

2008

# National Organization for Women, San José/South Bay Chapter Records

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## **Guide to the National Organization for Women, San José/South Bay Chapter Records**

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## Guide to the National Organization for Women, San José/South Bay Chapter Records

**Collection number: MSS-2008-03-02**

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San José, California

Processed by:  
Trista Raezer  
Date Completed:  
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Encoded by:  
Trista Raezer

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** National Organization for Women, San José/South Bay Chapter Records

**Dates:** 1971-2007

**Collection number:** MSS-2008-03-02

**Creator:** National Organization for Women, San José/South Bay Chapter.

**Collection Size:** 2 cartons2 boxes2.92 linear feet

**Repository:** San José State University. Library.  
San José, California 95192-0028

**Abstract:** NOW is the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States. The South Bay Chapter was founded in 1970, followed by the San José Chapter in 1972. The San José Chapter absorbed the South Bay chapter in 1978, creating the San José/South Bay Chapter which operated until 2006. The collection consists of administrative files, correspondence, publicity, outreach, publications, reports and photographs. It is arranged into two series: Administrative Files, 1971-2007, and Outreach and Publicity, 1971-2005.

**Physical location:** For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Publication Rights

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### Preferred Citation

National Organization for Women, San José/South Bay chapter, MSS-2008-03-02, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

### Acquisition Information

Donated to the San Jose State University library by the National Organization for Women, San José/South Bay Chapter in March 2008.

### Organizational History

The National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded on June 30, 1966 during the "Third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women." It was founded by Betty Friedan and twenty seven other women. The organization swelled to 300 members by October 26, 1966, when NOW held its first conference, where the statement of purpose was adopted. During this conference the structure of the organization was created and Betty Friedan was elected president.

The Statement of Purpose declares, *The purpose of NOW is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.*

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According to NOW, the organization concentrates on seven priorities: *constitutional equality amendment, reproductive rights, racism, lesbian rights, violence against women, and economic justice*. NOW takes on such causes as affirmative action, child care, custody and family law issues, disability rights, education equity/title IX, exposing the radical right, global feminism, health and body image, media activism, peace, social security, welfare, and women in the military. NOW is also active in lobbying, educating the public and media, organizing rallies and protests, registering voters, and recruiting new feminists. NOW is currently the largest feminist advocacy group in the United States.

The South Bay Chapter of the National Organization for Women was founded in 1970. Due to the large area that this Chapter covered, transportation to meetings and events became time consuming and expensive. Thus, the San José Chapter was founded in 1972 to cater to women in that area. Seven other chapters in Santa Clara County started during this time as well. In 1978 the South Bay Chapter disbanded, and their members were absorbed by the San José Chapter, thence forming the San José/South Bay Chapter (SJ/SB).

The SJ/SB Chapter enjoyed high levels of memberships and activities during the 1970s and 1980s, due to events such as the defeated *Equal Rights Amendment* and election of Ronald Reagan as president. Other events at this time included the *"Alice Doesn't" Women's National Strike Day*, nominating *Chicken Little* for the San José Jaycee's Woman of the year, hosting local appearances of Gloria Steinem, boycotting states that did not ratify the ERA, protesting the Gag Rule, supporting abortion rights and affirmative action, and sending members to the March on Washington for Abortion Rights.

The SJ/SB Chapter began to suffer from internal conflicts in their chapter board during the early 1990s, and from low membership. However, the chapter remained active, and protested the *Anti-Choice Group Operation Rescue*, the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, and rejoiced in the election of President Bill Clinton.

The SJ/SB Chapter disbanded in 2006 and as of 2008 there are no active NOW chapters in Santa Clara County. However, NOW is still active at the national level and chapter level throughout the United States. California still has many active chapters, though many have disbanded.

Prominent and active members of the chapter include: Lillian Gay Moore, Janet Camagna, Christine Klemmer, Dot James, Nona Tobin, Lillian Thompson, Sharri Le Page, Meredith Mazur, Sue Clarry, Jana Cunningham, Suzanne Hicks, Katy Kay, Nansea Levy, May Ann May-Pumphrey, Melissa Moore, Pat Sanders, Angel Shepard, Joyce Sogg, Connie F. Springer (Stallings), Sandy Spaulding, and Robin Yeamans.

#### **Scope and Content**

The National Organization for Women, San José/South Bay Chapter, consists of administrative files, correspondence, publicity, outreach, publications, reports and photographs. The collection records the day-to-day functions of the organization and illustrates the Chapter's involvement in local and national politics and the influence of a grassroots movement in local government. The Chapter worked as a proponent to women's rights in the "Feminist Capital of the World" and it promoted women's rights through support for the Equal Rights Amendment. Other lobby activities included: reproductive rights, child care, child support, equality in the work place, *"Alice Doesn't" Women's National Strike Day*, support for Anita Hill, end to racism, convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, amongst others. In addition to their various activities the chapter also supported local women politicians and maintained correspondence with local and national politicians and legislators.

#### **Arrangement**

The collection is organized into two series: I. Administrative Files, 1971-2005. II. Outreach and Publicity, 1971-2007.

#### **Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

National Organization for Women -- California

National Organization for Women -- History

National Organization for Women -- Periodicals

National Organization for Women -- Silicon Valley (Calif.)

Women's Rights Advocates

Women's rights -- San Francisco Bay Area (Calif.)

Women's rights -- Silicon Valley (Calif.)

Women's rights -- United States -- History -- 20th century

Women's rights -- United States -- California

#### **Bibliography**

Author Unknown. (undated ) *History of NOW*. Retrieved from <http://www.now.org/history/> on July 8, 2008.

Klawuhn, Kimberly. (August 20, 2002) *San José/South Bay NOW celebrates 30 uppity years*. San José, CA: African American Community Services Agency.

**Series I Administrative Files 1971-2007****Physical Description:** 1 box**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series documents the daily operation of the San José/South Bay Chapter; this includes member and board meetings, correspondence with NOW members, politicians, local media, and National NOW. The documents record the development and the founding of the San José Chapter, the later joining with the South Bay chapter, and the termination of the chapter. Documents in this series highlight the interaction between local government and grass roots movements as well as materials that focus on local political trends that affected women, minorities and the women's rights movement.

Items of interest include correspondence with Governors Ronald Reagan, Jerry Brown Jr., and George Deukmejian, local politicians Norman Y. Mineta, Don Edwards, Janet Gray Hayes, Albert Alquist, Leona Egeland, Rod Diridon, City Council members, Congress and State Assembly members, and the local media including radio station KXRX, the Mercury News, and KQED-TV.

**Arrangement**

This series is arranged chronologically.

Box/Folder 1/1-1/3  
Box/Folder 1/1-1/4  
Box/Folder 1/5-1/13  
Box/Folder  
1/14-1/37

**South Bay Chapter 1971-1973****Sunnyvale/South Bay Chapter 1974-1978****San José Chapter 1972-1979****San José/South Bay Chapter 1980-2005****Series II Outreach and Publicity 1971-2005****Physical Description:** 3 boxes**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series documents the publicity and outreach activities of the San Jose/South Bay Chapter. This includes local and national activism, community events, local media press releases, articles about women's rights interests, local publications and photographs of local and national events. The contents concentrate strongly on newsletters, press releases, and flyers of local and national activities. The photographs represented are of local and national activities, and chapter meetings. The publications are locally published and acted as guides to women.

Of special interest are photographs of the "San José Walk for Choice" of 1989 and 1990, the "Young Feminists Conference" of 1991, the 1991 chapter planning retreat, and the 1992 "Abortions Right March on Washington, D.C."

**Arrangement**

This series is arranged by subject, then chronologically

Box/Folder 2/38  
Box/Folder 2/39  
Box/Folder  
2/40-2/48  
Box/Folder  
2/49-2/78  
Box/Folder 3/79  
Box/Folder 3/80  
Box/Folder 3/81-3/87  
Box 4/88-4/96  
Box/Folder 4/88  
Box/Folder 4/89  
Box/Folder 4/90  
Box/Folder 4/91  
Box/Folder 4/92  
Box/Folder 4/93  
Box/Folder 4/94  
Box/Folder 4/95  
Box/Folder 4/96

**South Bay Chapter 1971-1973****Sunnyvale/South Bay Chapter 1974-1978****San José Chapter Undated 1972-1979****San José/South Bay Chapter 1980-2007****Outreach for Women Inc. 1977-1979****National Organization for Women Statement of Purpose 1966****San José/South Bay Chapter Photographs 1976-2002****Publications and Reports 1973-2002****Child Sexual Abuse circa 1977****Dis.so.lu.tion: A Handbook on divorce for Santa Clara County Women 1979****Revolution in Women's Sports September 1974****Survey on the Status of Women at San José State University 1973-1974****To Form a More Perfect Union 1976****The Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll Circa 1975****Women's Job Rights Handbook 1974****Women's Studies 1972-1982 1982****Women's Workers Today 1976**