



# The Voter

The League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County

June 2012

## WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE: IS THERE AN ISSUE?



### Our Guest Speakers:

**Christine Newsom, M.D.**  
Grass Valley, Retired

**Eileen Schnitger, Director of Public Policy**  
Women's Health Specialists, Sacramento

**Elaine Sierra, Vice President of Administration**  
Nevada County Citizens for Choice, Inc.

**Saturday, June 9, 2012**

*Refreshments at 9:30 am - Program at 10:00 am*

**Peace Lutheran Church  
828 West Main Street  
Grass Valley**

## THE PREZ SEZ

At our Annual Meeting in May, 32 lively, opinionated women gathered to enjoy each others' company, welcome new members, and review the League's accomplishments in the past year. The meeting ended with 45 minutes of feedback and advice from our members. We got new ideas for programs and studies in 2012-13, and these ideas will be taken to our Program Planning Committee for consideration and follow-up. You'll see some, if not all, of these topics popping up in the future as we plan our monthly meetings for 2012-13.

One of the highlights of the meeting was a multiple choice quiz on presidential quotes, many quite witty. After reading the quote, you could choose between three presidents who might have uttered the *bon mots*. We all had great time laughing and arguing over who might have said what. Many thanks to Mary Dreifuss for devising the quiz and to Ruth Schwartz for presenting it.

Would it sound like bragging to say that we have wonderful members who make our meetings a pleasure with their thoughtful questions and witty comments? You see only a few of us out front, running meetings or presenting reports, but most of the important-and fun-work of the League goes on behind the scenes. Here are some of the people who make our League work:

The Voter Service Committee currently consists of Chair Person Ruth Schwartz and very active members Polly Bacich, Mary Dreifuss, Desmond Gallagher, Jan Kaufman, Carol Kuczora, Dottie Schmidt, Pat Werner, Helen Williamson, Marilyn Wilson and me. These folks have made the League's Candidate Forums possible, and they'll be hitting the ground running this fall with Pros & Cons presentations on the November ballot initiatives.

The Program Planning Committee currently consists of Polly Bacich, Liane Dozier, Mary Dreifuss, Carol Kuczora, Gail Parle, Arlene Robertson, Ruth Schwartz, Helen Williamson, and me. We have, as yet, no chairperson, but we seem to be doing OK without one, because everyone divides the assignments up fairly among themselves. We welcome two new committee members, Annamaria Sauer and JJ Jordan, as we say thanks to Gail Parle who will be investing her energy elsewhere.

The League's Observer Corps Chair, Liane Dozier, has had to step down due to medical concerns, and will be greatly missed. Liane did a fine job of recruiting dedicated Observers and guiding them in their assignments to attend and report on local government agency meetings. We are seeking more Observers and someone to build on Liane's success.

Don't miss our next meeting on Saturday, June 9th on the topic "Women's Health Care: Is there an issue?" See you there.

Karen Schwartz, President

## Our June Meeting WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE: IS THERE AN ISSUE?

respect for intuition    autonomy  
personal responsibility  
knowledge-seeking    informed choice

Within the framework of the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity, reproductive health, or sexual health/hygiene, addresses the reproductive processes, functions, and systems at all stages of life.

Reproductive health, therefore, implies that people are able to have a responsible, satisfying and safer sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.

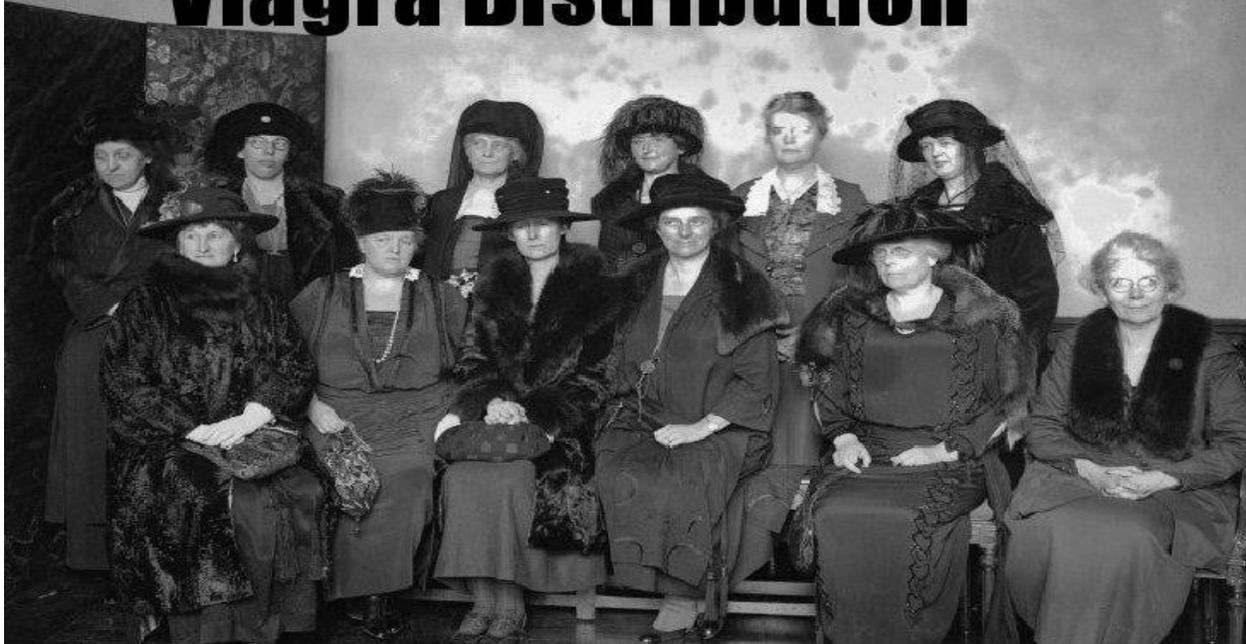
Implicit in this are the rights of men and women to be informed of and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of birth control of their choice, and the rights of access to appropriate health care services of sexual and reproductive medicine that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant.



## CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON CONTRACEPTION FEBRUARY 2012



## Panel Chosen to Discuss Viagra Distribution



## League of Women Voters PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

### REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

**Promote an open government system that is representative, accountable and responsive.**

#### Voting Rights

**Citizens Right to Vote.** Protect the right of all citizens to vote, encourage all citizens to vote.

**DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation.** Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation to both houses of Congress.

#### Election Process

**Apportionment.** Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

**Campaign Finance.** Improve methods of financing political campaigns to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

**Selection of the President.** Promote the election of the President and the Vice-President by direct-popular-vote. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

#### Citizen Rights

**Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation.** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making.

**Individual Liberties.** Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choices.** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

#### Congress and the Presidency

**Congress.** Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision making capability and effective performance.

**The Presidency.** Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

Editor's note: This is the first of four (4) Public Policy Positions of the League of Women Voters. The second Public Policy Position (**International Relations**) will be offered in the July/August issue of *The Voter*.

## Voter Service - Election 2012

The first Voter Service Committee meeting took place in February of 2012. The League had been asked to tabulate ballots for the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District special tax election. We didn't anticipate that 20,000 ballots were to be sent out with an anticipated return of 10,000 ballots! On March 8, 2012, twenty expert League members began the process of extracting, counting, verifying, recounting, and finally bundling the 10,000 returned ballots. We started the counting at 9:00 a.m., and completed the task of the tabulation and verification by 3:30 p.m.

The following is part of a "thank you" sent to our League from Maria Garcia-Adarve, coordinator of the firm hired to run the special election:

"Your level of commitment to the community, to help the democratic process at its most basic level by providing the best care and most accurate count of the Fire District voters' ballot, was remarkable. Your group worked really hard all day and always with a smile, nice comments, and an overall jovial and great attitude from all members that made the work seem easier, even though it was long and tedious. We pleasantly found on Thursday you have male members too, which is wonderful to see."

We have now completed four candidate forums. All forums were held at the Board of Supervisors Chambers at the Rood Center in Nevada City. Our League can be proud of the excellent, professional forums that have justifiably earned positive comments from candidates, the media and the audience of community attendees. A special THANK YOU to:

**Dottie Schmidt**, the moderator of the first forum for candidates for State Assembly. Five candidates participated and answered questions from the media and the audience. Approximately 75 guests were in the audience.

**Polly Bacich** who conducted the next forum for candidates for the Board of Supervisors, Districts 1, 2 and 5. She skillfully handled questions from the media and the large audience of over 100 guests. This forum was followed by a forum for the two candidates for Superior Court Judge, Seat 1.

**Steve Munkelt** moderated the forum for the House of Representatives, District 1. Six of the eight candidates running were in attendance to participate in this, our final forum. Unfortunately, two candidates were unable to attend because of scheduling difficulties.

**Patty Werner** and **Marilyn Wilson** were our very professional time keepers for all of the forums..

THANK YOU, also, to the media that sent representatives to all four League forums:

**KVMR, KNCO, YUBANET** and **THE UNION**.

THANK YOU to **NCTV** for the live coverage and taping of the forums for Assembly District 1 and Superior Court Judge, Seat 1.

Ruth Schwartz, Voter Service Chair

## Men for Women's Choice

*Michael Kimmel, PhD., Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Stony Brook University, New York*

*Michael Kaufman, PhD., educator, consultant, author of six books on gender issues*

*Harry Brod, PhD., Associate Professor of Philosophy & Humanities, UC, San Diego*

Like an ever-growing number of men around the world, we think that women should control their own bodies.

We hold these truths as deep moral beliefs. All humans should have the right to autonomy and bodily integrity. For women and men, this often means the same thing, but for women it has an additional meaning: the ability to make choices regarding whether she will bear a child.

We believe that no man should be able to force a woman to bear a child she does not want. No man should be able to limit her ability to obtain safe and effective means of contraception.

We believe that the government has many important roles in our society. But the state has no place in the bedrooms of the nation.

There are those (including some who support this statement) who believe that abortion and contraception interfere with the workings of God. Men who support women's choice respect each person's right to make their own birth control and abortion choices based on their beliefs. At the same time, we share the belief that none of us has the right to limit or interfere with a woman's moral position or personal choices, nor interfere with health care providers who are assisting her right to exercise those choices.

As men with strong moral beliefs, as men for women's choice, we especially emphasize our belief that no man - no husband, no boyfriend, no judge, no doctor, no politician, and no religious leader - should have control over a woman's body. Ever.

With a wave of fresh attacks on women's rights, now is the time for us, as men, to speak out with loud and clear voices to express our profound concern. We urge men:

- to speak out in our communities, media, places of worship and halls of government in support of a woman's right to safe and effective means of contraception and abortion;
- to oppose arbitrary laws and regulations that make it difficult to obtain these medical services;
- to keep abortion out of criminal law and see it solely as a medical procedure to be utilized by a women in consultation with her doctor;
- to support enhanced government funding and policies to ensure that women's reproductive rights are not only rights on paper, but that all women, regardless of where they live, where they work, or their financial resources, can obtain safe and effective birth control and abortion if they so choose;
- to support positive sexuality education in our schools that focuses on healthy relationships, sexual decision-making, and reproductive health (including the safe and effective use of birth control);
- to support political candidates who support these rights.

## Demystifying the League—a primer for new members

Many new LWVWNC members may wonder what the difference is between partisanship and taking a position on an issue. Older members will recognize the confusion, but the distinctions are more often than not obscure to new members. Let's begin by describing what is meant by:

### Nonpartisanship

- Partisanship-the word has “party” in it-means supporting a political party or anyone running for elective office whether that office is considered partisan or non-partisan.
- The League *never supports or opposes a candidate for political office.*
- The League *does strongly encourage* its members-as individuals with full lives outside the League-*to do exactly that.*
- The very highest form of citizen participation is, of course, serving the citizenry in elective office as some of our members do. But when we meet or serve as Leaguers, our individual partisanship gets checked at the door.
- The League board maintains the organization's nonpartisanship. The president, who serves as the “voice of the League,” and the Voter Service chair must live nonpartisanship in their day-in, day-out lives. It isn't always easy to turn down invitations to partisan political events or to keep the checkbook closed when we want to financially support a candidate. But we do it.
- Other board members are as free as general members to actively campaign for candidates of their choice as long as their activities do not jeopardize the League's reputation for non-partisanship. Obviously then, a board member choosing to run for elective office must resign.
- Many organizations claim to be nonpartisan. The League lives it.

In future issues of *The Voter*, we will attempt to demystify “League Advocacy-Action on Issues.”



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