

Voter

A look ahead...
 LWV public meetings are held in the Sons of Norway Lodge, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo, in the meeting rooms 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.

January 2, 2003, 2:30 p.m.
 Atomic Coffees 15 4th St. S., Moorhead
 Legislative interview with Minn. Rep. Morrie Lanning.

January 3, 2003, 12:00 noon
 First Friday, Sons of Norway
 722 2nd Ave N., Fargo
 (Buffet lunch available beginning at 11:30 a.m.)
 Progress on Womens Rights Around the World the UN Briefing.
 Speaker: Julia Jones LWVRRV co-president

January 9, 2003, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
 LWVRRV Board meeting
 7:30-9:00 p.m. League membership meeting
 Both meetings will be held in the meeting room at the Fargo Public Library.
 At the membership meeting, Cheryl Bergian will speak and ask the League to sign on to a request to the ND Legislature by the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition, that a Human Rights Commission be established. (See article, pg. 3)

January 19, 2003, 7:00 p.m.
 Concordia College Memorial Auditorium
 Eight Habits of the Heart
 Speaker: Clifton Iaulbert whose message is one of building community. He grew up in the segregated South and learned from his family and friend that the human touch is the mortar that holds a community together.

January 20, 2003, 7:00 p.m.
 Fargo Theater
 Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King.

February 7, 2003, 12:00 noon
 First Friday, Sons of Norway, 722 2nd Ave N., Fargo
 (Buffet lunch available beginning at 11:30 a.m.)
 Life Behind the Veil: A Visitors View of Islamic Life
 Speaker: Nancy Friesen

February 1 & 15, March 1, 15 & 29, 9-10:30 a.m.
 Fargo City Commission Room
 Fargo Area Legislative Forums

February 8, March 8 & April 5, 9-10:30 a.m.
 Board Room Moorhead Townsite Centre
 Minnesota Legislative Forums

February 15, March 15, & April 15, 10:30 a.m.
 West Fargo High School, Room 112c
 West Fargo Area Legislative Forums

LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING-TIME FOR MEMBER IDEAS

League members now have a chance to determine what local program the LWVRRV should adopt for study and action during the next two years. The local program must be adopted at the annual meeting on March 29th. The current local program includes the study of local boards and commissions and area school operations.

Study of local issues begins with member ideas. Recommendations for local study must be sent to the board of directors two months prior to the annual meeting. The board then considers these recommendations and sends the proposed program to all members one month prior to the annual meeting. At the annual meeting the local program is adopted by a majority vote of voting members present and voting. Recommendations for program submitted by members two months prior to the annual meeting but not recommended by the board may be considered by the annual meeting if a majority vote for consideration and the item can then be adopted by two-thirds vote.

In considering program for the next two years think about current issues that are relevant and that League has the resources to address. Questions to ask in considering new proposals for local league study:

- Can the problem be solved by governmental action?
- Is this a hot issue? Is the timing right? Will League involvement make a difference?
- Is the League the organization best qualified to study the issue? Will it duplicate the work of some other group?
- Will the issue attract new members? Will it increase involvement of current members?
- Does LWVRRV have the people to study the issue effectively?
- What are some possible local program topics?
- Land-use Planning: What are the issues that need to be addressed in land-use planning on a local and metro basis?
- Housing: How is need for affordable housing in FM area being met?
- Water Resources: Availability, quality
- Solid Waste: Are there some issues that should be addressed on a regional basis?
- Public Transportation: Is the system meeting resident needs?
- Immigration: What is the impact of recent immigrants on the economy, society and educational system? How accessible are services for this population?
- School Issues
- Human Rights: What progress is being made?
- Health Care: Are there some issues that can be addressed locally?

You will think of many more as you start brainstorming. Come to the January 9th membership meeting to share your thoughts with others. You can also talk to any Board member or send ideas to Mary Davies, 1001 10th St. S., Moorhead, MN 56560, or e-mail to Mary at marbob7@aol.com.

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.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The air is filled with the spirit of the Holiday Season! I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your involvement in the League of Women Voters and for those of you always answer yes when called upon to volunteer, your service is appreciated more than you know. It takes only a small group of committed people to make a difference and our League is certainly fortunate to have so many willing to help.

A silent auction fund-raiser was held in conjunction with Decembers First Friday. We had a great turnout and successful auction (\$840 raised), thanks to the many donations from area businesses and auction volunteers.

Looking ahead, our Annual meeting date has been set for Saturday, March 29th. Be sure your local program ideas get sent to Mary Davies or join us at the January 9th membership meeting to share your thoughts.

I'm looking forward to sharing highlights from my trip to New York City at our January First Friday. I attended the Briefing on the Status of Womens Rights Around the World at the United Nations and was in the company of some amazing people. I hope you'll join me on January 3rd, at the Sons of Norway.

I wish you much peace, health and happiness in the New Year!
 --Julia Jones, Co-president

MEETINGS OF INTEREST

Homes for All Conference in Minneapolis

More than 1300 delegates attended the Minnesota Homes for All Convention at the Minneapolis Convention Center on Friday November 15. LWVRRV members Mary Davies and Barbara Sipson attended this historic event, the largest convention on affordable housing ever held in Minnesota. The convention goal was to put forth a vision for housing in Minnesota. Safe, decent and affordable Homes for All by 2012 is the goal.

Delegates adopted a 2002 Policy Platform. Strategies and initiatives are aimed at reducing barriers to the development of affordable housing as well as preserving existing affordable housing stock and expanding the supply of affordable housing. Also included are ways to prevent and address homelessness, providing housing with support services and for eliminating discrimination in housing.

For a look at the complete platform, go to the website, www.housingminnesota.org. The platform will be used for lobbying efforts by citizens across the state who are concerned about adequate housing for all Minnesotans.

--Mary Davies

Program on Challenges of Immigration offered

Moorhead Community Education in cooperation with F/M Communiversity, Senior Connections and the Minnesota Humanities Commission is offering a National Issues Forum on The Challenges of American Immigration: What Should We Do?

It will be held Sat., Feb. 8, 1-3 p.m. at the Hjemkomst Center. It is free and open to the public.

Participants will look at some of the issues connected with immigration and the question of whose interests should be used.

National Issues Forums are nonpartisan citizen education programs giving people a chance to engage in thoughtful, deliberative dialogue on difficult topics.

North Dakota & Minnesota Legislative Forums Set

The League, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, has scheduled several forums to follow the action during the 2003 North Dakota & Minnesota legislative sessions. All of these forums will be held on Saturdays, at 9-10:30 AM in Fargo and Moorhead, and at 10:30 AM in West Fargo.

The Fargo area forums will be held on February 1 & 15, March 1, 15, & 29 in the City Commission room at Fargo City Hall, 200 3rd St N.

West Fargo area forums will be held on February 15, March 15 and April 5 in Room 112c at West Fargo High School.

The Minnesota meetings will be held on February 8, March 8 and April 5 in the Board Room at the Townsite Centre, 810 4th Ave S, in Moorhead. These forums will also be sponsored by Moorhead Community Education. It is expected that State Senator Keith Langseth and Representatives Paul Marquart and Morrie Lanning will attend.

If you are interested in helping the League at any of these meetings, please contact Barb Headrick (redbarbh@cablone.net) for the Fargo forums, or Mary Davies (marbob7@aol.com) for the Moorhead forums, or leave a message at the League office (232-6696).

North Dakota Needs A Human Rights Commission

The North Dakota Human Rights Coalition is requesting that the North Dakota Legislature enact a North Dakota Commission on Human Rights when its session starts in January, 2003.

The NDHRC believes that a Commission on Human Rights is needed in North Dakota to provide information to the Division of Human Rights within the North Dakota Department of Labor on human rights issues, and to provide services to the residents of North Dakota that the Division of Human Rights is unable to provide.

--Cheryl Bergian - NDHRC

FROM THE EDITOR

After two issues that were co-edited with Audrey Richmond, The Voter is now being edited by Carol Sawicki alone. The LWVRRV would like to sincerely thank Audrey for her six years of dedicated service as the Editor, and also to thank Donna Chalimonczyk for continuing to provide her layout and publishing expertise, without which this publication would not be possible.

FIRST FRIDAYS

At the **November** First Friday meeting, Drs. Jim Danielson and Phil Bauman, MSUM Political Science Dept., spoke about Understanding Election Polls.

These men have been conducting polls in this area for many years. They explained the many different factors that have to be taken into account in order that a poll be an accurate snapshot of the population at the time that it is conducted.

They also discussed the different ways in which the results of political polling are used. For example, by telling us about the opinions of others in the community, polls become a connection between the governors and the governed. On the other hand, poll results may be used to generate negative advertising, which may discourage citizens from voting at all.

At the **December** First Friday meeting, Dr. Catherine Logue, a Food Safety Microbiologist from NDSU, spoke on Food Safety and Bioterrorism.

In opening her talk, Dr. Logue said that she was going to show us how to think like a terrorist! She explained some of the different ways in which our food supply might be attacked. Food sources, such as crops and livestock, might be infected or poisoned, or a food product might be contaminated with a biological or chemical agent.

Dr. Logue also talked about the government agencies in charge of monitoring the safety of our food supply, and about steps that are being considered to improve the effectiveness of these agencies.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY OFFICERS 2003

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, Mary Davies and Margaret Blue

* denotes terms expiring in 2003

Observer Corps

FARGO SCHOOL BOARD

When the school board met on November 26, they used a new meeting format called a work session. They met around small tables in the District Office lounge. The purpose of this type of meeting is to increase discussion of one or more issues, possibly leading to a consensus.

Linda Schwartzwaller from Meritcare was a guest speaker. She presented the Polarity Management Model for use with issues that have two opposing viewpoints. The example that was used was the achievement of the strategic plan results with students. The two poles presented were: What the community wants and What the board thinks is best. The board agreed to invite a number of community members to share differing points of view about polarity management. There will be another work session with 9-12 community members on January 28. The polarity discussion will center around the two viewpoints: The community has too much say and The board doesn't listen enough.

On Dec. 10, Asst. Supt. for Instruction Chuck DeRemer presented information about the results of the state-wide assessment of North Dakota students administered last March. North Dakota teachers prepared the criterion referenced tests of language arts and math in response to a federal mandate for all states to establish standards and measure how students are performing on them. North Dakota assessed students in grades 4, 8 and 12. Previously, Fargo Schools used norm-referenced tests whose scores were compared with those of all other students taking the test and are ranked by percentile. From now on, scores will not be presented in percentiles but will measure performance in terms of achievement levels. The March assessments will establish a baseline for use in determination of progress in the future. Dr. DeRemer pointed out that these tests measure student performance on one day only and are not perfect.

In general, Fargos students matched or surpassed the performance of students in the state in math and at the 4th and 12th grade levels in reading. The reading test results for Fargos 8th graders were somewhat lower than the proficiency level for other state students.

Dr. DeRemer is not satisfied that Fargo students are achieving at the expected level, but teachers and administrators can use the test results to determine how achievement can be improved.

Board member Don Faulkner reported for the boards Facilities Task Force that data has been gathered and the architects have been invited to meet with the task force on December 16. They will present some alternative solutions to Fargos facilities needs based on the guiding principles determined by the citizens facility committee and the board.

--Audrey Richmond, 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

Diane Meyer

Long-time Moorhead League member Diane Meyer died December 16th following a year-long battle with cancer. Diane decided to run for the Moorhead School Board after serving several years as a League observer and realizing she might as well be at the table. She served from 1976-1983 and was a strong proponent of equal opportunities for girls. Diane was the first woman elected to the Clay County Commission and served from 1984-2000. Meyer strongly believed that more women should be in elected office and worked to encourage other women to run.

Janet VanAmburg

Bon Voyage to our LWVRRV co-president who will soon be leaving for an extended stay in Greece. She plans to return to Fargo in April, 2003.

Barb Headrick

Congratulations to another board member! Barb was recently chosen to be the chair of the Political Science Dept. at Minnesota State-Moorhead. Unfortunately for us, her new duties will force her to resign as a board member as of July, 2003.

--Carol Sawicki

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