

# Women: The New Network

**Network:** A fabric or structure of cords or wires that cross at regular intervals and are knotted or secured at the crossings. An interconnected or interrelated chain, group, or system.

*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*

BEFORE THEY were admitted in any numbers to the male-dominated bastions of business, the professions and government, women did their "networking" largely at home—in their neighborhoods and their children's schools, in book clubs and bridge clubs and community service organizations. They probably didn't even call it networking, though they may well have perfected the form long before anybody coined the word.

"Whether you like the term *networking* or not, I don't know what else we could call it," says former Sacramento mayor Anne Rudin, widely recognized as one of the region's most effective practitioners. She is a gentle, low-key conversationalist with a genuine, visible interest in the people she meets—some of whom quite wrongly concluded that she needn't be taken *seriously* when she ran for mayor in the early 1980s because her political style was so different than the prevailing, confrontational male model.

"Men were doing it for years," Rudin says of networking. "While they weren't calling it networking, that is what they were doing. It was for business. Since women weren't in the same kinds of business pursuits as men, we weren't able to do that except through women's organizations."

Like Rudin, many women got their start in business and politics through established organizations like the League of Women Voters—and, simply, by going to places and events where they would meet people, often other women, with shared interests.

Rudin, now 70, was a young mother living in Riverside, Calif., with her psychiatrist husband

and their four children in 1955, when she began the quiet political activism that would eventually lead to her election to the Sacramento City Council in 1971 and the mayor's chair in 1983.

"I had just had my fourth child, and I was really going crazy," she recalls of those early years. "I wanted more communication with the world outside the home. I had given up my nursing career, but I needed outside interests, and I needed something to keep my mind active. So

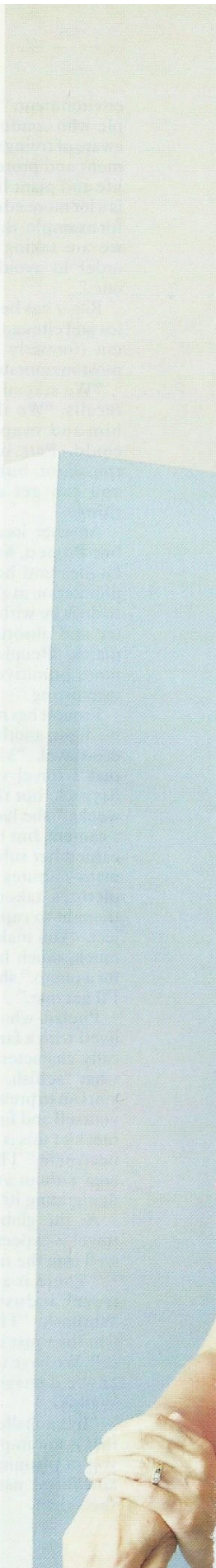
I joined the League of Women Voters."

She served as league president in Riverside and Sacramento, developing invaluable political and personal contacts throughout the state. "My first networking, though I didn't know the word then, was through the league, and not just with other women but with women and men in government." To be successful in business or politics, adds Rudin, women must move across gender lines. "The organizations provide opportunities to meet each other, and that opens doors. But women have other opportunities, too—and they have to be across gender lines if [they] want to be successful in business and politics."

Now, she says, networking for women has reached "a different level," as women "use the network to promote the political and business agendas of women. I have found there are more women rising in corporations. It's an interesting thing. When I became mayor, I saw all these women who had become corporate heads. Women don't realize the spinoff from other women."

Rudin, who retired as mayor in 1992, remains active in several major women's organizations,

by Sigrid Bathen  
photography by Roy Wilcox








"It's important to become a known entity in the community. And it's a professional necessity for me to really understand the community."

*Michele McCormick, president of the Sacramento chapter of the League of Women Voters and owner of MMC Communications*



A color portrait of a woman with short, curly brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a blue blazer over a patterned purple and white scarf, a pearl necklace, and gold hoop earrings. She is leaning against a light-colored wall.

"The need for networking, while we're all tired of the word, is to empower women to exchange information, trade ideas about skills, policy ideas and the kind of discrimination they face."

*Kate Karpilow, executive director of the California Elected Women's Association for Education and Research.*



# Women: The New Network

including the league and the California Elected Women's Association for Education and Research (CEWAER), which she helped found two decades ago. "With CEWAER, we are still feeling the need to promote women, to cultivate opportunities for women, but I think we've moved to really dealing with substantive issues, gaining the respect that we wanted."

NO DISCUSSION of Sacramento women and their networking styles would be even remotely complete without including Jean Runyon, longtime Sacramento public relations executive and the "first woman" in almost every major male-dominated club, organization or fund-raising effort.

"Networking," she says sourly, drawing out the syllables dramatically. "I just *hate* that word! It has been overused and it seems so pushy, so artificial. People get a little frantic and think they've got to be out there. I hear so many women say they're going here or there because they have to network, and I think, can't you go someplace because you *want* to?"

"Now, I think it just goes without saying in business that the more people you know, the more people you can help, the better it will be in terms of business. Serving on committees and community-related boards and events, getting involved with issues, meeting people that way, being effective for your charity or political or religious work—well, I guess you could call it networking."



"I see [community service and networking] as part of the professional role of lawyers in the community. It comes with being a leader. "

*Charity Kenyon, partner, Diepenbrock, Wulff, Plant & Hannegan*

As women have advanced professionally, their development of business contacts has taken a more routine path. "Women have a definite role now finally in the business world, and they are networking through things that they have to do anyway," says Runyon.

Stories abound that women are learning to play golf in increasing numbers so they can crash that bastion of businessmen, or forcing themselves to understand—to *like*, even—male-oriented sporting events. "Women are taking courses in football terminology so they can talk to people," says Runyon, the daughter of an Olympic silver medalist, Brutus Hamilton, who coached track and field at the University of California in Berkeley. "It's not a bad idea in a way, because this is a sports-oriented town, though it just struck me so funny. More power to them, I guess. I happen to like sports because my father was a coach, so maybe I have a leg up there."

As the first woman member of the Sacramento Rotary Club (and the first and *only* woman on the powerful, 18-member Sacramento Host Committee, which organizes the annual Host Breakfast each September), Runyon says younger women entering the higher echelons of business and the professions enjoy greater acceptance—and are better prepared—than wom-

*(continued on page 74)*



# Networking in the Old Girls' Tradition

SACRAMENTO WOMEN LAWYERS was founded more than 30 years ago by a small group of female attorneys whose principal objective was to get a woman on the bench—any bench. “It used to be a joke that they could all go to lunch in one car,” says current president Lilian Shek, a state Administrative Law Judge.

The organization now has 450 members. “We have lines at lunch and people have to pre-pay,” says Shek.

Other local women’s organizations have similar histories. The Sacramento Black Women’s Network was founded in 1979 by several women who got together for lunch to celebrate the promotion of a friend into a management position in state service. “Out of that grew an informal network, then a more formalized organization,” says longtime member and past president Faye Kennedy, a child care coordinator for Sacramento’s child care resource and referral agency, Child Action. “One of the founding members is also a past president of Sacramento Women Lawyers.

“We started with six women, and now we have hundreds.”

Women’s groups that had their genesis in the civil rights and women’s rights movements of



“It used to be a joke that they could all go to lunch in one car. [Now] we have lines and people pre-pay.”

*Lilian Shek, president of Sacramento Women Lawyers*

the 1960s and ’70s have in some ways become the “traditional” women’s organizations of today. And old-line women’s groups—many formed around the time women got the vote or before—remain a strong influence in the lives of many women. While many old-line organizations, like the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women (AAUW), lost members as women entered the work force in increasing numbers—despite the myth of the superwoman, women found they no longer had the *time* to work, take care of husbands and children, *and* meet—those organizations are now experiencing some resurgence.

“I was really gratified at the more recent conventions that more of the officers are younger women,” says Mavis “Myke” Taylor, past president and an 18-year member of the Sacramento chapter

of the AAUW, one of the oldest of the old-line women’s organizations and one that for more than a century has been dedicated to equality for women. “It’s a real step forward. I decided, well, we’re not dying out after all.”

Pat Stilwell, who runs the state office of AAUW in Sacramento, says a survey of members in 1988 indicated that the average age of

by Sigrid Bathen  
photography by Roy Wilcox



"Women of color still make less than their white counterparts, and the whole issue of affirmative action needs to be addressed. Work-family issues are critical to all women, but particularly critical to poor women."

*Faye Kennedy, past president of the Sacramento Black Women's Network and child care coordinator for Child Action*





women in the organization is 57—a number that has remained fairly consistent over the years. “Women join when they’re younger, then tend to focus on their children or their jobs, then rejoin when they retire or when their children are grown,” says Stilwell. When she joined the group in 1974, she recalls, the Sacramento chapter had about 1,100 members, and now has less than half that number.

“Membership kind of depends on the issues, and how politically active we are,” she says. “Nationally, member-

ship has gone up.” The group joins with other women’s organizations in lobbying the state Legislature and Congress. A recent AAUW study that revealed persistent inequities in educational opportunities for girls and young women received widespread media coverage and is the basis for a national fundraising and membership drive.

Some of the organizations have bolstered their survival rates—and their effectiveness—by banding together on issues of mutual concern, such as issues of educational and salary equity and

reproductive rights. Each year, several groups—including the AAUW, California National Organization for Women (NOW), the League of Women Voters, Business and Professional Women (BPW), the YWCA, Delta Sigma Theta and the National Council of Jewish Women—join a coalition for Women in Action Lobby Day at the state Capitol. Speakers and workshops are scheduled, and women are taught how to lobby an issue in the Legislature. The fourth annual Women in Action Lobby Day is scheduled for April 5, 1995.

“Change is slow, and you have to keep at it,” says Stilwell. “You can’t just back off and say, oh well, we did that.”

Women interviewed for this article—from the AAUW and the League of Women Voters to BPW, the Soroptimists, the Black Women’s Network and Sacramento Women Lawyers—expressed concern that gains for women and minorities may be slipping, and several expressed special concern about the pressures on women to resume “traditional” home-bound womanhood, from the increasingly powerful and well-funded religious right.

“Part of the decline in membership [in traditional women’s groups] has been purely economic—time and energy,” says Vicki Atwood, president of the Sacramento chapter of the BPW and legislative coordinator for the California Commission on the Status of Women. “Women’s lives are just too full right now. But we *need* these organizations. Some of us feel that we’ve done all we need to do, but there is a backlash. It’s more dangerous today, the misconceptions [about women’s roles] are being bought, and I think we have to be on guard.”

“A large part of the problem is that we need to reevaluate what our role is and where we need to concentrate our efforts. There is a great call for cohesiveness, which is a key strength of the other side. With women’s organizations, the dollars aren’t there, so it has to come from pure energy.”

Others agree. “People thought we were making gains, and we were,” says Faye Kennedy, “but there are still issues that we need to address. Women of color still make less than their white counterparts, and the whole issue of affirmative action needs to be addressed. Work-family issues are critical to all women, but particularly critical to poor women.”

Women’s organizations continue to focus energy on women’s issues, but increasingly also on at-risk children, raising money for delinquency and substance-abuse prevention programs. Last year, for example, the Metropolitan Sacramento chapter of Soroptimist International chose to volunteer time and professional expertise, including grant writ-

*Meet* Jozeff and Alison Kalachi, owners of Sacramento’s newest and hottest bagel cafe in town. Known throughout Northern California as the “Bagel King,” Jozeff is a trained Parisian chef and owner of five bagel/deli cafes. The bagels are baked in the old-fashioned New York tradition from recipes handed down by family members and served with Java City coffees.

**Bagel Express Deli Cafe**  
now open in Pavilions,  
Sacramento’s fashion  
specialty center,  
Fair Oaks Blvd. near Howe

**921-2720**

7 a.m.-6 p.m. daily





ing, to a gang prevention program. Mary Manly, a private investigator who handles publicity for the club, says each club chooses an issue on which to focus its energy. "These are not necessarily women's issues," she says, "but also at-risk families, at-risk children, groups that are getting dropped through the cracks."

One of the oldest and most influential women's groups is the League of Women Voters, which maintains a Sacramento membership of about 500, 10 percent of them men. Headed this year by Sacramento public relations executive

Michele McCormick, the group is planning a major fund-raising and public awareness campaign around the upcoming 75th anniversary of passage of the Women's Suffrage Amendment, which was ratified the year the league was founded. "The league has this reputation of ladies in white gloves," says McCormick, who has been researching the group's history, "but they were some tough babes. They organized. They went to jail. They fought industries that didn't want women to vote."

"The league was structured to meet

the needs of 75 years ago, and the needs have changed. I'm hoping this year our membership will get re-involved, get stimulated to re-create the organization." Included in the celebration will be women who have been members for more than 50 years and at least one member who was an active suffragist.

There seems to be no great rush by women, however, to join established men's organizations, which were forced to allow women to join within the last decade. The Sacramento Rotary Club, with 500 members, includes 30 women among its number, but only six women have been admitted to that very old-line, male-only downtown landmark, the Sutter Club, which has a membership of 700. Club officials say they don't get many applications from women.

Women have become a force to reckon with in a variety of professional organizations and in groups focused on specific women's issues. For example, the Sacramento chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners, founded in 1974, represents the interests of female entrepreneurs (the chapter estimates that there are 27,000 woman-owned businesses in Sacramento and surrounding counties). CEWAER was founded 20 years ago by a small contingent of elected women and now boasts 1,000 members statewide, including associate members who are not elected officials. CEWAER receives significant corporate and business support as well as foundation funding for research on women's issues.

And, increasingly, women are giving money to other women, through political action committees and fund-raising groups like the Sacramento Women's Campaign Fund, the Latina Political Action Committee and Africa's Daughters Rising, a PAC that raises money for African-American candidates and issues.

"There still is living in the world of politics discrimination that is gender-based," says CEWAER's executive director, Kate Karpilow, "and there is still an old boys' network. But there is also the emergence of an old girls' network, which is taking on its own power." ▼

## WOMEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 68

en of her generation. "I know from my own viewpoint that men my age have a better background in finance than I do, because I've had to learn it the hard way. Young women who come to work for me seem to be better prepared, so there isn't as much difference anymore."

WOMEN INTERVIEWED for this article say the key to effective development of professional contacts—a wordier way, perhaps, to describe networking—is sim-

## LOOK AS YOUNG AS YOU FEEL ...

Trust Your Face to  
an Artist!

RHINOPLASTY  
EYELID TUCK  
EYEBROW LIFT  
FACE - NECK LIFT  
AUGMENTATION OF  
CHIN AND CHEEKS  
LIPOSUCTION  
INJECTION OF FAT  
AND COLLAGEN  
LIP REDUCTION  
AND AUGMENTATION  
COMPUTER IMAGING  
GLYCOLIC SKIN  
REJUVENATION

### LESLIE BERNSTEIN, M.D.

Board Certified in  
Facial Plastic Surgery

Former Chairman,  
U.C.D. Medical Center

Past President,  
American Academy of  
Facial Plastic Surgery

### INSTITUTE OF FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY

77 Scripps Drive  
Sacramento

923-0820

Photo by Roy Wilcox



## Spring Forward... Fall Back

AT THE CAL NEVA LODGE  
RESORT HOTEL, SPA & CASINO

**\$79.00**

For Two (Per Night, Sun. - Thurs.)

### INCLUDES:

**Standard  
Lake View Room**

**Sunshine Breakfast in the  
Lakeview Dining Room**

**15% Discount  
on all European Health Spa  
Services**

**Use of Fitness Facility,  
Sauna & Jacuzzi,  
Outdoor Pool  
& Tennis Courts**

Tax and Gratuities are not included.  
Rates are subject to change without notice.  
Valid September 15, 1994 thru December 1, 1994  
Other Restrictions may apply.

**702-832-4000  
or 1-800-CAL NEVA**

#2 Stateline Road • Crystal Bay, NV 89402  
North Shore Lake Tahoe



## Sorensen's

The aspens are just beginning to  
turn gold now and soon Hope Valley  
will be blanketed in snow.

On the valley's edge lies Sorensen's,  
an all-season resort hosting a cross-  
country ski center offering rentals,  
lessons and access to 60 kilometers  
of scenic splendor.

Cozy log cottages, a country cafe  
featuring hearty cuisine and fine  
wines, and an 80-year tradition of  
old-world hospitality. Just south of  
Lake Tahoe in the high Sierra, we  
invite you to share in the beauty of  
this quiet and unspoiled preserve.  
It's a perfect fall or winter getaway  
and just a two-hour drive away.  
Call or write for a free brochure.

**Sorensen's**  
Hope Valley, CA 96120  
(916) 694-2203 • (800) 423-9949

ply being *out there*, being known in one's profession, and, most important, doing a *good job* for one's bosses and/or clients.

"I think it occurs in a few different ways," says Michele McCormick, owner of MMC Communications and president of the Sacramento chapter of the League of Women Voters. "There are the meet-and-greet settings, like the chamber [of commerce] mixers. I find that doesn't work very well in my industry, although it does work well in sales and retail services. The main thing that works for me is performing capably for my clients—keeping ties strong, continuing to deliver, meeting expectations. Without that, nothing else matters."

Client referrals, then, come from performance as well as visibility. "It's important to become a known entity in the community," says McCormick. "And it's a professional necessity for me to really *understand* the community."

Attorney Charity Kenyon, who 10 years ago became one of the first female partners in a Sacramento law firm at Diepenbrock, Wulff, Plant & Hannegan, serves on a plethora of local committees and believes that the concept of community service is central to the role of being a lawyer—that such networking also serves the lawyer's business.

"I see it as part of the professional role of lawyers in their community," she says. "It serves you well to be genuinely interested in the community, to make genuine efforts to improve things for people around you. Those efforts when they pay off for the community pay off for the lawyers. That is a role we have [historically] played and should continue to play—it comes with being a leader."

Lilian Shek, a state Administrative Law Judge who is president of Sacramento Women Lawyers, sees networking as a natural extension of one's professional and personal interests. "At this point in my professional and personal life, I believe people should do what they want to do and not because it will reap benefits. The benefits will come if you're doing something you enjoy. You have to go inside yourself and say, what do I want to accomplish? Do I want money, success, peace of mind? Do I want to help someone? It's different for each person."

"I think it's more important to help someone because you want to help them, not because there is a return—the return may come from a different source. . . . You do someone a favor, and they'll return the favor."

As women increasingly penetrate the higher echelons of male-dominated businesses, professions and politics, they tend to exert subtle influences on the way business is done. "We have seen a lot of changes in the legal profession," says Kenyon. "It coincides with more women in vice president and general counsel

positions making assignments of work based on ability. If it's true that there was an old boys' network based on golf course friendships and family ties, without merit, I think it's quite clear that we are now competing on the basis of merit."

Kate Karpilow, who holds a Harvard Ph.D. in social psychology and is executive director of the increasingly influential California Elected Women's Association for Education and Research, based at California State University, Sacramento, says that despite significant improvements, elected women often remain the "onlies and the lonelies" within their political spheres. "We firmly have our feet on the floor and are beginning to rattle the glass ceiling, but it is nowhere near breaking. . . . The need for networking, while we're all tired of the word, is to empower those women to exchange information, trade ideas about skills, policy ideas and the kind of discrimination they face."

Karpilow and other authoritative women in business and government say the presence of women in the higher echelons of those previously all-male worlds has forced changes. "Women and men are socialized differently," she says. "They bring different strengths and weaknesses to things. Women tend to be more consensus-oriented, more team-oriented." Some women suggest that skill may come from raising children.

Although the balance of power has shifted in the home as well as the workplace, women still bear primary responsibility for the care of families, which significantly limits their time and influences their perception of issues. "Women elected officials still have more of a balancing act, more of an overload experience," says Karpilow. "Networking for women, and for some men, gets tucked into a long to-do list. People generally have less time for networking. They want two-fer and three-fer events—not just networking, not just coming to discuss experiences, but also advancing knowledge of your cause."

Women who have attained positions of authority also tend, as they climb the ladder, to look behind and below, often offering an assist to women just entering the field. "Women need to be alert to how and where they can help other women," says longtime TV and print journalist Ruth Pritchard, 70, owner of a Sacramento publishing company, Capitol Enquiry, and a founder and first president of the Sacramento branch of the National Women's Political Caucus in the 1970s. "I don't ever remember trying to help a man find a job or straighten out a problem, but I've helped lots of women." ▼

*Sigrid Bathen is a senior writer for SACRAMENTO magazine.*