"Current Events" with Frank Damon

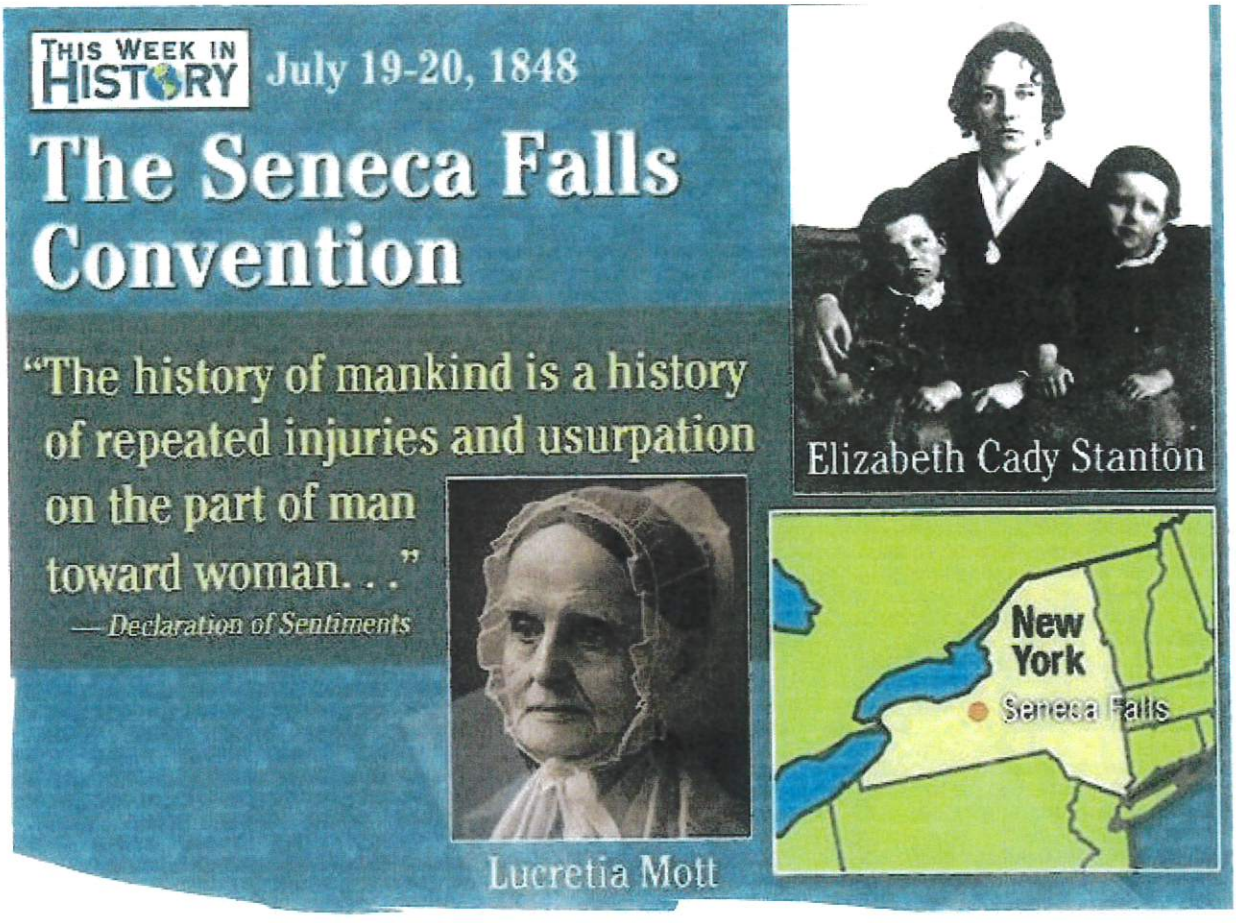
Summer 2020

Doelger Senior Center has been most fortunate to have Frank Damon leading both our Current Events and History discussion groups for the last 5 years. During this current time of physical distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Frank is sharing his current events discussion topics online. He will begin offering discussion groups using ZOOM in the very near future. Stay tuned for updates!

Frank received his BA degree from the University of San Francisco (USF) with a dual major in Political Science and American History. He also earned his MA in Political Science and teaching credentials at USF. Over the course of his career, Frank taught in the San Mateo Union High School District and at Marin Catholic High School, Terra Nova High School, Golden Gate University, College of San Mateo, Skyline College and Canada College.

Frank can be contacted directly at frankdamon@smccd.edu.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in these articles and discussion topics are those of the authors and group participants and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any agency of the City of Daly City.



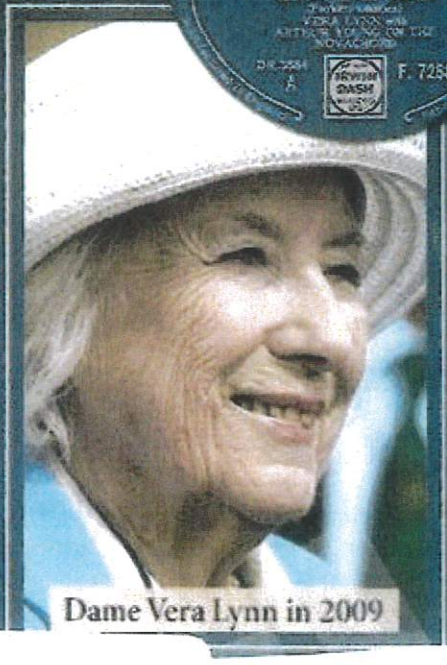
THIS WEE[illegible]ISTORY

Woman argued for equality at the Seneca Falls convention of 1848. In the mid eighteen hundreds, women could not vote in the US. They were also denied equal access to education and other equal protections under the law. Many women, and some men, were unhappy about this inequality. Elizabeth Caty Stanton and Lucrecia Mott were two activists who met at an anti-slavery convention in London in 1840. What were the ant-slavery activists called? They were called Abolitionists. Stanton and Mott became friends, and also started talking about women's rights. The decided to call a general meeting in Seneca Falls, NY where Stanton lived. People came from all over the uS to talk about women's rights. The Seneca Falls convention began on July 19, 1948. Mott who was well known for her public speaking ability, planned most of the convention. There were a number of speakers, discussing many different issues. The focus of the meeting was a document called The Declaration of Sentiments. Elizabeth Stanton-wrote it based on the Declaration of Independence. In it, she urged the fare and equal treatment of women. Stanton also demanded that women get the right to vote, although not all women were supportive of this idea. When did women finally get the right to vote?

Remember When . . .

Vera Lynn (1917-2020)

Driving a Jeep during World War Two

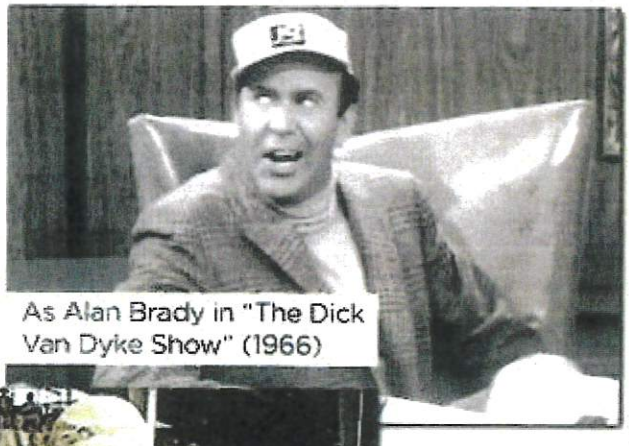


Dame Vera Lynn in 2009

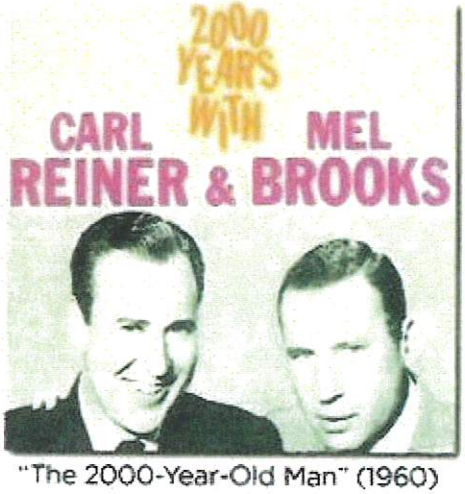
"Churchill didn't beat the Nazis. Vera sang them to death."
—Harry Secombe

Remember When . . .

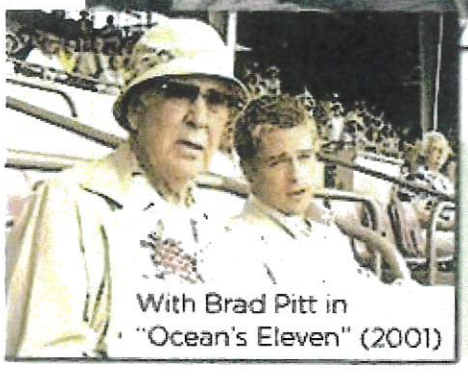
Carl Reiner (1922-2020)



As Alan Brady in "The Dick Van Dyke Show" (1966)



"The 2000-Year-Old Man" (1960)



With Brad Pitt in "Ocean's Eleven" (2001)

"I'm very ordinary. So I figure if I write about myself, other people with similar feelings and experiences would go, 'Oh, that's me.' "

House passes DC statehood bill

"We stand out as the only democracy which denies democracy to the residents of its own capital city."

--Eleanor Holmes Norton, DC delegate to U.S. House of Representatives

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSES A BILL CALLED HR51

Why did the house number the bill HR51? Because if it passes, Washington DC would become the 51st state.

The issue of DC statehood goes back more than 200 years. The Founding Fathers carved Washington out of the land that once belonged to the state of Maryland. They set it up as a federal district under the control of Congress, not as a state. Can you guess why? (They wanted to keep politics from interfering with the workings of the U.S. government. This action meant that residents of Washington DC had no voice in national politics. DC residents could not even vote in federal elections until 1961, with the passage of the 23rd amendment. Currently, Eleanor Holmes Norton is the districts delegate to the U.S. House. But she is not allowed to vote on any bill.

Under HR51 the new state would change its name to Washington, Douglas Commonwealth. This change would get rid of "district" of Columbia a name derived from the name of Christopher Columbus. It would also honor abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who grew up in slavery in Maryland. Do you think this is a good way to keep the name "Washington DC?" The state would include almost everything in the city's current boundaries and would get two senators and one US representative.

Since DC voters are largely Democratic, Trump and the Republican controlled Senate say they would never allow HR51 to pass. Instead, some Republicans say that Washington residents should get voting rights in the state of Maryland. Would this be a better plan?

D.C. residents:

- Can vote for president, but have no voting representative
- Pay the highest federal tax rate in U.S.
- Can have laws overturned by Congress
- Are more numerous than populations of WY, VT

LICENSE PLATES IN DC READ "TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION"

One of the biggest reasons for the Revolutionary War was the idea of "No Taxation Without Representation." American colonists were upset that they had to pay taxes to England without having a vote in Parliament. This idea led to the Boston Tea Party and other acts of rebellion.

Today, people who live in Washington point out that this praise also applies to them. DC residents pay the highest per capita federal tax rate in the US. In fact, they pay more every year than twenty-two current states.

Some critics say that Washington DC is too small to become a state. But with 650,000 permanent residents, Washington has a larger population than Vermont and Wyoming. Others say it would be unfair to add a new state that votes so heavily for one political party. And there are some who say there are Washington voters would mostly be politicians and lobbyists protecting their own interest.

In response, many DC residents say they are being deprived of their full rights because of their political views. How would US politics change with a new heavily democratic state?

INMATES ARE 2.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO CONTRACT THE CORONAVIRUS

By the end of June, there were 2.93 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States. Some states ended their lockdowns, only to start some restrictions bac up again after a sharp increase in infections.

One segment of the population has been especially vulnerable to the Corona virus. Statistics show that US prisoners are two-and-a half times more likely t have COIV-19 than people in the regular population. As of June 30th, more than 52,000 inmates have tested positive for the virus.

One of the biggest reasons for the high infection rate in prisons has to do with the inability to maintain social distancing. Inmates are often around each other in enclosed spaces. Many US prisons are at or above capacity. To reduce the risk, some facilities have stated to release some non-violent prisoners to home monitoring and other programs. This curtesy has been extended to some high-profile inmates including Trumps associates Michael Cohen and Paul Manafort.

Experts have cited other possible reasons for the rapid spread of COVID-19. These include substandard nutrition, lack of exercise, and inadequate medical facilities. But it is undeniable that the sheer numbers of prisoners are also a factor. More than two million people are incarcerated in the US-more than any other nation on earth. Why does the US have so many prisoners? Should something be done to change this? If so, why?

MAN IN THE NEWS

This is Vladimir Putin-president of Russia. He was born in St. Petersburg in 1952, when it was still called Leningrad. In 1975, he became an officer of the KGB, the Soviet Union's defense agency. Although the Soviet Union collapsed, he rose through the nation's political ranks until he became prime minister for the first time in 1999. He was first elected president in the year 2000. In 2008, he was prevented by law from running again so he stepped down and served a prime minister for 4 years. In 2012, he ran again for president, and was elected by a large margin. Although he is popular in the Soviet Union, he has been accused of intimidating journalists and political enemies.

A long economic down turn and his handling of the COVID-19 crisis was thought to have lowered his popularity in the Soviet Union. But nearly 78% of voters backed a new constitutional reform that would reset his presidential term limits to zero in 2024, allowing him to serve two additional six-year terms. This means that theoretically he could lead the Soviet Union until 2036.