



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

November 2008

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

## Calendar of Events

**November 20 (Thursday): Noon**

Lunch & Learn,  
US Bank Bldg 20<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
13<sup>th</sup> & M.

Topic: *Drug Court: Is it Working?*  
*See article at right.*

## **November Lunch & Learn to Address Topic of Drug Court**

*Drug Court: Is it Working?* is the topic of the League of Women Voters' November 20th Lunch and Learn. The Drug Court, established in June 2001 with a federal implementation grant and local law enforcement block grant monies, is now funded by a combination of state and county funds. Judge Karen Flowers and Mr. Jared Gavin, Lancaster County Adult Drug Court Coordinator, will discuss how the court has worked since its inception. A question and answer period will follow.

Judge Flowers is a graduate of the UNL College of Law and was in private practice for almost twenty years before being appointed as Judge on the Court of Industrial Relations. She was appointed District Judge in 1996. Prior to joining the Drug Court, Mr. Gavin worked as a Juvenile Probation Officer and Juvenile Services Consultant for the State of Wyoming Department of Family Services. He holds a Masters in Social Work from the University of Wyoming and is a provisionally licensed Master Social Worker and Mental Health Practitioner in the State of Nebraska.

Lunch & Learn events are open to the public. The luncheon will be held Thursday, November 20th at noon on the 20th floor of the US Bank Building, 13th and M Streets. The cost is \$9.00 and includes lunch, tax and gratuity. Reservations are required by noon Monday, November 17th and may be made by contacting the League Office by e-mail at [lww-ne@inebraska.com](mailto:lww-ne@inebraska.com) or by phone at 475-1411. Include your name, the number of reservations requested and contact information: your phone number or e-mail address.

The League of Women Voters 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 December 18th Lunch & Learn speaker will be Ed Zimmer, speaking on "*Lincoln in Black and White: Our Community's Early Diversity.*"

**Editor's Note:** *At a recent LWVLL board meeting, we discussed ways of increasing our pool of Voter Registration participants. Building on an article which Patte Newman had published in the October Voter, we decided to solicit anecdotes from people who have done registrations, in hopes of convincing other LWV members to join our corps of registrars. The following article, by Tari Hendrickson, is the second in our series. If it inspires you to sign up, contact our Voter Registration Coordinator, Mary Boschult, at [mary4now@aol.com](mailto:mary4now@aol.com) or 483-0415 to find out how you can help.*

## **I'll Always Remember...**

I'll always remember... the well meaning young woman at a local high school who pulled out her cell to phone home for information she needed to complete her registration form. "Mom, are we Republicans or Democrats?" Armed with the information she finished her form and handed it to me proudly.

I'll always remember... the middle aged woman at the grocery store who wandered back to the table once it had cleared of other registrants to ask me, "Can I still register to vote even if I never have? This is the first time I've ever WANTED to vote!" She was visibly thrilled when I told her that she could.

I'll always remember... the neat, but modestly dressed man who shyly asked in a hushed voice, "I heard somewhere that ex-felons can now vote again, is that true? You won't believe it, but I'm one. I'm really looking forward to being able to cast my vote again."

—Tari Hendrickson

## **A word from your LWV president:**

What an absolutely incredible year this has been in politics on both the national and state scene! From the Democratic Caucuses held in Nebraska in February, a lengthy and close primary finish between a woman and an African-American man for that party's nomination and a woman vice-presidential candidate on the Republican ticket; those historic "firsts" in this election helped raise enthusiasm to levels I've not seen in my lifetime. Some of us remember visits by presidential candidates Bobby Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy to small towns like Beatrice Nebraska back in 1968 and nothing since. This year national candidates or their families visited Nebraska several times. Some thought Nebraska's relevance on the national scene was due to caucuses or the possibility of split electoral votes. What mattered was that thousands came out to listen and later, to wait in line to vote. The goal of any democracy should be to prove to citizens that their voice has been heard and their vote does matter. This year, as provisional ballots are tallied and recounts in some races are done, we can say with certainty, that EVERY vote did make a difference in Nebraska.

The other notable item for our state, not so widely announced but a historic milestone as well, was the election of not one, but two African-American women to our Unicameral. This League member proudly offers her personal congratulations to Brenda Council and Tanya Cook who also made Nebraska history in this year of firsts.

When things run smoothly, it's easy to miss the fact that hard work and behind-the-scenes organization is usually part of that success. For those of us registered in Lancaster County, voting was quick and convenient. Record numbers voted early this year either in person or by-mail. The turnout for traditional precinct voting on November 4 was high. Both methods were easy, efficient and painless. For that we can thank the staff and volunteers at the Lancaster County Election Commissioner's Office. They do an extraordinary job which oftentimes goes unnoticed. Suffice it to say that with all the options to vote and the ease of using any of them, there truly is no excuse not to vote.

The other instrumental piece in making this democracy thing work smoothly is the act of registering people to vote. Again, heartfelt thanks need to be extended to Mary Boschult, our local League President-Elect and Voter Service Chair. Over the past year, Mary worked closely with Maura Kelly Tolzin, LWVLL board member and Deputy Election Commissioner to provide voter registrations at 31 sites in the spring and another 38 in the autumn. Mary signed up over 142 volunteers to work in two hour increments at grocery stores, businesses and other public places to make it easy for citizens to register, re-register or request absentee ballots. Both Mary and Maura filled in numerous times when volunteers could not be found. These diligent efforts deserve sincere thanks from not only League members who benefit from the financial funding the League receives for these efforts, but from residents of Lancaster County who benefit from the convenience of this service.

For those who might be interested in how the numbers changed for Lancaster County, the following figures are provided. In January, 2008 there were a total of 169,609 citizens registered to vote in Lancaster County. The breakdown by parties was 75,077 Republicans, 61,221 Democrats, 1,556 Nebraska Party, 391 Greens, 31,364 Nonpartisan.

As of October 28, the numbers increased by 9,373 or 5.53% to a total of 178,962. Breakdown was 75,689 Republicans, 68,496 Democrats, 1,475 Nebraska Party, 431 Greens, 102 Libertarians and 32,789 NP.

Obviously there are many other registration efforts going on countywide, but the numbers should illustrate that getting out there does make a difference. For any and all League members who contributed to these efforts to register new voters, thank you on behalf of the League.

## October Lunch & Learn

Our October LWV Lunch and Learn program was entitled “Why should I vote for your party?” Representatives of the Republican, Democratic, and Green Party organizations addressed the topic of why their candidates should be considered when we stepped into the polling booth on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Photographs on this page are from that program.



Frances Mendenhall,  
Green Party



Mark Fahleson,  
Republican Party



Vince Powers,  
Democratic Party

## Know your Board Members

Again this month, The Voter features a short bio of an LWVLL Board members. This month: Carol Connor. Watch for more articles next month!

**Name** – Carol Connor

**Hometown** – New York City, NY

**Family Status** – Married to Jim who is retired.

**Favorite TV show** – News Hour

**Favorite Movie** – Casablanca

**Mode of Transportation** – Honda Accord

**Last/current book read** – Last book *Improbable Cause* J. A. Jance

Current book – *The Thirteenth Tale* Diane Setterfield (One Book One Lincoln)

**Most Prized Possession** – Family and close friends

**Something everyone knows about me** – I love to read mysteries, especially cozies.

**Something few people know about me** – When I was very young my father had temporary employment in Louisville, KY and when I returned to NYC I spoke with a southern accent. That disappeared quickly. I don't know how many times people in Nebraska have asked me - Are you from the East.

**Current pets** – Julius (Maine Coon cat) and Marcus (Norwegian Forest cat)

**Secret Passion** – It's not so secret but I love Ireland and stories about Ireland

**What's the craziest thing you've ever done** – I have done some stupid things in my life but I can't think of anything that I would consider crazy. Example, when I was 16 my friend and I were at Jones Beach very early (before lifeguards on duty) and the current was pretty rough. We decided to go in the water and we both got caught in the undercurrent and it seemed like forever before I could get to the surface. We were both lucky to get out of the ocean alive.

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Time Dated Material  
Please Do Not Delay

### **UN-L Lecture Series on Democracy**

In 2008/2009, there will be a group of lectures on democracy at the UN-L Student Union, 14<sup>th</sup> & R Streets in Lincoln. Schedule is as follows:

- Dec 9, 7:00 p.m.  
Professor Thomas McGowan: *Educating for Democracy: The real and the Ideal of the American Public Schools.*
- Jan 21, 2009, 7:00 p.m.  
Professor David Forsythe: *Democracy and Human Rights in the Context of Terrorism.*
- Feb 19, 7:00 p.m.  
Professor Ted Hamann: *The Challenge of U.S./Mexico Transnationalism to the Linkage Between Schooling and Democracy.*
- March 11, 7:00 p.m.  
TBA
- April 1, 7:00 p.m.  
Professor Anna Shavers: *Citizenship: the Significance of Borders, Rights and Identity.*