



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

July 2008

President: Patte Newman
President-Elect: Mary Boschult
Secretary: Carol Connor
Treasurer: Corrie Kielty-Wesely
Voter Editor: Jim Johnson

City Charter Amendment Study Group

The Charter Amendment Study Group will begin work this summer. The volunteers for the group are Jan Gauger, Jim Johnson, Patte Newman and Mary Boschult. First steps for the group will be to draft a work plan and timetable for the work which will include defining the question-should city officials be allowed to contract with the city and what is the appropriate tool for allowing, prohibiting or limiting such contracts.

We will also be gathering information and identifying expert sources for input to the study group. The findings will be presented to the Board and then to the membership when they are completed.

If you are interested in participating in the study group or have input or information that you think would be helpful to us in this study, please contact me or any member of the group.

Mary Boschult
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LWVLL Member Death

The League has received word of the death of longtime LWVLL member Alberta Clifford. Ms. Clifford died in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on July 6.

Watch for a detailed tribute in the August *Voter*.

Editor's Note: The following article was forwarded by a LWVLL member; it's going around the Internet. We enjoyed the article and made an attempt to locate the author; after a Google search turned up articles attributed to persons in Texas, Montana, New York, and Virginia, all of whom apparently have a newly enlightened friend named Wendy, our Voter editor gave up trying to locate the source. Whoever wrote it, we think it speaks to the issue of why women should care to vote!

Why Every Woman Should Vote

This is the story of our Grandmothers, and Great-grandmothers, as they lived only 90 years ago. It was not until 1920 that women were granted the right to go to the polls and vote.

Thus unfolded the 'Night of Terror' on Nov. 15, 1917, when the warden at the Occoquan Workhouse in Virginia ordered his guards to teach a lesson to the suffragists imprisoned there because they dared to picket Woodrow Wilson's White House for the right to vote. The women were innocent and defenseless. And by the end of the night they were barely alive. Forty prison guards wielding clubs and their warden's blessing went on a rampage against the 33 women wrongly convicted of 'obstructing sidewalk traffic.'

They beat Lucy Burn, chained her hands to the cell bars above her head and left her hanging for the night, bleeding and gasping for air. They hurled Dora Lewis into a dark cell, smashed her head against an iron bed and knocked her out cold. Her cell mate, Alice Cosu, thought Lewis was dead and suffered a heart attack. Additional affidavits describe the guards grabbing, dragging, beating, choking, slamming, pinching, twisting and kicking the women.

For weeks, the women's only water came from an open pail. Their food--all of it colorless slop--was infested with worms. When one of the leaders, Alice Paul, embarked on a hunger strike, they tied her to a chair, forced a tube down her throat and poured liquid into her until she vomited. She was tortured like this for weeks until word was smuggled out to the press.

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So, refresh my memory. Some women won't vote this year because - why, exactly? We have carpool duties? We have to get to work? Our vote doesn't matter? It's raining?

Last week, I went to a sparsely attended screening of HBO's new movie 'Iron Jawed Angels.' It is a graphic depiction of the battle these women waged so that I could pull the curtain at the polling booth and have my say. I am ashamed to say I needed the reminder.

All these years later, voter registration is still my passion. But the actual act of voting had become less personal for me, more rote. Frankly, voting often felt more like an obligation than a privilege. Sometimes it was inconvenient.

My friend Wendy, who is my age and studied women's history, saw the HBO movie, too. When she stopped by my desk to talk about it, she looked angry. She was--with herself. 'One thought kept coming back to me as I watched that movie,' she said. 'What would those women think of the way I use--or don't use--my right to vote? All of us take it for granted now, not just younger women, but those of us who did seek to learn.' The right to vote, she said, had become valuable to her 'all over again.'

HBO released the movie on video and DVD. I wish all history, social studies and government teachers would include the movie in their curriculum. I want it shown on Bunco night, too, and anywhere else women gather. I realize this isn't our usual idea of socializing, but we are not voting in the numbers that we should be, and I think a little shock therapy is in order.

It is jarring to watch Woodrow Wilson and his cronies try to persuade a psychiatrist to declare Alice Paul insane so that she could be permanently institutionalized. And it is inspiring to watch the doctor refuse. Alice Paul was strong, he said, and brave. That didn't make her crazy. The doctor admonished the men: 'Courage in women is often mistaken for insanity.'

Please, if you are so inclined, pass this on to all the women you know. We need to get out and vote and use this right that was fought so hard for by these very courageous women. Whether you vote Democratic, Republican or independent party - remember to vote.

History is being made.

Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to LWVLL president Patte Newman after Newman's article in the June Voter. (See page 2 of the June newsletter, which you can find online at: http://lincolnleague.org/Voter/Voter_2008_06.pdf.) Ms. Newman appreciated the letter and thought it contained advice that our readers could use, so we're reprinting here, with permission of the author, Amy Tuttle. (Amy did stipulate that these are her thoughts and she would not want them to be taken as telling the whole League what to do.)

Open Letter to Patte Newman, LWVLL president

I am delighted, Patte, that League intends to focus on specific local issues, an aspect of League's stated purpose which has been neglected for some time. I think you will find it to be exciting, rewarding, and of real service to Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Of course a major reason for this long-time neglect was lack of woman power. Like many community organizations, League was shocked and disoriented when its core of capable women was rapidly diverted into fulltime employment. League's founding impetus, equal rights for women, had become a source of weakness.

But the members who remained are remarkable women, well educated, confident, experienced in working with people and with government agencies. They plan well and are excellent at managing their time. If a topic interests them, they know how to attack it, and how to recruit and excite others as well. With your good leadership, good days are ahead.

Here are some thoughts:

A local League studies issues which may be influenced by local legislation, discusses and publicizes the results of its study, and presents even-handed testimony before appropriate local agencies.

Attacking an issue effectively requires:

- Defining the problem (of course).
- Limiting study of the problem to aspects which can be changed by local action.
- Learning which individuals or agencies have power to initiate change, and how they may be influenced to make that change.
- Becoming familiar with local regulations and legislation which may pertain to the problem.

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- Learning what individuals and groups support and oppose solutions.
- Learning what study and action has been taken by others, and how we may cooperate.
- Attempting appropriate action.
- Analyzing completed experience as a basis for more effective future action.

In the past this has required much energy and time, perhaps in short term, from one woman with a strong interest in the field.

Problem: Members' lack of deep knowledge about the issue. Find people who are already involved in the field, either professionally or as volunteers.

If the issue excites, it will draw capable people, and is an excellent way to recruit and retain capable members.

The more we learn about a topic, the more interesting it, and related issues, become.

The example of a modest effort will inspire other work.

Public testimony is good publicity for League. But be well prepared, and prepare to be attacked. If we're not opposed, perhaps what we're saying is not so very important.

Long ago a League member, interviewing a county official, disclaimed his estimate of League's power, to which he ruefully replied, "Well, I'd sure rather have you with me than against me." We never know how far League's influence is felt.

— Amy Tuttle, LWVLL member

Know your Board Members

Again this month, *The Voter* features short bios of some of our LWVLL Board members. This month: Peggy Struwe and Tari Hendrickson. Watch for more articles next month!

Name – Tari Hendrickson

Hometown – Lincoln, NE

Family Status – married - to Clay Naff in November of 2007. Together, we now share 2 daughters and 3 sons ranging in age from 22 to 13.

Favorite TV shows – I don't spend time watching tv - movies are another matter!

Favorite Movies – As of this week - "*Then She Found Him*" directed by and starring Helen Hunt

Mode of transportation - I drive a '99 Dodge Caravan "kind of a white whale..."

Last / current book read – *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini - what a storyteller - please pick up this book or *The Kite Runner* and prepare to be amazed.

Most Prized Possession – Family photographs

Something everyone probably knows about me - My entrepreneurial itch was scratched for a 12 year period while growing a retail idea into 4 Lincoln locations - Paper Parade & Letter Perfect.

Something few people know about me – I played Mary Poppins in a statewide production in 1967.

Current Pets – Our two beloved cats (Boo boo & Kiwi) have been relocated with friends following my severe cat allergy diagnosis. Sigh.

Secret Passion – I can't tell you or it won't be a secret. It has nothing to do with traveling the planet, experiencing new places or making new friends.

Surprising prior occupation or hobby? I'm not sure if anyone knows I'm a Registered Jeweler (trained at Sartor Hamann and the Gemological Institute of America in Santa Monica, CA) and that I find gemstones absolutely magnetic.

What's the craziest thing you've ever done? I changed majors 4 times and took 6 years to earn my undergraduate degree. I still believe that I'm a dabbler, not a dilettante.

Name – Peggy Struwe

Hometown – McPherson County- Ringgold/Stapleton High School in Logan County

Family Status – Married a guy I met on a blind date - John Struwe who was in the USAF at the time. He later got his degree, masters and Phd in poultry science and ran the poultry farm at UNL until it closed. He also taught in the Japanese Agriculture Training Program for 7 years during that time. Then he worked for 12 years for NeighborWorks Lincoln and is trying to retire full time. He thinks he is going to hunt and fish all the time.

One son Robert who owns the bar Sherries in Milford. He is married to Deb Borer; they have 2 children, Elizabeth who is 6 and Rebakah who is 4.

One daughter Leeza Moyer who teaches nursing at UNMC Lincoln campus and working on her Phd. She has 6 children, Barret who is 11(his twin Cyrus was injured at birth and died 5 weeks later), Genevieve who is 10, Susanna who is 8 and Katherine, Elisabeth and Franklin are 6. She is divorced from her husband and has a significant other.

My husband picks up the 6 kids from school usually 3 days a week and fixes supper for them.

Favorite TV show – *Masterpiece Theater, Monk, CSI, NCIS, Matlock, Perry Mason, Sewing with Nancy, Perriot, Miss Marple, etc*

Favorite Movie – *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, any good murder mystery

Continued Column 2

Peggy Struwe – Continued from Column 1

Mode of transportation (what kind of car?) – Chrysler Van, because we need the seats for grandkids, but would rather drive a small pickup

Last / current book read – Light reading; murder mysteries, etc.

Most Prized Possession - My great grandfather's bible, my sewing machine

Something everyone knows about me – I say what I think and stand up for it in public.

Something few people know about me – I worked my way thru nursing school and graduated as RN when no one thought I would. I wasn't a very good student but I am persistent.

Current Pets – We have 3 rescue dogs. They are terribly spoiled.

Secret Passion – I love flowers and work in the yard for flowers so I have them to cut. I love painting, but don't have enough time to do it like I want to.

Surprising prior occupation or hobby? – When I was in high school, I broke horses for people.

What's the craziest thing you've ever done? - We decided to get married 1 month after meeting but we waited 9 months to actually get married.

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