



Voter

A Look Ahead...

LWV public meetings are held in:

The Sons of Norway Lodge
722 2nd Avenue North
Fargo, ND 58102

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.

March 2: Noon-1:00 p.m.

First Friday at Sons of Norway
Health Care Ills

Speakers. Helen Frampton, Director of Nursing, Eventide
Marlene Batterberry, Parish Nurse and a past President of the N.D. Nursing Association

March 3: 10:00 a.m.-noon
Fargo City Commission Chambers
North Dakota Legislative Forum

March 10: 10:00 a.m.
Scandia Hotel, 717 4th St. N.
Unit meeting: League Finance
LWVRR orientation followed by discussion of local issues

March 11 2:00 p.m.

Burdick Federal Bldg. Courtroom, 655 1st Ave. N.

Sixth Annual Freedom Lecture: Is There a Right to Bear Arms in the Second Amendment? (See article)

March 17: 10:00-12:00 a.m.
Fargo City Commission Chambers
North Dakota Legislative Forum

March 21: 5:15-6:30 p.m.
United Way Office, Fargo
LWVRR Board of Directors Meeting

March 24: 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Moorhead Townsite Center Boardroom Minnesota Minnesota Legislative Forum

March 31 11 :30 a.m.

Avalon Events Center, 613 First Ave. N.,
Fargo LWVRR Brunch and Annual Meeting

Reservation required for brunch (there will be a separate mailing to members).

April 6 12:00-noon

First Friday at Sons of Norway
Natural Resources: A Look at Wind Power
Speaker: Ben Larson of Dakota Resource Council.

ANNUAL FREEDOM LECTURE

According to the Second Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, "A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

Gun-control opponents, such as the National Rifle Association, claim that the amendment gives individual citizens the right to bear arms. The League of Women Voters has pointed out that "the U.S. Supreme Court and the lower federal courts have ruled consistently that the Second Amendment confers a right to keep and bear arms only in connection with service in a well-regulated militia-known today as the National Guard. "

The purpose of the lecture is not to answer the question posed in the title, but to help understand the arguments. Speaking will be James Leahy, retired professor of law at California Western School of Law, San Diego; Dr. John Helgeland, professor of religion, NDSU; and Dr. Max Richardson, Concordia political science professor.

For the third year, the lecture will be held in the courtroom at the Burdick Federal Building in Fargo. It is sponsored by F-M Communiversity, the League of Women Voters, the Cass County Bar Association, the Alex Stem Foundation, and the Freedom Lectureship Fund.

President's Message

Greetings.

Spring is just around the corner! With the arrival of spring comes the Annual Meeting of the LWVRR. Our 2001 Annual Meeting will be held at the Avalon Events Center (formerly Luigi's) located in downtown Fargo, on Saturday, March 31. Along with a lovely brunch, and a look back, we will nominate a new members to the board of directors, approve local programs, and the 2000-2001 budget.

Our featured speaker will be Dina Butcher, Human Rights Director/Deputy Commissioner, N.D. Labor Department.

We have enjoyed our time as co-presidents and thank you for the opportunity. We expect another stellar year for the LWVRR, its programs and membership. There are many areas in which you can take a part and we invite you to get involved!

We look forward to seeing all of you on March 31.

*-Regards,
Julie Jones and Mary Davies, Co-presidents. 2000-2001 .*

Editor's Corner

We have always encouraged readers to contact us with responses to material contained in the newsletter. We include in this issue a letter in response to the article on the electoral college appearing in January. There is also an article from a member who had something to share. Thanks to both writers.

Audrey Richmond 235-3904

An appreciation of patriotism

Members Jack and Tina Klugh recently read with pride a letter from their daughter, Sarah, a recent college graduate. After watching the motion picture, The Patriot, Sarah wrote the following *(edited for space)*:

"You read about the American Revolution in storybooks and middle school history books. But not until these past hours have I felt the poignancy of the birth of our American Heritage. The magnitude of passion within those men and boys ..they fought for freedom with every ounce of heart, soul, and strength. The idea of living in a free country was worth the sacrifice of their own homes and families.

"I can't stop asking myself, 'Do we possess that caliber of honor, love and passion for freedom?'... With what I have seen and know about my generation I cannot bring myself to shout a definite 'YES!' In an America where people do not even feel the need to vote-one of our most basic and imperative rights-would these same people step out of the cushioned world to seek victory for the assurance of America's freedom? For their neighbor's freedom? For their family's freedom?

"If farmers, merchants, soldiers and young boys could conquer the greatest military in the known world, we can accomplish our tasks and dreams, too-no excuses, no back doors, no 'somebody else will or can do it better' attitudes. We can succeed."

Letter from a reader

Dear LWV:

The item by Donna Chalimonczyk (Jan.-Feb. Voter) is interesting. However, it gives a distorted picture by comparing North Dakota to Wyoming, a state with a smaller population than North Dakota. Most states have a larger population. A more valid comparison of the clout of North Dakota's vote is to larger states. Doing this to Florida,

North Dakota's votes are worth 2.61 times that of Florida.

I calculated the other states' vote values compared to Florida. You could do the same comparing North Dakota to all the other states. The Electoral College gives smaller states a greater weight per population. If a straight popular vote were used, North Dakota would be easily overwhelmed by more populous states.

Maybe some thought to proportional votes in the Electoral College is worth considering-providing that a requirement for a majority of ballots be eliminated. However, replacing the Electoral College with a straight popular vote would almost disenfranchise smaller states.

-Gerald J. Bodoh, Fargo, 241-9070

Observer Corps

FARGO CITY COMMISSION

On February 5, 2001, the issues discussed besides those reported in The Forum were:

- The city planning department is attempting to "clean up" the zoning of older areas of Fargo. During this meeting, lots near both sets of railroad tracks were rezoned, many from General Industrial (which allows almost any sort of structure and business to be constructed) to more restrictive zoning types. Few existing businesses would be affected as they currently are operating, although some would not be permitted to expand their manufacturing capacities without getting a special permit from the Planning Commission.

- Mayor Furness had compiled a long list of bills, currently under consideration by the North Dakota Legislature, that might affect the city of Fargo. He asked the Commission to vote to concur with his determinations on whether to support or oppose each of these bills. Several bills were opposed on the basis that they took away some aspect of local control of government. Commissioners voted unanimously to support the Mayor's positions.

- At the February 20 meeting, the most contentious issue was the proposed changes in bus routes. There apparently has been a history of dissatisfaction between regular bus users and previous administrators of the transit system. The people who were objecting to the bus route changes also complained a great deal about changes in the past.

-Carol Sawicki, Observer

FARGO SCHOOL PUBLIC MEETINGS

Much has been reported in the media concerning the schools' projected budget shortfall. In addition to the Hawthorne Neighborhood Association, the Horace Mann neighborhood has organized into the Friends of Horace Mann. There has been much participation in the public informational meetings held in January and February with members of the school administration. The school officials, including those board members in the audience, have had ample opportunity to listen to the distressed voices of Hawthorne and Horace Mann area residents in reaction to the possibility that their schools may be closed as a solution to the deficit.

On Feb. 22, the Friends of Horace Mann arranged a Town Hall meeting. Fargo Superintendent David Flowers, Urban Designer Don Faulkner, Fargo's Asst. Police Chief Keith Ternes, City Planner Jessica Thomasson, Commissioner Jean Rayl, and Mayor Bruce Furness participated in a panel dealing with the Impact of School Closings on Neighborhoods.

Speaking first, Dr. Flowers stated that the board intends to maintain its commitment not to raise taxes. There are five main deficit reducing scenarios that will be presented at the final public input meetings. They are: combining services in nearby elementary school buildings, raising class-size, transporting students to low population districts by bus, flexible boundaries, and school closings. All the choices will effect some residents negatively. No decision has been made by the board of education. Other speakers agreed that closing the neighborhood schools would remove a key component of the areas.

Comm. Rayl, who is also a realtor, spoke of the need for change in the homes of the inner city. Losing the schools could further affect the value of these properties. She mentioned that nine projects have been approved for the renaissance zone program in downtown Fargo with three more on the table. She feels there should be a delay in the school closing decision by the school board to allow these projects to renew the downtown. The city needs time to consider what it will do to help the nearby neighborhoods. Along this line, Ms. Thomasson suggested the possibility of waiting for more accurate population figures as the 2000 Census data is released. Mayor Furness stated that it will take several years for the neighborhood revitalization initiatives, now in the planning stages, to take hold.

Questions and comments from the audience expressed the belief that too much money has gone into new construction for which the inner city neighborhoods may now have to pay by losing their schools. A moratorium on further construction or remodeling was suggested. Particular mention was made of the perceived irresponsible purchase of 72 acres of land for a future third high school.

Following the panel discussion, Mayor Furness and Comm. Rayl held a press conference outlining several incentive programs targeting the neighborhoods under discussion that could encourage newcomers to buy and fix up homes thereby potentially increasing the number of students. They have tentative agreement with the other city commissioners to implement the measures.

-Audrey Richmond, Observer

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF MINORITIES IN MOORHEAD

On January 30, the Minnesota Advisory Committee (MAC) to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released

the report "The Status of Equal Opportunity for Minorities in Moorhead, Minnesota." The report is based on testimony at a factfinding meeting on May 25 and 26, 1999, and on a survey of white, Latino, and Native American households (total of 19 households).

According to the report, the MAC felt that racial and ethnic problems in Moorhead are probably typical of other communities in the state and all previous studies had been conducted in eastern Minnesota.

Equal opportunity in Moorhead is examined in four areas: Income and employment, education, public safety, housing, and public accommodations. There are findings and recommendations in each of these areas.

The overall conclusion of the report mental is that although offensive racist behavior and attitudes are not tolerated by most whites or people of color who live in metropolitan Moorhead, it does not mean that prejudice and bigotry do not exist. Discrimination in employment, housing, and education does occur. The survey results show that whites are largely unaware that prejudice and bigotry exist or that discrimination in employment, housing, education does occur. In Moorhead, as in other parts of the state, the and white communities appear to be virtually separate.

The report has plenty of food for thought and discussion. The Justice Circle, a group of faith-based groups and other interested people, is organizing study circles on the report.

There will be a community forum on April 26 at 7:00 p.m. at a location to be announced. Call Mary Davies, 233-2175, if you have questions or want to be involved in a study circle.

LWV NONPARTISAN POLICY AN EXPLANATION

Non partisanship is the basis of the committees and commissions which League of Women Voters' public credibility and must be maintained. All members bear responsibility for maintaining the League's reputation for fairness and objectivity.

The purposes of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government and to act on selected governmental issues. The League all members to become fully informed about candidates and issues. It encourages all members, except visible officers, to work actively in the political party of their choice and to seek elective or appointive office in government. All League members are expected to keep their League activity completely separate and distinct.

To avoid any perceived or actual conflict with the nonpartisan integrity of the League, the following restrictions are accepted:

League Action. A board member may not speak publicly or work against a League position. Members may not identify themselves as League members in publicly expressing an opinion that is in opposition to a League position.

Board Members.

President, Voters Service Chair, the Finance and Development Chair

- cannot run or be appointed to political office
- cannot be political party spokesperson in, i.e., National Committee
- can accept appointment to advisory boards, committees and commissions which are not partisan in nature
- should not show support of any party, candidate, or party position including fund raising. Individual contributions are permitted.

Other board members and officers:

- can publicly support a party candidate in any way as long as they don't advertise support as a League member
- can accept appointment to governmental boards and committees, both state and local, and can run for and be elected to a non-partisan office such as city, county, or school board
- can be active in a party as a fund-raiser, district chair, endorse, etc., as long as League affiliation is not featured while in these activities
- can participate in any partisan political social event if not identified as League endorsed
- cannot run for or be appointed to a partisan political office. If a board member or officer decides to run for a partisan political office, he/she must resign from the board. General members. Members are encouraged to participate fully in the political process, including running for and holding office.

League meetings.

League meetings should be issue-oriented and held in an environment of non-partisanship. Only board of director-approved petitions may be circulated at League meetings.

Mailing lists.

League's roster is only available for non-League use with consent of the LWVRRV board of directors.

LEAGUE NEWS

New member, Barbara Headrick:

We are indeed fortunate that Mary Davies recruited Barb Headrick into our membership. She immediately became active and subsequently accepted a position on the board of directors. As an Associate Professor of Political Science at Minnesota State University Moorhead, she was our First Friday speaker for the November, 2000 program on Campaign Finance Reform. She has also served as an expert question screener for the current Fargo Legislative Forums. Her goal for league membership is to support an active and informed electorate. In that pursuit, she is also a member of Fargo's Hawthorne Neighborhood Association.

Barb came to the community from Texas in August, 1996. "just in time for the big winter of '97." A native of Missouri, she had been teaching at Texas A and M prior to the move. She says that she has "obsessive tendencies toward" politics (as we might guess), baseball, football, science fiction, and old movies.

People notes

Sherbanoo Aziz has been teaching a Communiversity class in the preparation of exotic Indian cuisine at the Hjemkomst Center during the month of February. Teaching how to cook is just one of the many talents of this LWVRR board member who enjoys promoting the multi-cultural nature of our community.

[back to top](#)

[back to homepage](#)