

## 2009 Quilt – Women’s Organizations

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### 1 "Excellent Women" Bookgroups – by Nancy McClements

Women's bookgroups are big today, especially since Oprah stepped onto the scene. I've been a member of the Barbara Pym bookgroup since 1980, when a couple of new mothers in Madison Women Library Workers decided that they needed at least one night out a month with some intellectual stimulation. In 2010 we will celebrate 30 years of reading and discussing books by women authors. In the early years our conversations were about nursery schools and love interests--now they tend towards grandchildren and health problems. Regardless, we are still laughing, drinking wine, eating cheese, and enjoying each month's new book. To see a list of what we have read, check out our web site: <https://mywebspace.wisc.edu/namcclem/pym>.

### 2 NOW – by Sue Searing

NOW, the National Organization for Women, was founded in 1966 and quickly became a strong and effective voice for second wave feminism in the U.S. It remains the largest feminist organization in the country, with half a million members (both men and women) and nearly six thousand local, state, and regional chapters. Activist members have helped topple discriminatory laws and practices by battling both the government and major corporations in multifaceted campaigns for gender equality in the workplace, the home, public accommodations, schools, and athletic programs. Today NOW's top issues are: abortion rights; violence against women; Constitutional equality; promoting diversity and ending racism; lesbian rights; and economic justice. My square depicts NOW's familiar logo on a series of buttons. The design is meant to symbolize how the network of grassroots chapters form the backbone of the national organization. I regret that the design appears rather static and rigid, thus obscuring NOW's dynamic nature. Over nearly a quarter-century, the organization has modified its tactics and priorities but never strayed from its mission "to bring about equality for all women." To learn more, visit <http://www.now.org>.

### 3 National Women’s Party – by Kathy Rohde

I was inspired by the film, *Iron-Jawed Angels*, a 2004 HBO production that, maybe because I don't have cable TV at home, I missed entirely when it was first aired. The title was passed around political activists last fall during the presidential election and I was astounded - - both with the story and the fabulous acting of the film's stars: Angelica Huston, Frances O'Conner, Vera Farmiga, Julia Ormond, and Hilary Swank. Swank plays the part of Alice Paul, one of the leaders of the radical group called the National Women's Party. They broke away from the more conservative National American Woman Suffrage Association and staged civil disobedience events such as parades, hunger strikes, and daily White House picketing that resulting in the arrest

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and incarceration of NWP members. The flag depicted on my square represents the one sewn by Alice Paul and the members of the NWP as the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was ratified, state-by-state. When a state passed the amendment, a star was added to the flag. When the requisite number of states passed the amendment and it became law, the flag was proudly unfurled at the NWP headquarters. The photos in my square are from the online Library of Congress collection and show the flag and the White House picketers. I highly recommend *Iron-Jawed Angels* to everyone – you will never again miss any opportunity to vote (even during the boring spring elections)!

### **4 YWCA – by Merle Iris Margolis**

I'm inspired by the work of the YWCA, past and present, in helping women get their lives together. The "Y" was founded in 1858 by a Mrs. Cook. Two organizations merged around 1870, and Grace Dodge became the first President. I'm also inspired by the Village People's YMCA song and motions. My cousins sing and motion at every happy family gathering. So, I had little "Village women" spelling out the YWCA!

### **5 Saturday Evening Girls and Edith Guerrier – by Marge Loch Wouters**

At the turn of the century in Boston, groups of young immigrant women gathered at the North Bennett Street Industrial School a reform settlement house for activities and friendship. Librarian Edith Guerrier worked to increase the young women's educational opportunities as well. She formed the "Saturday Evening Girls" club to read classic literature to the young women. At the same time, camps were established for the young women to experience the outdoors. When many of the girls couldn't afford the fee to attend the camp, Guerrier searched for a way they could earn money and hit upon pottery making. The work she did in setting up the pottery business formed the basis for Paul Revere Pottery, a noted Arts and Crafts business with popular designs featuring farmyard animals. The square features a pot with one of the classic designs.

### **6 History of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs – by Christine Jenkins**

The National Association of Colored Women (NACW) was established in 1896 as a federation of Black women's clubs throughout the U.S. that would enable them to work together for the betterment of the African-American community on a state, regional, and national level. Founding members included Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Mary Church Terrell. The impetus for this union of clubs was the all-white General Federation of Women's Clubs' refusal to allow African-American women's clubs to

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participate in the Women’s Building at the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago. At the time this book was written/compiled, the NACW had grown to over 300,000 members. My square begins with the official emblem of the NACW. The club’s motto, “lifting as we climb” may be seen in the association’s emblem at the top of my quilt square. Within the emblem I have included a group photo taken at the First Congress of Negro Women, held in Atlanta GA in December 1895. For my quilt square I consulted *Lifting As They Climb*, a historical record of the NACW compiled and written by Elizabeth Lindsay Davis (Washington, DC: NACW, 1933). This text includes formal photographs of many of the many women who were NACW leaders on a local, state, regional, and national level. I selected eighteen portraits pictured from the book for my square (#1-#13 arranged clockwise, starting at the bottom; #14 is immediately above #2, and #15-#18 are the row of photos immediately above #14 and below the emblem).

1. Mrs. Victoria Earl – Matthews, NY (founding officer - executive board chair)
2. Mrs. B.T. Washington, Tuskegee, AL (founding officer - president)
3. Miss Elizabeth C. Carter, New Bedford, MA (founding officer - recording secretary)
4. Mrs. L.C Anthony, Jefferson City, MO (founding officer - treasurer)
5. Mrs. Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Boston, MA (founder, “she issued the call”)
6. Mrs. St. Charles Edwards (past president, S.E. Federation)
7. Dr. Olive M. Officer, Chicago, IL
8. Mrs. Armita Douglass, (president, New Jersey Association)
9. Mrs. Frances D. Preston, Detroit, MI
10. Mrs. Estella Roberts, Illinois
11. Mrs. Clara C. Montgomery, Whitman, WI
12. Mrs. Judith Horton, Guthrie, OK (founder of Excelsior Library)
13. Miss Jane Hunter, Cleveland OH (founder of Phillis Wheatley Home)
14. Mrs. Lula Margaret Williams, Kalamazoo, MI
15. Dr. Sara H. Fitzbutler, Louisville, MT
16. Mrs. T.J. Nevins, St. Louis, MO
17. Rev. Florence Randolph, New York (past chaplain, NACW)
18. Mrs. Rosa C. Lee, Lexington, MS

Below each portrait is the subject’s name and (in most cases) their city and state.

The portraits and emblem were created using photo transfers. The frames I created from ribbon, embroidery floss, and fabric marker pens.

### 7 Girl Scouts – by Jane Pearlmutter

As all Girl Scouts learn, the organization was founded in 1912 by Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia. After meeting Sir Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in England, she became interested in a new youth movement for girls in the U.S. From the original troop of 18 members, Girl Scouting has grown to 3.7 million current members, and as it approaches its Centennial, has influenced about 50 million women who have belonged to the organization.

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According to Low’s biography at

[http://www.girlscouts.org/who\\_we\\_are/history/low\\_biography/](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/history/low_biography/), “In developing the Girl Scout movement in the United States, Juliette brought girls of all backgrounds into the out-of-doors, giving them the opportunity to develop self-reliance and resourcefulness. She encouraged girls to prepare not only for traditional homemaking, but also for possible future roles as professional women – in the arts, sciences and business – and for active citizenship outside the home. Girl Scouting welcomed girls with disabilities at a time when they were excluded from many other activities. This idea seemed quite natural to Juliette, who never let deafness, back problems, or cancer keep her from full participation in life.” This description certainly was reflected in my own experience with scouting, as our troops of city kids who had never seen anything wilder than Central Park, left the urban jungle and learned to build campfires and cook over them, to make bedrolls from our fathers’ old army blankets (no one assumed you could afford to buy a sleeping bag) and sleep outdoors, to swim and canoe, and of course, to raise the money for these camping trips through cookie sales. Later, my mother (who was the leader of another troop) volunteered me for a troop that was being started in a rehabilitation hospital and was in need of a few able-bodied girls. This turned out to be a group of girls my age (12-13) who lived at the hospital with severe and/or multiple disabilities – from thalidomide, polio, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, etc. – and yes, we went camping!

The quilt block contains a few of my merit badges.

### **8 Wisconsin Women Library Workers (WWLW) - by Maureen Welch**

WWLW is a feminist organization committed to improving the status of women in the library field and to the elimination of sex role stereotyping and sex bias. For over 30 years, WWLW has worked toward providing a feminist support network; improving the status, pay and image of library work, which has been undervalued because it is characterized as women's work; improving information resources on women's issues in Wisconsin libraries; providing a forum for political action and education on issues of concern to women; and linking libraries and library workers with the broader women's movement. Every year since 1980, WWLW has made a quilt to celebrate the womanly art of quilting, to enjoy the camaraderie of the quilting bee, and to raise money for the organization. Different volunteers make individual squares; it's assembled by our designer, and then those members who attend the annual retreat in Door County work on the quilting.