Red River Valley
Voter
May-June 2002

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A look ahead...
LWV public meetings are held in the Sons of Norway Lodge, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo, in the meeting room behind the cafeteria. Members and guests who wish to go through the buffet line and eat together (in the lodge meeting room), may do so at 11:30 a.m.

May 3, 2002, 2002, Noon-1:00 p.m
First Friday at Sons of Norway .
Covering Local Elections and Politics
Speaker: Lou Ziegler, Editor, *The Forum*

Monday
May 6, 2002 6:30-7:30 p.m.
(Note new day and place)
LWVRRV Board Meeting
Fargo Public Library Meeting Room

May 6, 2002 7:30-9:00 p.m.
LWVRRV Membership Meeting
Fargo Public Library Meeting Room
The United Nations Accords
Leaders: Suzanne Dobbins, Carolyn Bowe and Donna Chalimonczyk

June 137:30-9:00 p.m.
LWVRRV Membership meetings
Fargo Public Library meeting room
Final Presentation of Boards & Commissions Study

July 11, August 157:30-9:00 p.m.
LWVRRV Membership meeting
Fargo Public Library meeting room
Topics: To be announced.

Candidate Forums

Fargo- West Fargo Residents Only

May 9th, 2002 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Fargo Public Library Meeting room
Fargo School Board candidates
Sponsor: Horace Mann Neighborhood Association

May 30, 2002 Beginning 6:00 p.m.
Fargo City Commission room
Fargo Mayoral candidates
Fargo Park Board candidates
Fargo City Commission candidates

June 4, 2002 Beginning 6:00 p.m.
Fargo City Commission Room
Privacy Notification Initiative
Fargo School Mill Levy Issue
Fargo School Board candidates

June 5, 2002
West Fargo Candidates Forums
West Fargo City Hall Chambers
West Fargo Park Board 6:30 p.m.
City Commission 7:40 p.m.

June 6, 2002
West Fargo City Hall Chambers
West Fargo Candidates Forums:
West Fargo School Board 6:30 p.m.
Cass County Commission 7:40 p.m.

June 11, 2002
N. D. PRIMARY ELECTION DAY

The League of Women Voters values diversity in its members. In primicple 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.

From the President

It certainly feels like spring--Finally! Our Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, April 13th and was enjoyed by all who attended. I, along with Jan Van Amburg, will share the role of President for 2002-2003. We look forward to the opportunity to build upon the great work that has been accomplished by so many dedicated Leaguers.

We will continue our two local programs: 1) continuing study of area school operations, with emphasis on planning and 2) study of local Boards and Commissions. We invite your participation. We also have several opportunities to work with Voter Service throughout the year and encourage you to become involved!

Our monthly membership meetings began in April and the May meeting will be held on Monday, May 6th at 7:30 p.m. at the Fargo Public Library Meeting Room. We hope to see all of you there.

On behalf of Janet and myself, thank you for the opportunity to serve the League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley. What an exciting year it will be!

--Janice Jones, Co-President

Board Briefs

At the March 27 Board meeting, Membership Chair Suzanne Dobbins announced plans to hold membership meetings at the Fargo Public Library meeting room once a month. The first meeting was held on April 4 and the meeting room has been reserved for the rest of the year. (See schedule in A Look Ahead.)
Suzanne Dobbins, Carla Hartje and Janet Van Amburg will be delegates to the national League convention in Miami, FL. Their hotel, plane tickets, banquet ticket and registration will be subsidized.
Barbara Headrick and Carolyn Bowe will serve on the program committee for next year's First Friday meetings. It was suggested that one of the summer membership meetings could be a time for brainstorming ideas.
With the June election coming up plans are underway for publicizing the Dnet as a new angle for voters service.

LWVRRV Annual Meeting

The annual meeting was called to order on April 13 following a delicious brunch at the VIP Room in Fargo by retiring President Andrea Sather.
The first order of business was the presentation of awards to three worthy individuals:

- Laudable Leaguer: Kathie Kvalvog, for her extraordinary achievements as Finance Chair
- Learning Leaguer: Barbara Headrick, for her tremendous contributions as program and Voter Service Chair though a relative newcomer to League
- Legendary Leaguer: Mary Davies, for her outstanding and continuing participation in League at the local and Minnesota state levels over many years as well as service on boards and commissions in the community.

After routine business, the attendees were treated to the "hilarious" one-act original play "Our Town," starring the SLBC Players:* Barbara Headrick, Suzanne Dobbins, Mary Davies, Carol Sawicki and Marlene Batterberry. The play featured scenes from "typical?" meetings that might take place among local boards and commissions in our community. It truly lived up to its advertising and provided many laughs.

** Study of Local Boards and Commissions Committee*

League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley Officers 2002-03

Co-Presidents: Julia Jones* and Janet Van Amburg*
Vice President: Barbara Headrick*
Secretary: Mary Davies*
Treasurer: Suzanne Dobbins

Directors:
Marlene Batterberry, Carla Hartje, Margaret Blue,*
Carolyn Bowe,* Helen Rudie,* Carol Sawicki *

Nominating Committee:
Bea Arett, Judy Lee, Lois Ivers Altenburg

Many thanks to retiring directors:
Andrea Sather and Sherbanoo Aziz.

** denotes terms expiring in 2003*

Meet Our New Co-President

Janet Van Amburg
Our newly elected Co-President , Jan Van Amburg has been a member of LWVRRV for more than a year but is not new to the League of Women Voters. In 1972, she read an article in *The Forum* about a meeting which included Mary Davies' name. At that time, Jan was a stay-at-home mom and had been looking for something that would keep her informed and involved in the community and the world. She felt that the League was what she had been looking for: an organization that could help her make a difference in the local community and beyond. She called Mary about membership in the Moorhead League and became active.

Eventually Jan became a mathematics and computer science teacher. Following her retirement nineteen years later, she returned to the by then united Fargo, West Fargo and Moorhead chapter and has been a member of the board for the past two years.

In the meantime, Jan has had the opportunity to travel extensively throughout the United States, England, Wales, Scotland, Europe, Guatamala, Canada and Mexico. Most recently, she spent ten days in Greece. She has also lived in Nigeria for a year and India for four months. She has come to realize that while each country is unique, the people have the same dreams and desires for their life. She never tires of experiencing new cultures.

Jan's favorite hobby is knitting but she is also a quilter. In addition, she is very active in her church, First Presbyterian of Moorhead, where she is an ordained deacon and elder and has been certified as a Stephen Minister. She is also active in Audubon and Nature Conservancy and volunteers at the zoo. We are indeed pleased that she has agreed to become a League leader as well.

Observer Corps

Moorhead Human Right Commission

At the March 19, 2002 meeting, there were eight commissioners present and a public showing of around twelve to fifteen people. After the roll call and open forum for "citizens to be heard," the commission had an in-depth discussion of their Public Safety Recommendations. Originally there were five recommendations, but a sixth was suggested during the meeting and was approved by the whole commission. The new recommendation was that the Moorhead police department should begin submitting an annual report to the city council. These six recommendations will be officially presented on April 1, 2001 by any interested commission members and any of the public serving on the "Citizens Action Team."

A member of the public voiced concern regarding a recent incident at a local Boy Scouts award banquet. The incident involved a young Caucasian boy who dressed up in Native American clothing and used language that seemed to be inappropriate and discriminatory against Native Americans. It seems that the scout involved in this act received a badge for his performance. Commission member Mary Davies will complete a "fact finding" investigation into this matter and will report back to the Human Rights Commission at their next monthly meeting. Meanwhile, an apology on behalf of the city will be sent to the family who first reported the incident. They were in attendance at the award event and left it deeply hurt. Overall, there was healthy discussion among the majority of commission members. It was also encouraging to find that members of the public were asked on several occasions to share their opinions regarding what was being discussed.
--*Colleen Hermann, Observer*

Fargo Schools Update

The first Community Dialogue was considered a success with a turnout of close to 300. In addition, a telephone survey was conducted and almost 200 persons answered the questionnaire on the internet. Responding Fargo citizens seem to favor small school and small class size. They prefer transporting students to schools where there is room to closing schools or building new ones. However, they would like students to travel no more than 1 miles to school in a maximum of 15-30 minutes on a bus. Total results indicate support for a single grade configuration of K-6, 7-9, 10-12 closely followed by K-5, 6-8 and 9-12.
The DeJong Consultants have helped the facilities steering committee prepare five options for planning the schools' use to meet the above specifications. Following further input from the public on April 25, the committee will narrow down the options at May meetings and present a plan to the Board of Education in June.

Fargo Supt. David Flowers and Lowell Wolff invited subscribers to Fargo School Talk on the internet to meet with them for an informal question and answer session on April 17. Following are some of the topics discussed:

Construction:
Dr. Flowers reported that the addition of a gym to Clara Barton School will take place this summer. There had been some discussion at our April 4th membership meeting about the delay in this construction. The two extra classrooms planned at one time will not be built. Other construction at Ben Franklin and North High is on schedule.

School Finance:
When asked about finances for the schools, Dr. Flowers replied that the switch of medical facilities to non-profit status will have a harmful impact on school finance--a loss to the general fund of $900,000 from Innovis alone. When asked about the potential mill levy cap on property tax he stated that he thinks this movement is an effort to force alternative funding for schools. He mentioned other sources of revenue might be income tax, sales tax, or as in some other states, a lottery. The latter is considered to be undesirable by some people. A board committee is studying alternative sources of revenue. There has been consideration of offering catering service out the Fargo schools' kitchen to day cares and other entities in town and in-house photography.

Bussing:
Parents pay for bussing where it is necessary but the major cost is to the taxpayers. North Dakota does not pay adequately for transportation costs. This would be an additional cost to facilities use options requiring students to travel out of their neighborhood. Presently, students from west of I-29 are bussed to Washington School.
Those attending this session, which ran an hour over the planned time, expressed their appreciation to Dr. Flowers and Mr. Wolff for this exchange opportunity as well as the communication in Fargo School Talk website and the Freeze Frame newsletter.
--*Audrey Richmond, Participant Observer*

Be a part of the league observer corps!

Are you interested in government and how it works?
If you are a member of the League of Women Voters, then the answer to this question is almost certainly yes. Would you like to learn more and become more involved in local government? If the answer to this question is yes, then maybe you should consider joining the Observer Corps of the League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley.
Would you like a chance to help other local Leaguers be better informed citizens? This year the League is studying local board and commissions. There are a large number of these that operate in Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo and Cass and Clay Counties. Most local citizens are not aware of the duties and importance of these bodies. A LWV observer can report back to our members via the Voter newsletter and help them learn more.
An observer, in most cases, spends only one or two hours per month attending the regular meetings of a local board or commission. All observers wear a badge identifying them as a league member. They do not participate in the meeting, except to ask a question for clarification if necessary.
Many regular Observers have discovered that attending local board meetings is an interesting and highly educational experience. The LWVRRV is a respected organization, and the people who make up these local decision-making groups come to know and respect individuals who come to observe them.
Observing is a good way for anyone who is considering political office to become known to the community. It can also help them decide where they can best use their own interests and talents to serve their community.
If you are interested or would like to learn more about the LWV Observer Corps, please contact Carol Sawicki at 232-5676.

People Notes

We all wish our retiring President Andrea Sather well in her new endeavors. She has begun a new position at Wells Fargo Bank which includes greater responsibilities, is studying for an MBA and to top it off, will be married in August. Thank you for your contributions to League, Andrea. We all wish our retiring President Andrea Sather well in her new endeavors. She has begun a new position at Wells Fargo Bank which includes greater responsibilities, is studying for an MBA and to top it off, will be married in August. Thank you for your contributions to League, Andrea.

League Programs

Fighting Cancer through Legislation (First Fridays, they can be dispersed where there is room.)
During the First Friday program in February, Maxine Adams of the American Cancer Society mentioned that her organization began trying to influence legislation in this country in 1913. The goal of the ACS is to reduce 50% of current deaths from cancer by 2015. The means used will continue to be research,
education, provision of services and advocacy. Not many cancer related bills have passed, though the Cancer Society Action Team has 1800 members. Currently the Minnesota Smoke Free Coalition is asking the M.N. legislature for a $1 increase in tobacco tax. A third of cancers which originate from tobacco use, diet and sun exposure can be prevented. They are choice related. The ACS advocates for resolutions to require screenings for the major forms of cancer out of belief that "a dollar spent on prevention is a dollar saved in health care."
N.D. State Senator Judy Lee, a league member who was in the audience, is Chair of the Senate Human Services Interim Committee. She reported that the North Dakota Tobacco Fund received a $7,000,000 check in December, 2001 to support the state program. There are eight regional health agencies preparing plans to apply for this money. Lee also shared that 45% of the tobacco money is earmarked for common school trust funds, 45% for water-related needs and10% for tobacco and addiction related issues.

Election Reform for North Dakota
At the March First Friday meeting, N.D. Deputy Secretary of State Cory Fong stated that many groups have worked on examining state election laws since the problems with vote counting in Florida during the last national election. The Association of Secretaries of State wanted to lead election reform but there has been much disagreement with the Association of Election Directors about the approach. U. S. Senate Bill #565 in support of equal protection of voting rights could prove a financial burden. Most states are operating at a loss. One problem is providing a satisfactory way for disabled persons to vote. The bill asks that no person be refused, but there is controversy over voting by mail and the proper means of verifying identification.

The U.S. House "Help Americans Vote" act allows states to handle elections in the way best suited to their situations. There are few mandates and states are allowed control. Funding is provided for mandates such as buying out punch card voting systems which are banned. The bill passed by 85%. In our region, the N. D. Legislature has established a study committee. Our state's needs include: a process not requiring registration that will expedite voting, criteria for establishing legal residency, criteria for what constitutes a completed vote, study of DRE (digital recording equipment) which could replace use of physical ballots, a process of testing new equipment before purchase and the funds for replacement of unsatisfactory equipment at the county level. Not every county has pre-made voter lists when voters appear. Practices need to be standardized so there are readable lists at every voting site. The legislature is ultimately responsible for upgraded laws.

Students Learn About the United Nations
The LWVUS supports the United Nations as the "best existing instrument to promote world peace and improve the social and economical health of the world's people." *Impact on Issues 2000-2002*
Minnesota State University Moorhead played host to a Model United Nations event on April 17 and 18. Three hundred- fifty students came together for this simulation based upon possible international situations that might come before the Security Council.
Dr. Andrew Conteh, a native of Sierra Leone in Africa and currently a political science professor at MSUM, was a faculty sponsor of the Model United Nations and spoke to the April 5 First Friday audience about it. He reminded us that the United Nations was established in 1945 by the major political powers of the time. The United States finally accepted that it could not be isolated from the rest of the world. It was an achievement, he said , when the headquarters of the U. N. was established in New York City. The organization has played important roles in averting major world war, protection of the environment and furthering the rights of women to name a few.
Dr. Conteh explained that the model United Nations experience is beneficial to the students who participate. Through preparation for role-playing, they have an opportunity to: learn more about member countries they represent; become familiar with what group bloc their countries associate; learn how flexibility, listening skills and knowledge are required to negotiate with others; learn parliamentary rules and have an opportunity to understand that we live in a global village.
In answering questions about relations with undeveloped countries, Dr. Conteh stressed the value of an emphasis on improving education before expecting to establish democracy. He suggested that the reason corruption is so visible in Africa is that "the pie is small and elites feel that they have a natural right to rule." Corruption is an integral part of many countries due to the belief that the "wheels must be oiled in order to turn." The United Nations has an organization called Unifem in support of women. In developing countries, women produce food and men produce cash crops. The World Bank is anti-women, eliminating subsidies for women. Dr. Conteh feels that education for women is very important and the issue of violence toward women should be kept in the forefront.
(Note: Hear more about the UN at the League membership meeting on May 6.)

DO YOU CONCUR WITH THE PROPOSED LWVRRV POSITION ON LOCAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS?

Members of the LWV of the Red River Valley approved a study of local boards and commissions at our 2001 Annual Meeting. The committee has spent the past year gathering information through interviews and surveys. The results of their efforts were presented to League members at meetings and in a comprehensive packet, which was sent to each member with the 2002 Annual Meeting mailing. This year's annual meeting provided an excellent setting to discuss this study and to ascertain member input on our position. The LWRRV Board is now seeking member agreement with this proposed new position *(printed below)*. There will be an opportunity for a final presentation about the study and the proposed position at the June 13th Membership Meeting. Concurrence forms will be available at the meeting.

> If you are unable to attend this meeting, we encourage all members to send in the Concurrence Form printed in this issue of *The Voter* directly to the LWVRRV Board of Directors. Postmark Deadline: June 30, 2002

Proposed LWVRRV Position on Local Boards and Commissions
The LWVRRV supports an open appointment process to the boards and commissions which serve our community, which includes the cities of Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo. The League believes that the appointment process should include input from the Mayor, City Council or City Commission, members of the various boards and commissions, and the public. The citizenry can be encouraged to participate through:

- Public notification of all openings
- Use of a formal application form
- Use of the City Web sites to explain the application process and provide online application forms
- Implementing recognition programs to reward citizens for their volunteerism.

The League supports the active pursuit of diversity on all local boards and commissions. In order to achieve a diverse balance, the League encourages our cities to:

- Enact term limits in order to promote turnover and give more opportunities for diversity
- Post openings on their web sites, in the local newspapers and notify community groups of volunteer opportunities
- Adopt an affirmative action statement requiring that every effort be made to assure that the makeup of boards/commissions reflect the diversity of the community.

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

- Training sessions for new board/commission members on board policies, procedures and ethics
- Publishing a code of ethics for board/commission members to follow

Directions:
Fill out this form. Do you concur with the proposed LWVRRV position on local boards and commission?

- ○ Strongly support
- ○ Accept
- ○ Do not accept

Name (Required)
Address (Required)
Telephone (Required)
Email
Comments

Submit Reset

Wind III Conference

Alerus Center -Grand Forks, ND
The North Dakota State League of Women Voters voted on a study of wind energy at its last annual meeting. In order to collect information for this study, I attended the 3rd annual Wind Energy and Rural Development in North Dakota Workshop as a League observer on Feb.22, 2002. The workshop was organized by U. S. Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and the UND Energy & Environmental Research Center, along with other groups. Among the featured speakers was a representative from the U. S. Department of Energy and a Commissioner from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. There were over 700 people attending the workshop, which was a large increase over the number at the two previous workshops. More than half of the attendees were landowners. Some of them presumably were interested in commercial wind towers as a new source of income for their land. Others were looking into the possibility of erecting a small wind generator that would be able to provide some of their own electric power needs.

There were a large number of different experts who gave presentations at the conference. Some focused on existing problems that are preventing the North Dakota and United States wind energy potential from being fully utilized. Others gave their visions of the future of wind energy. All attendees received a notebook containing detailed summaries of the all the presentations that were given at the different workshops. Our copy of this notebook, along with brochures given out by commercial exhibitors, is available for study by members of the N. D. League. Contact Suzanne Dobbins for more information.
--*Carol Sawicki*

From The Editor

This will be the final Voter until August. Many thanks to the loyal contributors who have helped fill this year's newsletters, especially Andrea Sather, Mary Davies, Carol Sawicki and publisher Donna Chalimonczyk. My appreciation goes as well to Carol Zielinski and Mary Jenkins for their help in mailing preparation.

-*Audrey Richmond*

Thank You to All Our Donors!

Mayoral Level (up to $49)
Marlene Batterberry
Boulger Funeral Home
Jocelyn Birch Burdick
Cass Clay Creamery
Marjorie Corner
Jim and Portia Danielson
Dorothy Dodds
Gini Duval
Eide Bailey
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