

Classroom Spice

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Victoria Woodhull

Many think Hillary Clinton is the first woman to run for president, but that is not the case. It actually was Victoria Woodhull in 1872.

Woodhull was an unlikely candidate, not just because she was a woman. She was actually not quite of legal age to be president, but that was only one issue in her candidacy, and one that apparently was overlooked. She was one of seven children of an illiterate mother and a father who was a petty criminal. She only went to school from the age of eight to 11, and was married by the age of about 14 to an alcoholic philanderer. Why would she think she could be president?

Maybe it was her stint as a traveling medical clairvoyant? Maybe not, as she was indicted for manslaughter in Illinois after one of her cancer patients died. Maybe it was her friendship with Vanderbilt and his financial banking which allowed Woodhull and her sister to become the first female stockbrokers on Wall Street. Maybe it was her founding a newspaper, that addressed radical political, economic, and social ideas. Not only did the pa-

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Train to Death Camps

When Nazi death camps are brought up, little thought is given to the trains which took deportees to the camps. However, Holocaust survivors think often of those trains and have accused the SNCF, France's state-owned rail company of complicity in the horrors associated with the death camps. It is estimated of the 76,000 deportees SNCF transported from France to the German border from 1942-44, which ultimately ended at the camps, less than 3,000 survived. Not everyone who was sent to the death camps was Jewish. Others sent included "social undesirables." The Nazi's definition of "social undesirable" included a wide range of individuals such as Gypsies, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, mentally and physically handicapped, resistance fighters, socialists, blacks, criminals, and American and Canadian prisoners of war.

Starting in 2000, a class-action lawsuit against SNCF was initiated by some Holocaust survivors who had relocated in America. SNCF claimed they were coerced into complying with the Nazis and should not be indicted,



but facts showed the train company's own agents independently kept the deportees from escaping the cars, made no provisions for water or food, and provided minimal hygienic conditions. SNCF was paid third-class fare for each deportee. Documents show that SNCF even complained when the Red Cross tried to provide food and water to deportees.

One particularly powerful story of a Holocaust survivor is that of Leo Bretholz. In

November 1942, at the age of 21, he was herded into a SNCF train cattle car. The train was carrying 1,000 deportees to Auschwitz. Bretholz and another man were able to pry the bars of a small window open enough to jump from the moving train. Both Nazis and police hunted him. In what could be called an Underground Railroad similar to that helping escaped slaves in the United States, Bretholz hid with relatives in Jewish ghettos, among Catholic nuns and priests, in attics, and cellars. He slept in ditches, swam a flooded river, and climbed the Alps, only to be turned away from the Swiss border by Swiss guards. He assumed aliases and joined the Jewish resistance group. In total he escaped seven times from imminent capture during his seven-year ordeal. Of the 1,000 on the train Bretholz rode headed to Auschwitz, only five survived the war. Bretholz

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African-American Inventors

- Onesimus—Cotton Mather’s slave introduced a remedy for smallpox (vaccination).
 Benjamin Banneker—invented the first clock ever built in America. Built of wood, it kept accurate time for over 40 years.
 Thomas Jennings—First African-American to receive a patent. He invented a new way of dry cleaning.
 Miriam Benjamin—a school teacher who invented the Gong and Signal Chair. A person in a hotel or the U.S. House of Representatives could summon assistance from the comfort of their chair. A button on the chair would buzz a station and a light on the chair would let the staff know who wanted service.
 Elijah McCoy—invented an automatic engine lubricator, called the lubricator cup, which was used on trains and ship engines. He also invented such items as the ironing board and the lawn sprinkler.
 H. H. Reynolds—invented a ventilator for use in train cars to bring in air and keep out dust and soot.
 Jo Anderson—a slave invented a reaper. The credit however, of the reaper went to his owner Cyrus McCormick.
 Archie Ross—Laundress who invented the Wrinkle-Preventing Trouser Stretcher.
 Shelby Davidson—invented the adding machine to help the U.S. Postal Service employees.
 Ralph Gardner—chemist who invented hard plastics.
 The musician Prince—created a portable keyboard, the Keytar.
 Madame C. J. Walker—invented a line of cosmetics and hair products specially designed for black women.
 Granville Woods—often referred to as “Black Edison” invented the third rail enabling the use of subway systems.
 Lewis Latimer—draftsman and inventor, invented a long-lasting carbon filament allowing for everyone to afford electric lights, and such things as a device for cooling and cleaning air.
 Andrew Beard—invented a plow and rotary steam engine, but is best known for his automatic railroad coupler.

O S F C T B G D H I P H W Z B A P U C W
 L J A O N E S I M U S A B K E E O C Z Q
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ONESIMUS
 BANNEKER
 JENNINGS
 BENJAMIN
 MCCOY
 REYNOLDS
 ANDERSON
 ROSS
 DAVIDSON
 GARDNER
 PRINCE
 WALKER
 WOODS
 LATIMER
 BEARD

(Victoria Woodhull—cont'd from page 1)

per include coverage of the women's suffrage but it presented the first English translation of Marx's *The Communist Manifesto*! Maybe she thought being the first woman to address a congressional committee made her a good candidate. She advocated to the judiciary committee that women were citizens under the 14th and 15th amendments. Of course the committee rejected her petition that women should be allowed to vote, but her address helped her become a leader in the suffragette movement.

Her activist work for women's suffrage promoted her campaigning for the presidency on the Equal Rights Party ticket. Her platform included such issues as women's suffrage of course, but also regulation of monopolies, an eight-hour workday, direct taxation/graduated income tax, new divorce laws, nationalization of railroads, abolition of the death penalty, and welfare for the poor. Frederick Douglass was selected as her running mate, apparently without his consent. He actually campaigned for Ulysses S. Grant for president.

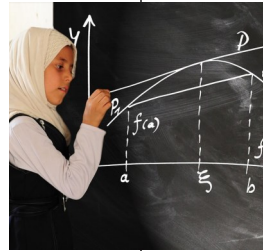
Since Victoria could not vote in the election, nor could any women, unsurprisingly she lost the election. However, even if she could have voted, she was in jail on Election Day, charged with sending obscene material through the mail related to an article in her paper about a popular preacher and his adultery. No one knows exactly how many votes she got as apparently a number of the election officials just laughed at votes cast for her and threw them away. Sometime following the election Woodhull moved to England, remarried, and spent most of her life as an ex-patriot.



The Literature Connection

Many know of Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani girl who stood up to the Taliban in support of education for girls. As a result, the Taliban put her on its hit list when she was 15 and shot her in the head on her way to school one day. Miraculously she survived, and despite many surgeries, continued her campaign for education for all children around the world. She believed "One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world." At 17 she became the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner in history. Do you know the story that led to her being put on the hit list? There were many who wanted girls to be educated but they were not on the hit list. Check out *For the Right to Learn: Malala Yousafzai's Story*, by Rebecca Langston-George, ISBN 978-1-62370-426-1 for more details. An excellent, sensitively written book for third grade thru middle school.

Brothers in Hope: The Lost Boys of the Sudan, by Mary Williams, ISBN 978-1584302322, is a Coretta Scott King



Award winning book. Based on a true story, the book follows an eight-year-old boy whose home is destroyed in the Sudan war and his family killed. In attempts to survive, he heads out alone to walk to Ethiopia which he believes is a peaceful place. On his trek he runs into

other "lost boys" who too are heading to Ethiopia. The book tells the harrowing story of their walk to Ethiopia and ultimately Kenya. Approximately 30,000 southern Sudanese boys, ages 8-15, walked almost 1,000 miles.

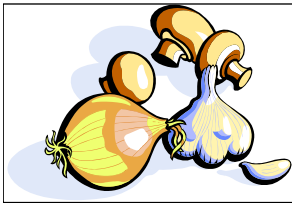
It tells how their spiritual faith and support of each other enabled many of them to reach their goal of Kenya. In 2000 the U. S. resettled 3,800 of these lost boys in such places as Atlanta, Dallas, Boston, Fargo, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Seattle, and Tucson. This is Anti-Defamation League's January Book of the Month. Access the related discussion guide at <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/book-of-the-month-brothers-in-hope.pdf>.

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The Re-disenfranchisement of American Voters

America has come a long way in enfranchising voters. Originally only white, male landowners could vote. In 1828, the last state removed religious restrictions for voting. In time, owning property, race, ethnicity, and gender restrictions were all removed. The grandfather clause, poll taxes, literacy tests, and demonstrating fluency in English were all used to restrict voter eligibility, but were eventually banned. Unfortunately, new ways to disenfranchise voters recently have evolved. Since 2000, 17 states have added new voting restrictions having the potential to stop over a million voters. The use of voter ID laws, purging voter rolls, and cutting early voting dates have

impacted elderly, poor, minorities, immigrants, and college students unfairly. In addition, use of political "dirty tricks"—such as false notification of changed polling places, distributing phony email or web addresses for online voting and counterfeit absentee ballots has increased. In many minority precincts, minorities have to wait twice as long to vote as whites in nonminority precincts. Supposedly these measures were designed to combat voter fraud, but one extensive study showed of more than 1 billion ballots cast 2000-14 there were only 31 reported instances of voter impersonation. Is this grounds for disenfranchising a million Americans?



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In This Issue...

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India's Gulabi Gang

The Gulabi Gang, women dressed in pink Saris and wielding lathi (bamboo sticks), was formed in 2006 by a woman in one of the poorest regions of India. A region marked by a rigid caste system, female illiteracy, and domestic violence. This vigilante group was started to shame and punish, if necessary, oppressive, abusive men; stop corruption; and challenge the caste system. It has helped to empower women, promote child education, and to fight for the rights of India's poor.

(Train—Cont'd from page 1)
lost 20 family members in the Holocaust. Go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpR0601MbPE) to see an interview with Bretholz.

After the war he moved to Maryland. His memories of the SNCF made him balk when one of its subsidiaries tried to win a taxpayer-funded contract in Maryland. Bretholz used this contract attempt as a platform for seeking restitution from the French train company. It took almost 16 years to receive a final court ruling demanding SNCF pay restitution to the deportee survivors and their families who settled predominantly in the United States, Israel, and Canada. Years earlier the French government had agreed to pay res-

titution to citizens from France, Belgium, Poland, United Kingdom, and Czechoslovakia, but not those relocated in other countries. It was through the determination of Bretholz and other survivors that the part the French train company played in the Holocaust was finally admitted.

A quote by Franklin Delano Roosevelt on March 24, 1944 is poignant, "All who knowingly take part in the deportation of Jews to their death in Poland or Norwegians and French to their death in Germany are equally guilty with the executioner. All who share the guilt shall share the punishment."

(Lit. Connection—Cont'd from page 3)

Te Ata: Oklahoma Cultural Treasure by Pati Hailley, ISBN 978-1938923234, is one of the I Am Oklahoma Children's Series. It provides a beautiful telling of Te Ata, born in 1895 to a Chickasaw father and White mother, and her story from infancy till her death in 1995. This tomboy grew up to be a world renown Indian storyteller. For more than seventy years she shared her love of Indian culture and nature with all ages and people throughout the world, including the President, First Lady, and royalty. The photos and quotes add to the simple narrative. It will be appreciated by third graders, middle schoolers, up through adults.