



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

December 2009

President: Patte Newman  
President-Elect: Mary Boschult  
Secretary: Carol Connor  
Treasurer: Margaret Remmenga  
Voter Editor: Jim Johnson

## Calendar of Events

**December 17 (Thurs.):** Noon  
LWVLL Lunch & Learn.

Guest: Ingrid Kirst  
Topic: *Growing, Buying,  
Using Local*

US Bank Bldg 20<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
13<sup>th</sup> & M Streets, Lincoln.

Reservations required by  
Monday noon, Dec. 14.  
*Reservations must be  
honored.*

Contact the League office  
by email at

[lwv-ne@inebraska.com](mailto:lwv-ne@inebraska.com)

or by phone at 475-1411

Include your name, the  
number of reservation  
requested, contact  
information (phone and/or  
email) and if you want a  
vegetarian meal.

*See article at right.*

**March 9 (Tues.):**

LWVNE Legislative Day,  
at the State Capitol.

All morning, followed by a  
luncheon at the Governor's  
Mansion.

Luncheon speaker:

Kerry Winterer, CEO

Nebraska Department of  
Health and Human Services

*Watch for more information.*

## **League of Women Voters Lunch and Learn to focus on Growing, Buying, and Using Local**

At the Thursday, December 17th, League of Woman Voters Lunch & Learn, Ingrid Kirst, Executive Director of Community CROPS (Combining Resources, Opportunity and People for Sustainability) will address the topic of "*Growing, Buying, Using Local.*" She will discuss what and how this local non-profit organization benefits the community and how it relates to the importance of purchasing local foods.

After graduating from UNL, Ms. Kirst began working at a large nonprofit organization, gaining experience with program management, grant writing and nonprofit organizations. In 2005, Ingrid was able to combine her nonprofit skills and her love of gardening by becoming the director of Community CROPS. She found she had a lot to learn in the transition from being an employee of a large organization to running her own, but feels it's been a great experience.

In her free time, Ingrid, a life long resident of Lincoln, enjoys working in her vegetable garden, cooking and reading. As a volunteer, Kirst is a board member of Open Harvest Natural Foods Cooperative and a tutor with Lincoln Literacy.

Lunch and Learn events are open to the public. Ms Kirst will speak on December 17 at 12 noon on the 20th floor of the US Bank Building, 13th and M Street. The cost is \$10 and includes speaker, lunch tax and gratuity.

**Binding reservations** are required by **noon Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>**, and may be made by contacting the League office by e mail at [lwv-ne@inebraska.com](mailto:lwv-ne@inebraska.com) or by phone at 475-1411. Include your name, the number of reservations requested contact information (phone and email) and whether you want a vegetarian meal. All reservations are expected to be honored.

The League of Women Voters Lunch & Learn events are held on the third Thursday of each month from September to 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 January Lunch and Learn will feature Milo Mumgaard, Senior Policy Aide to Mayor Beutler, speaking on *Plans for Stimulus Funds.*

## **Yearbook corrections and updates**

Please note the following corrections and/or updates to the 2009-2010 LWVLL Yearbook, which was distributed earlier this fall. Please update your lists.

**Ann Wahl:** Change e-mail address to: [awahl@neb.rr.com](mailto:awahl@neb.rr.com)

**Marge Young:** Change e-mail address to: [marge1942@windstream.net](mailto:marge1942@windstream.net)

If you come across further yearbook information that should be corrected, please contact the Voter editor at [LWVLL@neb.rr.com](mailto:LWVLL@neb.rr.com) with the name and the change.

## November Lunch & Learn Hears from Advocate for Retail Industry

The November speaker for Lunch and Learn was Jim Otto, who refers to himself as an advocate rather than a lobbyist. Otto, who works as a lobbyist at the Nebraska State Legislature, discussed a few of the retail trends. He spoke about two in particular that he and other retail lobbyists are working on in legislatures across the country.



1. The need for legislatures to establish an agreement among all states to require collection of sales tax by online businesses and 1-800 businesses. States lose millions by this process of buying goods. Nebraska's figure is 34 million.
2. Gift cards are another area in which retail lobbyists see a need for legislation. When a gift card, (let us say a \$30 gift card) is not used/or is lost, as many are, after three years that amount of money goes into the unclaimed property coffers in the State Treasury. It stays there with no chance for the \$30 amount to be claimed by either the receiver or the giver of the gift card. Otto and others would like to see removal of the mandatory three-year expiration dates and removal of fees attached to gift cards. There will be legislation on this issue, perhaps this year.

Observations that Mr. Otto made about working in the Legislature:

Otto pointed out that because we do have a unicameral form of government in Nebraska, there is more civility among the politicians here than in many other states.

Even though the legislators know the political party of each legislator that does not necessarily mean that they vote along party lines.

The general public seems to have less respect for our legislators now than in past years.

The legislators themselves joke about getting paid "\$1,000 a month and all the food they can eat" because it is not against the law for people and organizations to give them food items, but it is illegal for them to accept other types of gifts (beyond a \$50 limit).

He feels that we have an honest group of legislators who do the best they can for their constituents, but he admits that they each have their own ideas on issues and that businesses and organizations supporting a particular legislator because of that legislator's ideas on a particular issue.

League is to be praised, according to Otto, for focusing on issues and for educating the public on particular issues. He sees the League's role as one of counteracting the TV ads that try to sway the voters in favor of one candidate over another.

A question asked during the Q & A section was how the Restaurant Association feels about the possibility of being charged an extra 2% in order to pay for the proposed new downtown arena. Otto said that many of them don't like it at all, because there are restaurants across the city that will have to pay the extra costs with no benefits to themselves. If you have a business in Northeast Lincoln or East Lincoln it is very likely that those businesses will not gain any benefit from the 2% tax increase.

## Report on Lincoln's Midtown Village

Midtown Village is the talk of the town! Lincoln leaders are excited about this new model of neighbors helping neighbors, both because of its self-directed approach, and because of its cost efficiency. Communities across the nation are looking at existing Villages to see how they might want to develop their own similar organizations.

A unique feature to Midtown Village is its inclusive nature. Our membership is not based on age, so younger individuals and families can benefit from this "social cooperative" approach just as readily as elders. Our boundaries are from 27<sup>th</sup> St. on the west, to 63<sup>rd</sup> St. on the east, O St. on the north, to Normal and South streets on the southwest and south. Anyone living in this area is eligible to join the Village, whether homeowner or renter.

Why would younger people be interested? Let me pose a hypothetical:

Ms. XYZ is a single mother to a 4 year old daughter. On Monday morning Ms XYZ has a meeting scheduled for which she has been preparing for months. While getting her daughter ready for daycare, she notices a rash that she instantly recognizes as Chicken Pox. She needs emergency daycare! Since she is a member of Midtown Village, Ms. XYZ calls and relays her need. The Village arranges for another member to babysit her daughter in her own home, and it costs her nothing! If she were to look for a formal service to help her out, Ms. XYZ would pay at least \$15 an hour, and it is likely that it would take precious time out of her morning to find that sitter!

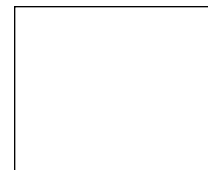
Others might be happy to have someone that they can call when they need help doing something around the house. Maybe you need help getting your gutters cleaned out, or you have a leaky toilet – you can call the Village and ask for help anytime! If we can find a volunteer to help you, there will be no charge! All of our volunteers and vendors are fully vetted.

We are also engaged in developing a project with the City of Lincoln that will allow us to help you make your home more energy efficient. As part of the Cleaner, Greener Lincoln project the City will identify Green Zones where recommendations will be made to help residents make small changes in their homes that will result in lower energy bills – which means you keep more of your money in your pocket!

Residents of all ages living within the Midtown Village boundaries are invited to join the Village. Strategic partnerships with vendors and agencies allow us to ask for discounts that will be passed on to you. Beyond services, we strive to make the Village a community of which you are an integral part. We will hold social activities and educational programs, as well as help facilitate affinity groups. Bridge club, anyone?

If you haven't heard a presentation about Midtown Village, but are interested, please consider hosting a small-group membership event in your home. The program takes no more than an hour and we simply ask that you invite your friends and neighbors to attend. We can provide the refreshments. If you cannot invite people to your home, we can arrange for an alternate location for your guests. Please call Nancy Intermill at 304-8757 to schedule your small-group information event, or ask to be invited to someone else's event. Visit our website at [www.midtownvillagelincoln.org](http://www.midtownvillagelincoln.org) for additional information.

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