
MARCH NEWSLETTER OF THE MSU WOMEN'S CENTER

By Apryl Little

Happy Women's History Month from the MSU Women's Center! This month is dedicated to honoring the invaluable contributions women have made both in the present day and throughout history. It is in the often untold stories of great women like Eleanor Roosevelt, Harriet Tubman, Aretha Franklin, and countless others that America was built. I hope March brings everyone the opportunity to reflect on the importance of Women's History Month as well as some of the women whose achievements and legacies paved the way for everything we are today.

The "Herstory" of Women's History Month

Women's history month was first created by a group of educators in 1978 in Santa Rosa, California. It was originally women's history week and was made to coincide with International Women's day on March 8th. The following years, women's history week activism spread across the nation drawing the attention of the federal government. In 1980, the week of March 8th was declared National Women's History week. This was in effect until March 12th, 1987 when President Reagan created public law 100-9 that designated the entire month of March as Women's History Month.

Why do we need Women's History Month?

Women's History Month is a time to learn about and celebrate the often-overlooked contributions, struggles, and triumphs of women throughout history. It serves as a focused time to recognize the roles that women have played, and continue to play, in shaping academia, politics, sciences, arts, invention, as well as every other facet of human undertaking. The significance of Women's History Month is not just about learning and acknowledging these contributions but also in challenging the traditional narratives that have often put women's contributions on the back burner.

For centuries, history has been predominantly written by and viewed through the lens of white men, typically of European descent. This skewed perspective has resulted in a lack of information about women's experiences, achievements, and perspectives from mainstream historical narratives. Women's voices were often muted or pushed to the side as supporting roles, overshadowed by the more documented and wide spread perspectives of men. The absence of women's stories, especially those of women of color, from historical preservation and accounts not only reinforces gender stereotypes of the times, it distorts our understanding of the past.

There's an amazing Ted Talk by Emily Krichbaum about the importance of women's history; she states: "women made homes, but they also made history". By neglecting to recognize these varied strengths and accomplishments, we continue to recognize a narrow and incomplete version of history that fails to reflect the diversity and complexity of human accomplishment. A study written by the Smithsonian Magazine found that less than 10% of history taught in American classrooms is about women. Of this 10%, over half of the women learned about are state specific and the majority are white. Change in the American curriculum is needed, and Women's History Month is a small way to push the stories of women to the front.

Women's History Month provides an opportunity to rectify these historical injustices by centering women's narratives and reclaiming their contributions to history. It offers a platform to highlight the achievements of women from all walks of life: from political leaders and activists to scientists, artists, educators, and beyond. It allows a space to "remember the ladies" as Abigail Adams famously said.

Women's History Month is also an opportunity to push more broad conversations to focus; conversations about gender, representation, and social justice not just in the past, but today and in the future. Women's History Month is a reminder that history is not an immovable narrative of the past. It is instead a flowing, continuous, catalog full of diverse people and forgotten stories that deserve to be shared.

Some Sources I used in this article:

White, A. (2019, March 1). *What schools teach about women's history leaves a lot to be desired*. Smithsonian.com. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/what-schools-teach-womens-history-180971447/>
White, A. (2019, March 1). *What schools teach about women's history leaves a lot to be desired*. Smithsonian.com. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/what-schools-teach-womens-history-180971447/>

UPCOMING EVENTS:



The HEART Initiative

By Megan Matteoli

The Heart Initiative is an on-campus student organization that raises awareness about human trafficking in Montana and beyond. The Heart Initiative has hosted speakers that have knowledge in many different sectors of human trafficking. The Heart Initiative has hosted Supervisor of the Montana Division of Criminal Investigation, Andrew Yedinak, Truckers Against Trafficking Ambassador, Dean Key, and Bozeman PD detectives.

Tuesday, April 2nd at 6 p.m.
The Heart Initiative will be hosting Penny Ronning of The Yellowstone Human Trafficking Task Force. Penny will be hosting a training on human trafficking as well as sharing her story about her mother being a survivor of human trafficking.

Through March Tuesdays 11am, Wednesdays 1pm, Saturdays 1pm

Illuminating the Shadowed World of Bozeman's Historic Red-Light District

- Hosted by the Extreme History Project
- Book a tour Here: <https://extremehistoryproject.org/>

Wednesday, March 6, Noon-1 PM SUB Alumni Legacy Lounge

Student Panel Celebrating International Women's Day

- Hosted by The Office of International Programs

Friday, March 8th

International Women's Day!

- Learn more here: <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>

Saturday, March 9th 9 AM- 1PM Museum of the Rockies

Women's History Family Day

- Hosted by the Museum of the Rockies
- Learn more here:
<https://museumoftherockies.org/calendar/womens-history-family-day>

Wednesday, March 20, 6:30 PM Inspiration Hall, NACOE

A Special Women's History Month Event:

Grassroots to Global: The Power of Public Health with Dr. Cora Neumann

- Hosted by the MSU Women's Center, The Office of the President, Jake Jobs College of Business, Office of Diversity and Inclusion and EHHD

Wednesday, March 27 Noon-1 PM SUB Alumni Legacy Lounge

SACK Lunch Seminar:

The Hayes Sisters of Bozeman's Red-Light District with Crystal Alegria

- Hosted by the MSU Women's Center

Tuesday, April 2nd 6 PM

Training on Human Trafficking with Penny Ronning

- Hosted by The HEART Initiative

Friday, April 26th

Bozeman Monologues

- Hosted by the VOICE Center and SASA

Sunday, May 5th

National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples

- Please be on the lookout for events on May 3rd

THE POWER OF PUBLIC HEALTH WITH DR. CORA NEUMANN

By Betsy Danforth



The MSU Women's Center is thrilled to welcome Dr. Cora Neumann for our featured Women's History Month speaker! Neumann was born and raised in Bozeman, MT. Her rich and diverse career path has led to the creation and success of several projects meant to improve the lives of other, particularly those in underserved communities. Cora is a public health practitioner, policy advocate and non-profit strategist who has over twenty years of experience in the public, private, and non-profit sectors, including working at the U.S. State Department, the RAND Corporation, the Bush Institute, Care.com, and the World Health Organization. Throughout her career, she has designed strategies and brought together local, Indigenous and national leaders to deliver quality, accessible health care and social services.

Neumann brings her sense of public service to her professional life, including serving on the board of Columbia University School of Public Health, as a former regional Vice President of the Montana Public Health Association, and running for public office. She has a master's degree in public health from Columbia University and doctorate in public health and development from the University of Oxford. While working on her doctorate, Neumann got on-the-ground experience doing research on the Thai-Burma border, at the intersection of global health and international development. She later served as a senior advisor to the State Department's Global Women's Business Initiative, a program started by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

In 2009, Cora launched GFLA (Global First Ladies Alliance) in partnership with the offices of First Ladies Laura Bush and Michelle Obama, and has worked with more than 40 first ladies around the world to support their delivery of critical social services to their populations. "Nobody ever asked them what their opinion was, necessarily. They have never been treated with respect, to be honest," said Neumann, who helped create the program that convened first ladies to discuss how to make an impact. In 2023, GFLA partnered with Columbia University to launch an annual executive leadership training with First Ladies, including Dr. Jill Biden.

Neumann told *Jewish Insider*: "The reason I went into public health was because my dad was a logger, and he died from injuries in a lumber mill accident when I was a baby," Neumann recalled. Her mom became a widow at 21. "The community here in Montana, in Bozeman, raised us. It was a wonderful place to grow up. But what we went through, obviously, it was very traumatic. And if we had been closer to good care, he probably would have survived. So I had a really early life lesson in the importance of public health and healthcare for rural communities and tribal communities."

In 2015, Neumann started a nonprofit that built coalitions with Native communities, conservationists, hunters and ranchers to preserve public lands. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she put her public health background to use. She had worked on the Ebola virus previously, and she knew a pandemic would be the most devastating for "our rural and remote and tribal communities," noted Neumann. "That's my expertise. So I wanted to just put myself to the best use possible to serve our communities during that time. Between political division and mass trauma and loss from the pandemic, we can't wait. We need to make sure that people are getting the care they need on one hand, and that we're protecting those who could be targets," she noted.

Cora currently serves as Chief Community Health Officer for the Native American Development Corporation, one of Montana's longest serving Native-led organizations, and continues to teach the Global First Ladies Academy with Columbia University. She has also very recently announced her candidacy for a Montana State Senate seat.

Media Highlights:

- Columbia University highlight video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIYWoh482z8>
- First Ladies Advance Public Health Leadership, Columbia University
- First Lady Dr. Jill Biden Speaks at Columbia Mailman School, Columbia University

Oprah Daily: The Force Behind the World's First Ladies

The Women's Center would like to credit **Jewish Insider** for much of the text in this article!

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR FEBRUARY SPEAKERS

By Betsy Danforth



Geraldine Fenn Memorial Library

By Apryl Little

A truly hidden gem on campus is the Geraldine Fenn Memorial Library in the MSU Women's Center. This library is available for all MSU students, staff and faculty to come in and check out books and is full of diverse publications and thoughts from some of the greatest minds to ever live. The library is named in honor of Geraldine Fenn, who was a trailblazer in equality for women's rights and education in the mid-1900's. The hope is for our library to provide a space to carry Fenn's legacy forward by providing a variety of literature dedicated to gender and the many multifaceted stories of women.

The library has a wide range of books including traditional feminist literature, works on gender equality, fiction written by great women writers, and a little bit of everything in between. Our goal is to encourage students to become interested in gender studies, intersectionality, social justice, and the expansive, rich history of women's contributions through the centuries.

In addition to providing students with a place to borrow books they otherwise might not have access to, the Geraldine Fenn Memorial Library plays a vital role in promoting representation and diversity within Montana State Universities curriculum. By featuring works authored by women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other marginalized groups, the library amplifies voices that are often not included in traditional academic settings.

It is through spaces like this library, opening its arms to others in the pursuit of knowledge that Fenn's legacy to teaching and women's rights is able to continue to live on and allow Fenn to continue to make such a monumental difference at Montana State University. The next time you find yourself in the sub I'd encourage you to check out room 368, our staff would love to show you the library and chat about some of the great stories housed there.

Pride and Prejudice

This newsletter's book shoutout is *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. A timeless classic for a reason, the novel explores issues like societal expectations, love, and independence way before its time. The tale was written in 1796 by the now famed writer, Jane Austen, during a time period when it was not common or socially acceptable for women to become published writers, let alone have a job at all.

In a society where women's choices were severely limited, Elizabeth stands out as a beacon of wit, intelligence, and independence, challenging conventions and defying expectations at every turn. As she grapples with her own prejudices and misconceptions, Elizabeth discovers the true nature of love and the power of self-discovery.

Austen's keen observations of human nature and societal expectations of the time shine through her beautifully written characters and dialogue, making 'Pride and Prejudice' a perennial favorite among readers of all ages. As we celebrate Women's History Month, Austen's masterpiece reminds us of the resilience, intelligence, and strength of women throughout history, inspiring readers to embrace their own agency and chart their own destinies.

THE EXTREME HISTORY PROJECTS BOZEMAN'S RED- LIGHT DISTRICT EXHIBIT

By Apryl Little

Media Section

This section of the Women's Center Newsletter is dedicated to empowering media. This includes books, films, podcasts, shows, music, and more that are designed to offer thoughtful conversation about a variety of subjects including gender, social justice, equality, and overall inspiration. Our selection aims to amplify diverse voices and back media that's meant to entertain, educate, or both. If you have a moment in the hectic schedule of college students, feel free to explore this list and delve into the power of media and social change. If you have any works you believe further the message of resilience, inclusion, and empowerment, please feel free to stop in or reach out to the Women's Center to get them added to the list.

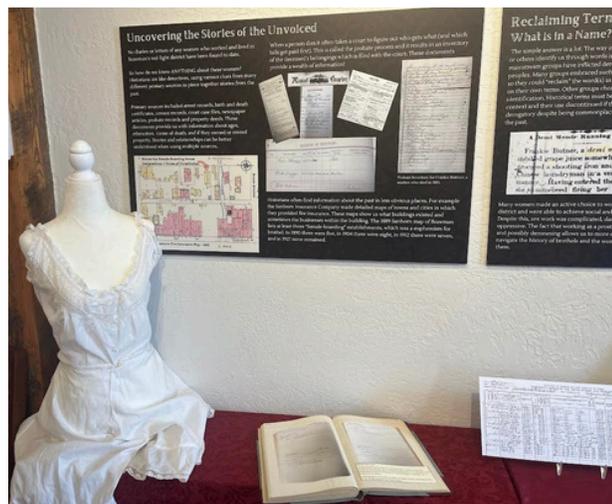
- Fargo (TV, season 5)
- It's Been a Minute podcast
- *The 7 Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*
- *Hamnet*
- *Americanah*
- *Rupi Kaur Poetry (Milk and Honey or The Sun and Her Flowers)*
- *Pride and Prejudice (Book of the newsletter!)*
- The Barbie Movie
- Legally Blonde
- Hidden Figures
- Erin Brockovich

Bozeman is a city rich with history and tales of the Old West. Among this history is the Red-Light District, Bozeman's once booming brothel and opium economy. The Extreme History Project, a local initiative dedicated to unearthing and preserving the lesser-known stories of Montana's past, has unveiled a new exhibit focusing on Bozeman's Red Light District. This exhibit acts as a journey through time, shedding light on pieces of Bozeman's history that have long been unexplored.

The Extreme History Project's exhibit delves into the lives of the individuals who inhabited this vibrant yet dangerous world. Through photographs, artifacts, and first-hand accounts, visitors are asked to go back in time to experience the sights and sounds of Bozeman's Red Light District. From the madams who ran the brothels, to the prostitutes trying to make it work in a world with little opportunity for them, each story adds depth to the rich history of Bozeman's past.

Beyond the rich history and scandal, the exhibit explores the complex dynamics of gender, class, and power, shedding light on the struggles and accomplishments of those who lived on the outskirts of society. The impact of red light districts on women at the time was multifaceted, reflecting both the harsh realities of exploitation and the resilience and resourcefulness of women seeking to earn a livelihood in a world dominated by men.

Moreover, the exhibit serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving and interpreting the often overlooked chapters of history. By confronting the uncomfortable truths of the past, we gain a more nuanced understanding of our collective heritage and the forces that continue to shape our world today.



Here's a photo from the Extreme History Projects Exhibit. The Exhibit is running through March and would be a great way to celebrate Women's History month on a local level! Checkout the Extreme History Projects website for more information here: <https://extremehistoryproject.org/>