



# Bulletin

League of Women Voters  
of Greater Omaha  
1941 South 42 Street  
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Omaha, NE 68105-2945  
Phone: 402-344-3701  
[www.omahalwv.org](http://www.omahalwv.org)

**League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha**

A non-partisan political organization open to all persons 18 years of age or older

**November 2009**

Volume 52 No 4



## **LWVGO Luncheon at Venice Inn Thursday, November 12, 2009 – 11:45 a.m.**

**6920 Pacific Street**

**WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE  
LEARNING COMMUNITY?  
COME TO HEAR ABOUT HOW YOU ARE  
AFFECTED BY THIS GOVERNMENT ENTITY.**

Reservations are due by Monday, November 9, 2009

Our speaker is Ms. Lorraine Chang, a member of the Learning Community elected Board. She was elected in 2008 to represent mid-Omaha. Come to find out how the government entity affects your taxes, your children/grandchildren's education, and the challenges faced by this new group.

Ms. Chang will present a power point review of the Learning Community and answer your questions about what the Board is doing. Among the challenges they are facing, is a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the taxing authority spelled out in the Learning Community Act.

Please come to learn more.

### **CALENDAR**

Thursday, October 29, 8:00-1:15, UNO Alumni Hall. Running and Winning.

Wednesday, November 4, 2009, 12 noon, Big Mama's Kitchen, 45 & Bedford: Hungry Club. See page 5.

Thursday, November 5, 11:00 a.m., League Office: LWVGO board meeting.

Saturday November 7, 11:00 a.m., New Life Presbyterian Church, 4060 Pratt St.: Memorial service for Wilda Stephenson. See page 4.

Tuesday, November 10, 7 p.m., Helen Fisher's home: LWVGO book group. See page 3.

Thursday, November 12, 5:30-8:00 p.m., First Unitarian Church, 3114 Harney: Wine, Cheese, & Choice. See page 6.

Monday, November 16, 5:30 p.m., Sgt Pepper's, 1501 N. Saddle Creek Rd.: LWVGO dine and discuss. See President's message.

Thursday, November 19, 11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m., Salvation Army Kroc Center, 2825 Y Street: Lunch and guided tour. See page 3.

Thursday, November 19, 5:30 p.m., Scooters in the Old Market, 12th & Howard (1123 Howard Street): Health Care Forum. See page 3.

Tuesday, December 8, 7 p.m., Helen Fisher's home: LWVGO book group. See page 3.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

We'll be celebrating Thanksgiving soon and I'm indeed thankful when I reflect on the past year in League. We've done a lot of good through our Speakers Bureau, our voter registration efforts, our presence at naturalization ceremonies, and our advocacy. We've gained visibility and that has helped to bring in new members—people who are in turn thankful they found an organization that lets them use their talents to accomplish worthy goals.

I mentioned advocacy earlier; that reminds me to express my appreciation to members who don't agree with every program position that the League takes. Health care reform, for instance, is an issue that will not achieve complete consensus anytime soon. The LWVUS conducted a study in the early 90's that was broad enough to be interpreted as favoring a public option nearly 20 years later. Our members who do not approve of the inclusion of a public option have been respectful in their comments and I am grateful.

Our members have been generous with their dollars too, whether in support of the Shrimp Feed, the Ghana Scholarship Fund, the Running and Winning program, or the various other causes we work for each year. We'll be listing donors' names next month.

Most members received the '09-10 LWVGO yearbook on October 17. Due to a glitch at the printer's there are two sections that are not the most up to date—the LWVNE program and the LWVGO bylaws. If you have email you should have received the updated documents from me. The printer has provided us with paper copies too so let me know if you'd like one.

At our most recent member orientation a new member asked about meetings, specifically meetings not during the day. Good point! Therefore we are going to begin casually with dinner and discussion and see how it goes. The time will be 5:30 unless participants want to change that. For now, make a note of Monday, November 16, at the Saddle Creek Sgt Peffer's—5:30. The discussion this month will center around women in positions of power. I'd appreciate a call or email if you plan to come, but if you show up unannounced we'll certainly let you join us.

Linda Duckworth, President, 932-4174

## **VOTERS' SERVICE REPORT**

FALL 2009

Barbara Tripp, Voter Service Chair, 2009-10

This summer and fall, the Voters' Service Committee provided voter registration at 3 venues--- quite a change from last year prior to the General Election! The list of our assignments:

- August, 2009: Omaha Education Association – Barb Davis and Pat Galusha registered new OPS teachers.
- August 2009; Nebraska Methodist College – Mary Ann Sturek and yours truly registered students on Women's Equality Day.
- September 2009: Metro Tech (North) Campus – Annette Conser worked with a local activist on Constitution Day.

Even though we have not had a lot of requests, we expect that to change in the spring as the mid-term election season gets in gear. If you are new to League and Voters' Service is your interest, please contact me. Training will be provided by the Election Commission Office and we'll put you to work. You get to meet new people, it's fun and gratifying. Join us!

## **All Welcome at Book Discussions**

On Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, the LWV-GO book group will discuss Gretchen Peters' Seeds of Terror: How Heroin is Bankrolling the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The Emmy-winning author, who has reported for the Associated Press and ABC News, extends her analysis of the challenges in Afghanistan and Pakistan beyond the religious and political perspectives to the criminal factors.

On December 8<sup>th</sup> the group will begin discussing Thomas Friedman's Hot, Flat and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution – and How It Can Renew America. Originally published in 2008, the revised edition is due for release the last week of November.

The Omaha Public Library has copies of both of these books, including an audio version of Hot, Flat & Crowded. The Bookworm in Countryside Village offers a 20% discount on book club titles; please let them know you're a League member before the clerk rings up the sale.

All are welcome to join the friendly fun and thoughtful conversation at Helen Fisher's home, beginning at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month. Please contact Anne Shaughnessy or Helen Fisher) if you'd like additional information about the book group.

## **OMAHA PRESS CLUB EDUCATIONAL FORUM**

The Omaha Press Club presents its November Educational Forum at the Salvation Army Kroc Center on Thursday, November 19, 2009 from 11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m. Reservations for lunch and a guided tour of this new facility may be made at [jeaniec@opc.omhcoxmail.com](mailto:jeaniec@opc.omhcoxmail.com) or by calling the Press Club at 345-8008. The usual \$15 lunch/lecture fee remains in effect; individuals must provide their own transportation to the Center at 2825 Y Street.

## **HEALTH CARE REFORM FORUM**

Every family has a story when it comes to health care  
Omaha Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority, Inc. and the League of Women  
Voters of Greater Omaha  
present

Coffee and Conversation about health care and you  
featuring

Dr. Richard O'Brien, the region's leading expert on health care legislation;

Valda Ford, RN;

Jonah Deppe;

and others to be announced

Thursday, November 19, 2009

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. - and beyond -

Scooters in the Old Market, 12th & Howard (1123 Howard Street)

Check web site [www.omahalwv.org](http://www.omahalwv.org) for further details.

Agenda:

5:30 reception and submission of questions

6:00 new and recently updated PowerPoint presentation by Dr. O'Brien

6:50 break

7:00 presentations or reactions by three panelists

7:15 questions and answers

8:00 (optional) small group discussion

## **Wilda Chue Stephenson, Omaha Educator, Dies in Cincinnati**

Wilda Chue Stephenson, 86, died in Cincinnati, Ohio, on October 10, 2009. A former secretary of the board of League of Women Voters and member of its social policy committee, she was a well-known educator in Omaha. In 1964 she became the first African-American teacher of an academic subject in an Omaha public school when she joined the faculty at Central High School. She left that position to become a Team Leader with Teachers Corps, a federally funded program to train teachers for inner city schools.

In 1975 Ms. Stephenson became the director of UNO's Goodrich Program, an innovative, multicultural approach at the college level to provide academic and financial support to low-income students which has a graduate rate equal to or better than the rate for traditional students. In 1981 she became the Senior Community Service Associate with the UNO Center for Applied Research. She retired from UNO in 1985.

Even in retirement, her work supporting educational opportunity continued. Ms. Stephenson took a part-time position as counselor for minority students at Midlands Lutheran College in Fremont, Nebraska and in 1997 was awarded an honorary doctorate by that institution. She served as co-chairman of the Diversity in Education Task Force of Omaha 2000. At UNO, the Wilda Stephenson Internship Program was established to develop future leaders dedicated to serving the community by providing paid practicum placements in non-profit organizations for 10 students annually. This program will carry Ms. Stephenson's legacy into the future.

Ms. Stephenson received numerous awards for her community work, including the YWCA Women of Distinction Award and the United Way Community Service Award. She was an active member first of Calvin Memorial Presbyterian and later of New Life Presbyterian Church. She was the Vice Moderator for Issues of national Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women from 1988 to 1991.

A memorial service for Ms. Stephenson was held in Cincinnati on October 22, 2009. In Omaha, a memorial service will be held on November 7, 2009, at 11 a.m. at New Life Presbyterian Church, 4060 Pratt Street. Memorials, in lieu of flowers, may be sent to the Building Fund at New Life Presbyterian Church, 4060 Pratt Street, Omaha, NE 68111 or to the Wilda Stephenson Internship Program, c/o UNO's Goodrich Program, 6001 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68182.

### **From Peggy Adair:**

I met Wilda Stephenson at my very first League meeting. She was so gracious and welcoming, and she made me feel "part of the group" right away. Wilda was a woman of classic dignity and strength, but she also had this little twinkle in her eye and a sideways look that bespoke of her wit and sense of humor. I am a better woman for having known Wilda, and she will be dearly missed.

LWV is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

LWV is where citizens like you are actively engaged in effecting change on the local, state, and national level.

LWV is an organization where smart, active leaders work to create change in their communities. The community needs everyone to participate in order to be a strong, safe, fair and vibrant place to live.

LWV is involved in shaping the important issues to keep our community strong.

LWV offers a whole new world of opportunities to apply the skills and smarts you've accumulated during a successful career.

As an LWV member, you have the opportunity to contribute in a leadership role through the organization that has a great impact on local, state, and even national issues.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

On Monday, September 21, 2009, LWV-GO held a luncheon at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Papillion. The featured speaker was Marlin J. Petermann, Assistant General Manager of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District. Mr. Petermann delivered a well-prepared and highly informative presentation describing the history of the Papio Creek Watershed Partnership (PCWP) and its intended 3-year implementation plan. He also graciously answered many questions from the audience.

Mr. Petermann described the Papillion Creek Watershed as a tri-county area involving Washington, Douglas, and Sarpy Counties. The PCWP involves most of the communities located within the watershed. The NRD is an integral member of the PCWP, and its mission is to develop and work for regionally common goals of controlling water quantity and improving water quality. Since the 1970's the tri-county area has experienced a marked increase in flooding area and depth due to increased urbanization. The PCWP's long range plan is to utilize both low impact development (LID) measures and regional detention basins to control flooding and protect water quality.

Mr. Peterman noted that Washington County is not a member of the PCWP and has opted to utilize maximum LID measures to control flooding. That option, Mr. Petermann suggested, is not viable for Sarpy and Douglas Counties because exclusive reliance on LID measures for flood control would likely decrease land density and increase urban sprawl and does not address immediate flooding issues. Existing regional detention basins are located at Zorinsky Lake, Cunningham Lake, Wehrspann Lake, Walnut Creek Lake, Shadow Lake, Newport Landing, Youngman Lake and Standing Bear Lake. In addition to regional detention basins, water quality basins protect and improve water by removing about 85-90% of sediment.

Mr. Petermann also discussed the 3-year PCWP implementation plan. The first project will be a flood control project for the West Papio Basin ("WP5"), which will be located near 126<sup>th</sup> & Cornhusker Streets in Sarpy County. The project will include a 130-acre lake. Construction is slated to begin in late 2010. Two smaller flood control structures, WP6 and WP7, will also be developed in the vicinity surrounded by green space to assure public access. In addition to flood control, the newly developed area will provide recreational use of the lake, camping, soccer fields, etc.

Another project in the 3-year PCWP plan is Zorinsky Water Quality Basin #1. The 30-acre basin will be located at West Center Road at Highway 6/81. Basin #1 will serve as a sediment storage area, and construction is proposed to begin in 2011.

A third proposed project is Dam Site #15A to be located at 168<sup>th</sup> & Fort Streets. The site will include a 225-acre lake, which will be surrounded by 2 city parks and one community park. Mr. Petermann mentioned the site may possibly include a lake-front drive and marinas. Construction will probably commence in 2013.

The LWV-GO will continue to monitor these and other natural resource projects in our community. If you are interested in environmental issues, please contact Jeanne Burke at [jeanneburke@cox.net](mailto:jeanneburke@cox.net) or 551-7895.

## **HUNGRY CLUB**

Wednesday, November 4, 2009, 12 noon

Big Mama's Kitchen -- 45th & Bedford

Tom Meradith, Director of Open Door Mission's Men's Center

"Pastor Tom" will speak about homelessness and poverty in the Omaha area, then respond to questions from the audience. Reservations are not necessary; order from the menu upon arriving.

## **MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK**

IT'S NOT TOO LATE! You still have time to nominate that special woman who has made a difference in our community. See our web site, [www.omahalwv.org](http://www.omahalwv.org), for details and a nomination form for the 2010 Making Democracy Work Award. This unique award was created to recognize one special woman in our community and allow LWV to share her success with the city of Omaha. By shining a light on the accomplishments of our award recipient, League has an opportunity to demonstrate that one person can and has made a difference. Make a nomination today! The deadline for the fourth Making Democracy Work Award application is November 15, 2009.



## **Wine, Cheese & Choice**

**Be a guest at a celebration for Pro-Choice Nebraskans!**

Share your stories about fighting for and having reproductive choice.

Thursday, Nov. 12

5:30 pm - 8:00 pm

First Unitarian Church of Omaha

3114 Harney Street

Omaha, NE 68131

RSVP or for more information [trustwomen2009@gmail.com](mailto:trustwomen2009@gmail.com)

Sponsored by the Pro-Choice Coalition of Nebraska.

### **Ways Nebraskans Are Supporting Reproductive Freedom**

#### **Keeping Kids Safe**

Omaha's rate of some STDs among 15-24 year olds are among the highest in the country--in some instances by as much as 50%! Parents and community leaders have been learning what they can do to keep kids safe through a series of educational forums offered by the Pro-Choice Coalition and the Douglas County Health Department's STD initiative. There will be confidential testing available at the next forum in November.

#### **Trust Women**

The weekend of August 28-29, hundreds of Pro-Choice Nebraskans showed their trust for women by supporting Dr. LeRoy Carhart and the Abortion and Contraceptive Clinic of Nebraska (ACCON--Bellevue). We salute Dr. Carhart and his staff!

#### **Members speak up for choice**

With information about relevant bills in the Nebraska Legislature provided by the Pro-Choice Coalition, members speak up and circulate action alerts so your voice is heard at key stages in the Legislative process.

Attend Wine, Cheese & Choice or email [trustwomen2009@gmail.com](mailto:trustwomen2009@gmail.com) for ways you can support reproductive freedom in Nebraska.

**“A Voice for Citizens, A Force for Change”**

**MEMBERSHIP**

We have created two new membership categories; your membership is important to us. For individuals joining for the first time or as a gift membership to a member, introductory membership is \$40 and for Full Time students membership is \$20.

New members

Sancha Corrigan

Jody Neathery-Castro

Nichelle L. Griffith

Ellie Wolcott

Anne and Kelly Walsh

Invite your friends to join the League of Women Voters. Tell them why you belong to League. They will get to know other interesting members and can choose any level of involvement. Our community needs their participation for a strong, safe, and vibrant place to live!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

- Individual Member \$60 \_\_\_\_\_
- Family Member \$90 \_\_\_\_\_ (2 individuals at the same address)
- Introductory, \$40 \_\_\_\_\_ (joining for the 1st time)
- Full Time Student \$20 \_\_\_\_\_

**Support the League's work of mobilizing citizens and influencing policy through advocacy and education.**

\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is a contribution to League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha  
*Checks made to LWV-GO*

\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is a tax deductible contribution to League of Women Voters Educational Fund  
*Checks make to LWV-GO Ed Fund*

Send to  
League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha  
1941 S. 42nd Street, Suite 501  
Omaha, NE 68105-2956

## **CARE CONFERENCE May 5 & 6, 2009**

Many Voices. One Movement - National Conference Celebration  
Ronald Reagan Bldg. & International Trade Center  
Congressional Offices  
Washington, D.C.

The annual CARE Conference commenced with remarks by Helene D. Gayle, Pres. & CEO, CARE USA, on The State of Care – 2009. For the following session, Hill Visits Briefing, participants were divided according to geographic regions of the U.S. (Northeast, Southeast, Central and Western)

From 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. participants had the opportunity to explore in detail one of three legislative issues to be presented on Capitol Hill. (Issues: Empowering Women and Girls by Preventing Child Marriage; Food For All: The World Hunger Crisis; The Human Face of Climate Change)

At the Luncheon Plenary, Wolf Blitzer, CNN anchor, addressed the attendees while they enjoyed a sack lunch. During the afternoon, participants had the opportunity to attend numerous sessions, e.g. Modernizing Foreign Assistance For The 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Defending Girl's Rights: Empowering Girls To Learn And Lead; Connecting The World's Women In The Fight Against Global Poverty; Voices From The Field: A Roundtable Discussion With Humanitarian Aid Workers; etc.

The day concluded with dinner at food stations and an evening celebration in the auditorium with music by Michael Franti and Spearhead; dancing performed by Step Afrika; and the presentation of the CARE Humanitarian award for Global Change to Richard Gere.

On day two for the presentation of issues on The Hill, the participants were grouped by states. Since Nebraska and Kansas each only had three attendees, they joined forces. The Nebraskans championed International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act 2009. Nebraskans and Kansas met with Sen. Johann's staff for a lengthy discussion and later in the Hallways with the Senator for a brief chat and photo op. They had more than half an hour discussion with Rep. Lee Terry in his office on all three issues being championed. Rep. Lee Terry co-sponsored the 2007 International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act, and had been grappling with the Waxman-Markey bill on Climate Change. The group met with the staff of Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS). In the afternoon, the three Nebraskans met with Sen. Nelson's staff and with the Senator in the hall as he raced to a vote. Kansas members met with Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS)

Concluding the afternoon was a Closing Reception with remarks by Sens. Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Richard Lugar (R-IN), and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH).

(CARE is a leading humanitarian organization dedicated to fighting poverty and social injustice. CARE places special emphasis on investing in women and girls because six decades of experience show that their empowerment benefits whole communities. CARE – acronym for: Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere. Began in 1945 as Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, as a consortium of 22 independent American organizations.)

Submitted by Heidi Roth Jung, attendee.

I have inherited a belief in community, the promise that a gathering of the spirit can both create and change culture. In the desert, change is nurtured even in stone by wind, by water, through time.

Terry Tempest Williams

Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be. -- John Wooden



**LWVGO Luncheon at Venice Inn**  
**Thursday, November 12, 2009 – 11:45 a.m.**  
**6920 Pacific Street**

**WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE LEARNING COMMUNITY?  
COME TO HEAR ABOUT HOW YOU ARE AFFECTED BY THIS  
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**Speaker: Ms. Lorraine Chang**  
**Member of the Learning Community Board**  
**She was elected in 2008 to represent mid-Omaha.**

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Please come to learn more.

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Please return this form and your check made payable to LWVGO to:  
LWVGO, 1941 South 42 Street, Suite 501, Omaha NE 68105-2945

**The reservation deadline is Monday, November 9**

Menu choices. Please enter name or initials before each choice.

\_\_\_\_\_ Chicken marsalas \$14.00  
\_\_\_\_\_ Veal Parmesan \$13.00  
\_\_\_\_\_ California grilled chicken salad \$13.00  
\_\_\_\_\_ Eggplant parmesan (vegetarian) \$14.00

The Chicken Marsalas, Veal Parmesan and Eggplant Parmesan all come with a tossed salad, baked potato, pasta, coffee & tea.

The California Grilled Chicken Salad comes with coffee & tea.