

nettles

a column by Meg McMullen

"Holy Cow!" Judy said, laughing across the table at my high school 15th reunion. "You are the only woman in this room with no makeup on and you still look good! I spent an hour and a half this afternoon on breast makeup alone...and that was only for my left one!"

I smiled laughed -- as modestly as possible under the circumstances -- and, made a cool gesture with an 'ah, shucks' air which resulted in my tipping over my drink onto, remarkably, three neighboring laps. Pride indeed goeth before a fall.

I was, however, genuinely flattered. I felt even better later in the evening when I copped a 'youngest looking' award. I wallowed in it, actually. Am still wallowing in it, shamelessly, whenever I think of it.

And I thought of it the other day when I saw a little feature on tv about the latest thing in wrinkle creams -- Preparation H. Seems those little tubes of cream are really moving these days. I'm not quite clear what effect it has on facial skin, but it certainly must be giving the Avon lady something to think about. And it lends a whole new connotation to the phrase "rosy cheeks". What the next look-young development might be, I dare not conjecture.

I'm somewhat torn about being flattered when I'm told I look young. That is, I like to hear that, but I realize I like to hear it because we're all so ridiculously conditioned to hang onto youth. I was much impressed a few months ago reading an interview in Esquire with (I think) Elizabeth Ashley. The interviewer asked her age, and she said, "Thirty-seven," (or whatever) and he said, "You certainly don't look it." To which she responded, "Nonsense. I look just like a thirty-seven year old woman."

I have been waiting for the opportunity to use that same response. I mean, she's so right. How in hell does anyone decide whether you look thirty-seven? Or, is there a difference between how someone is supposed to look at thirty-seven and how she's supposed to look at thirty-eight?

So I guess, if I so heartily support Ashley's response, I should have said something like that when I waltzed up to accept my little "youngest looking" award at the old Class of '60 reunion.

I should have stood there and wiped the potato salad off my chin and made a statement to the effect that they were, in effect, renouncing my 33 years. I could have kicked off my newly purchased Zayre's sandals (I went all out for the occasion), leapt to the top of the head table, and shouted, "This is nonsense! I look exactly like a 33 year old woman should look! All of you women here who are 33 look exactly like 33 year old women!" And so on.

But of course, I told you already that I did nothing of the kind. I wish I had, but I am not that fast...I don't care who you've talked to. So I blushed charmingly, belched silently, and grasped my award in a palm that only moments before had caught a flying chunk of cheesecake. I started to say a few sophisticated words,

but everything that came out had, at best, one syllable, and most of those sounded like parts of maybe medieval Urdu and ancient Pict. I sat down again, smiling still, and went back to the conversation with Judy and my damp-lapped neighbors.

We are having another reunion in ten year. I will then (correct me if I'm wrong) be 43. And I intend to look exactly like a 43 year old woman. And if ... if by some most curious happenstance the same award comes my way, I vow to say exactly that. I shall be prepared, I hope, but not with H.

News Flash!

RADICAL FEMINIST CONFERENCE

Many women envision a self-sustaining community of women, living with women, working with women, loving women. There will be a conference Aug. 25- Aug. 29 to discuss and begin to plan for such a community.

The 4-day conference includes workshops and discussions on goals, location, self-sustaining businesses, alternative power sources (to name a few). Other activities will be poetry, readings, sports, music, films, and theatre.

Registration fees are \$35 and \$65 (for women who are fully employed or have other adequate means of support). Financial assistance is available for low income women.

Day care will be provided. Child's fee is \$12. Register immediately while there's still time and space. Write: A Woman's Planning Conference, P.O. Box 391964, Miami Beach, Fla. 33139.

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INSIDE:

Reader Poll Results! PAGE 1

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sexism in schools PAGE 8

and more...

maine freewoman's herald



FROM THE STAFF, POLL RESULTS, and LETTERS

In response to all those thousands of complaints you've sent to the Post Office demanding delivery of the current issue of Freewoman -- finally, we are here! Due to finances, staff shortage, and that ever-present lack of ready cash, it was decided to publish only one summer issue.

As far as the complaints about foul-ups in subscriptions that's another story! Things have always been confused with lack of facilities and space, but since the last issue every person on the staff has moved, adding to the already existing confusion. If you've missed some issues, or know of friends who have, please let us know.

Soon we shall be reorganized and back on a regular publishing schedule. For awhile it looked bleak; we talked of folding or trying to merge with another publication. But everyone's response to our poll and to our query "is anyone out there?" made it clear that yes! somebody's out there--there's a lot of women "out there", and a lot of people care. Our readers' overwhelming response to our poll gave us the strength to get through a few bad months.

We're still seeking more staff women. On August 14 we'll be having a meeting in Brunswick for all women interested in joining the staff (in whatever way). The meeting will be a 7:00 at 136 Maine Street (in the Maine Land Trust Office, up the stairs). For more information call Meg or Char at 926-4343.

The results to our poll go something like this:

The majority of our readers think the paper's politics are "just right" and that we should strive to speak to all Maine women. One anonymous subscriber wrote: "Keeping a balance and speaking to all Maine women seems extremely difficult. At what point do you speak to one group of women to the total exclusion of others? It is an important goal to speak to the 'non-converted', but at what point do we ignore our more radical sisters and their ideology so not to 'turn away' the new; and at what point do radical feminists not reach out enough or dismiss women who have not developed their thinking to the same extent or in the same direction?"

This is a key question. We hope that a regular newspaper forum will provide space to women of various political/feminist orientations and generate discussions in various areas of feminist thinking and political theory. Most people were enthusiastic about a newspaper forum. Next issue we will print a forum topic with related questions and publish the responses in the following issue.

Of the possible articles we listed the following received the most positive responses: Native American Women in Maine, Feminist Childrearing, Lesbian Feminism, Pregnancy and Childbirth, Women in Prisons, Political Theory, and Spirituality.

Ideas for other articles included homesteading women, women's health problems in Maine, intercultural sensitivity, women in nursing, features on women artists and feminist art. If

you'd like to write an article in any of these areas (or others), please contact us.

Most people would like to see regular historical articles, particularly about Maine women.

Poetry -- the same amount. (To all the women who have submitted poetry: we will publish your work as soon as possible. There is a tremendous backlog!)

The article most enjoyed has been the 3-part mental health series by Miriam Dyak. The most controversial writing has been Nettles (but those who like it, really like it!).

Ideas on solving the financial problem ranged from having rock concerts to becoming more controversial to changing our name (taking the rhetoric out of our title). Another woman suggested that we urge our subscribers to read the issue of Quest on Money, Fame, and Power (vol. 1, no. 2) particularly the article "Put Your Money Where Your Movement Is". We hope readers will do so and begin to think about tithing and supporting feminist organization. (Also we think Quest is a very essential publication for discussing and developing feminist theory.) We will continue to hawk papers, bake cakes, sell ads, and raise money, hoping you will support us in any way you can. (Get a friend to subscribe today!)

The best part of the questionnaire were the letters you wrote. We do not have space to print all the letters, or whole letters. What follows are some extracts. We want to thank all of you who responded (including out-of-staters, three organizations, and three men) for the tremendous positive feedback.

"Yes, someone is out here!! Sure, you are broke, tired and ready to give up, but you aren't the only ones in the same predicament....don't hang up your printers' inked hands now, you're just getting started."

Jane L. Beecher, Bangor

"I haven't got a lot of energy for radical actions...but I want to keep in touch, informed. I want to know when the front gets too close to home, and I'll need plenty of information to fight with."

M.F. Head, Bangor

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scampering (and hiding) imps: courtesy cpl

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"In a struggle to learn more about ourselves we tend to categorize and theorize ourselves into boxes of definitions. I cannot separate my life into words and causes. What I read in the MFH are the feelings of people, a sharing of common experience, or an introduction to the alien."

Murray Jamison, Washington

"It's such a slow and painful process coming to feminist consciousness... Every woman must find a way that makes sense to her."

Michelle Murphy, Cornville

"...If we are, as we say, not bound by our bodies (biology is not destiny) then we must move beyond focusing the women's movement on the physical aspects (and emotional aspects) of our lives and deal with work, politics, economics, and power."

Belinda Huston, Bangor

"As for being radical....to get more people involved you will have to lead people gently with ideas....What we need here is a feeling of togetherness, more personal contacts, a tolerance for different ways at going at life, and a real love for each other."

Ellen Doran, West Bath

"Keep out the gutter language. You have no idea how repulsive it is to us 'old-timers'."

Ruth Hakens, So. Portland

"Please keep publishing! This is purely a selfish plea...up here in Central Maine the Freewoman's Herald is my one remaining link with feminism."

Sharon Smith, Hartland

I'm a brother in the struggle...a man, "superior" to anyone or anything which walks this earth. That, anyway, is what I've been taught to believe and I am being hurt by this belief because I am a man who loves a woman.... In many ways I am still a sexist but I have the battle half won because I realize it and I'm that much closer to conquering it than the one who hasn't realized it yet....So I say to my fellow brothers that you must admit your sexism before you can overcome it. Open your eyes and see the new world ahead.

A Brother

"Feminism means to me: Being able to be what I want to be without having to be what a man wants me to be. Being able to speak without being told I shouldn't say that or 'Don't let me hear you say that again'."

Being able to dress the way I want and having the time to put into projects I want to work on instead of having a man's meals on the table at the exact time he wants them or having to iron his shirts just so.

In short not being a slave but free to think, be, and do in my own way, speed, and time."

(We've lost the name on this one.)

"And to think we've been part of the Silent Majority....keep on keeping on!"
Mid-Coast Women's Group

Thank-you everybody! MFH.



ON THE INSIDE LOOKING OUT

by Charmaine Daniels

Without being imprisoned people can never feel what prison is or what it does to people. Most people who have options and choices in life don't come in contact with the law, cops, jail, the "criminal justice system".

Wanting to find out more about Maine's prison system for women, I tried to set up an interview with inmates of the Women's Correctional Center (WCC), Maine's prison for women, but was unsuccessful.

On my tour of the institution, I posted a notice in the living quarters about wanting to interview inmates. I received staff permission to post these notices. When I checked back with Mrs. Hanauer, the superintendent of WCC, about talking with inmates she accused me of being sneaky and underhanded, insinuating I had not received permission to post the notices. I later learned the staff had not acknowledged their allowing the notices.

At this point I again asked how I could interview inmates. Mrs. Hanauer told me I could go through the inmate's council or type a memo and have it posted with her permission. I chose the inmate's council but was told by Mrs. Hanauer it would not meet for 2 or 3 weeks. Thus, because of deadline considerations, I chose the memo. I later learned the council meeting had been only one week away and I could have had time.

When I asked if I could use both routes (the council and the memo), she replied "I don't see the necessity of using both routes", thus preventing me from contacting the inmate's council after learning I did have time to meet with them.

In conclusion, I feel Mrs. Hanauer was not cooperative with a member of the press. However, I was able to talk to a former inmate and others familiar with Maine's prison system.

Chris Emery, 24, of Portland was in Women's Correctional Center (WCC) in Skowhegan for about four years before it was moved to Hallowell. She was released about a year ago and is now out on parole.

"Something like Skowhegan is hard to talk about", she says. "Sometimes I have nightmares about the experience. It takes away your pride, your dignity... it's like realizing you lost the most important thing in your life--your freedom..."

According to Emery, the majority of the prison staff feels the inmates are there to be punished, instead of rehabilitated. "They act like if you have brains you wouldn't be there...you're told you're wrong all the time, and what they think is right, is what society approves of."

Emery recalls the inmates were told such things as when to eat, how much, and what kind of kotex to use. They were told not to take off their shoes and socks in the field, not to chew gum, not to read after 11 p.m., etc. "All the things you think, feel and are, are denied," she states. "Telling people 24 hours a day what to do and when to do it isn't the way to help people," she adds.

Some of the rules changed, she notes, after inmates formed a council to demand the changes. The council has no real power now, and according to one observer no one wants to be on the council because it is a "political ball game". In addition, the administration determines eligibility for the council, by stipulating inmates serving under or over a certain amount of time are ineligible.

Although dress standards have been relaxed, Emery and many other observers agree that the inmates are pressured to be lady-like and feminine. The code of conduct calls for a dress or

"other suitable attire" for Sunday and Holiday dinners and off-grounds appointments. Emery says most of the prisoners are there in the first place for acting out against society's definition of feminine.

Emery has many complaints. She was sentenced to 1-3 years for breaking and entering and assault, but was held 19 months (the judge's sentence stated a minimum time only) because as she puts it, "I stuck up for my rights." She was kept in solitary confinement for nine weeks. She got a lawyer who told the administration they could not confine her in solitary for more than 72 hours, so the policy was changed.

The administration, she says, thinks anyone who is ill is a hypochondriac and is trying to get out of work. "If they think someone needs to be calmed down, they have a way of convincing people they need tranquilizers," she complains. The work release program, she goes on, sends people for the most part, to shoe factories or to be nurse's aids.

In praising some of the corrections officers, Emery says some were well-respected and received cooperation from the inmates. But for the most part, she feels, "Prison is a private little world where everything that is wrong and corrupt with power is exaggerated. There are a lot of 'power trips'. If you play up to officers, you get a good report, and you can get around the rules if you're sneaky." She concludes, "It's all a game."

"I have to fight to keep Skowhegan from making me bitter. I hated to wake up in the morning there, but now I love waking up," she adds.

Emery believes more half-way houses, better screening of staff (she says most are uneducated about life and people), and pressure from the outside community will help to bring positive change in prisons.

The Women's Correctional Center in Hallowell, where Maine houses female "adult offenders", merges quietly with a residential neighborhood on a hill overlooking the town and the Kennebec River.

There are no bars, fences, or watch-towers and an unobtrusive sign reading "Stevens School" offers no hint that the clean brick buildings are more than part of an exclusive boarding school.

"The hill" as the institution is called, houses 23 girls under the age of 18 in the Stevens School and 18 women in the Women's Correctional Center.

The superintendent of Stevens School and WCC is Dorothy Hanauer, who has spent about 30 years in corrections. Hanauer has been superintendent since 1970, when she replaced Ward Murphy who at that time became head of the Bureau of Corrections. She had worked with Murphy before moving to Maine in 1962, and joined her staff then at WCC in Skowhegan, before its move to Hallowell in July, 1974.

Hanauer estimates the median age of the adult inmates is 25. She says most are low-income and 2/3 are mothers. The Governor's Task Force states a typical WCC inmate is white, 19 years of age, from an urban Maine community, single, with a 10th grade education, serving an average 10 month indeterminate sentence for a non-violent drug-related crime or crime against property, and possessing no prior history of major criminal offenses.

The drug-related crimes for the most part include possession of marijuana, LSD, or hypo and syringe, and the sale of amphetamines, barbituates, or LSD. Other inmate crimes include petty larceny, embezzlement, aggravated assault and battery, cheating by false pretense, or escape. There is only one woman who is a state prison case (meaning a

more serious crime). She is in for murder and is serving a life-sentence.

The inmate's daily schedule begins at 7 a.m. when they have an hour to get ready and do their "cottage chore" such as dust mopping, emptying ashtrays, and general cleaning. At 8 they go to breakfast until 8:30 when they begin their work or schooling. Around noon they have 45 minutes for lunch and then return to job or school until 2:30. Nothing is scheduled until supper at 5:30. After supper, if no recreational event is scheduled, they return to their rooms or watch TV, etc. The inmates are required to be in their rooms by 10 p.m. and lights must be out by 11.

Within 30 days after arriving at the institution, each woman meets with her program planning or "casework" committee. According to Hanauer, the inmate has a part in building her own "program", in deciding how her time will be structured. Any changes in these plans, must be approved by the committee.



Dorothy Hanauer

According to Hanauer, most inmates choose a blend of work and schooling. When a woman first arrives, she is placed in the labor pool, which is a housekeeping detail that empties wastebaskets, dusts, mops the auditorium floor, etc. "As soon as we discover a woman's skills or she develops a skill we pull her out of the labor pool," Hanauer says. Other work assignments, arranged by the casework committee, include working in the kitchens, stockrooms, library, etc.

Hanauer says WCC is not dependent on the inmate's work. "This place will run without their labor, but we feel the women are much happier if they are active throughout the day." She adds, "If you're busy, the time goes faster."

One woman, interested in upholstery, chose to fill her day with schooling only, but was persuaded to provide two hours of "creative service", working for a teacher of upholstery at the institution.

Hanauer feels the inmates' work is creative because it is work that needs to be done. "My wastebasket always has something in it...if that's emptied that's creative because it's doing something that needs to be done." ➡

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"We don't make work here," she adds. The inmates do not get paid for the work they do, as the legislature has refused the administration's request for funds to pay them.

Because WCC shares a location with Stevens School, it shares the state-approved educational facilities there which offer a range of academic subjects. The classes are small and most try to get their high school graduate equivalency degrees.

In addition, there are rotating six-week vocational courses such as typing, shorthand, waitressing, cashiering, dishwashing, business math, accounting, child care, nurses aid, stockroom work, library skills, and business machines. With these courses the administration tries to arrange a practicum in the community, so that inmates can apply their skills in a short term practical situation (they are not paid, however).

Asked if the administration had received criticisms about plugging women into traditionally female roles, Hanauer replies, "Well, we have very traditional women here." She notes there have been courses in auto mechanics and household repairs and says there have been women who wanted experience with garage work.

"We anticipate someone will want vocational training in shop work. I would do everything I could to accommodate this, but I don't see how I could house them at Men's Correctional Center (where there are shops)." Ward Murphy of the Bureau of Corrections noted that it would be very expensive to meet 10 different needs within a small inmate population.

Six months before a woman leaves the institution, she may be considered for work release, a program of full-time employment in the community. She receives wages, and can be looking for an apartment, and trying to reorient herself to the outside community.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Inmates can see a doctor or dentist once a week at the institution, although there are nurses there around the clock who make clinic calls and refer patients to the doctors. All medical services are free.

Gynecological services are available on a referral basis. Women accompanied by their caseworker, can elect to go to Family Planning for birth control information. According to Hanauer, the women are responsible for their own birth control.

If a woman is pregnant when she comes to WCC, she is provided with prenatal care thru weekly visits with a doctor and special diets, if necessary, and is taken to Augusta General Hospital when she is ready to deliver.

The inmate is responsible for making her own arrangements for the care of her child, but the institution will provide casework services if the mother needs it. If she does not have other arrangements, she may ask the Dept. of Child Welfare to take temporary custody of the child until she gets out.

During the inmate's "orientation period" she is given a battery of psychological tests on personality, aptitude, etc. Once a week two psychologists and one psychiatrist come to WCC and inmates can see them on a voluntary basis, although sometimes the administration requests the inmate to see them. A psychologist can recommend an evaluation and tests and, assuming the psychiatrist agrees, a woman can be sent to a mental institution where she is either admitted or kept for 30 days observation. According to Hanauer, this is considered a "medical furlough" and is not done without the inmate's consent. Others I talked to said it was sometimes done without consent, especially in the case of troublemakers.

Asked about the use of prescribed drugs at WCC, such as tranquilizers, Hanauer says the doctor or psychiatrist prescribe them only if someone is very anxious, or if someone has an emotional disorder. Hanauer estimates that out of 18 adults, 4-6 use prescribed drugs.

When asked if the women want to use the drugs prescribed for them, she replies, "If it's prescribed we would

assume they would want to take it... she would know why she was getting it, because usually she would have asked to see the doctor originally."

RECREATION

Inmates at WCC have one scheduled recreational activity per week. Providing there is enough staff, a group of women can organize other activities beyond what is scheduled.

According to Hanauer, inmates have a right to say what entertainment they want. There are few recreational facilities at the institution, so the inmates go off the hill to use community facilities. "Our custody is mobile," she notes.

"The women have asked for dancing and want to have a dance with the men's state prison...to me it would be a false sort of thing because what about the married woman who dances with someone else, her husband wouldn't like it," Hanauer states.

Women who qualify for weekend furloughs can go dancing, provided they ask their community supervisors and go to an approved spot. The supervisor must know where they are at all times. According to Hanauer, furloughs are for maintaining family relationships and finding jobs, not vacations.

Inmates are allowed weekly visitors for two hours on Sunday afternoon, provided the visitors are from an approved list. "We want to know who is coming in," Hanauer notes.



MADNESS NETWORK NEWS/cpf

Although no private visits are allowed, visitors are allowed to touch inmates in the visiting room. At Thomaston State Prison for men, visitors are separated by a wide table and observed through sections of glass. Residents at WCC are not allowed to receive gifts without the permission of the Superintendent.

A bill to allow private visits with family, friends, lawyers, and doctors was vetoed by Gov. Longley and the veto was upheld by the legislature. The bill allowed private visits with non-spouses. Talking about the bill Hanauer says, "I think it cheapens sex to schedule it for 30 minutes on Sunday afternoon...besides it could be discriminatory because the lesbian might not be allowed private visits."

Hanauer says there are not many lesbian women at WCC and sex is not allowed within the institution. According to Hanauer "normal" contact is acceptable, for instance if one woman wanted her hair done by another woman. "We do try to shield it (lesbianism) from the younger population because they're very impressionable...they would think it was something sensational to try," she adds. Other people I talked to about lesbianism at the institution suggested it was perhaps more common than the administration reports.

At WCC there is a code of conduct which outlines rules to be obeyed by inmates. Staff reports are made regularly, listing disciplinary charges. If there has been an infraction of the rules reported to the Asst. Superinten-

dent, the inmate is notified that she must see the disciplinary board. Some infractions meet with warnings or counseling rather than reports, although three infractions within 14 days must be reported.

When the disciplinary board receives a report, they call for an investigation by a superior officer, set up a hearing and inform the inmate. At the hearing the inmate hears the charges and can speak to them or, if she has the money, can get a lawyer to represent her. If the inmate doesn't agree with the committee's decision, Supt. Hanauer is the appeal source.

Usual punishment is loss of privileges for a week, loss of good time (days earned off sentence for good behavior), or lock-up. "We prefer not to lock anyone up unless they are out of control and actually destructive," Hanauer notes.

"Sometimes people go out of control, and we must control them and have a place to keep them, but it is a method of control I have not known to be used in the first year since our last escape just before we moved down from Skowhegan."

According to the administrative policy, an officer can, with the approval of a superior officer detain or take physical custody of a resident whose offense "indicates the presence of disorder or potential disorder", or which jeopardizes the safety of residents and staff. According to policy, restraints and detention shall not be "disproportionate to the threat posed

by the resident or continue for a longer period than is necessary to bring the resident under control." Detention for an infraction involving safety risk or disorder (as opposed to an offense) can be no longer than 48 hours.

The security unit at WCC is near completion in a wing of one of the dormitories at a cost of \$177,000. The unit consists of two maximum security cell setups with seven medium security rooms. The maximum security units are self-contained with toilets so the person does not leave the unit. Food trays are slipped through an opening in
con't. on pg.10

THE PAPER PATCH

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voluntary sterilization as birth control

by Karen Kennedy

Voluntary sterilization is a satisfying form of birth control for a few of us; however, the subject is usually treated with utmost hesitancy -- or horror. Perhaps this article will shed some light on the subject.

The most extreme sterilization procedure available to women is the hysterectomy. Hysterectomy as contraceptive sterilization or "hysterilization" is the most effective (100%) form of sterilization. It is also the most dangerous.

Total removal of the uterus is done through an abdominal incision or through the vagina. A "subtotal hysterectomy" leaves the uterine cervix in place, while the rest of the uterus is removed. Sterilization is guaranteed, and menstruation ceases; hence, curing dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation) is a side benefit. Hysterilization is major surgery. Because of high costs and high risks involved in this procedure many view it as unjustified surgery for contraceptive purposes. The risks include the possibility of hemorrhage, infection, complications due to the anesthesia, and a mortality rate of 300-500 per 100,000.

Most tubal sterilizations are also classified as major surgical procedures, but the risks, costs, time involved are less. Tubal sterilization is affected by blocking, severing, or removing the fallopian tubes without interfering with the function of the ovaries or the uterus. If sterilization has been a success, fertilization cannot take place. At ovulation, the ovary as usual releases an egg (ovum) which is caught up into the fallopian tube. Since the tubes have been severed, blocked, or removed there is no way for sperm and ovum to meet. The ovum disintegrates and menstruation proceeds as usual.

Approximately one in two hundred tubal sterilizations fail as contraceptive measures. A D&C (dilatation and curettage) is usually done at the time of sterilization to eliminate any early pregnancy. Interuterine tissues can be checked for cancer as well. Sometimes physicians will do tubal sterilizations under local (vs. general) anesthesia. A few procedures can be done in a physician's office, as long as emergency hospital facilities are nearby.

Methods of tubal sterilization are as follows:

1. Abdominal tubal ligation is done through an abdominal incision of several inches. The fallopian tubes are located, each tied in two places while inside the abdomen, and then cut between the ties. There are several methods of doing the tubal ligation, including Irving's and Pomeroy's.

2. Laparotomy, and laparoscopy, and tubal ligation or cauterization. A tiny incision is made in the naval usually on the rim of the belly button through which about three liters of carbon dioxide is infused into the peritoneal cavity until the abdomen becomes taut. This enables the physician to see the organs through the laparoscope (a sort of telescope inserted through the same incision) and gives her/him room to work.

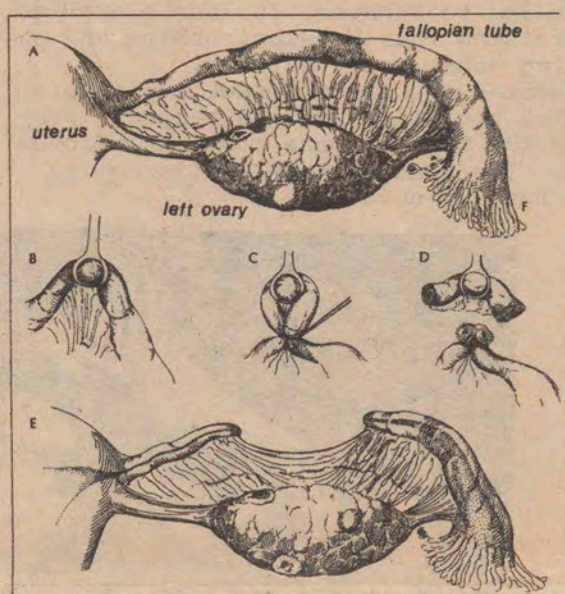
After the laparoscope is inserted and the position of the fallopian tubes is determined, a second small incision is made just above the pubic hair. Introduced into the second incision is a cautery instrument which when applied to the tube electrocoagulates it and seals the ends (cauterization). This is "bandaid" sterilization; the external incisions are so tiny that bandaids will cover them.

3. Uchida tubal sterilization, mini-laparotomy, or mini-lap. A small incision is made in the abdomen, and a special forceps are used to lift the tube one at a time and bring them out through the incision where they can be tied and cut. This is the newest and generally the safest method used. The whole procedure takes 10 to 30 minutes. The recovery time is one to four hours.

4. Experimental hysteroscopic cauterization. An instrument called the hysteroscope, rather like a small telescope is inserted through the vagina and dilated cervix into the uterus. The uterus is distended with carbon dioxide or a dextran or a glucose

solution so that the inside of the uterus and the fallopian tubes branching out of it are visible. A small cautery probe is used to electrocoagulate the tubes where they join the uterus. Scar tissue then forms, blocking the tubes. An advantage of this method is the recovery time required is only a few minutes. Effectiveness is about 90%. Many details of this procedure still need to be worked out. Risks include perforation of the uterus, cauterization of the bowels, bubbles of carbon dioxide in the blood, and the physician's inability to see clearly the tube branching out of the uterus.

5. Other methods of sterilization are done through the vagina such as a vaginal tubal ligation, and culdoscopic sterilization have caused various problems such as post-operative infections and should be avoided.



Pomeroy procedure. In the postpartum Pomeroy procedure, the fallopian tube (A) can be reached easily through a small abdominal incision. A knuckle of the tube (B) is drawn up, tied and cut off (C and D). The end result is shown (E). Note the fimbriae (F).

The cost of sterilization (approximately \$500 for tubal sterilization not covered by insurance) is prohibitive. Yet, over a range of 10 years, it may actually be cheaper than other forms of birth control and related complications, physicians' visits, and/or abortions.

Sterilizations carry risks just as any birth control method. Physical risks after the procedure is completed are minimal. Yet there are some psychological risks in that sterilization is to be considered a permanent birth control method. Unless a woman is clear in her own mind that this method is right for her she may later have real regrets about her actions. She is the only person who knows, in the end, whether or not she should be sterilized. She is the only person who lives with her own sense of self as a woman, and what that means to her.

Our society continues to define a woman as one who will, or should, bear children. To not want children today, or next month, is acceptable. However, in my own search for a physician who would respect my decision to be sterilized, I found that to not want children ever is unacceptable. I explained how I had other things to do, how I never wanted children, and thought seriously about sterilization for four years before actively seeking it. I told him I didn't like babies.

I explained that I was 28 years old and would never consider bearing my first child when I was over 30. I explained and explained to physicians, male and female, to the psychiatrist they requested I see, and to my friends. No, I did not hate my body. In fact, I was pretty careful to treat it well with healthy food, jogging, and yoga. No, I did not see sterilization as mutilating my body. In fact, I was deeply uncomfortable with other forms of birth control and had had complications with all forms I tried. I told them I wasn't a nymphomaniac! I explained how I had made other important decisions in my life, many with an element of "forever" involved.

Finally, I firmly stated that I did not want a hysterectomy because I wanted to menstruate. I could not articulate exactly why I wanted to menstruate, but that it was part of me. By the same token, I explain, bearing children was not part of me. The psychiatrist wanted to "protect me from myself," and urged me to begin therapy.

I began to wonder about the deep psychological reasons other people so firmly resisted my decision. I wondered if unconsciously women who considered their own ability to bear children as part of their identity recoiled from the idea of a sterilized woman just as we sometimes recoil from a physically disabled person. Or perhaps men were afraid that the future changes in society if many women refused to bear children.

I'm not sure exactly what the physicians thought. I only know that they were out to "protect me," and I felt quite alone. My friends however gradually accepted my position and gave me support. One friend had been sterilized and was a source of hope to me.

I have been sterilized for over a year now. I consider this one of the nicest things I've done for myself. I managed to find a willing and competent physician who did a laparoscopy under local anesthesia. I believe I thanked him at least five times.

My sexual relations have changed. I feel more relaxed and in tune with my body. Not only do I not feel like "half a woman," but I feel whole, centered.

Sterilization is a major decision, and with legal action women need to protect their right to be sterilized as well as their right not to be sterilized. Women considering sterilization need good counselors, counselors who have worked through their own biases against (or for!) sterilization. Finally, groups lending money to women for medical procedures should consider adding sterilization to the list.

Note: Until 1969 the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommended that sterilization be performed only on women who were at least 25 years old with five living children, 30 years old with four living children, or 35 years old with three living children. Note that children must be "living". In 1969 the ACOG "liberalized" its stance and came out in favor of more individualized decision-making for each woman. However, before a physician performed a sterilization it was recommended that she or he consult with other colleagues. In 1970 the ACOG grudgingly decided that if a woman wants contraceptive sterilization and her physician agrees, then consultation is not necessary.

(For many women sterilization is not a choice. For a look at sterilization as forced birth control refer to the April-May issue of the Maine Freewoman's Herald on population control.)





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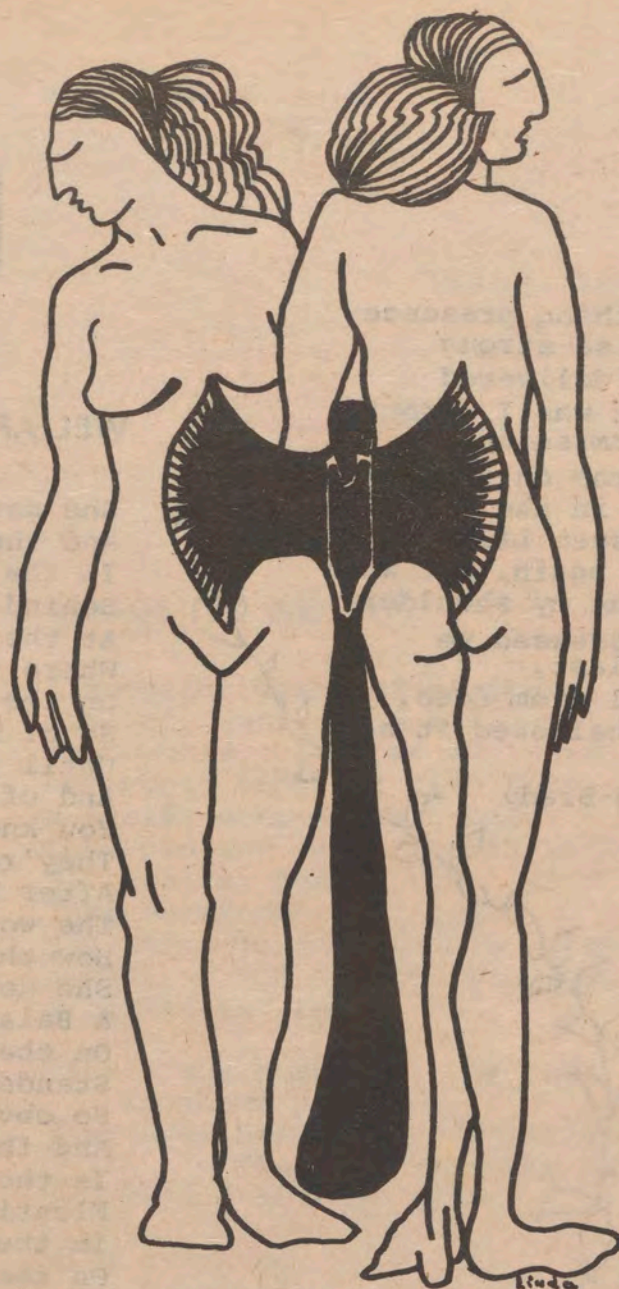
130 feminists from all over North America converged in Vermont on June 8 to begin the first session of Sagaris. For five weeks Sagaris, an independent institute for feminist thought, provided a womanspace for the exploration of political theory and the major issues of the women's movement. Faculty and students dealt with the subjects of money, class, lesbianism, power, leadership, organization, structure. Most women concluded that the creation of cohesiveness and direction in the women's movement depends largely on developing a feminist economic power base, delineating goals and strategies for achieving that, and recognizing and nurturing women's leadership abilities and skills.

A typical day at Sagaris Session I began with a political theory lecture by Charlotte Bunch ("Relationship of Feminist Theory to Strategies and Organization") or by Rita Mae Brown ("Leadership Models and Functions: Male Supremacist and Feminist"). Students divided into small groups of 8 to 10 women to begin to put theory into practice. Before lunch women learned karate and tai chi self-defense techniques. More political theory ("Feminism and Socialism" taught by Candace Falk) as well as elective courses (creative writing, education, journalism, psychology) filled the afternoon. Mary Daly taught Feminist Philosophy, or Emily Medvec demystified economics in the evening.

However intense the experience, Sagaris was not all work and no play. Concerts, films, parties, guest lectures, readings, volleyball, and softball games were an important part of the Sagaris process. One of the high points of Session I was an informal concert performance by musicians Willie Tyson, Casse Culver, and Barbara Cobb.

What did Sagaris women learn from each other?

We learned (1) that conflict can be creative; (2) that if the women's movement is to survive as a catalyst of liberation (i.e. not be co-opted) women must begin right away to examine many assumptions in the movement, particularly assumptions about class, sexual preference, race, and power; (3) that white, middle class, heterosexual privilege and the corresponding double oppression of lesbians, working class, and third



"Sagaris" is the name of the double-edged sword of the Amazons and symbolizes women's unity and power. For information about future sessions write Sagaris, 130 West 86th St., Apt 8C, N.Y., N.Y. 10024

world women must be analyzed and analysis acted upon; (4) that women must find ways to make use of the strengths our differences give us in order to work for the common good of all women.

Future issues of the Maine Freewoman's Herald will explore some of these topics. In the meantime, any woman who would like to join discussion groups focused on what relevance these issues have for women in Maine, please contact "Sagaris Women", Box 488, Brunswick, Maine 04011. We hope to hear from you!

Mary Lou Dietrich
Kate McQueen



lesbian issue

At last -- an entire issue of a national magazine is devoted to lesbian writing and publishing. The August issue of Margins (a review of little magazines and small press books) is a full-scale Focus on Lesbian Writing and Publishing.

"I knew almost nothing about the field of lesbian writing and publishing when I agreed to coordinate this project," says Beth Hodges (guest editor), "and, in my innocence, believed I could do a comprehensive issue. I had no idea there were so many lesbians writing! It's been a real high doing this project, discovering that there's a vital literature, making friends by letter with the writers, the women who run small presses, women who wrote articles for the issue, the artists and the photographers who offered their work."

"I had wanted to do an issue that would be complete, that would cover lesbian writing and publishing. I'm happy to report that my ambition will not be realized -- there is more lesbian writing than any single issue could ever hold."

Beth Hodges speculates that four articles will prove to be most helpful and of greatest interest. These are the "Annotated Checklist of Lesbian Feminist Resources" by Karen Vierneisel, Karla Jay's "Look at Lesbian Magazines," Gene Damon's "When It Changed, or Growing Up Gay in America with the Help of Literature," and Julia Stanley's overview of novels.

The special issue of Margins can be ordered for \$1.00 from Tom Montag/Margins, 2912 North Hackett, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211.

MAINE FREEWOMAN'S HERALD

The Maine Freewoman's Herald is seeking new staff women. Must be in the Bath-Brunswick to Portland vicinity in order to attend weekly meetings.

The vitality and continuation of this paper depends on you! We need fresh ideas and energies.

Women from other areas can contribute as news correspondents, paper distributors, fund raisers, and writers.

There will be a meeting for all new women on August 14 at 7:00 p.m. in Brunswick. (If you can't make it because of distance, please contact us.) The meeting will be at 136 Maine Street in the Maine Land Trust office, up the stairs. For more information call Meg or Char at 926-4343.

★

SPRUCE RUN

Spruce Run is an organization to help women (and children) in marital crisis situations. The Bangor group has opened an office at 44 Central Street and offers pro se help, service referral, and counseling. The phone is 947-0496. Hours are Mon-Fri (except Thurs.) 9am-2pm. If you are interested in joining a Spruce Run group in Bangor, Portland, or Brunswick write: Spruce Run, Box 727, Brunswick, Me. 04011.

★

BALANCING ACT

Balancing Act is an anthology of Maine women's writing compiled by the Portland Women's Group. To order a copy send \$1.95 to Balancing Act, Box 7355, Downtown Station, Portland.

★

THE ALLIANCE OF WOMEN ARTISTS

The Alliance of Women Artists is a coalition of artists providing a supportive work environment for themselves and other women artists. They have rented a building at 60 York Street in Portland to provide studio and work space, an office, and meeting place. For information call Karen Marchetti at 774-8489, Barbara Koch at 773-0859, or Penny Rich at 767-2577.

★

NOW NEWSLETTER

The Lewiston-Auburn NOW Chapter is publishing a monthly newsletter. Write: PO Box 512, Auburn 04210.

announcements

★

WOMEN'S COUNSELING SERVICE

The Women's Counseling Service has opened an office at 13 Main Street in Topsham. Office hours are Monday and Wednesday 7-10 p.m.; Thursday 4-7 p.m.; and Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

The Women's Counseling Service is a place to find help with problems whether or not they have reached a crisis point. Women who are building a stronger identity, who are seeking new ways to relate to their children and families, who are looking for meaningful goals and work, will find other women at WCS who have shared similar experiences and can help them to work through their own.

There is no fee charged. Women who can afford to do so are urged to give money or time in babysitting and transportation. Their number is 729-4561.



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LESBIAN BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Ladder has just issued the 1975 edition of The Lesbian In Literature with 2500 entries. (All of the trash entries from the first edition have been deleted.) The bibliography is partly annotated for easy usage and carefully coded to assist the reader in finding titles of interest. Cost: \$10. (40% discount for 10 or more.) Make check payable to The Ladder, PO Box 5025, Washington Station, Reno, Nevada 89503.

★

MAINE FEMINIST HEALTH PROJECT

The Maine Feminist Health Project conducts gynecological self-help presentations (slide show and demonstration) for any group of 5 or more women. They are also working to set up a women's health center. Pregnancy screening and alternative pregnancy counseling will soon be a service. For more information write: Box 1, Bath 04530 or call Rocki (772-7673); Joanne (926-4343); Laura (567-3100); or Lynn (443-5471).

★

PORTLAND WOMEN'S CENTER

Women working for a women's center in the Portland area have found a summer office. It has been donated (and is shared with) the Old Port Exchange Association. The office is at 388 Fore Street and is staffed 10-2, six days a week.

Every second Monday there is a meeting at the Public Safety Hdqtrs (7 pm) about getting a women's center building. If you are interested in joining this effort call Edna Wallace (774-6040) or come to the Exchange Street office.

★

FEED-A-NEIGHBOR

Feed-A-Neighbor is a program sponsored by SCAR. They have set up eight statewide centers to pick up surplus food and distribute it to those in need. If you have extra vegetables or would like to join this effort call SCAR at 772-2302. (They will arrange to pick up the food.)

★

HELP! HELP!

Help us keep up with announcements. Write us about your group and upcoming events.



MYTH

At forty-three I felt the breathing presence
of a woman on my left. It was so strong
I failed to hear a line or two delivered
from the stage. (Whose play it was I cannot
now recall.) But when at intermission,
gathered under stars and lanterns on the lawn,
I met her eyes, we smiled, and in the fleeting
sweetness there, I knew I had seen Lilith.
I never looked into those eyes again, but when
my escort's tightened hold about my shoulder,
as we drifted to our seats, possessed me
in a clutching way, I knew at last,
that Eve and Lilith never fell from Eden,
though all these years he had believed it so.

Anne Hazelwood-Brady
Kennebunkport

poetry

WAITING

In the night.
Light, cut by the bl.
across the bed.
It speaks of distance
You are all in silver

My hands rest.
They rise up and
They have all kn

Like petals th
If you touch th

WELFARE

She never finished the sixth grade
And they found her with her brother
In the shed
Behind the shack
At the bottom of the ravine
Where the tracks cross the Yalabusha
On the old iron bridge
So of course she went to the Home
Until she was eighteen
And of course
You know what happened after that
They're so promiscuous
After her third bastard
The worker had to explain twice
How the paper wheel with the pills works
She doesn't feed her children
A Balanced Nutritious Diet
On the stamps for which she
Stands and waits three hours
So obviously she isn't very bright
And the only beautiful thing in her life
Is the colt she sees
Floating and free
In the meadow in the ad
On the TV telling people
To bank at their bank
And she shifts uneasily and murmurs
"Ah!"
And one of the kids grunts
"Huh, Ma?"
And she mutters, frowning,
"Nothing".

Joanne Forman
Biddeford

DISCOVERY

I can't be made to answer
to a question-yet unheard,
in the fear of acknowledgment,
the scream of terror
yielding laughter.
with icy edges (Oh! your love-play!)
Now,
these blinding lights of loneliness
Revealing me -- Revealing.

You can't be my savior, nor my answer,
to laughter and tears-
Daddy, you don't live
here,
but, within the darkness of your fear.
I'm crazy -- in my own mind
Marked with blood.

I can share this ache
with you -
but, I love the question on my lips
that never passes,
remains the iridescent bubble-
unburst,

My own virginity to be
discovered,
and taken by myself.

Elaine Morrison
Orono

KEENE MANOR MAMMA

No more astrology
philosophies
you think I'm hooked
into your plug
but I ain't
never will
you try to pry off
the door of silence
I have shut tight
behind my book

Each Mamma tells a story
each one adds a pinch of dirt
a little bitch
wanting me to add
my cynical twist

It's best to be silent
keep my mouth shut
tongue bottled in saliva
no smooth words
smoking Mammias

Linda Rowell
Norridgewock

night.
cut by the blinds, rests in cool lines
the bed.
ks of distance.
all in silver. As remote as a star.

ands rest.
rise up and down with breath.
have all knowledge in repose.

like petals they enfold themselves with night.
f you touch them; they will unfurl.

Nicole d'Entremont
Perry

CONFESSION FOR 2 A.M.

They come
in herds

Soft cattle
brain herds

Money making
dullards

To fawn over
meanwhile,

Sneak
fondling you

Smile another
wine glass smile

Emptying
the ash tray

You do
your job

Another
waitress night

Ends in a
one o'clock drunk

R. J. Faustini
St. George

SUFFER THE WEARY

A Rumpelstilskin of a woman
made of leather and buttons
chin poked out where the teeth are gone
her whole body not five foot
a thrift-shop-bargain body
too worn and old shrunk in places
Her trailer ledges out
like mushrooms on a log
She works in the tunnels of motel bedrooms
smoothing the nights into long gray days
a persistent mole

"Yes the hospital my lady friend
is there you know..."
(her eyes hope for recognition)
"had the runs for two weeks
till I got her there

(the drinking
the cigarettes
the flu)

her clothes now I took
so she can't come home"

fear of poverty like steel teeth
on the outside
fear of the body emptying finally
from the inside
"You don't get over things easy
not when you've got the time she has
One time by the time I got a cab
there was almost a bucket of blood..."

But wait why do I always tell you this?
where are the healthy the sane
the children of our perfection?

I must explain it is just very ordinary blood
it is ordinary drunkenness
pain is the plain paper we use to write
about the need to touch
those no one else will touch the need
to thrust our hands
into the opened body and pull up
wet and shining
all that is alive and whole

Miriam Dyak
Brunswick

16 VI 74

Moisture pin pricks
changed to fluid lines
by slow wiper blades

Quiet moment
under the overpass:
Summer shower

Ann Armstrong
Bath

What Lies Between the Covers of your daughter's textbooks?

by Carla Rensenbrink

In a number of ways the Women's Movement is beginning to make itself felt in schools today. It has brought some new vocabulary, fresh perceptions and revised images. These adjustments are all to the good, but the question persists--are they enough? Do they represent a serious commitment to change? Let's take a look at some aspects of education and see what kinds of changes are taking place.

Books and Textbooks. Schoolbooks teach sexism. That has been abundantly proved in every area of the curriculum, from kindergarten through high school. Primary readers teach girls to be passive onlookers, fearful, vain and unadventurous. The only adult female models presented in these books are full-time housewives who are also shown as helpless and fearful. They spend most of their energy yapping at the children about muddy shoes or messy projects, and invariably end up in the back seat when the family goes out in the car.

Math books teach that girls will use their brains to estimate lengths of ribbon and to measure cups of flour. Boys will calculate speeds and distances, handle money, measure and plan a variety of projects.

High school history books teach that only men make history. In the eight major U.S. history texts used in secondary schools there is no mention of any of the leaders of the women's suffrage movement. There is no discussion of the reasons women did not have the vote earlier, and at best very scanty coverage of the 19th Amendment.

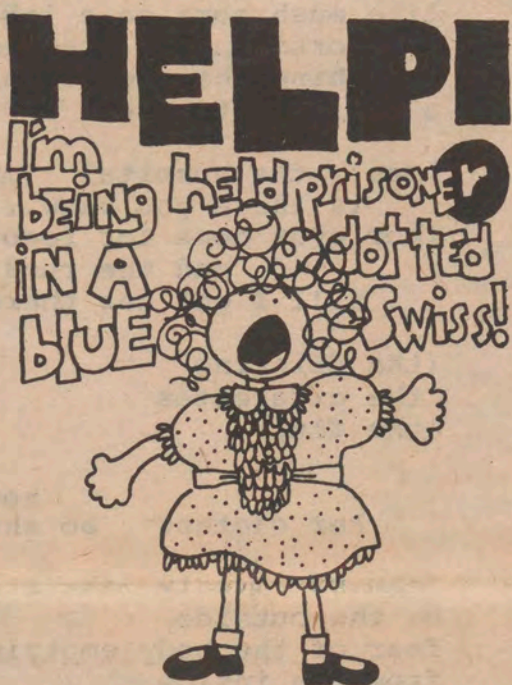
Illustrations of certain aspects of the democratic process (running for office, voting) depict only men. The texts are written in masculine language--mankind, Mr. Average Citizen--and the word *you* in addressing the reader implies that the reader also is male.

Of course it is only in the last few years that the sex-discrimination which permeates school materials has been uncovered. Recently publishing houses have begun to see-if not the light--at least the handwriting on the wall. It does appear that publishers are trying to change stereotyping in text books. Some of them have issued guidelines to textbook authors, helping them avoid sexist language and assumptions. Some have printed new guides for teachers with suggestions for handling sexist materials in a critical way in order to help students perceive and deal with the stereotypes presented in older books.

The textbooks themselves take longer to change. A publisher's representative at last fall's convention of the Maine Teachers Association spoke of efforts in this direction and the difficulties involved. For instance, in parceling out illustrations for a given book, not only must the male-female ratio be observed, but also proportionate representation of Blacks, Chicanos, Indians and other minorities; middle and lower class homes; rural and urban

environments; married and divorced parents.

But changes such as re-arranging the proportions in pictures, though important, tend to be rather superficial. A survey conducted last year by the Feminist Press of all major educational publishers concluded that most current changes in textbooks are "cosmetic". Surface imperfections--illustrations, use of pronouns, sexist language--are dealt with, but the underlying content in many cases remains the same.



from AIN'T I A WOMAN, P.O. Box 1169, Iowa City, Iowa 52240

I have seen very few new school books that could be considered exemplary, but a series of career books for primary grades (put out by Encyclopedia Britannica) struck me as hopeful. Career books, not surprisingly, have been notorious as purveyors of stereotypes. In this series, I saw an illustration of a family kitchen scene: mother was doing some repair work that required a hammer, father was helping a child with homework.

In those books women are mechanics and doctors as well as mothers and many other roles; men can do dishes besides a variety of other things. Children reading books like these can imagine a somewhat wider range of possibilities for their own lives.

In non-school texts change has been quicker. There are many new books presenting non-stereotyped images of males and females, and some old books (like *The Secret Garden* and *Caddie Woodlawn*) have acquired new interest because of their portrayal of strong, original girls and boys sometimes in open opposition to society's expectations.

Lists of such books are available, such as *Little Miss Muffet Fights Back*. Some local and school librarians, aware of the problem of sexism, welcome suggestions of titles to help balance their collections. One school librarian has quietly removed an armful of the heady romances of Betty Cavanna.

Some of the recent books, influenced by this current wave of feminism, are disappointing. They have changed, but the change is not profound enough and in some cases the old messages are there in a new guise.

For example, the title *Girls Can Be Anything* (by Norma Klein) sounds right on, but take a closer look. A little girl and her neighbor, a boy, are pretending they are various kinds of grown-ups. The girl wants to be a doctor, a pilot and a president--roles that the boy knows are not for girls. The girl goes to consult her parents. She finds them in the living room; father is reading the paper, mother is doing some embroidery.

Mother and father answer her questions by citing two remarkable women (Mrs. Gandhi and Mrs. Meir) and concluding, yes, she might even be president. The underlying message of this story is that a few unusual women do achieve high positions (which in itself does not speak to the little girl's right to imagine herself as a pilot rather than a stewardess), though mommies look pretty much the same as ever. Similar themes are presented in a poem called "The New Kid", published in the April edition of *Cricket: The Magazine for Children*. The poem is about the new kid in the neighborhood who has joined the baseball team. This phenomenal kid "never muffs a grounder or fly/ no matter how hard it's hit or how high./ And the new kid always acts quite polite,/ never yelling or spitting or starting a fight." The new kid is, of course, a girl, as we learn in the last line: she's so good "we don't even care that the kid's a girl."

If a girl is some kind of paragon, then we boys won't mind letting her play on our team. There is no suggestion here that a girl has a right to participate, to enjoy, to learn or to make mistakes. It's the old (abandoned?) medical school principle: a girl must be #1 in her college class to have any hope of acceptance. Or, it's the story of Jackie Robinson, who had to be twice as good as anyone else to make the Brooklyn Dodgers.

I'm sure the author of this poem felt he was doing something for the cause of equal opportunity. Thanks, but no thanks. If such exacting standards are demanded of girls, who can blame them if they protect themselves by refusing to try? And then the coaches (or deans or personnel officers) will be able to say, "Well, of course we'd let them in, but they don't try out".

Teachers. All of us who teach have used those sexist textbooks and unconsciously taught those messages. Some teachers are properly horrified at the implications of what they have been teaching, perhaps for a long time. One English teacher looks back in revulsion on her insistence over the years on the generic singular he and his, as in, "Everyone votes for the candidate of his choice." She now puts non-sexist language above correct grammar and permits "their choice".

There are more serious examples of sexism in every school. It has been shown that some teachers have different expectations of boys and girls. They expect (and receive) more trouble from boys and give them more attention. They tend to reward passivity in girls. Some teachers grant special privileges to one sex, allow separate lunch lines, form teams of the boys-against-the-girls.

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It is hard to generalize on how much opposition to sexism is found among teachers in Maine. In some schools there doesn't seem to be the merest breath of criticism. Other schools have a number of teachers who are informed and active. In one school I visited the issue of sexism was viewed as the particular complaint of a small vocal group. The rest of the teachers, in criticizing this group, managed not to ask whether sexism was part of their own practice.

However little has been done as yet by teachers to equalize opportunities for girls and boys, I'm convinced that most teachers are able to recognize the issues. At the moment this recognition may be expressing itself in some distorted ways: titters, heavy jokes, proud claims of being a M.C.P. or purposeful bumbling over non-sexist titles and language.

This does not appear to be a very promising level of awareness, but in fact it may be encouraging. Recently at the Representative Assembly of the MTA (where 70% of the representatives are male for an association that is 60% female), all these manifestations of confusion and hostility were going on. I thought it augured ill for a series of resolutions which had been proposed by the Womens' Caucus.

The resolutions dealt with eliminating sexist language, providing workshops on non-sexist teaching, and assisting teachers who want administrative jobs. To my surprise, however, despite the jokes and titters, all these resolutions passed--without any opposing votes. Perhaps the vote meant that though people may feel uncomfortable with some of these new ideas, they do acknowledge that the issues are valid, and that change is coming.

Administrators. Public education--both teaching and administering--was once the province of women in this country. After World War II higher salaries attracted men into the profession, and now they dominate it. As in all other institutions of our society, the men hold the policy-making, leadership roles, the women the lower-status jobs.

Although women constitute 60% of the classroom teachers in Maine, there is only one female superintendent. There are no women principals at the secondary level. At the elementary level, fewer than 7% of full-time principals are women.

If teaching principals (where the principal usually teaches a full load as well as taking care of administrative duties) are included, women account for about 20%. But even this low percentage is misleading, as women principals are apt to work in smaller schools. The average number of teachers working with male principals is 22, with female principals it's 8.

I was reminded recently how much it is assumed that administrator=man. A group of elementary principals met to discuss transferring math programs to the metric system. Some business cards were distributed, advising "Think metric" on one side. On the other side was a pin-up girl in a bikini, her measurements recorded in metric. Obviously if women were represented in greater numbers, such cards would be changed.

Though this may serve as an illustration of the problem, I don't mean to present administrators themselves as the "bad guys", just because of the position they occupy. In fact, at two recent workshops with superintendents and high school principals, I was impressed by the seriousness and lack of hostility which Affirmative Action issues were discussed.

Affirmative Action. A new state law, passed in April, requires all local school districts to submit written Affirmative Action Plans by July of 1976. What can these plans do to fight sexism in Maine?

For one thing, the law gives official recognition to the problem of sex bias in our schools. We don't (presumably) need to argue any more about whether sexism exists, but can move on from there--toward change.

It is also significant that a local plan is specified. This means that each school system will be taking a good look at its own staff and program, to see where discrimination lurks. It is the superintendent who is responsible for developing the plan. This is certainly a weak point unless she or he either requests volunteers for a committee or yields to pressure from people wanting to serve. It would be best to have different groups--teachers, students, school board members, parents, administrators--serve on the committee, thus insuring community representation.

The committee needs to deal with two quite distinct parts in an Affirmative Action Plan: one dealing with employment, which falls under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the other dealing with the school program, which falls under Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972.

The program section protects the students' rights and covers any aspect of school life where girls and boys may not have been receiving equal treatment. Some research will need to be done in this area: How many different sports are offered to boys and girls? Who participates? What are the girl-boy ratios in Home Economics and Industrial Arts? What kinds of guidance and career materials are used? Undoubtedly the facts and figures resulting from such research will provide clear evidence of sex bias in any given school. Based on this evidence the committee will then work out concrete steps for eliminating such discrimination in the curriculum.

Although Title IX does not itself cover textbooks--for fear of violating the 1st Amendment--there should certainly be some provision for the selection of non-sexist books in an Affirmative Action Plan.

The employment section of the plan will follow a similar procedure: first some research, then some plans for action. The committee will need to find how many men and women are employed at what levels and what salaries. Proposals for this section might include: efforts to seek out qualified women candidates for administrative positions,

elimination of discriminatory questions in job interviews (like asking a woman candidate how she will provide for her children while she works), provision of training or other ways out of dead-end jobs, which have traditionally been the lot of women and minorities.

In education the attempt to increase the numbers of women in administration has a double reason--to give women opportunities they were formerly denied, and also to provide students with role models of women in leadership positions. The picture of a male principal, surrounded by his female teachers, fits in too neatly with some long-established prejudices, and reinforces them in students.

This kind of role-modeling contributes to certain notions that children grow up with (and adults retain): that men are leaders and women followers,

that men can't work for a female boss, that a leadership position is in conflict with the female role. There have been many studies documenting the need for role models, particularly non-traditional ones, enabling girls to imagine wider possibilities for themselves. At present, in terms of leadership positions, our schools do little to fulfill this need.

Affirmative Action will not bring on the millenium, but it does give legitimacy to the cause we've had to argue for. Perhaps we can get farther discussing what we must do to fulfill the requirements of an Affirmative Action Plan than we can trying to convince the unbelieving that sexism exists.

On the whole, there are some encouraging things happening in the fight against sexism in schools. There is a sense that things are moving--ideas are changing, the institution is yielding to pressure. The movement is, of course, so slow as to be at times imperceptible, but I think it will move on. The greatest danger does not seem to be that it will grind to a halt, but rather that it will be co-opted. In the changes we have seen there is an alarming tendency to gloss over the tougher issues of sexism, and to offer a superficial improvement. This kind of change will not do--for ourselves, or our children, or the children we teach. But there will have to be a lot of pushing and a lot of watchdogging if we want a deeper change.

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the door. The heavy metal doors have windows so the inmate can be watched.

A special maximum security room is all tiled with a built-in tile bed (and mattress). No furnishings are allowed and the inmate is in full view of the staff (behind bars). An inmate's own room can become a maximum security unit by having all her furnishings moved out, which is sometimes done. The medium security rooms in the isolation unit do have furnishings and the inmate can leave the room to go to the bathroom.

The security units are stark and are referred to by the residents as "the hole". On our tour of the prison, a few staff members seemed puzzled by the existence of the new security wing. One commented, "I thought we were getting away from this sort of thing... moving in another direction." Certainly one must question the necessity of nine security units for a population of 18 inmates, only one of whom is serving time for a crime in the more serious bracket called state prison cases.

Looking ahead to the future and possible changes at the institution, Hanauer foresees area centers, which provide conglomerate services to "adult offenders". These area centers would be one unit to serve all correctional institutions, including those for men. The Governor's Task Force on Corrections has recommended that WCC become co-ed.

In 1961 the average population at WCC was 85, while four years later it was 57. According to Ward Murphy, head of the Bureau of Corrections, "There has been a steady decline until two years ago when it stabilized."



Ward Murphy

"There were too many people in the institution that did not need institutionalization. Most were in on indeterminate sentences and could have been released if there were more community programs," Murphy says. She continues, "Institutions should not be babysitting with people just because they have committed an offense...correction can best be served in the community." ("Idle and disorderly", along with similar charges have been taken off the books, eliminating a former segment of the prison population).

Although there has been increased use of probation and the length of sentences has, in general, been reduced,

Murphy feels the reduction of the inmate population at WCC has stabilized. Those left in the prison, she goes on, are state prison cases with minimum sentences before eligibility for work release, and women with indeterminate sentences who have just come in and are not involved in any program to see when they could leave.

There are two classes of sentencing in Maine--state prison sentences with a specific amount of time to be served and indeterminate sentences which state a minimum time, but not a maximum. A common indeterminate sentence is 1-3 years.

According to Murphy, anyone with an indeterminate sentence would meet the parole board after about a maximum of 9 and 1/2 months at the prison, i.e. one year minus "good time" which is seven days per month earned off the sentence assuming the person "gets along reasonably well with her peers and supervisor," and receives favorable disciplinary reports. For "exemplary service" she can earn two more days off per month.

According to Murphy, the one halfway house serving women was closed in January, 1975 because it was not serving a statewide population. Murphy says people could not travel to Skowhegan easily and the money was transferred to group home placements and foster care placements in the community.

Murphy feels that along with the extensive push for equalization of women's rights, has come a more active role in crime. "The kinds of offenses for which people are admitted for today (at WCC), as a whole, are more serious," she says. Not only are women acting out more, she notes, but police, courts, and juries are less likely to say, "Well, we won't sentence her to an institution."

The part-time advocate for the WCC inmates is Bob Carlson, also the advocate at Maine State Prison in Thomaston. Carlson, who calls himself an independent agent, comes to WCC only on Mondays for four hours, to have dinner with the inmates. They can also communicate with him by mail, he notes.

Carlson's duties include initiating grievances or helping to have them resolved, reporting to the administration, and providing inmates with information on their rights and privileges.

According to Carlson, most inmate complaints focus on "I'm in prison." He says inmates want to have more control over their community ties and their lives within the prison. As an example, he points to women who don't want to go to the gym for exercise just because it's the time scheduled to go to the gym for exercise. Presently the inmate has no choice because staffing arrangements are not very flexible.

Other complaints involve the dress code, haircuts, medication, mail procedures, furlough denials, etc. Carlson says he doesn't get many complaints about neglect or mal-treatment, and most inmates seem happy about the education program where they pick up "marketable skills".

If someone has a general complaint, he tries to determine the facts by talking with the inmates and the staff, and resolve the problem at the lowest level within the department. If an inmate faces the disciplinary committee Carlson, who never works directly with the committee, can recommend the establishment of a contract, a system where-

by the inmate agrees to act according to the rules and regulations and the institution agrees to reward her on some level if she maintains good behavior.

Carlson says the administration may be setting "unrealistic standards" for inmates. "It's unfair to expect people to adopt our value system while they're in...we expect them to act according to where we're coming from, rather than where they're coming from," he says. "We expect people to do a 180 degree turn and be middle class," he goes on. "It would be better to set up a viable alternative with the inmate making active choices about what's best for her, and what she can realistically do." Opting for community-based corrections, Carlson favors reintegrating inmates sooner into the community and providing supports for them there.

About three years ago Norma Jane Langford, a Portland free lance writer, wrote a series of articles on the Maine prison system. Disturbed by the difficulty journalists had interviewing prison inmates, she won a suit against Maine's Bureau of Corrections to allow journalists to enter Maine's institutions. Langford was a member of the Governor's Task Force on Corrections which completed its year-long study in 1974.

Langford is quick to note that the prison system does not like the press, does not like to be criticized. Their excuse is openness to the press weakens security. According to Langford, "The doors need to be opened to outsiders...they need to open up channels of communication with the outside community."

As a result of her experience with the corrections system, Langford condemns it saying "The whole system just isn't working...everything we know says you can't impose rehabilitation...then why lock them up?" she asks.

Langford says it's hard for the system to meet individual needs in a mass way. "There is no way for the individual to fight that system...the inmates are powerless and that's a bad situation no matter how humane the staff."

One game the inmates play according to Langford, is refusing to take responsibility for themselves. They continue to blame their circumstances on society or their parents, which although justifiable, is a "no win" policy, because it limits taking positive action to help oneself. Perhaps that's one reason why Langford feels the system isn't working--because it reinforces the loser mentality.

Langford says when she visited WCC there were no complaints about the quality of staff care, but there were complaints there, and in other prisons, about arbitrary demerits based on a guard's mood.

She outlined a picture of inmate frustration because of delays when seeking medical attention. For example, if an inmate has a toothache she can't call a dentist without getting permission to see a dentist from the bureaucracy.

Langford goes on to say that anyone who causes trouble is assumed to be in need of psychiatric care. "Maybe you're just mad and want to protest," she notes. "Well, haven't you been feeling well, dear?" is the administration's patronizing response.

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Langford says the world of prison is an unreal "little, isolated world". "There is a lot of game playing between guards, inmates, and the administration...everyone is trying to outcon everybody else. The administration should be saying 'Let's stop these games' but they don't because they're not aware of it." She feels the removed isolated environment is not good preparation for the "outside".

In one of her articles Langford says, "It was frightening to see what happened to people when they lost basic freedoms. The experience made Task Force members appreciate simple things; the right to speak, the right to read, the right to vote; the right to associate with friends of one's own choice, the right to choose medical or psychiatric care."

"It made us appreciate even simpler things--the right to take a bath, the right to clean sheets, the right to choose what you would eat, what you would wear, how you will spend your leisure time."

At WCC inmates cannot visit in each others rooms, they can't make telephone calls, they can't have private visits, and even their mail is checked for money and contraband. They can't "horse around", they can't swear, they can't drink wine or liquor, or be too messy.

Another member of the Governor's Task Force on Corrections is Liz Hoglund, who was also the state's youth services coordinator under Gov. Ken Curtis. She is a member of the WCC Board of Visitors, a citizens review committee.

Hoglund and other members of the Board met with six inmates at WCC, without representatives from the administration present. She says the inmates were "delighted to have someone from the outside to talk to."

The biggest worry of the inmates was, she states, "When are we going to get out?" Most are in on an indeterminate sentence, dependent on good behavior. Hoglund describes it as "Your life is in someone else's hands" and says the inmates develop an attitude of "O.K., what do you want from me? I'll play the game."

Other inmate complaints were not enough exercise, difficulty in adjusting to the different personalities of the guards (some let you do things, others don't), and not being able to do what you want (if you want to read but everyone else is scheduled to go to the gym, you have to go to the gym).

According to Hoglund a lot of the prison inmates seem pleased with the educational opportunities through the classes where they receive a lot of attention and get something which might not be available in the outside world. "But most didn't feel they were being rehabilitated in terms of not recommitting crimes or learning to deal with their problems," she notes.

Hoglund feels individual treatment plans are not sophisticated or individualized enough. "But you can't set up a program that costs \$100,000 for only one person. Because of the small population, the institution can't meet individual needs due to cost."

Hoglund says in relation to value systems, the administration has in mind what a socially acceptable person is. But, she asks, "Are they in tune with the 70's?" Referring to the administration she says "They really do care. They try very hard to do what is right, but working in a field for so long you lose track of the goal sometimes."

According to Hoglund the general attitude of the administration toward the public is one of "Who are you to question our policies?" She notes the Board of Visitors has a hard time getting information, and has recommended that they be kept more informed.

Another voice critical of the criminal justice system is the Statewide Correctional Alliance for Reform (SCAR), a Portland-based group including ex-offenders, who are working for a program of broad social change.

SCAR believes that crime is due to social and political conditions rather than defects in individuals, and that a system of punishment based on lock-

ing people up does not get to the root of the problem and will not eradicate crime.

"Most crimes would not occur if the economic system were different", says Patricia Gross of SCAR. "Society tells you to buy and want certain things. If you're confronted enough with society's image and you can't have it through honest means you get frustrated and you steal. The system promotes competition and greed, which promotes crime. Most people are in for property crimes, or drugs, or other victimless crimes, and it's because they don't have enough money."

Gross says poor people usually end up in prison because they can't afford a good lawyer while rich people can get off the hook. Langford agrees saying, "Prisons are really for poor people because the rich can afford to do otherwise."

Gross and Casey Hubbs, another member of SCAR feel there is no reason for prisons to exist, in most cases, because "keeping people in the community is so much better. They don't have the adjustment problems there that come with the absence of children and their families."

Gross and Hubbs state that prison, rather than rehabilitating people, merely punishes them. They say rehabilitation means reeducating people to help themselves, so they won't commit future crimes. "Rehabilitation centers should be places where people grow, not where they are stifled."

According to their theory, the money saved by eliminating prisons could go toward job training or education. Because there are so few women in Maine prisons, the cost of keeping a woman there ranges from \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year (twice the cost of keeping a man).

Langford, in one of her articles on the prison system says some Task Force members concluded the correction system Maine now has for the poor could be made to match the system Maine has for people who can pay.

"Why not, for instance, send delinquent kids to private schools? It would be far cheaper than sending them to the Boys Training Center (\$16,000 a year) or the Stevens School (\$23,700 a year)."

"Why not send most older offenders to vocational schools and colleges? They could attend Harvard with money to spare for what it costs to keep them at the Men's Correctional Center (\$10,000 a year)."

Why not make it possible for offenders to choose the rehabilitation they need? The state wouldn't consider choosing a psychologist for a person who can pay for this service, yet it does this routinely for those who cannot.

SCAR has been active for the last 2 and 1/2 years and now has several work projects such as busing visitors to the prisons, offering paralegal help, and maintaining a drop-in center, bail fund, newspaper, speakers bureau, and legislation advocacy.

Gross says the WCC administration has not been cooperative about letting SCAR members visit inmates. In one of her articles, Langford says SCAR is considered a "bad" organization by the corrections administration and is often stopped at the gates (at Thomaston) and subjected to endless questions.

"Good" groups at Maine State Prison according to Langford are church groups, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and Alcoholics Anonymous. "Bad" books and magazine are not permitted there such as Soledad Brothers, Che Guevara Speaks, and the National Lampoon. At WCC the issue of banning literature hasn't come up very often, but one administrator said a review committee can prohibit literature on an issue to issue basis if it was pornography or represented a security risk. There would be an appeal procedure, however, for

the inmate.

Backing up SCAR's social and political analysis is a woman who is on the staff of a self-help therapeutic community in another state. As she requests that her name be withheld, I'll refer to her as Susan Bradley.

Bradley was in a state penitentiary for several years, and spent most of that time in solitary confinement. She spent several years after her release working in correctional systems. She believes crime and drug abuse are a direct result of social, political and economic conditions.

Bradley states that 75% of New York City drug addicts are poor 3rd World people (from Africa, Latin America, etc). White people use "nice" drugs, while poor Blacks and Chicanas use "cold, hard drugs", she notes. She says the number of women addicts is at an all time high.

People who do not have choices in life use drugs more, Bradley says. "They don't like to steal or cheat, they do it in order to survive."

Bradley criticizes prison systems in general, because they use drugs to control behavior, they use inmates as guinea pigs for research, and they send lesbians or "disturbed" women off to mental hospitals.

She notes the systems of hierarchy which pits women against women within the prison. "The inmates don't hate the superintendent, they hate the turnkey, the one they have direct contact with. And the turnkeys are angry about being low on the totem pole. This is a class issue in a system designed by white males which creates a divide-and-conquer situation," she adds.

"I don't see the system making real changes shortly. Prisons should be replaced by self-help treatment centers run by the victims so inmates would be helping inmates," she proposes.

Bradley feels the self-help idea using peer group pressure, support and guidance is an exciting, positive alternative to prisons. "I can help people to help themselves, but I can't help them," she says.

She adds that a program run by the people in it, with the staff there to help out, provides an equal relationship between the residents and the staff.

As a former prisoner, Bradley urges women to help their sisters in jail. "When a woman is in prison, it's important that she has people out there to write to her. The administration would know she had a concerned person out there into positive things."

"If you've got a commitment to women, to your sisters, drop her a letter. Play their game to benefit the woman. She needs us. The system is bad, but we can deal with it because we're out. But the woman who is in feels like a dog."

Looking at the situation of women in Maine prisons it may, on the surface, not appear to be too bad, especially compared to more urban states.

But, in prison, these women are not paid for their work, their freedoms are severely restricted, and their chances for true rehabilitation through economic and social security are zero. Money is appropriated for security wings rather than job programs. The prison environment reinforces what society already tells a poor person who commits a crime--"you're a loser".

These women's economic and social status in society is reflected in their unequal status in the prison hierarchy, and the fact that they're in prison in the first place. And this situation goes beyond 18 women in Maine prisons--it's everywhere.

Note: There is no "penpal" mechanism at WCC, but the Asst. Supt. said if someone wants to write a prisoner they should contact the prison administration. A caseworker would be consulted as to who received little mail and the inmate would be consulted to see if she agrees. The address of WCC is PO Box 270, Hallowell, Maine 04347. I would really like to hear from anyone interested in doing this.

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