



**NOW**

# THE *broadside*

HOUSTON CHAPTER  
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

Vol. 4, No. 5

BROADSIDE

May 1973

## SELF - HELP

Do you know your os from your elbow? Have you ever taken a good look at your cervix? Did you know relief from the uncontrollable itching of yeast infection can be found in your refrigerator?

Houston feminists found answers to these questions during a recent demonstration of the technique of Self-Help, an exciting new method of health care for women.

Carol Downer, founder of the Feminist Women's Health Centers in California, spoke to Houston feminists on Thursday, April 12 at the Women's Center. Downer illustrated her lecture with a series of slides taken at the LA Health Center.

The Center specializes in care of the well woman. Services include birth control information, health information, pregnancy screening or a standard screening exam to let a woman know that all is well, or to detect deviations that need looking into.

These services center around the use of an instrument known as a speculum in order that each woman will be able to view her own cervix and os (the os is the opening to the uterus) and learn what is normal for her. Women at the Center purchase their own specu-

lums and are taught proper use of the device along with an explanation of danger signs and illnesses common to most women. Of course, any woman with a serious illness or problem is directed to a qualified physician.

Downer carefully explained slides of each type of common problem, for example, cervicitis or yeast infection. Through careful examination during an entire menstrual cycle, a woman will begin to discover what is normal for her and will be able to quickly detect any variation and seek medical attention.

In the two years the Health Center has been in operation, Downer has discovered some interesting medical information. "After meetings of the first self-help groups, we discovered that almost every woman has a tipped uterus at least some of the time. These slightly tipped uteruses do not appear to cause difficulty. The medical profession has chosen to believe a tipped uterus is never normal and, until recently, women were fitted with a painful suspension device called a pessary to force the uterus into a more 'correct' position.

"We have also found that most



SIMULTANEOUS DISCHARGE OF ALL THE GUNS ON ONE SIDE OF A WARSHIP . . . ANY STRONG OR COMPREHENSIVE ATTACK, AS BY CRITICISM . . . A SONG, CHIEFLY IN 16TH- AND 17TH-CENTURY ENGLAND, WRITTEN ON A TOPICAL SUBJECT, PRINTED ON BROADSIDES, AND SUNG IN PUBLIC . . . BY A PROFESSIONAL BALLADEER . . .

THE RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, UNABRIDGED EDITION

Comment

know thine enemy

Somewhere out there, at-large in the land, are the Right-to-lifers, the far-right women organized against abortion, the ERA, and women's liberation in general. Although calling them "Don't Rock the Boaters" might be more appropriate than Right-to-Lifers, "they" do exist and "they" come up often in feminist conversation nowadays. In conversation a reference to the Right-to-Lifers is always accompanied by a conspiratorial wriggling of eyebrows and darting glances for bugging devices, followed by "whoever 'they' are."

In my quest to discover "whoever 'they' are," I have encountered one name above all others, "their" Betty Friedan: Phyllis Schlafly. Well, Phyllis showed up on the tube the other night, debating the ERA with NOW's Ann Scott on William Buckley's "Firing Line." And lo! she is not a witch, orge, vampire, imbecile, or figment of the imagination. She is a Real Person. A graduate of Washington University in St. Louis with post-graduate studies at Radcliffe, Phyllis Schlafly is a middle-aged woman who wears her hair like Miss Kitty of Dodge City and always smiles when she speaks.

Opening the ERA discussion, Schlafly began to catalogue the "unfortunate consequences" of the amendment. She claims that the ERA would not give women anything they don't already have and will take away many of the privileges women now have (like exemption from the draft). She says that the ERA would be hurtful to women in industry and that it would prevent schools from being all-male or all-female. All of these topics were duly debated by Ann Scott with Buckley interjecting like this:

Buckley: Why doesn't sex have anything to do with it? (re schools)
Scott: Does the mind have sex?

But Schlafly's biggest mistake is not her ignorance of facts or her half-assed "logic"; it is her paranoia. She is emotionally involved; she's afraid of losing the status-quo, of losing chivalry and the "good deal" women supposedly have. At one point in the debate, cornered by a list of responsible women's organizations which support the ERA, Schlafly discredited NOW's inclusion in that list. "How can you say 'responsible'; in their National Convention NOW endorsed lesbians and prostitutes! I don't call that responsible." Now, Phyllis, they're women too.

ALL NOW MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO PAY

notice:

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I want to join but can afford only \$ (2.50 min.)
I am not a NOW member but would like to receive the newspaper (\$3.00)
I would like to make a contribution of \$ to NOW
I pledge \$ a month for the women's center

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P. O. BOX 58202
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77058

BROADSIDE STAFF

EDITOR: Sara McDaniel
ART DIRECTOR: Michelle Vennema
CONTRIBUTORS: Pat Dowell, Susan Hedding, Parrish Hirasaki, Wendy Haskell Meyer, Bonnie Moore, Christi Oliver, April Raines

NOW OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Parrish Hirasaki
VICE PRESIDENT: Peggy Hall
SECRETARY: Muncy McKinney
TREASURER: Ann McClung

TASK FORCE COORDINATORS

BROADSIDE: Sara McDaniel
CHILD CARE: Bonnie Burnett
CREDIT: Susan Butler
EDUCATION: Kay Whyburn
EMPLOYMENT: Linda Feahr
FCC: Betty Barnes
FUND RAISING: Marlyne Kilbey
MARRIAGE & DIVORCE: Peggy Hall
POLITICS & LOBBYING: Helen Cassidy
REPRODUCTION & ITS CONTROL: Jeanne Necaize
WOMEN IN THE ARTS: April Raines

National Organization for Women
P. O. Box 58202
Houston, Texas 77058

Have a question? Call:

A.M. P.M.
748-5369 524-5743
664-4121 332-4247
748-5369

## SELF-HELP (FROM PAGE 1)

heterosexual women experience a mild form of cervicitis as the result of intercourse. This appears as a small, irritated place on the cervix and does not appear to be serious. Many gynecologists automatically cauterize any cervicitis. We feel this is often an unnecessary procedure."

Throughout her discussion, Downer stressed that self-help is not a substitute for medical care, but an adjunct to such care. Self-help will allow a well woman the certainty of knowing she is healthy and immediately aware of changes that do call for professional attention. There is no reason a woman should wait until a six-month or annual check-up to know the condition of her cervix. Regular checking is simply a logical method of insuring good health.

However, good physical health is not the only benefit of self-help clinics. Downer states, "We have discovered that through this sharing of knowledge we develop a positive self-image that includes the ability to become self-sufficient. No longer will any part of our anatomy be an unknown realm, spoken of only in mysterious terms by our gynecologists. It is time indeed to 'worry our pretty little heads' and become knowledgeable about our bodies. Participation in self-help becomes a vaginal consciousness raising and the effects multiply as we share our knowledge with our sisters."

Following the slide presentation, Downer gave a personal demonstration. Inserting the speculum, she allowed all present (excluding males) to observe for the first time, the view our gynecologists see. Reactions ranged from "It's so pretty and pink" to "I thought it was more complicated than that."

Downer then explained how the shared experiences of women have led to the discovery of many simple remedies for common complaints. For example, the excruciating itch of yeast infections is often relieved through the application of unpasteurized yogurt. (This recommendation resulted in Downer's arrest last year and subsequent trial for practicing medicine without a license. Downer was acquitted of all charges.)

In addition to self-examination, the Health Clinic also performs the technique of menstrual extraction. The concept of men-

strual extraction was discovered by women in the clinic, as well as the invention of the technological method of performing the procedure. The Del'-Em Menstrual Extraction Kit is a method whereby women, independent of grants, degrees, and titles realized the pressing necessity of also controlling the technology.

Downer explained, "In using the Del'-Em Kit we simply gain control of when and how we shall have our monthly periods. The Del'-Em is making it possible for trained women, working within closed groups who are thoroughly knowledgeable about each sister's menstrual history and biological structure, to simply extract one another's periods when we so choose."

"We emphasize that menstrual extraction is not a euphemism for abortion. We are aware that men are obsessed with concern over the issue: Did their sperm in fact fertilize the ovum? But we must be the ones to define our lives and the uses to which our bodies will benefit us. We women are not interested in whether or not any sperm did reach an ovum one of those times last month. We are very much interested in control over when and how we shall have our monthly periods."

Lengthy discussion followed concerning the freedom resulting from the technique of menstrual extraction. Excited by the consequences of this procedure, the women present could have continued the discussion all night.

Time, however, forced the meeting to a close. Downer concluded, "As women we can form our own power bases to directly challenge existing discriminating, sexist, and inadequate health care services. These power bases can make changes in immediate kinds of services; can help women grow and develop their own personal worth and power; and force the existing powers to change. We have a successful prototype in the Feminist Women's Health Centers and want to help groups such as this establish similar centers in order to give women the ability to gain control over their own bodies."

Houston NOW is in the process of forming such a center. Anyone interested in participating and/or working should contact Susan Hedding, 667-5443, Jeanne Necaice, 665-3287, or leave a message at the Women's Center, 524-5743.

## NOW IN CLEARLAKE

On May 3 an organizational meeting for a NOW chapter in the Clear Lake area will be held in the UH Clear Lake Graduate Center, Room 243, at 7:00 PM. Parrish Hirasaki, president of Houston NOW, will speak to the group about starting a NOW chapter.

Rosemary Mendenhall, the chief proponent of a Clear Lake chapter, says that interest in a new NOW chapter was generated by the women's course given by NOW at the College of the Mainland. Rosemary admits that she's just too lazy to commute to Houston for NOW meetings but she states that many women simply cannot travel that far for a meeting because of baby-sitter or transportation problems. Anyone from the Clear Lake area who is interested in forming a NOW chapter should attend the May 3 meeting.

## KILBEY ATTENDS

### NATIONAL BOARD

Marlyne Kilbey, a member of Houston NOW, recently attended her first meeting of the NOW National Board as a member of the board. Evidently she wasn't the only new member, because there were so many fresh-people that a training session for board members has been scheduled for July 14-15 in San Francisco.

At the National Board meeting it was announced that \$10,400 was collected in the blood drive for ERA ratification funds. Another \$72,000 was garnered from a mail-out to the MS mailing list. There will be a Southern NOW Regional Conference in Atlanta, June 9-10. If any members of Houston NOW would like to present a workshop for the conference, please contact Marlyne.

A state coordinator for NOW in Texas will soon be appointed. If you are interested in working with NOW on a statewide level, let Marlyne know.

Since women in poverty is a national NOW priority this year, the National Women in Poverty Task Force is pushing to revise the Fair Labor Standards Act to extend the minimum wage to household workers. Congressmen need letters in favor of HB 47-57 which will extend the minimum wage.

**800-292-9601**  
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# TASK FORCE REPORTS



## MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

After numerous calls from women wanting a sympathetic attorney for a divorce case, the Marriage and Divorce Task Force is beginning an attorney's reference service. Like the Physician's Referral set up by the Reproduction Task Force, a list of area attorneys, both sympathetic and un-, will be available at the Women's Center.

Ultimately the Marriage and Divorce Task Force hopes to offer some form of marriage counseling for women recently divorced or close to it. This may be a special c-r group. Peggy Hall, chair-one of the task force, considers this kind of counseling a service to the community. "No matter how bad a marriage is, a certain amount of adjustment is required to break up. It is very hard for traditional women with no training for work outside the home. Mutual support in a special c-r group can help greatly," Peggy stated.

## EDUCATION

On May 12, NOW, WEAL, HCWPC, YWCA, and numerous other (hopefully initiated) women's groups will participate in a seminar on sexism in education at the HISD Administrative Offices. The all-day session will feature feminist educators from NEA and HISD.

On the state level, a seminar sponsored by the College of Education, UT at Austin, is planned for May 18, 19, and 20 at the Thompson Convention Center on the UT Campus. The seminar, "Boys Over Here; Girls Over There," is billed as a statewide conference of educators, parents, and students to eliminate sexism in education.

From the seminar a statewide task force on sexism in education should emerge. Among the topics to be discussed are library and curricular materials, counseling and guidance, school-related physical education and athletics, curriculum planning and budgeting for change, and educator training and retraining. Anyone interested in attending either of these seminars should call Kay Whyburn, 667-8556.

## EMPLOYMENT

The next advance of the Equal Employment Opportunity Task Force may be against Gulf Oil Corporation. Linda Feahr, the new chairone of the task force, has written to the Office of Equal Opportunity for information on the Affirmative Action Plan of Gulf. If Gulf has not filed an Affirmative Action Plan, the task force may file suit against the company. From the grapevine, the EEO Task Force has learned that there are almost no women in administrative positions at Gulf and that Gulf has never really tried to improve this situation.

The EEO Task Force has also withdrawn its complaint against the Chronicle's sex-segregated want-ads since the ads are no longer segregated. (See April Broadside.)

## FCC

By next month every TV station in town should have an employment practices statement available to the public. Form 395, as it is called by the cognoscenti, is required to be in the station for public perusal. The FCC Task Force will investigate employment practices in TV stations and pressure stations to hire more women.

Another project of this task force is to monitor TV programming for programs concerning women. (Soap operas don't count.) If it can be demonstrated that there are not enough programs for women, we may be able to negotiate for more programs for women, including one produced by NOW.

## WOMEN IN THE ARTS

WE'RE GETTING READY TO SHAKE UP THE CULTURAL SCENE IN HOUSTON. WANT TO GET IN THE ACT?

The Houston NOW Chapter is introducing a new task force this month: WOMEN IN THE ARTS. Local artists, patrons of the arts, and other people interested in the arts are invited to get involved. We are planning to produce, exhibit, and publish works of art in all forms to promote the image of wo-

men as professional artists.

In the organizing meeting, April 12, plans were discussed for a citywide art show at a well-known art gallery, a three-act play to be produced at one of the major theatres, a concert, and various publishing ventures. But, we need even more choices.

At the next meeting, May 16, at the Women's Center at 7PM, we will discuss implementing these plans. Please encourage members and people who would not be members otherwise to participate. Part of the purpose of this task force is to bring in new people.

Our new task force is patterned after the purposes set forth at the national organizing meeting of Women in the Arts (February 19 in Washington). These objectives are as follows:

- 1.) To act as an information exchange for women in the arts.
- 2.) To provide political and emotional support to the community of creative women.
- 3.) To identify acts of discrimination in society against women in the arts and to take action against these.
- 4.) To raise consciousness to the significance of women's art.
- 5.) To bring to light the contributions of women artists throughout history.

The National Task Force plans to compile data on the position of women in the arts and to disseminate that information, to encourage NOW membership of women in the arts, to aim for an International Year of Women in the Arts, and to study the subject of art education, examining curriculum and devising alternate curriculum.

Here in Houston we're going to make art. So, women with ideas, talents, ambitions, and dreams are needed to get this show on the boards. For further information call April, 225-1841 -- day; 682-4097 -- night, and let's get going NOW.

**NEXT BROADSIDE DEADLINE: MAY 14**



# CALENDAR

1973

MAY

1973

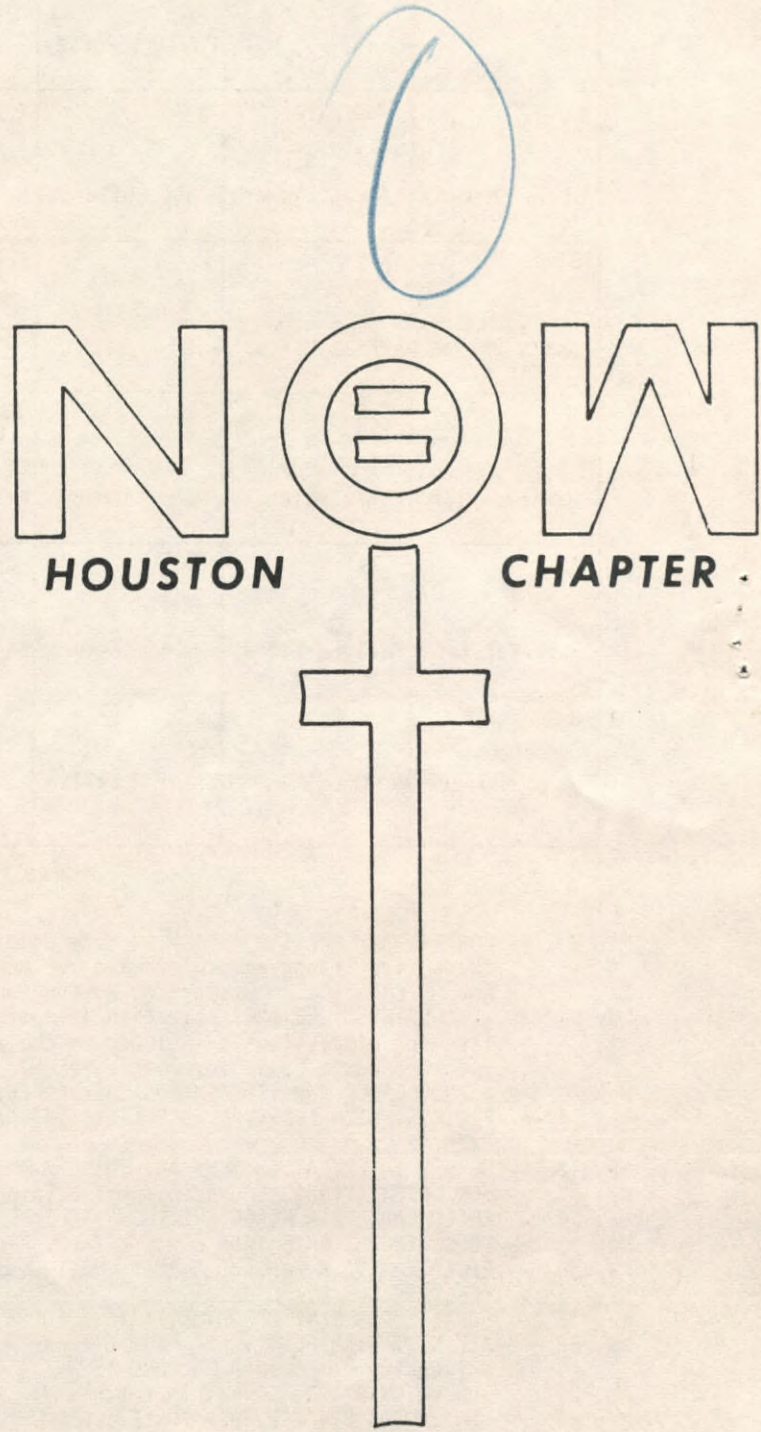
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 - 4 PM	7-10 PM	7-10 PM	7-10 PM	7-10 PM		10 AM-1 1-4 PM
		1 Phyllis Rowsey	2	3 Pat Kirk	4	5 Ruth Milburn Ann McClung
6 Cilia Estrada	7 Janet Fisher	8 Peggy Childress	9	10 Peggy Hall	11	12 Helen Via Beverly Crenshaw
13 Betty Barnes	14 Parrish Hirasaki	15 Ann Smith/ Margo Bishop	16 Kay Whyburn	17 Naomi Hirsh	18	19 Kathy Lively Clara Willing
20 Harla Kaplan	21 Susan Hedding Lynne Mutchler	22 April Raines	23 Pat Dowell	24 Jeanne Necaize	25	26 Sara McDaniel Jan Pierce
27 Gail Carstens	28 Marlyne Kilbey	29 Linda Feahr	30 Sally Melville	31 Muncy McKinney	1	2 Martha Failing Joan Ritter
3 Ruth Milburn	4 Martha McFerren	5 Toni McLellan		7 Tess Wells	8	9 Brenda Cooper Jonelle Owen

Women's Center 524-5743

- May 2 -- NOW PROGRAM MEETING. "The Supreme Court Ruling on Abortion." University of Houston Student Center. Check first floor schedule board for meeting room. 8 PM.
- May 7 -- NOW ORIENTATION. "History of Women/ Houston NOW." Presented by Betty Barnes. 8 PM.
- May 9 -- NOW BUSINESS MEETING. Election of nominations committee. Call Parrish Hirasaki to insure that your item for discussion is included on the agenda. University of Houston Student Center. Check first floor schedule board for meeting room. 8 PM.
- May 10 -- REPRODUCTION AND ITS CONTROL TASK FORCE. 8 PM.
- May 11 -- FEMINIST FILM FESTIVAL. "Bus Stop." Room 116, Science & Research Building, University of Houston. 8 PM. \*
- May 12 -- SEXISM IN EDUCATION SEMINAR. HISD Administrative Offices, 3800 Richmond. 9 AM to 3:15 PM. \*
- May 14 -- NOW ORIENTATION. "Consciousness Raising." Presented by Marlyne Kilbey. 8 PM.
- May 14 -- CHILD CARE TASK FORCE. 8 PM.
- May 16 -- WOMEN IN THE ARTS TASK FORCE. 7 PM.
- May 16 -- EDUCATION TASK FORCE. 8 PM.
- May 16 -- FCC TASK FORCE. 8 PM.
- May 17 -- EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY TASK FORCE. 8 PM.
- May 18 -- FEMINIST FILM FESTIVAL. "The Eleanor Roosevelt Story." Room 116, Science & Research Building, University of Houston. 8 PM. \*
- May 21 -- NOW ORIENTATION. "What is Feminism?" Presented by Helen Cassidy. 8 PM.
- May 24 -- MARRIAGE & DIVORCE TASK FORCE. 8 PM.
- May 28 -- NOW ORIENTATION. "Legal Rights." Presented by Parrish Hirasaki. 8 PM.
- May 28 -- FUND RAISING TASK FORCE. 8 PM.
- May 29 -- POLITICS & LOBBYING TASK FORCE. 8 PM.

Unless otherwise specified, meetings are at the Women's Center, 3602 Milam. Child care is available at all but starred (\*) meetings.

# ***broadside***



**HOUSTON**

**CHAPTER**

*National Organization  
for Women*



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN  
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