



# *The Voter*

The League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County

January 2012



## **January Program: PRISON REALIGNMENT**

### **Guest Speakers:**

- **Thomas M. Anderson** Presiding Judge Superior Court of California, County of Nevada
- **Margarita Perez** Deputy Director, Division of Adult Parole Operations,  
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- **Keith Royal** Sheriff/Coroner/Public Administrator, County of Nevada
- **Douglas A. Carver** Chief Probation Officer, County of Nevada

**Saturday, January 14, 2012**

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

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

## THE PREZ SEZ

**Happy New Year!** 2011 is now a dimming memory—though a very enjoyable one if you attended our festive Holiday Party.

The year ahead is full of possibilities. Take a moment to think about what you'd like to see happen in 2012. The end of our economic woes? The resolution of gridlock in Washington and the beginning of truly bipartisan governance? The election of the candidates you support in next November's election? The return of the fine art of compromise to benefit the most citizens?

Or - continuing proliferation of voter suppression laws; an increase in harsh immigration laws; the gutting of environmental protection laws; more court decisions that support the notion that corporations are people and campaign contributions are equivalent to free speech.

Our reactions to these possibilities depend on our values. Values can function as a compass that enables us to navigate through these often conflicting possibilities, helping us to identify what is most important to us personally.

Our values can also serve as a catalyst to action. The result might be joining with others whose values are similar to yours. Or donating money to a cause you care deeply about. Or writing Letters to the Editor of the local newspaper to express your opinion publicly. Or volunteering to help an organization that reflects your values. Or simply being willing to talk with others about what matters to you.

Do you make New Year resolutions? January is the traditional time to take stock of our lives, to reexamine our priorities, and to refocus our efforts. That's what our national League will be doing this month. In the months ahead, I'll be discussing those national priorities. But the ideals the League stands for will remain the same: encouraging grass roots level participation in our democratic process by all citizens.

This is the time to reflect on what you care deeply about and to ask yourself if you care enough to do something about it. I'd like to hear about your priorities, what you value, what you'd like to see our League do in the year ahead.

Karen Schwartz, President

## Our January Meeting



**Our January 14 Meeting** will focus on the issues surrounding “prison realignment” - the fears and also the hopes that our county will handle this mandate with foresight and diligence.

Herewith is an excerpt from an editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* of November 13, 2011, that succinctly covers the background of this controversial subject:

“Public safety realignment is no secret. After years of refusal to consider sentencing reforms, inability to provide adequate drug treatment, unwillingness to prepare parolees for lives outside prison and a continuing insistence on locking up more people longer, state prisons became so overcrowded that the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the population reduced. There was no appetite among the public or their elected representatives to build and staff more prisons. The state's options were to immediately release 33,000 inmates onto the streets, or to “realign”: move much of the authority for inmates to the county level. Counties now have to do what state government couldn't: make choices about whom to keep behind bars, whom to monitor at home with ankle bracelets, whom to refer for drug treatment.”

**You won't want to miss this very important meeting We will have a panel of experts from the courts and law enforcement to help us to understand what this means for Nevada County.**

**Bring your questions, your comments and your friends to this timely and provocative meeting on January 14. You'll be glad you did!**



**Privatization Study** - As reported in a previous *Voter*, the national League will be initiating a study on the privatization of government services (libraries, schools, etc.). Our local League plans to participate and will be updating members as the study develops. There was legislation passed this year in Sacramento which dealt specifically with what a governing body must consider when making such a decision. The concern is national, state, and local.

**Voter Suppression** - The national League's major focus currently involves legislative actions which make it more difficult for citizens to vote. Voting rights are being undermined in a variety of ways in many state legislatures. The League of Women Voters has called on the Department of Justice to act without delay to ensure fair elections in 2012. In mid-December, the Attorney General of the U.S. acknowledged what the League has known for a long time. It is felt that his office has not been aggressive enough in protecting the voting rights of American citizens. The League has been involved in "protecting the voter" activities. The national League president has testified at the Capitol stressing the impact that the state-passed legislation has made. In Florida, the League has cancelled voter registration as a protest to the restrictive conditions set by the state legislature. Ohio and South Carolina have also been states where the League has been working to alter those laws which threaten the rights of voters. For an update, be sure to attend our local League meeting in February which will feature an update on the current status on voter suppression activities and what is being done to combat this threat.

Polly Bacich  
Action/Legislation Chair

**The 2012 League Voter Service Committee is ready to swing into action!**  
Please plan to join this excellent group by calling Ruth Schwartz, Voter Service Chair



In February, 2012, the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District will hold a special vote-by-mail election on an additional tax. Approximately 20,000 ballots will be sent out to the residents involved, and our League has been asked to count the ballots in March.

A large number of eager and enthusiastic League members will be needed to help us count the ballots. The Fire District has promised to supply food and beverages in order for us to maintain our usual high energy levels!

In addition to this public service, we can look forward to at least two candidates' forums. We hope, also, to reach out to the high schools and Sierra College for voter registration.

Please join with us as we prepare to tackle these formidable tasks. Fortunately, there will be no initiatives on the June Primary ballot—that will have to wait for the November election!

We are now making tentative plans for a Tuesday, January 17th meeting of all those interested in joining with us as we make plans for the new League year. I hope to see many new members at this meeting.  
**The Voter Service Committee is a great way to get involved in League!**

Ruth Schwartz, Voter Service Chair



The end of a very busy year is approaching and offers lots of opportunity to reflect on the work that we have done and the work ahead.

I'd like to focus on the work ahead simply because of its urgency. Many state legislatures have managed to make it more difficult for citizens to vote in the upcoming 2012 elections. This week the Attorney General of the United States finally acknowledged what we, in the League, have known for a long time. Voting rights are being undermined in a variety of ways in a majority of the states. The time for action is now if we want the 2012 election to be fair.

Whatever course the Department of Justice takes over the next few months, we know that state legislatures will be coming back into session next year (2012), and efforts will be renewed to require voter ID, curb early voting and discourage groups like the League from registering voters. We, who understand the importance of full participation, must continue to oppose these efforts in every way possible. Whatever barriers the states throw up, we must work to overcome them. We know this is an organized effort, but regardless of who is behind it or what is motivating it, we must be just as organized and just as determined to make the process work for every voter and to make every vote count.

This past year, the League has been very involved in "protecting the voter" activities in various capacities. In mid-November, I was on Capitol Hill to speak about the impact of 2011 state-passed voting legislation.

Our state Leagues have been busy, too, fighting back against these anti-voter measures! Still, there is so much more to do.

This final message for 2011, then, is a call to arms to all Leagues! Let's roll up our sleeves and do the valuable work for which we are best known and best qualified. Let's get out and register new voters, provide Voters' Guides, host candidate debates and forums, and mobilize voters for the 2012 elections!

In League,

Elisabeth MacNamara, President, The League of Women Voters of the United States

## Next Month

**February 11, 2012**, The League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County will present a program specifically devoted to **voter suppression**. We will assemble a panel of experts from our area and beyond to listen to your concerns, answer your questions and keep us informed about the attack on voters' rights!

## Timeline of Women's Suffrage in the United States (1884-1896)

### Civil Disobedience is Tried (continued from December issue)

- 1886 - Women protest being excluded from the dedication ceremonies for the Statue of Liberty. Suffrage amendment reaches the U.S. Senate floor—it is defeated two to one.
- 1887 - Utah women lose the right to vote.
- 1890 - The National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association merge to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The focus turns to working at the state level.
- 1893 - **Matilda Joslyn Gage** publishes *Woman, Church and State*. After a vigorous campaign led by **Carrie Chapman Catt**, Colorado men vote for woman suffrage.
- 1894 - Despite 600,000 signatures, a petition for woman suffrage is ignored in New York. **Lucy Stone**, born in 1818, dies.
- 1895 - **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** publishes *The Woman's Bible*. Utah women regain suffrage.
- 1896 - Idaho grants woman suffrage.

### Suffrage Activism Enters the 20th Century

- 1900 - **Carrie Chapman Catt** takes over the reins of the NAWSA.
- 1902 - **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, born in 1815, dies.
- 1906 - **Susan Brownell Anthony**, born in 1820, dies.
- 1907 - **Harriet Stanton Blatch**, Elizabeth's daughter, forms the Equality League of Self Supporting Women which becomes the Women's Political Union in 1910. She introduces the English suffragists' tactics of parades, street speakers, and pickets.
- 1910 - Washington State grants woman suffrage.
- 1911 - California grants woman suffrage. In New York City, 3,000 march for suffrage
- 1912 - Teddy Roosevelt's Progressive Party includes woman suffrage in their platform. Oregon, Arizona and Kansas grant woman suffrage.
- 1913 - Women's Suffrage parade on the eve of Wilson's inauguration is attacked by a mob. Hundreds of women are injured, no arrests are made. Alaskan Territory grants suffrage. Illinois grants municipal and presidential, but not state suffrage, to women.
- 1916 - **Alice Paul** and others break away from the NAWSA and form the National Women's Party.
- 1917- Beginning in January, the National Women's Party posts silent "Sentinels of Liberty" at the White House. In June, the arrests begin. Nearly 500 women are arrested. Over one hundred women serve jail time; some are brutalized by their jailers. North Dakota, Indiana, Nebraska, and Michigan grant presidential suffrage; Arkansas grants primary suffrage; New York, South Dakota and Oklahoma state constitutions grant suffrage.
- 1918- Jailed suffragists are released from prison. The appellate court rules all the arrests were illegal. President Wilson declares support for suffrage. The Suffrage Amendment passes the U.S. House with exactly a 2/3 vote, but loses by two votes in the Senate.
- 1919 - In January, the NWP lights and guards a "Watchfire for Freedom". It is maintained until the Suffrage Amendment passes the U.S. Senate on June 4. The battle for ratification by at least 36 states begins.
- 1920 - **The Nineteenth Amendment**, called the **Susan B. Anthony Amendment**, is ratified by Tennessee on August 18. It becomes law on August 26.

## NOBEL PEACE PRIZE PRESENTED TO FEMALE TRIO IN OSLO



The 2011 Nobel Peace Prize has been presented to three women at a ceremony in the Norwegian capital, Oslo.

This year's award was won jointly by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the President of Liberia, Leymah Gbowee, the Liberian peace activist, and Yemeni pro-democracy campaigner Tawakkol Karman.

They were recognised for their "non-violent struggle" for women's safety and for women's rights to participate in peace-building work. (photo and text courtesy of BBC NEWS World)



Recently, there was the death of a 98 year-old woman named Irena Sendler.

During WWII, Irena got permission to work in the Warsaw ghetto as a plumbing/sewer specialist. She had an "ulterior motive." Being German, she KNEW what the Nazi's plans were for the Jews.

Irena smuggled infants and older children out of the ghetto in the bottom of the tool box she carried in the back of her truck. In that truck she also carried burlap sacks for the larger kids.

Her dog, which was trained to bark whenever soldiers approached, was also in the truck. The soldiers, naturally, wanted nothing to do with a "vicious" dog, and the barking covered the noises the children might make. During the time she did this, she managed to smuggle out and save 2,500 infants and children.

She was caught, and the Nazis broke both her legs and arms and beat her severely. She kept a record of the names of all the kids she smuggled out and kept those names in a glass jar which she buried under a tree in her back yard.

After the war, she tried to locate any parents that may have survived in the hopes of reuniting the families. Most had been gassed in the camps. Some of the children she helped were placed with foster families and some were adopted.

**In 2007 Irena was up for the Nobel Peace Prize. She was not selected.**

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*“Let us not look back in anger or forward in fear, but around in awareness.”*

**- James Thurber**