



The Lancaster County Democrat

January 2016

The 32nd Annual Patriots' Dinner and Silent Auction will be held on February 20, 2016 at the Center for People in Need.

Awards are given to outstanding individuals who have supported the Party. Invitations were sent this week. This is the major fundraising event of the year for the Lancaster County Democratic Party. Funds from this event will be used to support all Democratic candidates in Lincoln and Lancaster County in 2016.

A Cake Auction is held with cakes being donated by each candidate who is invited to speak to the group.

The Silent Auction is a big part of this event, also. Over 40 businesses and individuals who support the Democratic Party donate items to be auctioned off. Donations range from original art to gift cards.

In addition to supporting our candidates, fund-raising is very important this year as the Nebraska Democratic Party is caucusing to select our Presidential candidate. It is necessary to find locations in the entire county to enable people to cast their votes for the presidential candidate; some locations require rental fees. The Caucus Committee has worked hard to find Caucus Sites that are easily accessed by everyone at the least cost possible. The committee is also asking for donations or sponsors for sites to help defray some of the cost.

More information will be available on our website www.lancastercountymocrats.org.

We are currently accepting nominations for awards to be presented at the Patriots' Dinner. The awards are given to outstanding individuals who have contributed to the Lancaster County Democratic Party in the past year.

Nominations must be submitted by February 1, 2016. Please send all nominations to John Yoakum, Chair at johnyoakum@aol.com.

Categories:

Patriots' Award (The L.K. Emry/Barb Steinheider Award)

Nominees should be those who in recognition of lifelong effort to fulfill the ideals of the Lancaster County Democratic Party and demonstrate leadership that strives to make our democracy one that is truly of the people and for the people.

Volunteer of the Year (The Edward J. O'Neill Award)

Nominees should be those who have generously given their time and talent in support of activities of the County Party.

Young Democrat of the Year (The Donna Karnes Award)

Nominees should be under 35 years of age and those who have given their time and service in support of activities of the County Party.

Labor Award

Nominees should be individuals or unions who have supported the activities of the County Party.

Community Outreach (Hank Balters Award)

Nominees should be those who have carried out Democratic values in interactions with the diverse community of Lancaster County.

32nd Annual Patriots' Dinner

You are invited to meet and socialize with other Democrats, candidates and elected officials at the 32nd Annual Patriots' Dinner. Outstanding Lancaster County Democrats will be recognized for their support of party activities and their help in getting Democrats elected.

This event is not only the County Party's largest annual gathering of fellow Democrats, it is the County Party's largest fundraiser. It's always fun!

32nd Annual Patriots' Dinner
Saturday, February 20, 2016
Center For People In Need
3901 N. 27th Street, Lincoln NE
Mayor's Reception begins at 5 p.m.
Social Hour begins at 6 p.m.
Dinner is at 7 p.m.

Cost:
\$750 for a table of 8 (includes 4 Mayor's Reception tickets)
\$70 individual dinner tickets
\$30 for Mayor's Reception

You may purchase tickets through ActBlue's secure website: <http://nebcaucus.com/patriots2016> or mail your reservation to:

Lancaster County Democratic Party
P.O. Box 83213
Lincoln NE 68501

NAME(S) _____

_____ Number of tickets to Awards Dinner at \$70.00 each

_____ Number of Mayor's Reception tickets at \$30.00 each

_____ Table(s) of 8 at \$750.00 each

Show your support for the 2016 Presidential Preference Caucus!

The Lancaster County Democratic Party caucuses have secured multiple locations in the county to make our sites accessible to Lancaster County voters.

Would you like to make a difference helping to elect our next president? We need volunteers and financial sponsors to make this happen.

Volunteers are needed to phone bank as well as to serve as precinct leaders and site leaders at each caucus. Please call the Lancaster County Democratic Party Office at 402-476-2268 to volunteer. We are looking for people just like you.

If you choose to provide financial support for the 2016 presidential elections, please contribute at a level that is comfortable for you by calling the LCDP Office or by going to the Lancaster County Democratic Party website at <http://lanastercountymocrats.org/donate>.

-  —\$20.00 - \$49.00
-  —\$50.00 - \$99.00
-  —\$100.00 - \$249.00
-  —\$250.00+

All financial contributions are welcome!

We always hear about the rights of democracy, but the major responsibility of it is participation.

[Wynton Marsalis](#)

Candidate Presidential Debate Watch Parties

Where will you be on Sunday—January 17th at 8 p.m.?

The LCDP is sponsoring more Presidential Debate “Watch Parties” at Brewsky’s in the Haymarket, 201 North 8th Street. Come join Lancaster County Democrats on . . .

- Sunday—January 17th at 8:00 p.m.
- Thursday—February 11th. Time: To Be Determined.

Do you know our Democratic Party candidates? The debates are an amazing opportunity to see our candidates at their best working for you. Who will win your vote?

2016 Caucus Training Dates

One of the primary goals established by the Lancaster County Democratic Party is to have *every available* Lancaster County Democrat informed about the caucus, how to caucus, where and when to caucus, and why they should commit to caucusing for the candidate that they support.

The Lancaster County Democratic Party will launch our training and education efforts for the caucus process to prospective and current Democratic voters with caucus training at the Lancaster County Democratic Party Office, 830 L Street. If you have never participated in a political caucus this opportunity is highly recommended. Come as often as you like.

Caucus Training Dates include:

- Saturday—January 16, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.
- Wednesday—January 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday—February 3, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday—February 6, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.
- Wednesday—February 10, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday—February 13, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.
- Wednesday—February 17, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday—February 20, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.
- Wednesday—February 24, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday—February 27, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.

If you have questions about the 2016 Presidential Preference Caucus, please call the Lancaster County Democratic Party Office at 402-476-2268.

We will see you at the 2016 Presidential Preference Caucus!

The Lancaster County Democratic Party caucuses will be held countywide on Saturday, March 5, 2016, pivotal in determining our next President of the United States.

Our goal is to make our sites as accessible as possible to the voters of Lancaster County. The sites for the 2016 Presidential Preference Caucus in Lancaster County are as follows:

- **Legislative District #21**

Location

Schoo Middle School—Gym
700 Penrose Drive, 68521

Precincts @ Site

1D4, 1D9, 1D10,
1E4, 1E5, 1E6,
1E8, 1E9, Oak

Arnold Elementary School—Gym

5000 Mike Scholl Street, 68524

1F1, 1F2, 1F3,
2D3, Middle Creek,
2D5 (LD 32)

West Lincoln Elementary School—Gym

630 W Dawes Avenue, 68521

1D1, 1D6, 1D7,
1E2, 1E3, 1E7

Malcolm Fire Barn

Malcolm Road, Malcolm, 68402

Elk, Rock Creek,
West Salt

- **Legislative District #25**

Location

Lincoln East High School—Gym
1000 S 70th Street, 68510

Precincts @ Site

10E1, 10F6, 10F10,
10F11, 10F12, 10F14,
10G1, 10G2, 10G3,
10G4, 10G5, 10G6,
10G7, 10H2

Maxey Elementary School—Gym

5200 S 75th Street, 68516

9H4, 9H6, 10E10,
10E11, 10E14, 10E15,
10E16, 10F15, 10F16,
10H1, 10H3, 10H4,
10H6, Grant #3

Waverly VFW Hall

13820 Guildford, Waverly 68462

Stevens Creek,
Waverly #2,
Waverly North,
Waverly South,
North Bluff (LD 46)

- **Legislative District #26**

Location

Kahoa Elementary School—Gym
7700 Leighton Avenue, 68507

Precincts @ Site

12A1, 12A5, 12A7,
12A8, 12A9, 12C7

Meadow Lane Elementary School—Gym

7200 Vine Street, 68505

12A10, 12B1, 12B2,
12B4, 12B6, 12B7,
12B8, Murdock South

Nebraska Wesleyan—Prairie Wolf A & B

5000 St. Paul Avenue, 68504

11A2, 11B1, 11D2,
11E5, 11E10, 12A4,
12C2, 12C5

Central Labor Union Hall
4625 Y Street, 68503

10A, 11E1, 11E3,
11E6, 11E7

• **Legislative District #27**

Location

Southwest High School—Commons
7001 S 14th Street, 68512

Precincts @ Site

5E6, 5E7, 5E8,
6F1, 9F2, 9G1

Roper Elementary School—Gym
2323 S Coddington Avenue, 68522

2C1, 2C2, 2C3,
2D1, 2D2, 5C1,
5C3, Garfield #1

Lakeview Elementary School—Cafeteria
300 Capitol Boulevard, 68528

1A, 1A1, 2A,
5B1

IBEW 265 Electrical Workers Hall
6200 South 14th Street, 68512

5E5, 9F4, 9F5

• **Legislative District #28**

Location

Lincoln East School—Cafeteria
1000 S 70th Street, 68510

Precincts @ Site

10B5, 10C4, 10C5,
10C6, 10C12, 10F3,
10F4, 10F5, 10F7

Park Middle School—Cafeteria
855 S 8th Street, 68508

4A, 6A1, 8A,
9A1, 9B1, 10B1

Randolph Elementary School—Gym
1024 S 37th Street, 68510

10B2, 10B3, 10B4,
10C7, 10D1, 10D2,
10D3

Prescott School School—Gym
1930 S 20th Street, 68502

6D2, 6E1, 6E2,
9C1, 9D1, 9E1,
9E4

**Eastmont Towers—Assisted Living
Seasons Room**
6315 O Street, 68510

10C8

• **Legislative District #29**

Location

Southeast High School—Gym
2930 S 37th Street, 68506

Precincts @ Site

9E2, 9E5, 9F1,
9F3, 9F9, 9F10,
9G2, 9G4, 10D4,
10D8, 10E4, 10E5,
10E7, 10E8, 10E12,
10F1, 10F2

Humann Elementary School—Gym
6720 Rockwood Lane, 68516

9F11, 9G3, 9G5,
9G6, 9G7, 9G8,
9G9, 9H1, 9H2,
9H3, 9H5, 9H7,
Grant #4

- **Legislative District #30**

Location

Southwest High School—Commons
7001 S 14th Street, 68512

Precincts @ Site

5E3, 5E4, 10H5,
Grant 1,
Yankee Hill East

Bennet Community Church

350 Monroe Street, Bennet, NE 68317

Grant 2,
Nemaha,
Stockton

Norris School—Multi-Purpose

25211 S 68th Street, Firth, NE 68358

Hickman, Panama,
Saltillo 1,
Saltillo 2,
South Pass

- **Legislative District #32**

Location

Denton Community Center
7115 Lancaster Ave, Denton, NE 68339

Precincts @ Site

Denton,
Yankee Hill West

Hallam Community Center

630 W Dawes Avenue, Hallam 68528

Buda,
Centerville

- **Legislative District #46**

Location

Campbell Elementary School—Gym
2200 Dodge Street, 68521

Precincts @ Site

1D2, 1D3, 1D5,
1D8, 12G1, 12G2

United Steelworkers

5724 Seward Avenue, 68507

12C6, 12D, 12F

Steamfitters & Plumbers Local

2945 N 36th Street, 68504

11A1

**UNL Downtown Campus—
Multi-Cultural Center**

1B, 3D

**UNL East Campus—Student Union
Goldenrod Sunflower Room**

7A

Malone Community Center

2032 U Street, 68503

3A, 7D2, 8C2

Have you forgotten your precinct number or have you moved? If you have moved, you can change your registration online or go to the Lancaster Election Commissioner's office at 601 N. 46th Street in Lincoln. You will find your precinct number and legislative district on your voter ID registration card or you can find it by one of the following options:

- Go to the Nebraska Secretary of State website:
<https://www.votercheck.necvr.ne.gov/VoterView/PollingPlaceSearch.do>
- Call the Lancaster County Election Commissioner's office at 402-441-7311
 - or go online to find your precinct for within the city at
<http://lancaster.ne.gov/election/maps/cityprecinctmap12.pdf>
 - and within rural Lancaster County at <http://lancaster.ne.gov/election/maps/countyPrecinctmap12.pdf>.
- Call the Lancaster County Democratic Party Office at 402-476-2268.
- Call the Nebraska Democratic Party Office at 402-434-2180.
 - More information can be found at <http://nebraskaucucus2016.org>.

Democracy only wins if each of us makes it happen. Come out and vote at the caucus on March 5th!

The Watchful Citizen

In case you haven't discovered the County Party TV show on community access TV, check us out! The show airs on cable channel 13, at 10:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, and 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays.

Our current guest on the show is State Senator Patty Pansing Brooks (28th Legislative District). In the coming months we plan to have shows featuring information about the March 5th Presidential Caucuses, as well as candidates for local and statewide offices.

And check our video archive on Youtube:
<http://www.youtube.com/LancasterCountyDems>

County Party Committees Monthly Meeting Schedule

All committees meet at the County Party office, 830 L Street.

Central Committee: third Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Executive Committee: first Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Communications Committee: first Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.
Fundraising Committee: second Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
Issues Committee: second Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Membership Committee: second Monday, 7:00 p.m.
History Committee: Quarterly, last Tuesday of February, May, August, November, 7:00 p.m.
Caucus Committee: meets as needed.

Schedules are subject to change; if you want to confirm a meeting time contact the LCDP office, 402-476-2268.



Opinion

Looking Ahead

By Doug Emery,
Former Lincoln City Councilman



Happy 2016 to all of the great Democrats in Lancaster County. I hope you all had a great Christmas with your families. 2015 was a great year in term of accomplishments in Lincoln and Nebraska in general.

Rejection of the death penalty, the right to marry the person of your choice, regardless of gender, and continued strong business growth are just a few.

2016 will be a challenge as many of those accomplishments will be threatened by a different make up in city, county, and national elections. We need to work hard to make sure we have great candidates for those positions and that we continue to support them, both with sweat equity and financial donations. We need to make sure we educate those candidates so that we can speak confidently about the issues that distinguish the Democratic Party candidates from other candidates. We need to clearly identify those who run as if they are Democrats while all the while that is not what their actions show.

I hope some new blood will agree to step forward and carry the torch for those, who like me, have decided to step aside. We need to identify, encourage and promote younger candidates and others who have been active in the party but perhaps are ready to become leaders.

I know I speak for others who have been candidates and office holders when I say, "I am there to help and encourage your efforts." Thank you for all the support you have given me and for that you will give to others in 2016. Lincoln is on the move and we need to continue that movement.

Meet Our Candidates

Rick Vest Candidate for Legislative District 21



As January begins we put our Christmas decorations away for another year and move forward into 2016. With holiday celebrations over, attention turns to other priorities, especially the upcoming election and the decisions we will be making as citizens of this great state. I have begun the process of coming to see you all, and have been gratified by the response of those I have been privileged to meet.

As I reflect on running I am drawn to the leadership of those who came before. January is the month we honor one of the greatest American leaders of the 20th century, Dr. Martin Luther King. Dr. King loved America and Americans so much that he courageously called out our country when we failed to live up to our ideals. When discrimination and injustice were the practice of parts of our country, he led the movement that revealed the hypocrisy and injustice of these systems. Despite great personal persecution, he carried on, and we as a country are a better place because of him. I take inspiration from leaders like Dr. King as I carry my campaign forward, and hope in some small way to emulate his loving call to further justice and equality.

In 2016 Nebraskans face challenges and decisions about which direction our state will go. We will make decisions about expanding health care, reforming the criminal justice system, and protecting education that will impact us for generations to come. We must work together to make the best decisions possible. Creating a system that allows citizens access to education, healthcare and economic opportunity is an honorable goal. When men and women have these tools available, they can rise to their potential and strengthen our society.

I am committed to knocking on the door of each of you in District 21 in 2016 and look forward to hearing your thoughts about the future of our great state. God bless you and your loved ones as we begin this exciting year.

Meet Our Candidates



I “MOUSTACHE” YOU TO VOLUNTEER!

By Jim Gordon, Candidate for Legislature, District 25

Happy 2016!

With the advent of the New Year, we have set about to finish what we began two months ago with our November 4th campaign kickoff. We are walking our district door-to-door and engaging in every opportunity to meet voters and to listen to their concerns and ideas about how best to move Nebraska forward. Much of this work has been done with the help of many volunteers to whom I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation.



As we move forward with our campaign, the need for volunteers will continue to increase. In other words, I need your help. If you are willing to volunteer, please email me at info@VoteJimGordon.com or visit our website at <http://VoteJimGordon.com> or call me at 402-484-0076 (please leave a message if I'm out walking the district!).

It has been a rewarding 60-plus days and I continue to enjoy meeting and visiting with my fellow Nebraskans. Born and raised right here in Lancaster County, I am continually amazed at the connections which exist among and between us all. As but one example, I knocked on the door of a neighbor a few blocks away from our home. Lo and behold, she turned out to be the bridge partner of my law office manager! We had a good laugh and I made a new friend.

A recurring event is when folks discover that I am “Son of Sally!” First, they remember the elegant, petite and charming woman who served for 27 years as a Sergeant-at-Arms for the Nebraska Legislature. And then there is the look of amazement as they realize this.

Many have shared with me their memories of my mother. Mom never met a stranger.

There is also the reconnecting with classmates going as far back as Randolph Elementary School to Lefler Junior High to Lincoln High and through UNL Law School. Every day on the campaign trail brings renewed acquaintances and new friends.

I am encouraged by the willingness of voters to visit with me about their concerns. They are also very gracious in their comments about my candidacy, their recognition of my work with a number of community and civic organizations, and their appreciation of my military service. I have met many voters who also have family members who served and are serving in the military. I do hear a great deal about the need to welcome home and support our veterans.

Also of concern to a number of people with whom I have visited is the issue of property taxes. While the Legislature has established and increased funding for the property tax relief effort, more needs to be done. I anticipate this is an issue with which the 2017 Legislature will have to deal. With your support, I look forward to being a member of that Legislature and working to develop a solution to that and other issues of concern.

Again, your help is needed to ensure we have a winning campaign. From making phone calls, to taking a yard sign, to walking with me as I go door-to-door, to writing postcards to voters, I need your time and talents. Please volunteer – either by signing up on our website at VoteJimGordon.com or by emailing me at info@VoteJimGordon.com or by calling me at 402-484-0076.

Thank you for your support and encouragement!



Meet Our Elected Officials

Considering Public Power in 2016

By Mary Harding, Nebraska Public Power District Board Member



Every once in a while, I get a chance to do something wonderful in this job. Topping my list for 2015: working with Randall Gilbert, Jennifer Duerr and the Save Our Monarchs Foundation to establish 50 acres of improved pollinator habitat on idle ground.

I was approached by the Foundation to explore partnership with NPPD to increase monarch habitat in Nebraska last fall. NPPD's land management staff had been discussing habitat enhancement, and this partnership was jet fuel to this conversation. We seeded the buffer ground around the Beatrice Power Station last month, and now 50 acres of land in Gage County are on their way to becoming a mecca for pollinators next spring.

Public power has to do more than power light bulbs and appliances; we are obligated to look for every opportunity to improve the quality of life for Nebraskans however we can. To me, that is the difference between public and private utilities, and one that I hope gets more discussion in the legislative session just begun.

There will surely be discussion about the structure of our utility system this year. The Platte Institute has released a report suggesting that Nebraska cannot afford public power any longer. I disagree with many of their points, but I agree it is time for public power to take a deep dive into how best to provide service to Nebraskans. No one would argue that we would create the system we have today if we were starting from scratch. With almost 200 utilities across the state, the patchwork of service delivery is confusing to the average citizen. Certainly, reorganization with an eye to improving the transparency and accompanying accountability that voters deserve would be a positive step, and may even result in cost savings for the rate payer.

This isn't the first time privatization of our electrical utilities has been suggested. It is clearly time for public power to critically examine the value it returns to Nebraskans, and make whatever changes are needed to maximize that contribution.

Meet Our Elected Officials

My Wishes and Resolutions for 2016

By Ann Bleed, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District Board Member



- To pledge allegiance to a country "with liberty and justice for all";
- To help "form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence [stet], promote the general Welfare, and

secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity" (Preamble to the U.S. Constitution);

- To try to insure Congress make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;
- To try to insure "excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted" (Amendment VIII, U.S. Constitution);
- To try to insure "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, . . . are citizens of the United States and the State wherein they reside." And to try to insure "no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; **nor shall any State deprive any person** [bolding added] of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws" (Amendment XIV).

Clearly "The Welfare of the State is in the Watchfulness of the Citizen" and implementing the U.S. Constitution is a never ending process. Based on recent events in the U.S., this watchfulness is really needed this year.

Remembering Barb Steinheider, County Chair By Rick Hoppe

I did what she asked.

Wearing a tie dye shirt to a funeral was awkward, particularly when I noticed other mourners noticing me. But I was determined. I wanted to honor the wishes of my friend and first boss in the political world, Barb Steinheider.

Barb was an amazing paradox, a free spirit who could organize better than anyone I've ever known, a staunch liberal who never let her strong beliefs get in the way of compromise, an old time hippie who brought modern technology to local campaigns.

Barb's campaign and political philosophy was as effective as it was simple. In Barb's world, you turned out your people to vote, your candidates won, and then you "encouraged" these new elected officials to create change.

She was devastatingly effective in executing her philosophy. Always dressed in tie dye with her daughter Jessica in tow, Barb literally exploded upon meetings, bringing unparalleled energy and direction. If you were an elected official at the meeting, her tireless passion for her beliefs was now *your* concern. If you were some poor bystander at the meeting, you left with an assignment, donated to the County Democrats, and committed to walking your precinct in the election. There was simply no way to say "no" to the woman. Few tried.

Barb served as County Chair in the late 1980s and early 1990s. She was a key figure who set the stage for the string of Democratic successes that ensued. I was fortunate she chose me to work with her as the County Party's Coordinator.

The period was LCDP's "Midas" years: whether by hook, crook, or divine grace, everything the Party touched turned to gold. Nebraska's U.S. Senators, Jim Exon and Bob Kerrey, were Democrats. A slew of iconic state senators—Wesely, Landis, Schimek and Beutler—already dominated the Legislature. Democrats were well represented at City Council, with Bill Harris winning the Mayor's Office and Democratic candidates winning both district and at-large Council seats.

Local success planted the seeds for 1990, the pinnacle of statewide Democratic ascendancy. Senator Exon won re-election. Ben Nelson became Governor. Lancaster County Democrats Dawn

Rockey and John Breslow won the State Treasurer and State Auditor Offices.

Barb Steinheider and a strong, well-organized County Party led the way. Lancaster County was the cornerstone of Democratic fortunes in Nebraska, called upon by both state and local Democratic candidates to deliver on Election Day. The success was based on a huge grassroots structure of activists who ensured that Democrats in their precinct got to the polls. It was an organization that demanded the near constant recruitment of activists.

Fortunately, Barb was a tireless organizer. She believed in coalition building, courting liberal advocates to fortify the LCDP. Barb served as statewide coordinator for the Jesse Jackson for President campaign. Barb made sure Jackson activists became County Party activists, strengthening the Party's grassroots and bringing new voices to the Party's decision making table.

Giving voice to those in society did not always hear drove Barb. Her leadership on the Jackson campaign was not just practical/political. Barb fought for racial justice, gay rights, and a woman's right to choose. She lobbied for those with mental and physical challenges and never let Democratic elected officials forget about their low income constituents.

Under Barb's leadership, the County Party became an innovator. Data management software was not sophisticated three decades ago and as a result, electronic voter files were rare. But Barb was a firm believer that a shared voter file would lead to electoral success. Barb leaned on her talented and good-natured husband, Dave, to use his programming skills to start the file and raised funds to support it. At one point, LCDP was operating one of only a couple electronic voter files in Nebraska.

Now, I faced the bittersweet duty of speaking at her funeral. Barb wanted someone to talk about the recipients for tributes given in her name, the County Democrats and advocates for people with disabilities. As I thought about what to say, I remembered the Steinheider acreage near Malcolm. I smiled at the thought of the old barn filled with recycled yardsign stakes and 4x8 signs she saved for low budget campaigns. I recalled the warmth of her home as she excitedly plotted our next triumph. But mostly, I thought about the dogs.

Visitors to the Steinheiders were greeted by five to seven mammoth dogs, all thrilled to see you and just wanting to be part of the team. Their

enthusiasm was only matched by their size. Those visitors all wondered the same thing. Why would one family support this many dogs?

They were stray dogs, abandoned on county roads. They had found their way to Barb and she took them in and made them a part of her journey, just as she did for every cause that moved her. The memory had sparked a metaphor for my speech. I was sad about a friend who had passed too soon, but felt good about honoring her, until I got to the church parking lot.

Barb had asked mourners at her funeral to wear purple or tie dye. As I got out of the car, I saw traditional suits and ties and had a moment of anxiety. Was it really OK to be a funeral speaker in a tie-dye U2 t-shirt and shorts? My wife Janelle saw I was struggling and took my hand. "It's OK," she said. "You are doing it for someone else."

And so was Barb Steinheider.

Rick has served as Chief of Staff to Mayor Chris Beutler for eight years. He was the County Party Coordinator from 1989 to 1994.

A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be.

Rosalynn Carter

The first time I met Barb Steinheider she came into the Nebraska Democratic State Party office on 14th street with her two children. We talked for a bit when she paused and looked at me and said, "You are not the Dragon Lady that I expected." I was startled as I had never thought of myself exactly as a "Dragon Lady" though I must admit I have a tendency to speak my mind, but she had considered me that sort of threat and had come to see me anyway.

Now, that kind of courage I admire and she and I became friends. Rick Hoppe is correct about not ever being able to say no to her. The Patriots' Dinner was about a week away when she called and told me she needed me to take over the dinner as the previous chair had quit. Now that is a BIG job but I said I'd do it and it got done and it was a success.

Barb needed someone to serve as an advocate on a board for disabled clients of Social Services and again, I said yes without the slightest idea of what I was getting into but it was a service I felt good about for several years.

When she was so very, very ill she would call and just want to talk and feel normal and I repaid her kindnesses and service to me by just listening, glad she could not see the tears that often slid down my face while she talked.

She was a unique and challenging individual whom I admired and I was so glad that she was a part of my life.

Marlene Cupp, former Executive Director,
Nebraska Democratic Party

Opinion

Thoughts on the Death Penalty

By Miriam Kelle



Last May Governor Ricketts said he had found the solution to our death penalty quagmire. He gave us a promise the state would soon resume executions, and a bill for \$54,000 worth of lethal injection drugs. Seven months later, he's finally admitted that there's no way to proceed with

executions in our state. After all my family has endured because of the death penalty, I am not the least surprised at this latest twist in our death penalty drama. You see I've heard it all.

My brother was tortured and killed and his offender was sent to death row. Our family had already been through years of required appeals when the electric chair was ruled unconstitutional in 2008. When the Legislature made lethal injection the execution method in 2009, officials swore this would get the death machine moving again within the year. Two years later Corrections finally said they were ready to carry out an execution, but this never happened. And here we are: many years, countless broken promises, and zero executions later.

While my brother's offender sat on death row, the best prosecutors and lawmakers did everything they could to resume executions. There is no doubt in my mind if it was possible to have executions in our state, they would have happened already. But the reality is, our system is too broken for that to be possible.

Wrongful convictions, like the Beatrice 6 from my hometown who collectively spent 77 years in prison for crimes they didn't commit, have made us anxious to ensure no stone is unturned in confirming we have the right person and their due process has been respected. Botched executions have eroded the public's confidence in any process that's not marked by transparency, and made legitimate pharmaceutical suppliers wary of the execution business. The result of all of this is that executions just don't happen here.

This means that the only people actually punished by having the death penalty on the books are the families of victims who are promised a punishment that they never receive. For thirty years my family endured court proceedings, high profile coverage about the offender that ignored my brother, and uncountable false promises from elected officials.

I was finally freed from this terrible system last spring when the man who killed my brother died of natural causes, a few days before the legislature decided it was time to end our broken death penalty. Their recognition that our death penalty system was indefensible freed me, and every other victim who stood by waiting for the state to deliver on a promise it simply could not.

I appreciate that Governor Ricketts has stopped his quest to import drugs the FDA, DEA and U.S. Attorney all have clearly said can't be brought to Nebraska. I wish he would take the next logical step, look at the history of our death penalty, and acknowledge that even the most enthusiastic death penalty supporter can't make the system function. Enough is enough.

Miriam Thimm Kelle of Beatrice is the sister of murder victim James Thimm who was murdered by Michael Ryan. Ryan was sentenced to death in 1985 and died of natural causes on Nebraska's death row last spring.



Governor Ricketts denies Syrian refugees the right to enter Nebraska.

Cartoon courtesy of Steve Kemper

Labor's Perspective

We All Do Better When We *All* Do Better By John Kretzschmar

There's an expression in politics that "demographics is destiny." As the nation's demographics change, so will our politics and views about what makes this a great nation. There are self-described "conservatives" who fear the changes that will occur as we move toward 2040 when white Americans become a minority. They are people who are nostalgic for the "good old days." They fear a further slide away from "good old American values." That fear of change is literally a "conservative point of view" in that adherents desire to "conserve" the old and resist any change from it.

Defining conservatism as literally "resisting change and conserving the past," those holding a "conservative" point of view opposed the American Revolution! Why? They opposed revolutionary changes that curtailed the property rights of the English landed-aristocracy and gave the previously voiceless Colonists a voice in determining their future. People holding a "conservative" mindset opposed ending chattel slavery, because it attacked property rights of slave owners and gave a voice to the previously voiceless. Those holding a "conservative" mindset also opposed African Americans and women getting the vote. They opposed Social Security and compulsory public education. Similarly, this "conservative" idea of holding onto the past and resisting change led them to oppose ending child labor because it challenged the contractual right of employers to hire children. Similarly, they opposed the regulation of food and drugs because they believed that corporations and the "free market" would insure our nation's safety. These self-described "conservatives" likewise opposed workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, minimum wage, overtime, equal pay, as well as occupational and workplace safety regulations, because each limited employer prerogatives as they created new rights and safeguard for everyday wage earners.

Today's conservative rhetoric of Donald Trump reminds me of similar jingoistic and xenophobic messages from an earlier time. Sadly, too much of Trump's rhetoric indirectly hints of the "racial superiority" of white America over all others. The words of Trump and other self-declared conservative candidates are akin to those of a young Senator Alfred Beveridge. Beveridge was, at the time, a conservative U.S. Senator from Indiana who advocated for the Spanish American War. Beveridge's commentary in 1900 pushing for war was arrogant, xenophobic, and jingoistic in the extreme. In Beveridge's words: "We are

the ruling race of the world. . . . We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race, trustee, under God, of the civilization of the world. . . . He has marked us as His chosen people. . . . He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among savage and senile people." To me that sounds a little like candidate Trump.

War is hell, and the Spanish American War was no exception. Beveridge and others dehumanized the enemy, which set the stage for atrocities. Here's a 1901 report on what was happening in the Philippines from the Philadelphia Ledger: "Our men . . . have killed to exterminate men, women, children, prisoners and captives, active insurgents and suspected people from lads of 10 up. . . . Our soldiers have pumped salt water into men to 'make them talk,' and have taken prisoners people who held up their hands and peacefully surrendered, and an hour later . . . stood them on a bridge and shot them down one by one, to drop into the water below and float down, as examples to those who found their bullet-loaded corpses."

Little over a half century later William F. Buckley, the father of modern conservatism, wrote about his fear regarding what would happen to the South if African American voters, who he viewed as inferior to white Americans, began to exercise their right to vote in large numbers. Buckley's comments foreshadow the comments of today's candidates expressing a fear of change that comes with demographic shifts. Here's Buckley in 1957: "The central question that emerges . . . is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas where it does not predominate numerically? The sobering answer is Yes—the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race."

As the nation moves toward 2040, let's hope those exposing jingoistic, xenophobic rhetoric mellow as did Senator Beveridge, who later in life became a critic of America's moneyed and corporate elites. Beveridge became what is termed a "Republican reformer" like Teddy Roosevelt. The Senator later championed legislation that limited child labor and regulated food and drugs. He became a supporter of Roosevelt when Teddy broke away from the GOP and formed the Progressive Party. People can and do change over time. It is my hope that those who think of themselves as "conservatives" today will mellow as we close in on 2040 when national demographics will mark a significant change in our population. I hope they will come to realize that "we all do better when we *all* do better."

IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2016

January 17th

February 11th

Democratic Presidential
Debate Watch Party
8:00 p.m.
Brewsky's
201 N 8th, Lincoln

February 20th

32nd Annual Patriots' Dinner
Center for People in Need
3901 N 27th, Lincoln

March 5th

Nebraska Democratic Party
Presidential Preference Caucus
5:00 p.m.
A location near you!

May 10th

Nebraska Democratic
Primary Election
8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

May Date TBA

Lancaster County
Democratic Convention
Location TBA

June 17-19

Nebraska Democratic Party
Convention
Kearney, Nebraska

November 8th

Nebraska
General Election
8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

For more information contact the
Lancaster County Democratic Party
830 L Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
402-476-2268
LancasterCountyDemocrats.org

Opinion

Offutt Conundrum

By Steve Kemper

The Offutt Air Force Base runway is deteriorating and \$84 to \$117 million dollars is required immediately to replace the aging airstrip ("[Offutt's big air wing is at risk](#)," *Lincoln Journal Star*, Dec. 9, 2015).

Living in western Nebraska, I understand the value of a cash cow, albeit in a literal sense. Offutt is definitely the cash cow of the Omaha area, so it is understandable that there are serious concerns that the 55th and 155th air wings that are stationed at Offutt could be moved to another base with a serviceable runway.

Obviously, the economic loss to this area would be monumental but, wait, the U.S. Strategic Command (Stratcom) is also based at Offutt and presently a \$1.2 billion dollar command center, or something similar, is being constructed there.

If the base runway does close, how will all the Stratcom generals, DOD higher-ups and such land? Will they divert to Ellsworth AFB in Rapid City, South Dakota and carpool?

This situation begs the question about Air Force planning and operational efficiency. So, pardon the pun, does the left wing know what the right wing is doing?



Senator Fischer's fact-finding tour at Offutt A.F.B. verifies the fact that the runway has potholes. Terrorist involvement has not been ruled out.



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