

San Juan SAGE



MARCH 2022

INTEREST GROUPS:

- ***OMG – Our Memories Group.** Read about it on the website, first Fridays. Contact Peg Kimple.
- ***Mahjong,** every Tuesday, contact Katherine Burgess for details.
- ***Edouard,** March 30, 2pm, “House of Rain” by Craig Childs w Jean Walter. Contact Sharon Powers
- ***Walk-n-Talk,** March 23rd, Animas City Museum, 10:30am. Watch for details. Contact Faye Schrater
- ***Birthday Luncheons** to return soon!

BRANCH BIRTHDAYS!

Happy March Birthday to:

**Janet DeFratus; Sally Greninger;
Teresa Jordan; Vi Kessel;
Debbie Kurz; Betsy Norton; and
Laurie Williams**



WHO KNEW?

She studied at California State Univ., LA & Azusa Pacific in Social Science and Marriage & Family Therapy. These days you will find her as a volunteer at the Aztec Ruins National Monument.

January “Who Knew” was: **Patty Joy**

Common Reading Experience at Fort Lewis College this year is “Post Colonial Love Poems” by Natalie Diaz. Watch for details about the author’s visit on Tuesday, April 5th at the Community Concert Hall.



We Cannot Go Back: Our Reproductive Rights

By Peg Kimple, member

Until 1965 married couples in the United States did not have the legal right to use birth control. A wife needed her husband’s permission to purchase any kind of contraception. 1965 was also the year “The Pill” became available and the year I was married. However, non-married people did not have the right to birth control until 1972. Even condoms (available in men’s room vending machines) were sold “for prevention of disease only”.

Our nation has just passed the 49th anniversary of Roe v. Wade (1973), the decision that made abortion legal. Now, however, women anxiously await another Supreme Court decision this summer. The Court will decide whether or not we will still have the right to have an abortion. It will rule on recent Mississippi and Texas laws that effectively reverse the 1973 decision. The question before us is whether a state or the federal government can control our bodies. It is ironic that many people have used the slogan “My Body My Choice” to protest mere mask wearing. How much more invasive is control of a woman’s uterus.

However the Court decides, abortion will not go away. For centuries, desperate women have resorted to potions, knitting needles, coat hangers, or shady practitioners.

I am old enough to have some perspective on that awful choice. My experiences affirm my commitment to pro-choice, not pro-abortion but pro-choice. There is a huge difference.

In the 1940s and 1950s my father, Edward D. Wildman, was a young physician. Before public ambulance services, he was on call for all emergencies including the aftermath of back-room and self-induced abortions. He had to declare some women dead in their homes. Many had hemorrhaged and bled out. The lucky ones merely needed repair for interior destruction. My father was a religious man, a Quaker, who deeply valued the sanctity of life. He was a conscientious objector during WWII, refusing to kill, even to combat the evils of Hitler. However, he could not accept that women who had become pregnant too young, without a husband, as the result of incest or rape, or who simply could not afford to feed another mouth, had to maim (or kill) themselves in order to cope with an unwanted pregnancy. I also knew his intense commitment to his oath as a physician to do no harm. Following that oath was not easy. No harm to whom? He became a vehement supporter of safe abortion.

In the late 1960s I personally knew women who faced that same decision. Prior to Roe v. Wade, I carried a phone number that would connect to a physician willing to provide safe, albeit illegal, abortions. These physicians risked loss of licenses, arrest, and jail, but they were committed to mitigation of the consequences for women making the difficult, and very lonely, choice.

In 1970, my husband and I lived in New York when the state became the first to legalize abortion. At 4:00 one morning our door buzzed. A close relative had driven with his pregnant girlfriend overnight from Wisconsin to be in New York for a safe procedure. They simply did not have the resources to bring up a child.

Since those days I have worked for women’s health in many capacities. My earlier experiences better enabled me to counsel young women to use birth control to avoid the need for abortion and to get proper reproductive health care. My younger sister was an early beneficiary. When I learned that she had already been having unprotected sex, I took her immediately to Planned Parenthood for contraception.

I’ve lived long enough to have seen firsthand the consequences for women, from the time birth control was illegal and the era of back-alley abortions was common to the present. Today, safe care is readily available and affordable through Planned Parenthood and other providers.

The cost of losing that care is too great to bear. We simply cannot go back.

Women’s History Month 2022: WOMEN PROVIDING HEALING, PROMOTING HOPE

