community. This time, when it came time for me to vote I knew I was selecting the best candidates for office. Before that, I was blindly choosing an unknown candidate.

— Amy Baker

January 26 conference information

Local students from Concordia, NDSU, and MSUM are hosting the upcoming conference: **Confronting Controversy: Finding Common Ground**. This year's conference will explore such issues as, women in the military, human rights, and women's sexual health and safety. While these can be controversial subjects, they are all issues that women of the Fargo-Moorhead community deal with regularly. The students hope to organize a conference where these issues may be openly discussed in a respectful manner. Panelists will discuss areas of common ground for each topic. Deputy Mayor of Fargo, Linda Coates is scheduled to be this year's keynote speaker.

Confronting Controversy: Finding Common Ground will take place on January 26th at Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) from 3pm - 8pm. If you would like more information on the conference, please visit the conference website www.womeninaction2007.net. You may also register to attend or donate to the organization at this address:

Women in Action Tri-College University
North Dakota State University
Downtown Campus, 650 NP Ave #110
PO Box 5630, Fargo, ND 58105

**Women in Action is a non-profit 501c3 organization.*

2005-2006 LWVRRV Officers

President:	Amy Jacobson
First Vice President	Carol Sawicki
Second Vice President	Mary Tintes
Secretary	Alberta Dobry
Treasurer	Diane Briggs

Board of Directors

Amy Baker, Margaret Blue, Barb Headrick, Lynne Olson, Sherri Seeba and Carol Zielinski.

Fargo Area Legislative Forums

The League, along with the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce, will sponsor four legislative forums during the 2007 North Dakota legislative session. They will be held on Saturdays, from 9:00 AM-11:00 AM in the Fargo City Commission Chamber.

The legislators scheduled to participate in each forum are:

February 3 - Sen. Tim Flakoll (44), Sen. Jim Pomeroy (27), Rep. Al Carlson (41), Rep. Jasper Schneider (21), Rep. Kathy Hawken (46)

February 10 - Sen. Tony Grindberg (41), Rep. Mary Ekstrom (11), Rep. Steve Zaiser (21), Rep. Lee Myxter (27), Rep. Jim Kasper (46)

March 10 - Sen. Tom Fischer (46), Sen. Carolyn Nelson (21), Rep. Blair Thoerson (44), Rep. Ed Gruchalla (45), Rep. Scot Kelsh (11)

March 24 - Sen. Tim Mathern (11), Sen. Tom Fiebiger (45), Rep. Don Clark (44), Rep. Bette Grande (41), Rep. Randy Boehning (27), Rep. Rick Berg (45)

This is an opportunity for constituents to find out what is happening in Bismarck. A different group of Cass County legislators will be available at each meeting to answer questions and talk about legislative issues.

Clay County Legislative Forums

The League, along with the Chamber of Commerce and Moorhead Community Education, is planning to hold two legislative meetings on the 2007 Minnesota Legislative session. The schedule for these forums has not yet been finalized, but we expect to hold one in March and one in April.

These will be opportunities 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.

January First Friday

At the January 5th First Friday meeting, Deb White, PhD, from the Dept. of Sociology and Criminal Justice at MSUM spoke on: Women and Public Leadership: Past, Present, and Future. Over thirty people attended and heard Dr. White describe the slow progress that is being made towards the goal of gender equity in government, both in the US and around the world.

Many factors may help produce this inequity, including societal norms, lack of female role models, and the challenge of fund-raising. To help young women in the local area develop the skills that will enable them to run for office and get involved in government, the Tri-College New Leadership Development Institute was created. Each year this Institute hosts a five-day residential program aimed at promoting public and community leadership among women of diverse backgrounds.

The League in North Dakota & the ERA

The League of Women Voters of North Dakota enthusiastically supported the Equal Rights Amendment in the spring of 1972. With other organizations we planned our strategy for presenting the ERA to the ND Legislature for their approval in the spring of 1973. No one we conferred with voiced any objections to the ratification of the ERA. We were confident the ND Legislature would ratify quickly and easily. When the 1973 session ended without ratification we were shocked and dismayed. Immediately, we held a conference of all supporting organizations. We aggressively formulated our battle plan for assuring the ratification of the ERA during the 1975 ND Legislative Session. With a lot of hard work and good organization, we achieved our goal. Unfortunately, we lacked the two states needed to achieve national ratification. As a result of our state ratification, an analysis was made of all laws which referred to women, girls and females. After we reviewed the analysis, the LWV-ND initiated a study of the laws which discriminated against women. We felt we could easily have five of these laws rescinded by the 1977 ND Legislature. With the cooperation of other supporting organizations these five laws were rescinded in 1977. Other laws dealing with domestic property, the value of a homemaker's contribution to marital property and the equitable distribution of property required reconstruction during later legislative sessions.

An event will be held in Bismarck, ND on Friday evening March 9th at 7:00 at Trinity Lutheran's Community Center. The event will commemorate the ratification of the ERA by the ND Legislature and the subsequent effect on discriminating laws. Among the four panelists are Donna Chalimonczyk and Lois Altenburg of the LWV. Further information can be obtained by contacting Renee Stromme of the ND Women's Network, renee@ndwomen.org.

— Lois Altenburg

Consensus Meeting on Immigration Issues

The LWV of Minnesota began a statewide study on Immigration Issues in 1999. An excellent publication, *Immigration in Minnesota*, was published in December, 2002. At the national LWV convention in Minneapolis in June 2006, the LWV of Minnesota won national approval for a three year study of immigration. The LWV of the RRW will begin participation in this study during the First Friday meeting in March and the following day at the annual meeting. At the membership meeting we will come to consensus on the basic issues we wish to study and support.

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.

League Vision, Beliefs and Intentions:

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political membership organization which:

Acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels.

Builds citizen participation in the democratic process

Engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

President's Letter

League President Mary G. Wilson Issues Statement on the First Female Speaker of the House

"The swearing in of the first woman speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, marks another milestone on our path toward a democracy that is truly representative of its citizenry.

"The new Congress has taken its first bold step forward by naming a woman as Speaker of the House—and in doing so has set high expectations for the coming months. To that end, the League challenges Speaker Pelosi and other members of Congress to continue to advance representative government by improving the congressional ethics process, by ensuring D.C. Voting Rights, by taking big money out of campaigns, and by protecting civil liberties.

"I am sure that Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt and the many other courageous suffragists would be incredibly proud to see their pioneering efforts pay off. Yesterday's events, and the ever-increasing diversity of public officials at every level of government, indicate that our democracy can indeed work as our inspiring foremothers knew it could.

"Despite this remarkable and momentous event, though, the early suffragists would say there is still work to be done if we are to reach full equality in this country. A female Speaker is, in many ways, the tip of

the iceberg; in communities everywhere, citizens of different cultural and demographic backgrounds are still not fully represented by their elected officials or the policies they pass. Only the unwavering work of all citizens and community leaders will begin to change this trend.

"Since 1920, League members have worked to empower citizens and shape better communities worldwide. Good government rests on the shoulders of its citizens, and, as such, demands that those citizens have the knowledge, ability and inspiration to act. League members nationwide are dedicated to informing and engaging citizens in 2007 and beyond."

I was planning on writing a LWVRRV President's Letter on the subject of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the changes that I hope will soon come to the workings of our Federal government. When I read this letter by our national League President, I felt that she expressed my feelings in such an elegant way that there was no way that I could write anything else on the subject.

Amy Jacobson, President, League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley

*ajacobson@ppmns.org
701-261-4858*