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### Adult Chapter Meetings

Monthly, 3rd Thursday, 6PM  
Virtual Meeting  
(except in December)

### Youth Council Meetings

At Lincoln High School

### Business Name

Lincoln Branch NAACP  
P.O. Box 81322  
Lincoln, NE 68501-1322



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**Vice President** Rebecca Gonzalez  
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**Lincoln Chapter Youth Council  
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Dr. Jeannette Eileen Jones  
**President** Aleece Barnard

### Message from the President

Greetings and well wishes,

I am using this opportunity to assure you that with spring and its budding trees and flowers comes the reminder that Primary Elections are May 10, 2022. Our Get Out The Vote (GOTV) efforts are well underway. We are working to get as much information to you so that you can be as well informed on issues and candidates as possible. Please keep in mind that we have two more elections on tap for this year: the special election on June 28, 2022 to elect District 1 U.S. Representative to fill the unexpired term of Representative Fortenberry, which runs to the end of the year; and the General Election on November 8, 2022. These elections are very important, and I encourage each of you to make sure you exercise these rights. We are planning to work with our partnering organizations to conduct a forum to acquaint you with candidates and so you can investigate their platforms.

This has also been a busy legislative session with well over 600 bills introduced. Thank you for your testimonies and input on suggested bills of concern. When the session is over, we will need to do an evaluation to determine the effect on NAACP priorities.

Affordable housing continues to be an important topic of discussion in our community. Some relief appears to be coming as funding bills are slowly moving through the legislature and the city is in discussion with hopes of providing some relief. Preliminary research data is showing that the history of Redlining in Nebraska had a negative impact on student outcomes in schools in previously Redlined areas of Lincoln and Omaha. These preliminary data will promote a deeper discussion on the lasting impact of poverty on our community and the negative effects on student educational outcomes. Stay tuned to Truth and Reconciliation: History Project; there is much more in store. How much parallelism is there between housing and education? Hopefully, these factors and others continue to remind us that there is much to be done and that no one else can do your part, but you.

On another front, I recently received a call from Vern Williams, a long-time NAACP member and former editor of the newsletter. He is still a strong cheerleader of NAACP, and expressed his delight in the fine work of... **(continued on page 2)**

### Message from the president, con't.

...Frank and the Newsletter staff. However, he expressed his dismay with the political fray of the world. I assured him we shared his feelings. Vern would welcome a card or a note from you. His contact is as follows:

Vern Williams  
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital  
Room 421  
5401 South Street  
Lincoln, NE 68506

**Dewayne Mays**  
**President, Lincoln Branch NAACP**



M. Dewayne Mays, PhD  
President

## Dr. Woodson Urges Study of Negro Culture



CARTER G. WOODSON

### When Carter G. Woodson, Father of African American History, Came to Nebraska

Carter Godwin Woodson is called the Father of Black history because he, along with the members of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, established the celebration of Negro History Week in 1926. Negro History Week laid the foundation for Black History Month that has its roots in the Midwest in Chicago because the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History was first established there in 1915 along with the scholarly *Journal of Negro History* early in 1916.

After receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Chicago, Woodson was the second African American, after W. E. B. Du Bois, to get his doctorate from Harvard University in 1912.

When he came to Omaha on February 12, 1932, in observance of Negro History Week, he gave a talk at the Central YWCA called "History and Propaganda." His talk drew a sharp distinction, still very applicable today, between teaching the whole truth about all races and "teaching such a part of it as will develop a certain state of mind and promote racial antagonisms." The next day in Lincoln he gave a talk at the University of Nebraska on "The Negro in Our History."

Chicago also boasts one of the largest collections of African American literature and history in the United States called the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature. It is named after Vivian G. Harsh, the far-sighted and long-serving Black librarian, who began the collection originally called the Special Negro Collection.

*"Not to know what one's race has done  
in former times is to continue always  
as a child."*

**-Carter G. Woodson**

*Journal of Negro History*

April, 1926, pg. 239



## Carter G. Woodson and *The Voice*

Besides giving talks in Lincoln and Omaha in 1932, Woodson was also featured in Lincoln's Black newspaper *The Voice*. Below is an article by Woodson that appeared in *The Voice* (page 1) on February 16, 1950. This particular occasion was the observance and celebration of Negro History Week that Woodson founded in 1926.

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Lincoln

### Freedom With Opportunity Seen As Unfinished Task of Democracy Says Historian

(The week Feb. 12 to 19 has been designated as Negro History week. In observance of this week, *The Voice* prints the following article written by Dr. Woodson, professor of history at Howard University, author, and the founder and director of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.—Ed.)

BY CARTER G. WOODSON

The celebrants of Negro History Week, from Feb. 12 to 19, will emphasize freedom with opportunity as the unfinished task of democracy. In the effort to translate into action the program of democracy set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States this nation has had a hard road to travel. The main difficulty has been selfishness. What men have desired for themselves they have denied to others. As Thomas Jefferson once said, "What a stupendous! what an incomprehensible machine is man! who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment and death itself an indication of his own liberty, and the next moment be deaf to all those motives whose power supported his through his trial, and inflict on his fellowman a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that he rose in rebellion to oppose."

All Americans, however, did not give up in despair because of a majority to the contrary, as did Thomas Jefferson. The abolitionists decided to do something to advance the cause of freedom. The climax was the outcome of the sectional conflict which resulted in nominal emancipation, leaving freedom with opportunity as an unfinished task of democracy. A citizen without equality before the

law was a citizen in name only. Of what value was it to be called free and be confined to the ghetto, subject to injustice in the courts, denied the opportunity to obtain an education, to acquire property, and to learn an honest living and at the same time be victims of lynching and massacre?

Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens endeavored to secure the passage of laws necessary to grant Negroes all the rights of citizens and to protect them in the enjoyment of such rights. For so doing these reformers were libelled and slandered by so-called statesmen and historians as the greatest villains in the history of the United States. Books written, in denunciation of Thaddeus Stevens especially, would make up many trainloads if thus assembled. Yet these men were the greatest statesmen of their day. Sumner

(Continued from Page 1)

### FREEDOM

(Continued on Page 4)

was undoubtedly the ablest man in public life during his time. He was a scholar and a gentleman with a keen sense of justice which ever guided his actions.

Well acquainted with the history, diplomacy and language of European nations, he wisely guided Lincoln in foreign affairs during the Civil war. Stevens was the stern statesman who measured up to the requirements for dealing with the conquered secessionists. He was resolute, intelligent, daring and strong in piloting through congress the measures which sustained the war and guaranteed both freedom and equality to those in bondage. He was a man of the high order characterized by charity, honesty and sincerity.

He had nothing to do with the corruption which followed after his death in 1868. His sole aim was to do good to all men, and he therefore championed the cause of the equalitarianism which the people of that day would not accept. So-called statesmen of our time still contend for the right of their constituents to deny Negroes the right to live and move and have their being in peace, happiness and prosperity.

Faced with this bad records while trying to buy its way to world leadership, the United States has become a laughing stock for those on the rising tide of liberty, equality and brotherhood. In order to see ourselves aright before the world we are compelled to go back to the principles advanced by Sumner and Stevens four generations ago. These statesmen are rising, therefore, in the enlightened public mind, and we must re-evaluate their record as the advanced agents of democracy.



In 1946 the Lincoln Star celebrated the first day of Negro History Week with this photograph of Charles B. Washington (he is misnamed in the article as George) and Governor Dwight Griswold. After the Governor signed the proclamation, he presented it to Washington. Governor Val Petersen performed the same ceremony in 1947 with Washington who at that time was a junior in the college of arts and sciences at the University of Nebraska.

Washington went on to become a well-known advocate in North Omaha for civil rights and Black athletes and worked for many years as a reporter and editor of the Omaha Star.

## African American Read-In Celebrates Black History Month

Lincoln Public Schools and Lincoln City Libraries launched Black History Month on Feb. 9 with a special event: the annual African American Read-In streamed live by LPS Communications and Lincoln City TV from the Board Room of the LPS District Offices. The event was part of a nationwide effort by the National Council of Teachers of English to promote literacy by encouraging communities to read together.

Participants in the hour-long celebration of African American history, literature, and art, were asked to address the theme of the African American Read-In: "Walk Together."



Olga Mwenentanda- Photo from LPS News

The Lincoln Journal Star noted that presentations "ranged from the literary works of Langston Hughes and poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar to a rousing rendition of

'Lift Every Voice and Sing,' the Black national anthem performed by Ra'Daniel Arvie, assistant director of choirs at Mount Nebo Missionary Baptist Church. Daniel Turner, a scholar from Lincoln Southwest and Martin Luther King Youth Rally planning committee member, presented a stirring adapted courtroom piece from the 2019 movie drama, 'Just Mercy.'"

Peter Ferguson from LPS Youth Development coordinated the Read-In. Other persons participating in the Read-In included the following:

- Bill Bryant, student advocate for the African-American community, LPS
- Chris Haeffner, director of library media services, LPS
- Belmont Elementary School TRACKS scholars
- Pat Leach, director, Lincoln City Libraries
- Connie Edmond, managing partner at WRL CPA
- Jazari Kual Zakaria, congressional candidate; chief executive officer, Kualdom Creations
- Olga Mwenentanda, educator with LPS
- Antwan Wilson, assistant professor at Nebraska Wesleyan University and chief executive officer of Schoolwise Education Consulting LLC
- Marie Barrett - Lincoln Community Playhouse

# A Setback for Recruiting Teachers of Color

Bill Arfmann

A measure to lower a major hurdle for the retention and recruitment of teachers of color made it all the way to the last days of the 2022 legislative session, only to falter. This was a big disappointment for the NAACP Lincoln Branch, the Lincoln Chapter of Nebraskans for Peace and others who supported the measure.

Here's what the bill, LB1218, proposed to do: It would do away with a troublesome test, the Praxis basic skills exam, for an aspiring teacher to be certified. Instead, it would allow teacher certification requirements to be achievable through the successful completion of a college admission exam, college course work, or successful employment experience. The Praxis basic skills exam would no longer be the one and only means to get certified.

Here's how we got so close to hoping for passage of such a law: It began with a focus on the fact that students of color make up 30 percent of Lincoln Public Schools enrollment, yet only 6 percent of LPS teachers are people of color. This stark reality led our spokespersons to press for action to accelerate the recruitment and retention of educators of color, both in LPS and statewide.

In the early fall of 2020, NAACP President Dewayne Mays invited LPS Board President Kathy Danek and Superintendent Steve Joel to meet via Zoom with him and Lincoln faith leaders. A number of faith leaders participated, including Pastor John Leonard Harris of Encouragement Unlimited, Pastor Evan Westburg of First Covenant Church and Pastor Joy Martinez-Marshall of First Baptist Church. The LPS leaders spoke of doing better, and expressed a willingness to work with us, in the months and years ahead.

In December 2020, Dr. Mays along with Paul Olson and Bill Arfmann approached Lincoln Senator Patty Pansing Brooks to discuss what state legislative action could be taken. Senator Pansing Brooks introduced LR157 to authorize an interim study of the issue. In September 2021 the Education Committee, chaired by Senator Lynn Walz, conducted a hearing to consider the urgent need to better recruit and retain teachers of color in Nebraska, and the many benefits for our children if our school administrations take action on this pressing problem. At that hearing the testimony was persuasive. Students of color fare much better and are less likely to have behavioral problems if they have at least one teacher of color, said LPS' Dr. Vann Price.

LPS data show that students of color graduate at a lower rate and are more likely to be suspended than their white peers. Thomas Christie weighed in on behalf of the Lincoln NAACP. Our friends at the NSEA, the teachers' union, as and Nebraskans for Peace identified the Praxis test, as well as low teacher pay as big barriers to recruiting teachers of color for Nebraska schools.

As the Legislature convened in January of this year, three bills were introduced, seeking to address the Praxis certification obstacle and a rapidly growing teacher workforce shortage:

- **LB 960** (Senator Tony Vargas) proposed to eliminate the Praxis obstacle.

- **LB 690** (Senator Carol Blood) was proposed to provide more flexibility in the certification of teachers. It would allow the Nebraska Department of Education to determine the appropriate coursework sufficient to fulfill the basic skills competency. It would not eliminate the Praxis exam, but instead would add another choice to fulfill the requirement.

- **LB1218** (Education Committee) was designated a priority bill after, the committee hearing on all three bills. It was written to provide several solutions to the educator workforce shortage in Nebraska. Critical to the interests of NAACP, NFP and the Let's Talk (OLLI) Alliance, LB 1218 would change teacher certification requirements to allow greater flexibility to passing the Praxis Core. If you failed a portion of the exam you could retake that section or have equivalent college instruction to prove your basic skills.

*"...students of color make up 30 percent of Lincoln Public Schools enrollment, yet only 6 percent of LPS teachers are people of color."*

NAACP President Dewayne Mays and Bill Arfmann both testified in support of LB 960, as well as for LB 690 and LB 1218. They called for elimination of the Praxis testing requirement. They said research does not show that there is a correlation between passing the Praxis and competence as a teacher. They testified that the current Praxis testing requirement is clearly a major obstacle to recruiting and retaining more teachers of color in Nebraska's schools. As the newsletter was going to print, LB 690 and 960 were still in committee with no prospect of passing this session. LB1218, as a Committee priority, was amended to include other bills and debated by the full Legislature, but the part about testing we supported was dropped before the bill passed. The testing change could have been a very real step forward -- lowering an obstacle to recruiting and retaining teachers of color and addressing Nebraska's crisis in hiring teachers. Let us reflect on who had the power during the 2022 Legislative Session. Without a doubt, Governor Pete Ricketts had great influence this short session. And Speaker Mike Hilgers (who is running to become Nebraska's next Attorney General) made all decisions about which priority bills were placed on the Legislative Agenda, and when. Multi-million-dollar projects like a canal, a large recreational lake and new prison made it on the agenda for debate. Our crisis in the teaching workforce and in trying to hire teachers of color didn't appear on the agenda until late in the session, then it got axed altogether.

We close by quoting Webster's dictionary definition of power: "the ability to act." So we continue to walk forward, doing what must be done, one step at a time!

## Lincoln NAACP Committee Members

### Chair of Education Committee

Thomas Christie

### Chair of Legal Redress Committee

Catherine Wilson

### Chair of Political Action Committee

Currently Open

### Advisory Committee

Chassidy S. Jackson-Goodwin

### Newsletter Editor

Frank Edler

### Assistant Editors

Kathleen Rutledge, Mary K. Stillwell, and Micaela Fikar



## At Long Last! A Federal Anti-Lynching Law

On March 29, 2022, President Joe Biden with Vice President Kamala Harris attending signed into law the Emmett Till Antilynching Act that finally criminalized lynching by making it a federal hate crime punishable by up to a thirty-year prison term. The Act is named after Emmett Louis Till, a 14-year-old African American boy, who was tortured and brutally murdered near Money, Mississippi, in 1955. The legislation was introduced in the House in 2019 by Illinois Representative Bobby L. Rush and in the Senate by Senators Cory Booker of New Jersey and Tim Scott of South Carolina.



Emmett Till

It has been well over a century and more than 200 failed attempts since the first anti-lynching bill was introduced to Congress by North Carolina Representative George Henry White, at the time the only Black representative in the House. Since that time, various anti-lynching bills have been repeatedly brought forth in Congress only to have them die repeatedly by the bloc votes and filibusters of Southern Democrats.

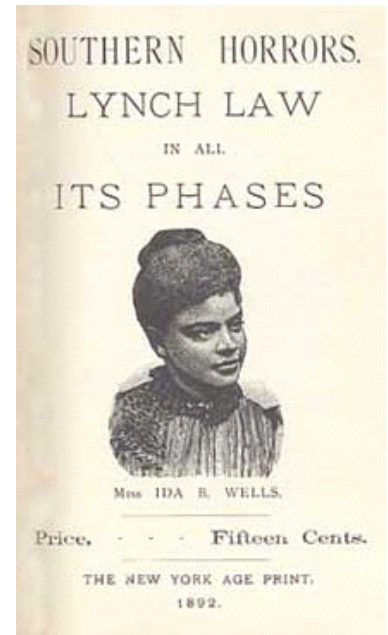
At the signing ceremony,



George Henry White

Ms. Michelle Duster recounted how her great grandmother Ida B. Wells fought courageously to expose and chronicle the horrors of lynching and racial acts of terror, notably, in her pamphlets *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All its Phases* and *The Red Record*.

The Emmett Till Antilynching Act will help greatly, but it alone will not put an end to racial hatred and intimidation. As President Biden said, "Hate never goes away. It only hides. It hides under the rocks. Given a little bit of oxygen, it comes roaring back out, screaming. What stops it is all of us, not a few. All of us have to stop it."



Ida B. Wells' 1892 Pamphlet

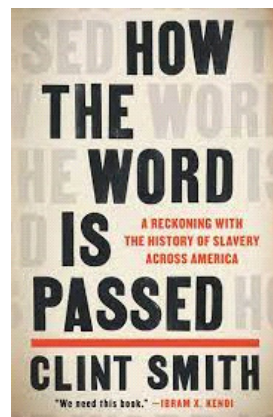
## Book Review

Catherine Wilson reviews Clint Smith's book *How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America*

Clint Smith takes the reader on a trip to eight historical locations in an effort to tell the story of slavery. The eight chapters in the book describe the author's encounters with current community members, oftentimes tour guides at the historical sites, as they tell the stories of the slaves who lived in the area over 400 years ago.

The author draws the reader into the book by painting, with words, vivid pictures of the sites. Whether it is a plantation, a town, or a prison, I appreciated the details the author shares about each location. In particular, the imagery he generates as he talks about touching the walls of the rooms in the House of Slaves on Gorée Island, Senegal, requires the reader to pause and think about the history represented by the horror that was experienced on that land where African were captured and placed on ships.

From reading the book, I learned about the Federal Writer's Project, a collection of stories narrated during interviews with formerly enslaved people between 1936 and 1938. The author indicated that he exercised caution when incorporating the narra-



tives, but the information shared from these interviews provides a glimpse into the thoughts of those who lived through slavery.

I also learned about slavery in the northern states from reading the book. In 1626, eleven African men were brought to the oldest parts of New York City. The number of slaves in the city and immediate surrounding area grew over the next two hundred years, ostensibly ending in 1827 when the State of New York abolished slavery. This past summer, I walked through the financial district taking photos on Wall Street. But, I missed the history. In his chapter about New York City, the author visits the marker for the market that auctioned enslaved people until 1726 and tells of slaves who were used to build the wall that Wall Street is named after. He also talks about the work of the New York abolitionists as well as the African Burial Ground, discovered in the 1990s, when the federal government was about to construct a 34-story office building. The chapter is filled with places that I cannot miss on my next visit to Manhattan.

It is in the last few pages of the book, in the Epilogue, that the impact of this book is made clear. The book certainly fills many gaps about our nation's history because it tells the story of slavery, a story that is not fully appreciated by the textbooks used in our schools. The power of the book stems from its ability to connect the unimaginable suffering to the experiences of people today. Whether it's the deep memories of the seniors in our communities or the impact of the history that shapes our communities today, the author makes clear that we must not just learn about slavery, but "have the collective will to reckon with it."

## Celebrating Women's History Month with Two Women Poets

### FORBIDDEN

by Jamaica Baldwin

Let me go back to my father  
in the body of my mother the day he told her  
having black children won't save you when the revolution comes.  
Let me do more than laugh  
like she did.  
Let me go back to my mother  
and do more  
than roll my eyes when she tells me,  
I think deep down, in a past life, I was a black blues singer.  
My mother remembers the convent  
where she worked after I was born;  
the nuns who played with me while she cleaned.  
My father remembers the bedroom window  
of their first apartment; his tired body  
climbing through. It was best,  
they agreed, if she signed the lease alone.  
Scholars conclude  
the myths of violence that surround the black male  
body protect the white female  
from harm. I conclude  
race was indeed a factor in my parent's attraction.  
I am the product of their curiosity, their vengeance, their need.  
They rescued each other from stories scripted  
onto their bodies. They tasted forbidden and devoured each other  
whole.  
Let me build a house  
where their memories diverge.  
Let me lick clean  
these bones.

### Honoring what my Family will Never Know

by Tryphena Yeboah

Leaving opens us up,  
makes a keeper out of us,  
shows us we're made of more rooms  
than we can count.  
Kisses us on the hand and holds on too tight.  
We speak of love like it is a garment,  
wrap it around the body like a promise.  
There are days words like hope are trapped  
between our teeth because to us, tomorrow  
is an emergency exit and we don't always  
make it out alive.

I live in the telling of stories that endure  
the brutality of truth:  
One Sunday, I remember sitting at my father's feet  
and looking up at his face—a beam of light.  
In a whisper, he said, "I won't be here forever"  
and I threw my head back and laughed;  
without a clue this sentence will someday turn  
into a noose that tightens about my throat.  
I laughed and my innocence bared its teeth at me.

*A little girl plays with fire because her father lit  
the match. Nothing from fathers burns.*



Jamaica Baldwin

Jamaica's poetry has appeared, or is forthcoming, in *Prairie Schooner*, *Guernica*, *World Literature Today*, *The Missouri Review*, and *Poetry Northwest*, among others. Her first book, *Bone Language*, is forthcoming from YesYes Books in 2023. She is a 2021 National Endowment for the Arts Fellow, the 2021 RHINO Editor's Prize winner, and the 2019 winner of the San Miguel de Allende Writers Conference Contest in Poetry. Her work has been supported by Hedgebrook, Furious Flower, and the Jack Straw Writers Program. She earned her B.A. in Afro-American Studies from Smith College and her M.F.A. in poetry from Pacific University. Jamaica currently lives in Lincoln, NE where she is pursuing her Ph.D. in English at the University of Nebraska Lincoln with a focus in Creative Writing (poetry), African Diasporan Literature, and Womens and Gender Studies. [www.jamaicabaldwin.com](http://www.jamaicabaldwin.com).



Tryphena Yeboah

Tryphena Yeboah is the author of the chapbook *A Mouthful of Home*, selected by the African Poetry Book Fund. Winner of the 2021 Narrative Prize, her stories have appeared in *Narrative Magazine* and *Commonwealth Writers*, among others. She lives in Lincoln, Nebraska, where she's teaching and pursuing a doctorate in English with a focus on creative writing.

## Household Hints: The Next Generation

*"Household Hints" was the title of Brevy Hill Miller's column in The Voice, an African American newspaper owned and edited by Melvin and Ruby Shakespeare that was published in Lincoln from 1946 to 1953. We hope to present this column periodically in honor of Brevy as recipes are sent in. Mary K. Stillwell suggested the title – something old, something new.*

### DAD'S SALMON CAKES (serves 4)

If you're a seafood lover, you're in for a treat with this recipe sent in by Jareldine Mays. The recipe is from Sheila Ferguson's book *Soul Food: Classic Cuisine from the Deep* (Grove/Atlantic, Incorporated).



- 1 large can (15 1/2 oz, 450 g pink or red salmon)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 large eggs beaten
- 1 1/2 tablespoon all purpose flour
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoon butter

Drain the salmon of all the juices in the can, then break it apart with a fork. Add the eggs, salt and pepper to taste, add onion and just enough flour to tighten up the mixture or until, it is no longer juicy.

Shape your salmon into patties and fry in the butter, turning once, until brown on both sides, about 8 minutes.

Serve with mashed potatoes, stewed tomatoes and a mixed salad.

### TASTY SPINACH CASSEROLE

Here's a delicious recipe from Jackie Egan.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 70-90 Minutes

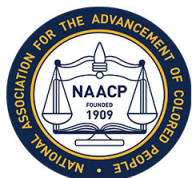
(Freezes well if wrapped tightly.)



- 24 oz lowfat small-curd cottage cheese
- 1/2 lb. cheese (I have used feta, cheddar, parmesan, a mixture!)
- 6 T. flour
- 4 T. butter (optional)
- 6 unbeaten eggs
- 1 tsp. salt

- 2 pkgs frozen spinach -- thawed (I prefer the looser frozen bags rather than the hard rectangular boxes of frozen spinach—easier to thaw! I have used one package of spinach and one package of spiral cut zucchini!)

Combine and stir all ingredients together. Put into greased 7 X 11 casserole and bake at 325 degrees for 70-90 minutes.



## NAACP JOIN OR RENEW

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New Member: Yes \_\_\_\_ OR Renewal: Yes \_\_\_\_

### Types of Membership:

#### Regular Annual Memberships

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Annual Corporate	\$50
College (25 and under)	\$15

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Bronze Life	\$400
Silver Life	\$750
Gold Life	\$1500
Diamond Life	\$2500

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