



March 2021 News

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH *(Join us March 18!)*

Dear NOW Members,

To celebrate Black History Month, we had a special Zoom meeting, and I want to thank Tina Rogers for her excellent overview of Black History Month, and thanks to all three speakers: Jackie Elward, Vice Mayor Rohnert City Council, Natalie Rogers, Vice Mayor Santa Rosa City Council, and Skylaer Palacios, Council Member, Healdsburg City Council. Thank you to all who attended, and a shout-out to June Brashares for facilitating the Zoom with Amy Nykamp.

March is Women's History Month. The theme this year is "Valiant Women of the Vote: Refusing to Be Silenced." In celebration of Women's History Month, for our **March 18th meeting**, I am excited to announce we will present a one-woman show performed by Lilith Rogers where she becomes Rachel Carson: ***Rachel Carson Returns. Silent Spring*** is an environmental science book by Rachel Carson (shown at right, *New York Times* photo). The book was published in 1962, documenting the adverse environmental effects caused by the indiscriminate use of pesticides. Lilith tells this story in such an inspiring fashion—you do not want to miss her performance. Just think what we might have accomplished if we would have listened to Rachel 59 years ago when she wrote the book. Join us at 6:30 p.m. March 18 (see Zoom info below).



Next, NOW is co-sponsoring the event “**Educating the Public: Criminal Justice Reform and the Role of the District Attorney.**” The event will take place via Zoom on **March 25th from 5:00–6:30 p.m.** (see box below). Our current District Attorney (DA) Jill Ravitch, the first woman DA in Sonoma County, will not be running for a fourth term, and it is important that folks start thinking about what they want to encourage those running to pay attention to.

Special announcement: The Peace and Justice Center is doing a weekly “Donation Drive for the Homeless.” Items can be dropped off only on Tuesdays from 3–5 p.m. Please do not drop off at any other time. The Center is located at 467 Sebastopol Ave., Santa Rosa. For additional information go to their website: <https://www.pjcsoco.org/> Tel# (707) 575-8902.

Something to think about: “The success of every woman should be the inspiration to another. We should raise each other up. Make sure you’re very courageous: be strong, be extremely kind, and above all be humble.” —**Serena Jameka Williams** is an American professional tennis player and former world No. 1 in women's single tennis. She has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles, the most by any player in the Open Era, and the second-most of all time behind Margaret Court.

—*Elaine Holtz, President*

[View this email in your browser](#)

Join Us on March 18!

Dear members and friends,

Here is the information for the NOW meeting of Thursday, March 18, 2021 from 6:30–8:00 p.m.

To celebrate Women's History Month we will have a special presentation following our regular meeting, plus Q&A with Lilith Rogers.

Video of Lilith Rogers as Rachel Carson:
RACHEL CARSON RETURNS

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87588753750?pwd=SW9nd1B3Y1dHbUphcGw4YW5LTUYyUT09>

Meeting ID: 875 8875 3750 **Passcode:** 520289

Phone in Numbers:

+1 669 900 9128 (San Jose)

Locations outside the United States <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kffdJcW5z>

Meeting ID: 875 8875 3750

In honor of Women's History Month:

Two local leaders then and now

—by Amy Nykamp

Helen Rudee (1918–2018)



Photo from 1978 — Seated (L to R): Brian Kahn; Helen Rudee; Eric Koenigshofer. Standing:
Helen Putnam;
Nick Esposti

Among the many “firsts” she held in Sonoma County, Helen Rudee is perhaps best known for being the first woman on the SC Board of Supervisors, an office she held from 1976–1988 (four terms!). Helen lived just over 100 years and experienced a lot of change! She was born in February 1918, the youngest of six children (five brothers!), on a farm in North Dakota. From her earliest years, Helen worked on the farm and learned to interact with all of the males in the family. During one interview I watched, she said this prepared her for working in organizations and groups where all the members were men. She never had any difficulties in that regard.

Helen was encouraged to go to San Francisco after high school, to have more opportunities than North Dakota could offer her then. After two years at a community college there, she

graduated from Stanford Nursing School, where she met her husband. They married and moved to Sonoma County for a year. Both worked for the Sonoma County Hospital. However, they moved back to be at Stanford. Helen had a first child, but then both parents served in the Army as medical staff. She worked for the American Red Cross. Her second child was born during this time and then a third after WWII. Helen and her husband moved back to California and had a fourth child. Sadly, her husband suddenly died and Helen found herself a single mother. She related how her faith and community kept her going. Eventually, she met and married another doctor, Bill Rudee, with whom she lived from 1957 until his death in 1995.

Entering into politics was a gradual road for Helen. She began by being in the PTA throughout her children's school days. She was so good at leadership, the Santa Rosa Board of Education asked her to join them. She was the first woman on that board, serving for ten years; eventually, she was the president. In 1976, she decided to run for the Board of Supervisors and won the first of four terms. While on the Board, among other actions, Helen developed both the Visiting Nurses Association and the Volunteers for Santa Rosa High School organizations. She and Helen Putnam designed the Santa Rosa Transit buses and ensured their service began. She spoke of her biggest challenge during those years, the developing of a general plan, after there was some disarray by her predecessor. While a Supervisor, she also joined the Sonoma County Advisory Board for Sonoma State University. This was a role she played from 1979 to 2005.

Along the way, she mentored many women in the political arena, including Susan Gorin, Lynn Woolsey, and Shirlee Zane—helping them with their campaigns. She was quite active in the Commission for the Status of Women, the Women's History Project, and other groups. When she passed away in September of 2018, many mourned her and had fond memories. I wish I could thank her for her innumerable contributions to women's rights. May she never be forgotten!

*Sources: [Interview](#) with Elaine B. Holtz in 2007 and Chris Smith's September 2018 [article](#) in the *Press Democrat*.
Photo courtesy of the Sonoma County Library

Susan Lamont



Celebration of the Sonoma County Supervisors' Gold Resolution for NOW's 50th anniversary. Susan is in the front row, second from right. Her great-grandmother, Isabelle Campbell Schindler, is shown in the banner, fifth from left. That was taken c. 1910 at a suffrage event in or near Albany, New York.

Susan is a dynamo! Raised by a family who moved a great deal due to her father's career, she has been involved in social activism her entire life because it runs in her family. In fact, her great-great-grandmother was an activist in the Temperance movement and took her teenage daughter, Susan's great-grandmother, to hear Henry Ward Beecher (brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe) speak at a rally about temperance, emancipation, and women's rights! That great-grandmother went on to become active in the women's movement and traveled all over the country to raise awareness for women's suffrage; she was a protégé of Carrie Chapman Catt. Her great-grandfather wrote and spoke against the death penalty and also protested law enforcement having guns! Likewise, her grandparents, great-aunts, and parents were active in various movements. Susan's own children have followed in her footsteps.

It was at a Unitarian church she attended as a teenager where she learned about racial and social justice issues. She earned her degree at Brown University in Providence, RI, and there she began her earliest protests. These were primarily against the Vietnam War, but also

included a protest against then-Vice President Hubert Humphrey, while he was getting off a train in Rhode Island. She said she never led anything in those days but “if somebody organized a protest, I would go to it!”

Susan arrived in San Francisco in 1971. She married and raised a family. She also had three different businesses—her current one is landscape design (<http://www.lamontscapes.com/>)—and moved to Sonoma County in 1991. After her children were grown, she restarted her activism. In 2000, she joined the Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County, where she learned to organize political protests and eventually became president of the organization. One of the major actions she took was after 9/11; to educate the public about the issues surrounding that, she created flyers and personally handed them out, and received many death threats as a result. She has helped organize close to 500 protests, street theater actions, vigils, and forums. Not only has she been out on the streets alerting the public to many issues, but also, Susan has written countless letters to the editor whenever she encounters injustice, and you’ll see her name/pictures frequently in newspapers.

After working for justice for Andy Lopez since his killing in 2013, in 2020 Susan helped spearhead the campaign for the successfully-passed Sonoma County Measure P (the Evelyn Cheatham Effective IOLERO Ordinance) to gain greater community oversight of the Sheriff’s Office. She attended myriad meetings to plan the campaign and spread the word. She has also kept the historical records of all that was done. Since the pandemic began, she has only organized the Vigil for Andy Lopez, to commemorate what would have been his 20th birthday, and she looks forward to doing more soon. Her name is engraved on Sebastopol’s Living Peace Wall.

I asked Susan what she wants NOW members to know and she said that it’s important to understand how intertwined the many social justice issues are with women’s rights. She said that people are happier and more optimistic if they are actively trying to change things because they know they have power. While no single person can do everything, each of us can pick a focus and do that to better the world. Learning to have conversations with others will really help us connect!

(Photo courtesy Susan Lamont.)



Register now: MARCH 25 Forum
Educating the Public:
Criminal Justice Reform and the Role of the District
Attorney
(cosponsored by Sonoma County NOW)

- Thursday, **March 25, 5–6:30 p.m.** via Zoom. You must preregister at: bit.ly/SonomaDAEvent
- The event will include some focus on the Progressive Prosecutor Movement.
- Our panelists are:
 - **Chris Andrian** - For almost 40 years, he has been one of Sonoma County's pre-eminent trial lawyers. Chris has become widely recognized as one of Northern California's top criminal defense attorneys, having tried in excess of 150 jury trials in State and Federal Courts.
 - **Kristine Burk** - Licensed attorney for over 25 years, Kristine is a Criminal Defense Attorney who currently chairs the Sonoma County Conflict Panel.
 - **Traci Carrillo** - From 2000 to 2007, Ms. Carrillo was a Deputy District Attorney in Riverside County, where she handled a variety of cases, including driving under the influence, domestic violence, child abuse, gang crimes, and capital murder. From 2008 to 2015, Ms. Carrillo was a Deputy District Attorney with the Sonoma County District Attorney's Office. She handled felony cases involving domestic violence, gangs, and murder.
 - **Yoel Haile** - Yoel is a Criminal Justice Program Manager with the ACLU of Northern California. In this capacity, he manages a statewide network of local

organizations in 11 of the largest California counties to hold elected district attorneys accountable.

- The *Peace Press* ran an article on the forum. The deadline for the *Peace Press* was prior to the first planning meeting, so the theme and panelists are not mentioned. You can read the article [here](#).

For Women's History Month:

A special interview with National Women's History Alliance (NWHHA) co-founder

Molly Murphy MacGregor

on *Women's Spaces* radio show with host Elaine B.

Holtz: www.womensspaces.com

A little history:

In 1980, the National Women's History Project (NWHHP) was founded in Santa Rosa, California by Molly Murphy MacGregor, Mary Ruthsdotter, Maria Cuevas, Paula Hammett, and Bette Morgan to broadcast women's historical achievements.

The NWHHP started by leading a coalition that successfully lobbied Congress to designate March as National Women's History Month, now celebrated across the land.

Now the (current name) [National Women's History Alliance](#) is known nationally as the only clearinghouse providing information and training in multicultural women's history for educators, community organizations, and parents, and for anyone wanting to expand their understanding of women's contributions to U.S. history.

A Special Shoutout to the League of Women Voters for their valiant information provided during the 2020 election, spearheaded by past President Deborah McKay.

The League of Women Voters of Sonoma County (LWV), “A Voice for Citizens, A Force for Change,” began in 1951 with the creation of a pre-organization committee and in 1953 was officially recognized as the Santa Rosa League. Although the Santa Rosa League studied and acted on county-wide issues from as early as 1957, only in 1978 did it emerge as the League of Women Voters of Sonoma County.

Their primary goals are to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influence public policy through education and advocacy. Although they do support ballot measures and issues, they do not endorse candidates.

LWV has two separate and distinct roles. Voters Service/Citizen Education: presents unbiased nonpartisan information about elections, the voting process, and issues. Action/Advocacy: Also nonpartisan, but, after study, they use their positions to advocate for or against particular policies in the public interest.

LWV has three monthly meetings, an Advocacy Committee, a Voter Service Committee, and an Outreach Committee. The group also has a monthly book club; you can check their calendar for dates and times. For further information visit their website at <https://my.lwv.org/california/sonoma-county> and email is info@lwv.org

March dates to celebrate

- **March 10, c. 1822 – Harriet Tubman Day**
 - **March 15, 1932 – Ruth Bader Ginsburg**, Supreme Court Justice and rights leader
 - **March 18, 1940 – Elaine Holtz**, Sonoma County NOW President, KBBF radio host
 - **March 22, 1848 – Sarah Latimer Finley**, Sonoma County suffragist
 - **March 25, 1934 – Gloria Steinem**, rights leader, author, activist
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Visit our Sonoma County NOW site for news and lots of links and information:

<http://www.nowsonoma.org/>

Contact us: info@nowsonoma.org

(707) 545-5036

P.O. Box 6223

Santa Rosa, CA 95406

About NOW

As the grassroots arm of the women's movement, the National Organization for Women is dedicated to its multi-issue and multi-strategy approach to women's rights, and is the largest organization of feminist grassroots activists in the United States. NOW has hundreds of chapters and hundreds of thousands of members and activists in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Since our founding in 1966, NOW's purpose is to take action through intersectional grassroots activism to promote feminist ideals, lead societal change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls in all aspects of social, political, and economic life.

Core Issues

NOW is a multi-issue, multi-strategy organization that takes a holistic approach to women's rights. Our priorities are winning economic equality and securing it with an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that will guarantee equal rights for women; championing abortion rights, reproductive freedom and other women's health issues; opposing racism; fighting bigotry against the LGBTQIA community; and ending violence against women.

Reproductive Rights and Justice

NOW fully supports safe and legal abortion, affordable and effective birth control and other contraception, and reproductive health education for all.

Economic Justice

NOW advocates for a wide range of economic justice issues, women's freedom and success and intertwined with racial justice, reproductive freedom, and other systems of oppression.

Ending Violence Against Women

NOW recognizes violence against women as the broad and interconnected issue that it is, addressing oppressive structures and attitudes in our nation.

Racial Justice

A leader in civil rights since 1966, NOW continues to fight for equal opportunities for women of color in all areas including employment, education, and health care.

LGBTQIA+ Rights

NOW is committed to fighting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in all areas.

Constitutional Equality

NOW is a proud supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment and prioritizes giving women explicit protections in the United States Constitution.

For additional information go to: <https://now.org/about/>



MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWAL FORM

- Regular membership \$40/year \$75 2 yrs \$115 3 yrs
 Reduced dues: \$10–30/year

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____



Sonoma County Chapter #CA0660

Mail with check to: National Organization for Women,
1100 H Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005

1/2021

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