



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), they do so at 11:30 a.m.

November 1, 2002, 12:00 noon
 First Friday, Sons of Norway/Understanding Election Polls
 Speakers: Drs. Jim Danielson and Phil Baunian, MSUM Political Science Department

Election Day, November 5, 2002, Polls open: 7:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

Check the LWV web site: www.lwvnd.org, and [Dnet.org](http://dnet.org) for information on candidates. (Just type in your zip code.)

November membership meetings:
 None

November 18, 2002, 6-7:00 p.m.
 LWVRRV Board Meeting Monte's Restaurant 220 Broadway, Fargo

Post Election Party (Following the board meeting)
 7:10:00 p.m. For winners, losers, LWV members & guests. Hors d'oeuvres, cash bar (cover charge \$7.50 in advance; \$10.00 at the door).

December 6, 2002, 12:00 noon
 First Friday, Sons of Norway
 Food Safety and Bioterrorism
 Speaker: Catherine L. Jagne, NDSU Food Safety Microbiologist

December 12, 2002
 LWV Board Meeting: 6:30-7:30 p.m.
 Membership Open House: 7:30 p.m.

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CANDIDATE FORUMS

LWV sponsors candidate forums

Moorhead Area – held at the Hjemkomst Center

- August 29: Clay County Sheriff Candidates
- September 18: Candidates for House Seats in 9A & 9B
- October 16: Candidates for Senate in District 9 & Clay County races

These forums were videotaped and copies will be given to Eventide Nursing Home, Moorhead High School and the Hawley, MN public access TV station.

West Fargo Area – held at West Fargo City Hall

- October 16: Candidates for ND Districts 13 & 27

Videotape reruns will run on West Fargo Channel 30 at 1:00, 4:00, 7:00 and 10:00 p.m. Thursday through Sunday until the election. Channel 2 in West Fargo will also run the forums on October 27, 30, 31 and November 1 and 2. Watch the scroll for exact times.

CableOne will run the tape for District 27 as portions of the district are in Fargo. Both districts are in the West Fargo School District.

Fargo Area Candidates & Issues Forums – held in the Fargo City Commission Chamber and rebroadcast on CableOne (Channel 2)

- October 17: Candidates for ND District 41 and a discussion on Measure 2 (Lottery) – rebroadcast October 19.
- October 22: Candidates for ND Districts 11, 21, & 45 – rebroadcast October 25th at 5 p.m.
- October 24: Candidates for Cass County States Attorney and a discussion of Measure 3 –Youth Investment Initiative. It will be rebroadcast October 26th at 2 p.m.

A league thank you to all our partners in presenting the candidate forums and to our faithful and dedicated forum volunteers!

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

Hello Fellow Leaguers.
 My trip to Itasca with my husband to experience the beauty of the fall colors in that area of Minnesota has left me invigorated and my spirit renewed.

I want to thank Mary Davies for the proposal that she submitted to LWVMN for a Martin and Brown Foundation Grant. Because of her efforts, the LWVRRV received a \$300 grant to be used for candidates' forums in Moorhead. Remember that you can also visit DemocracyNet on the Web for information on local candidates and issues. To do so, type in www.dnet.org. All you need to do is enter your zip code.

My trip to Miami with Suzanne Dobbins and Carla Hartje for the 45th National Convention of LWVUS was an inspiring event that I will never forget. There were so many interesting and informative forums to attend. In addition to the Plenary Sessions, I attended forums on Community Outreach, Membership and Election Administration Reform.

Most importantly, I met many fascinating people from all over the United States. Thank you all for giving me this opportunity.

--Janet VanAmburg, Co-President

LWVUS LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH

(League official position on the UN: "The U.S. should work actively and constructively within the UN system, exercising diplomatic leadership in advance of decision-making.")

September 27, 2002

Dear Mr. President:

The members of the League of Women Voters across the country were deeply shocked by the attacks of September 11, 2001 on the United States. Since the League firmly believes in international cooperation to solve world problems, we strongly support multilateral action to protect against further such attacks against any nation, particularly those that may involve nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. We, therefore, urge you to work with the United Nations to develop clear policy goals and actions designed to protect against these threats.

Over the past year, the grassroots members of the League nationwide have reviewed, updated, and reaffirmed our long-established position in support of the United Nations. For many decades League members have strongly supported the role of the United Nations in developing, maintaining and protecting peace around the world. We believe that the United Nations should be an important component of U.S. foreign policy. We support U.S. policies that strengthen the UN's capacity to solve global problems and believe that the U.S. should work actively and constructively within the UN system, exercising diplomatic leadership in advance of decision-making.

Working with the UN provides the United States with many foreign and domestic policy advantages.

- First, it ensures a full and exhaustive debate of a range of alternative policies and actions.
- Second, it builds unity of purpose and resolve by clearly defining the objectives to be fulfilled.
- Third, it assures the world that the U.S. is not acting solely for its own benefit while reassuring the American people that the U.S. is not acting alone.
- Fourth, it provides the legitimacy of international law.
- And fifth, it increases the chances of long-term success through international peace-keeping and nation building efforts. As was demonstrated when coalition forces ousted Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait, working with the United Nations can enhance achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals.

We urge you to follow that precedent.

Sincerely,

--Kay J. Maxwell, President

BOARD BRIEFS

The LWVRRV board met on September 12 and October 10 in the Fargo Public Library meeting room at 6:30 p.m. September. Co-President Julia Jones announced she was planning to attend the LWVUS UN briefing on the Status of Women's Rights Around the World. The board agreed to subsidize her airfare, registration and meal for this conference. At the October meeting, Jones reported briefly on this event. She said that women from the LWV in many different countries are looking to the LWVUS for leadership in their quest for improving their situations. She also talked about some of the presentations at the briefing, saying that a discussion on the women of Afghanistan was particularly moving. We are all looking forward to hearing in more detail about this conference at some later date.

For information about our November post-election party & silent auction, the December holiday membership open house, as well as the schedule for upcoming board meetings, see A Look Ahead on the front page.

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 Battersby, 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 LIBRARY BOARD

At its October meeting, the Fargo Library Board met with Tom Henman, a representative of LSSI, the Maryland company that has been running the Fargo Public Library since January 2001. As part of the negotiations on a contract for the next two years, there was much discussion about the board's need for more timely and complete fiscal accounting from LSSI than they had been receiving. The contract has not yet been finalized or approved by the Library Board.

--Carol Sawicki, Observer

FARGO SCHOOL BOARD

At its September meetings, the Fargo School Board devoted much time to discussion of the seven guiding principles recommended by the steering committee for determination of school facilities in the city. The following state the principles as accepted by the board in comparison to the originals:

- 1. Class Size: The wording was changed to preference for average class size of, primary-21 or fewer; intermediate-22 or fewer; secondary-core academic classes of 26 or fewer. This wording qualifies the original somewhat.
- 2. School Size: The statement applies only to elementary and secondary construction (new schools). It now states that elementary construction should be based on 3 to 4 sections per grade level (rather than 200-400 students per school), middle/junior high school construction for 600-800 and high school construction for 900-1200. Grade configuration would effect the population size of new and old schools.
- 3. Single Grade Configuration: A single-grade configuration across the city was acceptable but there was little agreement about what it should be or how to implement it.
- 4. Travel: Preference for 1 mile or less to or from school at all grade levels was accepted (down a half-mile for middle and secondary schools) but the maximum bus time was raised to 30 minutes from 20 for all levels.
- 5. Kindergarten: Return of kindergarten programs to elementary schools across the city was amended to read preferred...when feasible.
- 6. Under-populated Schools: Interestingly, this statement now reads that children should attend under-populated schools as opposed to building new schools. This eliminates reference to transporting children to these schools as in the original. Mention of closing schools is also omitted. (Note: Whether this demonstrates a commitment to keeping small inner city schools open remains to be seen.)
- 7. Community use of schools is supported. In addition, the board added its own principle: Provide quality education for all students and suitable space, resources, staffing and educational opportunities in all district schools.

The four specific facility recommendations have not been accepted or rejected as yet. The administration and the three board members who served on the steering committee, Dave Langemo, Arlette Preston and Don Faulkner, have been asked to begin development of test cases based on the guiding principles and facilities recommendations so as to demonstrate concrete ways that facilities could be organized to fulfill the community's preferences. Grade configuration would be the variable in the cases. In essence, this research would commence the feasibility studies suggested by the steering committee. The board has appointed member Don Faulkner to maintain communication with the steering committee as work on its recommendations continues. Items in quotation marks in this article are from Faulkner's report. He feels that the test cases will be ready for review in about two months. At that time it may be possible to adopt the guiding principles and the facilities recommendations officially.

--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

League member Mavis Bennett was recently honored by the Greater North Dakota Association with its Community Leadership Award for Service. Congratulations, Mavis.

Member Cheryl Bergian became a new full-time position in June as the salaried Director of the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition. The office is funded by a Bremer grant for three years. NDHRC is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations formed to address human rights issues in North Dakota.

Former LWVRRV President Billi Jo Zielinski and husband Mark are both working in Minnesota state government in St. Paul. Their address is 2004 James Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105.

NEW VOTER TRAINING

On October 15th, LWVRRV Board members, Mary Davies and Carol Sawicki conducted a new voter training session at the Cultural Diversity Resources office in Moorhead.

Sample ballots and fact sheets about voting procedures in Minnesota and North Dakota were distributed to about a dozen people attending the meeting.

There were many good questions from the group, not just about the mechanics of voting, but about the American political system in general.

We hope to make this training a regular and growing part of the league's service to our communities.

MISSION TO CUBA

At the October First Friday meeting we welcomed Brian Kramer of the North Dakota Farm Bureau as well as a number of Farm Bureau members as guests. Kramer was fresh from a visit to Cuba, where he was part of a delegation from North Dakota investigating potential trade with the country. The trip grew out of a U.S. Trading Conference in Cancun, Mexico last January.

Kramer explained that an agency named Alimport buys all agricultural products for Cuba. Many North Dakota products such as flour and beans are just what it is looking for. Kramer and others traveled to Cuba at the end of July taking with them samples of what North Dakotans had to offer for trial. They even took two bison by request. Alimport offered contracts. All contracts are negotiated in US dollars. Cash is to be tendered before the cargo leaves North Dakota.

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, 85% of the Cuban economy was driven by that of the USSR. With its breakup, Cuba has had real economic problems and has had to seek other trade outlets. Since the Soviet collapse, Cuban farmers are allowed to keep a small percent of what they earn at farmers' markets, but the government still keeps a large part of the profit. Retatives in the United States send U.S. dollars. The delegation was taken to a huge "dollar store" where there were many products of different kinds and all of the transactions were in dollars.

In touring processing facilities, Kramer found that equipment there was up to date but not plentiful. For example, a pasta mill he visited had good quality equipment but only one of them. Poor transportation is also a problem.

Cuba is really impressed in tourist dollars. While in Havana, the delegation was taken on a tour of sites that are intended only for tourists. Natives are forbidden to frequent them. One of the guides told Kramer that these places did not represent real everyday life for most Cubans. The wealthiest people are those who deal with tourists.

Because of travel restrictions, the delegation entered the country on a chartered Gulfstream Air plane which was licensed to enter Cuba. Kramer feels that travel restrictions should be removed and the trade embargo lifted as long as cash is paid. Meanwhile, the North Dakota commodities have been shipped.

--Audrey Richmond