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National
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A Different Point of View

NWHM Launches Online Archive, *The Chronicle of American Women*

Just in time for Mother's Day, the National Women's History Museum is thrilled to announce an ambitious new project called *The Chronicle of American Women*. *The Chronicle* is an online archive that will recognize the women who have contributed to the story of America.

The Chronicle provides our members and supporters with the opportunity to create biographical profiles, tributes, and remembrances for themselves or for other special women who have made a difference in their lives. Each Chronicle can include as much or as little information as is available for a particular woman, and members can add or edit their Chronicles as more information becomes available. Chronicle pages can even accommodate special features such as photographs of the honoree and comments from those who view the pages. One of the more interesting aspects of this project is that it will be our members themselves who choose how to build these tributes to the women who are important to them.

Anyone with an Internet connection may browse through the archive, and Chronicle pages are searchable by first name, last name, maiden name, city, and state. New Chronicles can be created by both existing Museum members who renew their memberships and by new visitors to the site. As the archive grows, we plan to make the database accessible to historians and other researchers whose use has been approved by the Museum.

The Chronicle serves two valuable purposes: it will provide those who have stories to tell with a platform through which to share those stories and to pay appropriate tribute to deserving women; and it will preserve these stories for future generations to learn from and to enjoy.

The NWHM will use the tax-deductible donations generated by *The Chronicle* to help defray the costs of maintenance and upgrades to the archive, along with our ongoing educational outreach programs and our efforts to procure a museum site.

Some of our members have asked what will happen to *The Chronicle* once the NWHM obtains a permanent building. We have every intention of continuing the Chronicle project even after moving to a physical museum. Visitors to the museum will be able to retrieve information from the Chronicle database just as they would be able to do using the Internet.

Please visit *The Chronicle of American Women* today at www.nwhm.org. Help us to honor the lives and legacies of those who have done so much to shape our world!



Celebrating Our Past
Inspiring Our Future

Spring 2007

CELEBRATE THESE WOMEN BORN IN SPRING

Dolley Payne Todd Madison

(5/20/1788) was born in North Carolina, moving with her family to Philadelphia in 1783. In 1794, Dolley, by then a widow, met and married Virginia Congressman James Madison. The couple moved to Washington, D.C. in 1801 when Madison was appointed to President Jefferson's cabinet. Through these years and during her husband's presidency, Dolley became Washington's premiere hostess, setting the standard for those who followed. She is best known for her courage during the War of 1812 when she refused to flee the White House until a portrait of George Washington was safely removed. In her eulogy in 1869, President Zachary Taylor referred to her as the "First Lady," making the role of President's wife an official one.



more than 80 golf tournaments during her lifetime. She qualified for five events in 1932 and completed in three. Dridrison set world records for the javelin throw and 80-meter hurdles and won a silver in the high jump. She took up golf in 1933 and proved to be one of the best players in history. Between 1943 and 1947 she won 17 amateur tournaments in a row. Babe also worked to further women in professional golf by co-founding the Ladies Professional Golf Association with Patty Berg in 1949. After battling cancer for three years, she passed away in 1956.

For over 50 years labor rights activist **Dolores Huerta** (4/10/1930) has worked tirelessly to ensure rights for agricultural workers. She grew up in Stockton, California and became a teacher after graduating from college. She helped found numerous organizations including the Stockton Chapter of the Community Service Organization in 1955, the Agricultural Workers' Association in 1960, and the National Farm Workers Association in 1962. Huerta lobbied for better healthcare, higher wages, and more secure contracts by organizing massive nonviolent protests. One



of the most gifted athletes of the 20th century, **Mildred Ella "Babe" Dridrison Zaharias** (6/16/1911) won three medals at the 1932 Olympics and

of her most influential boycotts was in 1973, which led to the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975 giving workers the right to organize unions. She continues her work as the President of the Dolores Huerta Foundation.

Sarah Margaret Fuller

(5/23/1810) was an author, editor, feminist, and foreign correspondent. From a very early age Fuller's father provided intensive schooling, which included studying works in Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and German. From 1840-1842 she edited the transcendentalist paper, *The Dial*, and she began working for the *New York Tribune* in 1844. Fuller was not only a journalist and literary critic in the United States; the *Tribune* sent her to Scotland, Wales, England, and France, allowing her to fulfill her dream of travel. In Italy she fell in love and married while covering the unsuccessful revolts of 1848. Tragically, Sarah Fuller, her husband, and her young son perished in 1850 when their ship sank during their return trip to America.



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Bill Richardson & Carolyn Maloney Show Support for NWHM

Support for the National Women's History Museum is growing throughout the country, and the Museum's mission has caught the attention of many prominent politicians.

In late March, representatives of the NWHM were honored to join Governor Bill Richardson (D-NM) in Santa Fe for a press event at which Governor Richardson issued a statement supporting the establishment of a National Women's History Museum in the Nation's Capital. A delegation representing the National Foundation for Women Legislators (NFWL) also attended the event. The NFWL is a NWHM Coalition Member Organization that actively supports legislation to provide NWHM with a permanent museum site in Washington, D.C. NWHM President Susan Jollie had the opportunity to make some brief remarks highlighting the work of the Museum and acknowledging the Governor's support.



NWHM President Susan Jollie with Governor Bill Richardson



L to R: Robin Read, Linda Denny, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, Joan Wages, Susan Jollie

Ms. Jollie, along with NWHM Board Members Linda Denny and Joan Wages and NFWL President Robin Read, hosted a tour of the Museum's proposed building site on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. for Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) earlier in the month. Ms. Maloney, who has promoted legislative resolutions in favor of the NWHM, visited the vacant Annex building adjacent to the Old Post Office Pavilion. The NWHM is grateful for Representative Maloney's continued support.

With vocal supporters such as Governor Richardson and Representative Maloney, awareness of the Museum will continue to grow nationwide. Be sure to let your congressional representatives know that you support the vital work of the National Women's History Museum as well!

Additional photos of both meetings and a copy of Governor Richardson's proclamation can be viewed on the Museum's website (www.nwhm.org).

Amazing Grace: The Unforgettable Grace Hopper

Few people have been more important to the development of the technological systems on which our world depends than **Grace Brewster Murray "Amazing Grace" Hopper** (1907-1992).

Born in New York City to a family that valued education, she earned a degree in math and physics at Vassar College in 1928. She became Grace Hopper in 1930, the same year that she earned her master's degree in mathematics and physics at Yale (which admitted women as graduate students, but not as undergraduates). While teaching at Vassar, she went on to obtain a Yale doctorate in mathematics in 1934 as Hitler and Mussolini consolidated their fascist parties in Europe. Like millions of others, her life would be fundamentally changed by the Second World War.

Grace's husband Vincent Foster Hopper went to war, and Grace went too as soon as that was possible for women. Congress created the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps in May 1942, and naval branches for women were planned as well. Because the acronym for the army corps was lampooned as "wacky," the Navy first created its acronym, the WAVES, "Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service." With Mildred McAfee, an academic like Hopper, as its head, the WAVES set out to recruit women who had backgrounds in math and science. Hopper joined the WAVES soon after its July 1942 creation. In 1945, the war's last year, she lost her husband. For the rest of her life, she was married only to her work.

The WAVES made excellent use of Hopper's skills, assigning her to a cutting-edge project within the Navy's Bureau of Ordnance

Computation. Many WAVES worked at "ordnance computation," spending their days figuring the trajectories of various weapons to obtain maximum gun-use efficiency. Hopper, however, would not merely compute; she concentrated on improving computing methodology. She spent the war in a basement at Harvard University researching and developing artificial intelligence that would move beyond the era's adding machines.

Most women were phased out of the military at the war's end, but the Navy was too smart to lose Hopper. For the rest of her Navy career, she was in quasi-military situations, often working under the financial aegis of defense contractors such as Sperry and Remington Rand. Hopper differed from many of her military colleagues, however, in that she could envision countless possibilities for the non-military use of computers. As early as 1949, she put her naval career at risk to begin developing business computer ideas. She wrote endless mathematical codes with the aim of developing a code simple enough to be used by non-mathematicians. The most famous result was COBOL, the first basic computer language.

Grace Hopper lived long enough to reap the rewards of her imaginative mind and her years of tedious calculating. In 1969, the new Data Processing Management Association gave her its first "Man of the Year" award, and in 1971, the Sperry Corporation began an annual grant in her name. Sometimes known as "The First Lady of Software" ("software" being a word that grew out of her pioneering work), Hopper is credited too for coining the term "bug," as in "bug in the system."

The Navy promoted her to its top rank and exempted her from its forced-retirement age. When Admiral Grace Hopper finally retired in 1986, she was the Navy's oldest officer on active duty, having served 43 years. Her retirement ceremony was held in Boston harbor on the nation's oldest ship, the USS Constitution ("Old Ironsides"). She had long ago developed a reputation for candor that Naval Secretary John Lehman acknowledged in his speech, saying, "she's challenged at every turn the dictates of mindless bureaucracy." Amazing Grace Hopper added, "I always tell young people, 'Go ahead and do it. You can apologize later.'"



"Amazing Grace" Hopper at work on a UNIVAC mainframe computer.
Image from Computer History Museum Archive

NWHM Planned Giving

The National Women's History Museum offers many different options for you to demonstrate your ongoing commitment to women's history! Please consider supporting the NWHM with a gift of appreciated securities, property, a bequest in your will, or through a charitable trust. You can also make a tax-free donation to NWHM from your IRA. For more information, please visit the planned giving page of our website at www.nwhm.org.

Letter from our President



I recently had the pleasure of seeing Wendy Wasserstein's 1988 play *The Heidi Chronicles*, which begins with the protagonist, a college art history teacher, giving a lecture about women artists who were not discussed in any art history books. At about the time this play premiered

on Broadway, a pioneering woman, Wilhelmina Holladay, had done something bold and far-reaching to rectify this situation. Using her collection and funding as its base, the National Museum of Women in the Arts opened its doors in 1987, and has been highlighting women artists ever since.

While NMWA is still one of a kind, its existence has transformed the art world. Now other art museums and galleries have been moved to offer works by women in their permanent collections and temporary exhibitions. Researchers now seek out women artists, finding that they were present throughout history and truly worthy of recognition.

In our own time, women study art in greater numbers than men, and are about equally represented as professionals, but the works that are purchased and hung in museums still overwhelmingly favor male artists. Creating respect and a market for women artists' work has the potential to redress these disparities over time.

As NMWA celebrates its 20th anniversary, we are inspired to continue our work to open the doors of a museum that would showcase the historic contributions of American women, not just in the arts, but in all areas of our history. While we work toward that day, we are now going to be telling the stories of women in a project we have dubbed *The Chronicle of American Women* - long before I saw *The Heidi Chronicles*. But just as that play was warm and touching and relevant to our times, I anticipate that the lives you choose to chronicle will be just as moving. Please check out this new feature on our website at www.nwhm.org.

Best regards,

Susan B. Jollie
President

Membership Updates

If your name is misspelled or you receive multiple copies of the newsletter, please contact us at: P.O. Box 1296, Annandale, VA 22003. You can also email us at staff@nwhm.org. Please type "Membership Update" in the subject line.

New Cyber Exhibit, *Building the New World: The Women of Jamestown Settlement*, Centerpiece of Website Redesign

The 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America, provides the context for the launch of NWHM's newest Cyber Exhibit, *Building the New World: The Women of Jamestown Settlement*. This exhibit traces the history of the women who helped to establish Jamestown in Virginia. Under the direction of Board Member Doris Weatherford, NWHM Spring Intern Kristin Tremper has meticulously researched and compiled an engaging look at women's indispensable contributions to the difficult early years of colonization.

NWHM Webmistress Holly Kearl has been hard at work revamping the website layout, color scheme, and navigation.

The new design incorporates a variety of dynamic features, such as *This Week in Women's History*, current news items, and frequently changing highlights and photos. Specific areas with new content include:

**NWHM launched a new Cyber Exhibit in March called *A History of the NWHM Coalition Organizations*. This exhibit highlights the histories behind the Museum's 30 Coalition member organizations. These voluntary service and professional associations of women have been major supporters of NWHM's efforts to procure a permanent building site.

**The *Newsbytes* section has been updated and expanded to include new articles about NWHM's activities during Women's History Month and more recent events. Many of the articles include event photographs and links to related information.

**The *Calendar of Events* current for all 50 states. This impressive resource lists women's history events by month for each U.S. state and is updated regularly.

**We continue to add biographical profiles of notable women to the *Educational Resources* section of our website. The number of women profiled now exceeds 150. Recently-added biographies include lawyer Margaret Brent, Wild West figure Martha "Calamity Jane" Cannary, and first lady Rachel Donelson Jackson.

**The *Chronicle of American Women* has been added to the NWHM website (see front-page article). The Museum is very excited about this new project, which will permanently record the stories and contributions of American women.



Rachel Donelson Jackson
Image from The Heritage

The National Women's History Museum is proud to announce these changes as we strive to make our website into a first-rate destination for information on women's history. Be sure to visit us often at www.nwhm.org.



"Arrival of the young women at Jamestown"
Image from the New York Public Library