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HOUSTON  
**Breakthrough**  
APRIL 1980



**TOUGH ON TOXICS**



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# THE BIG PICTURE

I wish to take issue with a statement made by [Houston Police Department] Chief B.K. Johnson in his interview with Janice Blue and Gabrielle Cosgriff. ("I'm a Crime Fighter: B.K. Johnson Takes a Hard Line," *Breakthrough* March 1980). Johnson tells Blue and Cosgriff that his "infamous statement" in November of '79 was taken out of context by reporters. He also says, "There was a helluva lot that went on in the statement that was made." Being the reporter that asked the question, let me relate the full text of then Assistant Chief B.K. Johnson's answer.

**Question:** Chief, if in fact the civil service promotional system has not discriminated against blacks, how do you explain the fact there are no black officers on the force higher than the rank of sergeant?

**Answer:** I can't answer that question. I don't know what goes on in the mind of the black as far as studying, the ability to take a test and score well—of knowing what he's supposed to be doing.

That was his complete answer. Although Johnson let it stand, Assistant Chief Tommy Mitchell tried to soften it with some qualifications. He said that because there are so few blacks in the department, they faced an overwhelming number of whites in the competitive examination system.

For example, one black candidate competes against 50 white officers for a captain's rank. It's not good enough to come in third. The black candidate must beat them all. Tests are only good for a year. Say only two captain ranks come open during the year. The black number three is out in the cold, and must take the test over again against another field of mostly white competitors. To steal a line from "Leader of the Pack": "You get the picture? (Chorus) Yes, we see."

My compliments on the interview and Dave's (David Crossley's) incredible pictures.

**TIM FLECK**  
Police Beat  
Metro News Service

I am writing this not to make a political point, but for personal reasons. I have always considered *Breakthrough* my paper and I could not keep quiet while ex-Dean Calvin Cannon was portrayed as some kind of feminist hero to my friends and community.

First, let me make clear that I am happy with his work with the community to bring the Judy Chicago exhibit here. Moreover, I do not believe that the particular cause or manner of his firing at this time was justified.

However, let us keep a little perspective. My perspective, unfortunately, is a bitter one. This is the man who initially refused to consider me for a full-time teaching position for which I was

fully qualified because I was married to another faculty member. He offered as a *mitigating* explanation his similar action with another wife whom, he said, he had persuaded to withdraw her application for an unrelated position. She would be angry, he said, if he considered me after dissuading her. Ex-Dean Cannon's then policy of hiring quite a few highly qualified wives to teach part-time, yet refusing to consider them as fulltime employees was hardly sex-neutral in a context where men overwhelmingly predominated in the faculty and [neither] women (nor minorities) were . . . seriously recruited. (As early as 1974 I offered him information on rosters of women and minorities in various disciplines which he never utilized.)

After I expressed my belief that it was illegal to exclude me from consideration, I was in fact given a set of interviews. The result was that a faculty committee voted to hire me 5-2, but ex-Dean Cannon vetoed that decision so high-handedly that the letter of protest which committee members sent included one signer who had in fact opposed my candidacy. Fortunately for the University, the other candidate was also an excellent woman scholar, so the students did not suffer from this man's prejudice.

I offer my personal experience as, unfortunately, typical of much of the ex-Dean's actions. Unfairly axed? Perhaps. Noble and fair-minded? Not likely.

**Laura Oren**

What an honor that Houston was where *The Dinner Party* became liberated from its crates. There was no disappointment as it was shown the way it was intended encased in blackness illuminated for us to feast on.

So my disappointment is great when I write about Judy Chicago, the creative energy behind *The Dinner Party*, and her abuse of the women's community in attendance at the session called "Sexuality or Iconography: The Dinner Party Plates" at UH/CLC on Sunday March 9.

We who had organized the panel realized that we were taking quite a risk by not structuring ourselves in the manner that people have come to expect from panels: the typical patriarchal assemblage of experts in linear procession. What began as a very exciting process ended with Chicago literally walking out on us because her agenda wasn't ours.

We invited the audience (who were actually on stage with us) to express individual views of their sexuality as the Dinner Party plates purposefully heighten our vaginal awareness. Some women talked about their fear of the plates being broken as they fear their bodies being invaded. A woman spoke about having never explored her vulva and all its parts. Women were spinning off, in process, spiraling, exciting one idea that moved like fluid to the next—trying on the feminine.

Chicago, who apparently distrusts process unless it is under her charge and tutelage, became angry that women were calling it theirs, owning the piece (as they were owning and reclaiming their bodies and history). She refused to stay for the weaving of the Houston tapestry of feelings and ideas because permanent housing for the piece was on her agenda. There is no issue here regarding the importance of housing *The Dinner Party*, but first we needed to have a relationship with it, to begin to make it ours. We were reclaiming and owning ourselves through what she and the other wonderfully gifted individuals have given us.

What Chicago doesn't realize is that she is part of us, we have all created this moment in history that creates a *Dinner Party*. Chicago's elitist conception of her art puts her apart from us, as if she is leading us, standing as an idol before us. I am excited by the piece because it celebrates women; I love it. After struggling with my disappointment in Chicago, I now love that the Chicago idol was smashed for me on March 9. Feminist philosophy has no idols; we celebrate us.

**BARBARA ELLMAN**

I would like to express my deep appreciation for the efforts you have made and the support you have given both to *The Dinner Party* and to me personally. When I saw the lines of people moving slowly through the exhibition, I felt gratified that the many years of work by me and my colleagues were not in vain. Thank you for helping bring *The Dinner Party* back into public view. Thank you for proving that the human spirit can transcend the prejudice and bigotry of an age. Thank you from me and from all the people who worked on *The Dinner Party* project.

**JUDY CHICAGO**

It's taken me long enough but it is my pleasure to renew my subscription. It has been two years since I've moved from Houston; a friend gave me a subscription to *Breakthrough* and I continued it out of nostalgia. Now, I find it a welcome addition to my understanding of what is happening with the women's movement reflecting not only the local Houston scene but events of national significance. Further, not only is the content and format much better than when I first knew of it, but also it comes out regularly.

**PAT O'BRIEN**  
Lawrence KS

Thanks for the coverage of "Blowout" (February 1980) and "The Invisible City" (September 1979) in *Breakthrough*.

It's super to have full transcripts published of hard-biting documentaries.

**VIRGINIA MAMPRE**  
Director of Programming  
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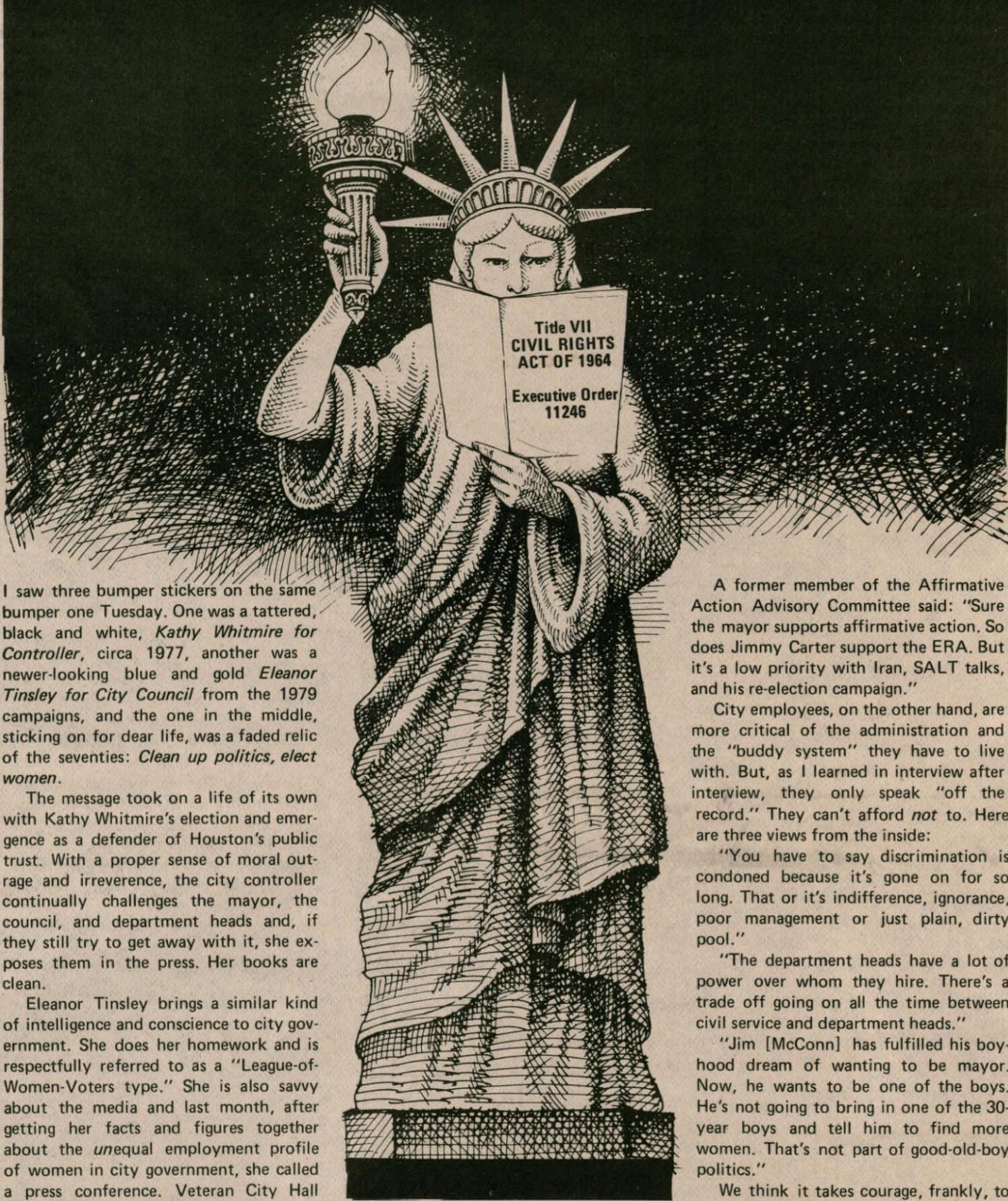
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Cover photo of Sharon Itaya by Gary Allison Morey

# Nothing's changed



I saw three bumper stickers on the same bumper one Tuesday. One was a tattered, black and white, *Kathy Whitmire for Controller*, circa 1977, another was a newer-looking blue and gold *Eleanor Tinsley for City Council* from the 1979 campaigns, and the one in the middle, sticking on for dear life, was a faded relic of the seventies: *Clean up politics, elect women*.

The message took on a life of its own with Kathy Whitmire's election and emergence as a defender of Houston's public trust. With a proper sense of moral outrage and irreverence, the city controller continually challenges the mayor, the council, and department heads and, if they still try to get away with it, she exposes them in the press. Her books are clean.

Eleanor Tinsley brings a similar kind of intelligence and conscience to city government. She does her homework and is respectfully referred to as a "League-of-Women-Voters type." She is also savvy about the media and last month, after getting her facts and figures together about the *unequal* employment profile of women in city government, she called a press conference. Veteran City Hall reporters couldn't recall any former councilman, including the 20-year incumbent she defeated last fall, ever calling a formal press conference—especially one reflecting poorly on the city.

Tinsley, however, made no charges of discrimination, she just made observations—"Our study indicates that in every category, even those where women are concentrated, men earn on the average more than women"—and she stuck to the hard facts that her research assistant and UH graduate student, Goldie Waghalter, uncovered in two months of intensive work.

For the record, these bleak statistics serve to remind us that little, if anything, has changed in the last decade. Back in 1974, Merylyn Whited, first as a graduate intern in City Controller Leonel Castillo's office and later as his director of research and public information, was the first person to collect data on employment patterns from payroll information in the controller's office. She turned over her research to Poppy Northcutt, the city's first women's advocate. Both Northcutt (1975) and Nikki Van Hightower (1977), who replaced her, built on Whited's origi-

—BY JANICE BLUE—

nal data and made current employment information public.

"It is incredible how consistent every report that comes out of there is. Nothing has changed from the time Poppy first did her report to mine to Eleanor's," said Van Hightower, now executive director of the Houston Area Women's Center. "We all come up with the same findings, the same problems, and say the same things, and nothing's happened."

"I know change is slow," said Tinsley. "But we hope that by demanding accountability things will be speeded up." She is careful not to lay blame at this point. Both she and Waghalter are more apt to say the discrimination is unintentional and that affirmative action suffers from "benign neglect." They feel it's simply a low priority, administration after administration, because the excuse can be made that there are more pressing problems facing the city.

A former member of the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee said: "Sure the mayor supports affirmative action. So does Jimmy Carter support the ERA. But it's a low priority with Iran, SALT talks, and his re-election campaign."

City employees, on the other hand, are more critical of the administration and the "buddy system" they have to live with. But, as I learned in interview after interview, they only speak "off the record." They can't afford *not* to. Here are three views from the inside:

"You have to say discrimination is condoned because it's gone on for so long. That or it's indifference, ignorance, poor management or just plain, dirty pool."

"The department heads have a lot of power over whom they hire. There's a trade off going on all the time between civil service and department heads."

"Jim [McConn] has fulfilled his boyhood dream of wanting to be mayor. Now, he wants to be one of the boys. He's not going to bring in one of the 30-year boys and tell him to find more women. That's not part of good-old-boy politics."

We think it takes courage, frankly, to do what Tinsley is doing, because City Hall is not a very supportive environment and you don't get very many pats on the back for reminding people they're not complying with the law. And you surely don't score any political points from the old council.

We were surprised to hear from Tinsley that the mayor was "surprised" things were as bad as they were, that he thought other departments were doing as well as his own. After all, he's only appointed one woman city department head out of 26 and that was only after his purchasing director, Jack Key, was indicted. We're glad he's finding women for those \$30,000-a-year executive assistant positions on the third floor, but what about the clerk typist in municipal courts taking home a bi-weekly \$300, less than the monthly car allowance for his own council members?

We read in Marge Crumbaker that the mayor is going to receive a humanitarian award from a cancer research group. We don't know what he's done for cancer, but he could take Tinsley's research to heart and probably win a humanitarian award from the city's clerical workers.

ADVERTISING

Beth Adam, Shirley Bryson, Ailene English

CIRCULATION

Missy Hauge, Debra Thornton, Rose Wright

COPY EDITORS

Janice Blue, Gabrielle Cosgriff, Rose Wright

DESIGN

David Crossley

EDITORS

Janice Blue, Gabrielle Cosgriff, David Crossley

OFFICE

Janice Blue, Rose Wright

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Daniel Bissonnet, David Crossley, Nancy Dahlberg, Marguerite Johnson, Gary Allison Morey, Alma Newsom

PRODUCTION

Janice Blue, David Crossley, Janet Meyer, Kathleen Packlick, Rose Wright

PROOFREADER

Gabrielle Cosgriff

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**City of Houston:**

# Unequal opportunity employer

**Women are underpaid and under-employed in city government.**

BY JANICE BLUE

Eleanor Tinsley is taking action on affirmative action. Some have apparently advised the new city councilwoman to take on a safer issue, "like flooding," but Tinsley told her research assistant, Goldie Waghalter, "I may be a one-term council member but I want my two years to have an impact. I don't want to be around here for 10 years and do nothing."

In early March, two months into her first term in City Hall, the former HISD school board president took an unprecedented step for a member of city council. She called a press conference and unveiled some hard statistics. Tinsley's "Study on Women in City Government," commissioned by her and researched by Waghalter, showed that women are underutilized and earn lower salaries on the average than men city employees. The average bi-weekly salary for all male employees is \$430, or \$11,180 per year. The average bi-weekly salary for female employees is \$341, or \$8,886 per year. These figures do not include firefighters and police officers.

Her report targeted four city departments that had no women in key positions—aviation, real estate, city planning and traffic and transportation. The latter department only has women employed as clerical workers.

Tinsley emphasized that she was not accusing the city of discrimination but rather pointing out that "the city is not taking advantage of the wealth of skill women have to offer. That is the city's and the taxpayers' loss."

The result, she says, is that "a lot of women are leaving and a lot of women who've been with the city for years are simply frustrated. They're at a dead end. They're the ones you hear about who train supervisor after supervisor and get nowhere."

No discrimination cases have been judged against the city. "We're hoping we can do things that will avoid having an expensive case for the city," she said.

The city adopted an affirmative action plan back in 1974, but the disparity continues in almost every job classification. As of January 1980, Tinsley pointed out:

- Administrators represent four percent of city employees: 74 percent male and 26 percent female.
- 12 percent of city employees are in the professional category: 48 percent male and 52 percent female.
- Technical workers make up 13 percent: 71 percent male and 29 percent female.
- Protective Services (excluding police and fire) employ 3 percent: 77 percent male and 23 percent female.
- Para-professionals comprise one percent: eleven percent are male and 89 percent female.
- 18 percent of the city's labor force is in clerical-related positions: seven percent male and 93 percent female.
- Service and maintenance workers make up 36 percent: 90 percent male and 10 percent female.

One of Tinsley's great concerns is for the women clustered in the lowest jobs in



Eleanor Tinsley (r) and Goldie Waghalter published a "Study on Women in City Government."

the city. Ninety-three percent of the clerical workers are women. Tinsley pointed out that clerical workers are the lowest paid of all city employees. Even here, "men are apt to earn more than women," said Tinsley of the seven-percent-male clerical work force. Clerical salaries fall below service and maintenance workers. Using the bi-weekly average earnings of employees hired since January 1, 1977, Tinsley noted that women clericals made \$341, whereas men in service and maintenance jobs average \$430 and women workers there averaged \$370. (See table next page).

Her recommendations for upgrading the status of women in city employment include plans to re-evaluate the career counseling program, set centralized training programs, and to strengthen the affirmative action enforcement powers.

The Affirmative Action Division has been "a department with no teeth. There are no penalties for non-compliance, Tins-

ley says and empathizes with the frustration of its new director, Erie Calloway, who was appointed during McConn's first term of office. "Erie came into a department that had not made any reports since 1975. She's trying to standardize the record keeping. She's asked department heads to come and be briefed and they just send representatives (to the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee meetings). She's had trouble getting goals and timetables."

The Affirmative Action Division of the Mayor's office requested all city departments to prepare their goals and timetables for the period July 1, 1979 through June 30, 1980 by last August 20. It was only after the Tinsley-Waghalter inquiries around the first of the year that the delinquent departments started working on their projections of hiring goals for women and minorities. All but one turned in the reports in March, seven months late.

Heading the list of the late filers was

the civil service department. Ironically, its director, Al James, held Calloway's job as chief of affirmative action before moving over to "the real power job," as one member of the Affirmative Action Advisory Commission calls this civil service post.

Tinsley issued a press release in late March naming the departments who filed their goals and timetables seven months late. In addition to civil service, they were the civic center, the city secretary's office and the civil defense and health departments. The treasury department never turned one in. "It would appear that (these departments) are not taking affirmative action seriously," says Tinsley, warning, "We have to take care of our own house or else Washington might come in and do it for us."

"Erie told us that with Eleanor's interest in this area, it has made her job a lot easier. People are starting to take her seriously because what we're saying is that affirmative action is a serious issue," says Waghalter, a UH graduate student in political science.

Tinsley, determined that this study on women in city government will not end up in a file like those documented by the now-defunct Office of the Women's Advocate, under Poppy Northcutt and later, Nikki Van Hightower.

Van Hightower says she is pleased Tinsley has made affirmative action a priority. "Eleanor obviously cares. She is the first person who has done anything about it (affirmative action) that really even has any possibility of making any changes. Neither Poppy nor I did. She's an elected official. She votes on the budget. She has bargaining power. We had none."

Tinsley intends to use her clout at the city budget hearings. "I can start asking every department head, 'What was your goal for 1979? Where are you in it?' and they have to answer, because I'll be voting on their budget," she says. "I'll have the figures. I'll know what they've done."

One of the people who will have some hard explaining to do is Del Marvel, director of the traffic and transportation department. The only women in his department are the eight clerical workers. Marvel was "with the highway department for 30 years" and came over to the city post two years ago as a McConn appointee. "First, we have to have them that are willing, that want to apply. As far as any reluctance to hire women (on our part). No, if they want to tackle it, fine."

He says he doesn't do any recruiting but any time he has a vacancy he follows what is his interpretation of city policy and that is "to put that vacancy to, what do you call it, civil service, yes, Al James, to civil service. We have rules that we can pick the top three applicants that come in, but to my knowledge, I have never seen three. If we get a response it's only one, and with the employment the way it is here in Houston, we grab whoever qualifies."

Daniel Blissonnet

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Interestingly, it was a well-placed employee in the civil service department who "grabbed" a newly-created vacancy as assistant director in Marvel's traffic and transportation department (effective April 1).

Another zero department for women administrators is the real estate department. Last year, Gus Kanakas, who has been with the city for 30 years, was named director. He says he does not have "a big turnover. My biggest turnover is in clerical personnel." Kanakas will have a vacancy as a right-of-way agent and "a lady who has some extensive real estate background is going to apply. Now, the other side of the coin is that this is an outside employee."

He explained a curious civil service policy. "When that examination is given by the civil service department, those people who are working for the city will come in one, two and three. Now, she could make a 100 on her examination, but if the city employees pass, anywhere from 70 to 100, I'm obligated under the civil service rules to hire one of three city employees. She comes in fourth, even if they get a 70, 75 and an 80, and she makes a perfect score. Many people are not aware of this, but that is civil service regulations."

"In all my years on the commission, I never heard that given as a reason for why they (the city) can't find women," said Madeleine Appel, former chair of the city's Affirmative Action Advisory Commission and former president of the League of Women Voters.

"Apparently, it is policy that civil service has been following, but I never saw it written anywhere. It's not in the Civil Service Code," said Waghalter. She was told by someone in civil service that the policy is followed because they want "to promote from within."

There's another "catch" to the policy which makes it almost impossible for women to get hired, Waghalter discovered. "They even do this (top three) by department. People applying for a job in a certain department are placed above the list, above all other city employees. So, in a department where they are all male, if someone in that department applies for an opening, there's no way to even compete with it."

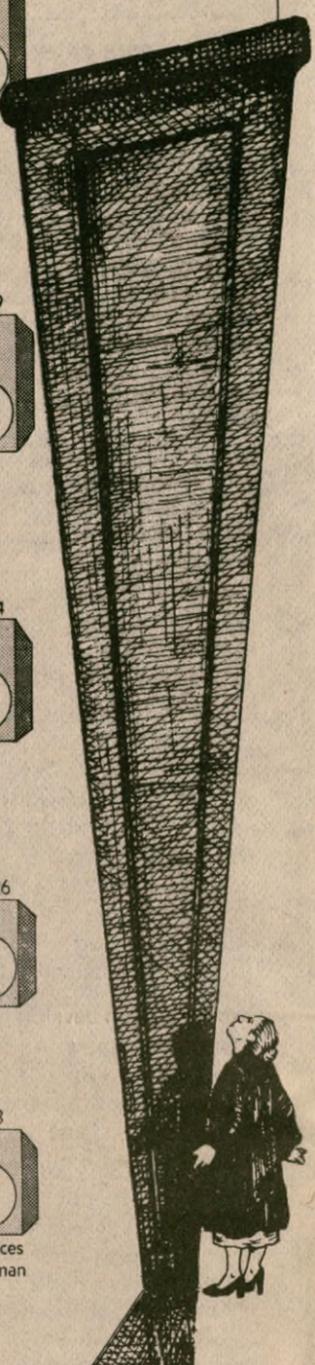
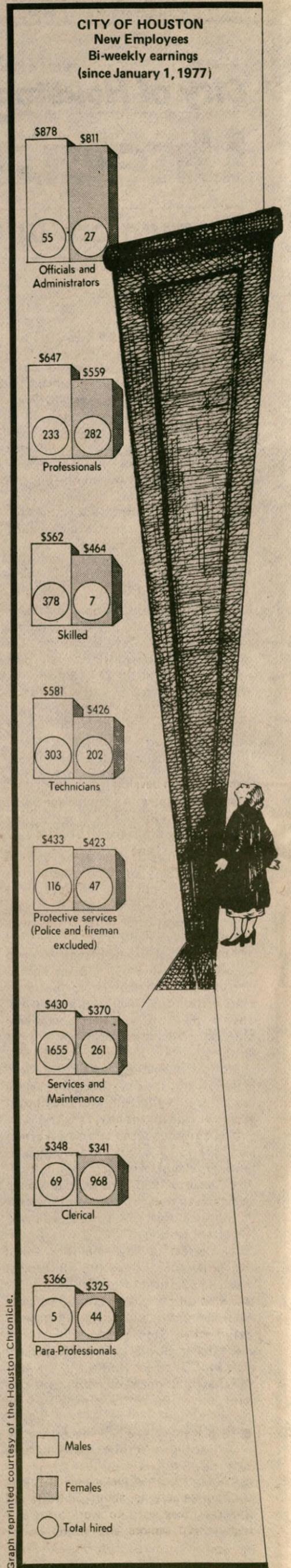
What Tinsley and Waghalter are discovering, however, is that testing is a rather arbitrary thing done "at the discretion of the civil service director." He can apparently make appointments in positions where he deems it "an emergency" placement. "There are a lot of vague areas there that we plan to look into," said Waghalter.

Van Hightower says her impression from working in the affirmative action office is that "the city wants the civil service department to be very weak so that it can use a lot of influence in that position. What you have in the city is a 'word of mouth' recruitment system. The good jobs are simply not advertised. The friends go in and apply."

She feels that who gets the jobs, who gets the promotions, is directly related to who can bring in votes, and who has something to trade. "Women in Houston, at least with the present leadership, are not perceived as a group that really has a lot to trade. We get the short end of the stick."

Almost three years ago, a study by the Affirmative Action Advisory Commission, chaired by Appel, recommended that the mayor reprimand and even fire heads of departments who continually fail to start or keep up with affirmative action goals and policies. This has not happened. Tinsley says the Affirmative Action Division has "no enforcement powers."

The commission called for centralized recruiting and personnel services that would give a fair chance at employment



and end the "buddy system" where civil service is bypassed in hiring and advancement. Tinsley said she heard complaints about "department heads posting job notices on the back wall where nobody could see it." She, too, has heard about the "word of mouth recruitment."

Appel's commission called for an expansion of the affirmative action office so that it would be more than a complaint desk. Tinsley said Calloway's office is understaffed.

The commission also called for training programs for entry into city jobs and placement in advanced categories. Calloway's office is developing a survey to determine what types of programs city employees are interested in before the city offers training. They plan to relate

that realistically to whatever vacancies are available. Waghalter heard of classes where 300 women were trained for a Typist III position. "There weren't positions for these people," she said. "That creates a high level of frustration," added Tinsley.

Back in 1977, the report noted that if the progress of women employees continued along similar patterns, it would be 1994 before there was job equality.

"We're just trying to speed it up," said Tinsley.

**Next month: Interviews with Erie Calloway, director of the affirmative action division, and Al James, director of the civil service department.**

*Janice Blue is an editor of Breakthrough.*

## Where to start?

BY FRANCES OTTO

The women that come to the Vocational Guidance Service for help are either tired of working in dead end jobs, or they are homemakers who are attempting to re-enter the job market.

"When a woman comes to us and is unclear about what she wants to do with her life, or doesn't know what her capabilities are, we give her in-depth vocational guidance counseling," says Gaye Brown-Burke, Division Director of VGS. "We show her the variety of jobs that are open to her in order to broaden her horizons."

This first stage of the program is an educational thrust. It is designed to explain what alternatives women have to the traditional clerical job.

The program includes seminars and workshops on developing job-seeking skills such as how to write a resume and how to dress for an interview. There are also seminars to help women become aware of themselves and of their capabilities as well as their limitations.

"When someone comes to us and says 'I don't know where I'm going or what I want to do,' we attempt to find the unique skills that she possesses and then go from there," Brown-Burke says.

"Most of the women that come to us need a job now," she says, "so not many go back to school full time or even part time. What we're really here for is to link these women to the resources that will help them make decisions on a new career based on their interests and capabilities."

After a woman has gone through the seminars and workshops and has made a decision as to the career she wants, the guidance service then refers her to a job.

"We have a lot of contact with the business community in finding jobs for these women," Brown-Burke says. "Even though the program is oriented towards non-traditional careers for women, we will work with women who have decided they want a traditional job, although we do introduce them to other occupations so they know they have a variety of choices."

Some of the careers women have chosen in the past ranged from carpet laying to printing to commission sales. According to Brown-Burke, most women who come to the guidance service are looking for upward mobility and more money. Especially more money.

Brown-Burke has been with the service since 1971 and observes that the average age level of women seeking help has gone up considerably to about 30 years old. She says they used to work a lot with high school seniors and young women



Gary Allison Morey

VGS staff members (l to r): Terri Constable, Carl Webster, and Gayle Brown-Burke help women entering and re-entering the job market.

just out of college.

### Counseling and Placement

There is a second program offered by the guidance service called the Counseling and Placement Program. This program does much more extensive counseling and is available to men as well as women.

In this program, counseling is on an individual basis and usually lasts seven to eight weeks, whereas Women Work for Work is based on group participation in seminars and lasts only as long as it is necessary for the woman to decide on a career she is interested in. There is a fee to join the counseling and placement program based on a sliding scale and your ability to pay. The Women Work for Work program is free with the exception of an occasional small fee for a seminar.

"Each person is given a battery of interest, personality, IQ and aptitude tests," Carl Webster says.

"We want these women to go out and make some of the good money that men have been making for years," says Webster, a counselor in the program.

The Counseling and Placement program was the original program in the Jewish Vocational Guidance Service which was started 34 years ago. Eventually the name was changed to the Vocational Guidance Service (VGS), and more recently to VGS, Inc. The service is located at 2525 San Jacinto and is a United Way agency.

The service also has a third program which began in September of 1979, in

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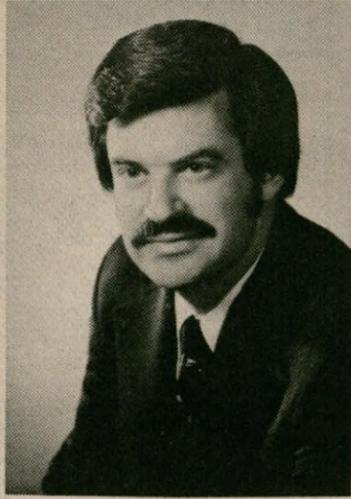
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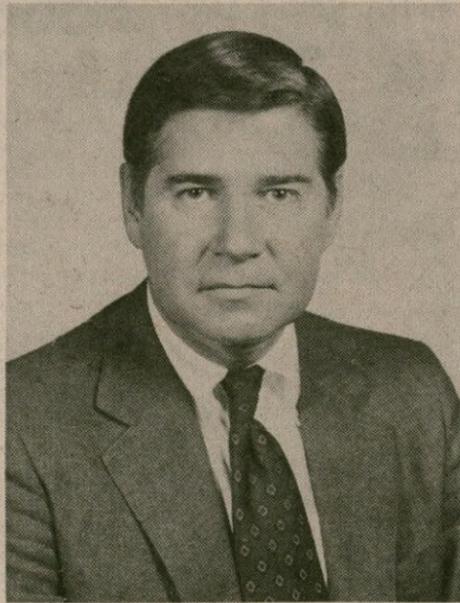
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which disadvantaged high school senior girls are placed on work sites and given a chance to see women doing traditional jobs. Teri Constable is the placement site coordinator for the Transitions Project.

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Brown-Burke says. "We try to give them a better perspective on what kind of work is out there for them and what type of training, if any, they will need to enter a new career."

Frances Otto works for the UH Student News Service.

## End to the dead end

BY ROSE WRIGHT

"Every time a woman runs into a barrier, she thinks she's not educated enough and gets another degree," said Jean Gandy, owner of *Professionally Yours*, the only employment agency of its kind in Texas. Gandy attempts to place women in executive positions.

She started her agency here two years ago, to help divorced women like herself find employment. Most employment agencies in Texas do not cater to professional women and definitely do not specialize, she discovered.

Gandy said that she has found nothing but resistance from Houston's corporate world.

Law firms are a source of ire to her. "They make clerks and typists out of women with law degrees. I have six in my file now."

Prior to opening her agency, Gandy had plenty of experience in her field. She both managed a placement agency and worked as an employment counselor. Gandy also served as executive secretary for two governors of Texas, Allan Shivers and Price Daniel.

"I learned how to giggle, say no and get out the back door when necessary. It was just another thing to live with," Gandy said of her days in the governor's office. "Remember I'm talking about the 1950s. My era of secretaries are dead and gone. They don't make us anymore."

When asked about the positions filled by her agency, Gandy said, "Everything but executive. This isn't New York, it's still Houston, Texas, and we're not ready for (women executives) yet."

One personnel director in Houston once asked Gandy for a "hungry divorcee with two kids."

"He wanted somebody that's got to work—and once she's in, she's not about to risk leaving. She needs the income."

Gandy interviews each applicant. They're 20 to 60 in age, are single or divorced, and almost all are underemployed. "97 percent are degreed and 85 percent are double degreed in marketing, sociology, psychology and public relations," she said. "Many are currently school teachers and secretaries with no possibility of advancement in their careers."

One applicant told Gandy, "I have trained six of my superiors. Now, they want me to train the seventh. I just won't do it. No longer will I train a man to be my superior. I am very qualified to be head of that department. . . I want out."

Another applicant came in from Florida. She had worked for McGraw Publishing Co. in New York and three major newspapers across the country. Gandy tried to find her a job in writing. "After three weeks, the best I could come up with was one that paid 14 thousand a year," she said.

There are over 500 women in her active file and she sees 25 to 50 women a month who are seeking better employment. Individual counseling is available and their resumes are carefully prepared. She contacts many employment firms and many seek her assistance.



Theresa Di Menno

All the women in her file have an earning potential of 20 to 30 thousand dollars a year, but "there are no positions over 24 thousand for women in Houston," said Gandy.

*Professionally Yours* usually places professional women in jobs which pay 15 to 20 thousand, "unless she's an executive secretary. They never make over 12 to 14 thousand," Gandy said.

Rose Wright is a student intern from Antioch College at Breakthrough.

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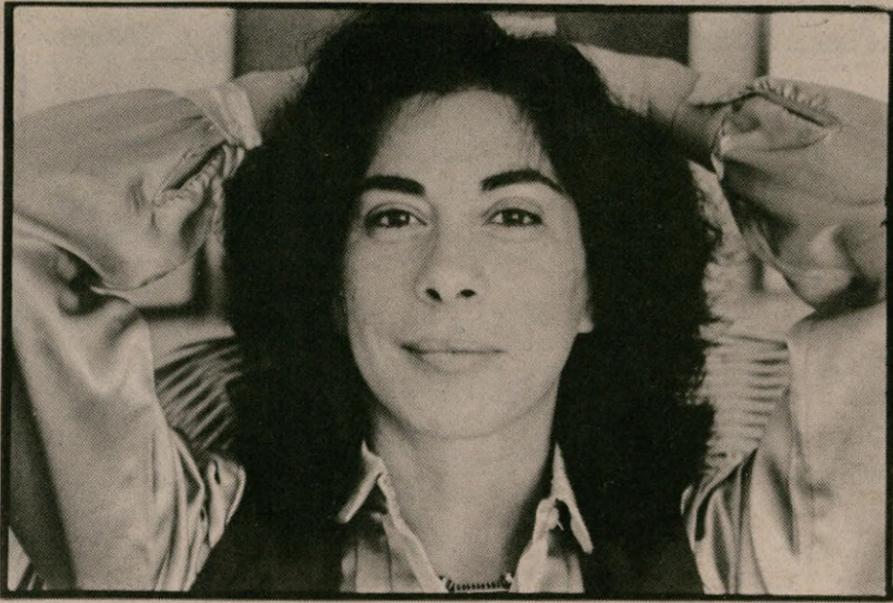
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Breakthrough called the law office of Gerald Isken to ask the secretary how she felt about being replaced with a "new mare." As it turned out, she helped her boss write up the ad which appeared in both the *Houston Post* and *Houston Chronicle* (March 10).

"We did it," she said, "because we've had back luck running just regular ads in the paper. We wanted an ad that was going to get somebody's attention."

They did not get many responses. Only one person found the ad offensive. The woman caller wanted to know if her boss "used the word 'mare' because she'd be working for a jack-ass."



David Crossley

Houston writer Laura Furman has won the Texas Institute of Letters 1979 Short Story Award for *Eldorado*, published in *Houston City Magazine* (January 1979).

Furman currently teaches writing at the University of Houston. This summer she will direct a special program in the arts at Bennington College in Vermont. The school has also hired two other Texans to teach at the July program for 15 to 17 year olds. Anne Cooper, a native of Victoria and now a Houston potter, will teach a workshop designed to bridge all the arts — the Kite Workshop, for the building and flying of kites.

Shelby Hearon, co-author of *Barbara Jordan* and another 1979 Texas Institute of Letters winner for her novel, *Prince of*

*a Fellow*, will teach creative writing at Bennington. She now teaches at the University of Texas at Austin.

Furman says the school is making a special effort to attract young Texans who want to test their future possibilities in the arts. At the school, located in Bennington, students will "learn by doing — by composing music and dances, by performing, by writing poems and stories and making visual art in two and three dimensions," Furman said. Students will also take day trips to nearby New England art festivals such as Tanglewood and Jacob's Pillow.

For more information contact: The Bennington July Program, Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont 05201.

## All that jazz



Popular Houston singer Joyce Webb is now the featured vocalist with Add Lib, the acclaimed all-woman jazz band. Add Lib now appears every Sunday night at Mum's Jazzplace, 2016 Main.



Former Houston Jazz singer Roseanna Vitro has brought her New York-based group home for a limited engagement at Mum's Jazzplace, 2016 Main. They are appearing Tuesday through Saturday nights. Through May 3.



New York "bebop" singer Marion Cowings appears with trio in a limited engagement at Rosco's, 3230 Chimney Rock, Tuesday through Saturday nights.

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*"The County Attorney's Office is responsible for writing the affirmative action hiring plan for the county. The present plan allows their own office to have only one woman out of thirty attorneys. This is a situation I feel must be remedied."*

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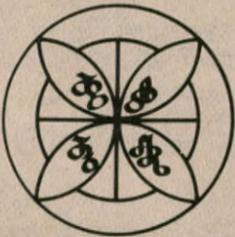
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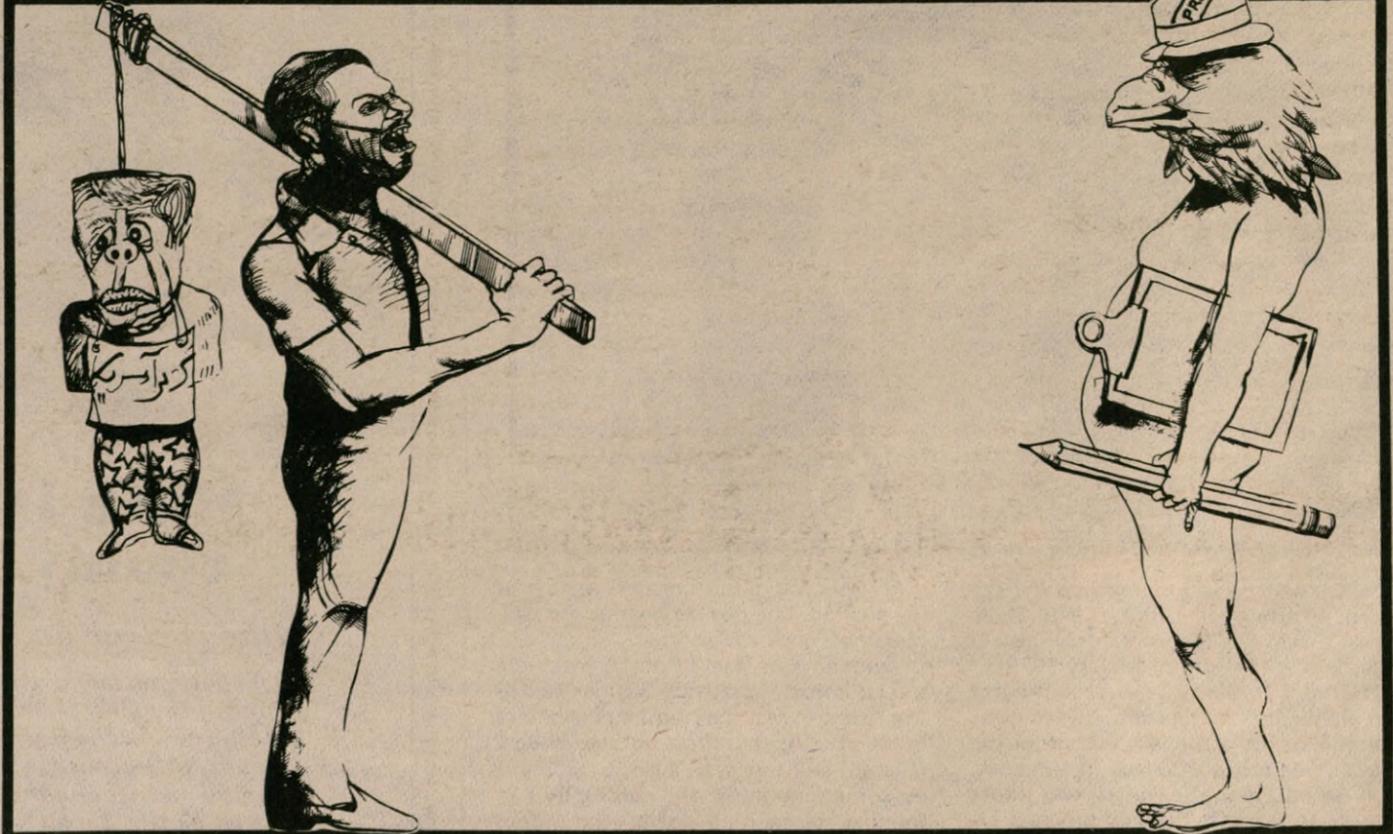
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## MEDIA MATTERS



Columbia Journalism Review

# U.S. vs. THEM

American coverage of Iran called simplistic and sensational.

BY GABRIELLE COSGRIFF

In the current issue of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, Columbia professor Edward W. Said has written a devastating assessment of the coverage of events in Iran by American journalists. He is particularly critical of their treatment of Islam, the religion of 40 nations and 800 million people.

Said questions why political events are reduced, in Pavlovian fashion, to the peculiarities of Islam. He feels that governmental and academic experts seem to have agreed implicitly not to recognize political developments as political, but to represent them as "a cosmic drama pitting civilization as we like it against the uncivilized and barbaric."

Said, a distinguished scholar and author, painstakingly documents the shortcomings of the American media's coverage of Iran. As one example, he describes a three-minute ABC "course" on Islam "which was reduced to a rush of images and symbols: Mecca, Purdah, Chador, Sunni, Shi'ite (accompanied by a picture of young men beating themselves), Mullah, Ayatollah, Khomeini.

Said compares American coverage to that of other countries, particularly to Eric Rouleau's series of articles in *Le Monde*: "Rouleau never used 'Islam' to explain events or personalities, because he viewed his reporter's mandate as comprising the analysis of politics, societies and history . . . without resorting to ideological generalizations and mystifying rhetoric. No American reporter spent the kind of time Rouleau did reporting the extended debate in Iran over the constitutional referendum; nor did others match his analyses of the various parties, tactics of struggle, personalities, ideas and institutions vying for power and attention.

"In sum," concludes Said, "Rouleau's reporting on Iran for *Le Monde* was political in the best sense of the word. The U.S. news media's simply was not; or, one could say, it was political in the bad sense. What seemed unfamiliar or strange to U.S. reporters was branded 'Islamic' and treated with commensurate hostility or derision . . . Cliches, caricatures, ignor-

ance, unqualified ethnocentrism and inaccuracy were inordinately evident, as was an almost total subservience to the government thesis that the only thing that mattered was 'not giving in to blackmail.' Along with this went a shocking assumption that if the U.S. had forgiven the ex-shah and declared him a charity case, it did not matter what Iranians (or Iranian history itself) had to say."

CJR publisher Edward W. Barrett expresses his reservations about Said's story in Publisher's Notes, in that same issue. He says he has "strong feelings that a publisher should restrain most of his impulses to intervene in the editing process. Moreover, magazines should not go too far in telling authors what they should or should not say in bylined analysis or opinion articles."

Having stated that, Barrett then takes Said to task, claiming that he "overstates his case in some respects, downplays the monstrous nature of seizing an embassy and staff, and confuses world outrage at the offense with press hostility to the Iranian revolution in general."

Barrett then "questions" whether another writer in the same issue "blames media standards too much . . ."

We reported last month that a *Newsweek* story quoted Barrett as saying that in the future the CJR would carry "no more than one feature article per issue criticizing the overall performance of the American press." Barrett responded to that story in a letter to *Newsweek* (March 17). "What I actually said was 'An occasional piece—say one major article per issue—by an outsider (a nonjournalist) sharply critical of American journalism in general is OK, probably desirable to shake up the profession—provided it is rational and does not distort the facts, and provided it is 'insulated' by heads and introduction if we do not basically agree with it. We are going too far if such overwhelmingly negative articles dominate any one issue of the *Review*."

It is ironic that CJR, for almost 20 years the most thoughtful, uncompromising vehicle for media criticism in this

country, should see fit to "insulate" itself from writers of media criticism.

He knew how to savor the good life, and had the money to do it," began *Time's* write-up (March 24) on the fatal shooting of Dr. Herman Tarnover. "He was the author of the bestselling *The Complete Scarsdale Medical Diet*. He was an avid hunter and fisherman, and a connoisseur of good food, fine wine and thoroughbred women." A perfect encapsulation of the *Playboy* philosophy—that women, like food and wine, are mere accessories to "the good life."

That lead was right in line with the rest of the story. Cliche-ridden and sensational, it read like a pulp novel: *An attractive blond divorcee . . . shots rang out . . . the well-groomed headmistress of the prestigious Madeira School . . . the daughters of some of America's richest and most prominent families . . . small, elegant dinner parties . . .*

At *Newsweek*, "The Lady and the Doctor" had its share of cliches, but at least the lead showed more class (no 'thoroughbreds' here) and stuck to the facts: "They had been friends and frequent companions for at least 15 years."

*Time* described the woman accused in the shooting, Jean Struven Harris, as "daughter of a career military officer"—no mother, apparently. (One assumes the father was the officer, since it would certainly have been newsworthy were it the mother.)

Harris thus joins those news celebrities born of a male parent only. This male equivalent of parthenogenesis is apparently far more common than its female counterpart. Only one of those is on record, and that happened 1,980 years ago, if at all.

Into each life a little sun must fall, if we are to believe the metaphorically mixed story on the front page of the *Houston Post*, March 25. In "Kennedy, Bush scramble for crucial support in 2 races," an Associated Press writer

says "... both struggled to keep the sun from setting in the East upon their presidential hopes.

"Though neither acknowledged a ray of gloom," continues the story, "defeat in Tuesday's twin bill of primaries (in New York and Connecticut) could shred their once-impeccable credentials as serious contenders." In light of the fact that Kennedy won handily in both states, and Bush beat Reagan in Connecticut, we can assume that "clouds of hope" have been cast over their respective campaigns.

**D**eath doesn't sell," proclaimed the new owners of *Houston City Magazine* last month, as they killed the cover of the March issue and replaced it with a lifeless Statue of Liberty. The original cover was a tight, close-up shot of funeral director Robert Waltrip, The Emperor of Death, with a legend to the effect that "he buried Elvis Presley and he'll bury you."

"It was a great cover," sighed Jerry Lazar, senior editor at the time, but since fired. "We thought it was one of the strongest we'd done. But then the new Emperors of Life came marching through the front door and that was that." Lazar said that (president) Wick Allison called the cover "bad editorial, bad marketing" and flipped it aside with the immortal words, "Death doesn't sell."

The Waltrip story, by Alan Waldman, was good stuff, and ended with the promise of more to come in the April issue—"Next month: Bobby Waltrip has his day in court." Part two, scheduled for April, was killed by Allison too. So we'll never know if Bobby got his day in court.

With all this killing going on, it is with several grains of salt that we read Allison's New Year's Resolutions in the April *City*. The new owner commits *City* to "deliver to our readers a sprightly, well-informed, tough-minded magazine... We want to be fair, but we intend to be opinionated... The journalist's job is to get the facts, but a magazine's job is to reach beyond the facts to tell its readers what the facts mean... We want to strive toward the best. We may not always reach it, but we will keep trying. I can guarantee you that we will not allow ourselves to fall into the mediocrity that dominates the Houston press..." And so on.

We hope the new owners of *City* will pull together a "tough-minded" magazine. God knows Houston needs it. And, judging from the last few issues, there are grounds for cautious optimism. But killing a "tough" cover and replacing it with the Statue of Liberty holding a tablet inscribed 'Business cards in 10 hours' is just plain deadly dull.

**I**t is no longer even debatable that women live under a sexual reign of terror," state the editors of *Mother Jones*, whose April issue is devoted almost entirely to "Sex, Porn and Male Rage."

Henry Schipper, in "Filthy Lucre" takes us on "a tour of America's most profitable frontier." Porn is so profitable, reports Schipper, that its gross take for 1977 was four billion dollars—as much as for the conventional movie and music industries combined that year. "Pornography is indeed very American," concludes Schipper.

In "The Politics of Porn," Deirdre English maintains that an important step in coming to terms with pornography is separating the men from the pornographers, the fantasizers from the rapists. She argues that women have much to lose in an unswervingly critical attack on porn.

Andrea Dworkin, in "The Prophet of Perversion: a new reading of the Marquis de Sade," claims that Sade's "ethic—the

right to use any "object" of desire at will—resonates in every sphere. It will be no surprise to feminists—though leftists have always denied it—that Sade's writing and life were of a piece, a whole cloth soaked in the blood of women imagined and real."

"The End of the Ride," by Amanda Spake, is a harrowing account of the ordeal of 15-year-old Mary Bell Vincent, who hitched a ride with a man who repeatedly raped and abused her, then cut off both her hands and left her for dead.

"It would be easy," says Spake, "to dismiss Lawrence Singleton as just another psychopath... We regard the rapists and the rippers we read about as such extreme aberrations that we can ignore the meaning of their acts, if not the acts themselves. Because we do not really understand the connection between sex and violence, submission and domination, eroticism and sadism, we say there is little connection.

"Yet, there is a link that we understand intuitively... For what Lawrence Singleton did was to act out a profound, almost mythic rage, an angry fear, a peculiarly male emotion... His acts were sadistic, but his rage is generic.

"This is not to say," concludes Spake, "that all men are rapists, batterers or maimers of women... I do believe, though, that all men feel a rage similar to his. Most express it not violently, but in jokes, in fantasies, in contemptuous remarks, in subtle ways, which ridicule and reduce women to something less than what they are."

*Mother Jones* does not presume, in these articles, to give answers to a tremendously complex question. It does, however, present "a basis upon which to examine the current debate over pornography and its relationship to sex, violence and male rage." And it does that very well.

**D**avid Frost started out as a funny man on British TV. Recently, he chaired a round-table on the future for Yorkshire Television, a BBC area network and "introduced the discussion with a sort of ventriloquist's patter," reported *The Listener*, a BBC publication. Frost's monologue inadvertently gave some clues as to why he made the switch from comedy.

For example: "A team of experts flew to Iran to try and find out what makes the Ayatollah Khomeini tick—and, in particular, what makes him go cuckoo every half-hour..."

The panelists were finally allowed to participate. They included Professor Milton Friedman, who was optimistic about British government policy, British trade union leader Jack Jones, who was not, and Germaine Greer, who addressed the role of women in the labor force. "I hope most people will digest the fact," said Greer, "that families need two pay packets to live on and that women do not work for fun and they are not reserve labor any more..."

"As long as they exist as a reserve labor force," she continued, "they undermine the bargaining power of the other, stronger workers. I would hope for a drive to recruit women to the trade unions and to have them properly represented."

Frost then asked about increased leisure for women. "Women don't have any leisure," responded Greer. "Women leave the factory at a run, because they have to do the shopping and collect the kids. Leisure is an unrealistic concept for most working women."

Jack Jones concurred. "I think that Germaine Greer has talked a lot of common sense on the industrial front." Now that Greer lives in Oklahoma, Jones hoped she could help the trade union movement organize in the United States.



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# UNION DOCTOR

## Safety on the job: an ounce of prevention...

BY MORRIS EDELSON

**Morris Edelson:** In your position as district health director for the Oilfield, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), are you aware of the Houston area, industrial plants which are implicated in environmental insult? I mean, pouring filth out into the environment. Have you seen certain plants in this area which are harmful to the general public?

**Dr. Sharon Itaya:** Well most of my experience with hazards of both pollution and toxic wastes comes from my particular experience with the South Houston workforce—the hazards they face on the job, which translate back to the community. Whatever our people are being exposed to on the job is spewing out all over the community. Yes, I think there really is a big threat to Houston, particularly to areas near the Ship Channel, from all the chemical and refining plants that exist there. The diseases caused are chronic, slow developing, largely incurable and expensive to treat.

There was an EPA study recently that indicated that the Gulf Coast area is starting to catch up and even exceed New Jersey as a big cancer center. They felt that the large amount of petrochemical pollution in the air has caused this increased danger.

**ME:** Do refineries produce carcinogenic wastes?

**SI:** Yes. In fact, they are getting worse. The refineries in the past used to process crude oil by a process called thermocracking, which was not as efficient as the new catalytic cracking. On the other hand, the old method did not produce as many aromatics which by and large are carcinogens.

Refineries appear to be much safer now than they were 40 years ago. In terms of explosions they probably are safer. On the other hand, in terms of cancer, heart disease and long-term health problems, they're probably much worse. For example, we discovered among our work force that there does seem to be an increase in cancer and heart disease.

**ME:** Sharon, how do you check the

workers? They have certain subjective impressions of their health, right? Do you examine them, or does the union examine them? Do you have objective information to check against their apprehensions?

**SI:** Right now we're just beginning to undertake the study of heart disease among our work force. In general, the best source of information is the workers themselves. The workers have been keeping track of their co-workers over the years. It was workers keeping records of themselves which led us to believe that there is an increase in cancer and heart disease.

Just yesterday I was at the local at Broadway and 610 near the ship channel. I was talking with some Crown Petroleum workers and a group of retirees. We went over a seniority list, and they were able to pick out the people who had heart disease. In some departments 75 percent of the people had heart disease. In others, there were 45 percent with heart disease. Both figures are much higher than we think acceptable in the general population. I'm going to keep trying to refine this type of information. But the best information comes from the workers.

In fact, it was one of the workers who found that Amoco workers have a very shortened life span. He discovered this by taking the company-supplied magazine for the last few years, which lists all the deaths of workers and their ages at death. He merely averaged the figures and noticed that chemical workers were dying around age 55, whereas the average age of death for executives was 78. Also, one of the men at Texaco in Port Arthur noted that 45 percent of the workers in the painting unit had hypertension.

**ME:** What about the general public? Are the workers like the canaries they used to carry into the mines? Do workers show the effects of the refineries before the environment does?

**SI:** It's not so much that the environment gets it later. The environment gets it in a lower concentration from many

sources.

**ME:** What are some of the dangerous things in the air and water here?

**SI:** Well, an EPA study looked at Houston, Baton Rouge and sites in New Jersey, looking specifically at carcinogens. The EPA never used to measure carcinogens—they measured irritants, like nitrous oxides, sulfur oxides, particulate matter, and they measured ozone, hydrocarbons. The things we're talking about are things like aromatic hydrocarbons, things like benzene which causes leukemia. They looked at five known carcinogens and more suspected carcinogens.

**ME:** Is Houston now in the cancer big leagues with New Jersey?

**SI:** I believe so. Texas takes pride in booming and being number one in everything. It's soon going to be first in another area. It's the whole Gulf Coast area, where the petrochemical and petroleum industries are. Even conservative people like Guy Newell, who now heads the M. D. Anderson cancer branch, has said the petrochemical industry contributes to a higher intake of patients there.

**ME:** The Medical-Industrial Complex... what is its position on the dangers to the populace?

**SI:** The medical community has never been concerned with preventive measures. Their focus is always on disease—therapy and disease, treatment and disease, surgery for disease. But the whole Public Health focus is prevention of disease. They look at the whole problem of occupational medicine, where you might be able to prevent incurable, horrible, irreversible kinds of disease. The medical community has never focused on occupational medicine or environmental problems.

**ME:** Why is that?

**SI:** It goes back to the whole process of how medicine is run. I think it's a result of the way medicine has been channeled over many generations. Of course there's always the money angle.

The most that's been done in cancer prevention, for instance, is anti-



Gary Allison Morey

smoking campaigns or early detection things like breast self exams and looking for the seven warning signals of cancer. That's just where the money's been. There's been a lot of pressure for researchers not to look at other kinds of preventative measures.

**ME:** But the foundations will pay for doctors who are treated like magicians.

**SI:** Right, you run in, and he fixes it. Medical people like to be thought of as magicians.

**ME:** How do you differ from the mainstream? How did you get into medicine in the first place?

**SI:** In my freshman year of college I thought I'd like to be a doctor. I really wasn't sure. I had never known any physicians. My parents hadn't even gone to college, much less to medical school. I really didn't know anything about medicine and my advisor, an English major, told me, "You don't want to go into medicine. That's too hard. It will ruin your life as a woman. You're going to want a normal life. You'll need time for yourself and your family, to be a housewife."

I got furious. I said, I'll show him. I'll go to medical school. That's how I ended up. I was always interested in it. At first I was interested in psychiatry. I started a major in psychology, then switched to basic sciences and ended majoring in biology. But I always thought medicine was an interesting pursuit.

During my years in medical school I got really disillusioned and discovered that people didn't go into medicine to help other people. My whole idea had been to be like Florence Nightingale, just go out and take care of people. It seemed so nice.

**ME:** Where did you go to school?

**SI:** My medical school was in San Diego. People were treated like experimental animals there. They were used and abused and I really became disillusioned with the whole process. I was almost ready to quit school when I joined a group called the San Diego Coalition for Safety and Health. There were all kinds of workers in the group. One woman had been trying to get compensation for a back injury she got while working as a waitress. There were construction people and a motley crew of nurses and medical students. We would meet and try to help workers with whatever technical skills we could muster.

In the meantime, they taught us about the kind of hassles they faced on the job. I found it fascinating, a field of medicine I had never met in school.

**ME:** Isn't there any occupational health training in medical school?

**SI:** My entire training in medical school was with an orthopedist who saw a lot of people who had job-related back injuries or other job-related health problems. My introduction to occupational diseases was him telling me in clinic that any worker that comes to you with job-related problems is malingering until proven otherwise. In fact, he gave everybody with compensation forms a psychological test, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Test.

You had to prove to him that you weren't faking it. That was the sum total of my training in occupational medicine, other than doing the extra activity with that other group.

We'd get together once a month and talk about the kinds of problems these people were facing in their workplaces. I did a little reading and we did some screening, some educational sessions, and we passed out pamphlets on the problems of shipworkers for example. It was a whole process of learning one particular field where I might be able to use my skills and actually benefit someone.

You see, the major clientele of hospitals are elderly women. They're the people who can afford to come sit in the

clinic and wait three hours to see somebody about their health problems. You very seldom see active working people there unless it's an emergency. So the whole idea of reaching healthy people, and trying to prevent them from getting sick in the first place, really appealed to me.

**ME:** How did that lead to working for the union?

**SI:** After medical school I went to the Public Health school in Boston and got some more training in occupational medicine. In Cambridge, we were concerned with the problems of industrial pollution coming into the community. The working people turned around and said, "Hey, you think this is bad—you should see what I work with." So we started up this whole other field, looking at particular work problems. It was through the School of Public Health in Boston that I met Tony Mazzochi, the vice president of OCAW.

He and the union arranged for some people to go to do some electives with OCAW. I wanted to go to one myself but I couldn't. So that's how I met Tony. Last September I was in a complete panic about not knowing what I was going to do when I finished and I sent a letter to an old friend in San Diego. I told her I was going to be looking for a job, and she must have told Tony—and that's how it happened.

I find that workers tend to minimize problems they have. They say, well, we think there's a problem here with cancer, but don't more people die of cancer anyway, because they're living longer now?

When you talk about the general community, you're talking about people who are more susceptible than workers. Young children, infants, old people, people already diseased are being exposed to the same substances that make workers sick—albeit at lower concentrations.

**ME:** Did you pick Houston to come to, or were you sent here by the OCAW?

**SI:** Actually I chose to come. I picked Houston because this is where the District Union Director's office is and it's been really helpful and supportive.

**ME:** Since Houston is so big, a lot of people think they are far away from what happens on the Gulf Freeway. Now they're facing threats from the wind carrying benzenes—is their water being poisoned by the refineries' pollutants too?

**SI:** I discussed this at length with some people from the Air Pollution Board. I was very interested in the pollution in and around the Ship Channel area and how it was being monitored. The people in the Air Pollution Board told me, and I assume it was true, that the main concentration of pollution is around the Ship Channel area.

But often, in the afternoons, there is shift of wind that takes all the stuff from down here and puts it up around in the northern sections as well.

Pollution risks are even higher now during the strike, since inexperienced personnel are running the refineries. In addition, we are talking about more than just a basic health threat. We're talking about communities as a whole and we're talking about subsidizing companies who are doing all this polluting. You're talking about health costs, you're talking about just general clean-up costs that are borne by the society but are racked up by companies who aren't forced to take responsibility.

**ME:** The strike by the OCAW may illustrate that. It came up over health issues, right?

**SI:** Well it's not totally health issues but our union does have a history of being very interested in health issues. Back in '73 there was a strike which concentrated totally on health and safety issues. During that strike there was a coalition between environmental groups and

community health groups where lots of different people got together and generated a lot of interest in their efforts to get a safer work place. They understood that the community around the refineries was affected directly by the level of safety in the industry.

There are three strike issues now and the whole conflict wasn't only about a two-year contract. The main issue is dental and health care benefits, which they're holding out for now. But in addition there are also wage and vacation issues.

They started out by asking for full medical coverage but have negotiated down to much less than that. What I would really like is for the union to get enough for me to go and work for them, to subsidize me.

**ME:** What are you doing out there anyway?

**SI:** Basically I'm helping the workers define their problems and consulting with them on a medical basis. I would ultimately like to provide direct medical services to the workers. That is, a workers' clinic where the workers hire and fire the doctors and medical personnel—a medical service where they can raise issues and questions about job-related health problems without the fear of losing their job or getting transferred to another job.

**ME:** Do the workers feel like you're not a real doctor? Do they think you're a social worker?

**SI:** When I first started I used to get a lot of questions: are you real, where did you come from? Now I think they respect the fact that I had a certain amount of training, that I'm willing to work with them and their problems and to speak to the locals. I've been in some places where people told me it was the first time a physician ever set foot inside a union hall. For many of them it's the first time they ever had someone with professional training at their beck and call. I think it's good. It's a new experience for them.

**ME:** Do you think it will change their view of doctors?

**SI:** There is a lot of distrust of doctors and it has a long history behind it. I don't think that will change much. They may become aware of the potential of what might be in for them in medicine, especially if they have some power and control over it.

I would ultimately like to see a union- and worker-controlled medical system where the doctor's responsibility is in fact to the patients and not to some company employer.

In Cambridge, I started a clinic like that when I was in training. I provided a service for workers to get assessed for possible job-related problems. But again that was a clinic run by a hospital and we had to charge for it. Although we had a large clientele we were limited to the kind of people who could pay for it. And if you find anything it's damn expensive. I am talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars for evaluation, accurate evaluation.

**ME:** Would you like to run a free clinic?

**SI:** The medical problems in this country are tremendous and when you provide services in a free clinic, you find all kinds of problems.

I learned that whenever you look at medical problems, you always have to look at the broader picture as well, at society as a whole. People have nutritional problems, housing problems. I worked in a free clinic and found people who would come to the clinic and not have enough money to buy the medicine you prescribed. A workers' clinic is a whole different thing. The workers would control their own medical care. It's a different philosophy. I think this is only possible through unions.

**ME:** Well, are the sands of time running out for unions?

**SI:** In Texas? There's a lot of sand . . .  
**ME:** It's been a right-to-work state.



Gary Allison Morsey

"The Gulf Coast is beginning to catch up and even exceed New Jersey as a big cancer center. Petrochemical pollution in the air has caused this increased danger." — Sharon Itaya

**SI:** Yes, there's a problem with that. The general public's view of the union is that they're like corrupt politicians. L.G. Moore and Brilab, things like that always get a lot of press. The good things unions do, like working for health and safety issues which affect members and the whole town as well, never gets in. Unions support blood drives, churches and that sort of thing but never get the press for it. The image of the union is bad, especially in a town like this where companies are so powerful.

**ME:** What's the union representation elsewhere in the state?

**SI:** We have a lot of small groups in West Texas. Locals are everywhere but they're mostly small.

**ME:** How do these locals survive if the company is anti-union? Do they go along to get along?

**SI:** We do sit across the table from management. We may cooperate, but we are across the table. We have fairly strong union locals working for better safety and a better life out there.

**ME:** You have a double stigma, I mean not only as a union member but also as a woman. Are you talking union blues, is the union a good boss?

**SI:** I love working for the union. There

are no better people as far as I am concerned. But it is predominantly male, 95 percent down here, and that affects leadership. Being a woman and working for the union has broadened my perspective on what medicine is. It's a lot more than taking care of people when they are sick, or just monitoring diseases as I did in my medical training years.

**ME:** What are some of the incidents with the strike involving safety and health?

**SI:** Well, these are just some that happened in this area in the last month. Last February 6 there was a sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) leak attributed to Stauffer Chemical. It was contributed to by Charter Oil, which, according to newspapers, had a simultaneous leak, a problem with a fuel converter. SO<sub>2</sub> is an irritant which causes respiratory problems. At high levels it causes death.

On February 12, there was a fire at the Union 76 Refinery near Nederland, Texas, in which one man was fatally injured, another burned. On the same day, an explosion and fire at Amoco, Texas City, killed two men. Then there was a fire, February 18, at Arco, Houston, with no serious damage.

**ME:** Could you tell me about yourself?  
**SI:** Well, I was raised in a small town in

California, Stockton, which is in the central valley. It is the home of Maxine . . . Maxine who wrote *Woman Warrior*. It's the only thing that it's famous for. My dad was a barber. He lost his shop when there was this huge redevelopment so he went back to school. My mom started going back to school when I was in kindergarten. She became a school teacher. My dad also became a teacher later. I went to Radcliffe College in Boston. That was in the 60s and early 70s.

**ME:** Boston was lively then.

**SI:** Then there were anti-war marches, building occupations. And classes. I graduated and went to medical school in San Diego. I took part in a lot of groups, and in the feminist movement when I was in medical school. It was part and parcel of the whole unrest that led to the anti-war movement and other movements. It came out almost simultaneously. It was a real inspiration to me in medical school to think that a lot of women who had gone before me had tried to get into the professions, tried to get into medical school and that that was the reason I got in. I was fortunate to be there at the time. There had been so many that had tried to get in and had been kept out.

The women in medical school were

very aware of that as we tried to assure administrators that we weren't going to run out and get pregnant and drop out of medical school. We felt we had a legacy from the generations.

**ME:** Was it a lasting breakthrough? Do medical schools still admit a quota of women?

**SI:** I haven't been directly in touch with my school but I hear that 25 percent of the students now are regularly women. But you still don't see many women in positions of leadership.

One thing that I worry about is that a lot of women get in and seem to take for granted all the struggles that got them there. They identify closely with the male leadership.

When I was in school . . .  
**ME:** Back in the golden days.

**SI:** Back in the good old days, we had a fairly strong woman's group. We worked very hard to educate our colleagues about their attitudes toward sexism and what they did to their patients. I met women, patients, who had no idea of birth control and their daughters didn't either. When you got pregnant and couldn't afford it, you had to get an abortion and that's all there was to it. Most of the medical students were racist as well as sexist anyway,

they would talk of the patients as an III or OYOYOY (III to indicate Hispanic women in labor and OYOYOY to indicate Jewish women).

**ME:** Have you visited our splendid Texas Medical Center?

**SI:** Yes, I've been in and out trying to find support for my worker's clinic idea. From what I've seen, it is white . . . male . . . upper middle class . . .

I've had a few run-ins with the company and the company doctors. I met with company-hired doctors and spoke with them about workers' health problems. They agree when we cite a problem but then nothing is done because medical decisions are compromised between them.

My parents worry about me here. The only thing that got out about the strike was that some foreman in Louisiana got offed. They tell me to lock my door behind me.

**ME:** Well what things about Texas jarred your sensibilities? Anything?

**SI:** You should have talked to me a few months ago about it. I used to rant and rave. Now I'm getting used to it.

*Morris Edelson is a general assignment reporter for the New York Times.*

**Impressions of a changing continent**

BY S. BRAXTON BLACK

**An interview with Alma Newsom**

# AFRICA

*Alma Newsom is the Director of Community Affairs at KHOU-TV. In January of this year, she and four other journalists spent 32 days touring six black African nations. The trip was sponsored by the African American Institute, a non-profit organization which is trying*

*to better relations between black Africa and the United States.*

*Accompanying Newsom on the trip were Tony Hughes, the editor of Africa Reports, a bi-monthly magazine published by the African American Institute; Marguerite Johnston, an editorial writer*

*for the Houston Post; Hiram McDonald, editorial writer for the Deseret News in Salt Lake City; and Earl Caldwell, a columnist for the New York Daily News*

*All were briefed for two days in mid-January by American and African officials before leaving New York for Mon-*

*rovia, Liberia. Many of the countries they visited are going through periods of nationalism. This is especially evident on the river boundary between Zaire and the Congo. "In Zaire, when you stand on the river bank you're facing the Zaire River," Newsom said. "But when you*



cross the river by ferry and stand on the opposite side, you're looking at the Congo River. It's the same river, but the different names are a nationalistic thing."

They traveled from Liberia to Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Zaire, and Kenya, but visa problems kept the journalists out of Angola.

**S. Braxton Black:** When you left, what did you expect to discover?

**Alma Newsom:** It was primarily a background trip. None of us, except Tony, had ever been to black Africa. We wanted to get firsthand impressions. By talking to people we got a perspective which we could apply to our future writings, reportings and producing duties.

Our information sources out of Africa are very, very limited. What can you read about Africa on a day-to-day basis? You can't read anything unless it's some sensational happening. When an Idi Amin is running amok, there's lots of press about Uganda. When Amin is ousted and the country is going through a traumatic

local dialects.

There are different stages of development because of external things rather than the people themselves. To a large extent, the level of development depends on what colonial power existed there and what institutions or basic systems, if any, people still use. There are perceptible differences in how people think which reflect their French or British colonial history.

The things people have in common are traditional values—the home. The role of the female is very traditional. One asks a man how many sons he has, not how many daughters. I noticed in some countries that women are trying to break out, more so in West Africa and Liberia than in East Africa.

**S.B.B.:** Is that because American influence is stronger in West Africa than elsewhere?

**A.N.:** In Liberia it is because of identification with the United States.

**S.B.B.:** Can you give specific examples

and low-profile. Now they want to be known for their efforts. They said they were struggling for recognition but pointed out a big difference between themselves and the feminists in the United States. They said, "We have no problem with our identity. We know who we are and what we can do."

**S.B.B.:** What about family roles?

**A.N.:** Most of the countries are still developing and don't think society can afford any disruptions in the traditional family, especially in urbanized areas where families have more economic pressures. In rural areas, the preservation of the traditional family and domestic roles for the woman is automatic; but it's hard to maintain traditional roles in the city, maybe because both parents have to work.

I met a woman who is kind of a contradiction. She is very active, publicly and professionally, and her family and husband encourage her. She changed careers and did many things success-

But they have no grasp of their power beyond their narrow local concerns. **S.B.B.:** What are the political systems in those countries?

**A.N.:** It varies greatly from country to country, from quasi-democratic to out and out military dictatorship. But they wouldn't call it that.

Nigeria fascinates me. It's been through all kinds of turmoil. For several years it was under military rule. They decided some time back to become a democracy, a constitutional government, on October 1, 1979. During the intervening years there were all types of military upheavals. Yet, as planned, on October 1, 1979, the military ruler handed over the government to an elected civilian government. The country is operating under a new constitution modeled after the U.S. Constitution.

They won't admit it's modeled after the U.S. Constitution, but it is. The elected Nigerian government is trying hard to succeed, but democracy is new to them and you have to expect problems. We have problems making democracy work in this country. In Nigeria they have a new building for the two houses of their legislature. They are making laws and hammering out a system: setting up Boards of Health and a judicial system, and still writing their Bill of Rights. We talked with some of the representatives who are seriously trying to represent their districts. They are figuring out where to put public works projects like television stations and dams. Representatives from northern Nigeria are trying to pull development away from the southern concentrations of projects in the capital of Lagos. They have already decided to move the capital northward to the center of the country.

**S.B.B.:** Does democracy work in Africa?

**A.N.:** Nigeria is one attempt at democracy I'll be watching. There is still a great military presence there. It's something you don't dismantle overnight. When you fly in, they tell you not to take pictures in the airport. That's a carryover from the military. The civilian government hasn't gotten around to undoing everything. Mt. Kilimanjaro, and to take pictures of

Nigeria impressed me with its determination to follow through the democratic experiment. Zimbabwe still has to be tested. Its constitution mandates a parliamentary government based on the British system. They have elected officials who can be unseated. There are some, built-in controls but the government is still settling in.

I'm not sure about the other countries. I think many of them have a long way to go. They may be faced with coups and violent changes in leadership before they start to settle down.

**S.B.B.:** What role does the United States and the Eastern Bloc, specifically Russia and Cuba, play in the black African nations?

**A.N.:** That's an interesting question because it gets to something basic. The U.S. has not decided what position to have in Africa. This leads to contradictory behavior. We may want positive relations with an African country, but we don't follow through. Our foreign aid to them is low. They need a mechanized agriculture but we haven't helped. We have not helped them defend themselves against hostile neighbors, especially in Zimbabwe's conflict with South Africa. How can you have a positive policy when you don't know what the hell's going on?

**S.B.B.:** What kind of policy do we have?  
**A.N.:** Our policy is mostly reactionary. We wait to see what happens and then we react. We must understand where black Africa is coming from. Say you're the leader of a country. You have to do what's in your best interest, not always in the best interest of someone else. Take weapons—Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda is widely thought of as



Typical market scene in Nigeria.

Alma Newsom

rebuilding period, suddenly the news stops. We don't have continuous news coming out of black Africa. Our impressions are distorted and based on limited information.

As much as possible, we tried to get out into the villages and markets to see what people were buying and what their living conditions were.

**S.B.B.:** In the countries you visited, what similarities did you find among the people?

**A.N.:** From country to country there are lots of similarities and great differences. Language is always a problem. From village to village the dialects can change dramatically. There are some common words but frequently people are not able to communicate.

This is why more and more countries are trying to get a standard language to aid business transactions. In Zaire the official language is French, but the vast majority of people outside the capital city don't speak French. They speak

of the "breaking out" you mentioned?

**A.N.:** We had constant battles trying to get off official schedules and away from official people in order to get to the grassroots. But the time wasn't there. I did not go to Africa to study women, but I did meet a group of women journalists returning from a meeting of 300 professional African women. They said West African women were much more ready to assert themselves than East African women whom they saw as willing to accept the traditional role of being a homemaker.

These journalists said African women had no identity problems. The journalists, who had been to school in England or the United States, told me: "Our struggle, just starting in Africa, is similar to the feminist struggle in the United States. We want to be recognized for what we are doing. African women are present in practically every aspect of society, but there is no fanfare about it."

**S.B.B.:** Can you give an example?

**A.N.:** They are educators. The president of the University of Liberia is female. There is no hassle about that. Women hold government posts and judicial posts. But they have also been low-key

fully. She has several children, but won't say how many because it is believed unlucky to count your children. She endorsed family tradition saying it was the woman's role to nurture children; but she turned around and said she was lucky because her husband was willing to help.

**S.B.B.:** Who controls African society?

**A.N.:** Most of black Africa is male dominated. A woman in a roomful of men is expected to sit quietly or serve the men. Women are not active in decision-making. The group of African women journalists told me they do all the work and get half the pay of men. They are bitter.

**S.B.B.:** Do women have any base for social or political power?

**A.N.:** The women who sell things in the markets are the real entrepreneurs in Africa. They are a social, political and economic machine, or at least a potential machine. But they have not recognized their power. Most of them don't want it yet. The market women exercise their power only when someone messes with their stalls, when a legislator tries to close markets on a certain day. Then the market women will react, when their own narrow interests are threatened.

*S. Braxton Black is a struggling freelance writer and a newcomer to Houston from Memphis, Tennessee.*

humanitarian, expounding the same concern for human rights as President Carter. Kaunda visited the U.S. around a year ago and got a fairly good reception. I gathered this doesn't always happen with black African leaders. They often feel we treat them as second class citizens and the facts often bear this out.

**S.B.B.:** Could you give me some background on Zambia?

**A.N.:** Zambia had been a non-aligned country, generally taking the human rights stand of the United States. It was formerly Northern Rhodesia, and went through a struggle similar to what is happening in Zimbabwe.

President Kaunda led the armed struggle and was imprisoned by the British. After Zambia gained its independence, it lent its support to the liberation movements in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. As a consequence, Zambia has become a target of South African troops who come into Zambia at will. South Africa claims Zambia harbors terrorists and that is the excuse they use for coming into Zambia.

South Africa also supported Rhodesian forces which bombed Zambia on a regular basis for about a year. Rhodesian helicopters even entered the Zambian capital and Zambia had no defense weapons against the Rhodesian aircraft.

Both Britain and the U.S. refused to sell Zambia weapons. In desperation, Zambia turned to Russia. By signing away many of its copper rights for many years to come, Zambia was able to buy 21 MIG jets.

I got into a heated argument with an American official. He said Zambia shouldn't have bought the weapons from Russia. I asked him why we didn't sell them the weapons. He said it was simple: President Carter would have, but knew the arms sale wouldn't be approved by Congress because the weapons would have been used for one purpose only—to shoot white folks.

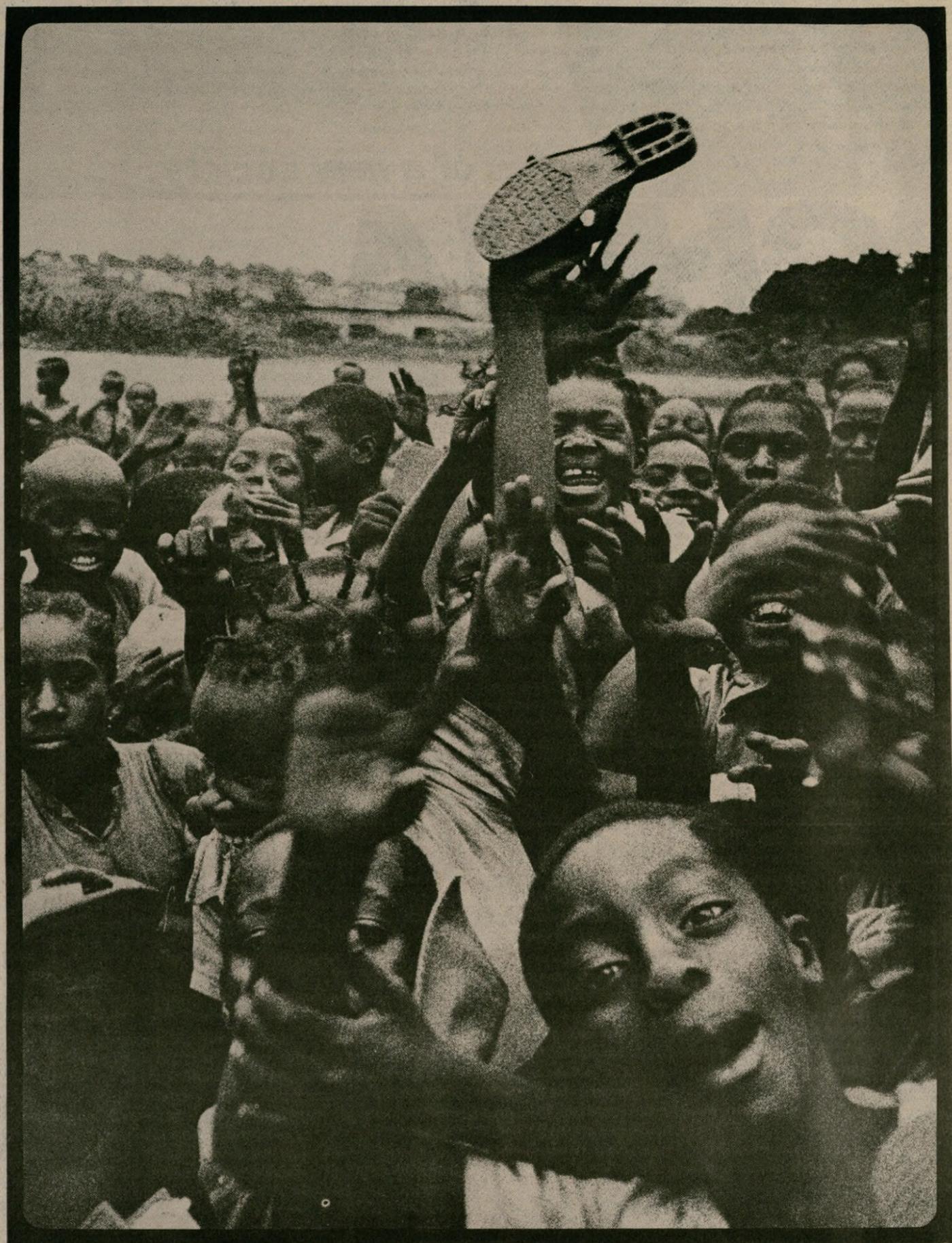
South Africa operates on a system based on inhuman practices known world wide. Yet, South Africa has had no trouble arming itself or getting anything it needs. Sanctions have not meant anything because most countries ignore them. It's meaningless if you say we're not going to sell them weapons, when you've already given them the technology to make their own weapons. The U.S. may not be selling certain goods to South Africa, but the other "free-world" countries are. To be fair, you have to acknowledge that a lot of black African countries now trade with South Africa. For many of them, it's a matter of survival.

During our visit to Zambia, we met with President Kaunda for three hours. We raised the arms question and he said: If black countries are forced to turn to the Soviet Union, Communist China or Cuba for weapons, it usually means the Africans will go into the supplying countries to learn how to use the weapons. The trainees then become immersed in socialist ideology. Inevitably, they spread it around when they return. For instance, Robert Mugabe, the new prime minister of Zimbabwe, is condemned by the west for his Marxism. South Africa is alarmed that he won a free election. If he has to get weapons from Marxist countries, how can we condemn him for supporting their philosophy?

In Zaire, we support President Mobutu, a military dictator known to be a brutal oppressor of his own people. We've cut back our military support, but we still support him.

**S.B.B.:** Why aren't black Americans lobbyists for black Africa?

**A.N.:** It's been hammered into us to get into the American mainstream. We relate to the Queen of England before we do to Chief Shaka. To do that you have to reject where you come from. We're



Outside a country school in the Congo.

also ashamed of how we came, as involuntary immigrants and we don't want to be reminded that we came as slaves. Others talk about English or German or French blood but we don't want to talk about African blood. We need to accept our African blood.

**S.B.B.:** Do you foresee that changing? What, if any, is the relationship between black America and black Africa?

**A.N.:** Potentially, it could be great. Realistically, I think it won't be realized for a long time, if ever.

We've resisted a positive effort because we're still brainwashed about Africans. Sure, we've gone through a period where people talk about finding their roots, going back to Africa, Black is Beautiful and all that.

**S.B.B.:** What prevents a good relationship between the two?

**A.N.:** You can see it locally. I appeared on Charles Porter's *Front and Center* on KYOK radio. A Nigerian called in and said he was disappointed. He's been here for some time, and has been treated miserably by black Americans. If people don't act like us, we assume they don't like us or assume they think they're better than we are. We don't make any

allowances for cultural differences. We're automatically defensive. That has been one roadblock to better relations between black Americans and black Africans.

It's a problem which can't be dismissed. One I hope will be resolved through more exposure on both sides: with more black Americans visiting black African countries. And with more black Africans coming to the country, which they are doing in great numbers.

**S.B.B.:** What was your most memorable moment of the trip, and your lowest point?

**A.N.:** One of the most memorable moments was when I met President Kaunda. I was struck by his sincerity, his warmth and the true humanitarian feelings he expressed and by the deep hurt caused by the United States in their treatment of him. He was just a human person.

The low point was probably Zimbabwe, although I'm tempted to say it was South Africa. The stopover at the airport said enough about what the rest of the country must be like. It was very depressing. I couldn't go through the airport without thinking of all that was

happening there. I couldn't spend time in Zimbabwe or Zambia without constantly relating it to what is happening in South Africa. South Africa is the next battleground. If the whites don't see the handwriting on the wall, and start dismantling the barriers so all people can have their basic human rights, there is going to be a bloodbath, unrivaled by anywhere else. I'm fearful of that.

Kenya was our rest and relaxation, but even there you couldn't get away from racism. There are a lot of tourists there. We were constantly running into tours from the United States, Japan and all over Europe. We would hear conversations, and I began to feel that many of the tourists, many of the white folks, were there to see the scenery, to see Mt. Kilimanjaro, to take pictures of the animals, but would just as soon not have the people there.

That's sobering. The thing that strikes me is all the racism in this world. It is alive and thriving.

I think black Americans tend to be lulled into a sense of complacency, to believe it's not as bad as it used to be. But if we can step back and look, racism is universal.

Marguerite Johnston

a view of a new society

BY PEGGY CHAUSSE

# CHINA

"Yes, but do they have any personal freedom?" I had the opportunity to go to the People's Republic of China (PRC) and see for myself.

In terms of personal freedom, I learned that the Chinese define freedom as having their basic necessities. They call them the

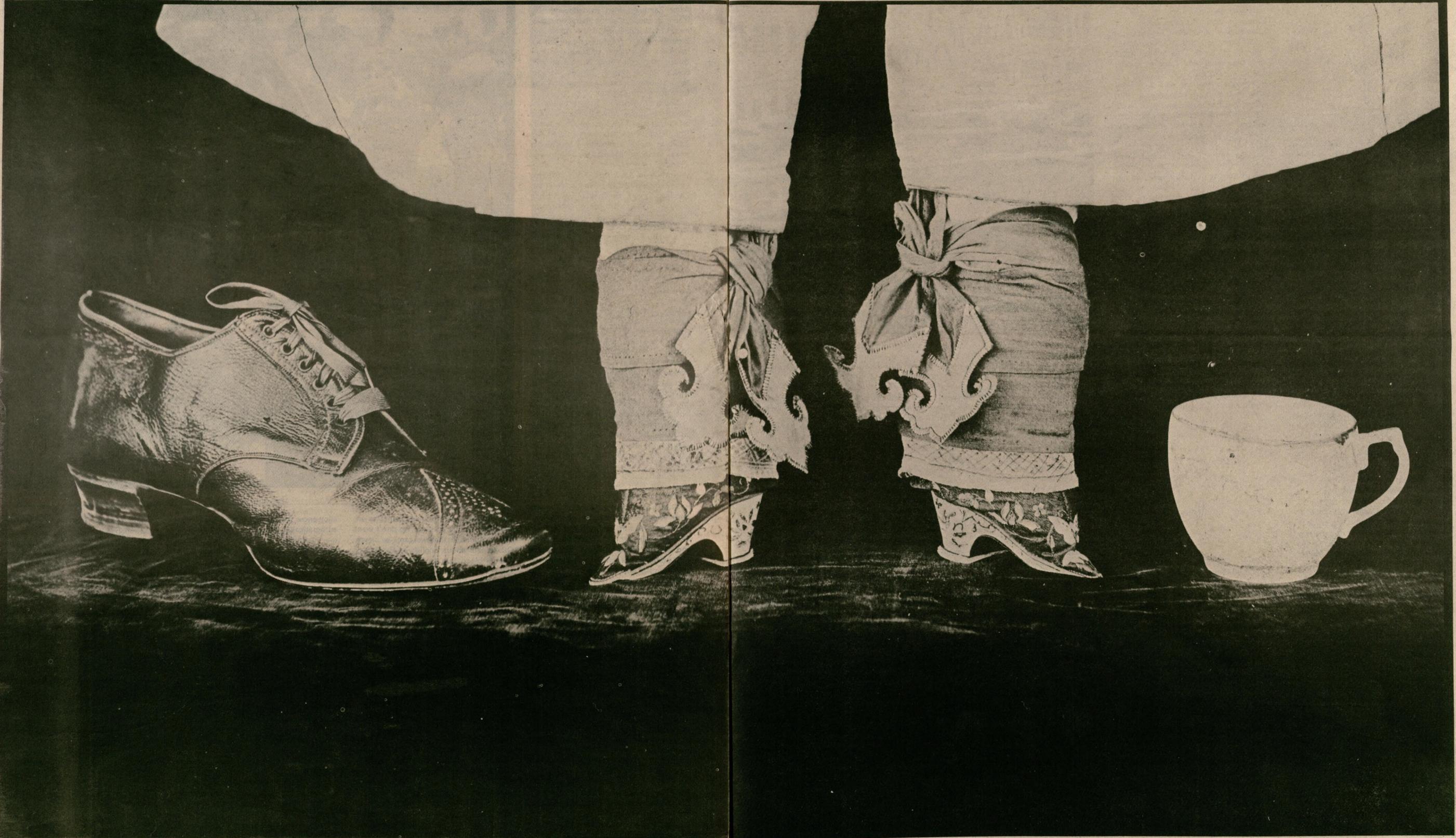
"Five Guarantees" which are, the right to shelter, employment, an education, health care and a decent burial.

The "Five Guarantees" were once the privilege of 10 percent of the Chinese population. Thirty years ago, before the revolution, the great majority of the

people were illiterate, starvation was rampant, and life expectancy was 35 years. What progress has been made since the founding of the PRC in October 1949?

Last June I went to the PRC with 15 other women. As guests of the govern-

ment, our delegation, composed of professors, doctors, lawyers, a judge, a senator and other professional women arrived in China with our own biases and expectations. Even though our stay was short—only three weeks—I formed some distinct impressions of the people. Most



notably, I was struck by the extent of active participation of people in their social, economic and political affairs and the determined spirit and varied capabilities in their work.

Our entire delegation looked at the PRC's child care system with perhaps a little envy when we reflected upon child care in our own country. We were amazed by the number of support systems provided for working women.

My greatest surprise in China was to see the progress made by women in neighborhood organizations and in their daily lives. That is the focus of my story.



"Before the revolution in Old China, life for the people was like a deep well full of bitter water, the woman was at the bottom of all," an old woman told us.

Footbinding lasted more than a thousand years. In Peking (Peijing) I met five women whose feet had been bound. I visited them at their early morning exercise time for six days. Their ages ranged from 50 to 65 years. Some of them could not walk. Others could walk with a cane. When they did, their weight was on their heels.

Footbinding, an excruciating and crippling custom, was forced upon little girls between the ages of three and 12. It was a prerequisite to a proper marriage.

"The tiny and fragile appearance of the foot aroused in the male a combination of lust and pity. He longed to touch it, and being allowed to do so meant that the woman was his." (Chinese Footbindings by Howard S. Levy)

Footbinding was more prevalent among the middle and upper classes. However, in an attempt to emulate the upper classes, lower class women also practiced footbinding.

One historical account gives a Chinese husband's view of footbinding.

"I am timid, and my voice plays me false in gatherings of men. But to my footbound wife, confined for life to her house except when I bear her in my arms to her planquin, my stride is heroic, my voice is that of a roaring lion, my wisdom is of the sages. To her I am the world; I am life itself." (Levy)

How did a little girl feel about footbinding? The following records her feelings:

"Mother betrothed me at the age of nine to a neighbor named Chao, and I went to the home of my future husband. My mother-in-law bound my feet much more tightly than mother ever had, saying that I still hadn't achieved the standard. If I loosened the binding, I was beaten until my body was covered with bruises. Mother-in-law insisted that the foot must become inflamed to get proper results.

Day and night, my feet were washed in a medicinal water. Within a few washings I felt special pain. Looking down, I saw that every toe but the big one was inflamed and deteriorated. Mother-in-law said this was all to the good. I had to be beaten with fists before I could bear to remove the bindings, congealed with pus and blood. To get them loose, such force had to be used that the skin often peeled off, causing further bleeding. I suffered indescribable pain. Being in an average family, I had to go to the well and pound mortar unaided.

Eventually my feet were only three inches long. Relatives and friends praised them, little realizing the cisterns of tears and blood which they had caused. My husband was delighted with them, but two years ago he departed this world. The family wealth was dissipated, and I had to wander about looking for work.

I envy the modern woman. If I too had been born just a decade or so later, all of this pain could have been avoided. The lot of the natural-footed woman and mine is like that of heaven and hell." (Levy)

Including her forced economic dependence, much was involved in the oppression of Chinese women. As one old footbound woman said, "Better eat than feet." Little wonder that the All-China Women's Federation was organized six months before the People's Republic was founded. It is easy to understand why the women's movement spread rapidly in China.

The women organized teams to visit families where women were treated badly. They arranged meetings for all women in the village and persuaded each other that, if united, women would be treated better. If a woman were beaten by her husband for attending such meetings, the women would go in a group to confront the husband, and in some cases, beat him. The women's association went through this first stage in order to ensure security for women who joined the revolution. To this day, we were told, collective structures, societal pressures and marriage laws provide support for women.



#### The All-China Women's Federation

Our closest contact with the Chinese women was the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF). It extends over all of China, in both urban and rural areas. The organization's overall goals are to reduce the burden of domestic work for women, to provide a support system which includes a paying job, health care, child care, educational opportunities and to encourage political involvement. ACWF has a great concern for world peace and maintains contacts with women in other countries.

In an interview with Professor Le Zhe-shing, the group's vice-president, we learned that the original purpose of this organization was to eliminate polygamy



and feudal practices relating to women. Now it works for modernization and social development in connection with the needs of women.

Their current priority is to develop and consolidate new family concepts. This goal is directly concerned with the best age for marriage. Professor Le Zhe-shing said, "The big question now is over age. Some people say boys and girls should marry young because of health, others say they should marry older in order to practice family planning." She explained how the neighborhood organizations hold meetings, discuss the issue and bring their questions to the upper level of the organization. The higher level then meets with the people to answer them.

Since birth control practices are very acceptable in China, I found it difficult to reconcile delayed marriage with family planning.



#### Care and Socialization of the Children

In China, beginning in the nursery, children have many people care for them. The child care centers are open 24 hours a day. They are either free, almost free, or in many cases paid for by the parent's

place of employment. Child care in China is not the exclusive responsibility of parents. It is the responsibility of the entire neighborhood.

This creates a bond between child and the larger community. The relationship seems to encourage the children to have a good self-concept. When one member of our delegation asked, "How do you help the children develop such good self-concepts?" their reply was simple: they cared for their children.

As part of the neighborhood organization, specific systems are being designed and carried out by workers' teams. In this way, childrearing is done collectively. Each production unit plans for the education and care of their children. They decide how much to pay the teachers, if fees will be charged, and the amount and cost of health care.

Because they are involved in planning and maintaining such a system, I asked the parents how they felt about the child care provided. The interpreter replied, "They like it. They know the teachers are trained to be gentle with the children, whereas the grandparents, from Old China days, sometimes spank the children." (Corporal punishment is not allowed in the PRC.)

In the centers, we observed the teachers and workers treating children with warmth, kindness, and respect. When asked about the teacher's training and qualifications, the response was, "The teacher must know how to sing, or play a musical instrument and love children." At the kindergarten level, there is an emphasis on music and dance. Everywhere we went children entertained us. When

asked what other things the children learned, I was told, "They learn to do for themselves." They acquire personal autonomy quickly.

Children of all ages decide which neighborhood work to take on as a group. Even kindergarten children are involved in productive labor which is related to their family situation and/or employment. The work might be as simple as sticking labels on a package, watering plants on the farm, or assembling a simple cardboard box. Apparently, this early participation is not an attempt to capitalize on every available source of labor but to teach children, from the beginning, that work is useful to society. Consequently, the children's first contact with work is in a collective atmosphere of production and workers. A worker from their neighborhood will go to the kindergarten or school to instruct the children in these skills.

The older children are provided numerous responsibilities such as, forming work teams to clean streets, to do housework for families, conduct education campaigns or to teach people about preventive medicine. These tasks are the sole responsibility of the children.

Another example of the relationship between children and adults is the representation of children at neighborhood meetings. School children elect fellow-pupils to represent their worker's team and they attend meetings. In this way, children participate in leadership and re-

spect is shown to them in the collective system.

By experiencing a different lifestyle, there's an emphasis on developing interpersonal skills among children. As an example, students often spend their summer doing "farm or factory work." It may sound unpleasant but it introduces children to a wider spectrum of society.

According to our three young interpreters, working with the peasant families helped them learn about life in the country, to appreciate work and the different areas of food production.

In China, considerable attention is given to eliminating the absolute dichotomy between school and work. The importance of learning, as it relates to the collective good, is stressed. University students as well as those in the public schools participate in the "farm or factory work" system.



#### The Collective System

Dating back to the revolution, the ACWF's neighborhood organizations are a part of the total collective system in the PRC. All people are organized into administrative units for political, economic,

agricultural and industrial work and for cultural, educational and health work. The number of people in these administrative units vary.

Each commune is run by a committee which is responsible to a regional committee, then to provincial and ultimately to the central government. However, at each place we visited, it was stressed that each commune is relatively free to decide how to best achieve its goals. For their achievement and production, they receive pay and social support.

We visited the Fusuijing Neighborhood, or residential committee. The Fusuijing Neighborhood is part of Beijing's West District and is under a regional committee that administers 20,000 households with 77,000 people. In this unit there are 34 residential committees. The Fusuijing Residential Committee cares for five to six hundred households.

Then there are usually street committees and sub-committees for every 3 to 5 streets with a group leader on each street. These committees are self-governing and the leaders are elected. Many of the leaders are aged women and retired workers. This highly developed network of neighborhood offices serve as coordinating and communication links from the grass roots to the top. It is this mechanism which allows people to feel "a part" of the system as an effective, productive citizen.

Mr. Liu Wen-yi, the vice director of the neighborhood administrative office described the committee's tasks as follows: to provide residents with health care, education and sanitation; to encourage unity among neighbors; to set up small repair shops, and to provide assorted support services for workers and to organize all students for after school activities.

I was told that the high mobility factor among Chinese does not alter this close, cohesive organizational structure. The Chinese are moved to various administrative units where neighborhood committees make decisions for the collective good. The collective goal is to work in four areas of modernization which are: agriculture, industry, national defense, science and technology.



#### Support Systems for Working Women

In 1959, large numbers of housewives joined the workforce. They formed groups to organize the domestic work. Now, women are no longer solely responsible for housework. A wife is assisted by communal work groups, and her husband. This support is considered so important that an article in the Marriage Laws was designed for working women to provide protection from extensive housework. Understanding the importance of women's contribution to market production and family life is clearly reflected in what the Chinese refer to as "guarantees for the woman."

Although the PRC is now rewarding

couples who agree to have only one child, the woman is "guaranteed" two, 56-day, paid, maternity leaves. In addition, her work assignment is modified to accommodate nursing her baby. We were also told during several interviews that women were assigned lighter work during menstruation.

In an interview with an American woman in Beijing who had lived in China for over 40 years, we learned that if a husband does not help his wife with housework, she can divorce him. This woman said she is considered a respected citizen in the PRC and is sometimes asked to serve on the neighborhood court. She related events regarding a divorce case in which she participated as an official of the court:

The trial was held in the neighborhood. The person serving as judge, and two peers, one man and one woman, sat on a raised platform, a space set aside for this purpose. The neighbors, family, relatives and factory workers were in the room. The woman who was seeking divorce said she worked all day at the factory, came home to domestic duties, and when she asked her husband to help, he said, "No. That is your role." She tried to convince him that under the new system he was supposed to help, but he said, "I like the old ways best."

Everyone there discussed the problem and decided that the woman should go live in the factory dormitory while the neighbors, relatives and factory workers gave the husband instructions in modern thinking.

After several weeks of instruction the people had "broken through the husband's feudal thinking" and impressed on him the importance of effective relations and a happy home life. They suggested that the wife go home. She did, and was greeted "by a very friendly, smiling face, and a clean house." She dropped her case for divorce.

Professor Le Zhe-shing of the ACWF told us that among the older generation, some men are reluctant to share the housework but it was very rare for persons under 40 because they grew up with the new ideology. She said divorce was allowed, but first the neighborhood worked for reconciliation. "Some couples have different opinions, but sometimes stay married," she said.

The Chinese women reported with satisfaction that the divorce rate is low now, one out of every 100. Whereas, immediately following the revolution, many arranged marriages were dissolved.

One official of a neighborhood administrative office said, "The residents know each other and this gives a sound basis for decision making." They realize the importance of living in harmony.

One American woman living in China pointed out without complaint, "This is a socialist society and you devote your best energies to improve the group or collective life."

Peggy Chausse was selected by the People's Friendship Association to be part of an all-women's delegation to China in the summer of 1979.

# DR. ROCKIT: TAKING OFF

Rhythm and blues and Rock Romano

—BY KATHLEEN PACKLICK—

*Dr. Rockit is a hot new rhythm and blues band from Houston. They are the main feature at Anderson Fair every Wednesday night. The band is the brainchild of Rock Romano, who is no newcomer to the Houston music scene. The Smokin' Fitz and The Natives were his babies too. But to audiences these days, Rock Romano is Dr. Rockit.*

**Kathleen Packlick:** When did you start playing music?

**Rock Romano:** I started playing professionally when I was getting out of the eighth grade of parochial school on the north side of Houston. I met a bunch of guys at St. Thomas High School. I had already been playing before that in a group called the Sultans.

**KP:** What kind of music were you playing then?

**RR:** We were playing Buddy Holly and Bo Diddley songs. If you were learning how to play the guitar, there were certain songs that you would learn and you'd play with friends and you'd ultimately end up in a band. We were just imitating the heroes and the stars and the pioneers of rock and roll. That's what I like about Doctor Rockit, it's just like the very first band I had.

In the 10th grade, I met a bunch of cats that were playing around Bellaire and Lamar High Schools. They were called the *Jim Askin's Combo*. We were playing stuff that was on the radio—Elvis songs, rock and roll, Chuck Berry, *Wine, Wine, Wine*. *Jim Askin's Combo* was the ultimate fraternity party band. The pinnacle of our career was playing at fraternity parties when we were still in high school.

I dropped out of sight for a couple of years and went to a seminary at the end of high school. I found out pretty quick that seminary life was not for me. When I came back, I got together with the same group of guys. I was in my first years of college at the University of St. Thomas where I studied art history. At the same time, I was in a rock and roll band that was doing real well in Houston. The same group of guys essentially were together for 10 years. We called ourselves the *Sixpence* and later the *Fun and Games Commission*. All throughout the 60's we recorded. We were nationally famous, actually. We had a number six record in Los Angeles. We did an album for UNI records from which a bunch of bubble gum hits were taken.

After I dropped out of my contract with UNI records, I started this blues band with friends of mine called the *Cat's Pajamas*. The last incarnation of the band was with Mike Sunler, Joe Dugan and Carson Graham. We put together a lot of original music, but mostly

with a blues base. We opened a lot of gigs at Liberty Hall for Bobby Blue Bland.

Since the *Cat's Pajamas*, I've always tried to put together a band that was oriented towards playing to straight ahead rhythm and blues instead of just rockin' out music. The *Cat's Pajamas* broke up about 1972. That's when I went out on the road as a private recording engineer and did a lot of freelance sessions everywhere from Atlanta to New York to New Orleans. I call those my years on the road.

When I hit back in Houston, I decided that I really wanted to come and live here. That was 1975. I had burned a lot of bridges because I left without telling anybody. Getting back to Houston was like starting over. I had been out on the road wild and free and most of my friends were getting set in their ways. But I came to find out that I had a lot more friends than I thought, because that's when I started the *Smokin' Fitz*. The *Smokin' Fitz* was somewhere between Dan Hicks and Steely Dan. Bonnie Brown, being the spectacular soloist that she is, moved us into a jazz area. When Jimmy Bigelow joined us on the tenor sax, we really turned into a jazz band.

Anyway, I was totally blown away at how many of my friends that I had known in the past came to see this band every Sunday night. I was real pleased. It gave me the confidence that something else could happen.

**KP:** Why did the *Smokin' Fitz* break up?

**RR:** The *Smokin' Fitz* broke up because we were all ready to go into different directions. It was hard to keep putting on street theatre and rock and roll jazz for very long.

After six months of not playing in a band, Herschel Berry and I got together. We were working together at a factory and we used to talk every day about putting this band together. We'd go see Gatemouth Brown, or Herschel would come back from seeing Link Wray and Robert Gordon saying, "You gotta come see this cat. We gotta start a band like this."

So, we put together the *Natives*. We did everything from "Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor . . ." to Buddy Holly songs, to more serious rock and roll. The rock and roll madness surrounding the band was unbelievable. We started playing at Anderson Fair on Sunday nights. It got so wild that they were breaking records on Sunday nights that they never even set on weekends. The *Natives* just took off like crazy.

Then, I got a yearning for a musical change and it was something that I was trying to make the *Natives* into at the beginning. *Doctor Rockit* was the next step. I had a desire to have a



Nancy Dahlberg



Doctor Rockit at the Second Office Club. Band members include (l - r) Kenny Blanchet (Screamin' Kenny Bobo), Steve Schmitz (Smitty), Rock Romano (Dr. Rockit), Rich Layton



and Bob FitzSimons.

blues band and I knew that I could do it from the *Cat's Pajamas*.

**KP:** Where did you get the name *Doctor Rockit*?

**RR:** It was just something we made up on the back patio of Anderson Fair one night because we needed a name. There has been a great tradition of doctors in rock and roll history—*Doctor John*, *Doctor Feelgood*, *Doctor Hook*.

**KP:** Didn't *Doctor Rockit* start with you and a drummer?

**RR:** Steve Hunter. When I was still in the *Natives*, Steve Hunter played drums and I played bass behind Rocky Hill to start the Blue Wednesdays, which was an attempt by Anderson Fair and Rocky Hill to get a blues night going. I was looking for people to play the blues with. I had a bunch of real good songs and I was doing a single act. Then, I ran into this guy, Bob FitzSimons, from Cleveland, Ohio. He was down here with Terry Ross, who now heads up *Terry and the Telephones*. Bob and I hit a real close

At the same time, I was going to jam with Mike Knutz and Kenneth Blanchet over at the Keg, which is a little dive in the Montrose area. It's a little dive, but it's been written up in *Rolling Stone*. Kenneth was playing bass for Michael. Kenneth and I hit a really strong note when I would go in and sit with them. It turned out that Kenneth and I and Bob FitzSimons and Steve Hunter got together. We had the core of a band and I wanted to play guitar in this band even though I had been playing bass for about 10 years. It was something that I wanted to do with the *Smokin' Fitz* and I wanted to play guitar with the *Natives*. In the original bands I did play guitar, but it always sounded better when I played bass. So, I finally got a bass player that sounded better than me.

**KP:** When did you pick up Rich Layton, your harp player?

**RR:** Rich called me when he got back from a

vacation saying that *Taxi Dancer* was breaking up and he needed a band to go to. I kept him at arm's length for a while, because I had never heard him play except with *Taxi Dancer* and I did hear him play with Vince Bell. I liked him better when he played with Vince. I thought he lent a musical character to Vince's music that was almost like an orchestra. He still does that with *Doctor Rockit*.

**KP:** Why did Steve Hunter leave the band?

**RR:** Well, Steve had to leave because he had to make more money than we were making and everybody else had something going. I was painting signs and doing commercial art work to make an extra buck.

**KP:** Isn't Bob FitzSimons a carpenter?

**RR:** Right. He was doing other things to try to make money and actually everybody, including myself, was taking other gigs for the first three months that *Doctor Rockit* was together, which was the way it had to be because people had to make their own living. Rich already has a full-

time job at a place called Media Works. Rich had time to devote to the band, but not as much money as Kenneth. Kenneth was ready to make his survival on it. That's not to say that Rich isn't involved. He really puts his heart and soul into the band and shows up for the rehearsals when he can. He's the one with the most limited time.

Our new drummer, Smitty (Steve Schmitz), is in a position like that, too, because he's a carpenter all day long and still plays with the band.

**KP:** Didn't Smitty tour a lot at one time?

**RR:** He did and he doesn't want to tour right now. He wants to be in a band that plays several nights a week. He's playing with *Doctor Rockit* to have fun. That's the main thing that got everybody together. Kenneth was making a lot of money playing in disco bands all over the state. He played with *Fever Tree* and with Michael Knutz. He was in demand as a bass player, because he's so great. He didn't have to

play with *Doctor Rockit*—nobody did. The important thing was the tunes and the dynamic way we could put them down. It isn't a nostalgia band. We were playing those songs just like they were on the radio now. We're playing songs that we learned a long time ago and we're rearranging them. *Doctor Rockit* is not a purist blues band. It draws from all phases of blues and rhythm and blues—from Marvin Gaye to Lightnin' Hopkins. Most blues bands will have a real stark format that works on the driving pumping thing. We can play about 150 different songs that aren't ours. We're in the middle of learning a lot of original stuff which is really going to be phase three of *Doctor Rockit*.

**KP:** Will you eventually just do your own music?

**RR:** Sure—I mean, I don't think we'll ever get away from playing rhythm and blues songs because we're taking on the character of a dance band now. Before *Doctor Rockit* got together, I was trying to put together the *Bayou Rhythm*

and *Blues Review*. I just wanted to be responsible for it. I was going to call it: *Rock Romano presents—The Bayou Rhythm and Blues Review*. This week featuring . . . It all stemmed out of going to some zydeco dances with a friend of mine, Clyde Woodward, from Galveston. He and Patty McQueen took me to some zydeco dances, which is cajun rhythm and blues music, you know, like Clifton Chenier and Marcel Degas and Rockin' Doopsie and the Twisters.

**KP:** Are these dances publicized?

**RR:** They're not publicized so much, but they advertise on telephone poles with those classic big-block-letter-three-color posters and you won't believe it, they charge \$3.50 to walk in the door. People are selling boudin and selling food and ribs. There must be six to seven hundred people in this gigantic auditorium. They're all between 16 and 60 years old. Most of them are in their forties and everyone is rockin' and dancin' to this pumpin' zydeco music.

Well, I had a vision at that time. I saw a

place to do what I had been trying to do for 10 or 15 years of putting a blues band together for people to dance to and, at the same time, I saw a way to maybe totally bypass the music industry, which has been a goal of mine ever since I dropped out. So, what I saw was a chance to charge \$3.50 at the door for people to pack in there and dance and, somehow, someday, make a record and sell it to RCA and just eliminate all that crap.

Anyway, I was moved by the blues festivals the last couple of years in Houston. I started seeking out the *Thunderbirds* and bands in Austin that were blues bands. I used to go and see Freddie King when I was 15 over on Dowling Street. I used to talk to him backstage. He'd show me things. I didn't know him. After he made his big comeback with Leon Russell, I tried to talk to him and he would hardly talk to me. But that was the kind of thing that I was attracted to in music and the feeling that people want to dance to that music.

**KP:** Most of the places that you're playing in don't have a dance floor, although people are making room and dancing.

**RR:** Well, that's because of the limited nature of the politics that I wanted to be involved with in the clubs. The *Bayou Rhythm and Blues Review* was going to bypass the clubs. It was going to bypass everything.

**KP:** Is that what you were trying to do with the parties at your house?

**RR:** No. My house was a mini version of that. We weren't booked anywhere for a couple of weekends. We had a real hard time getting booked the first weeks we were together. A couple of us were starving. I had the most to gain from what it looked like, because it was my band in the beginning. I deserved to starve so everybody else could make money. I had gotten commitments from everybody and got them not to book with other bands, except on very rare occasions, when they let me know early. In November, we had so many gigs and we were playing so many nights—and for so little money, I might add—that I forgot to book up December. I didn't really forget, I just had to sleep sometime.

December is a great month for bands. All of a sudden, my drummer was getting booked up. I went through three different drummers in December trying to get someone who was willing to play the blues. About every six gigs, we were breaking in a new band.

So there were a couple of weekends where we didn't have anything at all. It was terrible for the morale of any band trying to feel like they've got something going. I just said, "Well let's have a party at my house." I have a big old house in the Montrose. The party started about ten o'clock at night. About three or four hundred people came through my house. Not only did *Doctor Rockit* play, but *Terry and the Telephones*, the *Hammer Ridge Mountain Boys*, the *Michael Knutz Band*. Lucinda came by for a set. A band called *Disco-nect* (a new-wave band with tubas) showed up.

We did it again two weeks later because we didn't have a gig. We played just for the love of wanting people to dance to us and to try to prove to people that we didn't want their money. We wanted their flying feet. The next time it was bigger. It was insane. Horn players from Ray Charles were in there jamming. We just threw two enormous dances which took me two days to clean up after. I can't do that anymore. But it proved to me that we could throw a big party. Scott Prescott, of the *Urban Animals*, picked up on what was happening real fast and in a way he undercut my efforts.

**KP:** That's when the *Urban Animals* had their Winter Solstice Party?

**RR:** Yes, starring all the same people that played at my two parties. So, in a sense, he blew my momentum in terms of me throwing a dance and *Doctor Rockit* making all the money so we could buy equipment instead of having to scuff along. The thing is, that it turned out great for *Doctor Rockit*. We probably didn't sound as clean because of the PA situation and the strange dungeon of a room on the bayou over there at the Theatre Showcase, but it was packed.

That was the turn of the worm for *Doctor*

*Rockit*—those two parties, and the *Urban Animals* party where a lot of people saw us in a context where they could dance. I still see a future for the *Bayou Rhythm and Blues Review*, because since that party, the money that *Doctor Rockit* has been making and the number of times we're playing and the kind of clubs, the size of the club—it's all changing. It's getting a lot better. We're almost surviving. We're almost making about half a living now.

**KP:** How big do you want to get? It seems that part of your appeal is your intimacy with the audience. If you start playing bigger places, won't the atmosphere change?

**RR:** When you're playing a place like Anderson Fair, which is probably my favorite gig to be playing, there's not much room to move. We try to get our point across at bigger places, too. It's something that I learned over the last 10 years when I had to relate as a single artist and especially working with Herschel Berry. There's a communication that has to take place with the audience. In a big place, like Cooter's or Whisky River, there's room to move. We jump and dance and go wild when we get the space. There's a whole different element that takes over the band when we're not confined by a small space.

We're a party band. We're playing music for people to dance to. I've heard some people call us New Wave because we play hard and we play rock and roll. I resented being called a rock and roll band at first, because I thought we were a blues band first.

**KP:** Why would you resent being called a rock and roll band?

**RR:** Because I wanted to be called a blues band. I wanted to tap that source of people who might consider blues and dancing together. I called it rhythm and blues because we really play rhythm and blues. Then we started calling it rockin' rhythm and blues so we could keep the rock and roll element as a part of our tag. I resented it because my band was starving to try to project an image to appeal to blues purists, blues dancers and people who just might be curious.

Now, I feel like we're a rock and roll band, but we're a blues band, too. The same people keep coming back to see us and we keep converting new club crowds. I'm really excited about the future, because I've got two different people talking to me about recording money. We're going to have a record of some nature. I have a feeling that it's going to be half original and half music that we're playing on stage.

**KP:** One weekend at Houlihan's, I saw your son, Steve, acting as emcee. Do you think he will continue introducing you?

**RR:** As far as my music is concerned, Steve's involvement started when I was in the *Smokin' Fitz*. Steve and I were together. I was moving back to Houston and I was on the street, literally. A lot of my friends were letting me crash a couple of weeks at a time. It was summertime, so I wasn't worried about Steve being in school. Steve started hanging out with me at rehearsals. One day, he started dancing to all the *Smokin' Fitz* music.

**KP:** How old was he then?

**RR:** He was about five. The *Smokin' Fitz* music was really weird. It had a lot of breaks and odd changes because it was a jazz band. Steve had some very expressive dancing worked out to it. I used to let him dance at certain places. Sometimes he'd dance for a couple of sets. He was part of what made the people think the band was so unusual. When we started playing liquor clubs, I didn't want him exposed to that constantly. It was real hard to break him away from it. When school starts, kids can't stay out too late.

For a while, he had a band with my piano player called *Duelling Humans*. Steve sings and co-writes the material with Bob FitzSimons. Sometimes he'll introduce the band and he'll be wearing a space helmet or he'll be disguised somehow. One day, he was totally wrapped in aluminum foil and we played the theme from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* as he approached the stage. He still gets to do that on some weekend nights when he doesn't have to go to school. And, I think it's time to pick him up from school now.

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*Connections and directions*

EDITED BY LYNNE MUTCHLER



Jeanette at the entrance to her family's apartment by Mary Ellen Mark. On exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts through April 25.

*American Images: New Work by Twenty Contemporary Photographers*, an exhibition by some of the country's most important contemporary photographers is being shown through April 20 at the Museum of Fine Arts. Works by Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Linda Connor, Bevan Davies, Jan Groover, Mary Ellen Mark, and others were commissioned by the Bell system. The exhibit of physical and social America provides a varied look at America's landscape and people. One photographer rediscovered the countryside and familiar buildings in his Texas hometown, another documented the pregnancy of a young Puerto Rican girl in New York City (above) and a third pictured the hot colors of Miami Beach and New Orleans.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is organizing a chapter in Houston. Founded in 1915 with Jane Addams as its first president, the purpose of WILPF is to establish by nonviolent means those political, social and psychological conditions which can assure peace, freedom, and justice for all, throughout the world. For further information contact Akiko Watanabe, 7418 Aqua Lane, Houston TX 77072, 498-1091.

A major retrospective of the work of Finnish architect Alvar Aalto is now at the Rice Museum, University Blvd. at Stockton Street. The *New York Times* characterized him: "Alvar Aalto (1898-1976) is perhaps the least known of the modern masters. But architectural histor-

ians place him alongside the American Frank Lloyd Wright, the Swiss Le Corbusier and the German Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as one of the century's greatest figures." Organized by the Museum of Finnish Architecture in Helsinki, the exhibition includes photographs, original sketches, floor plans and models of Aalto's major buildings, texts, and an extensive array of the architect's furniture, most of which is still in regular production.

*Newsweek* called the show "a choice collection of models, photographs, objects and texts which will surprise and delight not only Aalto's fans—but also those coming to see him for the first time." First seen in the United States at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, the exhibition will be on view Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 6 p.m. through June 1. For further information, 527-4002.



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ROBIN FLOWER

The Robin Flower Band will explode on stage with high-spirited double fiddle tunes and fancy flatpicking. They open at Fitzgeralds April 27, and will be playing songs from Flower's new album, *More Than Friends*, a mixture of traditional tunes and Flower's own bluegrass and jazzy originals with songs written by Nancy Vogl and Laurie Lewis.

Flower, a feminist, came from a working class family in Cleveland, Ohio. Both her parents were harmonica players and taught her traditional Kentucky bluegrass music. She states that "Old time music embodies feminism. It has to do with struggle and sharing—everyone getting a turn. There's no elitism." Her experience and style is diverse and skilled. She has performed with the Latin rock band, Be Be K'Roche and jazz with Baba Yaga. She has toured and recorded with Hazel and Alice, Woody Simmons, Willie Tyson, Trish Nugent and Holly Near.

Nancy Vogl's acoustic rhythm guitar enriches and rounds out the fast picking momentum of traditional tunes. Exposed to music since she was very young, she committed herself at age 20 to write music. In late 1973, she started the Berkeley Women's Music Collective with three other women. They made five national tours and produced two albums, *Berkeley Women's Collective* and *Trying to Survive*. She met Flower about five years ago and they have played together since. "Music to me is more than entertainment—it is a reflection of the culture which inspires it. Playing with women has let me feel a force of change and growth and I have been at times soothed, healed and motivated by musicians I know. What I bring to my music is a commitment to build a better growing environment for us all," said Vogl.

Superlatives also best describe Laurie Lewis. She placed first in the California old-timer fiddler contest in 1974 and 1977, women's division. She has recorded with Good Ol' Persons, Bay Records, Spaniel Records, the soundtrack in "Musical Holdouts," and many others credit her name. She has been called the "best known woman bluegrass musician west of the Rockies."

Those wishing to partake in this special evening of entertainment may do so at Fitzgerald's, at the corner of White Oak and Studewood, on April 27. For more information, call 733-0332. This is another concert sponsored by OFF THE WALL PRODUCTIONS OF HOUSTON.

A panel discussion on Pornography will take place April 20 beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the University of Houston, Corpus Christi-Fort Worth Room of the University Center. Panelists will be William Simon of the UH Sociology department, Gail Padgett, who contributed to the *Breakthrough* article *Pornography, Harmless Fantasy or Violent Nightmare?*, (November 1979), and Louise Johnson of *Working Women*.

Crisis Hotline, the 24-hour telephone counseling, crisis intervention and suicide prevention service, will train volunteers on four Saturdays beginning April 19 from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Not all calls to the Hotline are about a crisis but each caller needs a friend who can listen. The training program teaches volunteers how to deal with problems like depression, drug abuse, rape, parenting problems or thoughts of suicide. After training, volunteers work just one 4-hour shift each week. The shifts are flexible to accommodate both family and work responsibilities. Especially needed are volunteers who speak both Spanish and English and people who can give their time after midnight. Call Crisis Hotline at 228-1505 anytime for information or an application.

Fourth Annual Nutrition Education Conference sponsored by the Nutrition Education Association, Inc., will be held April 12 and 13, 9 to 5 at the Houston Oaks Hotel, 5011 Westheimer. All talks will be specific and non-technical; speakers include Rebecca Schwanecke, MD, practicing Houston physician specializing in nutritional therapy, and Ruth Yale Long, PhD, of Houston, who will talk about what happens when we don't get the nutrients our cells need. Other topics will be delinquency and nutrition, nutrition and the effects of aging on the skin, and non-toxic therapy for controlling cancer. The public is invited but pre-registration (\$15) is required. For further information call the Nutrition Education Association, P.O. Box 20301, Houston TX 77025, or call 668-4218.

Valley Women's Martial Arts, Inc., a women's karate and self-defense school, will sponsor the 1980 Annual Special Training, an intensive workout for women practitioners of Karate, Kung-fu, Tae Kwon do and Ja Shin do, June 26 - 29. Seven Black Belt women from different styles (Okinawan, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean) will act as trainers. Workouts will include sparring, forms, basic technique, kicking, falling and sweeping, energy control exercises (ki or chi) and running. Workshops of special interest will also be held.

The training site is a small New England campus to which the workshop will have exclusive access during the training. Facilities include a large gym, mat room, pool, outside running space, home-style food service and sleeping facilities. The finale will be a public demonstration, for each group to show a special part of their style. Pre-registration is necessary. Write Valley Women's Martial Arts, 284 Bridge Street Springfield MA 01103, (413) 732-8118.

The *Voter's Key*, a directory of elected officials and voting information, is now available from the League of Women Voters of Houston. This convenient pamphlet is filled with facts about all levels of government—names and addresses of all federal officials including President, Vice President, senators and representatives; all state legislators by district and by party affiliation; telephone numbers for all county and city officials; and a precinct guide which indicates your district for U.S. Congresspeople, State Board of Education, State Senator, State Representative, County Commissioner, and City Council member.

Single copies of the *Voter's Key* may be obtained free at any public library or by sending a long, self-addressed, stamped envelope to the League of Women Voters of Houston, 1947 W. Gray, Suite 202, Houston TX 77019. For information on large quantities call the League, 529-3171 any week day from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The public is invited to enter a poster contest in honor of the work and goals of the Houston Area Women's Center. A \$500 cash first-prize is being offered. Runners-up will be awarded smaller prizes. The posters will be judged equally on their artistic merits and their ability to convey the theme of "Women Helping Women." Judges will be Mary Ross Taylor, commercial artist Phyllis McMahon, and artist Lynn Randolph, president of the Houston Chapter of the Women's Caucus for Art.

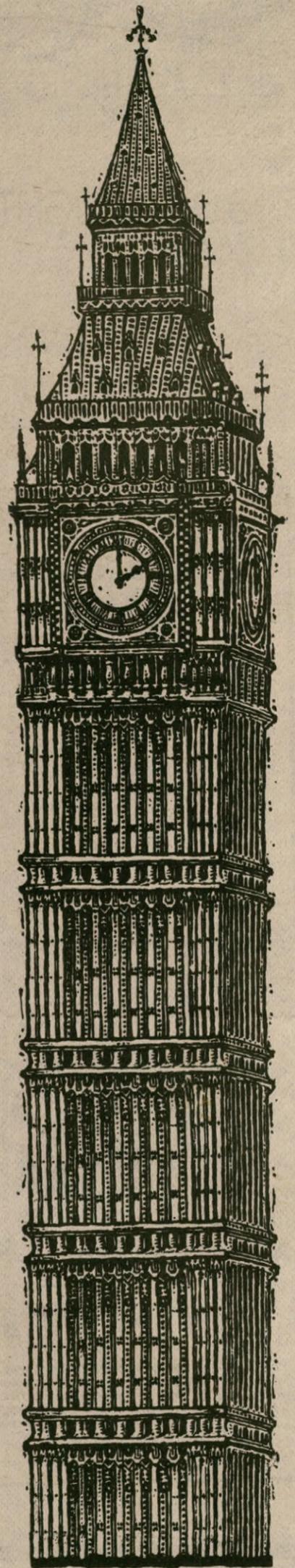
The winning poster will be printed and sold as a fund-raiser for the Houston Area Women's Center. The printed poster will be 24 by 26 inches, with a maximum of two colors on a colored stock giving it a three color effect. Submitted posters should follow these guidelines. Artists should not sign their work until after the judging on Monday, April 28. The posters will be on display from April 28 through June 1. Artists are to pick up their work after June 1. The posters should be mailed or hand-delivered to the Houston Area Women's Center. For further information or registration forms, call Sandy Long at 792-4403.

*The Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research* is a public forum sponsored in part by the UT Health Science Center, scheduled for Saturday April 19, 9 a.m. til noon, at the Scorpius Room of the Continuing Education Center of UH. Some topics to be considered by public health specialists and physicians are: *Informed Consent*, and *Privacy and Confidentiality*. A panel will discuss fetal research, research with mentally retarded, mentally ill, or comatose patients, research on reproduction and experimental drug research. For registration or further information contact Dr. Margery Shaw, P.O. Box 20334, Astrodome Station, Houston TX 77025.

The Houston Chapter of St. Joan's Alliance, an organization supporting equal opportunities for women and men in the Catholic Church and in society, meets the third Sunday of every month at St. Michael's Church, 1833 Sage Road. The next meeting will be April 20, at 7:30 p.m. For more information contact Alice Conlon, 3502 Nottingham, Houston TX 77005.

Women's Information, Referral, and Exchange Service (WIRES) is looking for volunteers. WIRES is a an organization whose goal is to help women find the knowledge, skills, and information to develop their fullest potential. WIRES' volunteers staff a phone service 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday. The calls they receive deal with questions on credit, education, housing, welfare, child care, legal rights, health, and employment. Crisis calls from battered wives, rape victims, and alcoholic or drug addicted persons are also handled by WIRES. Volunteers are given training on what resources are available in the community, how to refer persons, and how to effectively handle crisis calls. WIRES is a part of the Houston Area Women's Center. Its office is located in the Medical Center. For further information or to volunteer, call Elizabeth Glenn at 792-4664.

The Texas Association for Women in Mental Health, a newly-formed group of professionals and individuals interested in psychology free of sexism, will meet on April 12 at UH/CLC. The group will meet at noon in Room 2-508 of the Bayou Building of UH/CLC for lunch and a presentation on *The Dinner Party*. Viewing of *The Dinner Party* from 2 p.m. till 3:30 p.m., followed by organizational meeting. For more information on the group or their tour, call Kathy Morris, 791-2266 or 528-7716.



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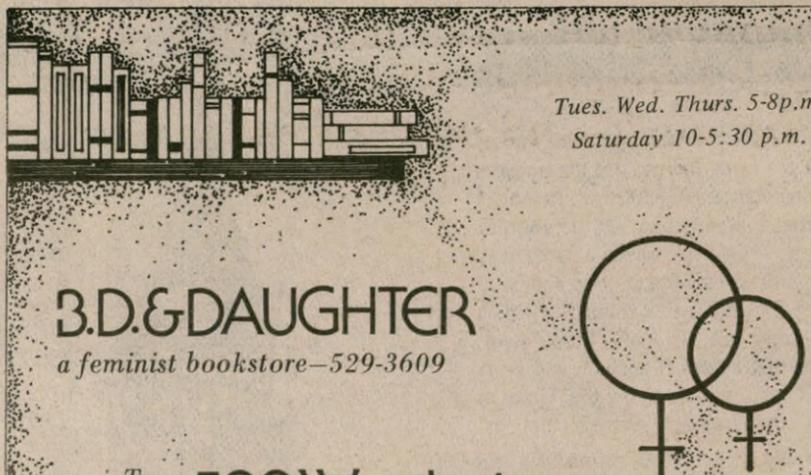
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Carol Kelleher, MS (left), and Rosemary Johnson, MSW (right), will lead a workshop on Women and Stress, Saturday May 3 at the Family Service Center, 3635 W. Dallas, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. How to juggle responsibilities of



home, relationships and career, how to reduce stress areas and make stress work for each individual will be the focus of the workshop. For reservations and further information on tuition fee call 524-3881.

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The Feminist Writers Guild is working to build strong networks of communication and support among feminists who write. The Guild is a national service and political organization, beginning a third year with a major outreach effort to third world women, southern women, and all women writing in isolation. Membership, including a subscription to the Guild newsletter, is \$10 a year, \$5 for low-income persons. For further information, write Feminist Writers Guild, P.O. Box 9396, Berkeley CA 94709.

Women Talking, Women Listening announces a women's chapbook contest for Womenpoets in the U.S. who have not yet published a chapbook. Entry fee is \$5. The winning chapbook writer will receive \$25 and 100 copies of her work. Guidelines for entry (deadline: May 15) are available from Women Talking, Women Listening, P.O. Box 2414, Dublin, CA 94566.

The American Sewing Guild, a non-profit organization of people interested in sharing and improving their sewing skills, is sponsoring a chapter in Houston with the American Home Sewing Association, a trade organization of approximately 300 notion, pattern, fabric, sewing machine and fiber companies. The American Sewing Guild aims to provide up-to-date sewing information and inspiration for people who would like to sew more—or sew better. The Guild sponsors lectures, demonstrations, classes, seminars and fashion shows and has a regular newsletter on the many facets of sewing. Each Guild has a Chapter Administrator appointed by AHSA who is knowledgeable in all areas of sewing, to serve as liaison between the chapter and the home sewing industry. For membership information contact The American Sewing Guild, P.O. Box 36081, Houston TX 77036.

Fluoridation and Recent Carcinogenic Implications, a lecture by Martha Bevis, will be sponsored by the Cancer Prevention and Control Organization at 7:30 p.m. Thursday April 3 at the Easter Seal Center, 3630 West Dallas. Bevis recently fought the Health System Agency's appropriation to fluoridate the entire state of Texas. For further information, call 668-4218.

The South Central Women's Studies Association, a regional division of the National Women's Studies Association, invites program proposals for WomanFair, to be held at UT at Arlington, October 18 and 19. Needed are panels, seminars, workshops, papers, arts and craft displays, musical and dance performances, dramatic presentations and other creative activities tied to the conference topics: Pioneers Then and Now; Women Innovators; Silver Threads and Golden Notebooks: Women and The Arts; Healing and Helping: Physical Mental and Spiritual Health; Getting and Spending: Economic Woman; Bearing and Caring: Families in the 1980s; and Majority and Minority Women: Myths and Realities.

Proposals should include name, address and affiliation (if applicable) of presenters, and a one-page description of the proposed activity including title, nature and format, time required and equipment needed. Proposals (deadline: May 11) will be judged on their appropriateness to conference themes and on the extent to which they use the humanities to clarify the values, concerns, traditions and experiences of women's lives. For information or to submit proposals, contact: Jeanne Ford, WomanFair Coordinator, P.O. Box 19528 UTA Station, Arlington TX 76019, (817) 273-2219.

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The seventh **National Women's Music Festival** will take place May 29 through June 1 near Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. Thirteen performers are featured, among them Holly Near, Meg Christian, Alive!, Robin Tyler and Teresa Trull. Daily workshops will cover everything from instrument repair to innovative approaches in teaching, from production to promotion. Concerts, workshops, feminist films, and jam sessions are highlights of the festival. Further information will be featured in *Breakthrough* in future issues.

**Wanted: Painters for apartment painting.** Commission. Sheetrockers or women interested in learning. Call Total Home Services 497-6371.

Two training institutes in national political campaign techniques—one for women judicial candidates the weekend of April 11-13; and one for Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific and Native American women the weekend of April 18-20 —will be held at the TWA/Breech Training Academy, Overland Park, Kansas. The newly-formed National Association of Women Judges is cooperating with the National Women's Education Fund (NWEF) in the first training institute. The second institute is being planned by Colorado State Senator Polly Baca Barragan and Tennessee State Rep. Lois DeBerry, chair of the National Association of Black Women State Legislators.

"Both institutes are a part of the NWEF continuing political skills training program for women, emphasizing the unique aspects of women's candidacies as well as those techniques basic to every campaign," NWEF Executive Director Rosalie Whelan said. "They are open to women who expect to participate in political campaigns as candidates, campaign managers or responsible staff members. Institutes are presented by national and regional campaign experts, including women who, themselves, have run for public office."

A \$100 fee covers room, board, tuition, and materials for each institute. A limited amount of financial aid is available, on basis of need. Applications for registration, limited by space available, can be obtained from NWEF, 1410 Q Street, NW, Washington DC 20009.

**A Women's Yellow Pages** is in the making and will be published by September 1, 1980.

It will include listings of women-owned and operated businesses (at least 50 percent ownership by women).

This directory is for all of us who freelance our favorite hobbies too.

The format will vary from pictorial graphics to paragraphed descriptions of your service or commodity.

Sheddan and Friends is a freelance graphics business and is undertaking this project. Please make inquiries by phone or mail to: Sheddan and Friends, 2400 McCue No. 103 Houston TX 77056. Phone 871-1801 from 7 a.m. - 8 a.m. 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. - 11 p.m.

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The Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press has released the 1980 *Index/Directory of Women's Media* listing women's periodicals, presses, publishers, news services, columns, regular radio and TV programs, and media collectives and companies in film, video and cable, music, art/graphics/theater, and multimedia. There is a section on individual media women and media-concerned women—women who are building a supportive communications network.

Included with the Directory is an annotated Index of women's media research and activities—over 100 different categories—from the massive wealth of information found in the pages of the monthly *Media Report to Women*. This index would be particularly useful to those doing research or delivering talks on any aspect of women's communications and mass media. The *Index/Directory of Women's Media* is available for \$8 from the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 3306 Ross Place, NW, Washington, DC 20008 (202) 966-7783.

**Women Hold Up Half the Sky in China.** Read about it in *Women of China*, an attractive illustrated monthly magazine, including reports on women in science and industry, women in the arts, women's role in Chinese history, and many other topics. \$5.00 a year (12 issues). Subscribe from Prairie Fire Bookstore, 3221 Main St. Houston TX 77002.

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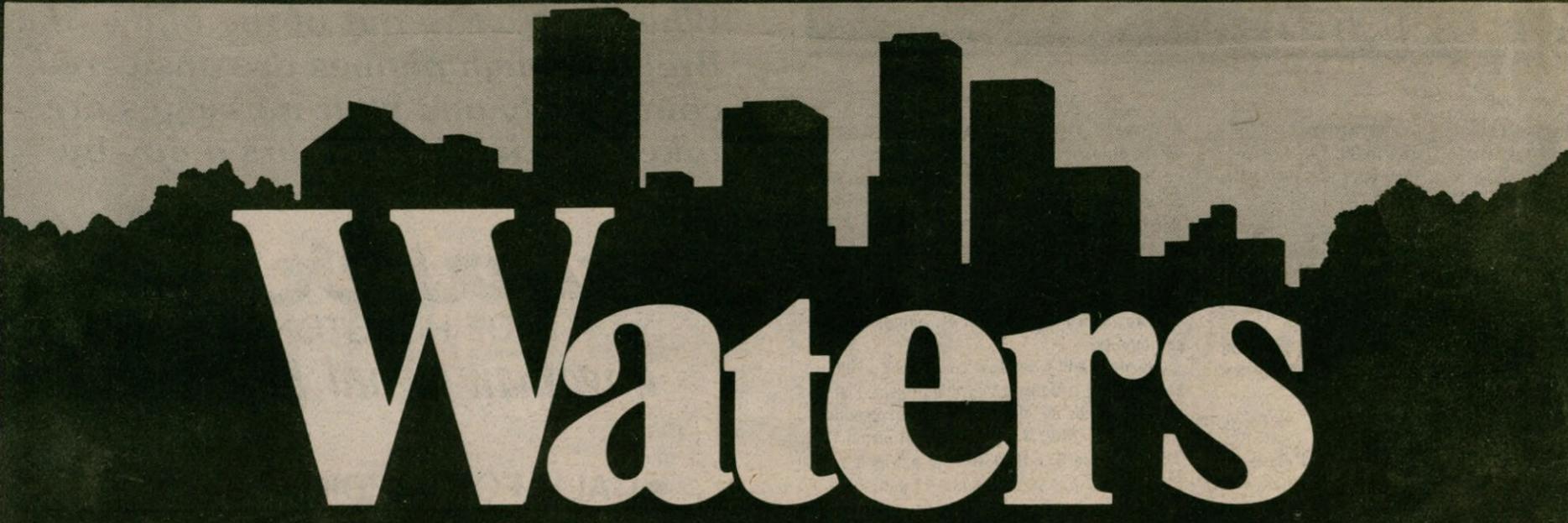
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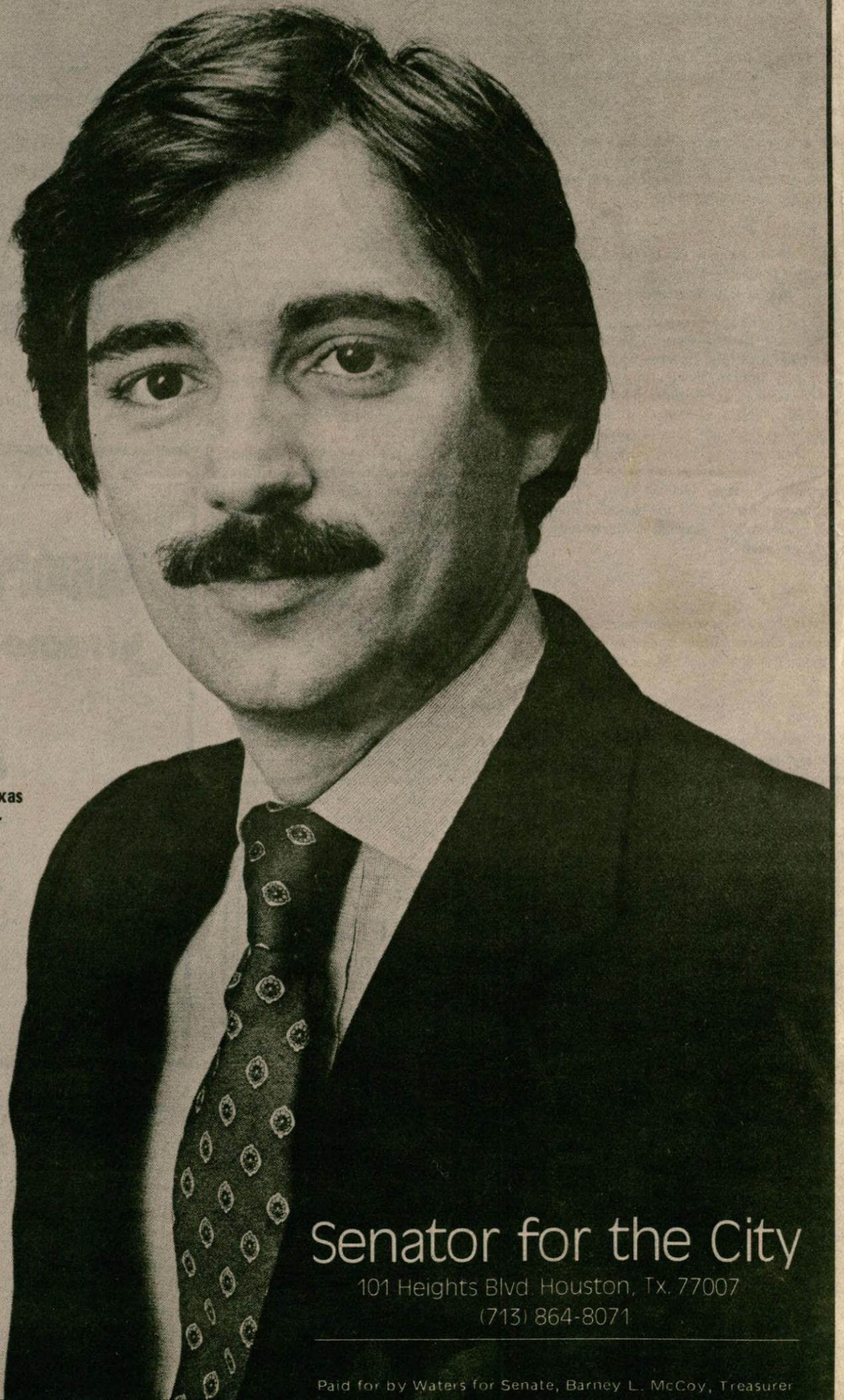
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