

“Chain Chain Change. Change of life.”

[From *Menopause the Musical*]

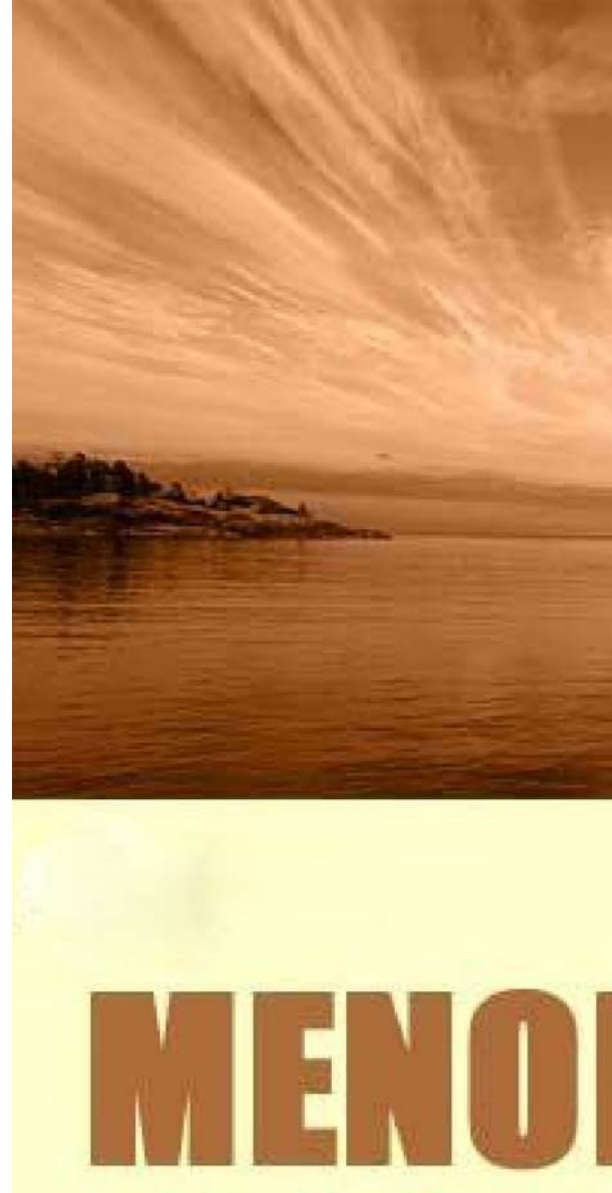
For those of us who enter menopause it generally begins around age fifty and is the “final” stage of a woman’s life. Recent articles and life attitudes have addressed this phase as a fruitful opportunity for significant changes and the chance for growth and life reflection. It is no longer considered a dreadful-pause. Our article highlights menopause again this month, as we continue to celebrate women’s accomplishments during their third phase of life.



When we began our research, we knew many of the women on whose shoulders we all stand, but neither of us had read about **Rose Blumkin**. She opened her first furniture store with \$500 in 1937, when

she was in her early 40s. She continued to build the Nebraska Furniture Mart, until, when she was 90 years old, she sold the store to well-known financier Warren Buffett in a handshake deal for \$60 million. Buffett said “Put her up against the top graduates of the top business schools or chief executives of the Fortune 500 and, assuming an even start with the same resources, she’d run rings around them.” Mrs. B. as she was affectionately known had a motto she lived by: to “sell cheap and tell the truth”. She pioneered the new (at that time) selling concept of buying in bulk and passing the savings on to the customer. She continued to work in her business for many years and died at age 104. Her original business in Omaha, Nebraska, occupied 3,000 square feet. At her death, the original store covered 75 acres.

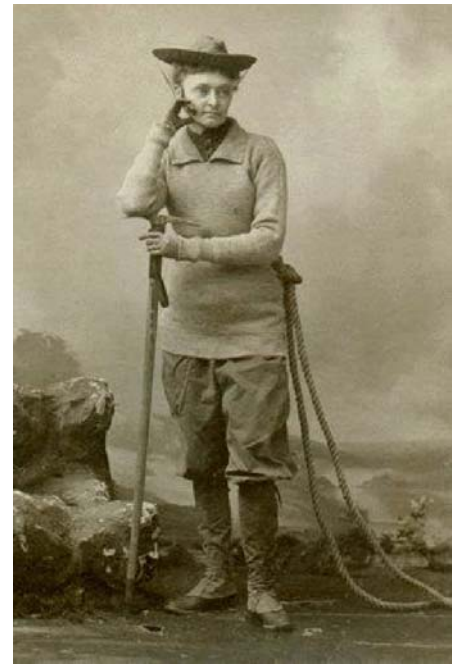
Do you know about another post menopausal woman—**Annie Smith Peck**-- who in 1911, at age 61, climbed and then planted a “Votes for Women” pennant atop Peru’s Mount Coropuna? Peck took up the pursuit of mountain climbing (an unimaginable pursuit for women of her time) in her mid forties. She became the third woman ever to scale the Matterhorn in the Swiss Alps, and the first to make the climb in trousers





PAUSE

rather than a cumbersome skirt. She became the first person to climb the north peak of Peru's 22,205-foot Mount Huascarán in 1908, when she was fifty-eight. In addition to the rigors of the climb, she had to cope with the ridicule of many male mountaineers, limited funding, and equipment which, since it was designed for men, was not suited for the female figure. For her ascent of Mount Huascarán, she designed her own mountain shoes and had them made to her order. Annie Smith Peck would not be denied her passion in spite of her gender and her age. What are you holding back from doing? How can YOU follow your passions?



In 1922, President Harding appointed **Alice Brown Davis** the first female chief

of the Seminole Nation, when she was 70. Davis had previously served as the postmistress of Arbeka, Oklahoma and run the trading post and ranch, in addition to raising her ten children. By 1892, when she was fifty, she became the superintendent of the Seminole girls' school, Emahaka. Over the course of many years, she had served as an interpreter, both for Seminole issues in Oklahoma and for the Seminole people who had remained in Florida (and not followed the Trail of Tears, the forced relocation of the Seminoles to Oklahoma). Davis was appointed chief to enable closing some tribal land affairs. However, she did not agree with the land transference and refused to sign the deeds! Davis served as chief of the Seminole Nation until her death in 1935. A bust of Alice Brown Davis was unveiled at the 1964 World's Fair on Oklahoma Day, in celebration of the life of this woman who was "a leader of her people."





Women have contributed in many different ways to the history of our country. In 1837, when she was close to age 50 and needed a way to support her family, **Sarah Josepha Hale** became the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*. For 40 years (until age 90), she will fight for greater educational opportunities for women through its editorial columns. During this time, she became one of the most important and influential arbiters of American taste. In addition, the magazine was credited with an ability to influence fashions not only for women's clothes, but also in domestic architecture. Hale is also remembered as the author of the children's rhyme, *Mary Had a Little Lamb*.

In 1963, at age 53, **Annie Dodge Wauneka** became the first Native American to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It is so powerful when women are selected to receive honors to celebrate their tireless work. After Wauneka's election to the Navajo Tribal Council, she worked diligently to improve the health and welfare of the Navajo Tribe and reduce the incidence of tuberculosis nationwide. She continued working in her community on health issues until her death in 1997. She helped improve housing and sanitation conditions and convinced her tribe to adopt many modern medical practices and avail themselves of hospital care, when needed. She also served on the advisory boards of the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service. In 1984, the Navajo Council designated her "The Legendary Mother of the Navajo Nation in recognition of her efforts in education and health."



A few other post menopausal accomplishments to celebrate:

At age 78, **Abigail Scott Duniway** signs Oregon's suffrage proclamation and becomes the first woman in her state to register to vote.

Jeannette Rankin's commitment to pacifism culminates when, at the age of 87, she leads 5,000 women on a Capitol Hill march (in Washington, D.C.) protesting U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

We celebrate menopause as we celebrate every phase of women's lives. Women have made remarkable accomplishments to U.S. history and we are proud to stand on their shoulders. Re-commit yourself to achieving your dreams.



Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen

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