



# *The Voter*

The League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County

March 2011

**ALERT!**

**SEVERE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS**

**FALLING THROUGH THE SAFETY NET !**



**Saturday, March 12, 2011**

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

Peace Lutheran Church  
828 West Main  
Grass Valley

## THE PREZ SEZ

Last month I wrote, “As we watch the year 2011 unfolding before us, we Americans face yet another example of how violence and incivility continue to afflict our democratic process.”

While events of the first month of this year may have left us to wonder about the imperfections of our democratic republic, the events unfolding in Cairo in February offered us reason to feel at least cautiously optimistic that mankind’s aspirations toward freedom and democracy may yet prevail around the world.

Here at home, it’s easy to fall into pessimism about the future prospects of our state and our nation. The daily news is unrelenting in examining all the problems and crises we face. This onslaught of bad news, topped with even worse news, can leave us feeling discouraged, helpless and defeated.

Fortunately, the League offers a remedy. We’ve just celebrated our 91st birthday, so we’re no “flash in the pan.” The League was founded on Valentine’s Day, 1920, six months before the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution giving women the right to vote.

For 91 years we’ve devoted ourselves to informing voters, encouraging their participation in our democracy. We remain committed to seeking and supporting any and all efforts that will strengthen our democracy. The heart of our mission—strengthening our democratic system and increasing the public’s participation—has not diminished. Today, we are a grassroots organization of 140,000 supporters and more than 800 Leagues throughout all 50 states.

The second part of the mission—increasing the public’s participation—means that when you attend League meetings, when you express your views, and when you support our efforts financially, you are doing your part. Thank you.

Karen Schwartz  
President pro tem

## Our March Program

Local resources for people with mental illnesses and how those resources are accessed will be the focus of our program for March 12, 2011.

A panel of speakers will provide insight and background concerning the complexities of Nevada County’s local public health and safety agencies.

The panel will consist of :

- A representative from the Sheriff’s Office
- Capt. Dave Remillard of the Grass Valley Police Department
- Representatives from our local Crises Team
- Michael Haggerty, Director of Nevada County Behavioral Health
- A representative from the Emergency Room at the Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital

As every level of government wrestles with budget cutbacks, we all need to know more about the vital services that may be affected.

Recent events have led us to realize the importance of understanding the availability for those with severe brain disorders and how we can help them access those resources. Bring your questions and comments to this important and timely meeting. We look forward to seeing you on Saturday, March 12.

Helen Williamson  
Program Planning Coordinator



## League of Women Voters of California®

### **SOCIAL POLICY POSITION: MENTAL HEALTH** (Adopted 1998)

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** *Support for an adequately funded mental health care system which provides comprehensive services to the acutely, chronically and seriously mentally ill of all ages; maintains optimal mental health services for all clients; places emphasis on meeting the needs of children; offers mental health services for the homeless; seeks additional funds for preventive services; implements a master plan to integrate services; raises awareness of critical unmet needs; and emphasizes case management.*

#### **RECENT USES:**

- Supported legislation requiring coverage of mental illnesses on the same level as other illnesses
- Promoted comprehensive programs for mentally ill persons who are homeless, recently incarcerated, or at risk for either of these conditions
- Supported legislation to establish a grant program for counties to develop mental health plans for children





## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS - A HISTORY - PUBLIC POLICY ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The League has joined with other pro-choice organizations in continuous opposition to restriction on the right of privacy in reproductive choices that have appeared in Congress as legislative riders to funding measures. In 1985, the League joined as an *amicus* in a lawsuit challenging a Pennsylvania law intended to deter women from having abortions. In 1986, the Supreme Court found the law unconstitutional.

- In January 1983, the LWVUS announced the position on Reproductive Choice.
- In spring 1983, the LWVUS successfully pressed for the defeat of S.J. Res.3, a proposed constitutional amendment that would have overturned Roe v. Wade.
- In 1986, the League opposed congressional provisions to revoke the tax-exempt status of any organization that performs, finances or provides facilities for any abortion not necessary to save the life of a pregnant woman
- In 1988 and 1990 the League urged support of 1988 legislation that would have restored Medicaid funding for abortions in cases of rape or incest
- In July 1989 the League joined in an amicus brief to uphold a women's right of privacy to make reproductive choices in the case of "Webster v. Reproductive Health Services". A sharply divided Supreme Court issued a decision that upheld a Missouri statute that prohibited the use of public facilities, employees or funds for counseling, advising or performing abortions and that required doctors to conduct viability tests on fetuses 20 weeks or older before aborting them.
- In 1990, the LWVUS joined the national Pro-Choice Coalition and began work in support of the Freedom of Choice Act, designed to place into federal law the principle of Roe v. Wade.
- The 1990 League Convention voted to work on issues dealing with the right of privacy in reproductive choices, domestic and international family planning and reproductive health care, and initiatives to decrease teen pregnancy and infant mortality (based on the International Relations and Social Policy positions).
- Throughout 1991 and 1992, the League continued to fight efforts to erode the constitutional right of reproductive choice by supporting the Freedom of Choice Act an attempt to overturn the gag rule.
- Late in 1993, President Clinton signed an executive order overturning the gag rule and other restrictive anti-choice policies.
- In 1998, the League opposed the "Child Custody Protection Act", federal legislation designed to make it illegal for an adult other than a parent to assist a minor in obtaining an out-of-state abortion.
- Throughout the tenure of the 107th Congress, the League signed on to group letters supporting the right to reproductive choices.
- In 2002, the League lobbied extensively against limiting funds for family planning.
- In 2003, the League strongly opposed the passage of the Partial-Birth Abortion Act, but it was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush.
- In 2004, the LWVUS lobbied in opposition to the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, but Congress passed the bill and President Bush signed it.
- In 2008, the League filed official comments with the Department of Health and Human Services to voice concern over "conscience" regulation that would have limited reproductive health care option for women by allowing physicians, pharmacists and other providers to sharply limit their services according to their own views on reproductive health care.
- **February 2011. BY A VOTE OF 240-185, THE HOUSE PASSED REP. MIKE PENCE'S AMENDMENT TO CUT ALL FEDERAL FUNDING FROM PLANNED PARENTHOOD HEALTH CENTERS, ONE OF THE MOST TRUSTED PROVIDERS OF BASIC HEALTH CARE AND FAMILY PLANNING IN OUR COUNTRY. A portion of that care falls under the so-called "Title X" provisions of the Public Health Service Act, a law that provides federal funding for family planning—but not abortion, which cannot be paid for with federal money except in very strict circumstances, such as pregnancies resulting from rape. The bill is now in the domain of the Senate.**

## Who was “Mother Jones”?



### MARY HARRIS (Mother) JONES: 1837-1930

According to a West Virginia District Attorney named Reese Blizzard, Mother Jones was “the most dangerous woman in America”. According to Clarence Darrow, she was “one of the most forceful and picturesque figures of the American labor movement”. Eighty years after her death, her name is still part of current culture - as the title of a magazine!

While Mary Harris claimed 1830 as her birth date, researchers suggest that it is more likely 1837, in County Cork, Ireland. Her family emigrated to Toronto, Canada, when she was a child. She trained to be a teacher at Toronto Normal School from 1858-1859, and worked briefly as a teacher and as a dressmaker. In 1861, Mary Harris married George Jones, an iron molder and union organizer, in Memphis, Tennessee. The couple had four children—but all four children, and Mary’s husband, died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1867. Mary Jones returned to Chicago, where she worked as a dressmaker until her shop was destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871.

During the next few years, “Mother” Jones became increasingly active in the union movement. Her life is in some ways a history of the labor movement in the United States. A brief sampling of her activities reports her involved in the rail strike of 1877, in Pittsburgh and elsewhere; organizing the coal fields of Pennsylvania in 1899; at the founding convention of the IWW in 1905; visiting rebel Mexico in 1911; being arrested at Homestead in 1919; and working with dressmakers in Chicago in 1924.

Mother Jones has a notable place in American history. Her work as a union organizer and orator and her influence on the making of history have had more lasting significance than her writing. However, *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*, which she partly wrote and partly dictated, clearly illustrates the power of both her voice and her convictions. Written in a natural, colloquial style, it paints a forceful picture of the working conditions and people of the mining camps, railroad towns, and textile industry that she worked with. A sense of her voice can also be obtained from a short article which she wrote in 1901. A tribute by Eugene V. Debs gives a view of her life as seen by one of her contemporaries.

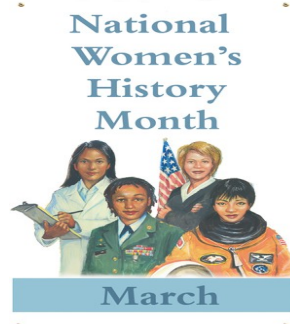
“Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living!” - Mother Jones

*(Reprinted courtesy of: A Celebration of Women Writers)*

# March is Women's History Month

## Important Dates in Women's History

- **March 1 Matronalia, Roman celebration of women** and celebration of Juno-Lucina, protector of women and the family, Temple fires welcomed the coming of spring.
- **March 1, 1864 - Rebecca Lee of Boston, MA** became the first African American woman to earn a medical degree.
- **March 2 Roman festival of Vesta, Goddess of purifying fire.** Vestal virgins were independent women who were priestesses of Vesta. The ancient meaning of "virgin" was "one within," signifying an independent woman.
- **March 3 Hina Matsuri, Japanese Doll Festival,** dedicated to the three Munakata goddesses, daughters of Amaterasu, the Sun.
- **March 4, 1933 - Frances Perkins** is sworn in as Secretary of Labor, first woman in U.S. cabinet.
- **March 4, 1917 - Jeanette Rankin** became the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.
- **March 7, 1870 - Wyoming women allowed on juries;** the right later was taken away until the 1950's when women once again were admitted to serve.
- **March 8, 1908 - First International Women's Day,** founded by German labor activist Clara Zetkin.
- **March 10 Mothering Day (England), the original Mother's Day.** It was the custom to visit one's mother on this day and present her with bread and presents.
- **March 10 Hypatia's Day, honoring the scholar of the University of Alexandria.** A pagan, Hypatia was murdered by a mob of monks because she was a woman who taught men.
- **March 10, 1913 - Death of Harriet Tubman,** Underground Railroad conductor who rescued more than 300 of her people from slavery.
- **March 12, 1993 Janet Reno** became the first woman U.S. Attorney General.
- **March 20, 1925 Birth of Romana Banuelos,** first Mexican American woman to serve as U.S. Treasurer.
- **March 22, 1972 Equal Rights Amendment** passed by Congress and sent to states for ratification.
- **March 25, 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City.** Nearly 146 workers died, mostly immigrant women. Many were trapped because of locked exits.
- **March 30 Feast of Eostra, German Goddess of rebirth and fertility.** This festival inspired the Christian Easter.
- **March 31, 1776 Abigail Adams** wrote her famous "Remember the ladies" letter to her husband, John, urging him to include women as he helped construct the U.S. Constitution. He didn't.



## LWVUS Legislative Priorities for 2011

The decisions regarding Legislative Priorities are based on what issues are likely to come before the 112th Congress, the opportunities to make an impact, program decisions made at the 2010 Convention, member interest and resources available to manage these priorities effectively.

The LWVUS Board of Directors adopted the following Legislative Priorities for 2011: **Clean Air; Health Care Defense; Money in Elections (campaign finance reform); and Voter Registration and Election Administration.** Among those on the Legislative Watch List are: **Ethics; Immigration; and Climate Change.** The Watch List means that if the opportunity arises and the LWVUS feels it can make an impact, it may take action.

When you see an issue, such as Campaign Finance Reform appearing year after year, it means that it is far from resolved and remains a major concern for LWVUS. Lack of congressional action does not make it less of a priority. The majority of the Action Alerts will focus on these priorities.

Polly Bacich  
Action/Legislation Chair

### NEW MEMBER

Our warmest welcome to our new member:

**Beth Bowman**

*Addresses, phone numbers and e-mails of members can be obtained by contacting the Membership Chair, Linda McVicker.*

**The League of Women Voters  
Western Nevada County  
Wishes to thank Brunswick Village  
Assisted Living Community  
For their continued support.**

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