



Voter

A Look Ahead...

November 3, 2000 Noon-1:00 PM
First Friday at Sons of Norway

Speaker: Barbara Headrick, MSUM Political Scientist
 Campaign Finance Reform

November 7, 2000
Polls open 7:00 AM-8:00 PM
Election 2000: Take a Friend to Vote!!

League members will supervise Kids Voting at
 Carl Ben Eielson School from 6:30 AM to 8:30 PM.

November 11, 2000 10:00 AM
Place to be announced

Unit Meeting: The League in Profile
 Orientation to Membership
 Suzanne Dobbins, Membership Chair

November 15, 2000 5:10-6:30 PM
LWVRR Board meeting

LWVRR Board meeting
 United Way Office

November 19, 2000 6:00-9:00 PM
"It's a Wonderful Night"
shopping fund raiser

West Acres Shopping Center: tickets \$5

December 1, 2000
First Friday at Sons of Norway

Meet our Local Superintendents Speakers: Dr. David Flowers, Fargo; Dr. Larry Nybladh, Moorhead and Dr. Charles Cheney, West Fargo

December 2, 2000 9:30 AM
Main Avenue Fryn' Pan

LWV of North Dakota Meeting

December 4-8, 2000
Time and place to be announced

Concordia College Scholar in Residence Winona Laduke , Green Party US Vice Presidential candidate, will meet with the Concordia Student LWV chapter for discussion of her book, Last Standing Woman.

President's Message

I'm delighted to be back doing League work. I was President of the Moorhead League more years ago than I care to admit, served on the League of Women Voters Minnesota Board, and then followed other paths. I never lost my interest in League, and never dropped my membership, but I was not active. Now I am re-energized by the great group of people who are leading the League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley. Election year is always a busy time for League. We have spoken at several group meetings on voting and on the League.

Members have organized candidates meetings and distributed Minnesota Voter's Guides. The League handed out packets to new citizens at the October 13th Naturalization Ceremony in Fargo. Our campus members have distributed voter information and registration materials. Members appeared at Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre productions of an American Daughter, both to introduce the candidate curtain speech segment of the evening and to facilitate post-play discussions. A special thanks to Andrea Johnson for spending seven evenings at the theatre. Our First Fridays have been interesting and informative. I think those who attended Christopher Gates' presentation wished everyone could have heard him. He knows the League well and had thought-provoking ideas on where we, as a democratic nation are headed.

I hope you have checked out our new web site. We have received compliments from LWVUS board members for the excellent and informative site. A special thank you to Suzanne Dobbins who found a way to get the web site up and running and with the help of her brother Craig Maas, is keeping it up to date. Look for it at www.lwvnd.org.

Mary Davies
Co-President

2000-2001 LWVRRR Board of Directors

Co-Presidents: Mary Davies and Julia Jones
Secretary: Suzanne Dobbins
Treasurer: Andrea Johnson
Directors: Sherbanoo Aziz, Marlene Batterberry, Barbara Headrick, Colleen Hermann, Kathie Kvalvog, Susan Petry, Audrey Richmond, Janel Carol Sawicki, Janet Van Amberg, Betsy Vinz
Advisor: Lois Altenburg

Editor's Corner

In my other capacity as the person who answers the League's information phone line, it has been great to help direct so many requests for absentee ballots especially for young people away at school. The League maintains a book with information about precincts and polling places and it's good to know people think of the LWV when in need of that assistance. Let me take the opportunity to mention our web site (www.lwvnd.org) again. It enables users to access so much information about our community's governmental agencies, the political parties, voting etc. Fargo League has not had the financial or human resources to publish candidate information such as the Minnesota Voter's Guide for some time, though we continue to sponsor Candidate Forums. The web site is a step in the direction of making voter education more easily accessible as were the debates sponsored by PPTV , Channel 4 and the League.

Audrey Richmond 235-3904

Observer Corps

FARGO CITY COMMISSION

On September 5 , young adults spoke in opposition to the dance hall control ordinance mentioning several other concerns they had besides those reported in the Fargo Forum. One was that, since college students often have jobs that keep them working until late at night, the only time that they have free for social activities is after 1 PM. Some people who work with local music groups say that it is becoming increasingly difficult for bands to find venues allowing those under 21 to attend so that there are few places where 18-20 year olds can go to hear music and dance. It seemed that some of the commissioners had not completely considered the matter from the students' point of view and did appreciate hearing from them. The students were upset that Police Chief Magnus was not available to discuss things with them after his presentation. The Mayor explained that he had a prior commitment to teach a class at NDSU.

Also at this meeting, there were two protests of special assessments. One protester, a business, had hired an attorney to argue the case. The assessor's office did agree that some errors had been made in both cases. I wonder how many errors are passed on to other property owners in Fargo who don't dispute them. At the September 18 meeting these disputed assessments were again considered. One was solved to both side's satisfaction and the other may go to litigation.

A homeowner who lives north of Meritcare was concerned that the bonds approved for Meritcare expansion might mean a change in traffic flow or zoning for her neighborhood. She was assured that the planning commission would meet with a large number of people in the area before any major changes were made.

On September 18th, discussion of relief from high special assessments for some homeowners around the new Bennett Elementary School took place. When these people built their houses, they were required to have two acre lots because of septic system needs. The property has now been annexed by the city. Since city assessments are determined by front footage, the specials are very high. The city is considering putting in some city money to lower the amount owed on these properties but there is concern about setting a precedent. The issue was tabled.

Discussion about the future median on 13th Ave. S. was partly a dispute over whether Fargo is ready for "big city" traffic control measures.

Carol Sawicki, Observer

MOORHEAD CITY COUNCIL

All members were present at the October 16 meeting, Guy Paulson explained what would be done to make a support system to preserve the Viking Ship at the Hjemkomst Center.

Barbara Sipson appeared both as a resident and as Director of the Clay County Homeless Assistance Program to express concern about the 108 housing units that will be lost with the convention and retail center development on the Holiday Mall site. She wondered where the units' residents will live. From her work she knows that it is already difficult to find affordable housing and starter homes in Moorhead. Sipson recommended that the Council put tearing down the units on hold until plans for replacing them can be made. Mayor Lanning responded that city staff is working on addressing the issue and the city had just approved several projects in north Moorhead. Further, the Mayor said, a lower vacancy rate in apartments may spur new building. The city may look into some incentive programs for building new units.

A resolution was approved to bond for city equipment rather than leasing.

Plans and expenditure of funds for the Rourke Art Museum sculpture garden were approved. This will provide a permanent home for "Minerva" the sculpture which was formerly at Moorhead Junior High.

Mary Davies, Observer

FARGO SCHOOL BOARD

Unfortunately, I could not attend the September 26 Board meeting at which a panel of persons experienced in using the policy governance model of management spoke. The panel was made up of: ND Lt. Governor Rosemarie Myrdal; Pat Traynor, CEO of the Dakota Medical Foundation and formerly head of the ND Worker's Compensation Bureau; and Peg Portscheller, Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning Director and former ND teacher and administrator. To quote the 9/26/00 Board Briefs: "The three panel members discussed their experiences with the policy governance model and cited a number of advantages: CEO/superintendent accountability and clear delineation of responsibilities, staff can be productive and creative in accomplishing Board identified ends, progress is monitored on a scheduled calendar, the board's energy is focused on students, opportunities are provided to link with key community groups and the model can and should be custom designed."

At the following meeting the Board adopted "policy governance as its model for management of the school district. This will place the Board's focus on long range goals and assigns the responsibility of day to day operation of the district to the Superintendent." (Board Briefs, 10-10-00)

Audrey Richmond, School Issues Committee

FIRST EVER STUDENT LWV CHAPTER

This fall, the League of Women Voters branched off into a Concordia College Chapter for the first time ever! The Chapter was aided by the fact that several of its members became enrolled in the LWV after attending the annual LOTT Conference at the Minnesota

The young leaguers have received much attention on campus and are working with other student organizations to share in planning State Capitol last January. The chapter had its first meeting in mid-September, and already has about 8-10 active participants. The chapter held a successful voter registration drive for the community the week of October 9-13, and will be hosting several Concordia speaker events including Arun Gandhi, Winona LaDuke and Carl Bernstein.

The Concordia Chapter thanks the LWV of the Red River Valley and Lonnie Pederson, the faculty advisor, for all their help in what has been a great start for their organization.

Colleen Hermann

CHIP UPDATE

The Children's Health Insurance Plan for North Dakota enacted during the 1999 Legislature is in operation under the name Healthy Steps. It is directed at those children not covered by any other health care plan. Participants must be 18 or under and living in North Dakota families whose net income is at 140% of Federal poverty guidelines or \$11,690-\$31,900 per year depending on family size. Net income is defined as take home pay after daycare, payroll taxes and alimony payments.

Services covered are clinic appointments, inpatient and outpatient hospitalization, prescriptions, mental health services, well-child exams, immunizations, dental and vision services. The program is covered by Noridian Mutual Insurance (Blue Cross-Blue Shield of North Dakota) and administered by ND Human Services Dept. Participants have no out-of-pocket costs but copays: \$2 per prescription, \$5 per emergency room visit, and \$50 for each hospital admission. There are no pre-existing condition rules or asset tests.

In their televised debate on October 15th, both ND gubernatorial candidates mentioned that they would support increasing the qualifying income level allowed. Heitkamp mentioned 200% and Hoeven %175. Perhaps there is hope that more children will be covered.

Audrey Richmond

MEET NEW MEMBER--JANEL SANDVIG

An important event has just taken place in Janel Sandvig's life. A baby boy, Jacob, was born on October 19, shortly before press time. Mother and son will be at home after October 20. It is the first child for Janel and her husband.

Janel moved to Moorhead two years ago from Aberdeen, SD and married sometime later. She is a financial counselor with The Village Family Service Center and still feels like a relative newcomer to our community.

Recruited into League by Andrea Johnson, Janel has strong feelings about helping young people become aware and understanding voters. Therefore, she is on the Voters Service committee and is also interested in helping with the web site. Janel serves on the Board of Directors as a new appointee. LWV is very fortunate to have Janel in our midst before she became engaged in other organizations in Fargo-Moorhead.

Janel enjoys reading and walking and is definitely looking forward to caring for her expanded family. We wish her much happiness with her new little Jacob.

HIGHLIGHTS

Suzanne Dobbins announced that she is planning to begin unit meetings on Saturday , November 11, especially aimed at new members from the past two years or so. Resources in a packet called The League inProfile , designed by LWVUS to help local Leagues provide understanding to new and "old" members of various aspects of the organization will be used. Notice will be sent to members.

Finance Chair Kathie Kvalvog reported on the progress of the recent major solicitation effort. Money has been coming in on the \$3000 goal. Although DC Publishing has once again offered a \$1500 match, it will not be considered a part of the \$3000. The plan is to write grant applications in November to some sources which have requested them. (See contributors elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Tickets for the second annual It's a Wonderful Night shopping event on November 19 will be for sale at the November First Friday. At \$5 each, all ticket sale proceeds may be kept by the League.

Voter Education workers are in place for candidates' meetings on October 24 and 26 as well as managing the Kids Voting site at Carl Ben Eielson Elementary School on election day. The students will not be voting on computer this year which will require more preparation work for us.

Welcoming at the Naturalization Ceremony on October 13 once again proved very worthwhile for Andrea Johnson and Sherbanoo Aziz. Fifth grade students were present from Valley City and a child recited the Pledge of Allegiance during the ceremony which was moving.

Concordia College and North Dakota State University have recently chartered collegiate chapters of League and have been active in voters' service events. Students at Minnesota State University Moorhead are in the process of organizing. The Concordia Chapter is planning to distribute MN Voters' Guides through the student mail.

Jan Van Amberg reported that the topic for the Freedom Lecture in March, 2001 will be "Is There a Right to Bear Arms in the Second Amendment? "

Susan Helgeland who was recently named Advocate of the Year by the Freedom Resource Center for Independent Living in Moorhead. She was honored for her work on behalf of people with disabilities in North Dakota. A former President of Fargo LWV, Susan is the director of South Valley (ND) Mental Health Association.

We are sorry to note the resignation of David Martin, a long time League supporter, from the Fargo Public Library Board. David was President of the Board during the planning meetings for library needs. We appreciate his service to the community.

League member Dave Zielinski, our departed President Billi Jo's father-in-law, reports that she and husband Mark have their own apartment with a host family living next door in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. They will be returning soon from training sessions in two other cities. They are studying Russian and Mark was pleased to learn he could understand quite a bit of what a museum guide said on a recent outing. Their host family has entertained them at dinner so they are trying new foods as well as using their Russian. Mark has been transferred into Billi Jo's area of business education. They are able to receive e-mail using the billizielinski@yahoo.com address. The couple is one of five married pairs among a total of 52 Peace Corps volunteers in their group

Jan Eken, a former President of Fargo League, died on August 27 in Perham, MN, where she had been living since 1992.

CIVIC LEAGUE LEADER DEFINES TRENDS

In a special Friday League meeting on September 29, Chris Gates, President of the National Civic League, described what he sees are the current trends in community development and action to address areas of citizen concern. The National Civic League, an organization over 100 years old, sponsored the recent All American City Contest and Gates was in our community to take part in the celebration of Fargo-Moorhead's award.

Gates mentioned a number of existing forces for social change including: diverse society, the cynicism of the media , angry citizens, the revolution in information technology and people's belief that government is not "us" but "them." He went on to describe how these forces may shape decision making in our democracy.

He cited two types of democracy--representative and direct. The former is the traditional type in the United States where people are elected to make decisions and their performance is evaluated by subsequent elections. Direct democracy involves the electorate in making choices and requires service providers to respond. Gates believes there is a huge shift in progress from representative to direct democracy. There will be a reduction in the complexity of voting quite likely involving the internet. He suggested the possibility of a middle ground involving representative, direct and citizen democracy. He described a model whereby a convener brings together citizens with government, business, and non-profit organizations for dialogue and decision making. (Similar to our recent Project Tomorrow effort?) To do this effectively we need a shift from the emphasis on citizens' rights to the active exercise of responsibility. Each citizen must become more active in the community. There must be space set aside within the community where citizens can come together safely for discussion and action planning.

Following Gate's departure for the airport, the audience had a lively discussion of the ideas presented.

MANY THANKS TO OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

Mayoral (up to \$49) Marlene Batterberry, Frank Knox , Judith Strong, Joan C. Miller, Betsy Vinz, Mary Jenkins

Gubernatorial (\$50-\$99) Korsmo Funeral Home, Dakota Monument, Douglas Sillers, Judy Lee, Moorhead Drug

Presidential (\$100 and up) Service Oil, Suzanne Dobbins, State Bank of Fargo, Creative Kitchen, DC Publishing (*Matching Grant*)

UPCOMING

North Dakota League President Lois Altenburg has announced a meeting of the League of Women Voters of North Dakota at the Main Avenue Fryn' Pan on Saturday, December 2, at 9:30 AM. The new legislative session and its pending issues will be discussed and plans made for a LWV Legislative Day in Bismarck after the legislative crossover date. Suzanne Dobbins and Andrea Johnson, both of Fargo, have been appointed LWVND Secretary and Treasurer pro tem respectively, replacing Alice Hauan and Diane Briggs who have resigned. New officers will be elected at the meeting.

Barbara Headrick, Minnesota State University Moorhead Professor of Political Science, will speak to the First Friday audience on this topic on November 3 .

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

In listening to debating candidates one issue that comes up is Campaign Finance Reform. The LWVUS has for some time supported more restrictive campaign finance laws-- the US House Shays-Meehan Bill and the McCain-Feingold Bill in the US Senate for starters. To refresh your memory, these bills place a ban on soft money, restrict sham issue ads, strengthen enforcement of the Federal Election Code and create a commission to study additional ways that the campaign finance system can be improved. Soft money and sham issue ads are both loopholes which enable political candidates and their campaigns to get around the laws governing campaign expenditures. The soft money loophole allows wealthy individuals, corporations and labor unions to donate large sums while disguising their real purpose of influencing the candidates involved . The money is given ostensibly to a party for general electioneering but is often used for negative attack ads. Sham issue ads avoid disclosure requirements of the Federal Election Campaign Act by avoiding specific wording which asks that listeners vote for or against a candidate. The ads can present a negative image of an individual candidate but are not considered campaign ads so there is no limit on the amount of money contributed nor is there disclosure of the source of funding for the ad required. The League believes that voters need to know who is paying for the ads they see and hear and that special interests are not buying the outcomes of elections.

REMEMBER: John F. Kennedy's margin of victory over Richard Nixon in 1960 was less than one vote per precinct and one vote per precinct passed women's suffrage in California in 1911. Vote Nov. 7 and encourage others to do the same because each vote does count !!