



February 2022 News

Black Lives Matter!

Dear NOW members,

Each February marks Black History Month and we will be holding our next event to discuss it on **Friday, February 18**, rather than next Thursday, due to a scheduling conflict. Well-known Sonoma County resident **Celeste Austin** will be our presenter. Celeste was formerly the director of the Living Room in Santa Rosa and currently works for the InterFaith Shelter Network, as well as being a member of Sonoma County Blacks United.

Our past president and current treasurer, Elaine Holtz, is also host of the *Women's Spaces* radio show on KBBF 98.1 FM. Please read below for details on tomorrow's Valentine's Day show at 11:00! Also, Elaine interviewed Celeste in December and that recording can be found [here](#).

This issue of our newsletter features a few African American women from the 19th and 20th centuries who have contributed greatly to history, but who have not been recognized by historians until more recently: Mary Jane Patterson, Anne Spencer, and Dorothy Porter Wesley. The sources for all three came from a combination of Wikipedia and a wonderful history book by Henry Louis Gates: *100 Amazing Facts About the Negro* (Pantheon Books, NY, 2017). The photos are all in public domain and are found in Wikimedia.

March will soon be upon us and so will Women's History Month. Look for more events from Sonoma County NOW!

--Amy Nykamp

[View this email in your browser](#)

Join us on Zoom February 18

Note new time: Friday, February 18—6:00 p.m.: Presentation followed by Q&A; board meeting at 7:00

Join Zoom Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82846374496?pwd=WIA0cE5CaFczUUtg
a1Nkc2tYQXkydz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82846374496?pwd=WIA0cE5CaFczUUtg
a1Nkc2tYQXkydz09)

Meeting ID: 828 4637 4496 **Passcode:** 035853

Phone in Numbers:

+1 669 900 9128 (San Jose)

Locations outside the United States

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82846374496?pwd=WIA0cE5CaFczUUtg
a1Nkc2tYQXkydz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82846374496?pwd=WIA0cE5CaFczUUtg
a1Nkc2tYQXkydz09)



A Special Valentine's Show!

Congratulations to Elaine B. Holtz and Kenneth Norton, co-producers of the radio show, *Women's Spaces*, celebrating their tenth year on KBBF 89.1 FM. Elaine has a long history with KBBF, coming on the air first from 1977 to 1981 at the time when women's music was coming of age. She chose as a theme song *The Woman in Your Life is You*, sung by Alix Dobkin, which can be heard at the beginning and end of the shows.

Both Elaine and Ken are excited about their Valentine's Day Show, which will air on their weekly show on Monday, February 14. They will be reading together Elaine's poem *Friends and Lovers*. It is a poem about beginning relationships and starts out with the line, "I don't remember missing you until I started kissing you."

February is Black History Month. During this special month during the segment, "Our History is Our Strength," African American women and their contributions will be honored. All shows are archived on www.womensspaces.com. Shows feature interviews with a variety of ordinary women doing extraordinary things, including interviews with Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, Women's National History Project co-founder Molly Murphy MacGregor, historians Gaye LeBaron and Mary Moore, DA Jill Ravitch, union organizer Lisa Maldonado, historian Dr. Kim D. Hester Williams, author Jean Shinoda Bolen, women's rights attorney Gloria Allred, and Peace and Justice Center executive director Shekeyna Black. Three of Elaine's favorite interviews are with award-winning singer/songwriters Earth Mama, Becky Hobbs, and Alix Dobkin.

The show airs live every Monday from 11–12 p.m. and replays Monday evening from 11–12 a.m. Elaine can be reached at elainebholtz@gmail.com.



Mary Jane Patterson (1840-1894) was the first African American woman to receive a bachelor's degree in the United States from Oberlin College in 1862. She not only became the first principal of what was then a Preparatory School for Negroes and is now a high school in Washington, D.C, but also was a humanitarian and benefactor to black institutions in Washington, D.C. She is known as a pioneer in the field of education.

(Sources: Gates, Henry Louis. (2017). *100 Amazing Facts About the Negro*, pp 324-325; and Wikipedia; photo from Oberlin College Archives--public domain)



Anne Bethel Spencer (1882-1975) can be considered the leading African American female poet during the Harlem Renaissance.

She was brilliant--beginning her higher education at Virginia Seminary (now Virginia University of Lynchburg) at only age 11! She graduated at 17, married at 19, and had three children. She served as both a librarian (for 20 years) and a teacher, but her passion was writing; while only a fraction of her poetry was published during her life, her verse numbered in the hundreds. Henry Louis Gates calls her home, "the doorway which Anne Spencer hosted the fledgling black literary world."

(Sources: Gates, Henry Louis. (2017). *100 Amazing Facts About the Negro*, pp 376-379; and Wikipedia; Photographic portrait of Virginia African-American writer Anne B. Spencer in her wedding dress, 1900. From an archive collected by James Weldon and Carl Van Vechten. Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University--public domain)



Dorothy Porter Wesley (1905-1995) earned a B.A. from Howard University in 1928, and a B.S. from the Columbia University School of Library Service in 1931. She was the first African American woman to attain this honor. Not stopping there, she also earned her master's at Columbia. Degrees in hand, she oversaw the collection at Howard University's Library of Negro Life and History, taking it from 3,000 titles to 200,000 by the time she

retired 40 years later. She was instrumental in preserving African American history. In the 1960s, she helped establish Nigeria's national library collection and in 1994, she was presented with the National Endowment for the Humanities Charles Frankel Prize.

(Sources: Gates, Henry Louis. (2017). *100 Amazing Facts About the Negro*, pp 412-413 and Wikipedia; Library of Congress. Photoduplication Service, photographer - <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017646173>)



February dates to celebrate

- **February 1, 1920** – **Dorothy Hansen** (1920–2014), Sonoma County activist and co-founder of Peace & Justice Center

- ❑ **February 1 – National Freedom Day:** Commemorates Lincoln's signing of the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery. This became Black History Day, and now Black History Month.
- ❑ **February 2, 1861 – Alice Locke Park** (1861–1961), California suffrage leader
- ❑ **February 3, 1874 – Gertrude Stein** (1874–1946), visionary artist
- ❑ **February 4, 1913 – Rosa Parks** (1913–2005), civil rights leader
- ❑ **February 4, 1921 – Betty Friedan** (1921–2006), feminist author, activist, cofounder NOW
- ❑ **February 9, 1944 – Alice Walker** (1944–), author, activist
- ❑ **February 14, 1847 – Anna Howard Shaw** (1847–1919), suffrage leader
- ❑ **February 14 – Valentine's Day, V-Day**
- ❑ **February 15, 1820 – Susan B. Anthony** (1820–1906), suffrage leader
- ❑ **February 18, 1931 – Toni Morrison** (1931–2019), author, teacher
- ❑ **February 19, 1934 – Audre Lorde** (1934–1982), feminist writer
- ❑ **February 21, 1918 – Helen Rudee** (1918–2018), first Sonoma County female Supervisor, feminist
- ❑ **February 21, 1936 – Barbara Jordan** (1936–1996), US Representative, rights activist
- ❑ **February 21 – Presidents' Day**
- ❑ **February 22, 1892 – Edna St. Vincent Millay** (1882–1950), poet, playwright
- ❑ **February 27, 1897 – Marian Anderson** (1897–1993), singer, civil rights pioneer; [link](#) to Anderson's historic 1939 concert at Lincoln Memorial, shown above (Creative Commons photo)

Visit our Sonoma County NOW site for news and lots of links and information:

<http://www.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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NOW Sonoma

PO Box 6223

Santa Rosa, Ca 95406

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