

# Commission

Public Social Services Agency  
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Summer 1998



## What is the Commission for Women?

The Ventura County Commission for Women was established in 1981 to assist the Board of Supervisors in addressing areas of education & job discrimination, sexual harassment, domestic violence and other injustices that women face. The Commission serves as advisors to the Board of Supervisors on issues impacting and relating to women, and coordinates efforts with Federal, State and local community groups to improve the quality of life for women.

In addition, at the request of the Board of Supervisors, the Commission will undertake studies or tasks, depending on resources being provided.

Information about social service agencies and organizations in Ventura County can be found on our web page at <http://www.ventura.org/cfw-home.htm>

The web page also has information of general interest to women and families, including links to other sites on the Internet, and will have articles from the current newsletter.

## Take Back the Night Rally

The Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence hosted Ventura County's first Take Back the Night Rally on Wednesday, April 22nd from 5-8 p.m. in Mission Park in the city of Ventura. There was a candle light march through downtown Ventura, to protest violence against women, with a rally featuring speakers Kathy Long, Supervisor, District 3, Hanna Beth Jackson, candidate for Assembly, MoDean McCullough, professor at

Moorpark College and author of *Self-Defense Tactics*. Students demonstrated self-defense techniques, and vocalist Betty Pattengale sang.

The Commission voted to co-sponsor this event, to lend our support to this vital message. Commission President Judith Cunningham attended, reporting that the intensely personal account of one woman who has risen above her past of abuse was the most memorable part of the emotionally charged evening.

## Women's Voting Guide Now On-line

From a special message from the founders of Women Leaders Online comes the news that a brand new web site has been created by their members. The web address is <http://www.womenvote.org>, and they intend it to "revolutionize the way women vote by providing objective and detailed information on the positions of all candidates for office." To accomplish this they have placed the voting records of

all incumbent U.S. Senators and Representatives, and hope to get responses from all candidates to a questionnaire they will send them. "Our goal is to enable voters to make side-by-side comparisons between incumbents and candidates, to see which candidate's views are closest to the voter." The guide will be non-partisan and non-advocacy, and will allow each voter  
*(cont'd on page 3)*

## Who Are The Commissioners?

### District 1 (Susan Lacey)

Ruth A. Hibbard  
Vacant  
Roberta Payan

### District 2 (Frank Schillo)

Angie Lavey  
Karen Gorback  
Corazon Ortiguerra

### District 3 (Kathy Long)

Judy Cunningham  
Vacant  
Sharon Hillbrant

### District 4 (Judy Mikels)

Bonnie Warrington  
Lori Zafiropoulos  
Eileen Gordon

### District 5 (John Flynn)

Bea Gan  
Dorothy Maron  
Ruth Ann McAllister

We hope to fill the remaining vacancies soon and be a full, active commission.



## In the Beginning- 150 Years Ago

Revolutionary, Visionary, Philosopher Elizabeth Cady Stanton began her life's work with a Convention for Women's Rights, July 19-20, 1848.

*Taken from a book report, by Jason Hibbard, on Elizabeth Cady Stanton: A Radical for Women's Rights, Lois W. Banner.*



*Elizabeth Cady Stanton with friend and co-worker Susan B. Anthony*

Banner writes on more than the historical influences, experiences and impact of this nineteenth century woman. The reader is treated with a thought provoking perspective on the development of this remarkable individual's ideologies, roles as feminist advocate and mother, and relationships with husband, Henry Stanton and best friend, Susan B. Anthony. Throughout her life, her vision of liberation was tested and further molded during political, social and religious conflict, crisis and challenge; yet, she remained a warm, enthusiastic, fun-loving woman. In this enjoyable, easily-read biography, Banner gives us a portrait of a woman as exciting and fascinating as the era in which she lived.

Coming from a strict upbringing, during the post American Revolution time

period, Elizabeth Cady rebelled relentlessly against the traditional female roles her mother enforced. She was what we might characterize today as an incorrigible tomboy. Many of her earliest memories were marked by the parental disappointment of their being no surviving males amongst her siblings. Her father, Daniel Cady adored young Elizabeth, yet often expressed his wish that she had been a boy. A lawyer, Mr. Cady unintentionally gave his daughter an early awareness of the unfair legal state of women just by allowing her to sit in his office while he worked, and unknowingly encouraged in her a life-long devotion to equal rights for women.

As a young woman, she enjoyed the freedom and idealism of liberal society. Although bright and disciplined, professional education and opportunity were not available to the women of her day; a young woman's best hope for a good life was to marry a good husband. Much to the dismay of her conservative parents, she married a radical advocate of abolition--Henry Stanton. At her request, the traditional wedding promise to obey her husband was omitted from their ceremony. This started a new life for her as a social reformist, albeit in the background of her husband at first.

Cady Stanton, as she wished to be called after her marriage, developed her ideals of social, political and religious reform in response to the limitations that legal and traditional constraints had on her own life and the lives of other women she met. She was outraged at the hypocrisy of a new America, characterized by its rebellion against tyrannical domination, yet allowing such a relation to exist between men and women. A brilliant orator, she spoke for a wide variety of women's rights causes, including liberal divorce laws, married woman's rights, dress reform, birth control, the right to vote, and on the oppressive, female subverting influences of conservative Christian religion. Her political rebellion included harboring a mother on the run for kidnaping her own children from an adulterous husband--a prominent politician who lawfully abused his wife, then committed her to a mental institution. She

felt it was at least morally equivalent to the abolitionist practice of helping escaped slaves. Cady Stanton was a radical activist, far ahead of her time.

As a devoted mother of seven children, she openly argued against the social tradition that women should do all the management of home and family. Yet, she did stay with her children, even though her husband was rarely home--being absorbed in his political life. Their children were not negatively influenced toward their father. Cady Stanton's passion for speaking on women's rights reform led to her writing speeches for friend and protegee, Susan B. Anthony, who often campaigned in her absence. They met shortly after Cady Stanton and a few friends held the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848.

The author has used extensive resources including Cady Stanton's unpublished letters, journals and articles, to show how this unique woman constantly explored and worked to realize her far-reaching ideals of women's liberation. She shows us that Cady Stanton led a full life and how, in understanding whom she was and what she did, we can better understand about the forming of American Society.

I read this book with great interest. What I liked the most was the illumination of Cady Stanton's spirit. She was not always right or wise in her rebellion, yet her humanity and compassion spurred her to fight for those she saw as oppressed. She recognized ideological bondage--maintained by apathy and religious domination--as the root cause which kept women subverted. She once wrote, "For twelve years in succession I have traveled from Maine to Texas, trying 'to teach women to think.' But the chief obstacle in the way of success has everywhere been their false theology, their religious superstitions..." She viewed herself as, "a radical who presented striking new issues to stir women up and produce new resolve." Never daunted by setback, she attempted perhaps her most radical campaign of all in her seventies and eighties. With characteristic audacity, she attempted to change traditional female



religious values. One method was to complete an annotated version of the Bible for women, called the Women's Bible--annotated with her philosophical and interpretative remarks.

Another reviewer, Sandra D. Atchison wrote that, "the timeliness of Cady Stanton's causes separates her from other feminists of her day." Yet, her tone seems to me to have a flavor of unfavorable comparison of Cady Stanton to P.C. feminist and liberal values. I think Cady Stanton wasn't P.C. at all. Whether she approved of U.S. violation of Indian rights or "lapsed into conservatism" is not, to me, any criteria by which to judge her. She was far from being a perfect model of an upstanding citizen, nor was she loyal to any particular cause other than those which served her own ideology. More important is her personal bent to do what she felt compelled to do, to contribute what was uniquely hers and not to apologize for it.

## What YOU Can Do!

Get involved--somewhere, on one of the issues that matter to YOU!

If you see an opportunity for women, let us know about it, or talk to other women you know. If you see an inequity or injustice to women, call it to the attention of the organization most likely to be able to work toward a solution. Call, or write letters to legislators; write letters to the editor; join organizations that work in an area you care about--there really is power in numbers. Most every organization is looking for new members, new energy and ideas. (And new bodies do carry out the ideas!)

Check out the Commission for Women web site at [www.ventura.org/cfw-home.htm](http://www.ventura.org/cfw-home.htm) for information about organizations and services for women. If you don't have a computer, try the library or go to a "cybercafe", have a cup of coffee and spend an hour surfing the net for a mere \$6 per hour. You can even print out some of the information, but ask about charges, first. Most of the fun is in zipping from site to site and cramming your head with the wealth of information available.

## More Places to Check Out on the World Wide Web

### Amazon City

[Amazoncity.com](http://Amazoncity.com)

### Health, Naturally

[healthyideas.com/healing/?wcialtmed](http://healthyideas.com/healing/?wcialtmed)

### National Council of Negro Women

[ncnw.com/](http://ncnw.com/)

### Site for Seniors

[www.senior.com](http://www.senior.com)

### Women's In Site

[omix.com/womensinsite](http://omix.com/womensinsite)

### Women Leaders Online, Women Organizing for Change

[wlo.org/](http://wlo.org/)

### Women's Voting Guide

[womenvote.org](http://womenvote.org)

### Women's Wire

[women.com/](http://women.com/)

Two by Two: Inspired by the energy and dedication of the women's Conference in Beijing, this woman vowed to teach two women how to use the internet, if they vow to teach two more...email her at:

[af385@lafn.org](mailto:af385@lafn.org)

### Young Women and Girls:

#### Double x Chromosome

[calarts.edu/~xxchrom/](http://calarts.edu/~xxchrom/)

#### By and About Teens

[teenvoices.com](http://teenvoices.com)

#### Games for Girls

[purple-moon.com/](http://purple-moon.com/)

#### The Spice Girls (one of many)

[geocities.com/SunsetStrip/3708](http://geocities.com/SunsetStrip/3708)

And don't forget, you can always do a search for any topic that interests you. These and many other sites exist for women, in all our aspects and concerns.

## (Women's Voting Guide, cont'd)

to choose what issues she cares about and compare her position to the candidates words and the incumbents voting records. The Women's Voting Guide was announced at an April 21st reception in Washington, D.C. co-hosted by Victoria Reggie Kennedy, a Democrat, and Sarah Brady, a Republican.

If you like the idea and want to know more, or to help, here's what you can do:

- 1 Visit <http://www.womenvote.org>, and register on the site so they can keep you posted about new features and activities as the site develops.
- 2 Tell all your friends to visit [womenvote.org](http://www.womenvote.org). If you *really* like it, add this line to your .sig file.. "Vote Your Values with the Women's Voting Guide at <http://womenvote.org>."
- 3 If you have a web page, put a link to <http://womenvote.org>. At the very least, "Bookmark" the address, so you can go back with a click of the mouse.
- 4 If you're a journalist or a newsletter editor, write a story about [womenvote.org](http://www.womenvote.org). (Or if you know someone like this, send them a message telling them about it and encourage them to write about it. There is even a ready to publish article (under 700 words) for local newsletters--if you'd like to consider it for publication, drop them a note at [media@womenvote.org](mailto:media@womenvote.org).)
- 5 If you have extra time on your hands (say 5 hours a week) and would like to volunteer to help spread the word, drop them a note at [volunteers@womenvote.org](mailto:volunteers@womenvote.org).
- 6 If you have extra money and would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Women Leaders Online Fund, drop a note to [donors@womenvote.org](mailto:donors@womenvote.org).