



The Voter

The League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County

April 2013



Our Guest Speakers:

Nancy Weber

Nevada Irrigation District Director, Division 1

Martin Webb

Host, KVMR monthly program "The Energy Report"

Terry Davis

Director, Mother Lode Chapter, Sierra Club

Amigo Bob Cantisano

Founding Member, California Certified Organic Farmers

Saturday, April 13, 2013

Refreshments at 9:30 a.m.—Program at 10:00 a.m.

Peace Lutheran Church
828 West Main
Grass Valley

THE PREZ SEZ

What fascinating times we live in!

We Americans are witnessing a great political debate that may shape our nation's economic health for much of the 21st century. On one side we have those who seem to view our national budget as a larger version of a family budget. Everyone knows that your personal expenditures must not exceed your personal income or you will face bankruptcy. They apply this principle to our national deficit and focus primarily on our national debt, preaching the need for austerity. Seems like common sense.

On the other side, we have many, including economists of the Keynesian persuasion, who argue that government must play a central role in monitoring and regulating the economy, especially in times of inflation or recession. As they see it, the federal government has a responsibility to use monetary and fiscal policies to stabilize growth and avoid the devastatingly wide swings characteristic of our economy before World War II. There are citizens still alive who remember how Americans suffered during the Great Depression and how austerity measures did nothing to heal the economy.

As the economy slowly improves, Wall Street hits new highs, but too many ordinary citizens on Main Street are still struggling to find or keep a job and balance their family budget. We stumble in partisan gridlock from crisis to crisis, as reflected in the "fiscal cliff," "sequestration," and the upcoming battle over continuing funding for the federal government. Many of us blame the politicians and wonder why they can't just get along and work together.

Someday this debate will be resolved. With any luck our economy will one again be firing on all cylinders, fewer citizens will fear for their economic future, and economists will analyze the facts and try to understand what happened and why. Future historians will decide from a comfortable distance who was right and who was wrong. But for those of us living through these trying times, it's difficult to have much perspective.

Meanwhile, this is how democracy works. When you vote in an election, you are communicating what your opinions are. When you vote for candidates, you are supporting their opinions. We all have opinions, but you're doing something about your opinions when you vote.

The right to vote is key to preserving all our constitutional rights. Yet the Supreme Court is now considering a challenge to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which, if successful, could threaten the right to vote, especially in certain states. Elsewhere in this issue you can read how the League is responding to this threat.

What fascinating times we live in!

Karen Schwartz, President

OUR APRIL PROGRAM

LIVING GREEN Sustaining the Quality of Life in Nevada County

Our April program will focus on the local environment and what each one of us can do to improve it.

The participants on the panel presentation include **Martin Webb**, Host of the KVMR program, "The Energy Report"; **Nancy Weber**, NID Director, Division 1; **Terry Davis**, Director, Mother Lode Chapter, Sierra Club and **Amigo Bob Cantisano**, one of the founding members of the California Certified Organic Farmers.

The emphasis will focus on what we can do locally to improve our air and water quality. As usual, legislation from the state will affect our county. We hope to make you aware of this legislation as it impacts our local environment.

What can we do right now to protect our food, our air and our water? Join us on April 13!



Action/Legislation Report

On Wednesday, March 13, Ruth Schwartz, Sharon O'Hara and I met with the recently elected Assemblyman for District 1, Brian Dahle. Every year the State League requests that each legislator be interviewed at the start of the legislative session. Three questions are submitted for discussion. This year the questions included: the budget process, money in politics, and the California Environmental Quality Act.

The meeting was unusual in that we found the Assemblyman anxious for discussion, and although he had strong opinions on specific topics, he was open to discussing alternatives.

He described his plans to learn how to be effective in the Capitol and establish relationships which he feels are necessary to be a successful legislator. The major point he made was the need for relief from regulations that he feels hurt business and, ultimately, revenue for the state. Comparing this particular interview with previous legislators, this one stands out as an extremely positive one.

Polly Bacich
Action/Legislation Chair

The League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County wishes to thank Brunswick Village Assisted Living Community for their continued support.



Take Action on Climate Change

Do your part -Tell President Obama you want to see him take meaningful action on Climate Change!

The League is thrilled that climate change is finally getting the attention it deserves. In recent weeks, we've heard promising statements from President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry on the urgent need to take action on this life-threatening issue. These statements are a good first step, but to fix the problems caused by climate change, we need action!

Climate change is a global catastrophe on a historic scale that will change the course of human life. Luckily, there are ways to help prevent climate change and protect our planet. The League calls on the Obama Administration to use its regulatory powers to place controls on new and existing power plants, the single biggest source of carbon pollution in the U.S. The League hopes this message was made loud and clear when we rallied near the White House over the weekend.

But you don't have to be in DC to make your voice heard! Tell the President that saving the world is a legacy worth fighting for.





The first Earth Day in 1970 was born because of increasing public concern about environmental issues. It drew 20 million demonstrators and put environmental crises on the nation's political agenda.

Earth Day was envisioned in 1969 by Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin and champion for the environment. Having just toured the devastated Santa Barbara coastline after a major oil spill, Nelson was inspired by recent teach-ins being held in protest of the Vietnam War.



“It suddenly occurred to me,” he said in a speech years later, “Why not have a nationwide teach-in on the environment? In a speech at Seattle in September, I formally announced that there would be a national environmental teach-in sometime in the spring of 1970.”

The Earth Day concept built momentum over the next few months, garnering nationwide press coverage and grassroots support. Nelson was stunned when 20 million people took part on April 22, 1970. *American Heritage* magazine called Earth Day “one of the most remarkable happenings in the history of democracy.”

The first Earth Day marked the beginning of a new era in environmental politics, an era that saw the passage of the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Endangered Species Act. The success of Earth Day fulfilled Senator Nelson's goal of “a nationwide demonstration of concern for the environment so large that it would shake the political establishment out of its lethargy and, finally, force this issue permanently onto the national political agenda.”

After founding Earth Day, Gaylord Nelson remained a staunch advocate for conservation issues. After leaving the Senate in January, 1981, Nelson continued his fight for the planet's health as counselor of The Wilderness Society. He was involved with a wide range of land preservation issues, including elimination of logging subsidies, protection of national parks, and expansion of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

(Reprinted courtesy of The Wilderness Society)



CALIFORNIA LEADS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY !

California has hit a major milestone in renewable energy: State regulators reported Thursday, Jan. 10, 2013, that more than 1 gigawatt—or 1,000 megawatts— of solar power has been installed through the California Solar Initiative, which encourages homeowners, businesses, local governments and nonprofit organizations to install solar panels on their roofs.

San Jose alone has installed 54.6 megawatts on homes and commercial buildings, including those of eBay (EBAY) and the San Jose Unified School District, making it California's top solar city. San Diego is a close second, followed by Bakersfield, Fresno and Lancaster.

One megawatt is enough to power 750 to 1,000 homes. But because the sun doesn't shine all the time, solar industry experts say that 1 megawatt of solar can power about 200 households.

Launched in 2007, the California Solar Initiative is an ambitious road map that calls for 1,940 new megawatts of solar power to be installed statewide by 2016. The 1,066 megawatts installed by the end of 2012 put the state more than halfway to that goal.

"California has the most customer-side solar installations of any state in the nation," said Michael Peevey, president of the California Public Utilities Commission. "This is a tremendous milestone for California and a testament to the success of the California Solar Initiative."

So far, 558 megawatts of solar power have been installed in PG&E's vast Northern California territory. PG&E has more than 75,000 solar customers connected to the grid via metering, which allows homeowners and businesses to offset the cost of their electric use with the rooftop solar power they generate and export to the grid. That's more than any other utility in the country.

The goal of the state's program is to help solar achieve what's known in the renewable energy industry as "grid parity" - the much-awaited point where solar can compete with cheaper sources of energy such as natural gas. It offers financial incentives designed to decline over time as solar adoption becomes more widespread.

When the program launched in 2007, consumers could get rebates as high as \$2.50 per watt that their solar system could generate. But the demand has been so strong that the incentive has fallen to just 20 cents a watt in PG&E territory.

"Incentives are falling quickly, said Melicia Charles, solar program manager for the CPUC. "It's happening much faster than many expected."

PG&E noted that solar has been growing in popularity among its customers even as the size of the rebates shrink. The San Francisco-based utility is adding about 1,000 new net meter customers each month and argues that the current net metering policy needs to be revised.

"The robust response to the program, even as the rebates continue to shrink as planned, shows that solar can stand on its own," said Danny Boyles of PG&E.

PG&E and other utilities argue that net metering subsidizes solar customers at the expense of other rate-payers and does not reflect the true cost of connecting solar customers to the grid. But solar industry advocates argue that California's new metering policy is helping to drive solar adoption and reducing dependence on fossil fuels, resulting in cleaner air for everyone.

(Reprinted courtesy of the San Jose Mercury News of January 10, 2013)

The following is a copy of a letter sent to Representative Doug LaMalfa by Polly Bacich, Action/Legislation Chair, LWVWNC.

March 4, 2013

The Honorable Doug LaMalfa
U.S. House of Representatives
506 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman LaMalfa:

As a member of the League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County, I sit on the Board as the Action/Legislation Chair. My primary duties involve following legislation at the state and national level. When a bill involves a matter on which the League has a stated position, members are requested to contact their legislators making them aware of the League's position. Following action on the bill, I report the outcome to the members including the vote cast by our local representative.

At the March 1 Board meeting I was asked the outcome of the vote on the Violence Against Women Act renewal. I reported that there were two versions of the bill and which version passed with Republican members joining with Democrats to form a majority. It was, in fact, bipartisan in both the Senate and the House.

The question was asked regarding your vote. Specifically, why you voted against it? I could not answer. This is the purpose of my writing today. Could you give me the answer to the question? I would appreciate a definitive response. When a piece of legislation is of importance to the group, I feel they deserve specifics. I am sure you and your staff examined the act in question and came to the decision you could not support it. Our question is, what prompted the decision?

I appreciate your time in considering my request and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Polly Bacich, Action/Legislation Chair, LWVWNC

Please Don't Forget Us!

LWVWNC March Fundraiser

If you haven't yet sent in your donation, please consider doing so. We rely on your support, and we always appreciate your generosity!

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

The LWWNC Board will be mailing written invitations to all members who have joined the League in the last four (4) years inviting them to attend a **complimentary breakfast for new members on Saturday, April 27, from 10 am to 12 pm.**

Members planning to attend are encouraged to bring along a friend who will also be a guest of the League. This is an opportunity to learn all about League activities and ways to get involved.

Marcy Elliott
Membership co-Chair

Spring Is Here! Salad Luncheon



**- All You Can Eat -
\$5.00 per person**

Come and join us on Saturday, April 13, for a delicious, mouth-watering salad prepared by members of our League.

All this and the chance to learn about “Living Green—Sustaining the Quality of Life in Nevada County.”

Everybody is always welcome at our Monthly Meetings and, of course, at our springtime salad luncheon. Bring a guest or two! They’ll thank you for the invitation...and *Bon Appetite!*

Threats to Voting Rights is Real

On February 27, 2013, Elizabeth MacNamara, President of the League of Women Voters of the U.S., joined civil rights leaders, members of Congress and activists on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court to speak out in support of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA).

On March 4, 2013, Karen Schwartz, President of the League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County, wrote the following letter to *The Union* and to *YubaNet*:

To the Editor:

On February 27, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments in Shelby County, *Alabama v. Holder*, one of the nation’s most important voting rights cases to date. At issue is the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), the landmark legislation that outlawed racial discrimination in state voting practices. The court is being asked to rule on VRA’s Section 5. Section 5 is vital in protecting eligible citizens from barriers to voting and ensuring that their votes count.

The immense progress made in recent decades to protect and expand the right to vote has largely been due to Section 5 of the VRA. With the onslaught of anti-voter legislation that has recently swept the country, we still need Section 5 to keep our elections free, fair and accessible. Section 5 has helped defeat approximately 2,400 discriminatory voter changes over the years, and helped protect voting rights just last year in a number of cases.

The League’s support for voting rights and the VRA is longstanding, and we have submitted amicus briefs in *Shelby v. Holder*. If the court overturns the VRA, it will not only threaten voting rights—it will threaten the very foundation of our great democracy.

Karen Schwartz
President

League of Women Voters of Western Nevada
County

Distinguished Women of the Past



Marian Anderson (1897-1993)



Marian Anderson, an African-American contralto, was born on February 27, 1897, in Philadelphia to John and Anna Anderson. Her father sold ice and coal, and her mother was a former teacher. Her talent for music was noted when she was still in elementary school. At the age of six she joined the junior choir of the Union Baptist Church in Philadelphia. In high school, she sang with the all-black Philadelphia Choral Society. She graduated from South Philadelphia High School for Girls in 1921. After high school, she applied to an all-white music school in Philadelphia, but her application was rejected. She was told: “We don’t take colored.” She continued her studies privately with world-famous voice teacher Guiseppe Boghetti, who can be credited with refining her technical skills and expanding her repertoire to include classical songs and arias.

In 1925, she entered a New York Philharmonic voice competition where she won first prize. Her debut with the Philharmonic on August 26, 1925, was a critical success. In the early 1930’s, she went on a concert tour of Europe, where her reputation was established. She performed at Town Hall and Carnegie Hall in New York. In the late 1930’s, she performed for the Roosevelts at the White House.

In 1939, Howard University sought to bring her to perform at Constitution Hall. The request was denied by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), who owned the Hall, because she was black. Eleanor Roosevelt, who sat on the board of the DAR, resigned her membership in protest over this decision, and other prominent women followed suit. Mrs. Roosevelt then arranged a concert for Anderson at the Lincoln Memorial which was attended by seventy-five thousand people. Millions more listened to the radio broadcast of this event. Four years later, the DAR invited Anderson to take part in a concert for China Relief at Constitution Hall. She accepted.

In 1955, she became the first black person to join the Metropolitan Opera in New York. She sang at the inaugurals of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. In 1958, she was an alternate delegate to the United Nations. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963, a Congressional Gold Medal in 1977, the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award in 1984, and a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1991.

Marian Anderson died twenty years ago this month in Portland, Oregon, on April 8, 1993.

We appreciate the support of the following businesses and business professionals:

The Wooden Spoon

A Toy Store for Cooks

2066 Nevada City Highway, Grass Valley
(530) 272-8980

www.atoystoreforcooks.com

Hair Razors

Amy Pirtle

233 Mill Street, Grass Valley

(530) 263-6330

Mill Street Clothing

Lisa Swarthout

117 Mill Street, Grass Valley

(530) 477-6404

SPD Markets

735 Zion Street, Nevada City

(530) 265-4596

www.spdmarket.com

The Book Seller

107 Mill Street, Grass Valley

(530) 272-2131

www.TheBookSeller.biz

A. Ann Armstrong, Attorney

Armstrong & Associates

200 Auburn Folsom Road #106, Auburn 95603

(530) 269-1515

www.annarmstrong.org

BriarPatch Co-op

Natural Foods Community Market

290 Sierra College Drive, Grass Valley
(530) 272-5333

Hours: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily - www.briarpatch.coop

Flour Garden Bakery

999 Sutton Way, Grass Valley 95945

(530) 272-2043

Mon.-Sat. 5am-7pm, Sun. 6am-6pm

www.flourgarden.com

New Moon Café

203 York Street, Nevada City

(530) 265-6399

www.thenewmooncafe.com

Piano Tuning

Yvonne Ashmore Piano Service

Registered Piano Technician since 1969

(530) 273-8800

"A woman is like a tea bag—you never know how strong she is until she gets in hot water."

- Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962)