



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

January 2008

President: Pat Walter
President-Elect: Patte Newman
Secretary: Peggy Struwe
Treasurer: Corrie Kielty-Wesely
Voter Editor: Jim Johnson

Calendar of Events

January 15 (Tuesday): 7:00 p.m.

The Death Penalty:

The View from Both Sides

Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street

See article at right.

January 17 (Thursday): Noon

Lunch & Learn,

US Bank Bldg 20th Floor,

13th & M.

Guest: W. Don Nelson,

Publisher of *Prairie Fire*

See article at right.

January 24 (Thursday): 5 - 7 p.m.

LWVLL Open House

Hawley Bed & Breakfast,

545 N 25th Street

Refreshments provided

March 31 (Monday): Time TBA

Debates, St Paul UMC

Details TBA

W. Don Nelson to Address January 17 Lunch & Learn

W. Don Nelson, former State Director for Senator Ben Nelson, will discuss his latest venture as publisher of *Prairie Fire* at the Lunch & Learn luncheon Thursday, January 17. *Prairie Fire*, a new monthly progressive newspaper, offers thoughtful, bipartisan discourse about all matters relating to public policy and the arts.

Open to the public, the January 17 luncheon will be held at noon on the 20th floor of the US Bank Building, 13th and M Streets. The cost is \$8.00 and includes lunch, tax and gratuity. Reservations are required by noon Monday, January 14 and may be made by contacting the League Office by e-mail at lwv-ne@inebraska.com or by phone at 475-1411, including name, the number of reservations requested and phone number or e-mail address.

Nelson, who worked in the private sector as an investment banker and lawyer, has long-served in the public sector. In addition to being State Director for Senator Nelson, he worked for former Congressman Doug Bereuter, served as chief policy advisor for former Nebraska Governors Norbert Tiemann and Jim Exon and for former Wyoming Governor Ed Herschler, and was chief of staff for former Governor Bob Kerrey. For much of his career, he has been responding to reporters' questions. In his new role, he is the inquirer.

Lunch & Learn events are held on the third Thursday of each month from September through May, at noon on the 20th floor of the US Bank Building, 13th and M Streets. All luncheons are open to the public with advance reservations. The February 21st Lunch & Learn speaker will be Leslie Levy of the Nebraska Attorney General's office discussing identity theft.

Public Forum on Death Penalty to be held January 15

The League of Women Voters of Lincoln-Lancaster County is sponsoring a free public forum entitled, "The Death Penalty: The View from Both Sides." The featured speakers are J. Kirk Brown, Solicitor General, Nebraska Department of Justice and Alan E. Peterson, Attorney, Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather. A question and answer period will follow opening statements by the speakers. The goal of the forum is to provide an informative discussion with two different perspectives on the death penalty. Do plan to attend and bring a friend or two.

Open to the public without charge, this informational event will be held Tuesday, January 15, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Church of Lincoln, 6300 A Street. Please enter through the west door.

Brown has been the principal attorney on death penalty issues for the State of Nebraska for more than twenty years, covering the administrations of four Attorneys General. He has won two death penalty cases before the Supreme Court of the United States. Peterson, with forty years experience as an attorney, has worked on various criminal cases as appointed attorney, including the death penalty case of Carey Dean Moore, starting in 1988 and still continuing. Additionally he has done civil rights trial work and served as counsel to the Central Interstate Low-level Radioactive Waste Commission. Both men are graduates of Lincoln Northeast High School and the University of Nebraska Law College.

The forum is co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Lincoln-Lancaster County Education Fund, First-Plymouth Congregational Church United Church of Christ Peace and Justice Team, and Unitarian Church of Lincoln Social Action Committee.

For information about the LWVUS position on this issue, see Martha Hunter's article on page 2 of this newsletter.

Come to an
LWVLL Open House!
Hawley Bed & Breakfast
545 N. 25th Street, Lincoln
Thursday, January 24, 5:00-7:00 p.m.
Refreshments Provided. Bring a friend!

Death Penalty Abolition: A New Year's Resolution for Nebraska?

The League's Position

By Martha Hunter

At the National Convention 2006, delegates voted to adopt the following League position on the death penalty: **"The LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty."** This decision was made in concurrence with a position adopted by the LWV of Illinois.

All state Leagues may thus take action opposing the death penalty in their states.

I attended this Convention and, being persuaded by the arguments provided by the Illinois League, voted for this position. Not all members of the Nebraska delegation were so persuaded. Our state remains divided on this issue.

Information is vital to the understanding of this policy and to the development of community consensus. The forum planned on January 15 [see calendar] is part of the League's educational effort to inform citizens about death penalty issues, both pro and con views. Our speakers will share their expertise with the public and respond to questions and answers. I hope you can attend. The death penalty is likely to be a major legislative topic this year. Have you made up your mind about this issue? New Jersey just passed a law abolishing the death penalty. Should Nebraska do the same?

Martha Hunter has been persuaded.

Background information can be found online at: <http://www.lvil.org/deathpenalty.asp> and will be distributed at the Forum.

HAVA (Help America Vote Act) Grant 2007-08

LWV-NE received notification from Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale that it was awarded a HAVA (Help America Vote Act) Grant for the 2007-08 year. This follows a very successful first year of funding in 2006-07, under the management of Project Director Lois Poppe.

The 2007-08 grant will be managed by Project Director Nancy Intermill and will focus on the following activities:

- 1. DVD/Web Video Targeted to 18-25 year old audience**
 - Explain Early Voting
 - Encourage getting involved in the political process – It's Your Future!
 - Make community presentations statewide
 - Distribute DVD copies to these groups
- 2. Speakers Bureau**
 - The purpose of the Speakers Bureau is to inform and educate all Nebraska citizens about their voting rights, voting law, the voting process, and why voting is important in a democracy
 - Develop and distribute a Speaker's Bureau brochure
 - Respond to requests for speakers, statewide
- 3. Toll-free Call In Line for Voter Information**
 - Much like the toll-free line that was available in 2006, this will be available to voters on a 24/7 basis, giving them access to information about the voting process and providing them with an opportunity to have questions answered on an individual basis.
 - The line will be answered 4 weeks prior to the primary and general elections by volunteers in the Omaha League office.
- 4. Radio Blitz**
 - Nebraska Radio Network, KFAB in Omaha, KLIN in Lincoln (covering the entire state)
 - Inform listeners of LWV-NE Statewide Speakers Bureau
 - Prompt people to visit LWV-NE website and view web video (#1)
 - Inform about Early Voting
 - Encourage people to vote

Volunteers are needed! Have you always wanted to be involved in a video production? Would you love to have an opportunity to practice your public speaking skills? Do you like the idea of helping people with questions on the voting process? Are you someone with hidden broadcasting talents? Local League presidents have been asked to identify a contact person from their group for the project. If you are interested in helping with the project, please contact Nancy Intermill at 402-484-5657, intermill@earthlink.net. Volunteers will be reimbursed for mileage, meals and lodging expenses that are incurred in activities associated with the grant.

December Lunch & Learn

The December Lunch and Learn was attended by more than 40 people who came to hear Mary Jane Nielsen's discussion on her books about Lincoln. She also showed slides of "O" Street as represented at the turn of the century and through the 1920s, 30s and through the 60s. The two books she discussed were *A Street Named "O"* and *Life In Lincoln—As We Remember It*. We all got more than we expected in several ways. Mary Jane gave a delightful talk. She very generously gave away two of her books. And her slide show was a big hit because it brought back many fond memories for many of us. She has a new book scheduled to come out next fall that will be a continuation of the *Life in Lincoln* book, so stay tuned. The luncheon was a delightful opportunity to relax and to get away from the hectic hubbub of holiday shopping and to enjoy a relaxing time with friends.



Mary Jane Nielsen

Photograph courtesy of Dick Dienstbier

LWVLL receives grant for \$10,000 worth of advertising from Time Warner Cable

Time Warner Cable has announced that they are awarding \$10,000 worth of in-kind advertising to the League of Women Voters -Lincoln/Lancaster County. This will include the production and air of a 30-second public service announcement (PSA) about LWVLL on 35 cable channels.

The League of Women Voters-Lincoln/Lancaster County thanks Time Warner Cable for their generous gift.



Pat Walter and Tari Hendrickson Sweeney receive award from Ann Shrewsbury, Time Warner Cable's Public Affairs Manager, at the 2007 Fall Community Grant Open House.

Photograph courtesy of Time Warner Cable

The Lincoln Lancaster *Voter*
League of Women Voters
The Apothecary, Suite 215
140 North 8th St.
Lincoln NE 68508
475-1411
lwvll@neb.rr.com



Time Dated Material
Please Do Not Delay

The 2008 Winter Lecture Series at the Unitarian Church Africa: Challenge and Hope

January 20: Professor Robert Hitchcock, Chair of Anthropology at Michigan State University, will give the keynote entitled “Emerging Africa, Development, Democracy, and Environmental Change.”

January 27: Professor Betty Levitov of Doane College will discuss seeing Africa through the eyes of students in her lecture “Africa on Six Wheels: A Semester on Safari”

February 3: *No WLS (conflict with Super Bowl).*

February 10: Professor Wesley Peterson of Agricultural Economics at UNL, with some of his invited colleagues, will form a panel to discuss “Prospects for Economic Growth and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

February 17: Professor Joseph P. Akpan is a political scientist who teaches at several universities. He will discuss “Oil Resources and Human Rights in Africa.”

February 24: Professor Janet Poley, President of the American Distance Education Consortium, will present “Revitalizing African Relationships in Education: A RARE Opportunity.”

March 2: Assoc. Professor of Agronomy at Iowa State University, Andrew Manu, will present “Food Sustainability and Natural Resource Management: A Matter of Survival.”

March 9: The final dinner will begin at 6 p.m., and will be followed by a panel of experts discussing other African issues.

Each session except for the March 9 dinner will begin at 7:00 p.m. and last for two hours. The first hour will feature a presentation by the guest lecturer, followed by a break. The remainder of the time will be an opportunity for questions and dialogue. The March 9 dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed at 7:00 p.m. by a panel presentation.

Additional parking is available in the south parking lot of the Catholic Social Services building (formerly Clark Jeary) across Eldon Street from the church.

This event is sponsored by the Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Church and the Nebraska Humanities Council.