



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

February 2024

President:	Cynthia Peterson
VP for Action:	Jean McGuire
Secretary:	Terri Rittenburg
Treasurer:	Dorothy Ramsey
Voter Services:	Jane Witte / Kitty Lozier
Lunch & Learn Chair:	Tari Hendrickson
Membership Chair:	Sandy Blankenship
Voter Editor:	Janet Chung
Facebook Manager:	Kristen Anderson
Website Manager:	Jim Johnson

LWV-LL Voter

LWVLL President shares BOD updates and other highlights

By Cynthia Peterson

There have been changes to the LWVLL Board of Directors that you should know about. First, Treasurer Dorothy Ramsey is resigning once we find a well-qualified replacement. Dorothy has a new passion project that is going to take most of her time and attention. We wish her great success.

Kate Borchman has stepped down as Voter Services co-chair. We persuaded Jane Witte to again join Kitty Lozier as co-chair until we can find another super talented replacement later this year. Jane then persuaded her friend and community volunteer Mimi Wickless to assist with voter registration activities. (Our first event was January 21, 2024 at the Karen (pronounced Ka-REN) festival.) If you'd like to nominate yourself or someone else for Voter Services, please reach out to a Board officer (Cynthia Peterson, Carla Larson, Terri Rittenburg, Jean McGuire).

Becki Gaston-Wise resigned her director-at-large position because of potential conflicts with her day job as Chief Deputy Lancaster County Election Commissioner. Becki has been a valuable asset on the BOD, but we commend her for putting Lancaster County voters first. If you'd like to nominate yourself or someone else for this at-large position, please reach out to a Board officer.

Kat Waters resigned as Vice President and Melanie Lawson as Webmaster, both for personal reasons. They are both talented, creative and principled women and their

contributions will be missed. Kat's remaining term has been filled by Carla Larson. The search is underway for a couple of talented webmasters with WordPress experience. We have one interested party, but we need at least one more so we can future-proof the position. Content creation won't usually be required. However, content updating as well ongoing maintenance will be required. Please reach out to a Board officer with recommendations, suggestions or nominations for Webmaster.

- ◆ While I have your attention, please see articles elsewhere in this newsletter about Lunch & Learn on Thursday, Feb. 1, signing up for action alerts, and our upcoming Program Planning Meeting on Saturday, Feb. 3. **So far, only 15(!!!) people have advised they will attend the planning session. This meeting is important for the future of our League and I hope more will RSVP soon.** Right now, the extended forecast for Feb. 3 is cloudy skies and temps in the upper 40s. I hope that holds true.
- ◆ Something of interest to you might be the [Curtis Lecture on Public Leadership](#) at Nebraska Wesleyan University on Monday, Feb. 5 at 7pm (free).
- ◆ Something else of interest might be the [Ecumenical Legislative Briefing Day 2024](#) on Saturday, Feb. 10 at Christ United Methodist Church in Lincoln (\$).
- ◆ [LWVNE Legislative Action Day](#) is on Wednesday, Feb. 14.

Updates (cont.)

- ◆ Sign up is underway for deputy registrar classes (free) — you need to be certified to register voters. See the article about Voter Services elsewhere in this newsletter. There's discussion about splitting Voter Services into two parts – registration services and voter education (including candidate forums). Please reach out to voterservices@lincolnleague.org if you have thoughts, suggestions, or interest. **We need volunteers.**
- ◆ [Membership renewal](#) is underway. [New members are always welcome.](#)
- ◆ At the January 2024 meeting the BOD voted to support the Protect Our Rights coalition, whose work is now focused on gathering signatures to get a ballot initiative to change the Nebraska Constitution before the voters in November. However, in light of recent developments, the BOD may decide to amend the motion. More information to follow after the Feb. 1 BOD meeting.
- ◆ The inaugural [AI & Democracy Community Summit](#) will take place at the UNL College of Journalism, Saturday, Feb. 24 at 10AM (free).
- ◆ The LWVLL Annual General Membership meeting is Saturday morning, April 20, 2024. More details to come. We're going to need volunteers to make this run smoothly, so please reach out to an officer (Carla, Cynthia, Jean or Terri) if you'd like to help.
- ◆ The second annual LWVLL garden party at Susan Scott's home is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 1, 2024. More info to follow after the weather gets warm and the garden is in bloom.



That's it for now!

Calendar of Events

- Feb 1 (Thursday): Noon – 1PM**
Lunch & Learn
Todd Wiltgen,
Lancaster County Election Comm.
Voter ID Law, Mail-In Ballots
See article on page 3.
- Feb 1 (Thursday): 6PM**
LWVLL Board Meeting
Dino's Storage Conference Room
1945 N. 84th St., Lincoln
- Feb 3 (Saturday): 9AM**
LWVLL Meeting –
Program Planning
See article on page 4.
- Feb 5 (Monday): 7PM**
[Curtis Lecture on](#)
[Public Leadership](#)
Nebraska Wesleyan University
- Feb 10 (Saturday): 9AM**
[Ecumenical Legislative](#)
[Briefing Day 2024](#)
Christ United Methodist Church.
- Feb 14 (Wednesday): 9AM**
[LWVNE Legislative Action Day](#)
Christ United Methodist Church.
- Feb 24 (Saturday): 10AM**
[AI & Democracy](#)
[Community Summit](#)
UNL College of Journalism.
- Mar 7 (Thursday): Noon – 1PM**
Lunch & Learn
Details TBA
- Mar 7 (Thursday): 6PM**
LWVLL Board Meeting
- Apr 20 (Saturday): Time TBA**
Annual Membership Meeting
St. Mark's United Methodist
Church, 8550 Pioneers Blvd.
- May 14 (Tuesday): 8AM-8PM**
Nebraska Primary Election Day

February Lunch & Learn: Registering to Vote 101

Lancaster County Election Commissioner Todd Wiltgen will provide detailed information about voter registration and how the voter registration system is maintained at the February Lunch & Learn. The event is Thursday, February 1, from noon to 1PM, and is free and open to the public throughout Nebraska via Zoom. Membership is not required.

Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Wiltgen's extensive public service included working for a state senator, U.S. Congressman, and U.S. Senator. He also served one term on the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners from 2015 to 2019. Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Wiltgen was the public policy specialist for the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

For over 100 years, the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, has encouraged informed and active participation in government, worked to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influenced public policy through education and advocacy. Membership is open to all. For further information regarding the League, go to www.lincolnleague.org. Those wishing to attend, use this Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89137424915>.

Voter registration training - join the LWVLL team

Are you interested in registering citizens to vote? First, you must be a deputy registrar. Deputy registrars work as agents of the Election Commission to register voters throughout the county. To become a deputy registrar, you must be a registered voter in Nebraska and complete free training provided by the Election Commission.

After completing the training, you will be certified by the Election Commission to conduct voter registration drives anywhere in Nebraska. It's a fun and rewarding experience. You'll be serving your community, AND most importantly, you'll be enabling someone to exercise her/his/their right to vote!

If you're not already a deputy registrar, and this is something of interest to you, LWV-LL Voter Services chair Jane Witte is ready to answer your questions and get you slotted in for an upcoming class. Reach out to Jane at voterservices@lincolnleague.org or phone her at 402-310-2609.





Help Shape the Priorities of our League

Please join your fellow Leaguers for our **LWVLL Program Planning Meeting**

NEW DATE AND LOCATION

When: Saturday, February 3, 2024

Start time: Food and fellowship starts at **8:30 AM**. Meeting starts at **9:00 AM**

Where: Former AAA Nebraska building, Lower Level, 2900 O St. (northeast corner of 29th & O streets). Enter through the glass double doors on west side. Elevator and free parking available

It's been a while since we have reviewed our local positions that LWVLL has developed over the years, so we want to take the time to do just that at this meeting. We also need to hear from you, our members, to help set the direction, priorities, and time commitments of our League for the coming 12-24 months as it relates to Voter Services/Education as well as Advocacy. And finally, we will take time to formulate our feedback to LWVUS on the proposed LWVUS Program that the League membership adopts at each biennial LWV National Convention.

So....

- if you are new to the Lincoln-Lancaster County League and are trying to better understand the work of the League as it relates to Education vs. Advocacy, this meeting is for you.
- If you have a burning issue that you think the League should be working on, this meeting is for you.
- If you just miss meeting with your fellow Leaguers, this meeting is for you.

More information will be sent closer to the meeting date.

What we need from you:

Please **RSVP** your attendance to llvp_action@lincolnleague.org

We need volunteers to bring "breakfast" finger foods. Please email Clare Nelson at clarnelson@yahoo.com if you can help.

SAVE THE DATE

LWVLL Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday morning, April 20, 2024

St. Mark's United Methodist Church

(8550 Pioneers Boulevard)

Upper Fellowship Hall (easy access & free parking)

What is the annual general meeting? It serves as a key forum for members to discuss and make decisions on organizational matters. It typically involves reviewing the past year's activities, electing board members and officers, and setting priorities for the coming year, all while fostering democratic participation within the group. More information will be shared when it becomes available.



League of Women Voters Membership Renewal

Sandy Blankenship, Membership Chair

Please renew your membership in the League of Women Voters Lincoln and Lancaster County! Our membership year runs from April 1 to March 31. The 2023-2024 memberships expire March 31st.

The League is non-partisan and does not support or oppose candidates nor political parties. We strive to increase understanding of public policy issues and to increase voter participation in elections.

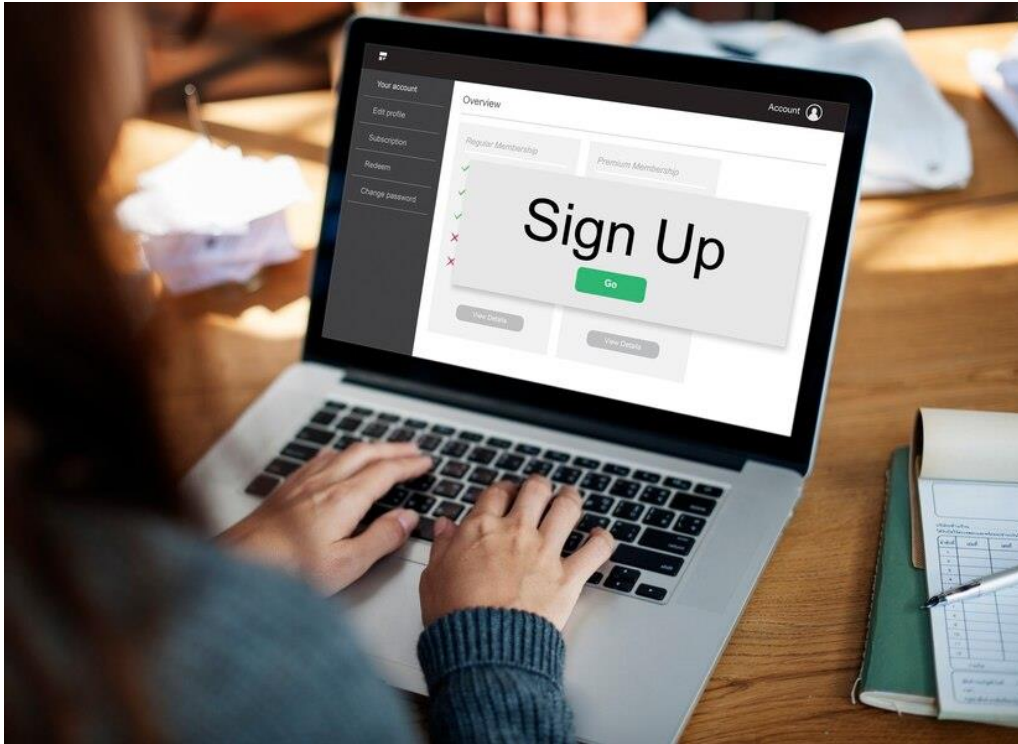
Check our site for more details: <https://lincolnleague.org>

There are two ways you can renew your membership:

- 1) Online at <https://lincolnleague.org/join-us>
- 2) OR download the form from the web site, print it, add your information, and mail it along with your check to:

League of Women Voters of Lincoln Lancaster County, P. O. Box 5054, Lincoln, NE 68505

Be in the Know – Sign up for LWWNE Action Alerts



This 108th Legislature, 2nd session began on Jan.3, 2024 and runs until April 18. There has already been a flurry of activity that is being closely watched by the LWWNE Action Teams, which includes members of our Lincoln-Lancaster County League. To stay informed and be involved, sign up for Action Alerts or join an Action Team at [Action Alerts](#).

Voter Registration, Karen Society New Year Celebration

By Jane Witte

This was truly an amazing event on Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024. There were close to 1000 people and they were dressed in their native costumes. The costumes were fabulous—all different colors and designs. The food smelled amazing too, but we weren't able to partake because of our schedule. Very friendly warm people.



Looking for League members to JOIN a Lincoln/Lancaster Observer Corp!

WHAT IS AN OBSERVER CORP PROGRAM?

An observer is an individual or individuals who attend governmental meeting (ex. City Council meetings, County Commission meetings or School Board meetings, etc.), notes what happens at the meeting, and reports back to the League Board. By attending public meetings of local governmental bodies/agencies, observers learn more about what their government is doing. They learn about the issues facing their community. They also learn *how* issues are being addressed. Observers keep elected and appointed officials on notice; their presence shows them that someone is watching what decisions are being made and how they are being made.

Please know that if you do want to participate, there would be no expectation that you would have to attend all meetings. Looking at the agenda ahead of time is always a good first step in determining whether you might attend. AND, we all have busy lives with other commitments so there will be no expectation to attend all meetings of one particular group or another.

If you are interested in becoming involved in an observer corps, please contact Jean McGuire at llvp_action@lincolnleague.org

Letter to the Editor

The following letter to the Editor from LWVLL President Cynthia Peterson was printed in the Lincoln Journal-Star on January 18, 2024, page A7:

Voters deserve say on issue

The League of Women Voters has steadfastly championed public education and the principle that public dollars require public oversight in accordance with state and federal laws. In June 2023, Nebraska state and local Leagues partnered with Support Our Schools Nebraska on a successful referendum petition drive, amassing more than 117,000 signatures to place the repeal of the Opportunity Scholarships Act (LB753) on the November 2024 ballot

In October, Nebraska Secretary of State Bob Evnen validated 91,861 signatures and certified the petition for the ballot. The recent move by the bill's author, state Sen. Lou Ann Linehan, threatens the essence of our democratic process.

Linehan contends the Nebraska Constitution exclusively reserves the power to set and raise revenues for the Legislature, thus nullifying the collective voice of 91,861 Nebraska citizens.

This blatant attempt to undermine the referendum process, a fundamental right of our citizen voters to check and balance legislative decisions, is an affront to democracy. Linehan's plea to Evnen to reconsider certification jeopardizes a sacred Nebraska democratic principle that allows our taxpayers/voters to decide the fate of LB753.

We taxpayers/voters — those whom Linehan, Evnen, Gov. Jim Pillen, and countless others are entrusted to serve — may find our voices stifled in November. This is not just an attack on the repeal referendum; it is an assault on our constitutional rights in Nebraska.

We call on our fellow citizens to stand united in defense of our democratic values, urging Evnen to uphold the certification, thus letting the voters exercise their constitutional right in November.

Signed,

Cynthia Peterson, president of League of Women Voters-Lincoln/Lancaster County, Lincoln

Global Perspectives:

The Winter Lecture Series, 2024

Sponsored by the Lincoln Unitarian Church

Can Democracy Be Saved?

The Global Trend Toward Strongman Rule

Access via Zoom on four successive Sundays beginning 2/18/2024. We will send email reminders 48 hours before each lecture with the Zoom link. The Zoom link will be the same for each of the four sessions.

Feel free to share this information with others who might be interested. The link to sign up for the email reminder list is on the Unitarian Church of Lincoln website on the [Winter Lecture Series page](#).

Availability: Recorded lectures and Q & A sessions will be posted by the end of March 2024 on the Unitarian Church YouTube WLS Playlist which lists all the available videos, past and present, for the Winter Lecture Series.

Time: All lectures will be held 7:00 to 8:30PM

Format: 45-minute lecture followed by an audience-driven Q&A session

- Sunday, February 18, 7:00PM **Professor Barany** on Orban in Hungary
- Sunday, February 25, 7:00PM **Professor Varshney** on Modi in India
- Sunday, March 3, 7:00PM **Professor Hunter** on Bolsonaro in Brazil
- Sunday, March 10, 7:00PM **Professor Arat** on Erdogan in Turkey

Series Description:

Across the globe we see many countries displaying some version of liberal democracy but then gradually yielding to strongman rule. We ask how and why this can occur in genuine democracies. We want to know about any successful recovery. We look at four countries that can be discussed within this framework: Brazil, Hungary, India, and Turkey.

To help us understand this puzzle we host a group of distinguished experts:

Zoltan Barany, Erwin Centennial Professor of Government, University of Texas-Austin. A native of Hungary and with a MA from UNL, he is an internationally recognized expert on civilian-military relations and other key aspects of the struggle for civilian democratic rule. He has personal as well as professional reasons to focus on the leadership of Viktor Orban in Hungary.

Ashutosh Varshney, Goldman Professor of International Studies, Watson Institute, Brown University. He also directs the Saxena Center for Contemporary South Asia and is Professor of Political Science. A distinguished scholar with a long list of scholarly publications, he knows well the political record of Narendra Modi in India.

Wendy Hunter, Professor of Government, University of Texas-Austin. She is a much-decorated expert on Brazilian politics. Her impressive scholarship has led to numerous awards, research grants, and visiting positions. She is fully up to date on the rise and fall of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil.

Zehra Arat, Professor of Political Science, University of Connecticut-Storrs. A native of Turkey, she has published many studies on Turkish politics, human rights, and women's rights. She has followed closely the long rule of Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the Turkish Republic.

The Lincoln Lancaster Voter

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Time Dated Material
Please Do Not Delay