

## A Look Ahead

### Friday, September 5, 2003

12 noon  
First Friday  
Dawson Lounge, YMCA  
400 1st Ave. S., Fargo (next to Island Park)  
*Please note the change of location for this month only.*  
Lunch is available in the Y's cafeteria.  
Please come early enough to be seated by noon.  
HAVA: Making it Easier to Vote.  
Cass County Auditor Mike Montplaisir and  
Clay County Auditor Lori Johnson will explain  
how each state is complying with the Help  
America Vote Act. Bring your favorite election  
judge to lunch!

### Friday, October 3, 2003

12 noon  
(Lunch available beginning at 11:30 a.m.)  
First Friday, Sons of Norway  
722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo  
A Personal Picture of Iraq - speaker to be  
announced

### Tuesday, October 14, 2003

7 p.m. Council Chambers  
Moorhead City Hall  
Candidates' Forum  
Moorhead City Council

### Thursday, October 16, 2003

7 p.m. Council Chambers  
Moorhead City Hall  
Candidates' Forum  
Moorhead School Board

### Tuesday, November 4, 2003

**Moorhead City Elections:**  
Council & School Board

### Friday, November 7

12:00 noon  
(Lunch available beginning at 11:30 a.m.)  
First Friday, Sons of Norway  
722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo  
What's Keeping Them Up At Night?  
Top issues facing local law enforcement  
Police Chiefs Arland Rasmussen, Chris  
Magnus and Grant Weyland

### Friday, December 5

12:00 noon  
(Lunch available beginning at 11:30 a.m.)  
First Friday, Sons of Norway  
722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo  
Health Care legislation  
Speaker: Former MN Congressman and U.S.  
Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland,  
President, Communicating for Seniors.

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## President's Letter

It is hard to believe it is August already. We just finished canning chokecherry jam and syrup which is still a big favorite with our kids. I have peaches coming in next week from Colorado. I usually freeze half of the lug so we have peaches in the winter.

I am excited about the programs that the First Friday committee (Mary Davies, Peggy Jensen, Cindy Maritato, and Nicole Bergeron) are putting together for this fall. You will be hearing from Suzanne Dobbins and Lois Altenburg about a new time and meeting place for the membership meetings this year. The league board had its planning meeting the middle of July to start looking at ways we can better meet the needs of our members and communities during the following year. The board was delighted by the news release from Mayor Bruce Furness in which he cited the LWVRRV's recommendations from the study on appointments to boards and commissions. I want to take this time to congratulate everyone who was involved with this study.

As I receive information from the state and national office, I will forward the information on to you via e-mail. If I don't have your e-mail address please send it to me at jkv1943@juno.com. The board is always receptive to any suggestions you might have so don't hesitate to contact me.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the First Friday meetings and the membership meetings. Enjoy the rest of your summer and I will see you September 5th at the YMCA (the location for the September meeting only).

*Regards,  
Janet Van Amburg President, LWVRRV*

### **Mission Statement:**

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.

### **Diversity Statement:**

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.

### **A Local League Position Gets Results**

If you've always been interested in being more involved in local government, applying for a post on a city of Fargo board or commission just got easier.

Fargo has updated and expanded its web site. The site now includes a page that offers citizens the chance to apply for membership on city boards and commissions electronically. The Getting Involved web page ([www.cityoffargo.com/getting-involved](http://www.cityoffargo.com/getting-involved)), explains the functions, meeting times, etc. of the various city boards and commissions that accept citizens' applications for membership. It also includes an application form that can be completed online and gives users the ability to send in their resume electronically.

At its 2002 Annual Meeting, the LWVRRV adopted a position on local boards and commissions. Among other suggestions, the position contains the following statements:

*The LWVRRV supports an open appointment process to the boards and commissions which serve our community.*

The citizenry can be encouraged to participate through:

- Use of a formal application form.
- Use of the City Web sites to explain the application process and provide online application forms.

When announcing the creation of the new Getting Involved web page, Fargo Mayor Bruce Furness said, "We appreciate the suggestions of the League of Women Voters on how we can make it easier for citizens to take part in their government."

If you would like to be considered for an appointed position with the city of Fargo, now you can fill out your application online and it will be kept and considered as openings occur in the future.

## **WVRRV Board News...**

### **New Board Members**

#### **Peggy Jensen**

I joined the LWV in 1980 and was very active in both the Porter County, Indiana LWV (Pres., V.P., Voter Editor, Voters Service, etc.) and the Indiana State LWV (Board Member, Voter Co-Editor). I've been out of the country for the last 8 years and am anxious to get involved in LWV again. I'm looking forward to helping increase our visibility in the local area and to help develop and promote our First Friday Program Series.

#### **Nicole Bergeron**

I was first introduced to the League in college. Suzanne Dobbins and Barbara Headrick explained the mission of the organization and encouraged me to get involved. I believe strongly in the principles of the League and very much wanted to be a part of it. While on the board, I hope to help increase the understanding and participation of the democratic process in our region.

### **Board Briefs**

The Board of the LWVRRV held its annual planning meeting July 16th. One topic that was discussed was the need in the community for some sort of concise guide to local government. People in the community often are not sure of where to go and who to contact when they have a problem or concern that local government could address.

The Board agreed that this was a project that the League could undertake, with the help of other local agencies.

## Observer Corps

### Fargo School Board

On June 10, the School Board voted to approve the third draft of the Long-Range Facility Plan which included almost all the recommendations from the community planning task force except the establishment of criteria for closing old facilities and building new ones.

Important features of the plan include the acceptance of the following configuration model:

- Grades K-5 in elementary schools,
- 6-8 in middle schools, and
- 9-12 in high schools throughout the city.

In order to move forward with this plan, replacement of the current Agassiz Middle School facility, extensive remodeling of Discovery School and the eventual construction of a new elementary school in the southwest would be required along with other adjustments. The time line discussed at this time was ten years. The Board Briefs (6-10-03) state that "both the time line and the pathway to achieve the vision may be revised due to demographic changes or other issues."

The criteria for closing old or building new schools was discussed by the board in a work session held on July 8. The Fargo City Planning Commission and staff provided input. The board appears to be moving slowly on this potentially heated area of the planning process. City Planner Jessica Thomasson will be invited to an upcoming meeting to discuss "revitalization initiatives." The closing/construction criteria will be revised by Lowell Wolfe to include points raised in the board discussion.

At the August 12 board meeting, speedy action toward the fulfillment of the long-range plan commenced with approval of the purchase of land for an eventual elementary school on the corner of 42nd St. S. and 44th Ave. SW. The Fargo Park Board will co-own the property contributing half the purchase price and part of the tax bill. (Forum, 8-13-03). The Forum article mentions that the long-range plan includes a projected date of 2007 for the new elementary school and the new middle school, which would be considerably inside the ten year time line mentioned above.

--Audrey Richmond, *Observer*

### Fargo City Commission

The Fargo City Commission room, as well as the Mayor and Commission offices, are now located in the second floor area above the new addition to the Civic Center. The Commission held its first meeting in the new facility on August 4th. The much improved sound system and audio-visual capabilities should make Commission meetings easier to follow for those attending in person or watching on cable television. The room also has four times the capacity of the old chamber. In the past, when more controversial issues were to be discussed, City Commission meetings were often standing room only.

### Making It Easier To Vote

Leagues across the country have been following implementation of HAVA...the Help America Vote Act...passed by Congress in 2002.

Resulting from the year 2000 voting problems in Florida, HAVA is more than just getting new voting machines. Each state is required to:

- Provide voters an opportunity to check for and correct ballot errors in a private and independent manner.
- Have a voting system with a manual audit capacity.
- Provide at least one voting machine per precinct that is disability accessible.
- Provide alternative language accessibility pursuant to the Voting Rights Act.
- Have a voting system whose error rate does not exceed the existing rate established by the FEC Office of Election Administration.
- Define what constitutes a legal vote for each type of voting machine used in the state.
- Provide provisional ballots to ensure no individual is turned away at the polls.
- Implement a uniform, centralized, computerized, statewide voter registration database to ensure accurate lists.

Both Minnesota and North Dakota have made their plans available for public review. LWVMN has a letter to the MN Secretary of State on their website outlining some concerns with the Minnesota plan. LWVMN asked whether the new machines will be capable of adapting to new election systems such as ranked and cumulative voting processes.

Come to the September First Friday (in the Dawson Lounge at the YMCA) to hear how the 2004 elections may be different than in the past. Speakers include Mike Montplaisir, Cass County Auditor, who serves as chair of the ND

HAVA Planning Committee and Clay County Auditor Lori Johnson who will answer questions on procedures in Minnesota. You will hear about DREs (direct response electronic) voting machines, EDR (election day registration), provisional ballots, "second chance" voting, and VVPBs (voter verifiable paper ballots). You won't want to miss this meeting.

To read a League of Women Voters-United States informational piece on the controversy surrounding the use of DREs, check their web site at:  
[www.lwv.org/where/promoting/votingrights\\_hava\\_drevm.html](http://www.lwv.org/where/promoting/votingrights_hava_drevm.html)

### **2003 Moorhead Elections**

Moorhead voters will elect four City Council members and four School Board members on November 4th. Filing for the spots runs from August 26 to September 9th.

The League of Women Voters and Chamber of Commerce will hold candidates' meetings as follows:

October 14, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers  
Moorhead City Hall  
City Council Candidates

October 16, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers  
Moorhead City Hall  
School Board candidates

*"Never doubt that a small group  
of thoughtful committed people  
can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that  
every has."*

*Margaret Mead*