YWCA Seeks End to Racism, Sexism

The YWCA is an international organization which has existed for over one hundred years. Though the name Young Women's Christian Association does not give the impression of a politically aware organization, the Y has played a vital role in anti-racist and anti-sexist activities since its beginning. Its founders were people who, through the church, fought against lynchings and slavery.

The two main imperatives of the Y are the elimination of racism and the empowerment of women, girls and Third World people.

The YWCA of the Monterey Peninsula, located at 276 Eldorado St., Monterey, was founded in 1973 and is one of the newest and smallest Ys in the country. Unlike most, it has no large building with hotel facilities or swimming pool. Therefore, many of its programs are held in schools and community centers throughout the Peninsula.

The Y's focus has been on classes and workshops geared toward implementing the two imperatives, though in 1978 it became actively involved in social services. Both the Child Abuse Prevention Council and the Salinas Family Emergency Shelter started as programs under the YWCA before spinning off into their own agencies. Women Against Domestic Violence (WADV) is still a program under the Y.

This fall the local staff has undergone major changes, new directors having been appointed to head the YWCA, the Women's Center and WADV.

Maria Gitin was appointed Executive Director of the Y in August, the first local Jewish director.

Gitin began her political involvement in 1964 at San Francisco State where she was active in the formation of SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee). In 1967, she joined Martin Luther King Jr.'s group in Selma for voter registration. "That whole experience of going to Selma, going to jail and being maced was the political turning point in my life."

"In 1978 I found myself in the position of a re-entry woman into the job market. I went to Antioch University to finish my BA degree and became CETA eligible. Through CETA I worked as a childcare worker at the PG Community Childcare Center. It was there that I became interested in social service administration. After I got my degree, I applied for Coordinator of WADV and got that position in April of 1979. I worked with WADV until August when I became Executive Director of the Y."

Some of Gitin’s goals for the Y include “offering more direct services to women like housefinding situations and maybe starting an emergency

(continued on page 7)
An Editorial

Women and Sports

One of the most important aspects of the Women's Movement is, or at least should be, organized sports. Through competitive team sports, we can and are discovering important things about our bodies, our minds and our ability to function as a member of a team — an ability that men have long told us we don't possess.

When we participate in sports, we abandon the passive role male-dominated society has imposed on us. The usual image of women — something to be looked at with emphasis on physical attractiveness — is replaced by an image of action, strength and competence.

Through sports we can defy the myth that we are incapable of group cooperation. In our society, sport is a symbolic activity. The games we play can prepare us for the life we lead. Games also symbolize the values necessary to lead that life.

We must make sure that our sports programs in schools and through local recreation departments are funded equally with men's programs. By competing in athletics, we learn the lessons that we need to play a meaningful role in society. Deprived of organized sports, we are denied the opportunity to learn about and like our bodies. We are also denied an experience that can help prepare us to lead an active role in life, to participate and compete on an equal footing with men.

We at Demeter feel that playing team sports is a valuable experience for women. To help women get this experience, we sponsor various teams in local recreation leagues. By sponsor, we mean that Demeter's name is used and that we organize and publicize events. Bringing teams together and encouraging the growth of individual women, on both an entry level and a more advanced level, is our main concern.

To engage in physical activity in a non-team situation is also an important, enriching experience for women. Self-confidence and feelings of accomplishment and competence increase as one's body increases in strength, endurance and agility. But my emphasis here is on team sports. By being a member of a team, one can experience a feeling of sisterhood that is missing from solitary pursuits like jogging or weightlifting.

Feminism can play a part in the competitive process. Women can be supportive and helpful of their team members, working and playing together for the advancement of one another as well as the success of the team. In feminist sports, cooperation and skill development are emphasized over competition.

To see this process in action, come out for basketball. A meeting will be held Dec. 10 in the Demeter office, 229 17th Street, Pacific Grove at 7:30 p.m. for all team members.

—Joan Weiner
Letters to the Editor

Herland Reconsidered

Editor:

Last summer a friend and I went to a women's retreat near Napa called "Willow." I heard about it from a friend and was curious to find out what it was like.

Willow is like a small resort for women up in the mountains surrounded by beautiful trees. There's a heated pool, tennis court, and hot tub. The atmosphere is quiet and restful, the women who own it (and also the women who go there) are friendly but unobtrusive. You can meet new friends if you want to, but your privacy is also respected. I found Willow to be ideal, a fantasy come true. There is a Herland after all.

For information, call Willow at (707) 944-8173.

A couple of months ago I wrote a letter to Demeter comparing Herland with The Wanderground. Naturally, as soon as I'd mailed the letter I wished I'd written it differently.

I realized that my comparison of the two novels didn't just favor The Wanderground but also slighted Herland. This unintentional "put down" of Gilman's book has been haunting me ever since!

Actually, I enjoyed Herland very much but was at first disappointed because it is narrated by one of the male explorers. I wanted to see Herland from the women's eyes.

Of course, part of Gilman's purpose in writing this feminist utopian novel was to expose sexism, and she did so brilliantly. It was so satisfying to see the idiocy of male chauvinism revealed.

Just recently I bought The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader which contains several short stories that are like dreams come true. The book also has an excellent biographical and critical essay, "The Fictional World of Gilman," by Ann J. Lane.

Herland and The Wanderground are similar in that both books are based on feminist ideologies and concern all-women societies, but after that each novel goes its own way, explores its own meanings. If I could erase the letter that was published in September, I would begin by saying, "Anyone who enjoyed Herland will probably also like The Wanderground."

Now that I have finally explained how I feel, I feel much better!

Erika Nielsen
Pacific Grove

Notes From Demeter

We would like to thank all the generous people who donated money to Demeter. Your contributions made it possible to pay last month's printing costs and our rent. We are in the planning stages of many fun and, we hope, profitable fund raisers. However, until that time we continue to be quite broke. We would appreciate any help, large or small, that you could give. May the Goddess smile down on you.

* * *

Holiday time is upon us once again and unique gifts are becoming harder to find. We have two great suggestions for you — Demeter t-shirts and Demeter subscriptions! The t-shirts come in three colors: tan with brown ink, light blue with dark blue ink and black with white ink. They are available in regular or French cut. And only $5 each! Unfortunately, the subscriptions only come in white with black ink, and in the tabloid cut. But still a treat.

* * *

The Demeter workshop was a grand success . . . many people came to offer their support and to volunteer their time and skills. Thanks to Maureen McEvoy for organizing the meeting. There is always something to be done on the newsmagazine or with the production team. If you'd like to get involved, call us at 375-5629 or drop by our office at 229 17th St., Pacific Grove. Our office hours are 12-3 Monday through Wednesday.

'Sapphic Journeys'

Editor:

A fascinating cassette of poetry, Sapphic Journeys, has been released this year by Womonsounds. The collection reflects the excellent taste of the editor-publisher, Margo Strik, who is also the managing editor of a bi-monthly newsletter, Southern California Women for Understanding.

Background music for the tape is exquisite: E. Marcy Dicterow, the violinist-composer, with friends on harp, flute and viola, perform interludes as well as very delicate background themes for the poetry.

The selections begin with Sappho's immortal fragment, "You Have Come," and her lyrics are interspersed throughout the program of modern romantic and sensuous verse by 11 women poets. The quality of all these (mostly unpublished) poems is remarkable — they should make us all proud of women's creativity and poetic sensibility.

After listening to the tape several times, I am still unable to decide whether the effect is achieved because of the extraordinary sensuous voices of the professional readers, Etoile Monet and Dimitra Stukas, or because the poetry itself is superbly suited to the oral and musical setting. One sample, by Virginia Roth, will make the point:

"For Deborah"
And I watch your face —
See the warmth spread —
The surge begins
behind half-closed eyes.
Your mouth remembers my lips,
your neck — my tongue.
Fantasies fluttering past your brow
Quiver beneath your eyelids.
You rush to catch the flush,
rising to its height,
flowing with its strength.
Lover, you pull me down with you into oblivion.

This cassette would be a thoughtful gift for a very special friend. If you don't find it in a women's bookstore, write to Womonsounds, P.O. Box 65891, Los Angeles, 90065. The price is $10.95 plus .66 sales tax and .75 postage. And I hope you will enjoy it as much as I do.

Suzy Sullens
Monterey
**Community News and Events**

**Cypress Institute**

The Cypress Institute, a non-profit corporation providing services for a broad range of family, couple, child and individual problems, offers several classes and groups of interest to women, including a problem solving group for professional women, a group for compulsive eaters, women in transition support group, co-parenting and others. For more information, call Lynn White Dixon or Claudia Daniels at 372-6242.

**YWCA Women’s Center**

Will hold a holiday party to celebrate international winter holidays with music and dancing. Share potluck. Thursday, Dec. 11. Call 649-0834 for more information.

“Exploring Ourselves Through Writing,” a workshop for women who write or would like to start writing, will be led by Paula Butterfield, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 321 Eardley, Pacific Grove. Fee.

“Women’s Workshop for Motorcycle Maintenance” will be offered Sunday, Dec. 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Yamaha Suzuki Sports Center, 1580 Del Monte, Seaside. This will be an opportunity to learn basic maintenance, routine service and repairs from three knowledgeable women. Fee.

The Women’s Center will sponsor a women’s basketball team for entry level players in the Monterey Parks and Rec league. To join, call the Y.

For more information on any of the above, call the Y at 649-0834.

**Hartnell College Women’s Program**

Drop-in counseling for battered women, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30 a.m.-noon at the Women’s Center, 6 W. Gabilan, Salinas. For more information, call 757-7253.

**Salinas NOW**

Business meeting will be held Tuesday, Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m. at the Women’s Center, 6 W. Gabilan, Salinas.

General meeting will be held Tuesday, Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m. at Salinas Northern California Savings and Loan meeting room.

**Community Meeting**

Moving Toward Separatism — a meeting of strategy will be held Monday, December 8 at 7 p.m. For more information, call Teramota at 659-5202.

**Monterey County Commission for Women**

The Commission will meet Wednesday, Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m. at the Salinas Courthouse. For more information, call 372-8026 or 443-1240.

**UFM**

“Introduction to Tai Chi” is the title of a one-evening workshop which will be taught by Cathleen Lucido on Wednesday, Dec. 10, 6:30-7:30 p.m. For more information, call 373-2641.

**Lesbian Rap Group**

A lesbian rap group meets Fridays at 8 p.m. For location or more information, call 372-1452 or 624-2133.

**Monterey Parks & Rec**

Offers “Jazz-Er-Cise” with Lorri Kershner, Tuesday and Thursday evenings, Dec. 2-Dec. 23, 6:15-7 p.m. at the Monterey Youth Center, 777 Pearl St. Monterey Youth Center will present a “Holiday Arts and Crafts Festival” on Sunday, Dec. 7, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is free.

For more information on either of the above, call 646-3866.

**League of Women Voters**

The LWV will hold its general meeting Wednesday, Dec. 17, 12 noon, at the Pacific Grove Community Center, 515 Junipero. State and local government relationships will be the topic for the meeting. For more information, call 624-9791.

**Monterey College of Law**

The Monterey Law Center, the community education branch of the Monterey College of Law, is sponsoring a seminar on “Basic Concepts in Estate Planning” Thursday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m. in Carpenter Hall, Sunset Center, Carmel. To reserve a place, call 373-3301.

**Handicapped Activities Unlimited**

Carolyn Berry Becker, director of HAU, announces its seventh annual Handicapped Art Show, Dec. 5-Jan. 3 at the Pacific Grove Art Center, 568 Lighthouse Ave. Art Center hours are 1-5 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday. There will be an opening reception on Friday, Dec. 5, 7-9 p.m. in the Main Gallery. Free childcare will be provided.
Local and National News Briefs

A Woman’s Place...

For only the second time in the history of the New York Philharmonic, a woman has been selected for one of the orchestra’s top musical chairs.

Judith LeClair, 23, was chosen from among 75 people to be the orchestra’s first bassoonist. Philharmonic spokesperson Jack Murphy said, “We believe she is the only woman principal in any of the country’s 10 major orchestras.”

LeClair, a native of Newark, Delaware, will join the orchestra in the fall of 1981.

Sponges May Be Hazard

The Emma Goldman Clinic for Women, one of the oldest and most prominent women’s self-help clinics in the country, has suspended sales of sea sponges as an alternative to tampons.

Dr. Adel Franks of the Iowa City clinic said that sales will be discontinued until more information is gathered on the possible potential health hazards of the sponges.

The decision to suspend the sales of the sponges came on the heels of a report released by state researchers warning that the sponges contain sand, bacteria and other potentially harmful substances. Dr. William Hauser, director of the state hygienic laboratory, said that the sponges pose a potential risk of infection.

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‘Pro-Daddy’ Politics

_Washington Post_ columnist Richard Cohen, in what he calls a “personal view,” says that the so-called pro-family people in American politics today are really just “pro-daddy.”

The columnist was referring to the new movement in American politics to restore the traditional American family — a movement which has gathered enough political clout to have put a Family Protection Act before the United States Senate.

Cohen says these pro-family people believe that the traditional American father — a sort of Robert Young “Father Knows Best” type of character — is being threatened by high divorce rates, women who work, equal pay for those women who do work, and federal interference in family life.

Says Cohen, “Daddy seems to be losing his authority. He cannot spank, say no to abortion, reject sex education, or deny contraception to his children. Daddy can no longer beat either his wife or child without answering for his actions.”

The columnist claims that the traditional stereotyped daddy is just a myth, and that, like other failing institutions, says Cohen “he needs government help.”

He may get it. Cohen observes that if you go through the Family Protection Act, authored by conservative Senator Paul Laxalt, you could delete the word “family,” and “just keep inserting the word ‘daddy’ in its place.”

97th Congress May Ban Freedom of Choice

The National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) is warning that last month’s Reagan victory and Republican sweep of the Senate increases the chances of a constitutional amendment banning abortion being passed by the 97th Congress.

NARAL spokesperson Susan Kuhn says that although the pro-choice lobbying organization is not pleased with having a President-elect who is against abortion, the big threat is in the Senate, where Republicans clearly hold a conservative majority. The National Pro-Life Committee has already predicted that a pro-life amendment could now be added to the Constitution within five years.

Kuhn reports that the Life Amendment Political Action Committee had a “hit list” of 18 pro-choice legislators it was trying to defeat. They succeeded in winning eight seats — a fact Kuhn calls a “partial victory for NARAL.”

The nine pro-choice seats retained or won were those of Senators Leahy, Cranston and Hart and Representatives Frank, Hollenbeck, Udall, Edgar, Hance and Martin.

Pro-choice “hit-list” candidates who were defeated included Senators Birch Bayh, John Culver, George McGovern, Jacob Javitz, Frank Church, and Gaylord Nelson, and three members of the House.

Election Impact — ‘Too Early To Tell’

The National Women’s Political Caucus says it is “too early to tell” whether the massive Republican landslide in last month’s general election will have an adverse effect on the fate of women throughout the United States.

The Republican Party platform specifically refused to support the Equal Rights Amendment and called for the passage of a constitutional amendment which would outlaw abortion.

Janyce Katz, a spokesperson for the NWPC, said that while extremely conservative senators and representatives were elected last month, it is too early to determine the impact on women.
An Interview with Bettina Aptheker

A recent arrival on the Monterey Peninsula is internationally-known author, activist, scholar and teacher Bettina Aptheker who first captured headlines in the 1960s as the 19-year-old co-leader of Berkeley's Free Speech Movement. During the early 1970s she was prominently involved in the trial of Angela Davis, a childhood friend for whose defense she served as a court-appointed legal investigator. Having been virtually “born into the Communist Party,” (her father is one of its leading theoreticians), she officially became a member at age 17. In addition to researching and writing several books, she has taught women’s studies, history, and Marxism at various colleges, and is currently working on her doctorate from UCSC.

Q. What is your reaction to criticisms of Marxism as rigid and doctrinaire?

A. To me, the philosophy of Marxism is a way of interpreting the world, not an ideology or dogma. The concepts are useful, and when Marxist methodology is used to look at women, the results are very illuminating. It is one thing to use a philosophy as a means of interpreting reality — and quite another to try to fit reality into a structure that doesn't change. When it becomes a “line” or “Talmudic” it is very constraining, and I think there is a lot of accuracy in people's perceptions on that score. I really believe that socialism is a far more sane way of organizing society, but it has not yet addressed basic feminist issues. Many women all over the country are working on the creation of a feminist Marxism.

Q. How would you define feminism?

A. Until recently feminism has been defined as equality between men and women. The modern feminist movement is now redefining equality. The heart of the newer definition is that we want women to have a co-equal role in the determination of all human affairs. A quota system, even at 50%, isn't it. To plug women into the existing power structure merely admits them to a society, a way of thinking, a world, which men have invented. Some feel that sharing the housework so wives can work or go to school is equality; they overlook the fact that the university system and the job market, as well as the family itself, are patriarchal institutions in whose structure and operation women have had practically no voice.

Sometimes people call me a separatist, and I answer, “No, I’m not a separatist. Men are separatists. They have excluded women from employment, from clubs, from church positions, from public office. They have made us economically dependent upon them; they have excluded us from the capacity to decide when and how we will participate.”

Q. Would you say that your description would also apply to the racial situation today?

A. Yes, many people of color are asking themselves if they really want to integrate into a racist structure which denies their full autonomy. Even in the women’s movement women of color are often expected to join an organization, created by whites who have already decided on its structure, its agenda, and the terms on which members may be involved. Sisterhood is wonderful, but it has to be based on a real recognition of substantive equality. It may come about most effectively as Black, Chicana, and other women of color organize to deal with the issues most important to them in ways they regard as most appropriate. Then, from a position of their own strength, they and predominantly white feminist groups may be better able to work together on matters of common concern. Feminism is incomplete without the experiences and priorities of women of color — a fact that many white feminists have not yet really understood in terms of their day-to-day activities.

This is an example of an area where a perspective from Marxism has been valuable to me. The Communist Party has done some fundamental work on what it refers to as “the national question of the U.S.” — a term which reflects its view of racial minorities in this country as actually being conquered nationals. This is especially clear with respect to native American Indians and Mexican-Americans whose territory was seized from them, but it also applies to Black Americans who were brought here from nations in Africa. As peoples with heritages and histories of their own, they have a right to self-determination, not just absorption into a structure in whose creation they had no part and which oppresses them politically and economically. If you think of this situation only in terms of race, you don’t get its full dimensions.

Q. What impact do you think the election will have on these issues?

A. First, I think it’s essential not to panic by misreading the temper of the American public. Large numbers of citizens were not even registered, and almost half of those who were didn’t bother to vote. We need to remember these figures to keep from overestimating the extent to which the Right has mass support. To assume that we face a repressive period like the fifties, or pre-Hitler Germany as some people fear, and consequently to retreat or become defensive could harm the women’s movement and act as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It is appropriate, however, to understand that Reagan is a dangerous man whose administration will do great damage. There will be serious cutbacks in the social services on which

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YWCA—
(continued from page 1)

shelter for battered women on the Peninsula.

"I'd like to reach out to a cross section of the community. We've been very effective in reaching the younger, more feminist-oriented women and I'd like to include more activities for older women and single mothers who may feel trapped or isolated at home. Our hope is to open up and show the variety of options for women."

WADV was founded by women who had a strong concern about domestic violence and who were looking for an internship through Antioch University. Some of the founders were Carole Anderson, Barbara Licht-Greenberg, Kate Miller, Lynn Evers, Carol Silverstone and Jean Celese.

The first organizational meeting was held in 1977 at the Legal Aid Society. In 1978 the crisis line was started, funded for the first year by the Kiwanis Club. Later that year, WADV received CETA funding.

In August of this year Paris Williams became director of WADV.

Williams was raised in Oakland and became involved politically in the fight to stop the move of the Marriott College campus from an accessible part of Oakland to an exclusive, inaccessible neighborhood. She became active in the Black Panther Party.

While working with the Ecumenical Hunger Project in Palo Alto, she decided to attend Antioch University. Paris applied for the position of WADV's director.

One of Williams' major goals is to see WADV become more integrated with the Y. After all, we are a Y program. We share the same policies and the main imperative of eliminating racism wherever it exists by any means necessary. I would like to integrate this into WADV. WADV finds itself in a unique situation because it is women fighting and dealing with the most blatant expression of male dominance while at the same time we're affiliated with an organization whose main expression of male dominance while at the same time we're affiliated with an organization whose main imperative is to fight racism. We are in a perfect position to develop concrete ideas for combating those two major issues.

"I would also like to get more women of color involved. There is a large population of Asian, Chicana and black women here in this county."

At present, 40 women volunteer for WADV as advocates on the line, clerical duties or staff jobs. Recently, WADV graduated nine new advocates.

The Women's Center is also a program under the YWCA. It opened in September of 1978, its focus is to organize and direct the various programs of the Y, such as the Cultural Awareness Project, the library, classes and workshops.

Gwen Marie became its director in October.

Marie's political involvement started when she was a social worker. "I got involved in social work thinking I'd be involved in change, only to find out that the system was very much interested in maintaining the status quo."

She worked on a housing project in Fresno for low income people and developed a support class for foster parents and foster children. "Part of that issue was racism because most foster children were children of color and there were such strict regulations on foster parents that most low income, Third World families didn't qualify for the program."

Marie has been self-employed as a graphic artist for the last three years.

"I got involved with the Women's Center on the ground floor, the planning stages. Then I became a board member and the liaison between the Board and the Center, and finally, the director of the Women's Center."

At present, the Women's Center is planning its long range goals. They are accessing the community's needs and trying to find ways to actively meet those needs.

"Our main goals are the elimination of racism and the empowerment of women, so what we would like to do is to offer skills, knowledge and information for women in all types of areas."

"I'd like to see women cross over the barriers of money, age and race, not only to get information about racism and sexism but to start working to change their personal lives. The YWCA is going to sponsor support groups centered around these special interests. Information and skills are a part of it all but so is sharing the emotional impact all the 'isms' have had on our lives."

There are about 450 members of the local Y with 50 to 80 active volunteers.

New people are always welcome. To become a member of the Y, or to make a tax-deductible contribution, drop by the office or call 649-0834.

—JT Mason

Bettina Aptheker—
(continued from page 6)

women rely; these will have a racist edge and be particularly hurtful to women of color.

This is a time for developing meaningful alternatives that break out of the patterns set by the two major parties. The strongest, most organized, progressive national movement is the women's movement. Besides, the whole fabric of politics in this country depends on what women do, but their work in the political system and for political parties is rendered invisible by the power structure which turns it into a male hierarchy.

If we can hang together and get a clear assessment of the danger, if we can maintain a position of power without despair or getting cynical, if we can overcome problems of racism and establish ties with Black and Chicana women as they continue to organize, if we build networks for mutual help in our own communities, we will have a solid foundation for expanding both our base of support and people's understanding of the real issues confronting us all.

—Polly Parker

Graphic by Cyndi Sumner
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<td>Women’s workshop in motorcycle maintenance, 10-4, Yamaha Suzuki Sports Center Holiday arts and crafts festival, 10-4, Monterey Youth Center</td>
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<td>Mandatory meeting for members of Women’s basketball team, 7:30 p.m., Salinas Youth Center</td>
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<td>Bill of Rights Day, 7:30 p.m., Salinas NOW general meeting, 7:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Women for Women, 7:30 p.m., Salinas Women’s Center, My Sister’s House, 12:30-3 p.m.</td>
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<td>Photographs of Native Americans opens at Monterey Museum of Art</td>
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"With the hold that patriarchy has on all religions, how can one possibly be religious and a feminist too?" This question was posed by a Danish woman to participants in our workshop in Copenhagen in July at the United Nations Mid-Decade Conference for Women.

By offering two workshops at the alternate conference, the NGO Forum, my colleague Lucile Schuck and I were able to introduce the subject of religion and its influence on women. It had concerned us that religion had not been discussed at the 1975 Mexico City Women's Conference and prompted our request to the planners for Copenhagen. The response indicated that women were ready for such a discussion. Seventy-five to 80 attended each workshop: Moslems, Christians, Sikhs, B'hai, Zoroastrians, Hindus, Jews and atheists. Many spoke movingly of the injustices that religion had brought on women in their countries.

A Moslem told of her belief that the Koran had been deliberately misinterpreted by men in order to exercise control over women. A nun, employed at the Vatican, said that research had revealed that names of women of accomplishment had been changed to men's names when Biblical history was recorded by church fathers so that men would be given the credit.

A Methodist from Africa spoke bitterly of the harm that missionaries had brought to her country. They had taught supremacy of the male as set forth in the Bible they brought with them, and women had lost whatever rights they once had.

An atheist spoke of her inability to understand how to build any compatibility between religions dominated by patriarchal leadership and feminist philosophy. It was she who asked: "How can one possibly be religious and a feminist too?" Sonia Johnson, the recently excommunicated Mormon, said, "We have to do a little heavenly reorganization."

Lucile and I were representatives of the International Association for Religious Freedom, a UN nongovernmental organization. The IARF was submitting a statement Challenging Patriarchal Vision to the official UN Conference. This statement names patriarchal perceptions of reality — as promoted and sanctioned by religion — as a basic cause of the oppression of women. Our workshops were based on this statement. We found little disagreement among the women present that all religions in the world are patriarchal and in need of reformation.

Our first workshop out of the way, we quickly began attending some of the 150 other workshops and events that took place each day at the Forum. I wanted to experience women like Betty Friedan, Bella Abzug, Phyllis Chesler and others who had been influential in my own feminist awakening.

Betty Friedan's workshop "Feminist Issues: Stage Two" was crowded. In this second phase of feminism, she said we needed to confront "the family" in new terms. Women need partnership with men in order to change structures and patterns. Husbands have to be shown that changes that women want to make will benefit them too.

Friedan told us that the family itself is here to stay and that today there are many different kinds of families. She described the family as two or more persons who share resources, responsibilities for decisions, and who share commitments over a period of time. The division of labor between two house-spouses should be renegotiated continually so that women are not in the old bind of being wage-earner and housewife too. Friedan feels the family, and all human relationships, are on a new, exciting frontier.

Bella Abzug brought together in an impromptu session seven official delegates who were also politicians — ministers, parliament members and leaders of political parties in Third World countries and in Europe. She asked these women to talk about their experience with political power.

An Indian politician, who began "Madam Chairman..." and then apologized, brought on much laughter. She spoke of often being asked how she managed to sit in Parliament and still raise four children. "This is a question not asked of male politicians," she commented.

One of 31 women in Parliament in Bangladesh is a grandmother with 11 children. She urged us to work for women in elections. "Men help each other. Women sometimes don't."

Agreement came in several languages that women need "the support of their sisters" to help win a political office.

An Israeli formed her own party with support from feminists only to find they expected her to concentrate solely on issues such as abortion and child care once she was elected.

A member of Parliament from Guyana said, "I can't assume that every woman is a feminist. When I am asked 'What do women want?' I say 'Which women?' We need women in politics who are feminists — not just women imitating men."

An African from Guinea felt that in new countries where women have participated in the struggle for independence, they seem to fare better at least in the lower levels of politics. It is still a struggle, however, to get to the higher level jobs. The men seem to save these positions for themselves.

Perhaps the most important and far-reaching action of the Conference took place in the first week when 51 nations — in an impressive ceremony — signed the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This historic document is called a "World Bill of Rights for Women."

Sarah Weddington, presidential assistant and head of the U.S. delegation, led five of the 39 delegates in the (continued on page 11)
UN Conference—
(continued from page 10)

signing. She said, "This is a proud moment. Women were not in Philadelphia when our Constitution was drawn. It has taken us 200 years to fill the gap."

Seventy-five countries had signed the Convention by the end of the Conference. It must now be ratified by 20 nations to make it binding. The convention has treaty status and a two-thirds vote of the Senate will be needed for ratification in the U.S. We discovered, however, much to our embarrassment, there already is a collection of UN agreements gathering dust in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—all unratiﬁed. Will this document, so important to women, join them?

For those of us who had never attended an international meeting, the experience was invaluable. My association with the young Danish family with whom Lucile and I stayed, was a rich addition to my Copenhagen experience. We learned a smattering of Danish over the dinner table each day, but found they learned English faster.

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From tribal times until today men (symbolized by the sun) are traditionally unacquainted with and afraid of this power designated to their female counterpart. Implications of feminine moon power are both symbolically and realistically controlled by men in an effort to create a dependent male-identified-woman rather than encouraging an independent and separate woman in and of herself. (There are still cultures which acknowledge matriarchy.)

Without questioning our responsibility, we often become physical and emotional representations or externalized objects of the male imagination and desires.

Astrology, as well as other esoteric systems, describes the order of the universe and our relationship to it. Symbols are used because they are attributed with more power than words and linear thought; consequently, they bring us closer to the essence of what is being described.

Symbolic rituals are so powerful that for a time their practice and teachings were outlawed by the Christian church. Women have often been associated with the moon—shadowy, quixotic, ruler of fertility, birth and death; the receptive, intuition, emotions and subconscious influences of the mind.

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Astrology, psychic reading, the senses, intuition, Tai Chi, Tarot, Yoga, I Ching, Eastern philosophy all become "silly, feminine and unscientific;" not reasonable and therefore, invalid. Access to these maps of the subconscious mind is diminished and the unintegrated logical male mind not only becomes superior but one-dimensional and dangerous.

Assimilated influences from the Orient, Asia, Greece and Rome have been combined, standardized and reﬁned to give astrology the form it has today. The word zodiac means circle of animals. Twelve symbolic animals rule a separate month during the full year. One astrologer notes, "The stars are imbued with life. They are superior animals whose fire is gentle and harmless and thus obedient to and in harmony with intuition and reason."

If you were born between November 23 and December 21 your symbol is Sagittarius, the Archer. Your planet, Jupiter, represents good fortune and your color is light blue.

The Archer aims well and the chief characteristic of the Sagittarian is her extraordinary power of mental activi-

—Rosemary Matson

Graphic by Kathy Stoner

Aspects of Feminist Astrology

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The Archer aims well and the chief characteristic of the Sagittarian is her extraordinary power of mental activi-

ty. She brings reason combined with finely honed intuition to bear upon every observed phenomena and finds her most congenial occupation in getting to the bottom of things. In general, reducing life to its simplest terms.

Verbal and mental precision make her a formidable antagonist and foolish suggestions or objections meet with little mercy. Rare is the occasion when she doesn’t know exactly what is going on in any given situation. Paradoxically there exists side by side an almost childlike sense of trust in others, leaving her too open and unsuspecting of ulterior motives, for the Sagittarian prefers to see only the good in others which meets with their own innate optimistic disposition.

Sports are particularly keen to these women as they all excel in one kind or another: running, swimming, arching, fencing, equestrian endeavors, and hiking seem to have the most appeal.

Outdoor work is usually preferred and they cannot endure the stale atmospheres of closed rooms. They are immensely sympathetic to those confined. Theories are experienced from actual contact with humanity making them excellent teachers, counselors, philosophers, therapists, psychics, writers and healers.

Sagittarians are most noted for being independent, outspoken, sincere, blunt, generous, popular, experimental, fair and open minded. Commitment is the key word to scare any one of them off, especially when approaching a love relationship. Projects which create an atmosphere of autonomy and independence are the ones which will keep their interests for years and the same holds true of marriage.

It is rare indeed to find a Sagittarian woman who will be possessed for more than the moment. Because it is impossible for them to lie or consciously hurt anyone (although their arrows have an unerring effect) they often end up under impossible conditions in work or love and suffer the resulting humiliation of losing self-respect. They are usually misunderstood as their open manner is frequently misconstrued for something quite different than actually intended!

Grecian goddesses of the feasts during this time are: Artemis, Hecate, Selene, Ceres and Rhea. The moon is ruled by Minerva.

—Laurel Hepburn
I have the bad habit of reading the newspaper in the morning, and what I read is not good news. We have a new president who campaigned on an anti-feminist and racist platform. Everyone seems to keep using words like “backlash” or “swing to the right” or “traditional Christian crusade.”

The public and private violence against women and people of color leaps off the page — a rape, a beating, pornography linking sex with unspeakable violence, harassment on the job, Ku Klux Klan rallies.

There doesn’t seem to be any safe place for me to hide. My response is often fear. I have the sense that I’m out of touch with my culture, isolated, de­vi­ant and powerless.

This panic comes from real conditions which many of us face daily. We feel powerless because we don’t have money or access to well-paying jobs or material security, and so spend much of our energy figuring out how we’re going to make it to the end of the month. When we’re plodding along, day after day, the changes we need seem to come so slowly that sometimes it’s hard to see any movement at all.

Because we’re women who are stepping out of traditional roles, we’re not protected from social censure or even from threats of violence. Some of our fear comes from a realistic appraisal of the punishments our society applies to those who are seen as “deviant.” This vulnerability is felt most acutely by those of us who are single mothers or who are not personally connected to men: women whose lack of material power is evident in a sexist, racist structure.

For me, this fear often descends without warning, usually precipitated by some small, insignificant incident or remark. It hits me when I least expect it, and I end up feeling not only frightened but also ashamed of myself for being afraid.

A lot of us are having these feelings now, which means we need to pay close attention to the ways in which our fear gets in our way. And, more than ever, we need to come together to nurture, support and care for each other. We need to apply solid, practical, collective antidotes to the poisons we feel.

This is not easy to do. For many of us, forming solid community support networks is difficult because we don’t know how to start. For those of us who are white and middle class, our recent historical experience has been one of isolation within the structure of the nuclear home and an emphasis on individual competition which has not taught us how to be of support to each other.

We have a lot to learn from women of color and from immigrants to this country who have always formed networks to help each other survive.

Black women in the United States, struggling against the heritage of slavery and racial prejudice, have designed family systems and networks which allow for sharing of resources and for building emotional and psychological support. White women need to look at how they’ve done this so that their strategies can give us courage, strength and practical survival tactics that work.

In turn, we have the obligation to join with them in the fight against racism, because racist acts and violence against women always reinforce each other.

If we begin to think of ourselves in terms of community, we have some protection as we make difficult and scary choices in our daily lives. First, we have to pay careful, conscious attention to our communication patterns. Sometimes we don’t listen carefully or articulate how we’re really feeling. We need to learn how to communicate directly across the class and racial lines set-up by our political system. We need to be able to acknowledge our fears openly, realize their legitimacy, and help each other through periods when each of us feels panic.

Most of all, we need to be gentle with each other, not critical or judging. We don’t need to be concerned with “ideological purity,” but rather we need to support each other’s choices and to realize that we’re each struggling with different paths toward similar goals. This diversity is also our strength; it’s a mistake to demand conformity from each other.

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Every time I’m able to connect solidly with another woman, I find that I lose the feeling of powerlessness. The more my family “extends,” the safer I feel. It’s not only emotional support I receive; my friends clothe me, help me with child care, share their homes and salaries, and provide solid, practical advice when I can’t figure out what to do about some problem.

The more we extend our family, the more we become a community of women, nourishing each other and providing ourselves with non-critical support.

As we put this feminist process into daily practice in small ways, we’ll see the obstacles facing us in a new light. Then, we’ll also find ourselves strong enough to handle almost any problem that comes our way. Let’s look around at our resources, notice how accessible we are to each other, and begin to talk about what we need and how we can provide help for each other now.

—Kate Miller
Some Positive Approaches

‘Lest We Forget . . .’

“It was in fact the job of a remember guide to call up and re-play, for those who did not know it, all or any part of the hill women’s violent backgrounds. Decades ago each woman who had escaped to the hills had offered — usually with great pain — the memory of her city experience, however dramatic or mild, however heroic or horror ridden. Her experience as she had known it had been added then to the vessels of memory kept within the person of every hill woman. ‘Lest we forget how we came here.’ ”

from The Wanderground
by Sally Miller Gearhart

From all indications we are entering an increasingly reactionary phase of political and cultural existence in this country. These indications range from the recent election of Ronald Reagan and dozens of right-wing legislators to the burgeoning evangelical/political groups representing the new “moral majority” — groups such as the locally-based Christian Voice and In God We Trust; from the Supreme Court’s denial of poor women’s rights of reproductive freedom to the Navy’s racist and sexist “lesbian trials.”

Not surprisingly, this reactionary trend accompanies rising inflation, unemployment, and resource shortages. It also carries a very real threat to the economic, social and political advances painstakingly won by women and racial and social minorities through the last two decades.

Those of us most vulnerable to this threat naturally feel it most strongly. More than once in the past several weeks I have felt myself jarred by rumblings of a fear akin to panic in our local feminist community.

“Panic,” so the myth goes, is a frenzied state induced by the mischievous god Pan, and has never brought anything but chaos and trouble to those afflicted by it. Fear, on the other hand, is most often a legitimate response to a perceived threat — and when the threat is real, examining our fear may instruct us in survival and keep us from panic.

Determining whether, and in what ways, a threat is real is of course critical to the instruction. We can then turn with precision to the task of eliminating or avoiding that particular threat. There are many ways to approach this process of naming our fear and dealing with the threat behind it. I want to suggest “remembering” as one important way.

By “remembering” I mean the act of examining the past with the eyes of the present: looking for patterns, for lessons culled from the experiences of others — then using what we’ve found to evaluate and address that which threatens us now.

In Sally Gearhart’s novel, The Wanderground, the hill women establish “remember rooms,” where the memories of those who have struggled before them are preserved and passed on to new generations, “lest they forget.”

For the hill women, “remembering” is crucial to survival: the old lessons guide them through new challenges. For us, too, “remembering” may help us unravel and confront new threats. And we have our own versions of “remember rooms:” in women’s studies courses and materials, in books and articles disclosing and explaining our common heritage, in reproductions and transformations of our past culture (such as Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party), in the memories and speech of those living among us who have survived other oppressive periods in this country or elsewhere.

It’s not that comparisons can be lightly made — an unquestioning acceptance of similarities (or differences) could lead to complacency or panic, depending on what piece of the past is in focus. And specific tactics will require new formulation in each new situation. But at the very least, some basic principles — the importance of community, for example, must emerge.

“Remembering” is only a small part of the process of survival, but it seems essential. Our foremothers’ lives were spent embroidering lessons on our common past; we cannot afford now to ignore or forget them.

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Election — Hidden Agendas

“People were reluctant to come right out and admit they wanted to put women in their place, but there was a strong current of that running through much of what happened (in the election) . . . The ‘family’ issue raised by the right wing was a code word for putting women back in the kitchen, stripping them of any decision on the question of abortion, and forcing them back into the old orthodox roles. There was a counterrevolutionary aspect to this campaign, and women were the chief victims, along with the poor.”

—Senator George McGovern
From SWALLOW to SWALLOW*

or

To SWALLOW a SWALLOW Lands One in the Soup

Out for An Outing
A SWALLOW's a bird:
It can be an act;
Be it noun or verb,
It's a well known fact

That SWALLOWs can WALLOW
When they're in the sky
Just being a SWALLOW;
It's easy as Pie!

The Role is a Roll
Suppose it's high diving
And loses its S
From overly striving
Which sets up a stress.

Then 'spose up in space
It goes into a spin
And W's lost its grace;
What a fix it's in!

No longer a SWALLOW,
The S is long gone;
It can't even WALLOW
For W went bonk.

A Try in the Sky
It then must recoup
And build up again
Or it's in the soup
Or could live in sin.

The soup, did you say?
There hangs the solution —
It's saved for the day
S&W are in an ablation.**

The word that is left
Is sounded AL-LOW:
And more letters bereft,
It would be only LOW.***

From SWALLOW to SWALLOW
To dive through the soup
With fishhooks in tow;
A loop and a loop
It's again a SWAL-LOW.****

Secrets
You awoke a virgin
sealed by fire
Your vision revealed in a dream
surrendering
to the goddess who blesses
our union:
two reflections of sacred starlight
we know each other.
Your innocence and passion
seduces
even the moon
who obeys your requests,
as you open
softly
Revealing your lush luminous forest
to the unsuspecting
morning storm.

Laurel Hepburn

*To June who's in tune.
**In alphabet soup, of course, where else?
***Poetic license permits pronunciation as LOUGH (I hope).
****Poetic license again; or "Try again Ruth with rhyming list in hand."

MRW
All Things Considered

By Janie Forrest

will return to this spot in our next issue

Progress on the W.A.L.L.

The last few months have seen the members of the Women's Achievements: a Limitless Legacy Mural Project, a task force of 12 women, hard at work. "Of 1500 surveys distributed on the Peninsula, 63 responses were received," said Kate Elvin, artistic director of the project. Of those returned, 10 were from males; respondents' ages ranged from 25-59, the average was 32.

From the 96 nominations submitted, 31 women were chosen. The considerations for selection were based on multiple nominations, a desire to give exposure to those women less well-known in our communities, and a desire to represent the wide range of roles in which women express their strengths and sensitivities.

These role categories were: political activists; community supporters; dance/performing arts; therapists/healers/doctors; fine arts; sciences; teachers; law/law enforcement; business, and sports.

Several women from the past were chosen including Dr. Julia Platt, former mayor of Pacific Grove; Lester Roundtree, a woman who walked this area and catalogued native flora; Mary Austin, writer, and Maria Antonia Isabel Lugo, mother.

A Coastañoan Indian woman will also be represented in the mural.

Before the drawing of the mural can be completed, each candidate will be interviewed and portrait studies will be done. The task force is still collecting replies from nominees.

The task force can still use your help and interest. Come by 229 17th St., Pacific Grove on the first and third Tuesday of each month and see what's happening in public art. You are it.

—bb bastian

Applications Sought

By College of Law

According to Dean Penn, the college of law, now in its ninth year, expects to obtain provisional accreditation in January. The school has graduated 29 students, 28 of whom have passed the bar exam.

Information about applying for the 1981 school year may be obtained by calling 373-3301 or by visiting the college at 496 Pearl St., Monterey.
Arriving at a feminist perspective is a profoundly personal experience. The process forces one to re-examine many unquestioned customs and relationships. Feminism helps women realize they have a right to make many more choices than society commonly permits. Through Demeter we hope in some way to reach every woman. Each month a woman will be writing a chronicle of the process she went through in becoming a feminist. We encourage others to send in their own accounts of their emergence as feminists.

I have been a feminist all my life. It wasn’t until very recently though that I realized that was what I was most comfortable in calling myself.

I had begun to be very interested in the feminist movement and ideals at the beginning of this year after I saw the Holly Near concert in March. All my initial thoughts were confirmed and clarified. The concert put the feminism in very clear terms in my mind, and when I left I was absolutely certain that I was a feminist.

I had found a movement that seemed to understand the importance of support groups and the fact that “we’re all in this together.” Feminism envelopes a broad spectrum of issues. I personally believe that people and our culture are enriched by all the different factions within society and by suppressing any group of opinion we are not living life to its fullest.

I see the feminist movement as a forward movement. The forward movement of women, but also the forward movement of all people because the success of women depends on the success of the whole earth. To rise in a world that is falling down is a backward motion.

Another aspect of feminism that is very important to me is self-examination: the idea that in order to get rid of stereotypes and generalizations we must pay close attention to the individual person. We must create a world in which people are able to feel free to express all parts of themselves without the fear of being judged or condemned by someone else’s preformed ideas of what is acceptable or normal, thereby giving them the chance to look at themselves without any reserve or hesitation.

I am a senior in high school now and I have discovered that the vast majority of the students have a very different view of the feminist movement and feminism than I do. They see only the aspect of equal rights which I think has been taken and processed and packaged by the media into an easily definable movement, one which can be simply broken down and analyzed. However, feminism by its nature cannot be routinely classified in our world of computers because it deals not only with law, but also with love and compassion, things which our society is not equipped to deal with on a large and serious basis.

Very often when I meet and talk to women and men regardless of whether they think of themselves as feminists, I feel the reaffirmation of the need to communicate with each other and find out what each other’s goals, hopes, aspirations are. I believe that most people would consider themselves feminists if they knew more about the long-term goals of the feminist movement, like creating a world and society without domination and exploitation. I consider becoming a feminist an evolutionary process.

—Ann Parker

On Thursday evening, December 11, Carmel Valley therapist, feminist and author Judy Tatelbaum will speak at The Open Book bookstore in Pacific Grove about her experience in writing The Courage to Grieve. Published in October, this moving and helpful book is winning acclaim and appreciation from reviewers and readers across the country.

Demeter readers are invited for wine and sociability at 7:30 with Judy’s talk scheduled to start at 8. The Open Book is located at 1184-F Forest Avenue, near the original Bagel Bakery.

Earlier that day, Ms. Tatelbaum will be a guest on JT Mason’s women’s music program on radio KAZU.

The condition of women in any civilization is an index of the advancement of that civilization.

—Dr. H.W. Haggard