

Jane Block

Judith: My name is Judith Auth and today is Tuesday, November 15th, 2011 and I have the pleasure of interviewing Jane Block. Also in the room is Cherstin Lyon. We have a series of questions, Jane, we'd like to have you answer, but if you would like to take the question and go in a different direction that's your prerogative.

Jane: Oh, thank you.

Judith: So, let's begin with your early childhood and family experiences. How may they have shaped your environmental involvement?

Jane: I grew up in Idaho and much of my youth was spent in a mountainous area, I developed a great relationship with nature because I interact and enjoy the great outdoors all the time, That experience has given me an extra appreciation of nature, and an extra need for a relationship with nature and the environment.

Judith: Is there anything in your family history or family traditions that shaped your involvement?

Jane: Well, I had a mother that was not traditional. She grew up on a farm in Kansas ... we're looking about three generations back because I'm 82, and my mother gave birth to me when she was 35, I was the second child. So just the fact that she had a baby when she was 35 years old, at that point in history meant that she had the ability to make her own choices. She was a wonderfully independent, energetic woman and that certainly had a profound affect on me, and the fact that my dad appreciated her and loved her and her independence, had a profound affect on me also.

Judith: Do you see any relationship between your political values and your views on the environment?

Jane: Yes, I do. I think that the concept of conservation and sharing what has been preserved go together and lead to community. We all need each other we are all part of a system. I'm a Democrat and I'm very liberal in my perspectives, but I have found that there are many traditional Republican conservatives that are also very much environmentalists. I certainly found that true working here in Riverside. Many of the people that I've worked with that have helped me make the biggest breakthroughs on both environmental and social issues have been conservative Republicans.

Judith: And do you see a relationship between your spiritual values and your views on the environment?

Jane: Oh, definitely. Definitely. I have developed a great respect for the full spectrum of life, and I think when one does that it then draws one into environmentalism. Everything and everybody has a right to the beauty of our planet. We are all interconnected and interdependent.

Judith: You have been very active in the community. Do you have any personal hobbies or leisure activities?

Jane: I like to go to the movies and I read a lot. (Laughing) No, I actually think that the garden here and hiking all integrate very well with what I do as far as being an environmentalist.

Judith: You mentioned your mother being an independent thinker, and your father being supportive, were there other influences, personal, cultural or social that shaped your environmental outlook?

Jane: I think growing up in a fairly wild area certainly had a profound effect on me because I know I appreciate that our home is close to open space, and that's gives me great, great pleasure. Every day I acknowledge my fortune to be able to walk out of the house into nature.

Judith; Can you describe a situation or a moment that provided your impetus for joining in the movement to preserve open space?

Jane: I think it was a rather natural outgrowth from my involvement and concern with feminism because at the point that I first became involved with the concept of feminism and the political practice of feminism, women had really relatively few opportunities, relatively few possibilities and very limited political presence. Watching and being involved in making the changes that empowered women emboldened me and gave me the sense that democracy does work and that if one applies oneself that one can effect change, and make things work better in one's social and political arena.

Judith: What was the biggest obstacle that you encountered in moving through this new awareness of potential power in the group, particularly in the group of women?

Jane: Well, shortly after we moved here I joined the NOW organization and became a public speaker for that organization. I would go out and give facts, and talk to people and present reasonable and logical reasons that supported change. Somebody then suggested that I would be more effective if I would "Stir them up!" You know, "Challenge them." Tell them why things as they existed were wrong.

And so I went out one time and I stirred them up and challenged them, and I found that I didn't really enjoy that. So it set the tone for me that I then carried through everything that I've done, which is that when one is acting in a public sense, you don't personalize and you don't become either personally vindictive or respond to other people's personal vindictiveness. It is a good philosophy for me I prefer to work on structural changes rather than emotional challenges.

Cherstin:: What year was that when you joined NOW and that you moved here to Riverside?

Jane: We moved to Riverside in 1968. I joined The National Organization For Women in 1969. We moved to our current home in the Box Springs Mountains in 1970.

Judith: What was the bravest thing you did?

Jane: The bravest thing that I've done was concerning the Woman's Movement. In the early Woman's Movement we had consciousness-raising sessions. We would invite women into our home, about five or ten ... not more than ten ... and talk about mutual concerns and mutual experiences. It was made clear that it was sharing, confidential, no criticism with lots of empathy and understanding. The goal was to find commonalities. This model of leaderless organizing is now being used by the Occupy Movement. This was when I became aware that many women had experienced some kind of either physical or psychological abuse. It was very informative for me, as was the lack of community support

for women who were being abused. We have a prison for women nearby, the Chino woman's prison, so a friend Moria Cranor and I decided we would go to the Chino prison and ask if we could have consciousness-raising sessions in prison with the women who were incarcerated. The administrators at the prison were cooperative so we started the process.

Almost everyone we talked to had been abused, neglected, or had been raped, and/or forced into prostitution. These women had few choices and little help, I became aware of the fact that for battered women in this area there was little possibility of recourse. There were no shelters, and no structural help system.

A group of us decided that the first step to start to rectify these issues would be to have a Commission on the Status of Women. At that time one had been formed at the State level. So we put together a group; Jane Lawrence Gunn, an attorney, helped us with this. We put together a group locally, organized existing groups throughout the county, and then requested from the Board of Supervisors that they establish a Commission on the Status of Women.

Two groups of women each affiliated with a major religious organization were opposed and testified at the Board of Supervisors when it came up for a vote. Fortunately they both told the Supervisors that the act of establishing this Commission would be sinful and that the Commission would contribute to the destruction of the family. We gave a very professional presentation and the Supervisors voted to create the Commission. (Laughing) I felt like saying, "Thank you very much" to our opponents afterwards. But I restrained myself.

At our first meeting of the commission I had this conversation with Supervisor Clayton Record, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and I said, "Thank you so much Supervisor Record for voting for the Commission. However, I would like to mention to you that we don't have any funding, and that we don't have any staff assigned. Would you be able to assign us some staff or allocate some funding?"

He said, "No. It would be a little inappropriate for me to assign any staff or funding at this point."

And I said, "Well, could you give me a view of how you want us to operate?"

And he said, "Just be a Commission."

And so I said, "Okay, thank you very much for forming the Commission." And I came home and I called my friends and associates in Palm Springs, Hemet and Corona and asked them if they wanted to schedule hearings on battered women. Their response was an emphatic "yes" (Laughing) The head of the Personnel Department from the County went with the Commissioners to all of these hearings; he became quite well informed on the issues. It was really quite interesting. We received excellent press coverage and the hearings were effective in educating people regarding the need for shelters for battered women and their children. At this point many religious organizations, community groups and many men had joined our campaign.

The Shelter for Battered Women was a natural outgrowth of those hearings. The information developed by Marilyn Brandon Hampton who was doing graduate work at UCR and who produced a paper on domestic violence in Riverside County was also of great assistance. Rosanna Scott who was a

member of the Riverside City Council was also very helpful. Members of the board of supervisors acknowledged the need and also agreed that from a law enforcement perspective it would help solve problems officers encountered when going on domestic violence calls. I learned a very important lesson politically from that effort. We had structured the organization to be countywide. We failed to build in specific assurance that the money raised in the Coachella Valley would be used in the Coachella Valley. The Coachella Valley did not feel comfortable with the structure we had created, so they split off and formed their own organization. I learned that lesson and in subsequent countywide efforts took care of that issue.

The countywide coordination of women's, and men's groups that was created by our efforts to create shelters for women gave us a support system that was available for women who wanted to run for the Board of Supervisors. By 1982 with the election of Melba Dunlap we had a female majority on the Board of Supervisors. We were the second county in California to accomplish a female majority. Kay Cenicerros from Hemet, Corky Larson from the desert and Melba Dunlap from Riverside all excellent, thoughtful and hardworking. They did a great job and created a better balance in the human services area.

I learned from these efforts that it was important to distinguish early on if what you were trying to accomplish required structural changes or was it simply a need for a better or more efficient delivery system. I accepted that there were many ways to get to a goal. I recognized that a clear strategic plan was vital, and that you had to maintain equilibrium with all the people who were players. These are lessons that have served me well. So that was probably one of the most challenging things that I did, and one that taught me many lessons that have served me well.

Judith: And that's had far ranging affects and we are all grateful to you.

Chertin: Yes. And the Shelter for Battered Women still exists. . .

Jane: Oh, yes.

Chertin: And operates in its excellence, and does really really good things.

Judith: What do you see as the pressing issues right now in our community?

Jane: I think the continued conservation of land and connectivity. One of the first things that I did in conservation was in 1972. We had moved to our house that is at the base of the Two Trees Canyon. Richard and I were hiking up in the canyon with our children Cathy and Charles and we ran into this guy on a motorcycle and said, "Hey! How are you? What are you doing?"

And he said, "Well, I'm up here looking at this land. I'm going to build a bunch of beautiful homes up here and hide these ugly boulders."

And we said, "Oh, gee! That's interesting!" Came home and decided we needed to form an organization and get a park created. The Box Springs Mountain Conservation Association that had a board and membership with mostly University staff and faculty was formed. Ruth Bratton Anderson Wilson and Martha McLean shared the bylaws of the Tri County Conservation League (the group that had been formed to preserve the Santa Anna River), and Ruth also helped us understand the process we

needed to follow. They were generous in sharing the insights they had gained in the process of saving the Santa Ana River in Riverside County. Ruth and Martha were both inspirational for me: women who were making major change happen. Their mentor was Pete Dangermond I have also benefited from his knowledge and generosity.

When we started working on creating the Box Springs Mountains as a park, Richard agreed to chair the Committee. He did a fantastic job. As a professor and mathematician he was very detail-oriented so when he would get up to testify in front of the Board of Supervisors (laughing) they all started taking notes. It was quite interesting to watch. Richard recruited people from UCR and the neighborhood, and we were very fortunate in that Norton Younglove, the Supervisor for this District, supported and promoted the concept. Norton found financing and saw that the County staff did a great job of putting the park together. So in two years we had a park. And it was a wonderful, wonderful exciting thing. It's always nice to start out with a big success.

After that I was involved was the conservation of Sycamore Canyon Park in the city of Riverside, which was the largest park that has been created within a city in Southern California since Griffith Park in Los Angeles. It's a real prize.

The City seemed to be delaying any meaningful action on preserving Victoria Avenue so I formed a group to work for multi- purpose bike paths on each side of the Avenue. The group was successful and later was headed by Bob Buster and then Hal Snyder and Bill Kleese who have truly saved Victoria Avenue.

We also formed a group and got the first bike lanes striped on the city streets. I am currently a member of the City of Riverside Bike Committee and am now focusing on class 1 multi-use bikeways.

In 1990 I got a call from Dr. Dan Silver, a physician from West Hollywood, to ask me if I knew what was threatening the Santa Rosa Plateau, and I said, "No, but I know how important the Santa Rosa Plateau is."

And he said, "Well, if we don't do something it's going to be gone."

So I said, "Well, can you get a meeting here at my house next weekend?"

And he said, "Sure." A great group of people arrived for the meeting. We chose a name Preserve Our Plateau, put together a good fundraiser, did lots of interesting publicity. Kathleen Hamilton who was one of the most active members--although everyone in the group did a lot--has continued as an effective defender of the earth in the Temecula area.

So again, a two-year success. We hired Pete Dangermond as our previous County Park Director who had retired as the State Parks Director and who was working on the Indian Canyons Park in Palm Springs. Fortunately, he was available as a consultant. I had learned that if you say "No" to something environmentally, you need to present something that people and elected officials can say "Yes" to. Saying, "No I don't want you to do that. Go away!" doesn't work usually and it's really not fair. You have to say "No, I don't want that to happen, but this is what I envision and it can be good for everybody." And that's what we did with the Santa Rosa Plateau. With Pete's help. It was kind of amazing. Kay Cenicerros had a large amount of mitigation money in her District, from the

construction at Diamond Valley Lake. We invited Kay and her husband Blair to lunch at the Adobe on the Santa Rosa Plateau, ... the Santa Rosa Plateau has its own magic and it worked ... and she said, "Okay, you can use my mitigation fees from Metropolitan Water District to save the Santa Rosa Plateau. Fortunately for us Lois Krieger was the Chair of the Metropolitan Water Board (the first woman to hold that position) and a Riverside resident who was knowledgeable about the Plateau. We also had persuaded the Board of Supervisors-- they had never received so many letters on a planning issue from people with PHD attached to their names. The State also participated. So it was kind of an incredible experience, the saving of the Plateau. There was so much support. Again it took two years.

Dan Silver found the process so interesting that he put his medical career on hold and formed the Endangered Habitats League. I am a member of that board and he and EHL have made a great difference in conservation in all of Southern California. and even in Baja Mexico.

Judith: And you mentioned initially that you see today the challenge of connecting these various environmental open spaces...

Jane: Yes. And actually that sort of gets us to the next step in the environmental progress in Riverside County which is the Habitat Conservation Plan, I understood, having been to many meetings, on environmental issues that there weren't enough people and enough energy to go to every meeting and to make all the points that needed to be made. It was a time of rapid development in Riverside County. Tom Mullen had become the Supervisor, after Norton Younglove retired. Tom, like Norton, had a lot of political background and valued the creation of infrastructure. Another very important factor ... we had gotten the University information which we have used ... much University information. The thing that I found was when I would look at an EIR going to the Board of Supervisors, often it would be pretty shoddy. And sometimes the name and the location had just been changed from a prior EIR. In 1990 I discussed this with Dr. Tom Scott at UCR and he agreed that we needed to assure that good information was available to elected officials. Tom wrote for a grant and then digitized the existing EIR documents at the County so that they could be made available in an accessible manner to the academics and the general community. This created higher quality documents with more accurate information

It was still difficult for planners in the County or planners in general to properly access biological information at the University. I went to Dr. John Moore, a professor of Biology at UCR and a Member of The National Academy of Science, and asked him to go with me to talk to Chancellor Orbach, He told the Chancellor, "We need to have a way to connect the University and the University information to the scientific process that's taking place for the environment in Riverside County." And subsequently, in 2001 Chancellor Orbach put together the Center for Conservation Biology. It would provide scientific information but the University would not be involved in land use decisions. A very important distinction. As is the concept of providing high quality information to decision makers.

And so, as Tom Mullen then suggested, instead of a patchwork preserving a species here, a species there, that we do a Habitat Conservation Plan for all 148 species. A large number. And we agreed to that and I said, "I will definitely work for and support this if it is science-based."

He said, 'It will be science-based.' And it has been science-based, and it's been very good and we've saved a lot of land and ... not perfect! ... nothing is ever perfect. But so much better than the alternative would have been, because there weren't enough people ... we were in the boom! The

building boom . There weren't enough people to attend all the hearings. I mean, even if you had a million dollars you wouldn't be able to hire all the people to go to the hearings. So it was a good resolution, and it continues.

Judith: What bothers you about the movement today?

Jane: The environmental movement?

Judith: Uh-hmm.

Jane: I think the concept that some people still have that we would be better off without the environmental movement, rather than trying to solve the problems that exist. They say, "Destroy the laws", and I see that starting up again now because of the economy, and they're using the economy as an excuse. Good environmental laws do not keep jobs from happening. People who live in a place that has good environmental laws are happier people. They work better, and you get a higher quality of people to work. So I see that as opportunism, opportunism in politics.

Judith: What do you think about the young women who are involved in the environmental movement today?

Jane: Well, I think the young women that are involved in the movement today and young women in general are absolute wonderful knock-out people. I mean, I watch them walking down the street. They have free strides. They're not intimidated. They're very polite. It's wonderful! I think feminism has worked and everyone benefits, including all the guys in the world.

Judith: Well, with a dedicated force for a change, what still needs to be done?

Jane: I think that women's rights need to be better protected and documented, because you see there's a third of the world where women have no rights. And there are men who have never really acquainted themselves with their own power and their own responsibilities who feel that women are temptresses that distract them from whatever their ego tells them they should be doing, and would like to put women away in a closet. And we simply have to address it. At this time we need to talk about the issue of how a man benefits from relating to a woman who is balanced and has her own equilibrium and rights. There are great benefits to a man in that relationship. It's beginning to happen. Men who marry a woman who he considers a peer, and they have a wonderful relationship. We need to address the issue. It has never been really specifically addressed. What do men lose? What do they gain?

Judith: That's a challenge. (Laughing) In retrospect, where do you see the movement that you started going in the future?

Jane: The woman's movement or in the environmental movement?

Judith: I think they go together.

Jane: They go together. Both of them. Well, I see them both maturing and becoming a natural part of the political process. One of the very strong points that I always make when I'm helping anybody organize a group, and I've helped to organize a lot of groups at this point, is that you have no enemies.

You only have people who don't yet have enough information, and you don't personalize. If you're working on a project and you have a strategic plan, there is no way that anyone can personally attack you because you're working outside of the person. So whatever happens you never take it in. You never personalize and become hurt or angry. And you never do that to someone else either.

So I think with those basic rules that it will ennoble the political process in every regard. We also need to have more women elected.

Judith; What keeps you motivated?

Jane: You know, I have invested my time. A long time ago I made the decision that I needed to figure out what I was doing and why I was doing it, because I obviously wasn't the average volunteer. Now, a person who volunteers to help a person ... tremendously valuable, and the gift they give is incredible. I'm not good at that. The gift I can give is I can change the laws. I can move things around. And the payback for that is enormous to me! Every time I drive home and I look at the Box Springs, I get paid! When I drive down to Temecula and I hit that Clinton Keith exit and I see the Santa Rosa Plateau, I get paid. It is big time pay and of course many other people also collect all the time because nothing is accomplished by one person. So I'm a rich woman (chuckle) in that regard, and I think that that is the thing that gives one back energy. It's very important that the people who do the work understand that they need to personally see that they get paid. They have to do the personal-pay kind of thing. It's very important. It keeps you going.

Judith: You've received many awards. Is there any one or two that are especially meaningful to you?

Jane: Well, at one point when the woman's movement was just really getting grounded here in Riverside, I thought, "Now, I have to find a way to get the women from the Woman's Clubs, and the women who are scared, you know, who say, "Oh, I'm not a feminist." I thought I'd get them involved. So, how can I do that? So the Y had a program called "Women of Achievement" and I convinced the Y that they should put together the Woman of Achievement Award, and they did. And they started awarding Achievement Awards to women from this broad range of women who if you ask them would say, "Oh, I'm not a feminist" and giving them credit for what they had done. And I think about 10 or 15 years after it started, they honored me and I thought that was *really* nice. You know, it really works. It has accomplished a great deal.

Judith: Do you feel that you have made a difference for this community?

Jane: Oh, yes. And with all modesty. (Laughing)

Judith: One of the areas we haven't touched on is your work with child care. I first met you when you were putting together the Child Care Consortium to find a way to provide better childcare opportunities for particularly working women. Would you say something about that?

Jane: Oh, I'd be delighted. One of the women that I worked with and helped get elected was Jean Mansfield. She was on the City Council. I believe Rosanna Scott was still on the City Council at that time. And Lois Carson, who was the Director of the Community Action Group here in Riverside, put together this wonderful program out in Banning. A new childcare center was doing all of the good

things that childcare centers can do, and I thought, “Wow! We need that in every city!” And then I thought, “Hmmm, putting the organization together in every city ... that's going to be a real challenge.”

So Jean and I mulled this over and we decided that what we needed was a Child Care Consortium that would offer assistance and information to people in any city that wanted to put together their own group, or wanted to establish a childcare center. So, again, we went to Norton Younglove. He supported it. So it became a non-profit: The Riverside County Child Care Consortium. I was very careful this time, and I saw that if the money were raised in the desert, it stayed in the desert. So we're organized countywide for child care

The structuring of it was amazing because one of the problems ... when you put together a non-profit organization, I have found in the past, that you need somebody to administer it, and having a good administrator is important, so I thought, “Well, now, how can I do this?” Carolyn Wylie and Diane Mapes at Riverside County Office of Education both understood the value of childcare and were part of the organization. They encouraged me to talk to Dr. Dale Holmes who was the Superintendent of Schools and ask him if he would donate space and supervision to the Child Care Consortium. The Child Care Consortium would raise its own funding for its Director, and we would take care of all of our own business, but we would have a liaison with a Director in his office who would provide our staff with supervision and share their childcare expertise. His office would also handle the money that we raised. He said, “Yes.” It worked incredibly well. Years later after Prop 5 passed, the Consortium moved out of the County Schools but it continues to do great things.

So the Child Care Consortium was born and has done extremely well. And one of the things that happened when we finally got First Five, was we were the only county in California that was all ready to go because we had already organized the childcare community countywide. And it has made a huge difference for many people. So I feel good about that.

Judith: Thank you for sharing that. Do you have a favorite story you would like to share? You told us about the women's prison. You told us about the Women's Commission, daring the Supervisors in their den. Electing women to public office. Forming the Child Care Consortium. Being a speaker and later a recipient for the YWCA, Women Supporting Women, Women of Achievement.

Jane: Yes. I have a wonderful story! I helped form the Center for Women at UCR. I was one of the original people that put that together. And it was quite interesting. And I thought very indicative of the growth that was taking place for women After it was formed, the students met and decided that they didn't want this older woman from the community (laughing) involved. So they asked me to resign! And I thought that that was a very positive act! A very positive act. And the Center has thrived.

Judith: And that's a wonderful comment on your modesty and your graciousness that you can turn the matter over to the younger women and with great expectations for their success.

Jane: Yes.

Judith: It's really been a pleasure talking with you, Jane. Thank you so much.

Jane: Thank you.

Cherstin: Can I ask you a couple of follow-up questions?

Jane: Sure.

Cherstin: I was really intrigued by the lesson that you learned from working with groups in the high desert, and the fact that you learned that if money is raised in the desert it should stay in the desert, because it sabotaged one of your efforts. I'm curious if there are other things like that that you learned along the way about how politics work. Or things that you wouldn't have known about how to get people to work together.

Jane: Yes. I think one of the most important things that I realized was that if you got along well with the staff that you were far ahead. (Laughing) and that it very important to treat staff and everyone one contacts with respect. If you set a level of respect, then you get back more respect. It became apparent that it was up to me to set the standard. If other people didn't live up to it, that was their problem. Respect is important. It is also really important to understand that when you're working with people who are employed in the City and the County, the School District, or the private domain, you never have a right to put them in jeopardy of losing their jobs. You have to be extremely careful not to ever jeopardize anybody's job, because you don't have the right to do that. If they give you private information, it stays private. And I can assure you that I have profited greatly from private information. Never would I ask a person who was working in an organization to take a stance that would potentially jeopardize them. Never. Very important. No one's my boss. I can say and do anything I want, but (laughing) never put another person in jeopardy. And have respect for what they do, too, because the people who work in jobs often are frustrated perhaps that they can't go in a direction that they would like to go. And if you could help them find a way to do that, they'll be very grateful to you, and they'll return the help.

But I guess the biggest lesson that I've ever learned is that ... never impugn anyone's motives. If someone is going down a track that I don't like, I think of it as ... well, they need more information. But I never assume that they're being dishonest or vindictive, because there's no point in that. It doesn't lead to anyplace interesting. (Laughing) That's selfish of me, but (laughing) ... I never do that. I never do that.

Cherstin: So you said that you moved here in the 1970's. Is that correct? You moved here in the 1970's?

Jane: Actually it was 1969

Cherstin: And have been working ever since the 1970's on environmental and women's issues. So you know, one thing that as a historian I'm always interested in is turning points. Can you think of one of the projects that you worked on that after that things got a little bit easier? Or organizing became a little bit easier after that because you overcame a particular hurdle?

Jane: Well, I think that ... Yes, I think that there were many, many markers along the way. Once I started pulling back and understanding that there were lessons for me to learn in all of these things. For example dealing with the University, dealing with information, accepting that some systems work with little strategic thought or plan. I learned to draw back and ask for help from experts in the community,

gain a different understanding of the structure. With added knowledge, I can then go back in and rearrange things. Create change without anybody really being upset. Sometimes you have to change laws too, but if you have a good basis for it, you can do it.

Cherstin: So which project really helped you figure that out?

Jane: I think it was kind of incremental over the years, and I'm fairly good at it now. (Laughing) But it was incremental over the years. I think one of the things that's very important for a volunteer ... a person who makes the choice to spend their time and energy in trying to accomplish something in their community, is to have a good strategic plan. If something doesn't work, go back home, write it out, figure out why it didn't work. Then you learn from it. I've done that repeatedly. And early on I learned that if somebody was going to say "No" to my main request, to try to ask for something lesser that they could say "Yes" to. Because people do like to say, "Yes." And it also makes it easier for them to say, "Yes" the next time you come and ask for something. You've gotten them in the habit of saying, "Yes." (Laughing)

Judith: Well, I think it's quite an accomplishment the way you were ahead of your time in using data to drive decision making and your ability to work with the University and Chancellor Orbach to provide good information, that then the elected officials could use to make better decisions that would benefit the larger community.

Jane: Yes. It is something that I have been able to do because my husband is a professor at the University, and so I had access to information that most people didn't have access to. And ability to manipulate, you know, that most people didn't have access to. But it really does make a huge difference.

Cherstin: Can you tell about one of the laws that you were able to change?

Jane: One of the laws ...

Cherstin: 'Cause you said that was one thing you were very able to do, was to change the structure ... change the legal structure. Can you think of an example that you can share with us?

Jane: Sure. The Habitat Conservation Planning effort has changed many laws. From that I've gone on. One of the problems that you often have in planning is that an arroyo or stream-bed will start in one locale and end up in another locale. So a group of us decided that we would put together a project called the "Arroyo Project" and we decided the County of Riverside and the City of Riverside would be our first trial effort.

And one of the things that happened ... water is going to be our new gold, so I used that. And in this we used it to change laws. One of the things that happen in any watercourse is re-charge, and that's a very important factor. So we went to the City and the County and said, "We need to put together a committee." So we put together a committee with appointees from the County and appointees from the City, and a high level appointee from the Planning Department for the County, and a high level appointee from the Planning Department of the City of Riverside. And it was quite successful, and the City changed many of its laws. The County is in the process of changing its laws

through the General Plan revision, which takes forever and a day. But it's continuing. And that was a successful change.

Another little side story on that ... it was interesting because I think sometime in the '70s we had all these committee meetings, and I had a great ally in one of the Planning people in Riverside, Jerry Joliff who was in Riverside County planning. I wanted to change the regulations concerning building in hazardous areas, because they were very loose and people could, and did, build in hazardous areas. So we tried to get it through that session of General Plan revision, but there was an economic breakdown before we got the change adopted and the whole process stopped.

Ten years later when the next General Plan review occurred...it was adopted..

Cherstin: How?

Jane: It came up quite naturally; at that point it was not controversial. It was a matter more of having the money to do it than it was the planning change. It's important I think to look at the entire structure when one is trying to make changes, or make things better.

Chertin: Well thank you for letting us ask additional questions.

Jane: (Laughing) And most important it's fun. (Laughing) You meet great people. You have a lot of good times, you know. It's fun.

Judith: Well, it really was a special time when we had women in the majority as you said on the Board of Supervisors. And we had women on the City Council. And there was a sense of alliance that we don't have today.

Jane: Yes, And it's beginning to perk again, and it's young women that are doing it. And there's a leadership for young women ...to train young women, and they're doing it. And it's great. A young woman who was a neighbor, I knew her when she was a child, just ran for School Board. She didn't win but she ran a good campaign and she'll run again for something. And Patricia Lock Dawson who is also on the Land Conservancy Board, ran and won. It's good. It's beginning again. And it's the way it should be. It's the younger people coming up, and that's good.

Judith: I was with the League of Women Voters putting on the forum for the school board candidates, and we were all very impressed this time as to how qualified all eight candidates were. And the majority of them were women.

Jane: (Laughing) And that's an excellent place for women to get started in the process. Allison Dale will at some point be in some elective position and she'll do a wonderful job. She's a businesswoman. She runs her own business that she inherited from her dad, and she runs it well. And, you know, it's good.

And it's interesting because things have changed somewhat. The Community Foundation, put together an environmental initiative, and they're bringing people in and educating them about the environment. Education is a very important component of this, because when someone says, "Oh, you're just losing jobs by doing that" we need to have a very intelligent and responsible reply. It's not

true, but we need to be able to tell them why it's not true. ... And the Santa Rosa Plateau, for example, is just thriving. It's wonderful. Have you ever been down there?

Chertstin: I have not, but I'm going to now.

Jane: Oh, wonderful. They have a great Director, Ginger, and she's doing good stuff. And actually this is a countywide thing, isn't it?

Chertstin: Yes.

Jane: Oh, you're going to interview Kathleen Hamilton. She's somebody that I met when Dan Silver put this group together for Santa Rosa Plateau, and she has been saving things ever since. She is now working on the Liberty Quarry issue, and doing an absolutely incredible job of organization. A great woman. You'll just love her.

Chertstin: Her name is Kathryn Hamilton?

Jane: Kathleen Hamilton.

Chertstin: So that whole story about the Santa Rosa Plateau I think is really interesting because you're able to bring people together from different agencies, and different areas. Do you know if anybody's done any kind of write-up about that story? If we were to, let's say, explore that a little bit more, specifically who would you recommend that we talk to?

Jane: Yes. If you could do the Santa Rosa Plateau story that would be wonderful. When I went to see the Face Book movie, I thought we should have a movie on the Santa Rosa Plateau because it's absolutely perfect! It has the story structure in a two-year span. I mean, it would be an incredible story. Dan Silver who was the instigator of it ... the Santa Rosa Plateau, and it's inspired a lot of people because, you know, if you can save the Santa Rosa Plateau, you could fly to the moon. Because everybody said, "There is no way" when we started. "There is no way you can do that."

But Dan Silver, who is a physician, decided that he would put his medical career on hold and become a full-time environmentalist. And he has worked here in Riverside County and San Bernardino County, Endangered Habitat's League in San Diego County, and it has been an incredible, incredible thing. It would be a great interview if you could do an interview with Dan.

Chertstin: Where does he live?

Jane: He lives in West L.A., but he might come out.

Judith; I think one of the successes of the Santa Rosa Plateau is that you didn't take a win-lose position, that it's all or nothing. It has to be this and no building...no development ...no roads. Instead you worked with the development community so that they got something out of this, as well as the preservation of this beautiful, unique environment.

Jane: Let me tell you a crucial point on that. Won Yu who was the owner of the property has a real respect for education. He's a well-educated man himself. And Dr. Bill Mayhew from the University

had been taking kids down to the Santa Rosa Plateau for education for years, so I arranged a lunch at the University with Won Yu and Dr. Mayhew, and I believe Gregg Ballmer was involved in the lunch too. I got Dr. Mayhew to tell stories about the educational value of the Plateau, the uniqueness of the Plateau, and I could almost watch Won's resolve ...going... during the lunch. He became a willing seller. He was reimbursed for all of his investment in the Plateau. As he should have been. But he became a willing seller. Which was wonderful. I've got a plaque down below that he gave me and I would say we are now friends, which is the way it should work,

Judith: It's a higher purpose.

Jane: A higher purpose. What a gift he gave to the world!

Judith: And your skill in choosing just who to bring in to that discussion. Gregg Ballmer worked with the documentation of the flora on the Santa Ana River, and he is with the Botany Department at UCR.

Jane: (Laughing) Yes. Having all these dedicated people at UCR is like having a treasure chest that you can just pull money from, you know. I mean they have so much information. They are so specialized and they are so generous with their information. It's incredibly valuable.

And the same thing is true at Cal State San Bernardino. I'm on Susan Longville's Board ... the Water Resource Institute over there, and one of the things that I've always tried to do is to get universities talking to each other more freely. (Laughing) It's very important I think to everybody. And very helpful. Helpful to everyone.

Judith: You've talked a lot about the value of open space in terms of health and to human happiness. There's a new book out called The Earth Knows My Name written by a woman who has interviewed gardeners who are themselves refugees from various repressive environments: and she talks to people about the healing that comes through the engagement with the garden and with the extended environment. Do you have any experience with that?

Jane: When the children were small and Richard was busy as a professor at the University, I did most of the gardening here, and I started one of the first drip systems that anybody had put in. A garden is a wonderful healing thing. ... I don't know if you've encountered *Growcology* or not, but that to me was a wonderful example of youth and the positive expression of young people now. I mean the fact that Bianca and her husband Nick Heyming put so much energy into teaching people to garden.

And I just encountered another woman who does a garden at a school in Riverside, and it's really wonderful. Gardens are a way to reach across cultures because you can garden together. You really can't fight. If you have adjacent plots and you're both growing something ... I mean, you know, who's going to argue. (Laughing) It's a very positive thing. Very positive.

Another important thing is educating men. Educating men about the advantages that they have from living in a society where women are treated with respect and equality. And how they benefit. There are multiple benefits. Particularly, I think, an infant male is very vulnerable as an infant female is very vulnerable. And if a woman has been raised in an era in an atmosphere that's antagonistic to her, it's very difficult I would think for her to be as loving and as generous with that infant male as she

should be. And males need to understand that, you know, that it begins with respect, and that's good for everybody. Good for everybody.

But can you imagine if you were in a society where if you had a baby girl everybody would say, "Oh, gee! That's too bad." You know, "How sad." I mean, Gosh! It wouldn't be good. It wouldn't be good. So, we have work to do. We have work to do.

And the concept of women being provocative, and the fact that men are disturbed by this. You know, we need to think about that too. And we need to think about it, and think about how we can understand it better. I mean, when you look on television and you see these very scantily clad women with, you know.... "Oh, my gosh!" you know. But of course what happens ...

My dad really loved me as a person. And he died when I was fourteen so I never had that clash with him of growing up, you know, and going away. So I think that one of the things that has been very effective for me is that I like men. I really do. And this is very interesting. When I ask a man to do something I'm a fourteen year old asking my dad, and I expect him to do it.

Judith: (Laughing)

Jane: And that's very powerful with men. There's no sexuality involved. You know, at my age it doesn't matter, but when I was younger, you know, men would go down that track sometimes. But it's a fourteen year old girl asking her dad to do something. And it's hard to say 'No' for a guy to do that. (Laughing)

After we had the female majority on the Board of Supervisors I sort of did a self-evaluation and I said, "Well, what can I do to really help families? Where do families really need help." And I figured young families need childcare help. And again I came to an early understanding that I was not the one to do the actual work with the person, because I wasn't qualified, and I also didn't know how to restrain myself emotionally from becoming involved in their problems. It takes a certain kind of education or generosity to be involved in other people's problem, and I couldn't do it. So I thought, "Well, that's okay. There are things I can do." (Laughing) I can do structural things and make it better for them, you know. But I think it's very important that people understand that that is an important function. I mean, those people who volunteer, hand out soup at the soup lines, who go and attempt to help people who are down. I just have so much respect for them. Generous souls. Generous souls.

Judith: I think that's a lovely comment about your success that you do structural things. You build structures that enable people to live better lives. To be more fully human. To be more engaged in this business of life.

Jane: I hope it works that way.

And I also had another philosophy when I did the Child Care Consortium. I said, "I'm not going to opportunist on people who want to volunteer and want to do good work. I'm going to see that the people who work for the Child Care Consortium have adequate insurance and adequate retirement, and all of that kind of personnel protection, and because it was within the umbrella of the (laughing) ... It was easy, you know. We did that and it was good.

Judith: And to see First Five ...its potential is to insure that that people who work with children have proper credentials, and good education, and good benefits. And there is a funding source to protect that.

Jane: Yes.

Judith: I showed Cherstin this morning's paper about how the revenue to buy wildlife habitat has dropped because the building industry development fees were funding the purchase of properties and with the diminution of building projects, there's not so much money coming in to buy the property. These things are yin and yang. It's a balancing act again.

Jane: Yes You know, politics is a constantly changing stream, and it takes us in many directions. Many directions.

Cherstin: You said not to assume that people have an ulterior motive or are vindictive, or anything like that, but surely you encountered corruption, and people who were perhaps looking out for the wrong interests. I'm curious how you dealt with that because I think your approach was very smart. But inevitably you probably encountered suspicions that people were other than they appeared.

Jane: Well, and I think that ... yes. I come from a fairly powerless position on that issue because of my age, and when I was maturing I virtually had no powers. So my position would be to let them hang themselves. In other words, if the women are coming to testify against the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women, and they are going to tell the Supervisors that if they vote for it that they're sinning ... I'm not going to do anything to stop them. In fact, I might even encourage them. But I also might go and recruit those same women to work on bikeways because bikeways save kids, you know. So that's kind of where I come from. And I think that your generation is much more straightforward. You have a much more straightforward approach because you come from a position of more equality and more power. My technique might work from time to time when your technique wouldn't. So keep it in your back pocket! (Laughing)

Judith: And those same women that you didn't antagonize by arguing with them become enthusiastic about crossing guards, and trails, and protecting the children on bicycles?

Jane: Yes they did

Judith: You're amazing.