



by Meg McMullen

Just goes to show you what a long month and a short field of vision will do. Last week as I was sauntering through my local Disco Discount Cheapness Mart, trying to convince myself I didn't have a basic life need for the heap of plastic and elastic in my shopping cart, I glanced up, and my eyes were met by a sign that read: "March is Shin Care Month!"

SHIN care! What'll they think of next? Shin care, for the sake of flying flopsy, who gives a... then, of course, I stepped a little closer to the sign suspended over several cases of caramel colored goop which was, they claimed, something good for your skin. (Although from the color alone I would not want to apply that particular lotion any closer to my internal organs than my Achilles tendons.)

So that set me to thinking. First of all about getting my glasses changed, and secondly about skin. And when I got to the privacy of my boudoir mirror for my nightly smile practice, I moved in a little closer to the reflection and experimented with several crinkles and winks designed to assess my February wrinkle crop.

February was a fine month for wrinkles this year. Splendid. More per square sag than in any previous year, due, I assume, to the abundance and purity of the, uh, fertilizer I've been wallowing in.

But the thing about wrinkles and lines is, I like 'em.

How many years I have waited for this facial harvest. I mean, I've earned these lines...they can tell you who I am, what I've done. And following their patterns sketches in the details of my life.

I realize, however, that not everyone has quite the same fascination with face maps. I was talking to Ann, my cohort in the land of the legal orange, last week shortly after the Disco Mart episode.

Ann has decided, after a number of years of teaching, that there are joys in being a student. She's going back to school so she can be a doctor. Not a doctor-doctor, you know, but a doctor of reading, who will, dressed in her white cape, fly throughout our mighty land, healing little illiterates.

Anyway, all the decisions and acceptances and congratulations have been made, but our noble Ann needs a few thousand dollars to kind of cover the basic expenses. She is, she says, considering writing to the Ivory soap people, trying to get herself featured on a commercial as a faithful user of their sudsy purity.

"I really have been using it for years, you know," she tells me, testing her sell. Then she pauses. "Do you think, Margaret," she asks, "that they're going to be interested in a thirty-six year old woman who looks like a twelve year old with wrinkles?"

Well, I tried to break the news to her gently, but those things come hard sometimes. I think Ann's nearly ready to accept a slower, but surer, way of earning the cash. And along with it, a few more wrinkles. And when she's finished, she's going to look a lot more like a real adult woman than practically anyone she'll see on tv pushing super soaps and puffy potions. I'm sure she'll come to appreciate that.

I might have cheered her a bit, however, had I told her a whole new field of advertising may open up for her. I figure sometime within the next few months the campaign will be underway to find the next model for the annual March Shin Care posters. Till then, she should keep on smiling. That makes terrific wrinkles.

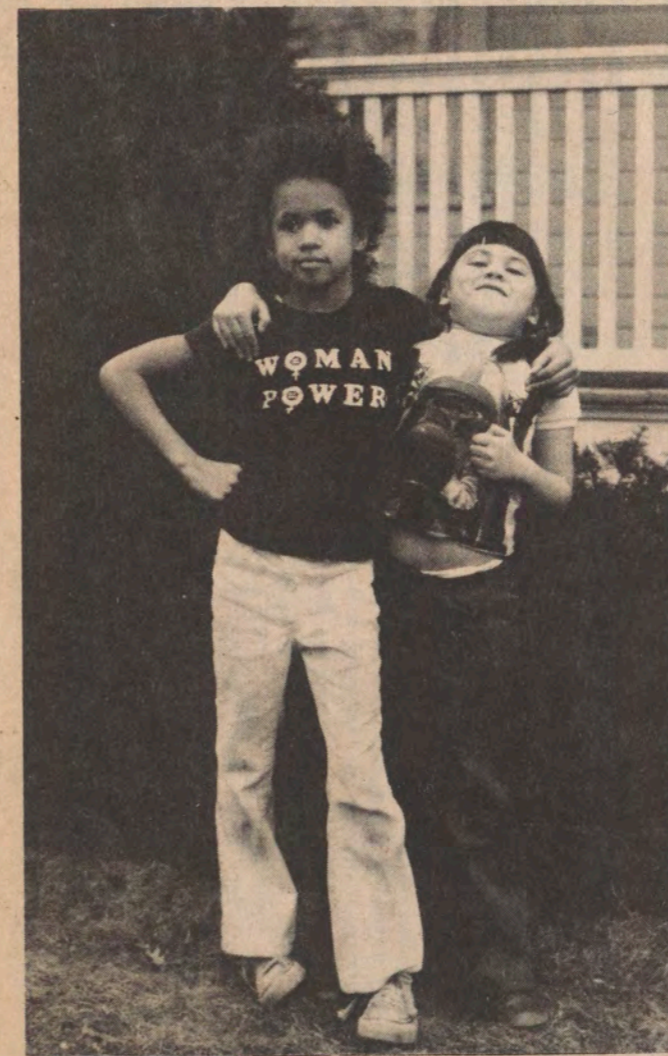


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SPRING 1978

ISSUE 9 VOLUME 4 40¢

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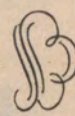
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maine freewoman's herald



So, what has happened since the Maine Freewoman's Herald put out our distress call last November, with our previous issue?

The response was wonderful at the November general meeting. We had twenty or so women there, about seven of whom considered themselves staffers, with varied experience. The rest were new -- also with varied experience at newspaper work.

We had put together a collection of all the old FWHs, which we handed out to each woman (and it was worth going to the meeting to get that, we immodestly feel) and a brief description of what duties and skills are needed to get a paper to press. We talked, did an around-the-room bit, and generally got to know each other. The feedback from new and old people was good -- heartwarming, even.

Then we started having weekly meetings, alternately at Portland and Topsham, and in the beginning, they were very well attended. We spent these meetings planning and discussing the paper you now have in your hands. There was a beginning cohesiveness developing -- group spirit, if you will.

Then it came time for layout, and that was where we fell apart as a group. It's time-consuming, layout, and not many of us have the skills involved. There is a lot of driving time required; up to an hour for some. One of the big problems

FROM THE STAFF

for our groups is being so spread out, and I guess that's true for many Maine organizations. Some of the time there was heavy snow on the roads, and for various other reasons, both valid and invalid, many of us didn't make it to Portland for layout.

Another problem we still face is distribution. There were two women who decided to take on this task, and one has since moved to California and the other has found herself without a car, which makes it nearly impossible for her to do very much distribution. As an alternative, she spent many hours sending out notices to various women's groups, hoping to receive some assistance. She got no response.

We still need lots of help getting advertising for the paper. It feels real hard for me to think of soliciting ads -- is there anybody who feels comfortable doing this sort of thing and who would be willing to put out some time on it? There is the alternative of not feeling comfortable

with it and doing it anyway. (I am talking to myself, too.)

In short, we are still struggling. We know each other better, and a lot of us want very much to get out a good paper that will be beneficial to Maine women. We still have a lot to learn, a lot to understand about each other -- and we do still need more energy, both from ourselves and from new women.

I am a feminist. I have faith in women's ability to create and control their own lives, but it surely does seem like we've got a long battle ahead of us, on many fronts, both individually and collectively.

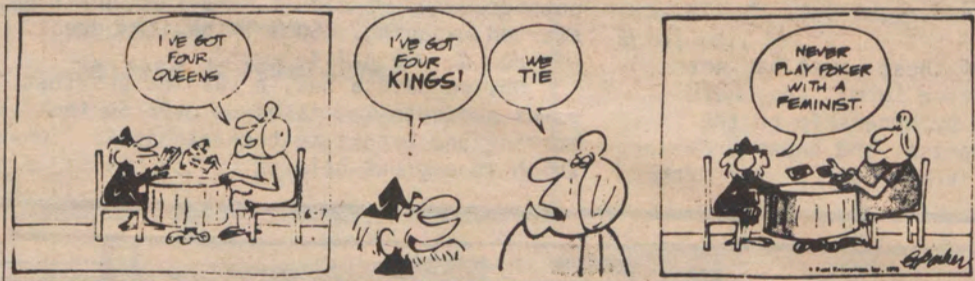
Feminism is only a theory until it becomes a way of living for the majority of humans on this globe -- then it will be not theory but a part of life, a given. Common knowledge of the progress and problems of feminist groups (without invading any member's privacy) is an important part of making the framework of feminism solid. In the hope of contributing to that, I've attempted to give you an idea of what's going on with us. Any feedback or questions will be welcomed.

Donna

PUZZLE ANSWERS

The answers to last issue's Doo-Dah Double Crostic (as if any of you needed them by now) are:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| A. Eunice Wyatt | N. Twice Before |
| B. Stutter | Its Close |
| C. Sister Boogie | P. Deed |
| Woman | R. Trent |
| D. Lilith | S. Nora Ephron |
| E. Cass | T. The Female |
| F. Pomegranate | Eunuch |
| Seeds | U. Lyn Rosen |
| G. Michigan | V. Custody |
| H. Pentimento | W. Athena |
| I. Moffitt | X. Heidi |
| J. Christopher | Y. Indigo |
| Street | Z. Juno |
| K. Femme | AA. Spoon |
| L. Orgasm | BB. In Code |
| M. Lady Jane | CC. Yoko Ono |
| Grey | DD. End |



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FOR SCAPEGOATS ONLY: PACKING FISH IN MAINE

"Economists have computed the total underpayment of women workers as amounting to \$109 billion each year." *

When you say "fish packer" to a Maine native, it is assumed you mean a woman. Why? Here are some of management's explanations: women are used to preparing food, better suited for it; their fingers are more nimble; they don't mind the monotony or the smell the way a man would; the irregular hours give them more time at home.

A worker's explanation: "Packing sardines? Depends on how bad you need a job. It's inconvenient as hell to family life. About all it's good for is when you're a high school student, and you want to make a little money in the summer. But if you're packing fish and you don't have the educational opportunity to get yourself out of it, or if you've got kids to feed, they've got you over a barrel!"

A woman who packs fish is typically over 40, without a high school diploma, grateful to have been hired, and afraid of being fired. She is called in to work when the fish are running (workers are called in on the basis of seniority -- longest there, first called.)

Her job consists of standing at a table cutting and packing the fish, which come to her via conveyor belt. The fish are cold, slippery and wet, and she cuts them with scissors to fit into the cans. Her hands dart from the pile of fish on her table to the cans lined up in front of her, scissors flicking, hummingbird speed.

She must put between four and 24 fish into each can (depending on size of fish) and she must pack 200 cans in an hour to make her \$2.30 minimum wage. Often she gives up part of her lunch hours and breaks to accomplish this. (When the belt stops for 15 minutes for a break, workers who have hoarded fish on their tables can continue packing far into the break.) Often she cuts her fingers in her haste to make her quota.

Each hour she works she packs \$50 worth of fish; but she only gets \$2.30 for her work -- less than 5% of what she produces. What happens to the other 95%? Curiosity runs low on this subject in fish packing plants -- she is grateful to get her 5%.

There exists an escape valve, a small one, for fish packing women that is reminiscent of prison behavior. In one woman's words...

"Senior staff people could bait the boss; that was their relief. The workers would catcall and whistle at any man who came in dressed in a suit -- tease him about sexual matters -- and sometimes they (the workers) ran them right out..."

But the anger of these women has not taken on a constructive form; they have no union. Hand-fed by ownership on the myths of free enterprise, and knowing no alternatives, most seem to accept the myth

that "hard work is its own reward." Company loyalty runs deep.

The following is a transcription of a videotaped interview with Elizabeth Kenney, a packer at the Stinson plant in Belfast. Ms. Kenney supported, until recently, her father, her daughter, and two neighborhood children.

She had to go twice a day to the town pump for water until she got lucky. The Waldo County Center for Social Action took an interest in her and arranged for her to appear on public television, whereupon she asked the town to put in plumbing on her street, and got it.

In this interview, Karen Saum of Women's Video Works, Belfast, asks the questions.

The Elizabeth Tape

I used to be a maid.

Did you work for private people in their houses?

Yes.

How did you like doing it?

Well, it was nice but I'd much rather work for Stinson's.

Why?

Because...you're more independent. It's not a nine-to-five job.

What is it?

You go out at seven in the morning... you get out when it's done -- not later than five.

(Here the tape switches to music -- a frenzied fugue -- and footage showing rapidly moving conveyor belts piled high with the bright fish -- women cutting and packing them with incredible dexterity and at breakneck speed.)

The Stinsons are very nice people. They're very accomodating. And the manager...the manager, he's, he's *very* nice. He's real nice. He's accomodating.

What do you mean by accomodating?

Well, you know what I mean, he, he does things...ah, he, he'll do things for you without asking. You know, if he sees that you're -- that you need things that make the work easier.

Give me an example.

Let's see now...(long pause)...we, we have a new...we have new...let's see now, I don't know for sure if it was the manager or not; but I do believe it was, because we didn't have them until he started... until he came here to manage it. We have brand new sinks, and we have new seats to sit on, and we're going to have a brand new ladies' room.

I've noticed they're doing a lot of work.

Yes, and -- oh! We have new stairs outside. And we didn't have them until he started managing. So I think it's great.

How do you get to work?

Oh, we have a bus, a sardine bus that comes and gets me, takes me over in the morning and brings me back at night. Which is a great help.



(Tape switches to more fugue and high-speed fish-packing activity.)

I, I'm not a high school graduate... I...and, uh, well, I'm 52 years old, and I really, you know, haven't...haven't had time to really look for another job because I've been so busy. You see, I've been bringing up my daughter by myself. And she's graduated, she graduated in '72. But now, now I'm living for myself!

So now you can think about getting another job?

I have been thinking about it, but you know, I want to be sure before I jump into anything else, where, you know... that I'm...this age.

Do you think you could train for another job now?

Ah, I...I don't...oh, I suppose I can do anything -- you can do anything if you try.

Do you sometimes feel that there are other people who'd want your job at Stinson's?

Ah...no, no, I don't believe so, because the younger people, they don't like to stay. They just like to go here and there. But really, packing fish really is for a person anywheres near from 40 on. Because that's when you're more reliable.

Do you feel that maybe young people feel they have more options?

Yes, I think they do have more, they really do.

I noticed there weren't young women around.

No, no, no! Because packing really is for from 40 on, I believe. Take me, I'm all by myself, and I really do earn enough to take care of myself, because I'm really very -- you know, I...don't...want too much.

So you don't think young people with families could...

No, no, definitely they couldn't.

No, they couldn't.

So do you think Stinson's pays well, then?

I think it pays...as well as any of the... factories in Belfast.

How much do you get packing fish?

Well, that depends on what you pack, what kind you pack.

Say, the steaks.

Oh, a dollar fifteen for steaks, a case.

How many are in a case?

A hundred cans.

So in order to get minimum wage, you have to pack...

Two cases.

Two hundred cans?

Yes.

Do you know what the cans sell for?

Oh, somewheres around... four for a dollar.

Four for a dollar? So then, if they sell about nine cans they make up your wage.

That's right.

What do you think happens with the money from the other 190 cans that you pack in an hour?

Why, it goes for...for...different things -- for repairs on the factory and for...enjoyments outside of the factory. (Laughter.) And it goes for... Really, 2



if I got sick or something, I'm sure that Charlie Stinson and Calvin, they would really help you out if you really needed it -- I'm sure they would.

How would they help you?

Because, they know if you're a good worker, and you're reliable. I'm sure they would help. Me, I'm sure they would!

What if you got real sick and couldn't go to work, do you think...what would happen then?

Well, I...I don't plan on gettin' sick!

If you did, though, if you couldn't hold your job for some reason...you were saying before that you had to take care of your father for many years...

Well, I'd call 'em. I'd call 'em. I'd call on Stinson's!

Really?

Yeah I would!

What would you ask them to do?

I'd say, I've enjoyed working for you, and now my luck's run out. I'd say, Come on -- help me!

What would you want them to do for you?

Most important thing is food and rent...food and fuel.

You think they'd support you?

Sure they would.

Even though you weren't working there?

I'm sure they would.

What would happen to Mr. Stinson if he got sick and couldn't work?

Oh! (Laughs.) He has plenty of collateral behind him!

So he wouldn't have to worry?

No, no, course not!

What would you do if you had a hundred thousand dollars?

No, I might take my time a little bit more. (Laughs.)

Would that be okay with the Stinsons?

Oh yes, he...he wouldn't...they wouldn't care, as long as you -- as long as you made your quota, they wouldn't care.

As long as you make your quota? What is the quota again?

It depends on what you pack.

Say, with the fish steaks.

The fish steaks -- that's a dollar fifteen for a hundred cans.

So you'd still have to do 200 cans an hour anyway?

Yeah, really. Yeah.

And that's how many fish, to cut...

Oh!

For fish steaks?

Ohhh! You have to put at least five big ones in a can!

So that's a thousand fish? So you still have to cut a thousand fish and pack 'em in an hour?

Yeah, but...but you don't -- you wouldn't have to go as fast as you do now.

Right.

Another point of view on fish packing: A middle-class woman, who has had a "successful" professional life, went to work in a fish packing plant in order to understand the fish processing industry "from the bottom up." She worked for three months as a packer, also for Stinson's, but not at the same plant. She was in no way economically dependent on her wages, and could leave at any time. Here are some of her comments.

Why no union? You're talking about a fragile industry which is not growing, which must compete with imports -- and a worker who is afraid to put her job on the line.

The boss is male, as well as the supervisors, although there are two women supervisors in lower slots. It was hard to find people to talk to, who knew anything: each worker only knows her own job. The structure and decision-making processes are utterly unknown to the workers.

If I had been trapped there, it would have broken my spirit. I'd stand there, and think of ways conditions could be improved -- but knowing that I would be ignored if I suggested anything. Suggestions from employees are never solicited. One supervisor there, when approached, downplayed her own role, insisting that she had no power to change anything. So you're fast and good...still your sense of worth can only be minimal.

We never sat down; the worst pains and tensions were in my shoulders and arms. I could see that the good sardine packers had developed a series of very defined, set motions. Any break in the rhythm meant a loss of speed.

Packing fish for a living is a misuse of the human body, mind and abilities. It's noisy, malodorous, exhausting. There is no energy at the end of the day to pursue other interests.

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I saw what it was like not to use my mind for three months. It became difficult even to sit down and write a letter...being able to concentrate, having a desire to think! The most demanding mental work of my day was to drive my car to work...then it begins to play into your confidence. I began to worry about being fired if I wasn't fast enough! Eventually, my lack of confidence began to spill over into my personal life...

"The pitcher cries for water to carry and a person for work that is real"

Marge Piercy, "To Be Of Use"

Fish packing is clearly a type of work that no one should have to do. Yet, I suspect that if (white) men packed fish for a living they would take home close to \$200 for their week's work, as does any man who can swing a pick or hammer, provided his work is unionized. But then my friends tell me that the unionized white male labor force is really a very privileged class. They say, in fact, that buying these people off (with privilege) is management's way of keeping workers divided against each other, and that the 25% of workers who are lucky enough to belong to a union struggle to keep women, blacks and minorities out.

Whatever one's point of view, it is clear that unions take no interest in women who pack fish.

How to convince women who pack fish that their work is worth as much as the work of men who hone machine parts, stamp out washers, swing picks? And if these women become militant, will they achieve anything in a society where "women's work" has a cash value slightly over half the cash value of "men's work?" **

Or, since packing fish for a living is a "misuse of the human body, mind and abilities," oughtn't it be shared by everyone, so that the burden doesn't fall, lifelong, on a scapegoat segment of the population?

Again, no dice. Because we are blessed with the system of "free enterprise," it is considered quite all right to have profit as the main motive in all production. Temptation is too much for the greedy. The temptation is -- and the reality is -- that about half of all that is produced is unnecessary. Witness the energy big business puts into creating a need for all these un-necessaries of life, media promotion being merely the tip of the iceberg.

But fish is necessary, yes, fish is food. Still, if all fatuous production were eliminated (after all, if a population has to be convinced to buy, they are certainly buying things they don't need) if we produced only what we needed, wouldn't the work week be considerably shorter? So short, in fact, that a worker might have time for an inner life, a wide spectrum of personal experience, a future...?

No...as long as profit is the main motive in production, millions of women like Elizabeth Kenney will be born without a future.

Eunice Steiger

Footnotes * and **: U.S. Department of Labor.

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Probably no traditional male occupation has had so many accompanying myths, images and cliches piled on it than that of the lumberjack.

The image is a dramatic one; the strong silent man of the north woods, swaggering forth boldly in plaid lumbering jacket and hefty gear to slay the great towering pillars of nature. It is an image that speaks loudly of conquest, of might, and of powerful brute strength.

Like most images, though, this particular one is only partially accurate. The drama of the image is real enough. The setting is, to be sure magnificent; the actors are, by and large, strong; and the action, the work itself, is definitely hard. It is back-breakingly, shoulder-achingly, bicep-swellingly hard. Definitely.

But no, not everyone who works in the woods for a living nowadays is a modern-day Paul Bunyan, either in size or temperament. Woodwork, like a lot of other kinds of work, has slowly gone through a number of changes in recent years.

For one thing, mechanization has come to the woods. This means that what was once grindingly and painfully accomplished by sheer musclepower of men and animals is now smoothly executed with an elaborate array of technological wizardry -- from the speedily efficient chainsaw, to the adroit loader, to the omnipotent harvester.

Another change is marked by just who you will find working in the woods these days. Chances are good that you will find a whole assortment of miscellaneous small woods jobbers who don't fit the mold of the archetypal lumberjack at all. There are urban refugees, who have taken to the woods to get some distance from their past and to make a living, just like anybody else. There are farmers, craftsmen, well-diggers and handymen who go into the woods for one season of the year, often winter, to make some extra money to carry them through the lean times. And here and there, now and then, there are women working in the woods.

I am an occasional lumberjackette myself. Over the past few years, I have gone into the woods to work for periods of time ranging from a few days to a couple of months. I have cut on my own land and paid a stumpage fee to cut on other people's land; I have thinned hardwoods for my firewood, stumpcut fir for pulp, and cut cedar, hardwood bolts and logs in the yard; I have worked with a skidder and with a funky 1940 farm tractor.

I should make it clear at the outset that I am no Paula Bunyan either. I am an average size and build, about 5'6" tall and 130 pounds. I am probably stronger than a lot of women, but I certainly didn't used to be. When I moved to Maine several years ago, I had never done a moment of manual labor in my life, and I have a remarkably clear recollection of constantly and apologetically explaining to people, mostly men, that "I have absolutely no strength in my arms at all." It was true.

But living the way I did in Maine changed that. If you spend enough hours of the day lugging about cement bags, chains and 8 by 8's, hanging from rafters by your fingernails, and loading four foot sticks of rock maple onto a trailer -- well, eventually the muscles begin to show themselves. In an arm-wrestling contest with any



T H E P O W E R O F T H E T R E E S



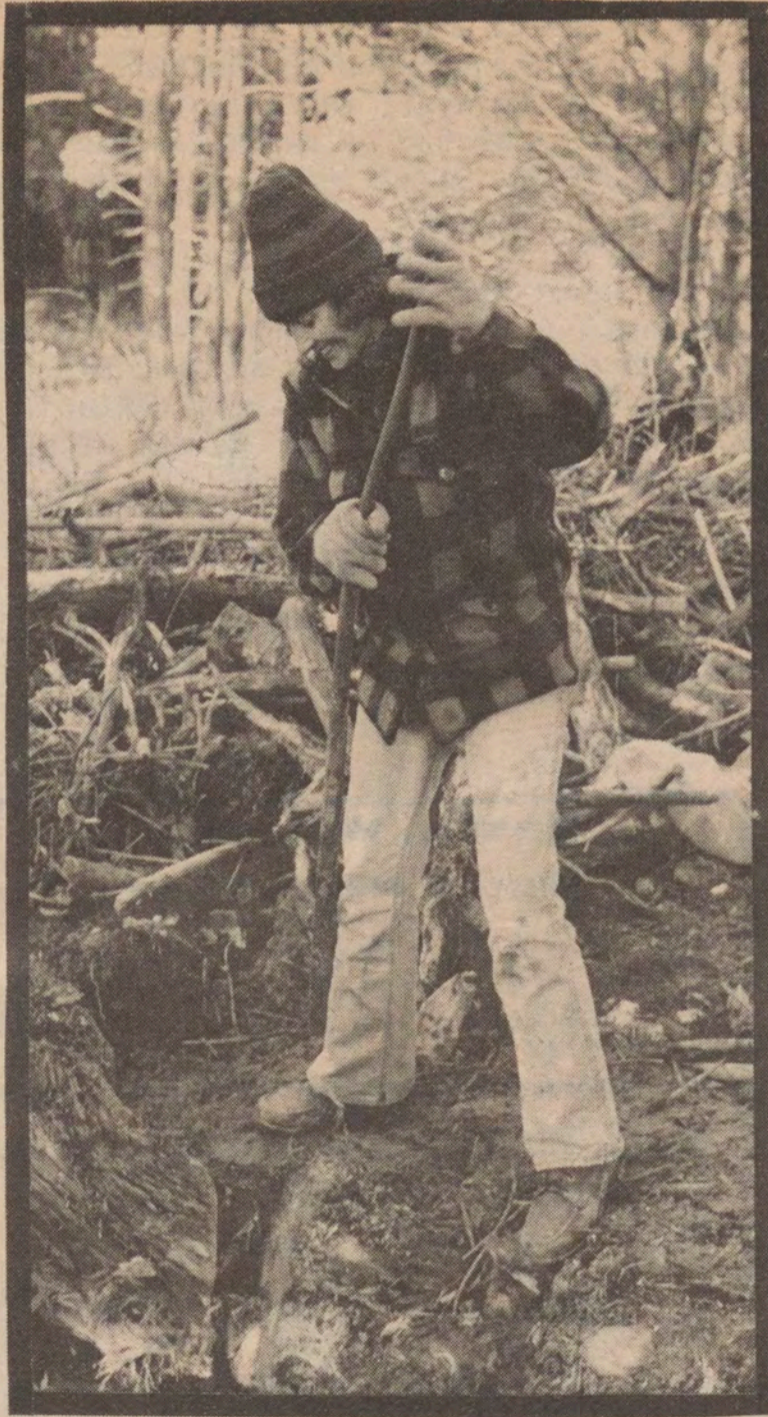
man around here I am still on the table before I've had time to blink twice, but with an urban professional I can usually hold my own for a respectable period of time and even, on occasion, emerge victorious.

The issue of strength is really not that important. I mention it only because so many women seem to allow themselves to be intimidated by certain kinds of work on the grounds that they are physically too hard. But I think that with woodwork, and probably most other kinds of work, strength is no more or less crucial a factor than skill and, above all, state of mind.

For me, the urge to work in the woods springs from some pretty varied and complex sources. Sometimes the reasoning is extremely concrete: necessity, either the necessity of making money, or getting in firewood, or cleaning up my own woods so that they will grow up to be healthy and abundant.

But other times, my reasoning goes well beyond that into a whole sea of abstract, convoluted, politico-psychological motives, that may or may not rightfully belong in the woods. Nonetheless, I do carry them there with me as surely as I carry my trusty chainsaw, gas and oil cans, pulphook and baggie wrapped lunch. Those motives are somewhat murkily related to the die-hard image of conquest, of might, and of powerful brute strength.

The fact is, working in the woods allows you to indulge in all of your most outrageous impulses toward omnipotence. It is unspeakably exhilarating work. And no amount of ambivalence about its intimate connection to a traditional male culture, based on traits of aggression and honchoism, can change that. It is still exciting, challenging, and profoundly satisfying work,



work that sharpens the mind at the same time that it wears the body.

Let me be quite clear on one point: I do not want to romanticise woodwork in any way. The work is hard and dangerous. Hanging onto a chainsaw all day is bound to give you a painfully aching back, pitching pulp will pull your shoulder muscles tight,

clambering over tops will wear out your legs and driving a skidder will shake up your insides something fierce.

Working conditions are not the best, because the climate hereabouts is not the best. In the summer you swelter and sweat your way through the bugs, the mud and the pitch; in the winter you get to stumble through snowdrifts and incipient frostbite at every turn. The economics of the wood business are not encouraging either; the only time I made close to a decent wage for my labour was cutting for the ASCS Timber Stand Improvement Program, which pays out government funds at a certain rate per acre. And of course there are all the moral qualms involved if you are clearing a piece of land using a skidder: do I really want to be wreaking this havoc in the woods so that Scott Paper can supply America with toilet paper and Macdonalds wrappers?

Nonetheless. Nonetheless, when all is said and done, I would still sharpen up my saw and stomp out to the woods on a moment's notice. The woods make a majestic workplace. They are all around you, they are larger, stronger, and more handsome than you ever will be, and they will endure long after you have shuffled your way out of their lives again.

Clearcutting the trees is a folly only to be undertaken by men of no vision; thinning the woods with care and discretion means survival for both of you.

When you spend time amidst the trees, you learn to treat them with respect. You learn about their power the first time you get a sprung sapling in the mouth, or a giant old beech starts heading towards the ground in the wrong direction, that is to say, towards the spot where you are standing. You learn about this power of the trees, and then you don't forget it, you don't resent it, you don't do battle with it. You simply grow to respect it. It is the only possible response.

And you learn to do your work. Woodwork, like just about any other kind of physical work, is an art, a science unto itself. It involves an elaborate system of knowledge, small and large bits of know how that, if you know how, can add elements of grace, ease and style to work that would otherwise be laborious and unwieldy.

The skills to be learned are about your body and tools of the trade as well as the trees, and they are endless. They range from learning to file your chain razor-sharp, to learning to make your notch in a large tree leaning the wrong way just so, just this high, this large, this angled, so that with the final cut the old tree creaks slowly, slowly on the notch like a barn door on a hinge, creaks and rolls a hair and creaks again and rolls a little more and then, with the graceful elegance of a ballet dancer, goes soaring through the air, heading for earth.

There is no thrill on earth quite like the thrill of felling a big tree, of watching that big old mother tree careening towards earth, watching her branches kind of quiver and flail about moments before the descent begins, listening to the groan and grumble as she begins to fall, and feeling that great shattering allpowerful WHOOMP as she hits the ground, the ground shuddering under your feet with such intensity that its not clear where the reverberating ends and the actual tremor of the ground when the impact begins.

Maggie faced at age force Panthe fighti States travel speaki and ex ceived age.

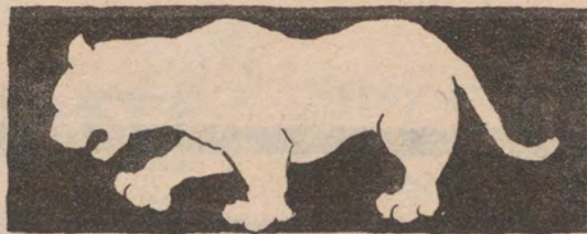
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72 year old feminists?

You may have heard of Maggie Kuhn. In 1970, when faced with mandatory retirement at age 65, she became the moving force in forming the Gray Panthers, an organization fighting ageism in the United States. Since then, she has traveled 100,000 miles a year—speaking, organizing, teaching, and exhorting. She has received much national news coverage.

Maggie Kuhn came to Augusta on October 20, 1977 to speak to 3000 "senior citizens" at the Augusta Civic Center. She particularly applauded the efforts which led to Maine passing the first state anti-mandatory retirement law in the nation, over Governor Longley's veto in the last legislative session (applicable to state employees only).

Maine news media—television, radio, and newspapers—reported much of what she said. She encouraged women and men in the room, most in their 70s and 80s, to brag about how old they are and to fight the ageist slurs they face daily. She urged them to action—old age should be the age of liberation, we can be radical, the risk takers, we have nothing to lose since most of us are on fixed incomes and approach or are in the poverty bracket anyway.

And it was reported that she urged concrete action, task forces within the next six months, nationally and on state levels, in the specific areas of health care (health care, not sick care, for every woman, man, and child) and environmental issues (a council of elders, after all, we remember farms and fishing and swimming and breathing without getting emphysema). She is against age segregation and spoke of the need for better and different housing as well as the need for changing our definitions of family.

And it was reported in a general way that she called for new language, new lifestyles, new work. (Work is the key to longevity). She incited old

The tone of the news coverage was positive, for it would be difficult not to acknowledge that Maggie Kuhn is impressive—articulate, powerful and intelligent.

But, you know, reading the regular news sources, within the state or nationally, you would never have any idea that Maggie Kuhn is a feminist.

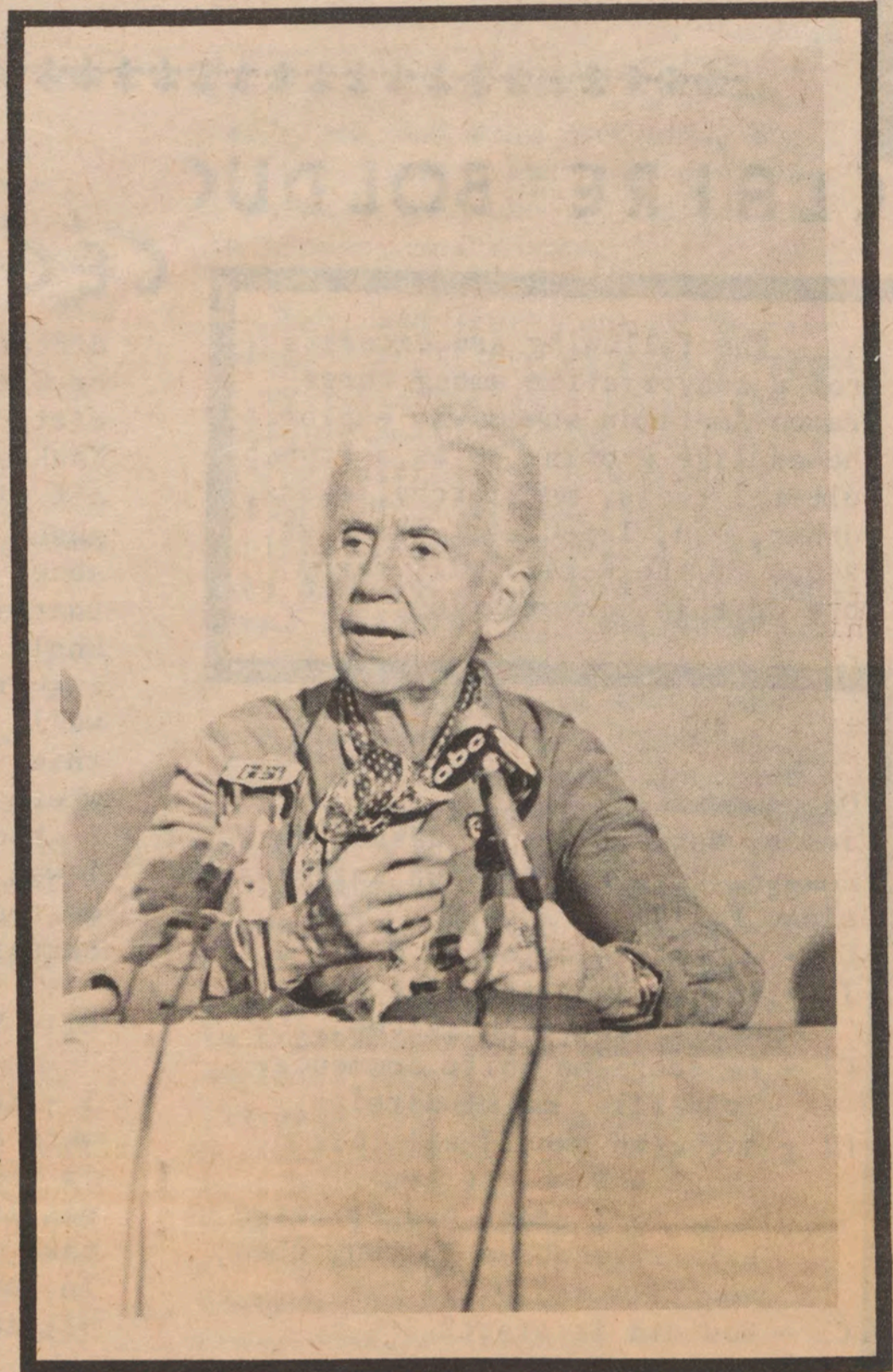
Yet within the opening two minutes of her speech, she referred to struggle within the Gray Panthers' national steering committee over the sexism of our language (mankind versus person-kind). In calling for a new language at a later point, she not only denounced the terminology "senior citizen", she also expressed outrage at being called "young lady" (I am old and I am a woman — call me an old woman).

Although in the news conference following the speech, she made her basic political views more explicit, the standard news media ignored them. She spoke of the feminist movement, and the security and knowledge and power we have gained as feminists. She called the United States a racist and sexist society as well as ageist. And she spoke of building political power to change these basic structures.

One criticism that can be made of Maggie Kuhn herself, beyond the selective reporting of her remarks, is her failure to analyze more explicitly the class structure of this country and the steps needed to change it. She clearly knows the reality of class divisions, though probably not from her own class background. She did refer to the facts that 1.) in general, quick, short term profits dictate how decisions are made in this country, and 2.) in the specific, how nursing homes are being run by big business now, enormous profits are being made from the frailty and sickness of old people.

When declaring that we need new types of work, she stated that first of all, everyone should be able to get work, and, secondly, to enjoy their work. But in a society which she recognizes is dominated by greed and competitiveness, such goals are not likely to materialize.

I would have liked to hear Maggie Kuhn point out the sexism within the Central Senior Citizens Association and the Central Maine Task Force on Aging, which was apparent in the auditorium where she spoke. Of the 3000 old people in the room, approximately 90% were women. Yet, of the officers of the organizations sitting on the stage, only 5% were women.



But I am sure she does what she can — and although her political energies are rooted in the struggle against ageism, she is also working as a feminist, aware of the need to change basic power structures.

Maggie Kuhn ended her speech urging the old people in her audience, who had come to Augusta in chartered buses from rural towns and cities throughout Maine, to realize their special role as advocates for all people in this society. "Our survival is a sacred trust — our creator allowed us to be here. Our creator, she in her wisdom, would choose those nearest death to point to where new life can be found."

There was no visible reaction in the Augusta Civic Center to the gender of the creator. But I do know there was one 32 year old feminist in the back of the hall, scribbling notes, who was blown away by Maggie Kuhn saying that to this audience.

Until I heard Maggie Kuhn in October, I did not realize the need I had as a feminist for models of older women-identified women who are actively committed to working to change the material injustices of this society, run as it is by an elite group of white men for profit.

Maggie Kuhn, you are dynamite and inspiring. I was high and full of directed woman energy for days after I saw you.

Maida E. Solomon

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LE DEUXIÈME

SHIFT

CLAIRE BOLDOC

IRÈNE SIMONEAU

CÉCILE COLLIN

The following are excerpts from a conversation among three Franco-American women who explored themes like growing up as a Franco cultural tools, matriarchy, class, mother, men, language...The next issues of the Herald will carry more of this conversation.

On commence.

Jésus, Marie, Joseph. Jésus, Marie, Joseph. On a besoin d'un intercession. Voilà.

C1 - Qu'est-ce qu'on va dire?

I - Why we want to write for the paper...about ourselves...

C - Le deuxième shift commence. Travaille, ma maudite!

C1 - Maybe we should all talk about how we got here.

I - Yeh, if I start and it triggers a response in you, then you fill in, O.K.?

C1 - How did it start?

I - I had first started in a kind of rejection of myself as a Franco a long time ago -- for a lot of reasons. First, I didn't find it too useful to my life to be a Franco-American.

C1 - Well, what kind of life were you leading?

I - I was trying to make ends meet. I was trying to get an education. I was a part of a Franco American community, but it was taken for granted. I was living there (Lowell) but I could be living somewhere else...maybe. So, it was like trying to be upwardly mobile and at the same time shedding my background...not in a violent way, but in a way that didn't take the background into stock at all. I was just progressing, and progressing meant assimilation into American society. But I was also aware that I had this Italian (looking) name and in many cases it was easier for me to use the Italian name because being French didn't really do much on the positive level.

C1 - Was this when you were still in Lowell or away?

I - That was when I was still in Lowell. This was a lot of my life in Lowell. When I finally left Lowell after 25 years of living there, I went to school in Virginia and there, there was no

differences between French, Italian or Greek. It was all Southern society - ways...maybe you could be Yankee. So being French there did not give me anything either. So I guess I just didn't really care about being French. I was aware that my mother was French, my whole family was French, and bringing friends home who weren't French, well, the friends would realize this. And I think there was a place where I might have been embarrassed. I shed my accent to a point where I was very pleased when people told me that they knew I came from a certain section of Lowell, but...

C1 - You were almost white?

I - Yeah, it didn't show. And there were a lot of things that went on in the French community that I disliked, for instance, they didn't take very good care of their own. In Lowell, it was like that. I disliked a lot of my own people.

C - Did you bring a lot of friends home, or what happened to you in deciding who you'd bring home?

I - Well, I didn't bring any home. That's how I decided. Even now, when I bring people home, I'm careful...careful now that they will be sensitive and understanding whereas before I didn't select that way. Then I came to Maine. I was in Bangor a couple of years. Nothing ever happened there that raised my consciousness that I remember.

C1 - Why were you living there?

I - I was going to school here, at the University, but I was just going to school. There was nothing connected with anything Franco-American. However, I have another language which helped me. For instance, it helped me pass college boards, get into graduate school. When I came to Maine it was easier to get into the graduate program because of this other language. I was aware of that advantage. It's not until I got into the history department, and that my advisor suggested I do a dissertation on Franco Americans because little had been written about them. I didn't want to do that. One reason was I thought it would be boring...also because I was raised as a Franco, I would be too subjective about them...I wouldn't be able to be objective.



Irène, historian & proofreader

Somewhere along the line, when I started doing seminar papers on Franco Americans, and then doing a bibliography on Franco American materials for the Canadian-American Center, I started getting angry. I would go to places - and before I'd get there they would have thrown out materials on the French culture, like newspapers. They'd say, "Well we had them, but we just threw them out." In one city they were going to throw out an entire run of a Franco American newspaper. Things like that did something to my consciousness. Now, if I had been researching Yankee history (how could I help but think!) no one would think of throwing out precious bits of Yankee history. But here they were throwing out everything that was French because they couldn't read it or it was otherwise indecipherable to them - and they just decided to throw it out. So somewhere, I got very angry.

Then, as I moved along, I got in touch with Yvon at the FAROG office and started doing bits and pieces for FAROG, like sitting in on sessions. I think there I started getting an emotional commitment. Before then, it was a "head" commitment, an intellectual commitment related to history...because I had become angry at our history being thrown out. I had also wanted to do a good dissertation on Franco-Americans. Then I got an emotional commitment which led to a re-exploration of my roots in a way that would give me something...by being French I would get something from it. Then I had to decide what I had to get rid of that wasn't good for me - that came from the French culture...and what it was that was really tremendous that I didn't want to throw out with the bath water.

Le deuxième Shift, con't.

C1 - What did you decide to throw out?

I - Well, the Catholic Church, as it was...in the way it had had its influence on me was not anything that was very positive for my life at that point, I threw that out. I didn't throw out God, but I did throw out things like dogmatism and the things that kept me humble, very modest, very ladylike...things that were not coinciding with other sides of me that were becoming liberated. I knew there was a lot of Catholic school training in me, and reinforcing of traits that I didn't want.

C1 - What about the religious life as it connects with our culture?

I - Yeah, it is connected, although by that time I think that my experience as a nun was pretty much in the background. I didn't base a lot of my decisions on my past convent experiences, thank goodness. It's a good thing the consciousness didn't come earlier because I probably would have rejected more than I eventually did.

I think the culture connects because a lot of the Catholic Church I gave up was also associated with and reinforced by the training I received as a young novice: the humility, the modesty.

C1 - the self-effacement?

I - Right. Maybe with me Franco-"Americanness" was even more intense than with somebody who hadn't gone through the convent experience.

I don't really know what I gave up in my working class background. I guess I'm kind of torn about where I am in terms of class. I'm not as middle class as one can be, I'm really not working class anymore because I'm upwardly mobile, or I'm at the point of being upwardly mobile. I don't even know if I like that, but it is happening. As I reassess my Franco-Americaness, I reassess my working class background. I feel I can now bring people home who are sensitive to both my mother's culture and to her very, very apparent working class roots.

I think there's a certain klutziness about me that I've retained from my working class background, I can trip -

C - You mean middle class people don't trip?

I - Yes, but they do it with style. There's a certain loudness I think I still have. And I have a combination of directness and shyness. I believe that's working class. You're afraid someone's going to take away the little you have. On the other hand, you want to tell everybody off.

A lot of my training as a woman I've also had to reassess... Everything came at once. Everything's been connected to the cul-

ture. How I was raised as a woman was connected to how I was raised as a Franco, which was in turn connected to how I was raised in the working class. There are things I didn't want. I didn't want to take off at 15, get married and raise ten kids. I didn't want that. I didn't want to be a goody-goody, one who was seen at les Vêpres every night. (Vespers)

C1 - You didn't want to be a clean living spinster?

I - Yup, you're right. I didn't want to be a martyr. In our culture, if it isn't self-imposed martyrdom, it's imposed from the outside and readily accepted.

C1 - Well, where are you now with all that?

I - I'm still reassessing. It's like a big garde-robe (closet) and you say to yourself: "Gee, I've got so many clothes. What am I going to keep, and what am I going to throw away, you know?" So I'm still in the closet cleaning.

C1 - Yeah, le grand ménage (spring or fall cleaning). Elle fait son grand ménage. What else did you pitch out? Was the French community you knew fairly racist, as an example?

I - Yeh, there was a lot of that. I think any self-enclosed community has things like that, and that's true in a large Yankee community in a suburb, or in a section of a working class district. Any outsiders who are 'different' are going to be maligned in some way. There was a lot of prejudice in my own family. But, when I think of it, it was due to ignorance rather than to malice. We were living in such a self-enclosed community that you didn't see any Black faces around...so that when you finally did see someone of another race, or even another background, that was so different - so strange.

I - The first time I met you, Claire, was in some kind of discussion group, it was early on when I had just been introduced to FAROG, there were a lot of men there... Francos, and we were talking about the Franco culture being matriarchal. That's when I first met you. I remember you were so pissed because they were saying that. You spent, maybe half an hour trying to refute that statement. They were convinced, but you were refuting. I remember just listening because it made sense from both ends. Intellectually, I knew it was not matriarchal, but emotionally, I couldn't fight it off.

C1 - You can't fight it off partly because you are convinced yourself that it's matriarchal. To me, it's absolutely patriarchal. I don't see a lot of ego supports for women. Two personality types seem to be rewarded: one is the outrageous type and the other the sweet, kind and forbearing type. And the fellows in that discussion are all angry with their mothers, so

they are saying we live in a matriarchal society: the anger they feel somehow gives their mothers power.

C - In the beginning, at FAROG, we had a way of bringing people out by teasing them, and this past year at the office, I've started doing this consciously, and we play with each other, and it makes people relate: it's like a small miracle.

C1 - I react well to teasing, it's a way of receiving attention and affection, with less risks: you can't hug and kiss everyone, but you CAN tease just about everyone. I think we can use this as a tool in groups, and so on.

I - Yeh, and still, one of the things I still try to keep straight in my mind is that a lot of the feminist meetings I've been to, I do feel different, I do feel culturally different from many English speaking women, I feel like a bastardized person. I cool down, I calm down, I become a mouse.

In fact, some of the women were commenting after the meeting of the 17th: "Say, what happened to you, you're so alive!" I remember when I was going to college in Lowell and I was rooming with three Irish and one Lithuanian woman and my mother called me one night and we started talking in French to each other. One of my Irish roommates came up to me and said that she couldn't help notice that I was like night and day. She said that when I spoke English I was completely reserved, quiet. But when I spoke French, my body was in complete motion: hands, eyes, head, everything.

I was really resentful because one time an Anglo feminist came up to me and asked me why I wanted to remain Franco-American for it was such an oppressive culture? And I was really pissed at that comment. Who says that the Yankee culture isn't as oppressive as mine? I just have to find ways within my culture to liberate myself.

C - The mouse doesn't get to talk, so they don't ever have to hear it, they don't have to know.

I - But they could ask questions. They could ask.

C - Teasing is a sort of yardstick. In the office I'm conscious that the teasing and the atmosphere finally work...people are really loud and they're comfortable, they come in and joke, and get a lot of work done. Others have a hard time believing that we can work that way and still get a lot done.

I - The same thing is happening at my work: for the first time I have control of a project. We have birthday parties for each of the staff, we blow out candles, and have fun: there's always a little party for something. We joke and have fun - it's pleasurable, and I have control over that. It's great, really great.

I - Maybe the trouble with the Franco-American culture is the Anglo culture.

C1 - I think it makes you a hollow person to try to live up to the expectations of the Anglo culture. 7

Credit investigation bureaus provide information on the sex lives of Maine women to those insurance companies wanting such information. Rep. Robert Howe submitted a copy of a series of 1975 reports on a Poland Springs woman prepared by Equifax Services, Inc. to a hearing of the Legislature's Business Legislation Committee on November 9, 1977. The 1975 reports noted and subsequently rechecked the fact that the divorced woman was living with a man. Although the reports also said she had good driving habits and did not mention any driving convictions or accidents, her car insurance was cancelled after the credit investigation.

Under a new state law, credit investigation firms would be barred from collecting information on a person's lifestyle, race, religion, philosophy, or political affiliation. However, the law is being challenged by Equifax on the grounds that it is too vague and that it restricts constitutional guarantees to free speech. Equifax compiles 5,000 personal investigations reports each month in Maine.

Kennebec Journal

The Maine Human Rights Commission needs community support and feedback. Women with particular experiences of discrimination or suggestions of general areas of discrimination to be investigated should write the Maine Human Rights Commission, Western Avenue, Augusta, or phone 289-2326. The Commission needs your letters to document that their work responds to a clear public demand to meet conservative legislative opposition to their appropriations.

The Maine Right To Life Committee claimed to have collected 10,000 signatures in less than a week in early December, protesting student tours of the Women's Community Health Center, an abortion clinic which opened in September 1977, in Portland. "The Concerned Parents of the Greater Portland Area" said that tours given to junior high school and high school students were "detrimental to family life, to our community and to the state of Maine."

Kennebec Journal

This news section represents an initial attempt to include as much information as possible about work by feminists throughout the state and about any event reflecting on or affecting the status of women in Maine.

We need a women's information network to sustain and expand this function of the newspaper. We need our readers -- you -- to send us information (even one paragraph will do) about work that is being done, or events that are happening relating to women.

Please send any information to: Maine Freewoman's Herald, attention: news, P.O. Box 7232 DTS, Portland 04112. Copy deadline for the next issue will be mid-April.

After one-and-one-half years of discussions, the Maine AFL-CIO Women's Caucus has developed by-laws, received recognition and some seed money from the Maine AFL-CIO Executive Board, and has elected officers: Jane Weed, AFSCME, Chairperson, and Kathleen Kadi, AFSCME, Secretary-Treasurer. Membership in the Women's Caucus is open to all dues-paying AFL-CIO union members and their immediate families.

Actions by the caucus to date include speakers at legislative hearings supporting the Displaced Homemakers Bill (LD 842) and an amendment to the Human Rights Act to assure non-discriminatory application of disability benefits (LD 821), resolutions supporting the IBEW strike against Central Maine Power, telegrams opposing the proposed requirement that unemployment recipients accept a job paying 120% of their benefit level, (that is, paying a wage far below previous wages earned,) circulating information on the J.P. Stevens boycott.

AFL-CIO Women's Caucus
36 Quebec St.
Portland, Maine, 04101

(information from The Maine Issue)

On December 16, 1977 Elizabeth Ann Habecker was ordained as the first woman priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Maine, amidst protest. The church flag of St. Paul's in Portland was flown upside down and at half mast at the time of ordination and the wardens and vestry in a letter to Bishop Wolf called the ordination "no less than one of the most tragic events in the history of our Diocese".

It is unclear at this time whether some Maine parishes will withdraw from the church as a result of the ordination of a woman, as has happened elsewhere in the country. According to Northeast, the official journal of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine, American Church Union directors have "claimed the present leadership of the church is blurring the distinction between male and female, breaking down our traditions of family, marriage, and sexual identity by allowing women to become priests and by embracing gay liberation."

Kennebec Journal

The number of women among Maine's city and town managers has more than doubled in the last four years. Out of 149 managers, currently 27 are women. A Bangor Daily News report noted that "The next breakthrough in the traditionally male-dominated field of public administration may take place in poor, rural towns where full-time salaries for managers fall to \$7,000 or below."

Bangor Daily News

Newport potato farmer Seth Bradstreet was appointed the \$36,000 director of the Farmers Home Administration over eight other candidates, of whom three were women, including Pam Scarcelli, whose qualifications were established by three years of being head of the developmental division of the Maine Housing Authority. Scarcelli's supporters are convinced that a man of her age, qualifications, and Democratic Party commitment would have received the appointment.

Maine Times

NEWSMAINE NEWS WOMEN NEWS NATIONAL NEWSMA

GROUPS OF WOMEN TAKING ACTION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HAVE SPRUNG UP IN SEVERAL MAINE CITIES. ALL CAN USE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND VOLUNTEERS.

The Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services, Inc., has brought together several separate groups for communication, mutual support, joint projects, and specifically to lobby jointly for appropriations in this Legislative session.

Groups are asking for varying amounts of the appropriation, to total \$300,000. The amounts requested for the six local groups range from \$95,000 to \$6,500 for pilot money.

The Coalition hopes to operate a central office which would provide statewide information and referrals through a toll-free number. Other functions are to provide technical assistance to groups just beginning, community education, and lobbying with regard to bills which would affect former or currently abused women. Contact: Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services, c/o Pine Tree Legal, 35 Franklin St., Augusta 04330.

Shelters or other services for battered women and their children are underway or in planning in the following cities and towns:

BIDDEFORD/SACO: Caring Unlimited -- 20-plus women plan to begin volunteer counseling on February 1 to battered women, and to provide emergency shelter for single overnights. Contact Marjorie Meyer, 282-4151 days, 967-4251 nights.

PORTLAND: The Family Crisis Shelter, Inc., (P.O. Box 4255, 775-1221; emergency hotline 773-5516) opened January 1, 1978, with CETA and local mental health funds for an eight-month demonstration project. With three staff members, the shelter can house up to 10 persons for a maximum of three weeks, not more than twice in six months. Any abused women and their children from Cumberland County are eligible, while those from Portland get priority.

LEWISTON/AUBURN: The Abused Women's Advocacy Project, P.O. Box 713, Auburn 04210, will begin February 1, 1978, to provide shelter for up to six women and their children, open to residents of Androscoggin, Oxford and Franklin Counties, and a hotline (5-11 pm) run by volunteers. The project is supported by three CETA staffers, Department of Human Services funds for rent and utilities, and small grants from the Haymarket People's Fund and the Maine Council of Churches.

AUGUSTA AREA: The Augusta Task Force on Domestic Violence, seeking to develop services for abused women and children in that area, is looking for new members, particularly women with personal experience of domestic violence. Contact Erna Koch, 993-2273.

The Augusta office of Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Inc., has established work on behalf of battered women as a priority for 1978. Any woman calling for help because

of domestic violence will receive at least referral to available resources. Any woman eligible for Federally funded legal services will get appropriate advice and/or representation, as, for example, in seeking a court order against the man who beat her.

The staff will also provide technical assistance to local and statewide groups against domestic violence, and seek to encourage more effective responses to physical abuse from area legal institutions. Contact Nancy Brockway, Pine Tree Legal Assistance, 35 Franklin St., Augusta 04330, 622-4731.

BANGOR: Spruce Run, Inc. (44 Central St., 3rd Floor, Box 653, Bangor 04401, phone 947-0496 days, 989-6665 nights.) The oldest group dealing with domestic violence, started four years ago, now has four CETA staff and a core of volunteers providing 24-hour phone counseling, a weekly support group of abused women, pro se divorce counseling, and referral to area resources.

In the Fall, Spruce Run withdrew from operating a shelter funded by the City of Bangor Welfare Department because of the City's refusal to enter into a written contract, and because of serious violations of security and confidentiality. The City shelter apparently requires that applicants for admission be visibly bruised.

AROOSTOOK COUNTY: Newly forming group to provide counseling and referrals. They are looking for new members. Date to commence services not known. Contact Edwina Anderson, Aroostook Mental Health Center, Downtown Mall, Caribou 04736.

N.O.W. is currently involved in two major efforts. First, we are spearheading the ERA deadline-extension drive. Anyone who cares about ERA must understand that Congress' mail is currently running against extending the March '79 deadline. Write to Congressperson Cohen, if you have only one letter in you. Or contact N.O.W. and help us generate letters, postcards, and petition signatures. This is one letter campaign that could turn the course of herstory and history. And it could turn against us if we don't get off our duffs and dust off our stationery!

Our other current priority is the restoration of state funds for abortions. Poor women cannot choose unless all of us fight for our Constitutional right.

To become involved on behalf of women's rights, or to expand your current involvement, contact your local N.O.W. chapter or write: Greater Bangor N.O.W.
Jo Anne Dauphinee
23 March St., Bangor 04401
or call Jo Anne at 942-2830
(DO IT NOW)

Boston was the scene of a march and rally held November 19 in support of the year-long boycott against J.P. Stevens textile company. The rally was preceded by a benefit concert for the boycott and was followed by a conference on "Women Workers and J.P. Stevens" sponsored by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Lucy Taylor, a retired Stevens worker and a victim of brown lung disease, described the company's attitude. "They called brown lung 'consumption' and said, 'People are dying of consumption.' Well, that's true. But they were consuming cotton dust."

--from Off Our Backs

In Texas, one woman died and four suffered severe complications after undergoing cheap abortions in a Mexican border town. Texas cut off state aid for abortions after the HEW's termination of Federal funds for abortion in all but life-threatening situations.

- from News and Letters

On October 25, 1977 Diana Press, a vital feminist publishing company, was severely and expertly vandalized. The typesetting and paste up of at least three fall books were destroyed, holding up the books. Paint, ink, chemicals, and comet cleanser were poured into machines, presses, and typesetters, making it impossible for the Diana Press women to do commercial work to get some money. Five thousand copies of Rita Mae Brown's A Plain Brown Rapper were destroyed creating serious cash flow problems. Diana Press is in precarious financial condition and is fighting to stay alive. The only way they have to raise money is to sell the remaining inventory.

Write: Diana Press, Inc.

4400 Market St.

Oakland, Calif. 94608

to send money or get a catalog.

"I suspect that you will receive your share of letters from outraged right-to-lifers because you have identified the main anti-abortion thrust as 'the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy, masquerading as a non-sectarian Right-to-Life movement with the help of a few Protestant fundamentalists' (Human Rights vs. Fetal Rights, The Playboy Forum, October). But you are absolutely correct and we have plenty of documentary evidence. The Catholic Church has every right to institute whatever ecclesiastical censure it proposes for its members, but it is out of place when it tries to impose its morality on the rest of us who favor freedom of choice."

Robert W. McCoy, Sec.
National Abortion
Rights Action League
Washington, D.C.

Playboy Forum, March, 1978

The parents of 11 Navajo girls have filed lawsuits seeking more than \$5 million in damages against three male employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The suit claims that the girls, between 11 and 13 years old, were sexually assaulted by these men at the Teec Nos Pos Boarding School.

Native American children are often placed in boarding school by the B.I.A. and their agents on the grounds that the home environment is unfit or unsafe.

- from Off Our Backs

Washington, D.C. -- In a typical example of its tortuous, twisted logic, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on December 6 that, "Although some discrimination against pregnancy—as compared with other physical disabilities—is permissible, discrimination against pregnant or formerly pregnant employees is not." (Actually, this was Justice Stevens opinion rather than the majority opinion, but the logic is similar). In a case involving the Nashville Gas Co., the court reaffirmed its last December's decision in the G.E. case which stated that companies can refuse to give sick-leave pay for pregnancy, as long as they pay women and men equally for other sick leave. However, the Nashville Gas ruling held that women can not be denied their accumulated seniority for taking maternity leave.

In Oakland, California, over a thousand clerical workers have struck the Blue Cross Insurance Company for their first contract. The workers, who voted in Office and Professional Employees Union Local 29 after eight years of trying to get Union representation, walked out on November 6 when the company refused to negotiate in good faith. One worker summed up their battle this way: "The company has refused to recognize us. They still can't believe that the Union is in. They never believed that we would go on strike. We didn't want to strike but they refused to take us seriously. This is our first contract and anything worth getting is worth fighting for."

from Off Our Backs

A MATTER OF PRIORITIES— The government is currently spending \$6 million a year to advise the public on the danger of smoking and on related research. It is also spending \$78 million a year on subsidies to tobacco growers.

from The Militant

NEWSWOMEN NEWS NATIONAL NEWS MAIN NEWSW

In October, the government decided that Janet Sloan's life was worth a whopping \$810. Janet, 22, was killed last summer while working at the Sun Shipbuilding yard outside of Philadelphia. A welder, she was working on a double hulled ship when she fell 52 feet to her death.

She was assigned to the job alone, out of hearing distance from any other workers. Workers demanded that the company officers be indicted for murder. Sloan's death was the second there in a year. Coworkers also charged that Sloan, a member of the Communist Party was given the unsafe job because of her militancy.

Instead the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) fined Sun Shipbuilding \$810, charging that there was an inadequate backrailing where Sloan was working. Workers claim that there was no railing at all.

Since Janet's death, Sun Shipbuilding has not corrected the safety violations and has appealed the OSHA citations.

- from The Guardian

National Science Foundation researchers are trying to determine the environmental factors behind their finding that up to 14 percent of the gulls on California's Santa Barbara

Island are lesbians, many of them maintaining stable relationships. Probably they don't read their bible or drink their OJ.

from the Militant

The latest tally of state Medicaid policies on reimbursing abortions showed that 14 plan to pay for all abortions, necessary and elective, from state funds. They are: Alaska, California, Florida, Hawaii, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Major moves to change state Medicaid payments for abortions are not expected until most of the legislatures reconvene in January.

Connecticut, Nebraska, and Nevada were funding all abortions until September. Nevada, along with Colorado and Pennsylvania, was working out new payment policies.

West Virginia is under a Federal Court order to pay. Idaho will cover only medically necessary abortions that are approved by two physicians.

States that are required by law to match Federal funds are: Georgia, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, Texas, Vermont, South Carolina, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Maine.

from NWHN News

An eleven year old girl successfully fought off two would-be child molesters it was reported in Karate News. As she was walking home, a car with two men stopped, and one man opened his door and grabbed her by the arm. She flipped him onto his back on the sidewalk, chopped him on the neck with the edge of her hand, and jabbed him in both eyes with her fingers. The driver jumped out, screaming, "that's murder!". Neighbors, alerted by the noise, called the police, and both men were apprehended. The child is the daughter of a woman who studied judo and a man who holds a brown belt in karate. She was unharmed, except for a slight bruise on her arm where the man grabbed her.

from Big Mama Rag

England— On November 12th, women marched through the streets of cities throughout England to "Reclaim the night"— to protest the dangers of rape and attack that deny women free access to the streets. Singing, chanting, bearing torches and banners, and jeering, 500 women marched through Soho, London, center of the porn trade and sexual exploitation. Some of the male bystanders spat at the demonstrators, or tried to grab individuals out of the procession. However, this possibility had been taken into account in the planning stages of the march, and these men were sprayed with red dye. The marches were exhilarating events with women singing songs about their struggles and plastering stickers on sexist advertisements and establishments.

- Off Our Backs

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ALCOHOL: SOME SURVIVE IT

Ever since Eve, women have taken second place in the world (let us not forget that Eve was created after Adam) and much of the time have been treated as something less than human. We have been denied the very freedom of doing our own thinking, been expected to marry, reproduce (in that order, naturally), remain ignorant of the world situation the only questions we were allowed to ask were about which shade of eye shadow would look good with the new dress, could I borrow a cup of sugar and oh, dear, what shall I do about the baby's diaper rash?!

Not having been allowed to think, feel, learn and explore, we therefore had no basis with which to develop a sense of self esteem/confidence. It is much more fulfilling and worthwhile to try and take a firm hold of ourselves, be assertive and go forward from here, but unfortunately this may seem unrealistic and perhaps even somewhat melodramatic to those of us who may have found another way in which to deal with exploitation and humiliation in this sexist, capitalistic patriarchy. Some of us may have found that when we "had a few" we didn't feel unimportant anymore, at least for a little while, and that for a few hours the pain would go away.

Although alcohol seems to come to our "emotional rescue," so to speak, it in fact does just the opposite. It is a great deceiver, indeed. While we are perhaps beginning to "enjoy" its effects more, and drinking larger quantities, it is very possible that alcohol may be gradually beginning to run our lives. In many instances, it may seem to be easier/less painful for a woman to keep drinking than to take an honest look at her situation and her life's situation. The saddest thing about this is that she may well be on her way to alcoholism, and when she comes to realize this, most generally she will now feel the lowest of lows, that she's a total failure, completely useless, and that she may as well keep drinking because she's convinced she's "no good anyway."

Society very often still views a woman alcoholic as degrading and disgusting. We have all, at some time, heard someone say, "If there's something I can't stand it's a drunken woman!"

How will she "survive" through all this? Perhaps if she can try to get honest with herself long enough to realize that she doesn't drink because her life's messed up, but that her life's messed up because she drinks. Society may have denied her some rights and freedoms and exploited her, therefore be contributing factors to her disease of alcoholism but she alone must take the greatest responsibility.

There are millions of women living a life of needless turmoil. She can get help through A.A., for instance, where she will meet other women who have been there, can empathize, support, guide, and help her realize her potentials. This is what survival is all about.

If we allow alcohol to take first place in our lives, we are once again accepting a second place. We are a very warm, loving, living, growing, knowing special breed. We are women and sisters.

Let us never again settle for second place.

D. Diana Dargie

In response to an article condemning the channeling of dollars into Maine's state alcoholic rehabilitation centers, which appeared in the Bangor Daily News in August, 1977.

First off, I would like to state that I am a 24-year old, female, recovering alcoholic. It always angers me to see people totally uninformed or misinformed about alcoholism expressing their ignorant views on this very complex and cunning disease, thus helping an already misinformed and confused society remain more confused.

Alcoholism is a three-fold disease: physical, psychological and spiritual. I spent several months in an alcoholic rehabilitation center, where I learned a lot about myself and my disease. With this knowledge, I was able to look into myself and find my personal "Higher Power," whom I choose to call God. This rehab center helped me pick up the scattered and battered pieces of my life and go on living a responsible and productive life, one day at a time.

I thank God each day that someone cared enough for me to introduce me to Alcoholics Anonymous at my young age, that I cared enough to put in some honest effort of my own and didn't have to drink another 30-40 years before finding God, sobriety and serenity. Perhaps I wouldn't have lived long enough to find this if I'd persisted to drink.

A "drunk" isn't necessarily an alcoholic. Alcohol is a "poison" to alcoholics, but not to "social drinkers." There are different stages/levels of alcoholism, but either you are or aren't afflicted. There is no maybe! A woman is never "just a little bit pregnant." Either she is or she isn't. Whether she knows about/accepts it is another thing.

I hope companies and unions do devise a plan to help their alcoholic employees get into rehab programs and/or AA. Society must be educated about the disease of alcoholism and therefore know what symptoms for which to look. The blind cannot lead the blind!

I am thankful to God and A.A. for my new-found life in sobriety. It was beautiful waking up this morning with a clear conscience and mind, free of seizures, restraints and vomit, remembering where I was yesterday and how I got there. For me, each day of sobriety is a day of victory. I don't feel the state wasted expenses on me for my rehabilitation. It was simply an "investment" on a new productive Maine citizen.

You might ask, "But what about all those others who go through a rehabilitation program, learn nothing and go on drinking?" Well, I personally don't believe that anyone leaves a rehab program or comes to A.A. without attaining at least a bit of knowledge/self-growth. In some cases, such as mine, that "bit" of knowledge was the difference between life and death. I chose life when I chose to get sober. Anyhow, who are we to question their sincerity? Had you seen me sign myself into Midcoast Rehabilitation Center last year, I doubt if I would have "appeared" to be the picture of sincerity! I was rum dumb, hostile, fearful and irresponsible, to say the least. My family and psychiatric hospitals had given up on me when A.A. greeted me with open and understanding arms of love. How can anyone oppose a program which helps sick people get back on their feet and come to know God? I have made it, and millions more can if we all work together and give them the same chance I had. I cannot say that I will never drink again, I don't know. All I do know is that for today, 24 hours, I choose not to do so. That is all that is important because today, realistically, is all that I have. I have to work at it, but life has never been more beautiful than to someone who is "experiencing it" for the first time.

The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community, Dalla Costa, Maria and Selma James. Falling Wall Press Ltd., 79 Richmond Rd. Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5EP, England. (U.S. Address: New York Wages for Housework Committee, c/o Cox, 689 10th St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215.)

Marxism and Feminism, Charnie Guettel. Women's Press, Ste. 305, 280 Bloor St., W., Toronto, Canada. (416) 962-3904 \$1.95

Women's Liberation and Imperialism. Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, P.O. Box 40614 Station C, San Francisco, Ca. 94110 \$1.00

Feminist theory is in the process of developing. It grows out of daily struggles of women for their liberation and it illuminates, and sometimes obscures, the way for future struggles in our revolutionary task of destroying male supremacy.

It is worthwhile to distinguish the three major schools of feminist theory: liberal reformist, Marxist reformist, and Marxist revolutionary. Both reformist trends, liberal and Marxist, are well established, having their roots in the 19th century and being a response to the transformation both of the family and of women's role brought about by the industrial revolution. Marxist revolutionary feminist theory is a product of the current women's movement and has only begun to be articulated.

Examples of liberal feminism are John Stuart Mill's Subjugation of Women and Kate Millet's Sexual Politics. These are liberal because their emphasis is on the ideology of male supremacy rather than on the material basis upon which that ideology rests. They are reformist because they assume that the ideology can be changed through a process of education while leaving intact the economic systems of exploitation which utilize the subordination of women.

Three Schools

Examples of Marxist reformist theory are Engles' The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, and Charnie Guettel's Marxism and Feminism. (I would suggest here that Shulamith Firestone's The Dialectic of Sex is neither Marxist or reformist, let alone revolutionary, but is, rather, a heavily academic exercise to prove that, indeed, biology is destiny.)

The essence of Marxist reformist feminist theory is the argument that since socialism is a necessary precondition for the liberation of women, women's current task is to become paid workers in order to be able to work more effectively for the overthrow of capitalism. In order to do this they should organize to deliver their children over to the state as soon as possible (day care centers) so that women can be as free as men to produce profit for capital. They should also struggle, almost as an afterthought, with men to get them to be less sexist at home, on the job, in labor unions and party organizations.

Marxist reformist theory emphasizes that women's unpaid labor is "non-economic", has no value, and in short, doesn't count. Women's role, it claims, in the family, "no matter how much work is involved," is "unproductive consumption!" (Charnie Guettel, here and there)

Why Marxism?

Marx' analysis of the dynamics of class society is a powerful revolutionary tool. Practice based on Marxism works to enable people to overthrow oppression and exploitive economic systems and the oppressive state apparatus which orders those systems. Lenin's analysis of imperialism was a Marxist analysis which enabled Russian workers in a semi-colonial, semi-imperial state to achieve the first socialist revolution in a world dominated by the capitalist system.

Mao used Marxist analysis to organize the Chinese people to be the first colonized and peasant nation to free themselves, through revolution, from imperialism and to industrialize in a socialist rather than capitalist manner. Since 1949, the people of Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Mozambique and Angola have done the same.

By using Marxist methods, over half of the world's people have broken free from capitalism and imperialism. They did not do this by using any blue print traced by Karl Marx over 100 years ago, but by using an analytical method which enabled them to understand and put to revolutionary use situations many of which did not even exist in 1863.

Marxist revolutionary feminist theory aspires to use Marxist analysis to understand the dynamics of the special oppression and exploitation of women in a capitalist society and to distinguish between struggles necessary for third world and white working class women. Most "Marxists," however, so far haven't wanted to bother to do this. They feel more comfortable sticking to their familiar mechanisms of class analysis. Therefore they advise women to become wage slaves and struggle for proletarian revolution.

BOOKS:

"It is worthwhile to distinguish the three major schools of feminist theory ..."

Similarly, in the 20's, the Comintern advisors to China from the new Soviet state were uncomfortable dealing with the Chinese peasant as a revolutionary class. They thought peasants had to move to the city and go to work in a factory before they could become revolutionary.

In much the same way as Mao used Marxism to clarify the revolutionary potential of the Chinese peasantry, revolutionary feminists can and are using Marxism to realize the revolutionary potential of women as women in a capitalist society. Revolutionary Marxist feminist theory begins by studying women's role in capitalist production as it actually is rather than wishing women away onto a production line where they can be dealt with like men.

Capitalism and Women

Before capitalism there were other kinds of economic exploitation. They were all characterized by some form of male supremacy. Capitalism, however, was the first economic system in which everything that was produced was produced in order to be sold, as commodities. Capitalism is an economic system of commodity production.

Under capitalism no matter how much something is needed (like workers housing), it won't be produced unless it can be sold for profit. And under capitalism, if something is produced which can't be sold profitably, even if it is needed, it will be destroyed rather than be put to use unsold. (Remember the Depression and the destruction of orchards for instance.)

Also, only under capitalism is labor power itself a commodity bought and sold in personnel offices. Surplus for owners, or profit, comes about under capitalism because what the workers produce with their labor power can be sold by the owners for more money than workers need to produce and reproduce themselves. What the worker sells his labor for, his wage, is what is needed to keep him and a new generation of workers arriving at the factory gate each day to produce profit for the

bosses. What the workers produce is worth more than the wages they receive for producing it.

Workers, still mostly male, are obliged to arrange privately for the production and reproduction of their labor power which they individually sell at an hourly or annual rate. The private arrangement a worker usually makes is to obtain a wife who purchases from his pay the necessary items that enable him, with her unpaid labor, to be clothed, fed, sheltered, sexually serviced and provided with another generation of workers to produce profit for the bosses or to take care of the bosses' workers as wives.

Women's Work

Seen this way, women's work is not only NOT unproductive, valueless or without economic importance under capitalism --- women's work is absolutely essential for capitalism to work at all. Without it, if male workers had to pay a market price for women's labor, if male workers had to pay as much for their successors in the labor force as they pay, for instance, for the cars they must buy to take them to work, male workers couldn't afford to exist. They'd have to stop be-

ing workers. They might even become revolutionaries.

The significance of the economic value of women's work is obscured under capitalism because a woman as homemaker doesn't sell her labor power directly to anyone. Her labor power is sold indirectly by her product: her husband and her working children.

The double, or triple, exploitation of women under capitalism is that they must work full time (according to one study, more than 90 hours a week) without pay producing and caring for workers who can make profits for the owners of capital; they must, in addition, often sell their labor power directly "to make ends meet;" when they sell their labor power directly it is at greatly reduced prices because they are a "reserve labor force" and are "only supplementing the family income." Third world women, because the workers they produce are considered a glut on the labor market, face the further horrors of forced sterilization and the break up of their families through welfare, deportation and some form or another of "adoption" of their children.

Essentials

This is the essential nub of the developing Marxist revolutionary feminist theory. Ideas of how it can be applied in struggle can be read in the pamphlet Women's Liberation and Imperialism and The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community. Some ideas in these pamphlets are:

1. Lesbianism is automatically revolutionary because it represents women withdrawing their services as unpaid producers and reproducers of labor power for capital.

2. It implicitly supports capitalism and therefore imperialism. Thus, all struggles for women's liberation are an implicit attack on capitalism, imperialism, and racism.

3. A few suggestions on how to organize women without first turning them into men.

IWY: strategy & solidarity

What was significant about the National Women's Conference, held in Houston, Texas, November 18-21, 1977? If you had no opportunity to learn about the Conference events except through reading the local newspaper and watching commercial television, you may have been led to believe that the significance of the Conference revolved around the ERA, lesbianism and abortion.

The recommendations on these controversial issues certainly did express the positions of the great majority of delegates and other Conference participants on three issues of concern to millions of women. Nonetheless, the less controversial events and recommendations -- which were virtually ignored by the media -- are perhaps more expressive of the values, political strategy, and broad appeal of the contemporary feminist movement.

A delegate from Puerto Rico, after addressing the Conference in Spanish, demanded an interpreter, reminding the listeners that they had a responsibility to make an effort to understand her language; *the burden of change in an effort to communicate should not be hers alone.*

American Indian, Black American, Asian and Pacific American, Hispanic and Caucasian women transcended their differences of experience and language to define a comprehensive recommendation to address the many needs of minority women and children for strong legislation and enforcement. The resolution was approved by an overwhelming majority, who recognized that the minority women had experience and expertise that should indeed be recognized and heeded, not only by the Conference, but also by Congress.

In providing interpreters throughout the Conference to "sign" for the deaf, the Conference organizers conveyed that they, too, recognized that *they* bore a responsibility to help communicate with still another segment of the diverse audience: the hearing disabled.

In substance, as well as style, the Conference addressed the concerns of disabled women, who had challenged the recommendations of the "leaders," with whom the media were so preoccupied. The disabled women know from personal experience the needs of the disabled. Ultimately, the disabled women themselves proposed the recommendation on the disabled for submission to the President and Congress.

Similarly, elderly women delegates persuaded the Conference to approve a recommendation that better reflected the needs and desires of the elderly than did the original recommendation drafted by the Commission. Delegates who represented the experience and concerns of women on welfare were equally successful in insisting that their personal experience be recognized and that public policy reflect their awareness of social and economic needs.

Thus, the philosophical premises of both the young feminists of the late '60s and early '70s and of the generally older, more conservative feminists had finally been validated by more than 1700 women whose views represented all points along the political spectrum.

As the more conservative feminists had recognized, the lawmaking and law enforcing bodies of this country can and must be made to hear and respond to the needs and concerns of women. But, as their self-styled "radical" sisters had insisted, the expertise that must be heeded may emanate from little-known individuals with relevant personal experience, not just from well-known people who are already perceived as possessing formal credentials and expertise.

Moreover, the needs and concerns of all women must be heard and addressed by the social, political and economic institutions of this country. The recommendations to ensure equal opportunity in personal credit and in Small Business

loans were enthusiastically endorsed by the young, as well as the middle-aged and elderly. Moreover, many middle-aged and elderly women voted to support what is really a conservative position on both sexual preference and reproductive freedom.

Keep your laws off my body, read many a button. That slogan expressed the fundamentally conservative view that neither federal nor state governments should legislate against what are matters of individual conscience.

Prior to the 19th century, the American and European governments had generally *not* legislated against abortion. Governmental restrictions of abortions can be traced to military concern that enough males be available to fight wars.

At the National Conference, people supporting the "right to choose" were less concerned about the military origins of governmental restriction of abortion than about the dreadful fact that countless women die when abortions are illegal or financially inaccessible.

Is the elimination of the fetus any more horrifying than the death of a woman who has been driven by desperation to attempt a "coat hanger" abortion?

Feminists are profoundly concerned about life, and about the *quality* of life. To support the quality of life for families, the National Women's Conference recommended: 1) Programs to eliminate woman abuse and child abuse should be supported by the President and the Congress; 2) The Federal government should assume a major role in directing and providing comprehensive, voluntary, bias-free child care; 3) The legal rights of homemakers should be supported by the Federal government and by the states and territories.

Homemakers are in need of protection against inequitable property, inheritance and Social Security laws. Many wives and mothers think they are well-protected by the law; but the reality of widowhood, divorce or separation can reveal to a woman why so many other women are saying that the Equal Rights Amendment is the

What happened at Houston, Texas, Nov. 18-21 at the National Women's Conference is far more important than Sadat's visit to Israel over the same weekend, media coverage notwithstanding.

The revolutionary message of the Women's Conference in Houston was deliberately obscured from the very beginning. The message was: American women living in the center of imperialism's worldwide web of exploitation are going to sweep that web away and throw it out on history's rubbish heap along with slavery and feudalism and other dirty systems of exploitation.

How did women serve notice of their intention?

They opposed American imperialism by supporting demands by third world women who demonstrated against deportation; who demonstrated for support of a woman prisoner in Iran, a fascist dictatorship in the Middle East supported by American arms and money.

They opposed racism, the ideological support of imperialism, by voting, almost unanimously, for the very radical resolution agreed upon by various Third World women as amendments to the rather tame resolutions proposed by the IWY Commission.

They opposed every attempt to make of the conference a cooption of the Women's Movement by the Administration of the American State.

The last issue of the *Freewoman's Herald* correctly identified the opportunist direction the Administration intended the Conference to take and for which it spent \$5,000,000. The *Herald* was wrong, however, in underestimating the power of the Women's

most effective and efficient way to ensure that women enjoy equal protection under the law.

Prior to speaking in favor of the ERA, the niece of the great suffragist said in ringing tones: "My name is Susan B. Anthony." Her name reminded many of us that American women are still struggling against the same sort of irrational opposition that our foremothers confronted. The same unfounded arguments -- that femininity and the family will be threatened -- are now cited against the ERA as they were against women's obtaining the legal right to vote.

Betty Friedan, another great feminist spokeswoman, the next day rose to remind the Conference that the ERA will not protect lesbians and male homosexuals in their lifestyle.

The ERA is an issue completely separate from the issue of sexual and affectional preference. Therefore, said Friedan, there is no reason for conservative women to fear that ratification of the ERA would be impeded by a recommendation urging the Federal government and the states and territories to approve other laws ensuring equal opportunity and civil rights, regardless of sexual and affectional preference.

Most women at the Conference were deeply moved by Betty Friedan's acknowledgement that her past opposition to lesbian feminists was a mistake. "We must no longer allow others to divide us with this issue," said Friedan. Friedan then moved approval of the recommendation that lesbian women be ensured their civil rights.

We had now come indeed a long way. Our women's movement is now both responsive and inclusive -- attempting to address the needs and concerns of all women -- regardless of lifestyle, nationality, language, color, disability, age or income.

If 1700 men had been elected to represent all the states, and if they had so transcended the barriers of lifestyle, income, nationality, language and age, they would have had gavel-to-gavel press coverage, and their solidarity of purpose and strategy would have been hailed as an extraordinary advance of American civilization.

Why didn't the press coverage of this Conference convey the scope and the power of the National Women's Conference?

JoAnn Fritsche

Women Serve Notice:

Movement in 1977 to take that Administration's \$5 million bull by the horns, turn it right around, and use it to oppose the exploitation of women and men here and everywhere that American capitalism and imperialism thrives on the division of workers.

The women at the Conference overwhelmingly supported civil rights for lesbians...even Betty Friedan did. This meant, whether those voting realized it or not, that they supported the most radical attack possible on male supremacy. This in turn represents an attack on the most essential prop of American capitalism and imperialism: women's unpaid labor producing workers and keeping them available to make profits for the owners of capital.

The lesbian rights issue was an addition to the Commission's original proposed agenda of resolutions. It was included because lesbians across the country organized to get the resolution included in 30 states, including Maine.

The slogan of the radicals at Houston was, "Pro Plan: Keep the agenda moving; let every issue be heard."

Because it was known that some state conventions had been taken over by the Ku Klux Klan and similar organizations and that these delegates were bent on obstructing the passage of every resolution so that the Conference would be hamstrung, the "pro plan" slogan meant that no matter how inadequate the Commission's resolutions were in speaking to the needs of a special group, like lesbians, the interests of all women would best be served by passing the resolutions.

continued next page

Equal Pay Equal Power

How many times in our working lives have we gotten angry at some highly-paid manager who is totally unaware of what is really going on at the workplace or who has no idea what it feels like to be an underpaid, powerless worker? Yet the manager has complete control over our working lives -- he (or she) tells us when we should work harder, when we should smile and be submissive, and when we can get a raise.

I've been lucky enough to get away from all of that for a while, by working for a so-called "alternative" organization, the Sam Ely Land Trust in Augusta.

At the land trust, all get the same salary. I believe the concept of equal salaries is one of the most important elements in improving a work situation. Its implications are far-reaching, for there's a real connection between equal salary and equal power. Just imagine how it would feel to make the same salary as your boss. Our economic system equates high salaries with power and a sense of self-worth. For years I've felt inferior because I've never made a lot of money and have been easily intimidated on the job. By paying equal salaries, the land trust is saying we are all worthy of self-respect and we all have basic needs of food and shelter as human beings.

But beyond equal pay, there is an emphasis on equal power in another structure. The land trust staff (five people) operates as a "collective," in the sense that we all

have an equal say in decisions. We have staff meetings where we go over business together. Everyone has input and when we make a decision it is done by consensus, a kind of mutual discussion and conclusion method.



The other major factor in making this job much better is the expectation of "non-sexism." Partly because the other women on the staff are feminists and partly because the goals of the organization reflect a changed society (see below), there is at least the expectation that sexism will not appear. This is vastly different from fighting your way through the day, knowing you will face a multitude of insults and degradations.

I think the difference is in knowing that you can freely confront or get angry because the expectation, at least on the part of the women, is non-sexism. In most jobs if you "put up a fuss," you end up feeling even more alienated.

This is not to say that sexism does not exist in the organization. It does, and it's quite obvious at times. But on a couple of occasions men have been confronted, either individually or in a group setting. The support of other women on the staff means a lot at these times.

Other aspects I like about the organization include the emphasis on self-motivation. There's no one looking over your shoulder all the time, assuming you to be incompetent. You're free to try things, work at your own pace without getting bogged down in petty, unwritten rules. There is an expectation of mutual support among staff members, instead of competition. Personality conflicts get dealt with, instead of ignored.

In addition, there's respect for people as employees. People let go are given notice and severance pay. When I was laid off recently from a "traditional" company, I was given no notice and no severance pay. It's the difference between being treated as a person or as a cog in the machinery.

A major drawback to alternative organizations is that they seem to employ and reach out to mostly middle class people. Although the land trust pays equal salaries, they are not really high salaries, thereby excluding many working class and low-income people who simply cannot afford to work for the salary offered. Although the land trust can't afford to pay higher salaries, I wish it and other organizations were capable of employing more people. And I wish our economic system were structured differently so that equality wasn't just another word.

Charmaine Daniels

Note: The Sam Ely Land Trust is a non-profit organization concerned with land reform and access to the land for the average person through the land trust vehicle.

mandatory motherhood!

~ C.E.M.D. FIGHTS ~

In response to last summer's Supreme Court and Congressional actions restricting state and federal (Medicaid) funding for abortion* a meeting of individuals and groups concerned with Medicaid discrimination was held in Augusta in September.

As a result of this meeting, the Coalition to End Medicaid Discrimination was formed. Eight coordinators from throughout the state volunteered to organize concerned persons in their respective areas. (Call CEMD at 622-9680 evenings for names of local coordinators.) Established groups which have actively joined the new organization include the Maine Civil Liberties Union, Maine Right to Choose and NOW.

Strategy meetings have been held monthly. As a result, the Coalition has decided to do grassroots organizing in an attempt to inform legislators -- both state and national -- of their constituents' anger with discrimination against Maine's low-income women, in the hope that state funds could be appropriated to pay for abortions if federal funds remained cut off.

In early December, the US Congress finally came to a compromise with the Senate and agreed to allow the use of Medicaid funds for abortion in cases of reported rape and incest, or when pregnancy would result in "serious and long-lasting physical health damage to the woman," in the opinion of two physicians. (The last clause is currently being challenged as unconstitutional, because in 1973 the Supreme Court said the abortion decision is a private one between a woman and a doctor.)

This "compromise" language is quite conservative, and again discriminates. Women with money will continue to seek and get medically safe abortions for personal and/or medical reasons. Low-income women will be forced to bear unwanted children, some of whom will suffer known genetic defects.

Under present Medicaid regulations, mental or emotional reasons for termination of a pregnancy are not enough to meet the standard of "serious and long lasting physical health damage."

*For details, write Maine Right to Choose/NARAL, Mary J. Herman Coordinator, 91 Oak Street, Gardiner, Maine 04345.

Among other victims will be numbers of teenaged girls, unable to assert that the clause applies to them. Illegal abortion will once more become itself the cause of serious and long lasting physical health damage to poor women.

In addition to grassroots legislative lobbying, the Coalition to End Medicaid Discrimination is marking the fifth anniversary of the Supreme Court decision on abortion rights by

- holding public speak-outs in several Maine cities
- placing Statements of Support asking for full state funding of abortion in Maine in our two major weekend papers
- urging clergy to include a mention of the five year anniversary either in a sermon or an announcement.

It is imperative that legislators know what their constituents want. State legislators hear astonishingly little from those they represent, and now is the time to speak out to them.

All major public opinion polls since 1973 reveal that a majority of Americans favor full access to safe, legal abortion for all women; yet the opposition (the "Mandatory Motherhood/Compulsory Pregnancy" people) are well-organized, well-funded, and use sensationalism to attract the eye of the media. We must all act now to have our collective voice heard!

The Coalition to End Medicaid Discrimination needs support to ensure that federal and/or state funds will be available to all women. To help attain this vital goal, get in touch with the Coalition to find out what you can do, and write or call your representatives to solidly make your feelings known.

You must be realistic -- the Medicaid restrictions on the 1978 Labor-HEW Appropriations Bill (the so-called Hyde Amendment) are only the point of the wedge which is attempting to destroy abortion rights in this country. All women and their families will ultimately be touched if the opposition succeeds in its goal of prohibiting all abortion in the US.

Maine Right to Choose, Maine's affiliate of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), also needs to hear from you, and needs your support for continued protection of abortion rights.

A major rejuvenation of pro-choice efforts in Maine is planned for 1978 -- energy is needed to help prepare mailings, participate in telephone alerts, speak out publicly, and so on. If you have ever considered joining the effort to protect our abortion rights, the time is now.

Mary J. Herman
MRTC

Coalition to End Medicaid Discrimination
c/o Margie Love
Box 2143
Augusta, Maine 04330
Phone: 622-9680 (eves)

Diana Press Publications
NEW BOOKS

<p>THE LESBIANS' HOME JOURNAL <i>Stories from The Ladder</i> Barbara Grier and Coletta Reid, eds. 320 pp., paper, drawings \$5.75</p> <p>Sex Variant Women in Literature by Jeanette Foster 420 pp., paper \$8.00</p> <p>Sapphic Songs Seventeen to Seventy by Elsa Gidlow A collection of lesbian love poems. 80 pp., paper, photos \$3.50</p> <p>All Our Lives A Women's Songbook Joyce Cheney, Marcia Deihl, & Deborah Silverstein, eds. 200 pp., paper, photos \$6.50</p> <p>THE LAVENDER HERRING <i>Lesbian Essays from The Ladder</i> Barbara Grier and Coletta Reid, eds. Thirty-seven essays by long-time feminist thinkers. 357 pp., paper, photos \$5.75</p>	<p>A Plain Brown Rapper by Rita Mae Brown A complete collection of this radical feminist's essays from 1969 to the present. 230 pp., paper, illustrations \$5.00</p> <p>SO LONG <i>The Most Famous Bull-Leaper on Earth</i> by Z. Budapest and Carol Clement A girl's adventure story set in the ancient world. 52 pp., paper, two color illus. \$3.75</p> <p>Biographies of Women from The Ladder LESBIAN LIVES Barbara Grier and Coletta Reid, eds. Biographies of over 60 women including 86 rare photographs. 433 pp., paper, photos \$5.75</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Send total plus 15% post. & hand.</small></p>
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On Friday, December 2, a group of women gathered at UMPG to discuss with Dr. Dolores Mirto and Portland lawyer Kim Matthews the issue of authority in women's lives. The discussion began with the definition of "authority" as "the power to create or begin to form things or acts." The word evolved, Dr. Mirto pointed out, from the Latin word *auctor*, which is connected with the idea of god as creator and author of the world. Authority was discussed at the meeting as the power of creating or "authoring" a world, a life, or book for one's self.

THE REVISED "AUTHORIZED" VERSION

Dr. Mirto, who is fighting to regain her position in the English Department at UMPG, where last year she was the only woman in a 17-man, all-tenured department (another woman, Mrs. Barbara Wolf, was let go a year earlier) provided literary and anecdotal material for her theme. Ms. Matthews dealt with the legal angles of the social picture.

Dr. Mirto stressed that historically "reality" has been authored or created by traditional authorities. God was the authority of the Biblical age. In later periods, certain social groups -- a king or aristocracy -- provided the "authorized version" of things.

Likewise, Mirto emphasized, men have authored or created a history in which the female half of the population was rarely seen or heard. Men seemed to write all the books, to create all the art forms.

Lately, this history has been rewritten and women writers are increasingly visible; neglected women painters of the Renaissance and later periods are also now being discovered in our own decade. Dr. Mirto stressed that reality -- people's real existence and suffering -- often has little to do with the "authorized version," just as a newspaper article will often bear only a slight resemblance to the story it purports to cover.

So often what is "invisible" or "not heard" is more real than what is heard, and yet this reality has no "authority." No one with power says it is true. The disparity between experience and social authority has obvious social parallels: our "histories" are about the visible kings and their courts, not about the "invisible" peasant -- until the peasant, too, insisted upon being seen and heard.

This order of things is apparent in all institutions. For example, at the university men still dominate the faculty; therefore they have a more visible "presence" and this gives them more authority.

Women students and faculty, although they are more present in number than they were two decades ago, still tend to fade into this male authorized version of the world, rather than establishing their own visible space. So, if women are seen at all, it is usually in the mode of being seen rather than of being heard.

Since it is now socially *de rigueur* to have more women visible, men often seem to wish women's visibility to be that of team mascot, rather than that of an equal and independent voice. Dr. Mirto stressed that women must speak and be heard more; being an image is not enough.

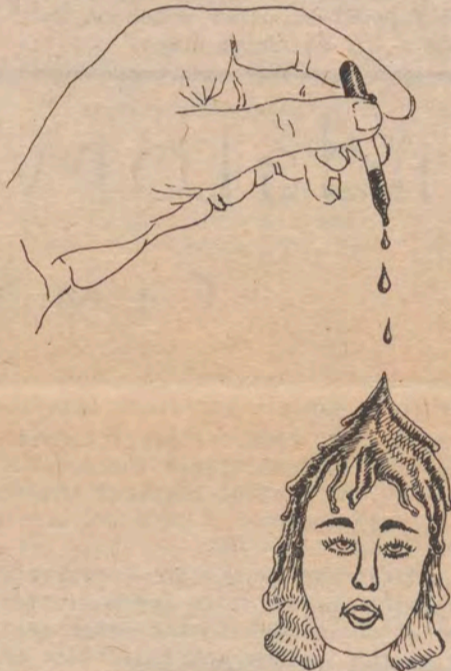
Voice, rather than image, is the true creative principle. Women are too often seen merely as passive images, while men are the actual creators; they plant their seeds, speak their business, and write their books. A popular image in current literature in fact sees the blank page of the writer as the female principle, waiting for validation -- the male -- to put his imprint on it.

When a woman tries to assert her authority -- her voice, in effect -- her heightened visibility, confronting the traditional male authority, will often

make men uncomfortable. While authoritative men are seen as appropriate figures, even charming and stylish, an authoritative woman will often be perceived as "unladylike." Harassment of women on the job often begins when men see the women becoming "uppity." Dr. Mirto stressed that the men are often not aware of the structure of their own responses.

Women must continue asserting their visibility and voices to combat the existing structure of authority which, while allowing us more and more freedom, still, for the most part, speaks for and silences us.

This is a difficult task, because of the different approaches men and women often take to solving problems. Whereas men tend to adopt pugnacious attitudes toward much business -- a posture they learn from childhood -- women often take a less warlike but more pragmatic approach. There is a conflict in process even when men and women are defending identical principles, and yet it is widely believed that authority can be exercised only in a pugnacious, "male" style.



Men often draw battle lines around issues, which usually leads to the abstraction of the original issues, and to war. Women often take a more concrete, constructive approach, in which the struggle to win does not overshadow the search for a reasonable, constructive solution.

Dr. Mirto pointed to her own situation, in which originally limited issues assumed monumental proportions because all the men in her department took "battle" sides. Some men attempted to "authorize" her as the cause, whereas in "experience" she was the victim, being the only one whose job was jeopardized.

Lawyer Kim Matthews pointed out that despite the growing number of women attorneys, it is the legislators and judges who wield authority, and there are still few women in these positions. In effect, legal decisions are authorized by men. Women are well aware of the "conflict of interest" involved in some of the decisions handed down by male legislators and judges. For instance, in spite of the presence of anti-discrimination laws, little funding to administer the new laws has been "authorized."

Similarly, although discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status was outlawed by a recent credit law, if a woman is not a "sure thing," credit institutions will use their "discretion" to exclude her. Ms. Matthews further pointed out that female juveniles who commit crimes are often given longer sentences than juvenile boys.

Therefore, although the laws providing better treatment for women are "visible," they are still not as effectively "heard" as they should be.

Another authorized myth is that women become the recipients of large money settlements in divorce cases. In reality, women are often left in a financial bind. After devoting a good portion of her life to furthering her husband's career security, she is left with little security herself despite years of work in the home.

Ms. Matthews also discussed the legal problems connected with a criminal violation like rape. In many states, for instance, the law does not recognize the possibility of a man raping his wife. The rape victim is confronted with further psychic violence in the unpleasant prospect of pursuing her case and being interrogated about her intimate life by male "authorities."

On the other hand, battered wives are perhaps the most blatant example of the brutality of male authority when it is exercised through physical violence. The exercise of this authority has for the most part been invisible; only lately has the problem of battered wives been authorized and made visible, mostly by angry women themselves.

Women were often beaten into "ladylike" silence about their victimage, which they experienced as a shame to be covered up, rather than as a violation to be published and heard.

One woman stated that the Committee for Women in New Hampshire says that women are beaten because they become "women's libbers" (despite the contradiction of a "liberated" women getting beaten.) The Committee's view provides an ironic example of how women sometimes internalize their authorized inferiority and relate to the world according to the male's authorized version of their structure and position.

University women staff and students contributed other anecdotes on their confrontation with authority after Mirto and Matthews spoke. Many of us, especially this writer, felt that the meeting was one of the few meetings on women in the University that created solidarity and enthusiasm among an assorted group of women from both the University and outside community.

We left with an energized feeling of accomplishment and purpose. Hopefully, similar discussion groups will meet in the future and perhaps the support evident at this meeting will become available to all other women who feel a conflict between their "experience" and the "male authorized version" of it.

Sherrill J. Brittain

Continued from page 12

Given the time allowed and the numbers of resolutions, it worked out that only 25 minutes were available to pass each one. The resolutions were in alphabetical order, and by the way they were worded the more revolutionary ones were toward the end of the agenda. For instance, "abortion" as "reproductive freedom" was in the twenties rather than first.

Nonetheless, and despite the parliamentary maneuvers on the part of the Klan, many resolutions dealing with such issues as minority women, employment, welfare and rape were altered radically on the floor and supported overwhelmingly.

Only one of the Commission's resolutions was defeated, the one calling for a special cabinet position to deal with women's affairs. This cabinet position apparently was Bella Abzug's solution to the puzzle, "What can a politician do after having been elected Mayor of New York?"

It is crucial that everyone understand the significance of Houston. The Women's Movement is no longer one of white women from privileged backgrounds. It is a movement identified with the most oppressed of us: Latinas, Native Americans, Blacks and white working class and welfare women.

This is why what happened at Houston is being obscured even in such "radical" papers as the *Guardian*. The Women's Movement has become a revolutionary threat to American imperialism. Let's organize to keep it that way, until imperialism, with its ideologies of sexism and racism is a thing of the past.

Karen Saum

announcing...

THANKS: Most of us are quicker to express disapproval than approval, but positive reinforcement can work even better than the reverse. Both CBS and AEC recently broadcast positive lesbian portrayals in regular dramatic programs (*All in the Family* and *Family*, respectively) and it would help if they received some letters of thanks from viewers. Write Van Sauter, VP for Program Practices, CBS-TV, 51 W. 52nd St., New York, N.Y. 10019; and Richard Gitter, VP for Standards and Practices, ABC-TV, 1330 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019. (Suggestion via NGTF.)

Two-Day New England Women's Festival in Portland, planned for the weekend of May 6-7. To make this effort a success, it must be a coordinated effort of many women and women's organizations, local and regional. We wish to invite you to join in the planning stages. In addition to women musicians, we need sound technicians, set-up women (roadies), organizers to spread word and action. Hoping to work with you... Contact Buffy, Pam or Monica at the U.M. P.G. Women's Forum, 207-780-4086.

LESBIAN MOTHERS: Iris Films/Iris Feminist Collective, the producers of "In the Best Interests of the Children," a film about lesbian mothers and child custody, has published a pamphlet of the same name, sharing the research on resources for lesbian mothers that went into the film. For a copy, write Iris Films, P.O.Box 26463, Los Angeles, Calif. 90026. Suggested donation is \$1.50 (includes postage.) Same address for info about renting the film.



Trees — cont.

good work. And I think it's good work for women to do, I think it's time for women to stop feeling intimidated and indulging in some of the aggressive body-building, mind-sharpening, challenging work that has hitherto been the domain of men. The exhilaration of woodwork comes in many forms and, I suppose, is about many things. It can be about the sheer drama and power of dropping a large tree. And it can be about the quieter satisfaction of learning a skill properly, like when your wrist flicks your pulp hook in just the right way, so that the four foot stick of pulp you are balancing goes flying effortlessly up, up to land just so, on top of the loaded trailer.

I think it is also about learning to overcome the fear shared by almost all women — the fear of machines. Overcoming that fear means the discovery of a whole new world, a world that most of us tend to view with a strange combination of hesitation, fascination, and repugnance. A chainsaw is not all that appealing a tool — it is noisy, dangerous, unpredict-

The Maine Freewoman's Herald invites women to participate in the making and thriving of our newspaper. Articles, poems, artwork, photos, news, announcements are welcome! Perhaps you're interested in selling advertising or papers -- if so, let us know. Maine Freewoman's Herald, P.O. Box 7232 DTS, Portland 04112.

There will be a Franco-American conference at Bates College in Lewiston on April 8 and 9. The two-day event will include discussions on the comparison of French Huguenot and Catholic French Canadians and their contributions to American society.

A Spring lecture series at UMPG will present MONIQUE WITTIG, French feminist and author. In April, Wittig will speak on topics relevant to all women, and dealing especially with feminist Utopias.

A suggested reading list includes: *The Dispossessed*, by Ursula LeGuin and Joanna Russ; *The Female Man* -- two science fiction books -- and *Archaos ou le jardin etincement* and *Encore heureux qu'on va vers l'ete* by Christiane Rochefort (these two may not be translated.) Also, *Sketch Book: A Dictionary of Female Lovers*, by Wittig, in process of translation by Sande Zeig.

The lectures are open to the public, and a strong show of support may be an impetus for future University-sponsored lecture series for women. The next issue of the Herald will provide specific time and dates of Wittig's talks.

(Other books by Wittig -- *Les Guerilleres*, *The Opopanax* and *The Lesbian Body*.)

able, and weighs pretty heavy on the arms after a while. But it is also an extraordinarily efficient, useful, and adaptable tool. It feels good to establish a working relationship, wary but respectful, with something that is so much a part of the landscape and the economy of rural Maine.

And, perhaps most important of all, the sense of exhilaration is about simple competence. It seems clear that one's physical and psychological states are intimately entwined, and that if you feel control of the basic physical elements of your life, then that feeling will extend, to some degree, to a sense of emotional and intellectual control.

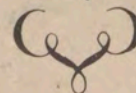
Seems like all of this is a crucial part of survival — the feeling that you exercise some competence and some control over your life, your mind and body, your environment, rather than being wholly at their mercy. Without that sense, we are rendered helpless and unchanging creatures, victims of our own worst fears.

Amelia Melville

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15

The Waterville Family Planning center offers daily walk-in clinics to all women of child-bearing age in Northern Kennebec and Somerset Counties. Call toll-free 873-2122.

Quilting, the Great American Art is the subject of an exhibit in Bangor. The show features some 40 19th and 20th century quilts created by Maine women. The exhibit is sponsored by the Bangor Historical Society and the Penobscot Marine M Society and the Penobscot Heritage Museum, 159 Union Street, Bangor. Museum hours are 10 to 4, seven days a week. There is no admission charged, but donations are welcomed.

A committee of the Women's Rights Project of the Maine Civil Liberties Union, chaired by Janet Mills, is planning a spring conference on "Maine Women in Law and History." The day-long public conference is scheduled for early April. It will include panel discussions on the rights of Maine women under present-day law as well as discussions and displays concerning prominent Maine women in history, and exhibits of regional artists and their work. Women who wish more information should contact the Maine Civil Liberties Union in Portland at 774-5444.

CLASSIFIED

Women's Land Community...does that mean anything to any of you women out there? Is this more than an idea with any of you? I have these and more questions..... if you have any answers write: c/o Maine Freewoman's Herald Box 7232, Downtown Station, Portland, Me. 04111

Country Women.....do you have space on your land to accommodate two more? ready, willing and able to pitch in and help support and cultivate Mother Nature. Wishing to share a forest amidst other women...please, if you've any leads respond: Palmer, Box 305 North Waterboro, Me. 04061

Women Pilots....Where are you? Wish to get in touch with other aviation-minded women. Contact Jan c/o Maine Freewoman's Herald Box 7232, Downtown Station, Portland, Me. 04111

CLASSIFIEDS ARE FREE - SEND IN YOURS

Books — cont.

4. A few insights into just how skilled women's labor is (for instance, in providing for the family when there is no money or too little of it. Can you imagine a Marxist, or anyone, maintaining that a buyer for Macy's or U.S. Steel was just a consumer and that therefore his labor had no value?).

5. Insights into the networks of support women make for themselves (like the infamous coffee Klatch, as opposed to coffee break) counteracting the "Marxist" analysis that homemakers are too isolated to be revolutionaries.

For instance, would it be possible to start a mixed study/practice group of working class women and women from privileged backgrounds who are committed to struggling to overcome their classist attitudes and behavior? (Rosa Luxemburg, who was from a very privileged background, was a dedicated revolutionary murdered by the German state during the Spartacist uprising in 1919).

Karen Saum