

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH 2009

SPECIAL EDITION

A Feminine Touch of Progress

Sister Sister



LOCAL 300 WOMEN'S CAUCUS

Women Taking The Lead

"From social economics to ecology, women have made history"

Being allowed to live life in an atmosphere of religious freedom, having a voice in the government you support with your taxes; living free of lifelong enslavement by another person; citizenship and full civil rights in this country for women, and the right to vote.—These beliefs about how life should and must be lived were once considered outlandish by many. But these beliefs were passionately held by visionaries whose dedicated work brought about the change that altered the attitudes of people and ultimately—made history. Now these beliefs — are commonly shared across U.S. society.—

The Women's Rights Movement marks July 13, 1848 as its beginning; when a group of women gathered at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls to rally on behalf of women's rights. Over the past seven generations, dramatic social and legal changes have been accomplished that are now so accepted that they virtually go unnoticed by those whose lives have utterly been changed by these wonderful accomplishments. Many people who have lived through the recent decades of this process have come to accept (so casually) what has transpired. And younger people, for the most part, can hardly believe life was ever different. They take the changes completely in stride, and think that life has always been the way it is now. The staggering changes for women that have come about over these past decades in family life, in religion, in government, in employment, and in education - did not just happen spontaneously. In fact, women themselves made these changes happen very deliberately. Through meetings, petition drives, lobbying, public speaking, and nonviolent resistance; women have persevered. They have worked very deliberately to create a better world, and they have overwhelmingly succeeded. During Women's History Month, the Women's Rights Movement is being celebrated across the nation with programs and events taking every form imaginable.

This year, "Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet"- is the theme initiated by the National Women's History Project. The theme subjects saving the environment. Environmental issues have become a concern for the world.

This year The National Women's History Project is honoring women who have made an impact on communal, and environmental successes. Women have played a major role in environmental science, green politics, bio hazard research, recycling, and natural science.

This year as we celebrate the wonderful and outstanding achievements of women in connection with all aspects of history; including, science, economic causes, social and civil rights; let us remember that today, we also celebrate the history of a new and amazing achievement for all Americans, in electing the first African American as President of the United States of America. Remember, everything and everyone has a spiritual connection and a starting point—For it is true—if it were not for the amazing struggles and efforts of women, in bringing about the sincerity, the conviction and the belief that everyone has rights and can contributed something to American society—in this respect—the doors of equality and equal opportunities would not have been opened. Today, let us not only celebrate the achievements of those in history, but let us also remember

TAKING THE LEAD AND MAKING HISTORY

Like many amazing stories, the history of the Women's Rights Movement began with a small group of—people questioning why human lives were being unfairly constricted. On a sweltering summer day in upstate New York, a young housewife and mother, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, was invited to tea with four women friends. When the course of their conversation turned to the situation of women, Stanton poured out her discontent



1815-1902 Elizabeth Cady (Stanton) was one of the first leaders of the American women's rights movement.

with the limitations placed on women under America's new democracy. She thought "Hadn't the American Revolution had been fought just 70 years earlier to win the patriots freedom from tyranny"? But for her and other women had not gained freedom; even though they'd taken equally tremendous risks through those dangerous years. Surely the new republic would benefit from having its women play more active roles throughout society. Stanton's friends agreed with her, passionately. This was definitely not the first small group of women to have such a conversation, but it was the first to plan and carry out a

specific, large-scale program. Within two days of their afternoon tea together, this small group had picked a date for their convention, found a suitable location, and placed a small announcement in the Seneca County Courier. They called it "A convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman." The gathering would take place at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls on July 19 and 20, 1848. And as hoped, by many who attended the rights of women would be born. Historical facts from: [Wikipedia](#) the free online encyclopedia

Editor's note: Each year, March is designated as [National Women's History Month](#) to ensure that the history of women will be recognized and celebrated in schools, workplaces, and communities throughout the country. The stories

TAKING THE LEAD ON HEALTH

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that in the USA, the number of newly infected HIV cases are among women. The main way in which women get infected with HIV in the USA is through heterosexual sex. And women who are victims of sexual violence are at a higher risk of being exposed to HIV.

Other ways that HIV is spread are among women of child bearing years. The Mother-to-child-transmissions (MTCT) occur when an HIV positive woman passes the virus to her baby during pregnancy, labor and delivery, or breast feeding. But there are a number of drugs that can reduce the chances of a child acquiring HIV from its mother. Nevirapine and AZT are just some of the drugs that are used.

There are a number of things that can be done in order to reduce the risk of contracting Aids/HIV. These include promoting and protecting women's human rights, increasing education and awareness among women and men; and encouraging new preventative technologies that could directly benefit women. The following are just a few of these technologies:

- Microbicide: There are plans underway to develop a gel or cream that could be applied vaginally without a partner even knowing and which would prevent HIV infection.
- The female condom: The only female-initiated HIV prevention method presently available. These condoms can help women protect themselves from becoming infected.
- Post-exposure prophylaxis is an antiretroviral drug treatment that is thought to decrease the chances of HIV infection after exposure to HIV. This treatment could potentially benefit women who have been raped, if started within 72 hours of exposure.

In conclusion, protecting women from HIV is not solely a woman's responsibility. Most women with HIV were infected by having unprotected sex with an infected male partner. Preventing transmission is the responsibility of both partners, and men must play an equal role in preventing Aids/HIV from spreading.

by—Lucy Lombardo, Shop Steward - ISC/JFK