8 Activism in the 1970s

The Year 1970

Three movements claimed our family’s attention during the year 1970: the antiwar movement, the environmental movement, and women’s liberation. The thread of civil rights ran through all of them.

Avril went off to the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) conference in Los Angeles in February, and on her return to the University of Utah, sent us a letter which began, “Have no fears that sibling #4 is becoming a true revolutionary. My hopes have been dashed. At least as far as SDS goes.” At an early session, Avril sat down in a corner and kept hearing mumbling sounds from a stranger next to her. She wrote, “I glanced over to check this one out and summed him up with the label ‘Oriental Hippy’—8” long hair, wide-brimmed hat, mustache, cowboy boots, safari jacket.” He asked her if she would mind going to bed with him after the meeting, and she replied briskly, “Go to hell, male chauvinist.” She wrote that male SDSers regarded women’s liberation as “‘crap.” They did have concern for women’s low pay scale, but in psychological liberation they were sexist. Avril was appalled at the totally abstract arguments against democracy and capitalism, two concepts which she found that SDS equated, and she observed that, in reality, workers detested revolutionary college students.¹

Back at the University of Utah campus Avril continued classes and her work with the drug crisis referral center. Before the year was out, the center became Helpline, headquartered in the student union with Avril as codirector. Sixty undergraduate volunteers did double shifts on the phone, with twelve graduate students as semi-professional backup, and with one “shrink” on call at all hours.²

Early in 1970, Barbi Ellefson, an editor at the Salt Lake Tribune, interviewed Avril and me on our views of the women’s liberation movement, but nothing appeared in its pages; I supposed it was because so much else was being printed those days about the women’s movement. The Chronicle of Higher Education had an article on “Faculty Women View Their Status,” and when Wynne came home from meetings in
Washington, D.C., he brought a news clipping about NOW (National Organization of Women) marchers.³

On May 3 the Salt Lake Tribune interview bore fruit. Avril and I appeared on the front page of the “For Women” section of the Sunday paper with a headline, “Mother, Daughter Cite Roles in Today’s World.” Avril’s profile was on the left edge of the article, and mine was on the right edge. We were marginal women, not only because we were literally on the margins, but also because we were at the bottom of the page, the top half being given over to a male historian and his young son—and their opinions on women’s liberation.
In the interview, Avril said she was more a psychological liberationist than a movement one, feeling if she got caught up in a movement she would get sucked into all sorts of things she really was not committed to. I told of my concern for women in poverty, and my hope to see all people, men and women, have a fair shake. I wanted more women in better paying positions, and more women lawyers and scientists. Avril said, “I think Mom’s more for hitting the normative structure, and I’m for hitting the psychological structure.” Avril criticized stereotypical roles of both men and women.4

Yet in the eyes of Cache Valley it was not women’s liberation but the antiwar movement that transformed me into a radical. Upset over the Cambodian invasion and the death of four students on the Kent State University campus, several USU students and faculty arranged for a peace march through town on May 15.

I joined the march in town. A block and a half before we reached the high school, I went up to the front and took a corner of the banner from a young bearded man. I had heard rumors of possible violence when we came to the high school. Ahead of time Allen Stokes had gone with two USU campus leaders to get permission from Mayor Richard Chambers and the city commission to hold a peaceful march. The course was charted so it went past the First Presbyterian church, up to Mr. Tims’ Grocery Store corner (which had become a parking lot), turned and proceeded east without going onto high school property. Mayor Chambers let it be known in a news release that he was against what the peace march stood for, but had consented to a peaceful march and police would be kept in the background. Matter of fact, he had promised police protection. When Allen said to me, as I walked with him and we reached Main Street, “Where is the police protection we were promised?” that was the moment I decided to move toward the front.

As we came toward the corner of Mr. Tims’, there across the street beside the high school stood a burly policeman, legs apart, arms folded, daring us to come across. Several faculty stood by him. Actually the high school ROTC was down on Crimson Field having its spring review and school was out, and I imagine a great many people were down there out of sight. But not all students were there. Over near the high school entrance were lots of students, some of whom wanted to cross and join. I learned as I walked in the march that the faculty and administration had forbidden students to join, but somehow six or eight had joined us along Main Street, or even earlier, and they were right behind me. As we came opposite the crowd across the street, student Clair
Kofoed, behind me, said, “Let’s shout for them to come on over!” I turned around and said, “Be quiet, don’t say a word.” They didn’t.

Clair, a good friend of Lance’s, grew up across the street from us. Having known him all his life I could turn around and say briskly, “Be quiet, don’t say a word,” and depend on him to obey. So we got peacefully to the corner of the block, turned toward Center Street, then went down to Central Park, known as Merlin Olsen Park today.

We had worried about intersections for fear somebody might try to run us down. Right behind me were college students with wives and babies, and somehow a baby in a stroller doesn’t seem a good target even for extreme rightists. Quite a number of USU faculty marched and their wives. Sandra, too, marched. A total of 250 left the campus after memorial services on the lawn, at the top of the open air amphitheater, honoring the Kent students, those who had been killed the day before in Mississippi, and those who died in the Indochina war. A peaceful assembly was held in Central Park where 250 more people joined us.5

The march was on Friday. The following Sunday the Herald Journal carried the story and a picture on the front page of me at the head of the march, holding the banner. The invasion of Cambodia by United States forces triggered my participation in this peace march. The previous
November, I had been in Cambodia with Ione Bennion to see Angkor Wat, one of the stops on our six weeks round-the-world trip together. We were impressed with the gentleness of the people we met in that small country, and we were subsequently appalled that our own nation had invaded it.

Logan High School graduation occurred soon after the peace march. Fortunately it was not my year as president and I had only to sit on the stand, but I could feel crackling hostility. There were exceptions. A young woman student body officer came to my home to give me a beautiful handkerchief and to say she appreciated what I had done. In my view, it was ridiculous to educate young men only to send them overseas to be killed. Furthermore, being a school board member should not deprive me of my citizen’s right to protest war.

That same month, student antiwar sentiment was reaching a high pitch on the University of Utah campus. Lance and Avril took part in campus sit-ins, and I recognized them on a television newscast. Avril wrote that, on one occasion, they left a sit-in when informed that if they got arrested the bail was a thousand dollars. Eighty students were arrested.

Wynne and I sent telegrams protesting the war to the four men of Utah’s congressional delegation. Senator Frank Moss was the only one to send a favorable reply. I helped write an antiwar plank for the platform of the Cache County Democratic party.

Kip, by then an associate professor of theoretical physics at Caltech, came to USU to give a talk on the nature of the universe and spoke to a packed auditorium. Before he arrived, the Herald Journal published Kip’s open letter against the Vietnam War, telling of concern over the needless loss of life of young men. He suggested that the Caltech faculty have a day of mourning and political education, and that the university’s academic calendar be rearranged so that, for the two weeks in November before the election, there would be no classes, allowing faculty and students to campaign vigorously for candidates who were against the war.

Kip’s letter ended: “It is not just a radical minority of the young who are being alienated from our government and society. It is the majority of the young. I see it even on the normally apathetic Caltech campus. It frightens me; it frightens the entire faculty of Caltech; it frightens the leading universities of America; and it should frighten you.” In answer to this letter (which was also published in Pasadena, where Caltech is located), three open letters of opposition and two in favor appeared in the Herald Journal.
My part in the local peace march continued to have repercussions. I received a handwritten letter, unsigned, that said, “For heavens sake Allison Thorne—have you lost your buttons? We might expect more from a ‘so-called educator.’ Haven’t we enough problems with our youth and communism which is at the bottom of it all; without people like you making a spectacle of yourself and trying to help the problem makers. This is your last stupid mistake. Vote time is coming and don’t you forget it.” There were petitions against me and, sure enough, I lost the school board primary election. Everett Harris received 240 votes, Dean Porter 143, and I had only ninety-seven.

In spite of this turmoil, life went on during the summer of 1970. Lance worked for John Hunt in forest recreation, interviewing tourists, just as Sandra had done earlier. Lance was seeking conscientious objector status, and Barrie sent him and his friends materials from her draft counseling project in Boston. Lance’s draft call number was thirty, a number so low that it meant he could be called up by early 1971. As a member of the LDS Church, he could not claim conscientious objector status because ostensibly the church prided itself on patriotism and endorsed the Vietnam War. But the LDS Church called so many eligible young men on missions, urging college enrollment and marriage immediately afterwards, that in Utah the risk of being drafted was greatly increased for inactive and non-Mormons. Lance was an inactive Mormon. Ultimately when his number was called and he took the physical exam, the doctor found a heart murmur and Lance was deferred.

While Lance worked for John Hunt during the summer, Sandra worked at the Bear River Bird Refuge west of Brigham City, under a male supervisor who had strong opinions on appropriate female dress. Not only did he require that she wear a skirt, but he told her to kneel so he could determine if it was too short. This was the type of behavior one expected of Brigham Young University but not of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Sandra and Robert Brown planned to be married on August 22, in a garden wedding at our home, and in the fall they would enroll again at USU, he to complete his bachelor’s degree, delayed because of two years of military service which was spent in the United States. She would begin a master’s in forest recreation.

Avril went to Boston for the summer, at Barrie’s invitation, and worked with Dean Mitchell, a Utahn who directed the conscientious objector program of the international office of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. As codirector, Avril edited a letter listing possible
jobs for alternative service, and answered letters from conscientious objectors who wanted jobs. She took charge of the office when Dean went to Seattle to a conference on problems of young American men fleeing to Canada to escape the draft. At age twenty-five, Dean was, himself, under indictment for evading the draft. He claimed conscientious objector status on religious grounds, although he didn’t believe in a supreme being. At the Seattle conference, Dean found that forty Americans a day were moving into the Vancouver, British Columbia, area, and estimated that from fifty to sixty thousand Americans were living in Canada. With help from Quakers, Mennonites, and Vancouver physicians, the Unitarian Universalist program assisted these “refugees” in finding jobs and housing, and in communicating with their families in the United States.¹²

On August 22 our whole family gathered in Logan for Sandra and Bob’s wedding, a wonderful affair, if I do say so myself, as one with a hand in the arrangements. The newlyweds moved into a duplex across town.¹³

Back in Boston to complete her summer’s work, Avril wrote that the American exiles in Canada preferred to be called expatriates, and women’s liberation preferred the term “sexist” to “chauvinist.” It was becoming clear that within movements, the choice of names and labels was an important matter.

During the summer Barrie worked for her major professor, Everett Hughes, a warm person and a distinguished sociologist. He was by then in his seventies, had retired from Brandeis, and now held a position at Boston College. Barrie had an office there and was writing her doctoral dissertation on the draft resistance movement. She was also working with Hughes on a book about education in the medical and legal professions, which included a section on student culture, unrest, and activism. I was interested in what she wrote of the relation of these professions to Office of Economic Opportunity anti-poverty programs, and of the need to recruit women to medicine and law.¹⁴

Alienation of youth continued to be on many people’s minds, not just those of Kip and Caltech. During the summer and fall of 1970, Utah was preparing for the White House Conference on Children and Youth. White House Conferences on Children had been held every ten years since 1909, and this particular one, because of the unrest of young people, included youth defined as ages eighteen to twenty-four.

Governor Rampton appointed task forces on various topics, and meetings were held across the state to outline problems and get young
people’s opinions. Among the topics were health and drugs, civil and legal rights, national service and the draft, and economy and employment. I chaired the urban-rural task force. My assignment included holding a regional conference with a broad spectrum of young people in attendance, and with dialogue between them and receptive adults on topics of concern to youth. We held this conference in the Logan Junior High School with attendance from Rich, Box Elder, and Cache counties.

Two hundred youth attended along with a sprinkling of adults to carry on dialogue. We had university students including some who were in the peace march, 4-H youth council members who were college freshmen, the high school Neighborhood Youth Corps members, and youngsters selected by their high school principals from all the high schools. There were ten discussion groups, and by and large they spoke up freely, and in fact asked for more such dialogues. The group talking about the draft agreed unanimously on abolishing the draft and having a volunteer army instead. In school matters, all agreed that students should have more voice in decisions, but appeared to doubt that changes would be made. The results of this meeting were combined with results of fourteen other regional conferences held across the state, and the summary was to go with Utah delegates to the White House Conference on Children and Youth in March.

By including them in our conference at Logan Junior High, I had legitimated the youth who were in the peace march, and the youth of the Neighborhood Youth Corps. As matters turned out, President Nixon was afraid to have a national gathering of youth, so regional meetings were held instead and our Utah delegates went to Denver.

In preparing for the White House conference, our urban-rural task force had among its thirteen members two men who listed themselves as architect/planners, and one who was a community planner. They, with a sociologist, emphasized the findings of a Utah survey that 84 percent of urban youth worried about pollution, but far fewer adults cared. They noted various national writings on the environment, and the movement of hippies into rural areas. At one point they proposed changing the title of our task force to “philosophy of youth toward environment.”

At USU, Tom Lyon of the English Department founded the Earth People, which held a meeting in January 1970. Sandra attended. This group had gathered up litter in Logan canyon the year before, and now came together to hear the views of the Forest Service on further widening of the Logan Canyon highway. Sandra returned to say that the Earth
People mostly dressed way-far-out. But there were also some clean-shaven, neat haircut types, and a considerable number of faculty.\textsuperscript{17}

The county commission acted to keep smoke stack industry out of Cache County, and a new sawmill was not permitted to burn its waste. In April a campus teach-in week focused on the population explosion and on pollution. Edward Abbey spoke on campus to a large crowd, with Earth People prominently present. Allen Stokes, ornithologist, Quaker, and chief sponsor of local anti-draft counseling, spoke to our Sunday night discussion group on the Earth People movement and attitudes toward nature.\textsuperscript{18}

In June, Wynne invited to dinner at our cabin the faculty involved in seeking an ecology grant: Dean Thad Box of Natural Resources and his wife Jenny, John and Ruth Neuhold, Fred and Marilyn Wagner, and Austin and Alta Fife. Carolyn Steel also came. She held a new Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in systems research, and was associate dean of our College of Education. The Rockefeller Foundation was interested in this project and would send a three person team for an on-site visit October 21–22. Before the visit, Wynne sent Al Boyce, one of the team members, a copy of Austin and Alta’s latest book, on western ballads.\textsuperscript{19}

In November a $600,000 Rockefeller Grant on environmental planning was secured, and plans for an Ecology Center at USU went forward. Faculty Women’s League had a program on the environment, with USU faculty as speakers. Locally, the environmental movement had begun.

I used environmental material in my classes and insisted that my community organization students attend environmental hearings. I used Elizabeth Hoyt’s concept of basic cultural interests, with emphasis on the aesthetic and empathetic, and one of my students wrote a lyrical account of her experiences in the hidden areas of Mt. Jardine north of us. In class my sociology students wore casual attire, while the family life and home economics students wore “appropriate” clothing, but with time the difference lessened.

Sandra’s Environmental Career

In the summer of 1971, Sandra was employed as forest ranger up Logan Canyon, the first woman to hold this position. She was in charge of six camp grounds and the Guinevah Amphitheater programs. Sandra bought Forest Service male trousers and altered them to fit, but for amphitheater programs she was listed as “Interpretive Rangerette,” and was required to wear a skirt. The next year, however, Sandra had
the company of three more women forest rangers, and the Forest Service had finally come out with a women’s uniform—pants and vest in double knit polyester of a yellowish pea green color. Sandra declared it “horrendous” and didn’t buy it. Sandra’s favorite episode in her Logan Canyon work was the time she was cleaning out a stall in the women’s side of a restroom and heard a mother and small girl enter. The mother went into a stall, telling the child to wait. Suddenly the little girl saw a ranger jacket backing out and shouted in alarm, “There’s a forest ranger in here!” Sandra’s head emerged as she said sweetly, “But I’m a female ranger.”

For her master’s at USU, Sandra created guides for environmental education field trips, completing her degree in December. Bob Brown completed his degree in business, and in January 1973 they moved to Houston to look for work. Things were booming in Texas because of the oil shortage and Bob found a management position with SIP, Inc., a corporation that did construction for oil companies.

Sandra, too, tried the oil companies, hoping they had a position dealing with the environment. They didn’t, and she wrote in discouragement, “My kind of a job is not created yet.” So she tried the schools, but they didn’t have environmental education positions. Next she tried local parks, and wrote that the Houston Citizen’s Environmental Coalition was helping her, “the only outfit willing to help a misfit girl.” Her luck turned when she tried the district office of the Soil Conservation Service. She was hired and became the first woman soil conservationist in that district, and one of only three in Texas. An article in the Houston Chronicle shows her paddling a canoe with her director, looking at flood levels of Armand Bayou.

Sandra was placed on the Environmental Educational Council for Southeast Texas Schools, and completed conservation plans for three elementary schools, as well as for two county parks. She designed outdoor learning classrooms, wrote a Nature Trail Tour for Armand Bayou, and trained two hundred members of the League of Women Voters and American Association of University Women to be volunteer guides. She also created a new kind of woodland contest for members of 4-H and Future Farmers of America clubs. But all was not sweetness and light. Sandra wrote:

Had a rotten experience at my talk to the Daughters of the American Revolution. I gave a slide talk on conservation problems in Houston touching on destruction and channelization of streams and bayous, lack of silt and sedimentation control, unscrupulous
developers, lack of flood plain management and land use planning (which is absolutely non-existent in Houston). Had many favorable comments afterwards and then a woman came up and really laid into me! Said how she hated me, my beliefs and everything I stood for. That her forefathers came here in 1610 so no one could tell them how to use their land, etc. She wouldn’t discuss anything but screamed at me with more hate than I’ve ever seen directed at one person! Don’t know how but I kept my cool and eased out, ran to the car and swore all the way back to the office.\textsuperscript{24}

Here again are women’s organizations: LWV, AAUW, and DAR. Sandra joined the Federal Employed Women, which urged opportunities for women and opposed discrimination. In 1975 there were only five women Soil Conservation Service professionals in all of Texas, but they started a statewide annual women’s seminar for women SCS employees of all levels.

League of Women Voters of Cache County

Losing my place on the school board was not the end of the world. Another avenue for community work opened up in the newly organized League of Women Voters of Cache County (LWVCC). Anne Hatch was the impetus behind this new organization. She had belonged to the League of Women Voters in Ames, Iowa, before moving to Logan with her husband, Eastman Hatch, who joined the USU physics faculty. Both grew up in Salt Lake City. Anne wanted to associate with up-and-coming women while working for the common good, and she had been particularly prodded by her friend, Norma Matheson, an active LWV member in Salt Lake City. Norma’s husband Scott would later become governor of the state, succeeding Rampton. Anne Hatch’s liberal leanings were already showing, because when she was in a supermarket back on May 15 and saw the peace march moving past, she promptly put down her groceries and came out and joined us.

In November, Anne invited state LWV officers to an organizational meeting in the Cache Chamber of Commerce meeting room. Reggie Benowitz of Ogden spoke on how to create a league. I remember her well because Reggie wore a pantsuit. Soon afterwards I went out and bought two pantsuits and wore them when I taught, a radical innovation in campus dress of faculty women. The BYU didn’t permit women to wear pants on their campus, nor would the LDS Church-owned hospitals let nurses wear pants.
Word of mouth brought in our first LWV members. Some, like Anne Hatch, had belonged elsewhere. Jenny Box had belonged in Lubbock, Texas, where she helped register Blacks to vote, much to the consterna-
tion of conservatives. Her husband, Thad Box, dean of Natural
Resources at USU, was very much a liberal too. Dorothy Lewis, who
taught child development at USU, had belonged to LWV chapters in the
early 1950s when she was a graduate student with two young children,
first at the University of New Mexico and later at Iowa State University.
Our new LWV chapter included other women faculty, mostly single.
Some of our younger members were nonemployed faculty wives with
young children. A few members were not attached to the university in
any way. Ione Bennion, I, and a few others were former members of the
Women’s Legislative Council, but we had become disillusioned with
the council when a change in its policies narrowed its possible actions.

One requirement to form a LWV was twenty-five paid-up members,
and dues were $7.50, a lot of money in those days. Recalling the first
membership meeting, Anne Hatch said there were twenty-four paid up
members, and they needed one more. Phyllis Snow, dean of the College
of Family Life, rose to leave, and paid her $7.50 before going out the
door. A general sigh of relief ensued. At its height LWVCC had seventy-
five members. A democratic organization with the goal of educating
voters, LWV invited anyone interested to join. Leagues made studies of
problems which might be solved by government action, discussed their
studies, and if consensus was reached, worked for change.

Among the young faculty wives who belonged were Janet Osborne,
Elki Powers, Carol Windham, and Mary Farley. They had young chil-
dren and in order to get their LWV work done, they formed a baby-sit-
ting cooperative. Janet also arranged for baby sitting at the 1971–72
meetings of Faculty Women’s League, an innovation. Today we speak
of child care, not baby sitting, and eventually the state LWV produced
an excellent child care study that influenced state legislation, and
which I used in teaching women’s studies at USU.

Janet Osborne recalls with laughter that she and Elki Powers came
to those early LWV meetings together, wearing long white boots, fancy
hair-dos, and jingling earrings. Janet’s children said of LWV, “You are a
bunch of hippies!” which prompted Anne Hatch to report that her sons
complained, “Do you have to join every radical organization that
comes along?” Our provisional League of Women Voters of Cache
County was formed on November 12, 1970. A brief history of LWV
written in 1972 says:
Now the real work began. For a Provisional League to achieve full recognition, it must fulfill a number of requirements. For example, a comprehensive Know Your County study was undertaken, in which almost every aspect of county government was investigated, officials interviewed, graphs prepared, charts and figures interpreted and so on. When we felt sufficiently well-informed to be able to ask intelligent questions, we invited the three county commissioners to attend a meeting, and spent an enjoyable and revealing morning picking their brains.

Our study was well done and qualified us to become a full fledged league on March 30, 1972. LWV regularly monitored Cache County Commission meetings and other public meetings as well. Jennie Christensen, reporter for the local newspaper, had attended the county commission meetings for some time and welcomed the presence of other women. Jennie and the League were appalled at how the commissioners did preliminary work and held LDS prayer behind locked doors, often failing to unlock them when the official meeting began. The women often had to knock loudly to gain entrance.

Convinced that the three-man commission form of government fails to separate legislative and executive functions and is not representative, LWV pushed for a change, but it would be fourteen long years before voters mandated an executive-council form of government for Cache County, in 1986. Success was due to the shrewd strategy of getting the mayors’ association to spearhead the campaign for change. Our LWV member Helen Roth attended council meetings of all the towns and met often with the mayors, giving them basic facts from the LWV studies and insisting that they take the initiative.

Changing the Logan City government from a three-man commission proved easier than changing the county government. In 1974 the league produced “A Study of Alternate Forms of Local Government,” and the next year voters mandated a change to a mayor-council form. Carol Clay, who worked very hard for the change, was voted in as a member of the new council. She was the only woman. No woman had ever served on the Logan or Cache County Commissions. Once when I asked a commissioner why this was the case, he replied that women are incapable of dealing with heads of departments, especially with regard to county roads and city streets. This was sexism, a term that didn’t exist in the 1950s and 1960s.

League members made other studies during the 1970s, including of mosquitoes, low-income housing, Cache and Logan school districts,
youth services, mental health, solid waste, and water resources. Our attempts to get a mosquito abatement district were foiled time and again. Jenny Box worked on the “Cache County Mosquitoes” study along with Cathy Schultz, Jeri Malouf, Janet Osborne, Elki Powers, and Carol Windham.

Jenny Box has described the successful petition drive for a mosquito abatement district, and how league members visited every one of the nineteen incorporated areas to speak to city councils. But for reasons unknown city council members began to withdraw support. The county commission put the issue on the November 1974 ballot hoping to kill it. Logan City and immediate towns around it were strongest in support. The vote was favorable, but the county commission refused to appropriate funds for mosquito abatement, giving as their reason that while individual voters might support mosquito control, their leaders did not.

Attempts were made again in 1975 and 1976, but opposition continued. One resident of College Ward who privately supported mosquito abatement, said, “Please don’t let my neighbors know. Someone will run over my mailbox, cut off my water, shoot my dog.”

It was with surprise that Jenny Box noted, many years later, that opposition in that area seemed to have collapsed. She wrote, “It was with some bemusement that League members read the April 19, 1989 headline in the Herald Journal: ‘Mosquito Control Program Gets OK.’ With the enthusiastic support of most of the residents of College Ward/Young Ward, the Cache County Council created a Mosquito Abatement District for that area.”26 However, countywide mosquito abatement has never come into being.

Public Library Funding

In addition to mosquitoes, another continuing problem was lack of adequate funding for local libraries. In the 1920s and 1930s, the library in Logan was supported with a small sum from both Logan and Cache governments, but the twenty thousand dollar annual budget did not begin to cover librarian Virginia Hanson’s salary, the coal bill, and purchase of books. Only the generosity of Boyd Hatch, who lived elsewhere but sent money, kept the library afloat.

I knew part of the opposition to increased library funding was the county commissioners’ dislike of Joseph Geddes and Carmen Fredrickson of the USU sociology faculty, who kept pressuring them in
the 1950s for more library support. I discovered that, as new commissioners were elected, they carried on this animosity.\textsuperscript{27}

In spite of abysmal funding, Virginia Hanson was a fantastic librarian. I could write reams about her many kindnesses to so many children, and of our visits to her home out in Cornish, where she had a fascinating attic room reached by a ladder that pulled down from the ceiling. Every New Year’s Day she entertained international students at their farm, and invited us too. She called the home, where she lived with her sister Mae, “Dreary Acres.” But it certainly was not dreary to any of us. Mae taught at the Lewiston elementary school. In 1973 Virginia retired from the library, and five years later, Virginia and Mae were killed when their car stalled on the railroad track that runs between their farm and the highway.\textsuperscript{28}

There were state-operated bookmobiles in some areas, and local citizens wanted such service for Cache County. The state did offer a bookmobile for six months, free, to find out if the people really liked it. Yet the county commission refused this offer fearing people would like it and they would have to cough up money to supplement the state’s payments for regular service. Finally public pressure forced the commission to pay twenty thousand dollars annually for bookmobile service, which began in July 1963, but the commissioners continued to refuse to put money into the city-county library in Logan. Several towns in our county have long had their own libraries, smaller than the one in Logan, and they understandably wanted a continuing existence. Anne Hatch wrote a history of local libraries in 1963, and the League of Women Voters of Cache County completed a library study the next year.\textsuperscript{29}

The county and city commissioners lost the chance for $150,000 of federal funding to enlarge the public library in Logan, and an outraged public wanted to know why. In 1975, out of a large meeting of Friends of the Library, emerged the Committee of Fifty, chaired by Kathryn Gardner, an extremely capable person who worked in the USU Merrill Library. This committee traveled about looking at libraries and recommended a countywide system. The county commission remained opposed. A later Committee of Nine also failed. The county commission would fund only their portion of the bookmobile.

About this time Logan changed from the three-man city commission to the council form of government, with Carol Clay as an elected member. She arranged for a Committee of Five to study the library situation. Stewart Williams, retired USU geologist and chair of the Logan Library
Board, was helpful. It was my fate to serve on all three committees: Fifty, Nine, and now Five.

But I found that the Committee of Five posed an awkward situation because one of the members was Newell Olsen, who had attacked me in an open letter in the *Herald Journal* on February 17, 1974, when he was opposing the Logan School Board’s leeway election to transfer three mills from capital outlay to maintenance and operation. I was no longer on the board, but I supported the transfer and was a victim of his animosity. He wrote in the 1974 letter, “Can any amount of scientific research or study nullify the rebellious conduct of teachers in picket lines who spurn court injunctions, court order and legal subpoenas? . . . Of faculty members who march in rebellious and violent demonstrations that, oftentimes, commit arson, looting and murder (witness Allison Thorn, Logan City’s Supt. of schools of yesterday).”

I was angry, but I remembered that years earlier when a nasty letter against me showed up in the local paper, Wynne had one blunt piece of advice: “Never get in a pissing contest with a skunk.” Where was Wynne now, when I needed him? Well, he was in New Mexico at meetings of Western Agricultural Experiment Station directors. My friends said to forget Wynne’s advice. “Sue!” they said, and prepared to collect money to pay a lawyer. I wrote a reply which appeared in the paper of February 21 under the heading, “Falsehoods”:

To Editor:

On February 17 the *Herald Journal* published a letter from Newell J. Olsen which contained several falsehoods about me. Contrary to Mr. Olsen’s statements:

I have never been Superintendent of Logan City Schools.
I have never taken part in a rebellious and violent demonstration.
I have never committed arson, looting or murder.
Frankly, it appears to me that I have grounds for suit.

Alison Thorne

Three days later, two letters to the editor appeared. The first was from Arthur and Doris Holmgren about “the recent vicious letter written by Newell J. Olsen.” It questioned the judgment of the editor in accepting Olsen’s letter for publication because it appeared libelous to them. The second letter was headed, “An Apology,” and was from Newell Olsen. He said his referral to violence, arson and murder was
intended to refer to those hectic days at Berkeley, Stanford, Kent State, Harvard and many other universities. He wanted to bring attention that a member of Logan City’s School Board had actually joined a demonstration march. “I sincerely apologize to Mrs. Alison Thorne.”  

The school leeway election of 1974 passed by 83 percent, and this flurry of controversy may have helped us. Here I was, two years later, facing Newell Olsen across the table as the Committee of Five met. We got along amicably. Our committee hammered out a compromise between Logan and the county government, a compromise which lasted into the 1990s.

Another issue was the LDS genealogical library that, for years, occupied part of the public library, with taxpayers paying for its space, heat, water, and lights. Both Anne Hatch’s history of the library, and the League of Women Voters’ library study, noted the situation. The American Civil Liberties Union threatened suit. The LDS Church moved its library to the basement of the LDS Tabernacle across the street, which proved a better location for its purposes. However, many faithful LDS members viewed the ACLU and the league with a jaundiced eye. One of our officers reported that league was respected for doing things well and thoroughly researching issues. “We are perceived, however, as trouble-makers, somewhat liberal, and usually non-LDS.”

Through all this, the handful of us who were LDS and in the League of Women Voters of Cache County, sought to serve as bridges between Mormons and non-Mormons, just as we had done on the Governor’s Committee on the Status of Women, and in the War on Poverty.