



Ventura County Commission for Women

MARCH 1988

VCCW Issues

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

A PIECE OF LIVING HISTORY: WOMEN'S HISTORY LUNCHEON TO OFFER A COMPELLING VIEW OF EARLY SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

Claiming "we have greater cause for revolution than the men of 1776," in the late 1800's radical suffragists demonstrated, committed civil disobedience, refused to pay their taxes, ran a woman for President, and petitioned for their rights as citizens of the Republic.

Why? "For the women 100 years later."

The women of "100 years later" will have a chance to relive the empowering story of these early women leaders at noon Saturday, March 19 at a Women's History Month celebration luncheon at the Holiday Inn Ventura Beach Resort.

Noted historian and author Dr. Sally Roesch Wagner will portray a leading suffragist from the late 1800's at the luncheon.

A women's studies teacher and social change agent for more than 15 years, Dr. Wagner is the author of a book entitled "A Time of Protest: Suffragists Challenge the Republic: 1870-1887."

The luncheon is sponsored by the Women's History Project of Ventura County, a joint task force of the Ventura County Commission for Women and the Women's Equity Coalition. Proceeds from the luncheon go to the Women's History Project to support continuing women's history activities.

Dr. Wagner's book documents women's rights activities in the years surrounding the centennial celebration of the Declaration of Independence in 1876 and the Constitution in 1887.

She has done much research into the foundations of the women's movement and is the biographer of early feminist leader Matilda Joslyn Gage, who worked with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony to win the right to vote.

In the late 1800's radical suffragists demanded justice through a systematic campaign of direct action and political pressure they sustained from 1870 to 1887 to win the right to vote. "We ask justice," they said. "We ask equality, we ask that all the civil and political rights that belong to citizens of the United States, be guaranteed to us and our daughters forever."



(Sally R. Wagner as M.J. Gage)

(continued on Page 2)

When the Statue of Liberty was unveiled in 1886, women's rights advocates called it "the greatest hypocrisy of the 19th century" to depict liberty as a woman "while not one single woman throughout the length and breadth of the Land is as yet in possession of political Liberty."

Dr Wagner, a research affiliate at the University of California at Davis, makes this early history come alive through presentations she makes throughout the state.

During 16 years of research, Dr. Wagner uncovered a large collection of Gage's previously undiscovered writings. One of the things that has intrigued her in studying Gage's papers is learning how the suffrage movement began as a full-fledged women's movement, a pluralistic, multi-dimensional effort that Wagner believes lost much of its significance when it narrowed to the single focus of the vote.

Dr. Wagner's three-volume biography about Gage, That Word is Liberty, will be released soon.

Many women's organizations throughout Ventura County have joined as co-sponsors for the luncheon. These include Channel Islands Business and Professional Women, Soroptimists International of Ventura, the SOLO Project-the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, the Ventura County Historical Society, Ventura County Community College District, Moorpark College, Oxnard College and Ventura College.

Also the Moorpark Chamber of Commerce, Ventura County Library Services Agency, Baha'is of Santa Paula, Interface, American Association of University Women in Thousand Oaks, Camarillo and Ventura, Simi-Conejo National Organization for Women, and Tres Condados Girl Scout Council, Women's American ORT, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, West County Alcohol

See Page 4

CANDELARIA VALENZUELA



*Photo courtesy of
V.C. Historical Society*

Candelaria Valenzuela (1838 - 1915), last of the Sespe Chumash, will be honored during a Women's History Month celebration set for March 1 at the State Capitol in Sacramento.

"The Ventura County Commission for Women selected Candelaria to be honored by the California Commission on the Status of Women to reflect our commitment to recognize the multi-cultural history of the development of what is now Ventura County," said Commission for Women Co-Chair Sandy Ryder.

Presentations on women honored throughout the state will be given in the Governor's Council Chambers. A reception follows in the south hallway of the restored portion of the State Capitol.

Candelaria Valenzuela was the last of the Sespe Chumash, and as such a valuable source of information for local Ventura County anthropologists as well as John P. Harrington of the Smithsonian.

Certain of the value of her culture, Candelaria fully cooperated with those more formally educated than she to

insure that her store of songs, legends and craftsmanship would not disappear upon her death.

It is through Candelaria that much of the Sespe dialect of the Chumash language has been recorded as well; it is because of her classes in basketmaking that our knowledge of local basketmaking techniques is so extensive.

Her lore continues to enrich the works of today's anthropologists. Through the efforts of this dedicated woman, we have come to know and appreciate the culture of the Chumash and, on a larger scale, that of all California Indians.

The Commission for Women is grateful to the Ventura County Historical Society, and especially to Alberta Word and Patricia Clark Callachor for their research and writing.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH ON CAMPUS

Women will be the focus of special recognition during March as the Ventura County Community College District joins in the national observance of Women's History Month.

Various events will be sponsored by Moorpark College, Oxnard College, Ventura College and the District Administration Center.

The district will host a special art display, "The Ventura County Community College District Celebrates Women in the Arts," on Saturday, March 12 at the district administration center, 71 Day Road in Ventura.

Beatrice Wood, recognized for her outstanding work as an artist and sculptor, will participate in the program, which will feature the works of students and staff in the visual arts, music and theater arts.

Committees on each campus are planning other special events for March.

ERICA NEVILLE AWARDS
PRESENTED TO CONEJO AREA WOMEN

Two Conejo area educators and community activists are this year's recipients of the Erica Neville Memorial Alice Paul Awards from the Women's History Project of Ventura County.

The awards will be presented to Wilma Rosenberg, a teacher at Meadows Elementary School, and Sandy Hindy, a Westlake Village parent, at a special Women's History luncheon on Saturday, March 19 at the Holiday Inn Ventura Beach Resort.

The award recognizes the work of educators and community activists who follow Erica Neville's model in promoting Women's History Month in Ventura County.

Erica Neville, a young housewife and mother, made women's contributions in history come alive by dressing as a suffragist and pioneer woman and making classroom presentations throughout the county. Active in the Women's History Project since 1981, she died January 27, 1986.

Wilma Rosenberg became enthusiastic about teaching her students the important contributions of women after meeting Erica Neville more than 5 years ago. Erica had impressed upon her students that women had made many important contributions to the nation but that the average person did not know about women of the past because text books rarely mention them.

Wilma personally researched the "Hidden Women" in history and each year observes national Women's History Month in her classes. Students get involved in learning about famous women in history and have become enthusiastic about exploring new information. Over the years, she has helped to add more than thirty books about women to the school library.



Wilma Rosenberg



Sandy Hindy

During a visit to the pediatrician in December 1985 to have a broken arm re-set, Sandy Hindy's daughter made a statement that appalled her mom. "Women can be nurses - only men can be doctors".

Concerned with the lack of information in our elementary schools about women, about what they are capable of achieving and have achieved, Sandy resolved to try to make some changes.

In January 1986, Sandy approached her children's elementary school with the idea of portraying famous women; Amelia Earhardt, an aviator, Elizabeth Blackwell, a doctor; Sojourner Truth, an abolitionist; and Babe Didrikson Zaharias, an athlete.

The idea caught on and she ended up by giving other presentations at other schools. The Thousand Oaks branch of the American Association of University Women, (AAUW) presented 5 new women in each classroom throughout the Conejo last year.

The project continues to grow. Through the efforts of AAUW members in the Camarillo and Simi Valley branches, students in those cities will also "meet" 5 women from history in their own classrooms.

"Wilma Rosenberg and Sandy Hindy are committed to bringing the best possible educational experience to our children and in helping them reach their highest potential," said Sandy Ryder, co-chair of the Ventura County Commission for Women which co-sponsors the Women's History Project with the Ventura County Women's Equity Coalition. "We are very proud of their efforts to educate children on the important contributions of women in history."

from Page 2

Counseling Center, Clinicas del Camino Real, Step Family Association of Ventura County, Ventura-Oxnard NOW, University Center at Ventura, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Channel Islands Links, Inc., Rape and Sexual Abuse Center of Ventura County, Ventura County Commission on Human Concerns, Ventura College Re-entry Center and the Coalition Against Household Violence.

Deadline for reservations is March 10. Tickets are \$14 per person. Send a check payable to the Women's History Project to 2661 Tanglewood Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010. Tickets will be held at the door.

NEWSLETTER SPONSORS

Zonta Club of the Conejo area
Soroptimist International of Ventura
Maggie Erickson, Supervisor
National Council of Jewish Women, Camarillo Section
Dr. Priscilla Partridge de Garcia, MFCT
Soroptimist International of the Conejo
Organized Parents Against Latchkey
Pleasant Valley Hospital's Women's Health Services
Pamela Dunlap, agent
Simi-Conejo NOW
Bonnie Warrington
Judy Wong
Pat T. Mason
Sandra Smith Ryder
Women in Education
Mamie Island

Elaine Freeman
Mrs. Dallas Sidlo
Baha'is of Santa Paula
Teresa Monzon, D.D.S.
The Links, Inc.
Alpha Kappa Alpha
Delta Sigma Theta

To become a newsletter sponsor, please send a minimum contribution of \$25 to the Commission office at 505 Poli St., Ventura, CA 93001.



Ventura County
Commission for Women

VOL. 5, NO. 9

Ventura County
Commission for Women
(805) 652-7611

Officers 1987-88

Brook Hubbell, Ed. D., Co-Chair
Sandra S. Ryder, Co-Chair
Karen Flock, Finance Officer
Susan H. Witting, Secretary

Martha Baskerville, Admin. Aide

MARCH 1988

Friends of the Commission

Lee Anderson, President
(805) 496-8470

VENTURA COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

505 Poli Street
Ventura, California 93001

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
Paid
Ventura, CA
Permit No. 396