

Gender gap adds spice to political process

By Jann Nyffeler

Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

Differences in the way men and women think about political issues create a gap that can work to the advantage of the political process, according to three Lincoln women who took part in a panel discussion at UNL Thursday afternoon.

Susan Welch, chairwoman of UNL's political science department, and Susan Hale and Sue Ellen Wall, both of the Lincoln-Lancaster Commission on the Status of Women and lobbyists for the Nebraska Coalition for Women, discussed the impact of the gender gap on the 1984 election.

A gender gap exists because women are more likely to think of themselves as Democrats, more

liberal on a wider variety of issues than men and vote more for Democratic candidates, Welch said. There also is a gender gap within the Republican Party, she said.

Hale disagreed, saying the gender gap is based on issues, not on parties. Neither party has a monopoly on women, she said.

Wall said while women are "a more diverse group and are more willing to vote independently, women reach those decisions differently than they used to."

"Some of us will vote for all women just for the pure joy and fun of it," Wall said. "I don't consider it a totally responsible action, but I'm going to do it anyway."

Welch said she thinks it's too early to determine the effect that

Geraldine Ferraro's vice-presidential candidacy will have on the Democratic Party. The media have problems with women on a political ticket, she said.

"If Ferraro had ranted and raved like Bush did for the first 20 minutes of that debate, they (the media) would have torn her up," Welch said.

Wall said, "She has been put through what no other candidate in history has had to go through. It's just another example of the double standard (imposed on society by the media)."

Primarily because of Ferraro's candidacy, Welch said, she anticipates an increase in women voters and women activists working for the Mondale-Ferraro ticket.

Women are far from a homo-

geneous group, Welch said. She said there is little sex difference in voting patterns, she said.

"Men are just as likely to vote for a woman candidate as women," Welch said.

Hale recommended that feminists running for office should identify themselves as feminists.

"If you believe in social, political and economic equality, then you are a feminist," she said. She admitted that some women aren't well-informed about what the feminist movement is doing.

Wall said women have been in politically sensitive positions throughout history.

"The way we got to be the way we are today is because of women

working hard in the past," she said.

When asked by panel moderator Linda Krug what the gender gap might be like in 1996, the panelists agreed that getting a woman to the top will be a long process. Hale suggested that the key to closing the gender gap lies in who wins the 1984 election.

The discussion was second in a series sponsored by the Talks and Topics Committee of the University Program Council. The next discussion, "Religion's Impact on the 1984 Elections," is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Nov. 1.



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Protestors rally to save weed board

By Barry Trevarrow

Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

Lancaster County voters have two reasons to vote against eliminating the citizen-controlled weed board according to former board member Roger Welsch.

Welsch spoke Wednesday at a Save the Weed Board rally at the County-City Building, 555 S. 10th St.

A proposal by three county commissioners to turn over the functions of the Noxious Weed Control Authority Board to the Lancaster County Board will appear on the ballot Nov. 6. The weed board advises and directs the county's enforcement of the state's noxious weed laws.

The board currently is composed of community volunteers interested in controlling the spraying of the county's wild weeds and protecting the environment against such weeds. Welsch said these members essentially are "experts" in this area, while county board members "know nothing about weeds."

"This is another case of the responsibility being taken out of the hands of the people and handed over to nameless people," he said. "We don't know who will be handling sprays or who will be spraying ditches."

Welsch said he also is concerned with the board's budget. The volunteers currently are paid about

\$15 per month, Welsch said, giving the board a budget of about \$1,300 per year. Welsch said he thinks administration costs will be greater if the county board takes over the weed board's responsibilities.

"The same responsibilities have to be taken care of," Welsch said, "except now, instead of \$15 a month volunteers, it will be handled by \$100 a day bureaucrats."

County Commissioner Leo Scherer agreed.

"There is no possible way county government can do this any cheaper or any better than the present board," Scherer said.

Scherer said the county board

does not have the expertise or time to do the job, adding that "there has been no outcry from the public to make this change."

"If something is not broke, why try to fix it?" he said.

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A debate on agriculture land valuation will be Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Nebraska East Union.

Jack Kay, of the UNL speech communication department will serve as moderator, while panelists will be Dan Looker, farm editor of the Lincoln Journal and farm writer for the Star, and Bert Evans, of the UNL economics department.

Richard Mercer, president of the Nebraska Livestock Feeders Association and chairman of Ag Land Committee, along with state Sen. James Pappas of Hershey will speak in favor of the issue. Charlie Bacon, executive vice president of the Nebraska Tax Research Council and state Sen. Don Wesely of Lincoln will speak against the issue.

The debate is being sponsored by UNL's UPC Talks and Topics Committee and UPC-East Sights and Sounds Committees.

Saturday will be Balloon Day for UNL's Tassels organization and the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

The Tassels, a UNL spirit organization, will donate all proceeds from the sale of balloons before Saturday's football game to the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. The balloons will be sold for \$1 each.

Today is the final date to register to vote in the 1984 election. Those wishing to register can do so at the Gateway Auditorium from noon to 6 p.m. and at the Centrum downtown from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The Lancaster County election office also will be open today until 6 p.m.

Nebraska election laws provide

for voting for absentee and disabled voters. People who are sick, disabled, institutionalized, or those who will be out of Lancaster County on Election Day are eligible to vote.

Call the election office at 461-7311 for more information.

Cornhusker fans can take advantage of the Big Red Express lots operated by the Lincoln Transportation System again Saturday for the NU-Kansas State football game.

Buses can be boarded at either Holmes Park or Southeast Community College every 15 minutes from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Passengers can ride non-stop to Lincoln Center and Memorial Stadium; 11:30 a.m. buses will make the downtown loop, before going to the stadium. After the game, fans can ride a bus back to Holmes Park or SCC from the stadium or ride the bus leaving 11th and M streets at 5 p.m. Fare is \$1 each way.

A fund-raiser dinner for Sen. J. James Exon will be Saturday at 6:30 p.m. at the top of the NBC building. The dinner will begin at 7:30 p.m. and costs \$50 per person.

Gov. Bob Kerrey and Sen. Ed Zorinsky are scheduled to attend.

A Fun House for children, sponsored by the University Child Care Project, will be today from 6 to 8 p.m. The event costs \$1.50 per person, including children. Prizes are being donated by area merchants. The Fun House, including games, a maze and "fun stations," is being held in the Commonplace Building, 333 N. 14th St. The Fun House is being held as a safe alternative to trick or treating.

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