

# BROADSIDE

Vol. 8 No. 12 Houston Area N.O.W. December 1977

Dear N.O.W. Folk,

Well, another year has passed for Houston Area N.O.W., new officers have been elected, memories of this past year's activities are still fresh in most people's minds, and it is now time to assess where we are and where we are going. All of us have expended our energies throughout 1977 for a variety of reasons. We joined with women and men from all across the city to fight city council's abolishment of the office of Women's Advocate, we marched (gay and non-gay, women and men) to protest the ugly campaign of bigotry and hatred that Anita Bryant and her cohorts have launched in the name of their own narrow-minded religious and political views, we wrote letters and made calls to our senators and representatives as we found the reproductive freedom of poor women threatened by the Hyde Amendment. Some of us worked on programs to aid battered women. Others threw themselves into the campaigns of women and men for every office from mayor to school board in a historic city election that produced Houston's first woman city official.

Finally, we witnessed here in Houston, Texas, the most dynamic assembly of

women and men that the country has probably seen, the National Women's Conference. These people came from all across the country and from the territories. They represented all shades of American belief, opinion, and interest, but they united for a strong program in favor of the rights, equality, dignity, and progress of American women. This was truly one of the most remarkable events in the American history of women since that brave few first came together in Seneca Falls, New York, almost a century and a half ago.

We can all be truly proud of our efforts, but we must not rest on our laurels. The E.R.A. must be passed! It will take the unceasing efforts of all of us. We must marshal our strength, our creativity, our intelligence, our dedication for the year to come. To this end, we will not have a program meeting on the first Wednesday of December. Instead, this time will be set aside for a rap session to which all of you are most enthusiastically invited. If you're looking for a way to get involved and/or have ideas about things that we should work on in the next year, please come. This is your chance. Houston Area N.O.W. is only as effective as its members make it. You all, women and men, are needed.

As the new president of Houston Area N.O.W., I want to sincerely thank last year's officers, Renee Rabb-president, Cindy Millis-treasurer, Joy Goodman-secretary and Broadside editor. These people gave of themselves, their time, and their energy in such a way that they may well feel proud of their efforts. We who follow them do so in a spirit of continued faith in all of your support, help, advice, and friendship.

*Linda Jones*

## THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE (A VIEW FROM THE FLOOR)

I showed up at 7 a.m. Saturday for duty as a microphone monitor at the National Women's Conference. Bleary-eyed, I stood in line with the rest of the volunteers to receive my red tee-sheet bearing the legend, "Convention Aide." I put it on and immediately felt like a fruit drink.

We had been briefed earlier about our duties. As representatives of the I.W.Y. Commission appointed by the feds, we were to show no political stance at all during the meeting. No buttons, no signs, no street gestures. Above all, no show of approval or disapproval of either the issues or the delegates. I thought it might be difficult. It was a piece of cake.

Since the opening session was all pomp and circumstance, with no speakers from the floor, the mike monitors were pressed into security duty. Several of us were stationed in front of the stage. Our duties consisted mainly of trying to keep the aisles clear and the media at bay.

After the keynote address, the media rushed the stage. I found myself linked up in an arm-chain of redshirts trying to keep them from climbing on the stage. The Secret Service guys were behind the Thin Red Line.

I had earlier half-heartedly thought about trying to hustle one of the Secret Service guys who resembled Kurt Vonnegut, but I experienced the female equivalent of an inability to achieve an erection. (We need a term for this, gang. Get to work on it.)

Our real work began with the second session. We took our places at the mikes. We had a series of colored placards to hold up to get the Chair's attention. Each color was significant: Blue for a pro speech; Green for a con speech; Orange for an amendment or substitute motion; Yellow for a point of order or personal privilege; White for calling the question; and Red for HELP!

As soon as business got underway, it became apparent that a great number of delegates knew less about parliamentary procedures than the average tamale.

Speakers at the mikes were recognized on a first-come, first-served basis. And the aisles were cleared and delegates required to take their seats for every vote. So every time a new question came on the floor, there was a rush by delegates to line up at the mike.

They tried everything. Crouching in the aisles (as though in starting blocks at the track), sitting on top of each other, and simply refusing to sit down. I began to feel like a cross between a shepherd and a first-grade teacher.

It was never to get any better. I only had one nervous breakdown, and it happened at 11:30 p.m. the first night. I had been on my feet for over 16 hours. The Chair had reversed herself for the third time on a question of whether Yellow cards took precedence in lines at the mikes. Informed of yet another change, and knowing we mike monitors were about to catch hell from the delegates, I asked my facilitator to take my place for a while. I went to the bathroom near the command post and freaked out for a good fifteen minutes.

Barbara Cigainero, head of security, saw me coming. To her everlasting credit, she brought me a soft drink, let me cry on her shoulder, and told me funny stories about providing credentials for guide dogs for blind delegates. I was soon able to return.

We had a meeting with Commissioner Harry Edwards after the session adjourned that night. Ann Saunier, who would chair the following day, also attended. They promised not to change the rules any more.

Since we were short-handed, I wound up working all the sessions. By Sunday night, my thigh bones were no longer connected to my knee bones.

There was the at-large delegate who was always slightly drunk. She wore a straw hat and was fond of dancing in the aisles, humming some tuneless ditty.

There were the two delegates who both claimed to be first in line. Neither would budge. The first time it happened, I arbitrarily selected one and relegated the other to second place. The second time it happened I flipped a coin. The third time it happened I sent them both to the end of the line.

I only had to have one person escorted from the floor. A woman reporter was trying to interview Betty Friedan as she was standing in line at my mike, waiting to be recognized. Friedan was gracious at first, then brief, then exasperated, as she asked the reporter to wait until the issue at hand was decided. The reporter simply would not quit and so I called a sergeant-at-arms and had her removed.

Hundreds of thousands of words have been written about the real significance of the conference, and it is not my intention to do that here.

But it should be remembered that the success of this conference was partly due to the redshirts, most of them Houston feminists, who gave so much time and energy to this event. We submerged our personalities, we put aside our political differences, and we worked hard. By so doing, we advanced the cause of women's rights as much as the delegates.

Jan Dilbeck

#### PROGRAM MEETING

Instead of a program meeting this month, there will be a rap session to discuss the future of N.O.W. It will be at Nancy Kuykendall's apartment at 2515 Shakespeare, No. 11. Her phone number, if necessary, is 667-4362. The date : December 7, 7:30 p.m.

#### BUSINESS MEETING

The December business meeting will be December 14, 8 p.m., at Nancy Kuykendall's (see above for address).

## BOOK NOTE

A Wollstonecraft Anthology, containing the best writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, has recently been published by Indiana University Press. Selections from Vindication of the Rights of Women, from her letters to William Godwin, and from her two novels are included.

## BROADSIDE DEADLINE

Copy deadline for the January issue will be Monday, December 26. Please get your information to Yvonne Broach by then (phone 523-8705 after 7 p.m.)

## HELP!

Broadside needs a mailing person to take the bundled issues to the main post office downtown for bulk mailing on the Friday preceding the first Wednesday of each month. If your schedule would permit such an errand, please call Yvonne Broach at 523-8705 after 7 p.m.

# houston area now folk

## OFFICERS:

President	Linda Jones
Vice President	Joy Goodman
Secretary	Linda Bain
Treasurer	Ellen Sitton

## BROADSIDE STAFF:

Yvonne Broach, Editor
Linda Jones
Joy Goodman
Jan Pierce
Nancy Kuykendall

The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of Houston Area N.O.W. or N.O.W., Inc.

## **broad'side**

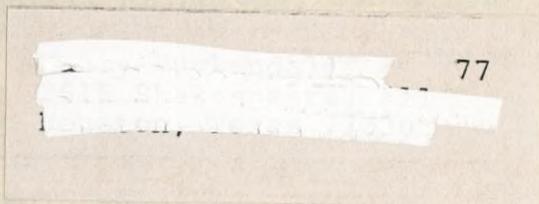
- 1: a sheet of paper printed on one or both sides and folded
- 2: any strong or comprehensive attack, as by criticism
- 3: the simultaneous discharge of all the guns on one side of a ship

Copyright Houston Area N.O.W. 1977



Houston Area Chapter  
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN  
P.O. Box 66351 Houston, Texas 77006

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Houston, Texas  
Permit No. 9902



Address Correction Requested

# BROADSIDE

IS FREE WHEN YOU JOIN NOW.

- I want to join N.O.W. and enclose \$26 for chapter, state and national dues.
- I enclose hardship dues of \$17.50 for chapter, state and national dues.
- I'll pay in two equal monthly installments of \$13.00 (regular) or \$8.75 (hardship).
- I want to subscribe to Broadside and enclose \$4.
- I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as a donation to Houston Area N.O.W.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to:  
Treasurer  
P.O. Box 66351  
Houston, Tx 77006