



# The Lancaster County Democrat

March 2014

The Lancaster County Democratic Party is your Local Contact for Democratic Politics.



## **New Location, New Chapter, Same Democratic Values. By Bennie Shobe, Jr.**

On Sunday, February 23, 2014, the Lancaster County Democratic Party moved to a new location at 830 L Street. After seven years, 14 election cycles, two presidential races and a host of other Democratic events, the Lancaster County Democratic Party starts a new chapter in a new location.

A handful of volunteers spent their Sunday morning carrying packed boxes, office furniture, yard signs and all the tools needed to promote Democratic values from their old home on 2215 C Street. Volunteers stated they would miss the old location, but there's a lot of excitement surrounding the move to a bigger space. "It is a very nice space," said Maryjo Shibata, "and I love the building from 9th street. It's beautiful!"

The new office space is more than double the previous location. While taking a break from unloading the moving van, long time County Party volunteer Sheryl Jordan said the new offices "have a lot of room to have meetings." There are individual office spaces, two conference rooms and a large common area that will accommodate different committee meetings to occur simultaneously. The additional space will also allow the County Party to provide more support for local candidates and organizational space for issues based campaigns. The new location is ADA compliant with a "no step" front entrance and an elevator to the lower levels where you will find, as Chris Kelly said, "Parking is more than ample."

When asked to comment on the difference between the two buildings, Christa Yoakum, Chair of the Candidate Recruitment Committee said, "I liked the old neighborhood. I like that people would just walk in and register to vote or just stop in to have a good discussion." She said that while many features of the old location would be missed, the close proximity to the City/County building, the state Capitol and the downtown area holds greater opportunities.

Volunteers will staff the office from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday for the next few weeks and the public is invited to stop in and see the facilities. The business hours are expected to increase around the primary and general elections. If you would like more information, directions to the new location or to become more involved as a volunteer with the Lancaster County Democratic Party, please call our offices at 402-476-2268.

## Tribute

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### CAROL YOAKUM

4/24/27 – 2/9/14

By Bob Hans



Last month Carol retired from a lifetime of serving other people. A celebration of life filled the IBEW Union Hall as several community leaders, both present and past, local and distant, along with just plain people paid tribute to Carol's impact on them and our community. Also providing insights to her lasting impact were representatives of her 10 children, 18

grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

Born and raised in Nebraska, graduating from Beatrice High School, and Duchesne College in Omaha, Carol started out as a teacher in Omaha and Beatrice, and also served as a caseworker for Douglas County Welfare and the Job Corps. In 1965, Lancaster County won the lottery as Carol moved to Lincoln, living in Arnold Heights for over 30 years.

Job Corps, Lancaster County Welfare, Willard Community Center, Aging Services Telecare program, and the Jennie B. Harrell Youth Attention Center all benefited from Carol's leadership. Carol also served on the Lancaster County Democratic Party Central Committee and 21 years on the board of the Lincoln Housing Authority.

It was during my term on the Housing Authority that I really got to know and appreciate Carol and her efforts for others. She worked hard to develop and improve a family resource center in Arnold Heights; the Housing Authority board felt it fitting that we name it after her. It is not possible to cover all of Carol's service to others because a lot took place behind the scenes, and because she didn't care who got credit for the deed as long as the job got done.

Carol played a role in so many things. Everywhere she went she was a "people helper."

Carol did all this while being a single mother raising ten children and she truly amazed many at providing for them without the benefit of a "living wage" job. One of the family stories recalled a daily prayer; "God bless Carol Ann, God bless David, . . ." and all down the line naming each child in order, finishing with Mom. While she said it showed they were a family, it also kept them from forgetting each other's names. As these children left the nest, they stayed family, but provided Carol with some "Carol time." She was proud of her children and summed it up ". . . you all turned out pretty damn good." In her free time, usually weekends, she loved to spend time at her "cabin" on the Missouri River, so much that the kids bought her a message plate for the car: "2ZRIVER."

Carol asked me if I would say a few words at her service; I agreed. I found out that wasn't a request, it was a command. Her Will included the words, "Bob Hans will read the poem 'How Do You Live Your Dash?'" I told her son John that I didn't know the poem and he whipped out a copy. There was a handwritten note on the margin, "Use this and then get people to speak about how I used the gap. cy." I never could say no to Carol. She either wanted to help people with needs she could relate to or to elect Democrats who could. What a great way for a great woman to fill her gap!

Author Linda Ellis later expanded her poem into a book of inspirational poems, essays and stories: *Live Your Dash: Make Every Moment Matter*, published by Sterling Ethos, 2011.

## The Watchful Citizen

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In case you haven't discovered the County Party TV show on community access TV, check us out! The show airs on Time-Warner Cable Channel 13, at 10:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, and 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays. We have an interview style format. Guests are Democrats chosen by party leaders, sometimes because they're politically well-known but occasionally just ordinary citizens who have a message to give their audience. Our current show features W. Don Nelson, Sam Van Pelt, and Gerry Finnegan discussing the book *Big Jim Exon: A Political Biography*, by Charles M. Pallesen, Jr. and Samuel Van Pelt.

And check our video archive on Youtube:  
[www.youtube.com/LancasterCountyDems](http://www.youtube.com/LancasterCountyDems)

## Meet Our Candidates

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My name is Dave Domina. I'm running for the United States Senate. Two thoughts compel me to run: 1) the clear, strong voice of a nonpartisan, progressive American from Nebraska is urgently needed in Washington; and, 2) I have such a voice.

Nebraskans have little interest, now, in partisanship. Many are angry with incumbents on both the left and right. We are fed up with bickering and selfish unwillingness to compromise for the benefit of our Nation.

### **Principles Unite. Issues Divide.**

We must focus on principles. Principles unite us. Issues divide us. We want our Nation and our neighborhoods to be secure. This is our first National priority. We can achieve this only by governing ourselves effectively. The government must be open for business, a budget must be adopted and we must live with it, basic services must be delivered and infrastructure must be maintained and upgraded constantly. Our military must be modern, focused, and precise.

Each of us must meet the call to service as citizens. Just as I cannot sit idly by and forego the responsibility to offer myself as a candidate, each of us must expose ourselves to the discomfort of involvement. We exchange this discomfort of citizenship for all of its comforts.

We must insist that we live in an honest Nation that keeps its promises, a strong Nation that holds power and uses it responsibly, and a fair Nation that treats everyone the same way, giving each the same rights regardless of race, creed, national origin, gender, or who one loves.

Our Nation must be great. Its greatness cannot exceed the greatness of its people. We must challenge one another to be bigger and better than each is alone. We must assure that every person has great opportunity, and that no person is permitted to accumulate so much, or concentrate so much power in the hands of one or a few, that we are all deprived. Our economic opportunities must be universal, our tax burdens must be placed on us fairly in relation to what we earn, and we must all pay our fair share.

We do well to recall the motto of a major U.S. corporation, used for years to sell its products: *"Progress is our most important product."* We must progress. And we must not apologize for our desire to progress.

A progressive thinks ahead, cares for others, and focuses on what needs to be done for future generations to assure future opportunities. At the same time a progressive makes certain today is committed to balanced consumption of resources, conservation of our land, water and air, and to a fair marketplace, quality schools, and a lifestyle where living wages can be earned from abundant jobs.

Basic logic must govern our key decisions. Two examples illustrate this point. First, if the minimum wage is to be a realistic alternative to the acceptance of government benefits, it must at least equal, and should exceed, the poverty level. If it does not, the term "minimum" wage is misused.

Second, we cannot threaten to round up 11 million people, most of whom are in the United States because they love this country and are contributing. We must secure the builders and know who comes and goes. We must assimilate with reasonable steps along a prompt pathway to citizenship those of us who are here without documents, yet love our country, obey its laws, and contribute to its daily life.

Please consider helping with my candidacy to advance these principles, and provide Nebraska with a strong, clear voice committed to the Nation's future.

### **How Can You Help?**

Vote for me! Contribute with time, treasure or talents as much as you can!

Our Lancaster County office may be open by the time this newsletter reaches you. It is adjacent to the County Party office, at 830 J St. We are eager to hire our first full time person for the Lancaster County office.

We need your help as volunteers. Yard sign construction and distribution, mailings and canvassing, event planning, crowd building, and event organization are daily tasks, and we need help with them.

Your thoughts about events where you think my voice should be heard on behalf of all of us are welcomed. And, your thoughts on policy, position statements, and building groups of supporters, are essential needs.

Potential interns: we can offer hands-on political experience and high levels of responsibility. Please apply. Contact us at 402-403-4244. We can win this race together. If we do, we can make the United States Senate different. That will be good for everyone!

## Meet Our Candidates

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### Who Are The Real Welfare Queens?

By Dennis Crawford, Candidate for Congress, District 1



For decades, the GOP has been demonizing people who are on welfare and has attempted to tie them to the Democratic Party. This is all part of the GOP's fealty to Ayn Rand's nihilistic philosophy of the makers versus takers. This effort to

demonize poor people reached its apogee when Ronald Reagan went after a fictitious welfare queen who allegedly had "eighty names, thirty addresses, twelve Social Security cards" and was collecting government benefits in excess of \$150,000.00 per year. Closer to home, Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning compared poor people to "raccoons" and Auditor Mike Foley was forced to apologize when he claimed poor people lacked proper money management skills. Just who are the real welfare queens? How much money are they taking from the taxpayers?

Many voters would be surprised to learn that the government spends much more money on corporate welfare subsidies than on social welfare programs. According to a 2006 study by a Progressive think tank, about \$59 billion was spent on welfare programs for the poor while \$92 billion was spent on corporate subsidies. In other words, the government was spending 50% more on corporate welfare than it did on programs like food stamps in 2006. For example, \$4 billion of the taxpayer's money is spent every year on subsidies for the already incredibly lucrative oil industry. In addition, a study by Good Jobs First revealed that various Wal-Mart stores around the U.S. have received over \$1 billion in taxpayer dollars. Here in Nebraska, the taxpayers are providing lavish subsidies to corporations that don't need the money. According to the *New York Times*, Nebraska spends \$1.4 billion per year on business incentives, making it the third largest spender in the country. A special report from *Nebraska Watchdog* found that most of the jobs being subsidized by the Nebraska Advantage Act would have been created in the absence of the taxpayer money doled out to already profitable corporations.

Nebraska's corporations aren't the only ones here in our state that are on the government payroll. U.S.

Senator Deb Fischer has been receiving a lucrative grazing subsidy for over 30 years that the Libertarian Cato Institute has labeled "cowboy socialism." Fischer is among a handful of Nebraska ranchers whose cattle graze on federal land at prices that amount to a significant federal giveaway. Deb Fischer and her husband lease 11,724 acres of federal land in Nebraska for about \$4,700 for seven months, paying about \$110,000 less than the market rate for private land in Cherry County. The Fischers have benefited from this federal program for nearly 30 years and only around 2% of the cattle raised in this country feed on federal lands. When Fischer was asked about this handout two years ago, she said she would "have to research the matter." We haven't heard from her about this subsidy since.

New GOP gubernatorial hopeful and Ameritrade Executive Pete Ricketts is no stranger to government handouts. Even though Ricketts claims that he is for limited government and less spending, his family's various businesses have lobbied for and received lucrative taxpayer handouts. Last year, the Ricketts family lobbied for a \$150 million subsidy from the taxpayers of Chicago and Cook County Illinois to aid a business his family owns in Chicago. The Ricketts family also asked for a chunk of tax revenue from the city of Chicago in perpetuity. The city of Chicago wisely denied the request when Joe Ricketts considered funding \$10 million in ads last year linking President Obama to Reverend Jeremiah Wright. It also hasn't gone unnoticed that Ricketts received a large tax subsidy from the city of Omaha to build a new gleaming twelve story headquarters building for Ameritrade.

The Republicans always like to tell us that they don't believe in government and that they hate spending. The reality is that so-called "conservatives" believe in government so long as the government helps them and their wealthy friends. They also believe in spending so long as they are the ones pocketing the checks. All of this so-called "concern" about the deficit we hear from Republicans is only a political weapon they are using in an attempt to cut spending they don't agree with like Social Security and Medicare.

The debate in America today isn't about the size of government. It's really about who government is for: the middle class and the least fortunate among us or the wealthy and the corporations. We Democrats must constantly remind the voters that we are the party of the middle class and that we are the party of those with modest economic means. The Democratic Party is ready to govern and to improve the lives of all Americans. We are the party of the people because the wealthy are already well represented by the GOP and the conservative movement.

## Meet Our Candidates



*Dear neighbors and friends,*

*You will see me walking door-to-door in Lincoln, Waverly and Lancaster County in the next few months. I want to hear your concerns and suggestions for making Lancaster County the best of the Midwest. Contact me at 402-484-8770 with your concerns.*

*I have always been proud to be a part of a team of dedicated professionals and volunteers tackling issues to make our neighborhoods and communities a better place.*

*As urban Lincoln and surrounding communities grow, I want to help mobilize citizens to work together to solve any problems that may arise. My past service on task forces and work on substance abuse prevention in urban or rural environments illustrated the dedication of volunteers willing to step up to analyze, weigh in and offer solutions on a variety of issues. Whether it is youth, parents, teachers, school administrators or business owners, there is a drive, enthusiasm and energy to work together and ensure good results. I never want to lose that spirit of volunteerism as a core value in our lives.*

*Please consider helping me get my message out by hosting a neighborhood coffee or event. Donations can be sent to: Newman for County Board, 1110 Lamplighter Lane, Lincoln 68510 or contact me at [patnewman2014@gmail.com](mailto:patnewman2014@gmail.com). Your commitment of money or time or even a location for a yard sign to help my campaign would be greatly appreciated. Thanks for helping!  
Sincerely,  
Patte Newman*

### **Patte's Priorities for Lancaster County:**

- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Continue to provide services with a balanced budget.
- **Quality Growth and Development:** Maintain our high quality of life by encouraging new job creation while respecting old jobs and local business. Carefully plan the future of Stevens Creek and other rural areas to retain prime farmland, sensitive riparian corridors and historic properties. Minimize conflict between rural and urban environments.
- **Public Safety and Human Services:** Find collaborative ways to address gaps in services. Encourage cost efficient alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders with use of problem solving courts. Centralize local data to promote awareness of trends and resources.

### **Experience with You**

- Patte has a proven track record of supporting families, neighborhoods and community-based programs. She has lived in Northeast Lincoln for over two decades, working continuously to improve the quality of life for all of us.
- Patte initiated founding of the Eastridge Neighborhood Association, 1994.
- Patte was elected as Northeast district representative on the Lincoln City Council, May 2003 to 2007, serving her last year as chair.
- Over four years, Patte held monthly meetings as Lincoln City Council rep with Northeast constituents to listen to concerns and provide information on city and county projects and policy issues.
- Patte served the Lincoln/Lancaster County League of Women Voters as President-Elect 2007-2008 and President 2008-2012.
- Patte worked with several non-partisan civic organizations to encourage the Lincoln City Council to approve a Conflict of Interest ballot initiative that passed by 69% of voters in 2013.

### **Experience with Business**

- Patte has a Business Administration degree and over 30 years of business experience, helping large and small businesses balance their budgets, make payroll and safeguard jobs.
- Patte worked in Europe for six years with international companies. She has the experience and global vision to lead Lancaster County into the future.

## Meet Our Candidates

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### **Patty Pansing Brooks, Candidate for State Senator, Legislative District 28.**

**PATTY  
PANSING BROOKS**  
*Legislature*

Hello Friends!

Only 14 days until Spring!

Just 68 days until the Primary! We have a lot of work to do before the Primary and it will be a relief to have some warmer weather in which to walk and meet my neighbors in Legislative District 28!



Over the past six months, I have met many residents and learned a great deal about LD 28. What I have become most alarmed about is the number of households in our District that are facing growing financial needs. Sadly, recent US Census Data shows that over 36% of Households in District 28 have an annual income of under \$25,000. Further, data shows that two of our neighborhoods in District 28 are in extreme poverty. Residents tell me that they are deeply affected by a lack of affordable health care and are burdened by the low minimum wages offered in some workplaces. The growing number of households that fall into these categories in our District is heartbreaking and demands our immediate attention. Our neighborhoods cannot stay consistently strong under these circumstances. All residents in our community will be affected if we cannot effectively deal with issues regarding poverty.

I support the current Legislation being considered in the Legislature to raise the Minimum Wage and to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit. I also support the important efforts of Senator Campbell and others in their work to expand Medicaid coverage in our State. These are critical and basic steps to address the substantial burdens being shouldered by a growing percentage of residents in our District. Additionally, education is one of the main tools in our work to combat poverty. The fact that there are 12,500 children living in poverty in Lincoln is unacceptable. We must take care of our children, our future.

Consider going to my website: [pattypansingbrooks.com/](http://pattypansingbrooks.com/) and sign up to help my campaign! I need you! Also, I urge you to vote for me in the Primary and allow me to voice these fundamental issues in a responsible, strong and caring manner. Please help me move forward to the State Legislature to become a passionate advocate for Education, Quality Jobs, Renewable Energy,

Neighborhoods and Equity Issues! I hope to see you at the polls on May 13th!

## Meet Our Candidates

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### **Joe Nigro Candidate for Public Defender**



I am proud to be a lifelong Democrat. The Democratic Party has long stood for fighting for working people and for the weakest members of our society. However, good government isn't about partisan politics. It is about serving people.

I believe that each of us has a responsibility to help make our world, and especially our community, a better place. I have dedicated my life to public service, serving 30 years in the Public Defender's Office, volunteering in many political campaigns, my church, and our schools, and coaching youth sports.

Dennis Keefe has established one of the finest public defender's offices in the country. We have set a high standard for quality legal representation while protecting taxpayer dollars. I am honored to be endorsed by Dennis as the candidate to succeed him as Public Defender.

When I am elected, I will work to establish a mental health court similar to our drug court. It is a more humane, more effective, and much less costly way to deal with people in the criminal justice system with mental illness than imprisonment. I have worked in our drug court the last three years. These courts work.

I will work with the Mayor and the City Council to change unnecessary penalty provisions in the Municipal code to reduce costs for taxpayers.

I have been involved in efforts with the Legislature to reduce prison overcrowding. I will advocate for allocating more resources in our communities for mental health and substance abuse treatment, education, and job training to keep people from entering the criminal justice system. We must reduce the number of non-violent offenders in prison by reducing penalties and expanding the use of problem solving courts like drug and mental health courts. It is easy to be tough on crime. We need to be smart on crime.

By defending the poor, we protect everyone's rights. My years of experience, combined with my leadership skills, and my dedication to public service, make me the best choice to be the next Public Defender and to protect all of us. I would appreciate your support.

Thank you.

## Meet Our Candidates

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### Chuck Hassebrook, Candidate for Governor



#### Lancaster County Democrats:

February was a great month for my campaign. We held dozens of events, made tens of thousands of phone calls to recruit volunteers and talk to voters, and are well on our way to another impressive finance report. Thanks for all you did to help us have another successful month in 2014.

March is Women's History month, and in honor of that we've officially launched "Women for Hassebrook," a group specifically geared towards supporting, advocating for, and engaging Nebraska women in my campaign. We're holding phone banks, meet-and-greet events, and fundraisers to reach out to women all over the state, and I hope you'll join us at some of them. You can join the Women for Hassebrook group at [www.chuckhassebrook.com](http://www.chuckhassebrook.com) and see all of our campaign events at [www.chuckhassebrook.com/calendar](http://www.chuckhassebrook.com/calendar).

Additionally, Saturday, March 8th, was our Statewide Canvass Kickoff. We had 100 volunteers join us at a dozen locations to start talking to voters right at their doorsteps about my campaign. I joined volunteers and knocked on doors in all three of our state's congressional districts. It was a little chilly, but also very exciting and encouraging to see the organization that we've built so far come together for one big event!

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at the Patriots' Dinner on March 15th, and continuing to work with you throughout the spring.

Best,  
Chuck Hassebrook  
[www.chuckhassebrook.com](http://www.chuckhassebrook.com)  
for **ONE** Nebraska

## Democratic Memories

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### I Remember 1968

By Frank Eman, Former County Chair

I look back and remember when I was sixteen and going to Lincoln High.

I skipped school (along with many others) to go see a man running for President—Bobby Kennedy—on the University campus.

I was one of the lucky ones to at least touch his hand that day.

When getting home that day my dad asked me where I'd been all day since he was called at work and told of my absence from school. "What and where did you do and go all day?"

He said to me that he told the school he'd find out what was going on and address my absence from class sternly.

When I told him I was sorry for cutting class but that I had a chance to see and touch the hand of Bobby Kennedy who was going to be our next president.

He then smiled and said that even though I shouldn't cut class that this was a once in a lifetime chance to get that close to a future president and a great American.

Dad then told me that Bobby shook his hand while he was servicing his campaign train and thanked him for taking care of him and his train.

#### Later on in 1968

I was getting ready to leave the State Capitol to deliver the rest of my *Lincoln Star* newspapers when I heard that Bobby had been shot.

I finished my route and went home to wake my family to tell them and we cried.

At the age of sixteen I knew for sure I was a Democrat.

I think back every once in awhile to 1968 and remember that I must keep this country strong and free. Our nation and the Democratic Party cried a lot in 1968.

We have kept moving forward.

Another memory some other time.

## Meet Our County Party Officers

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### Jane Egan, 1st Associate Chair



I am the current 1st Associate Chair of the Lancaster County Democratic Party. I was elected at our 2012 county convention at my high school alma mater, Lincoln High. I had no idea what I was in for the next two years! I have met many new fabulous friends who share my passion for

progressive values and liberal ideals born from a natural caring and empathy for others. My official duties as 1st Associate Chair are mainly to fill in for the County Party Chair when required. Other duties include serving on the Fundraising Committee, chairing the Building Committee and I am the Event Coordinator.

My other volunteer work the past two years involved packaging and delivering slate cards to precincts, participating in “Get Out The Vote” phone banking during campaign cycles and working at our fundraising events. Oh, and yes, meetings, meetings, and more meetings! As you can see, I wear a lot of hats! I have enjoyed my work with the party immensely and especially meeting wonderful folks who have been working longer and harder at growing our county party and electing Democrats!

My lifelong journey into politics began in 1959 when John F. Kennedy ran for President. I watched the Democratic Convention on a small black and white TV with my Dad and I was absolutely fascinated with the proceedings. I was only ten years old! Some people know they want to be a doctor or teacher or some other profession at that age. I confess to wanting to be a ballerina, but for some reason I was drawn to reading about current events in the newspaper and I could not wait to cast my first vote. I thought then, and still do, that people thrive when their government is more progressive than conservative.

I grew up in a family of Roosevelt Democrats who talked about the Depression years and how much they disliked President Eisenhower’s policies. They were not involved in the political process other than casting their votes or placing a campaign sign in our front yard, but our dinnertime conversations were lively and gave shape to my already liberal view of the world. My actual foray into politics came with the Vietnam War and the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. My husband was a Navy Corpsman and had just received his

orders to go to the jungles of Vietnam attached to the 3rd Marine Division.

That night his classmates of newly trained corpsmen were celebrating their graduation from corps school in San Diego. We had a television on at the party and everyone was called over to see what was going on. We all watched in disbelief as we saw an Illinois National Guardsman point a huge gun into the drivers side window of a woman’s car as she was trying to leave the area where violent demonstrations were unfolding against the war and just as presidential candidate Hubert Humphrey was about to take the podium inside the convention hall. Humphrey supported President Johnson’s escalation of the war. There were about 30 people at the graduation party and the conversation quickly went to discussions about going to Canada to avoid going to war for a cause we did not support. No one did. One out of three Navy corpsmen did not make it back alive at that time because the North Vietnam Army was targeting them. My husband decided to obey his orders and complete an 8-month tour in Vietnam. Thankfully, he returned safe and sound.

While he was serving there, I moved back to Nebraska and got a job with the City of Lincoln. In 1969, a group of University of Nebraska students organized a protest march against the war from the UNL campus to the capitol steps over the noon hour. I joined them on my lunch break to protest even as my husband was fighting that war.

The next several years we spent building a family, careers and completing college. In 1971, we bought our first home in the Near South Neighborhood and learned that our next-door neighbors were Dick and Jackie Herman. Dick was the opinion page editor of the *Lincoln Journal* and Jackie was a founding member of the newly formed Near South Neighborhood Association. We talked politics over the fence and one day Jackie asked me to take her place on the Association Board. Again, not knowing exactly what I was getting into, I took her place, eventually serving as Vice President.

My involvement in the Association led to work on JJ Exon’s campaign for Governor. I was a precinct leader when Bob Kerrey (a family friend) ran for Governor. I was a management analyst during Mayor Helen Boosalis’ administration and supported her many campaigns for office. James Garver asked me to work on his first campaign for Lincoln Public School Board and I have worked on many other federal, state and local campaigns over the years.

During my 15 years as a city employee I was a member of the City Employees Association bargaining unit. I



was a long time board member and was elected President for two terms. We grew our membership and strengthened our bargaining power during the years I served.

In 1983 my husband and I incorporated an independent insurance agency. We observed 30 years in business last year. Even though starting a new business is all consuming, my need to continue to volunteer was still strong. I was a board member and fundraiser for the Combined Health Agencies Drive (CHAD), the United Way and the Nebraska Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. I think I am a serial volunteer!

My passion to help elect Democrats to office in Nebraska has never been stronger than it is today. Democrats must stand up for their beliefs in good governance that is fair and just to all. We must fight to protect the hard won voting rights of minorities and women. We must work to prevent or overturn radical laws that deny a woman's right to choose an abortion. We need to rekindle the effort to once and for all provide Medicare for all. Our party must support and strengthen our labor unions and return the middle class to be the backbone of our economy and overall progress into the future. All of these things can be accomplished by electing Democrats who will move us forward to a better community, state, and country.

I am a proud lifelong committed Democrat! I hope that others will join me in our democratic causes by supporting the Lancaster County Democratic Party with your time, talent and treasure whenever you can. Visit us at our spacious new headquarters office at 830 L Street and find out how you can become an activist and member of the party. If you have been looking for a positive outlet for your frustrations with the antics of the radical right, I suggest you join with others who think the same way you do and start your own progressive journey.

## Labor's Perspective

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### Understanding the UAW/VW Election in Chattanooga By John Kretzschmar

In February, the United Automobile Workers (UAW) lost a vote (712-626) to represent assembly line workers at a Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The unionization vote was unusual for two reasons: first, the employer did not oppose the UAW organizing efforts; second, it was an attempt to organize a large employer in the South.

The election defeat was the culmination of a fight for the hearts and minds of the VW workers. The relatively close results have been characterized as everything from a step forward for organized labor to a crushing defeat for the UAW.

The roots of this defeat can be found in both a lack of a coherent union strategy and a broad semi-autonomous group of anti-union forces. The UAW gave up the idea of home visits to the VW workforce and chose not to run a multi-faceted grassroots community campaign framing the direct and indirect benefits that would accrue to Chattanooga from unionization.

The loose knit group of anti-union forces was not allowed to have meetings with the workforce inside the plant. The group charged that the UAW and VW were in bed together conspiring to harm the workforce. The anti-union forces spent their time and energy instilling fear of what unionization would do to the workers, their families, the Chattanooga community, and the entire South. They used internet websites and social media, town hall meetings, op-eds and letters to the papers, radio ads and even billboards to explain how the UAW was bad for the community and a victory at VW would be the first step in organizing the South. Their anti-union framing was powerful because it played upon decades of anti-union messaging that pervades Southern culture.

What could have been done differently? The union could have understood the job was not just to win the hearts and minds of the workforce, but as importantly to win the hearts and minds of their families and their potential allies in the greater Chattanooga community. The UAW could have insisted on home visits to explain the benefits of meaningful workplace democracy to the families of VW workers. The UAW could have done more outreach to like-minded groups to reinforce the message that, "We all do better, when we *all* do better." The UAW community group coalition could have done outreach in person, over the media, and on the internet. The 5,200-employee Nissan plant in Canton, Mississippi understands that there were mistakes made. They are working on covering all the bases and wrapping themselves in both the American flag and the history of the Civil Rights Movement. The right to organize a union is both a civil right and a human right. As Pope Francis said last year, "Trade unions have been an essential force for social change, without which a semblance of a decent and humane society is impossible under capitalism."

## Columnist

### The Nebraska Attorney General By Rick Boucher

If you were asked to sketch a picture of a Nebraska Attorney General (often referred to as General \_\_\_\_\_), chances are you'd draw an older white man in a dark gray or dark blue suit with much gray hair. The stereotypical image comes from two of Nebraska's most popular and accomplished contemporary Attorneys General, Republicans Robert Spire (1985-1991) and Paul Douglas (1975-1984).



The most recent occupants of the office, Republicans Don Stenberg and John Bruning, were both much younger when elected to office. Attorney General Douglas was the former Lancaster County Attorney before his relocation a couple of blocks east at the Capitol, and Bob Spire was prominent in private practice in Omaha.

Yes, the elected position is one that favors primarily male, Anglo-Saxon law graduates of private schools nationwide. And yes, it should be a position more about skills rather than schooling (private v. public—Attorney General Stenberg was from Harvard) or gender. The office is important (capital I) because it provides counsel to both the executive and legislative branches of state government (advisory opinions), as well as local units of government, enforces statutes on public meetings, elections, agency rulemaking, interstate water streams, boundary lines, water rights, appeals in criminal cases and so much more. It's place is secure as the nerve center of state government through the Constitution (Article 4, Section 1) and statutes from Administrative rulemaking (84-905.01) to the Worker's Compensation Trust Fund (48-162.02). The last Democrat to hold office was Harold P. Caldwell in 1951. He was elected for a "short term" and was in office for 31 hours. Democrat Richard Hunter was Attorney General from 1937-1939. In 1964, voters approved a change in the term of office from two years to four years beginning with the election of 1966.

In the 2014 Primary Election, voters will cast ballots for Democrats Janet Stewart (Fremont) or Allen Eurek (Lincoln), or Republicans from Lincoln Doug Petersen or Mike Hilgers, or Omahans Pete Pirsch or Brian Buescher. The purpose of the primary election is for political parties to nominate their candidate for the general election, and to reduce the field to two. But, persons who were not members of either party from January to March 1 in the year of a general election, can petition to appear on the ballot through petition (32-615)

with about 4,000 signatures for statewide office and local offices not to exceed 2,000. Another avenue to access the general election ballot is through the write-in process.

When I moved from Philadelphia to Nebraska in 1980, Independents were about 5 percent of the registered voters. Independents now make up about 25 to 30 percent of registered voters. Laws have evolved to take into account the Ross Perot and Tea Bag reform efforts. The Nebraska Democratic Party has officially endorsed Independents voting in its primary election.

The move to merit in the selection of an Attorney General would be in the right direction for many reasons including, but not limited to:

1. The power and authority of the Nebraska Attorney General is vast & definite under law (84-205).
2. The ability of a trustworthy and impartial Attorney General to influence the legislature can be immense and save the State when it comes to laws of doubtful constitutional validity. This is particularly true when the occupant does not attempt to legislate a "package" by press conference, invade the province of the Legislature, and writes definitive, nonpartisan, Attorney General opinions, when requested.
3. The bully pulpit of the office can focus the public's interest on generally accepted initiatives: domestic violence, child abuse, and crimes against the elderly.
4. Aggressively prosecuting or defending all of Nebraska's natural resources including water and land, and all above and below the land.
5. The ultimate enforcer against those who would cause waste, fraud and abuse in government operations and programs.

Besides Democrat and Republican Attorneys General, voters elected Constantine Smyth of the Fusion Party (Populists plus Democrats) to serve from 1897 to 1901. A few years later, the option of a candidate of two political parties was prohibited. Election laws are constantly evolving. For the sake of economy, it is argued that if there is only one candidate from both political parties running for the office, neither the office nor the candidates' names should appear on the primary ballot. LB 144, just advanced from Final Reading this week, pertains to a tie in primary votes by candidates of one party. The tie is resolved by chance (pick a card, name in a hat, flip a coin). The neutral flipper can be accused of manipulating the toss but the law permits the loser to petition onto the general election ballot, thereby getting the second bite at the apple.

It should be remembered as voters enter the booth: "There is hereby constituted an executive department to be known as the Department of Justice, and the Attorney General shall be the head of this department (84-201)." "The Department of Justice shall have the general control and supervision of all actions and legal proceedings in which the State of Nebraska may be a

party or **may be interested, and shall have charge and control** of all the legal business of all departments and bureaus of the state, or any office thereof, which requires the services of attorney or counsel in order to protect the interests of the state (emphasis added) (84-202).”

## Issues and Events of Interest to Democrats

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### The Next Big Idea

By Amy Tabor

Around a crowded table in a small local coffee shop in late November 2013, a conversation started among eleven local food advocates:

*How could we come together as a group and work to expand and strengthen our local food system?*

Obviously this was not the first time this question had been considered; for some it has been on the edges of the mind for years. The conversation quickly transitioned into a plan to ask Mayor Chris Beutler to consider creating a Food Policy Council at a city level. Coined as the “Next Big Idea,” focusing on local food through a Food Policy Council would fit seamlessly into the Mayor’s plans for Lincoln to be the healthiest city in the nation within the next five years.

The proposal of the “Next Big Idea” came at the Mayor’s Environmental Task Force (METF) meeting on December 6th. Many of the members of the METF and the Mayor voiced strong support for the group to explore the implementation of a Food Policy Council (FPC) in Lincoln.

The original group of eleven swiftly grew and evolved into the Local Foodshed Working Group. Members of this group represent a wide range of organizations, businesses and individuals all across Lincoln and the surrounding area with each member contributing to a diverse set of interests and skills.

The group immediately identified the need for a community food assessment, a document that would illustrate exactly where Lincoln stands in terms of local food production, distribution, processing, consumption and waste management. This document would provide a baseline of information that will be invaluable in establishing a FPC. Exploring funding options and developing a strategy to complete a community food assessment remains the top of the priority list.

The Local Foodshed Working Group is organized into various teams which are currently focused on researching best practices and building a central directory of people, businesses and organizations involved in local food—information that will be crucial to pulling data for the community food assessment.

The timing is right for people in our community to come together and take action; the momentum for local food has been steadily building. Through a strong and vibrant local food system we can enhance the physical, environmental and economic health of our community. Creating a Food Policy Council is the way to do it.

### Q & A

*What is food policy?*

Food policy is a set of collective decisions made by governments at all levels, businesses, and organizations that affect how food gets from the farm to your table.

*What is a food policy council and what do they do?*

A Food Policy Council will provide a forum where diverse stakeholders can come together and work on building a food system that reflects the values of the community. They work with the public on issues that range from farmland preservation, land access, economic development, food security, transportation and even beekeeping!

*What is a foodshed?*

A foodshed is the geographic region that produces the food for a particular population. The term is used to describe a region of food flows, from the area where it is produced, to the place where it is consumed, including: the land it grows on, the route it travels, the markets it passes through, and the tables it ends up on.

*How can I get involved with the Local Foodshed Working Group?*

Connect with our Local Foodshed Working Group on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/EarthToLincoln](http://www.facebook.com/EarthToLincoln).

Attend our monthly meetings, every second Tuesday of the month at the Irving Recreation Center at 2010 Van Dorn St.

The next meetings are Tuesday, March 11th and April 8th from 4:30-5:30 p.m.



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