

Voter

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.

September 6, 2002 12:00 noon

First Friday, Sons of Norway
Meet with the Mayors-- A chance to hear from and question the mayors of West Fargo, Fargo and Moorhead

September 12, 2002 7:30 p.m.

Membership Meeting
Fargo Public Library Meeting Room
Topic: DNet and Voters' Service

September 12, 2002 6:30 p.m.

LWVRRV Board Meeting preceding the above membership meeting

October 4, 2002 12:00 noon

First Friday, Sons of Norway
Food Safety Issues Today
Speaker: Brian Kramer , Farm Bureau

October 10, 2002 7:30 p.m.

Membership Meeting
Fargo Public Library Meeting Room
Topic: Wind Energy in North Dakota

November 1, 2002 12:00 noon

First Friday, Sons of Norway
Understanding Election Polls
Speakers: Drs. Jim Danielson and Phil Bauman, MSUM
Political Science Department

CANDIDATE FORUMS

Fargo: Check the League website or **DNet** for details of time and place

Moorhead: F-M Chamber of Commerce, Senior Connections and MN-AARP are joining LWV in sponsoring candidate forums at the Hjemkomst Center on:

- Thursday, Aug. 29, 2:30-4 p.m. Sheriff Candidates
- Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2:30-4 p.m. Candidates for House Seats 9A and 9B
- Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2:30-4 p.m. Senate District 9 and any contested Clay County races

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I write this president's letter without the help of our co-president, Janet Van Amburg, who has been ill the past several weeks. We all wish Janet a full recovery.

As summer comes to an end, we find ourselves gearing up for another year of League activities and opportunities. Make the commitment to get involved! Whether it is attending the monthly membership meetings, Voter Service, Observer Corps or First Fridays, you won't be disappointed.

We'll start our First Friday meetings on September 6th with the Mayors of West Fargo, Fargo and Moorhead. This will certainly be a lively and interesting discussion.

Our next membership meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 12th at the Fargo Public Library. The membership meetings are an opportunity to discuss League activities, studies and items of community interest. Mark your calendars!

I wish each of you a wonderful autumn and hope to see you soon!

--Janice Jones, Co-President

LEAGUE PRESENTS POSITION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

At its July meeting, the LWVRRV Board adopted a local position on city appointed boards and commissions as reached by member consensus in June. The position calls for an open appointments process, diversity on appointed boards and commissions and strengthening the integrity and effectiveness of boards and commissions. The committee presented this position to Fargo and Moorhead governing boards August 5.

Carol Sawicki made the presentation at the Fargo City Commission meeting. Mayor Furness responded that Fargo has placed ads for board/commission openings in the past, but received more names than they could use. He said there are self-imposed term limits on many of the boards. The city of Fargo already has programs to recognize persons who volunteer to serve in the city. While training for new board members is not done in the city as a whole, each individual board does have training sessions with city staff members. The city officially received and filed the report. Later in the meeting a citizens addressed the commission and mentioned the League report. The Mayor then noted that the city of Fargo keeps a list of interested people to appoint.

Mary Davies presented the same statement to the Moorhead City Council. There were no questions. Mayor Voxland thanked the League for their interest and said they would keep our suggestions in mind. Earlier in the meeting Council Member Rowell had noted the difficulty in recruiting diverse populations for boards and commissions.

Marlene Batterberry is working on approaching the city of West Fargo.

In our position we did say that the League has an obligation to help inform citizens about their government and how they can be involved. In Fargo and Moorhead it is important for League members to let their elected officials know that they are interested in serving on a board or commission and to suggest people who would be good candidates.

LWVRRV will need to monitor the appointment process and continue to encourage greater diversity in appointments. This was a first step in that process. --Carol Sawicki and Mary Davies

BOARD BRIEFS

The board of directors met for a planning session on July 17, 2002. Suzanne Dobbins, Jan Van Amberg and Carla Hartje spoke on their LWVUS National Convention experiences in Florida last June. All agreed that it was a wonderful opportunity.

The following committee portfolios were assigned:

- Finance Development: Kathy Kvalvog
- Voters' Service: Marlene Batterberry, Mary Davies, Jan Van Amberg, Barb Headrick and Carla Hartje
- Public Relations: Julia Jones
- Action: Audrey Richmond
- Voter Editor: Carol Sawicki
- First Friday Meetings: Barb Headrick and Carolyn Bowe
- Membership Meetings: Suzanne Dobbins and Carla Hartje
- Naturalization Ceremony: Margaret Blue and Marlene Batterberry
- Website and DNet: Suzanne Dobbins, Audrey Richmond, Carla Hartje and Barbara Headrick
- Speakers Bureau: Mary Davies
- Annual Meeting: Julia Jones, Jan Van Amberg, Carla Hartje
- Freedom Lecture: Jan Van Amburg

It is hoped that each committee will expand as members sign up to serve.

The board voted to adopt the positions presented to the membership by the Boards and Commissions Study Committee following consensus in June. It was decided to present the positions/suggestions to the Fargo and Moorhead city governing boards. (*See League Presents Position to Local Governments article.*)

Mary Davies will order Minnesota Voters' Guides from LW MN to be distributed this fall. Mary, Carol Sawicki and Carla Hartje volunteered to work on a New Citizen voter education training project this fall.

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, Mary Davies and Margaret Blue

* denotes terms expiring in 2003

Observer Corps

FARGO CITY COMMISSION

AUGUST 19, 2002.

The city of Fargo is working to be proactive in the realm of planning for future growth in the city. There was a widely reported discussion of the proposed annexation of land southwest of the city, and how this might conflict with the planned growth of West Fargo. There were several other items of this nature that were voted on such as rezoning of property in north Fargo on 32nd Ave. (the "pony farm" land). Although this land is not currently owned by a developer, and there are no imminent plans for such a sale, the city planners decided to rezone it now, ahead of time.

The property is currently zoned agricultural although it is surrounded by residential areas. If the property is developed in the future, the new zoning will allow for residential uses only on most of the land with a small commercial strip along University Drive. Because the land is near the airport and the sewage treatment plant, special restrictions regarding the height of buildings and the size of buffer zones were included in the zoning language.

Fargo is also looking forward to growth towards the northwest of the city, near the city of Reile's Acres, since the new horse park will probably create development there. The Growth Plan was amended to include that land in Fargo's extraterritorial area. --Carol Sawicki, Observer

FARGO SCHOOL BOARD

JULY 23, 2002.

Co-chairs Ann Cichy and Jim Nelson of the Fargo Long Range Planning Committee for School Facilities, presented final recommendations to the Fargo School Board. The report contained two sections: Facility Planning Guiding Principles in rank order and the committee's actual recommendations for facilities upon which consensus was reached.

The seven guiding principles included preference for:

- Class size: Elementary, 17-22; Secondary, 23-25
- School Size: elementary, 200-400; Middle school, 600-800; High school, 900-1200
- A single grade configuration across the city
- Travel of less than 1 mile to or from elementary school or a maximum of 15-20 minutes on a bus and less than 1-1/2 miles from middle, junior or high school and a maximum of 15-20 minutes on a bus
- A return of kindergarten programs to the elementary school across the city
- Transportation of students to under-populated schools as opposed to building new or closing schools.
- Community use of schools

Realizing that their recommendations have significant policy implications and that several will require further feasibility studies, the committee reported the following preferences for facilities:

- A single grade configuration.
- Movement of kindergartners back into elementary schools (in keeping with principle #1).
- At least three middle/jr. high schools-- the number currently maintained by the district.
- Replacement/major renovation of Agassiz Middle School-- specifically, the committee recognizes the need for improving this facility and recommends replacement of all or components of the building on the same or a new site.

In addition, the committee requested that these facility related policies be adopted:

- A broad-based, proactive process be developed and maintained for continuing involvement of school and community in the facility planning process.
- Demographic evaluations should be established as enrollment and population changes.
- The Facility Planning Guiding Principles should be used as a filter for any future decisions regarding facilities including but not limited to renovations, new construction and school closings
- Policies should be put in place and published by the Board of Education providing criteria for opening and closing schools which are in keeping with the Guiding Principles.
- Before execution of any elements within the facility plan, a complete and thorough feasibility study be conducted to ensure the best possible solution to the facility needs of the community. This study should include site feasibility studies, boundary and feeder pattern analysis, budget implication analysis, busing plans, traffic studies and assessments of existing building conditions.

The above recommendations are edited from the lengthy report prepared by consultants DeJong and Associates which details the process and resources used in drawing the conclusions presented. A longer condensation than appearing here will be available at the First Friday meeting.

The school board seemed receptive to the report. William DeJong and and Carolyn Staskiewicz of the consultant firm DeJong and Associates, Inc. were present at the meeting and provided additional comments. In response to a question, Dr. DeJong said that in his judgment the time line for the implementation of the total plan would be about five to ten years. Surely, various aspects will not be accomplished quickly. There was little unfavorable reaction expressed at the meeting to the consultants or the process through which they guided the committee and community.

Changes to current facilities are still in progress as school starts. Construction is underway at North High School and Clara Barton Elementary. This will be the first year for the joint operation of Hawthorne (grades K-3) and Clara Barton (grades 4-6) schools.

--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

A call to Co-President Jan Van Amberg on August 22 revealed that she is home after two weeks in the hospital with high fever and pain. There has been no diagnosis but after five weeks her symptoms are finally gone leaving her very weak and also bruised from many IVs. We wish her well.

We send condolences to longtime active League member, Alice Hauan, whose husband, Jim, passed away last month. Alice and Jim had spent the past winter in Seattle but had returned to Fargo shortly before Jim's death.

Congratulations are due League member Arlette Preston who has begun a four year term on the Fargo School Board. We know from Arlette's previous service on the city commission that she is not afraid to question actions when she feels it is necessary.

We extend our appreciation to retired School Board members Mari McCullough and Kim Brust for their service to the community as well as former City Commissioner Gib Bromschenkell for his many contributions to the city.

Special thanks to Finance Chair Kathy Kalvog for her fund raising ideas and follow through. Most recently she managed the LWV rummage sale in Oak Grove Park on August 17.

LEAGUE PROGRAMS

Voters' Service Forums

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