

Veterans Vote!

The election season is upon us and it is important for Veterans to vote, as it is for every other group of individuals. It is apparent that Moorhead voters are taking an interest in their candidates. At the candidates' forum for Moorhead mayor and city council, we had almost 150 people attending. The Moorhead library ran out of seating space, our sound system was not quite strong enough for all attendees. All three mayor candidates' answered audience questions in the first hour followed by the city council candidates with one stating her position on a video and one no show. The questions were far reaching and informed. The forum was moderated by a ND person, the League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley president. Tonight, 4 October, candidates for state house district 4A and 4B will be taking your questions at 6:30 followed by the candidates for Clay County commission and sheriff at 7:30. The best chairs are the cushioned ones up front, so come early. Moorhead Community Access Media records and replays all our forums and program information can be found on their website – www.moorheadaccess.org. As co-coordinator of the MN forums, I've found all candidates very responsive and willing to make schedule changes to attend these forums. Apparently Moorhead cares.

Campaign time is also a time of political ads, many slamming their opponents. Please take the time to sort the truth from the somewhat true and mostly untrue. If an ad sounds too outrageous to be true, it probably is. Related to that, I heard an exceptional talk over Minnesota Public Radio from the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis. The presentation called Hackers, Terrorists, Russians and Fake News was by Clint Watts, a former FBI agent with expertise in electronic espionage operations, misinformation campaigns, fake news and the manipulation of social media. Audio of the speech can be found at www.westminsterforum.org. In his speech, Watts explains how social media manipulators are able convince people to wire money to phony organizations, recruit young people to join the Islamic State and produce false 'news' reports.

From a personal point of view, I have Facebook friends from both the extreme right and left. Recently one of those Facebook friends posted that Barrack Obama was the son of Satan and that Donald Trump was anointed by God to be our president. The Fargo Forum also had a letter to the editor claiming the same about Trump. I have no way of verifying either claim. However, some of the extreme claims can be verified by using fact checking sites such as snopes.com, factcheck.org and politifact.com. You must be careful when attempting to convince others that what they posted was false. As Clint Watts recommended in his speech, please check and verify stories before believing them. Also get your news from more than one source. If you are left leaning, check out FoxNews' version of stories. If you are right leaning, check out MSNBC's version.