

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings to All,

The Winter Olympics are in full swing as I write this report. It sure was nice that we had “*just a little*” snow this past year to really put us in the mood for winter sports! Even though this winter has seemed everlasting to some of us, spring will be here before we know it. Before your calendar gets cluttered up with the usual spring activities I would like to encourage everyone to reserve June 18th and 19th on your activities calendar for the annual NEBRASCOE convention. This year's convention will be held in Grand Island at the Riverside Inn. I believe this year's convention will have a lot to offer, including our own Laugh-Olympics on Friday evening. Each district is challenged to field a team of four individuals to compete in various feats of skill to bring home the coveted gold! (*Just a word of warning, you'd better bring your “A-Game.” District three employees are already pumping iron and running laps.*) Since it's unlikely that we have any Olympic caliber athletes in the state, I anticipate the events will offer more fun than physical challenge. In addition, we will have a presentation from the FEDMEN covering USDA employee benefits and retirement planning on Saturday. Several other states have previously had this presentation at their conventions. It has been well received and described as very informative.

Four members of the NEBRASCOE board had the privilege of meeting with the new State FSA Committee on February 10th. During this meeting our main emphasis was the need for improved computer capacity, reliability, and availability. We also emphasized the critical need for ongoing training as new programs are implemented with ever-evolving computer software and emphasized the need for thorough software testing before it is implemented in the field. The State Committee was very receptive to our input. We look forward to working with the committee in the future. Following the meeting with the State Committee we were able to meet briefly with the State Specialists. Many of the same topics were covered with the State Specialists. I believe all FSA employees should be excited about the sincere desire for open communication that is being exhibited by the SED and STC. NEBRASCOE is grateful for the opportunity to be a part of that process.

NEBRASCOE has received contacts from a number of employees regarding the recently announced task force on staffing evaluation. NEBRASCOE was contacted in the formative stages of this task force and offered the opportunity to recommend an individual with NEBRASCOE ties for inclusion on the task force. Rod Repenning, CED in Knox County (District 6) and current NEBRASCOE board member in charge of programs, was recommended and included on the task force. I am confident that Rod will provide valuable input to the task force in a manner that provides fair representation for all CO employees. Several individuals have expressed concern that the 8-member task force includes only one program technician. We have been assured that the process will be transparent and that input from all employees is welcomed. As an organization, NEBRASCOE recognizes the need for management at the state level to insure that available staff members are allocated to county offices in the manner that best matches staffing to the workload and unique challenges faced by the county offices. We can be certain that no county office feels that they are over-staffed. However, with the elimination of workload reporting and the work measurement system, it is important that management establishes a means of monitoring office staffing that is both comprehensive and fair. We encourage everyone to make this process as effective and all-inclusive as possible by providing your thoughts, concerns, and input to the task force members in a constructive and positive manner.

Steve Stark, NEBRASCOE President

Legislative Report

There are many ways to contribute to NASCOE and those that are working for FSA. Two key tools NASCOE is using to not only keep our current benefits but to improve them are through NASCOE's PAC and Capwiz.



I encourage everyone to visit the NASCOE Legislative page and consider enrolling in Capwiz and PAC. You must now obtain a password to access the PAC website where you will find information on signing up and of NASCOE's current promotion. You can also find out where your contribution is going.

Currently there are 115 Nebraskans with an active Capwiz account that sent 973 messages concerning the Health Care Reform Bill this past December. Expect more alerts to be sent through Capwiz in February or March.




Greg Chewakin
NWA Legislative Chair

2/12/10

Nebrascoe State Convention – June 18th and 19th – Grand Island

The 2010 NEBRASCOE Convention will be held in Grand Island at the Howard Johnson Riverside Inn. The dates for the convention are June 18th and 19th. Room rates are \$68 per night double occupancy plus an additional \$5 per person over two. The buffet will be two entrée for \$10.99 plus tax and gratuity. Listed below you will find some of the items that are being planned:

- Laugh Olympics – various (non-athletic) games with valuable prizes to the winning teams 
- A buffet with two entrees for \$10.99 plus tax and gratuity.
- The FEDMen will do a presentation at the Saturday's meeting. This is a retirement investment company that will provide retirement information for both FERS and CRS employees.
- Dan Steinkruger, SED, Cindy Hall, NWA Executive and JM Marketing will also be invited to be on the Convention Agenda.



Washington

George Washington – Things you may not know!

According to an article from Robert Longley from About.com here are some interesting facts about our First President, George Washington that you may not have known:

- Washington was the only Founding Father to free his slaves.
- He was the only president who did not live in Washington D.C.
- As a farmer, Washington grew marijuana on his farm and promoted it's growth. (In the 1790's, the crop was grown mainly for its industrial value as hemp and for soil stabilization. It was many years later that the recreational and illegal use of marijuana became popular.)
- As a farmer, he is credited with introducing the mule to America.
- He was the first Mason to serve as president.
- He was the only president to win a unanimous vote of the Electoral College.
- Washington's second inaugural address was the shortest ever delivered – 135 words.

[More interesting information from Angela Harris of hubpages.com:](#)

George Washington was offered a very nice salary for the time, \$25,000, to take on the duties of being president. Washington refused to be paid for his service. In the end, Congress talked George into accepting a salary.

Another precedent started by George Washington was the length that a president should spend in office. Although he signed no formal laws, George Washington stepped down from the presidency after eight years. He would not run for re-election. No other president tried to run for a third term for president for almost 200 years. Franklin D. Roosevelt ran for a third term in 1940. In 1951, this precedent became law as the 22nd amendment to the Constitution.

George Washington proposed to Martha after knowing her less than a month. They were each 27 years old when they got married.

They got married in Martha's house. Ironically, the house was called The White House, just like the future home of American presidents.

George Washington had no children of his own. But he helped raise Martha's two children from her previous marriage, Jackie and Patsy.

George Washington died from a severe infection of his tonsils, which led to pneumonia. He had been on horseback all day in extreme winter weather the day before he became sick.

Many claim that the cause of George Washington's death was attributed more to his method of treatment than the infection itself. Bloodletting, the process of applying leeches to a person to remove large amounts of blood, was used on George Washington before he died. Washington lost more than a half-gallon of blood during his bloodletting.

Lastly, according to various Internet sources, President Washington rode horse nine miles to regularly attended church services as an orthodox Trinitarian Christian, but always left before communion. (Compiled by Dave Safty)

Abraham Lincoln – Things you may not know!



The following interesting facts were obtained from AbeBooks.com:

Lincoln under-utilized his pockets - Lincoln's stovepipe top hat served as more than fashionable headwear. He used it to store and carry notes, letters, even bills. Why do they call it a stovepipe hat? Well, the rise is so tall and straight up and down with no flair that it resembles a length of pipe. They're hard to come by nowadays, the traditional top hat being much more current, but still pretty "retro". Best you go to a custom haberdashery to get one made just for you.

Lincoln has no living heirs - Despite the fact that the marriage between Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln yielded four sons; there are no living heirs. Three of the four sons died before their 20th birthdays: Edward died at four years of age, Willie at twelve years, at Tad at eighteen. Robert was the only child who lived into adulthood and his last descendent died sometime in the 1980's.

Lincoln's son Robert was a death-magnet - Speaking of Robert, he was sort of a magnet for tragedy. More specifically, presidential assassination tragedy. While he was not present when his dad was killed, he was an eyewitness to Garfield's assassination, and at the same World's Fair where McKinley was assassinated. Another interesting fact about Robert, he was saved from a train accident by Edwin Booth, the brother of his father's killer, John Wilkes Booth.

Lincoln Liked to Tinker - Lincoln really liked machines and gadgets. He liked to take them apart to see how they worked and try to put them together again. He even tried his hand at inventing, and in 1849 had a patent issued for "A Device for Buoying Vessels Over Shoals". The machine never made it, but the patent was a new thing for a president, and no president has held a patent since.

The following interesting facts were obtained from Buzzle.com.

Lincoln's education comprised only 18 months of schooling. Thereafter, he was self-educated and benefited a lot from his habit of reading.

Abraham Lincoln was very close to his stepmother Sarah Bush Johnston, but distant from his father. His mother died of 'milk sickness', when Abraham was nine years old.

His assassination made Lincoln the first American president to die in this manner. Abraham Lincoln died at the age of 56 and his mortal remains were buried at Springfield, Illinois.

Lastly, according to Wikipedia.com., President Lincoln received less than 40% of the popular vote:

On November 6, 1860, Lincoln was elected as the 16th President of the United States, beating Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, John C. Breckinridge of the Southern Democrats, and John Bell of the new Constitutional Union Party. He was the first Republican president, winning entirely on the strength of his support in the North: he was not even on the ballot in ten states in the South, and won only two of 996 counties in all the Southern states. Lincoln received 1,866,452 votes, Douglas 1,376,957 votes, Breckinridge 849,781 votes, and Bell 588,789 votes. The electoral vote was decisive: Lincoln had 180 and his opponents added together had only 123. Turnout was 82.2%, with Lincoln winning the free northern states. Douglas won Missouri, and split New Jersey with Lincoln. Bell won Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, and Breckinridge won the rest of the South.

(Compiled by Dave Safty)

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

“Rookie of the Year” is a phrase associated with sporting events and one that means great accomplishment. Jacque Fender, PT in Knox County, earned this honor in her first year of cutting horse competition in 2008. As in most sporting events, teamwork is required. Jacque’s teammate is a 5 year old registered AQHA gelding named Quiocattin. Jacque has reentered the competitive horse world after a short absence. She and her family have been involved with horse activities her entire life. Having grown up in the south, it was common to be involved in 4-H and youth rodeo. Her dad was a long-time rodeo competitor while her mother brought the 4-H emphasis.



After marrying Denny Fender, Jacque continued with horse activities. Living near Whiting, IA they had access to an in-door arena. Many evenings were spent roping; heading and healing. Jacque also competed in barrel racing competitions. In one year, she competed in futurities in a three state area. She placed in the top 10 in two states and was forced to withdraw from the third after her teammate was injured. A futurity is a season long competition where a 4 year old animal that has never competed in the activity is entered. Success is based on total money earnings for the season.

Jacque’s son, Casey, has inherited the love of horses. He spent time with his first pony at the tender age of 11 months and watched horse events from a play pen in the back of a pickup. Casey and his family currently live on a vast working ranch in Nevada. He has also competed in a national working ranch competition in Amarillo, TX.

As Jacque was raising her family she told her kids, “Before I die, I want to ride cutting horses on a competitive basis.” Finally, husband Denny said, “Now’s the time.” After contacting Kevin Daniels of Norfolk, Jacque was matched with her current partner, Quiocattin. Kevin competes in the professional division of competition. The other divisions are non-pro, amateur, and limited rider. There are strict boundaries between classes. Rankings are based on money earnings. Each competition is video-taped and reviewed by a panel of national evaluators to try and ensure as much consistency as possible in the subjective evaluations. In the competition itself, the rider enters a 30 head herd of cattle and must do at least two and hopefully three cuts of an animal from the rest of the herd. Once cut, the horse must demonstrate ability to keep the animal separate with minimal rider intervention.

Most athletes face injury and personal health issues. Jacques’s season was cut short this year and she faces a decision on whether to have shoulder surgery which would definitely effect next season. Whatever her decision, we know at sometime, she’ll be back in the saddle again for future competitions.