

Houston  
**Breakthrough**

Where Women Are News  
July/August 1979

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# letters

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## "A policy of corporal punishment invites abuse . . ."

Other *Breakthrough* readers probably sat speechless with anger and sadness after reading Melanie Mayeaux's fine story ("Violence in School", June 1979) about blind, four-year-old Ramon Couture and the principal at New Caney Elementary School, just as I did.

As I understand the current system, each independent school district in the state is empowered to formulate their own policy regarding corporal punishment; the ultimate power to limit or prohibit corporal punishment statewide rests with the State Board of Education and the Texas legislature.

It is a step that the Texas Education Authority's appointed judge recommended against corporal punishment for special education students in New Caney, but it is appalling that someone, just because he is a school administrator, can abuse a child, undoing the patient hard work of his mother and teacher, and be exempt from dismissal because he "did not violate any existing policy." If anyone else in the community had done this they would have been liable for criminal proceedings.

The current policy on corporal punishment invites abuse, and I doubt that it provides much protection for the classroom teacher with a violent or extremely disruptive pupil. It seems we need new rulings to better protect Texas school children. With Ramon's story fresh in mind it is a good time for us to write our state legislators and the State Board of Education (201 East 11th Street, Austin 78701—best to put "re: corporal punishment" or some such at the top of your letter). ALISON FRANKS

## "Are we planning wars for the battlefields of the 1980's?"

I am not sure you would be interested in printing something as controversial as this letter I wrote to the editors of *Science* magazine last year. They have not printed this letter (as of this date).

It would seem to me that if this "war expectation" pattern (see letter below) is ever to be broken up, it is up to women to do so, with the help of the few reasonable men in the world who do not enjoy even the thought of rattling swords.

I enjoy your publication.

B. J. KOLENDA

Ms. Christine Karlik  
Science  
1515 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

15 August 1978

I am responding to the brief article, written by Nicholas Wade, about the XM-1 battle tank that appeared in *Science* (August 11, 1978). The article mentions ". . . a weapon that it hopes will dominate the battlefields of the 1980's." (See *The Violent Sex*, page 18).

Obviously, this statement assumes that there will be battlefields in the 1980's. Are we planning wars for the 1980's? How does this type of attitude, so widespread among males around the world, foster efforts to initially exhaust all alternatives to violent aggression and to achieve eventual world peace?

This attitude that "war is inevitable in every lifetime" (passed from father to son, teacher to pupil—an assumption similar to that of assuming that baseball and football "are forever") is primarily responsible for the continuation of politically aggressive thought leading inevitably to war and resulting in the progressive policy of "survival of the unfittest." A large portion of the fittest and most intelligent males of each generation is killed on battlefields.

If the world we live in needs to kill off its surplus males, why not institute a cost-efficient and much more humane method of doing it? It would be less expensive to the world and would avoid the endangering depletion of resources if that same percentage of each generation of males was [aborted] . . . [Therefore] they would not need food and schooling for 18 to 24 years before they are killed with very expensive weapons such as the XM-1. Ten thousand abortions surely are much less expensive than one XM-1 tank.

The humane and monetary benefits would be everbroadening. For instance, if there were no armies . . . there would be thousands fewer conceived, unwanted, and abandoned bastard orphans for the world to feed, school, and [eventually] send out to be killed on the battlefields . . .

If you think this letter is submitted in jest, you are mistaken. I have never been more earnest about a suggestion in my life.

Ms. B. J. Kolenda

The women of *Off the Wall Productions* are pleased to announce that their fund-raising concert featuring Sharon Lauder, Kay Gardner and Mojo (June 16) raised \$720 for the Houston Area Wo-

men's Shelter for Abused Women. We hope to see you at our next production. THE WOMEN OF OTWP

"When will men do something besides extend congratulations? I would rather have President Roosevelt say one word to Congress in favor of amending the Constitution to give women suffrage than to praise me endlessly!"

It is well to remember these words of Susan B. Anthony as the coin bearing her likeness passes through all our hands. It will be necessary to work very hard to get male state legislators to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. Let's not let the Susan B. Anthony coin be but another of the empty gestures Anthony so scorned!  
H. KATHLEEN GRESHAM

## "Miss Piggy is everything we don't want our daughters to be."

Last night I took my ten-year-old niece to see *The Muppet Movie* and I was appalled at the blatant sexism in the film. Naturally, the main character/hero was a male figure, Kermit the Frog, who goes through a series of marvelous adventures on his way to seek fame and fortune in Hollywood. Of the 20 or so characters in the film, three were female. These were portrayed as submissive, non-opinionated and stupid!

Miss Piggy was the only one of the three who had what could be considered a major role. The audience first meets her as the winner of a beauty contest at a country fair. She is beautiful (for a pig), but of course, as the stereotype goes—"you can't be both beautiful and intelligent at the same time"—therefore, the big-busted, blonde Miss Piggy is an idiot. She leaves all of the decisions to the hero, Kermit. Waiting for the HUMOR to shine through her demeaning role, I was saddened to find there was none. Later, it is revealed that she possesses fantastic strength and saves Kermit from disaster, but instead of self-recognition of her talent, she retreats back into her old personality as stupid and submissive. She is everything we don't want our daughters to be. Let me emphasize that there was no humor or saving grace in her character.

The other two female muppets were almost unidentifiable in that they had very few speaking parts. One, a chicken, had a tremendous (and I am being facetious here) line when she went "ga ga" over the present of balloons that her boyfriend bought for her. The rest of the time she was mute. The other was a member of a rock band who seemed to be too stoned or loaded to make much sense. Of course, at the end of the film Kermit the Frog achieves his goal by becoming rich and famous and through him all of the other characters are able to, also, including Miss Piggy, the chicken, and the band member.

It is a very sad thing that children (and adults) must constantly be subjected to stereotypes and it is especially worsened by films such as this one. One would think that after all that has been said and done to stop racism and sexism in our society, it is still being produced anew in our children's films. In *The Muppet Movie* the redeeming value of the humor done by the cameo appearances of Madeline Kahn, Cloris Leachman, Carol Kane, Steve Martin and the rest was not enough to take the taste out of my mouth. I strongly suggest that if the children of feminist mothers, sisters, aunts, etc. do want to see the film—if they haven't already by now—then, some time should be spent preparing the child to watch for these discrepancies in the female characters' roles and in pointing out these stereotypes. RUDYNE M. GRIGAR

## "How wonderful to see the portrayal of a competent woman!"

I wish to report a significant, though small stride forward in the way women are portrayed in the movies. It is in the film *Alien*, a science fiction shocker with few redeeming qualities. Except that the last person left alive — the one who courageously and imaginatively destroys the monster — is a woman, played by Sigourney Weaver. She portrays a competent, aggressive, efficient woman without the coldness which screenwriters and directors have laid on women in the past.

Even two years ago this role with no changes would have been played by a man. That Weaver is a woman is immaterial to the plot. She is not a sex object and shows no skin except near the end, when the lack of clothes makes her appear more vulnerable to the menacing creature. How wonderful to see the portrayal of a competent woman! For this alone I recommend the film. LYNNE MUTCHLER

Thanks so much for your support of *The Dinner Party*. (See "The Dinner Party" by Nancy Lane Fleming and "Will Houston Host the Dinner Party" by Dianne Brown, June 1979).

I just wanted to share with you the latest problems we are facing in getting the exhibition shown. (News clippings reported that the only remaining scheduled showing has been cancelled. See *News-makers* page 4).

We will keep you posted on the latest news. We are getting a flood of letters from people around the country wanting to see the exhibition in their area. I hope that we can bring it together for everyone in Texas. In sisterhood.

DIANE GELON  
Project Administrator  
Through the Flower  
Santa Monica, CA

Houston  
**Breakthrough**  
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# Happy 40th Birthday, Nikki!



Growing up in Cut Bank, Montana, age 2, with sister Lee (left)



In 1965 with sister Lee Clark, former KHOU-TV news anchor



Nikki Van Hightower will be 40 on August 14. See Commentary page 5

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Cover photo by Tony Bullard. Special thanks to Polly Dunham, Pat Cearcy, and Robert Garcia, our cover models, and to Missy Hauge and Diane Rainosek for making the cover pie.

# Newsmakers



**Bette Graham White** public relations consultant and former Houston mayoral candidate, has formally filed as a candidate for mayor of Houston. "I propose to lead city government, not be swept along by events," says White, "Houston needs leadership, not stewardship"

White is a founder of The Fourth Ward Clinic and an organizer of The Hunger Project. She has a master's degree in theology and religious education.

Her three-point platform includes: 1) efficient city management, 2) a responsible spending program to address tax pressures and 3) accountability.

**Judith McCandless Rooney** has been appointed Associate Curator of The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Rooney had been a staff member at the Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh since 1976, most recently as Assistant Curator of Painting and Sculpture.

Rooney will coordinate the Museum's forthcoming handbook of its permanent collection and will have curatorial responsibilities in her fields of interest, nineteenth and twentieth century art.



**Ralph Waite**, star of the TV series, *The Waltons*, has donated \$25,000 towards a facility for the Houston Area Women's Center, to be named for his late sister, Joan Waite Hanlon.

Capital funds for the facility will be raised by the Joan Waite Hanlon Houston Area Women's Center Foundation, of which Waite is the founding member (see story p. 17).



**Shere Hite**, author of *The Hite Report*, is suing the McMillan Publishing Company for allegedly withholding about \$780,000 in royalties on her book. Hite charges that in 1975, when she signed her agreement

with McMillan, she was induced to sign a limitation clause holding her earnings to \$25,000 a year, supposedly for tax benefits.

She says although the book has since earned over \$875,000, she has received only \$75,000 plus the \$25,000 advance. She received nothing from the \$800,000 paperback rights sale in 1977 although her agreement entitled her to \$400,000.

Hite used no agent or attorney to negotiate the McMillan agreement. She said she was not told she would earn no interest on funds held under the limitation clause.

Hite says it will take 32 years to get the royalties owed her now, and the book is still selling well worldwide.

She says McMillan has not put her money in escrow and is profiting from using it.

Hite wants the limitation clause voided and her earnings now held, plus interest, plus the profits McMillan has made on her money and a million dollars in punitive damages, saying the company "willfully, wantonly, and maliciously violated its obligations and duties" to her by using her money.

McMillan has no comment. Irwin Karp, counsel for the Authors League of America, says changes in tax laws made the limitation clause useless well before the agreement was made.

In an interview, Hite said, "It's a tax-free, interest-free, eternal loan. Here I am—me—who had to borrow money from my editor's doorman to write the book, propping up this stupid company."



**Jane Fonda**, fresh from her campaign against the nuclear power industry, has chosen her next issue: the pay and working conditions of the millions of female clerical workers throughout the country.

The presence of the actress at a secretaries' rally in San Francisco drew a crowd of 7,000 and her new film, a comedy to be called *Nine to Five*, will undoubtedly reach millions with its low-key message calling secretaries and clerical workers to arms.

Up to now, few companies have had to worry much about discontent among office workers. But in recent months there have been unmistakable stirrings in this traditionally unorganized and docile work force. The signs of the new militancy include the following: 1) organization by the Teamsters Union of 1,900 clerical workers at the University of Chicago, and 2) moves by the Communications Workers of America to organize female clerical workers through existing organizations of working women. The union is also planning to raise the issue of equal pay for comparable work in 1980 contract negotiations with the Bell system. An attempt will be made to bring pay in traditionally female clerical jobs into line with salaries for male janitors and linemen.

The issues for clerical workers are the same as those that have always prompted employees to band together, with salaries heading the list of grievances. The average pay for all clerical workers is \$8,128 a year, only slightly above the current poverty threshold of \$6,800 for a non-farm family of four. A worker with two children earning \$130 a week is eligible for food stamps, although entry-level salaries for clerks, receptionists and typists in most industries are below this level. "We feel that a full-time worker should make more than a subsistence wage," says Ellen Cassidy, staff director of a Boston organization called 9 to 5.

Women clerical workers are also concerned about the lack of opportunities for promotion and the galling nonprofessional demands of some male bosses. At meetings during National Secretaries

Week in April, secretaries complained of employers who, among other things, asked them to clean their dentures and to sew up their trousers—while the latter were still on.

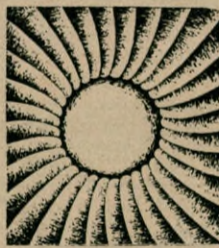
One of the most innovative attempts to reach clerical workers has been organized by a national network of 13 organizations, loosely affiliated as the National Association of Working Women, with a total membership of only about 8,000. But they have been able to challenge a number of carefully chosen employers on such issues as equal pay and promotions, partly by petitioning federal and state authorities to enforce existing equal employment statutes.

Representatives of the women's groups concede, however, that there are limits to what can be accomplished without the legal right to bargain and to win an enforceable contract, as in union contracts.

**Maria de Lourdes Pintassilgo** has been asked by Portugal's president to form a government and become Portugal's first woman prime minister and the second in Europe.

A chemical engineer by profession, Pintassilgo is Portugal's ambassador to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. She has served as Portugal's minister of social affairs and studied women's affairs for the government. She has been active at the top level of international Roman Catholic groups.

Pintassilgo will not be forming a government as a party leader. Her task is to form an interim government to prepare for autumn elections.



The only remaining scheduled showing of **Judy Chicago's** art work, *The Dinner Party*, after its premiere at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMMA), has been cancelled. A terse press release from the University of Rochester's Memorial Art Gallery (June 20) cited "conflicts of policy concerning programming and fundraising by the artist and problems of financing the exhibition after cost estimates had increased dramatically over original estimates."

*The Dinner Party*, a multimedia collaboration of 200 women to Chicago's designs, broke records at the SFMMA where it opened in March. Over 10,000 people attended the opening weekend. 90,000 saw it during the three-month exhibit. The Museum took in over \$58,000, recouping all its costs for the show, an unusual phenomenon even for the most prestigious shows.

Henry Hopkins, director of SFMMA said it was "bizarre that it is not going on to other museums." He has been active since the Seattle and Rochester cancellations trying to set up another exhibition; "there is some hope Brooklyn Museum will take it," he said. Brooklyn Museum director Michael Botwinick said last week, "We are interested. We just found out the show was available, and

a quiet, small, hopeful examination of the prospects is going on."

*The Dinner Party* had been scheduled in Seattle for late July through September, but was cancelled, according to Charles Cowles, curator of modern art at the Modern Art Pavillion of the Seattle Art Museum, because of lack of space.

The Rochester cancellation was an unexpected blow, said Diane Gelon, Chicago's project coordinator. "We had had an informal written agreement for more than a year. Some costs were increasing, because of inflation, but everything seemed to be working out."

Rochester's Memorial Art Gallery's acting director Bruce Chambers said, "True, we were just details apart, but I basically felt we would never get together. There was no point in resuming talks." According to Chambers, Rochester has just announced the cancellation there, and letters expressing disappointment are beginning to come in.



**Marleah Drexler MacDougall** a fiber artist from Washington, D.C., has moved her studio to 11685 Alief Road, No. 7 in Houston. MacDougall has worked in the Textile Department of the Smithsonian Institution and studied feltmaking in

Turkey, Afghanistan and India. She has a master's degree in textiles and related arts and has taught in two California colleges.

*Professionally Yours Executive Search Consultants*, the first firm in Houston to specialize in placing professional women, have opened new offices at 2640 Fountainview, announced owner **Jean Gandy**.

UTeG Barter Associates is a group of people joining together to fight inflation by exchanging services and merchandise.

Members exchange their professional services, trades, or talents. Annual membership (\$50) gives immediate access to services rendered by UTeG members up to that amount. A member who normally charges \$25 per hour and works two hours on another member's request will be credited \$50. No money changes hands. Merchants receive full retail value for merchandise bartered to members.

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For information call T. J. Kay at 729-5972 or write UTeG Associates, 10913 Chimney Rock, Houston, Tx.

Send information for this column to **Newsmakers, Houston Breakthrough, P. O. Box 88072, Houston, TX 77004.**



Bill Narum

# COMMENTARIES

by nikki VAN HIGHTOWER

## On Turning 40

This 40th birthday has been in the back of my mind now for some time—sort of lingering there generating mild feelings of stress, and I have been trying to put my finger on the reasons.

Ellen Goodman wrote a column several months ago on turning 40. She expressed many of my sentiments in trying to sort out her feelings at the passage of the 30's. As she pointed out, things are a great deal better than they used to be:

“Not long ago a woman turning 40 would never consider buying a dress out of the junior department, even if it was perfect, for fear of trying to look ‘young.’ Forty meant retreat; concealment. It meant buying bathing suits with little skirts to cover middle-age droop, instead of taking up tennis or racquet ball. It meant opting for a ‘safe’ marriage or a ‘safe’ job, instead of taking a chance on finding something happier or better.”

I agree with you, Ellen. If anything, we seem to have the opposite reaction to turning 40 now. We are buying clothes specifically because they make us look younger, or taking up those sports or those risks that we somehow passed up when we were younger, maybe because we thought that there would always be plenty of time to do it later.

It is not chronological age, alone, that reminds us of our tenure here on earth. There are physical changes as well—the lines, or wrinkles, that give a face character or depth of expression. They don't mean the same things they used to, such as switching to the bathing suits with the skirts, but they mean something and that is what I have been trying to figure out. It's not that I really mind the way those lines look on my face, it's what they mean in terms of my individual freedom and mobility that matters.

What is it that makes me anxious when I look closely into the mirror? Part of it I know is related to 30 years of conditioning that I have had only about 10 years to counteract. Thinking about 40 in terms of my socialization causes me to rephrase the question. What did youth mean to me as a woman? Youthfulness was related to attractiveness—one-dimensional kind of attractiveness. Youthfulness was a requisite for beauty, physical beauty.

This fact takes me back another step. What was the value of beauty or physical attractiveness for my life? It provided one of the most achievable routes to upward mobility—a man. Physical attractiveness was also very important in getting a job, at least the kind of jobs that were open to women.

I understand my past reasons for concern with youth, but almost nothing that I want today will be achieved through either youth or beauty. So why the lingering concern over turning 40? Is it merely a

hangover from past experience? After doing my best to weed out all the mental pollution from the past, I have to conclude that there is indeed a legitimate reason for a certain amount of stress at turning 40. It is, statistically speaking anyway, the middle point in life. The significance of this is that there will not be another 40 years in front of me. Most of us will never again have as much time in front of us as we have had in the past. For me this means that there is not as much time to waste and I find myself attaching a new seriousness to whatever I do. On the whole, life has become more meaningful to me now than it was, say, 20 years ago.

Ellen Goodman called this feeling the “Last Chance Syndrome.” However, I am finding it rather exhilarating, rather than dismal. I know that the advent of feminism has had a great deal to do with my reaction to turning 40.

The bathing suits are now irrelevant and the facial lines are now only a reminder that I had better keep moving if I care about what I am doing with my life—and I do.

## A Medal for Masculinity

“President Carter calls John Wayne genuine article,” a *Houston Post* headline read on March 13, 1979. “Genuine article?” If John Wayne is a “genuine article” to President Carter, it's a poor outlook for our country. Our highest elected leader has lost the ability to distinguish between the real and the imaginary. I don't mean to pick on Jimmy Carter over this John Wayne matter, it's just that his ridiculous comments are always so much more visible than those of others. In this particular case, it was probably more a matter of Carter jumping on the bandwagon and following the crowd than leading.

As a matter of fact, not even John Wayne's name was for real. It was a stage name. His real name was Marion Michael Morrison. The characters he played on screen were no more genuine: super-heroes, Marines, pilots, cowboys, sea captains, prize fighters or cavalymen.

His personal or “real” life, from what we know of it, appeared to be rather chaotic and as much out of his control as his screen lives were under his control. He had three failed marriages. The second one ended in a bitter divorce in which his wife accused him of being a drunk and a philanderer. Although he made millions in his screen career, poor investments kept him from amassing the fortunes of some of his contemporary actors such as Bob Hope.

Politically, he seemed unable to adapt to the times. He remained a loyal supporter of Richard Nixon and was never able to grasp the opposition to the Vietnam War.

With so little going for him, why was John Wayne presented the Congressional Medal of Honor? Was it because he died of cancer? Millions of people succumb to

that disease. Was it because he was a famous movie actor? Many great actors have died unnoticed by our government officials.

I have been astounded by the lack of dissent about the presentation to John Wayne of our nation's highest award. The only intelligent comment I have yet to hear in the media came from Henry Fairlie, a Briton who for many years covered America for the *London Observer*. Fairlie stated in a commentary for the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service,

“John Wayne has contributed nothing to the welfare or progress of the American people beyond what has been demanded of him in the normal pursuit of his career and its pecuniary rewards; he has set no exceptional endeavor or duty that mothers might repeat to their infants to excite them to lives of civic virtue; and the sad fact that he is dying of cancer is of no relevance in determining whether he should be singled out for one of the highest awards of the state. It is impossible to discover any tenable ground for bestowing the honor.”

It is my theory that the medal was bestowed as an effort to try to consummate a world of make believe, to make it seem as if it were genuine. John Wayne, “The Duke,” was the ultimate super-male. He represented the ideal, but unachievable masculinity that has come under severe attack for being a phony article in the last few years. The medal was a way to try to preserve the ideal, to make it seem more real. It was a statement by our government and our president, of their male chauvinistic mentality. It had nothing to do with Marion Michael Morrison.

He was, after all, just as ordinary as the people who honored him. It was John Wayne, the super-male movie hero, who was being honored—one more triumph for a masculinity that is no more real than the image on the silver screen.

## Do Feminists Represent Homemakers?

It is fairly typical in appointing women to government posts, particularly those which are primarily advisory or symbolic, to use wives or daughters of famous and/or rich men. Perhaps this is a reward to women who have shown their loyalty to their men by remaining in the background, doing little that would bring them individual recognition. To most politicians, such appointments probably have the benefit of safety, not to mention the extra little bonus of a pat on the head to the influential male, if he is still alive, or his constituency, if he is not.

Such would seem to be the case with the appointment of Lynda Bird Robb to the position of chair of the President's Advisory Committee for Women. Carter made no bones about the fact that her appointment was linked to her being the daughter of Lyndon B. Johnson and the

wife of the Lt. Governor of Virginia. The other reason given caught me by surprise, although I don't suppose it should have. I can't seem to overcome my naivete about the abysmal ignorance of many public officials on the women's movement.

At any rate, once again I was caught off guard when I heard that the other characteristic that got Lynda Bird her appointment was her role as mother and wife. As opposed to what? Does this imply that there are no other wives and mothers on the committee or that there is an over-representation of single women? As I recall, it is the single women who are underrepresented.

However, I feel sure that the appointment had little to do with quotas or fair representation. I feel certain it had more to do with a backward image of active women. That is, if a woman does anything more than be a wife and mother, in the minds of some people, including the president, she loses her identity as a wife and a mother, and also, apparently, her ability to represent or relate to those roles.

Even Robb seems to think there is a distinction between feminists and women. She foresees no problems in following Abzug as chair, since “we represent different constituencies.”

I would find the whole issue of these ridiculous distinctions amusing were it not for the bad rap that feminists have taken over their positions on women in the homemaker role. Feminists have always been deeply concerned with upgrading and protecting women in the wife/mother roles. After all, the vast majority of women fit into one or both of those roles, so turning our backs on them would mean turning our backs on most women. And, although it may come as a surprise to many politicians, most feminists are also wives and/or mothers.

The National Organization for Women and other women's rights groups have carried the entire weight of the struggle for economic rights within marriage, economic recognition for the homemaker, and greater opportunities for homemakers in transition. One of the greatest impacts of the federal Equal Rights Amendment would be through changes in family law that would provide greater protection for the homemaker/mother.

So who really represents wives and mothers? Those who have been out struggling in their behalf or those whose horizons stretch no further than their individual families? By the way, President Carter, now that Lynda Bird Robb has assumed the position of chair of the President's Advisory Committee for Women, who is going to represent the wives and mothers of our country?

*Dr. Nikki Van Hightower is the executive director of the Houston Area Women's Center.*

# Media Matters

by gabrielle cosgriff

**B**en Baldwin, in his capacity as a private citizen and news director of KTRH Radio, and Gebe Martinez, as a private citizen, took the City of Houston to court June 14. They were challenging the legality of a 90-minute closed city council session, arguing that it violated the state's open meetings act.

Martinez, who was a KTRH reporter at the time, explained how it came about. "I had been hearing all week that the council planned to meet in executive session to discuss a districting plan (see story p. 9) but it didn't really hit me until that morning as I listened to the news.

"I felt very strongly this was not allowed under the open meetings law. I discussed it with our morning news editor Velma Cato and with station manager Hal Kemp. Velma talked it over with Ben. Velma also talked to 'legal experts' in this field, and they encouraged

Martinez feels they did get away with it this time. State District Judge Wyatt Heard refused to bar the council from holding future executive sessions on districting.

"It's a Catch-22 situation," said Baldwin. "The judge told us 'my court will always be open to you to come back if you have proof.'

"Well, when we recorded statements from the mayor and city council, saying they were going to come up with a plan in a secret meeting and then present it to the people, we went back to the judge.

"He said he wouldn't see us without the city attorney, and the city attorney wasn't about to go with us voluntarily. That's the Catch-22."

"It was ironic," said Martinez. "Just about the time the judge was making his ruling, the council was coming out of its session, and the mayor admitted discussing several plans. He even said he was

**E**quality in hurricanes," commented Jan Carson, KTRK TV anchor, as Bob, the first male-named hurricane, came ashore in Louisiana recently.

When hurricanes were exclusively female, not only were they described as "she," they were often regarded as risqué, sexy ladies by the media.

Remember *Anita plying her trade in the Gulf . . . Celia wasn't as big as some of her older sisters . . . Belle's temper . . . teased and threatened . . . and Blanche, perfectly formed.*

One of these *tempestuous females even flirted with the Florida coastline.*

So it was interesting that after the initial "him-icane" jokes about Bob, the media very quickly got down to describing the hurricane as "it," a part of the overall weather scene. Even the relentlessly jolly John Coleman (ABC's *Good Morning America*) who talks to a frog on the air, played it straight with Bob.

There was still a kind of wistfulness, though, that Bob did not develop into a more destructive force. "Only a weak sister," lamented an ABC TV newscaster, and CBS TV reported that people were "grateful that Bob was more merciful" than other hurricanes. "It's a disgrace to the men of the world," commented a KPRC Radio reporter. ". . . a puny shadow of . . . more violent storms" wrote the *Houston Post*.

The problem seemed to be that there were no clichés to fall back on for male-named hurricanes. The well-worn phrases for the "ladies of the sea" just don't apply to hurricanes named Bob.

The morning paper headline (July 12) simply read "Hurricane Bob loses steam over land."; the evening paper was almost an identical twin, "Hurricane loses punch as it howls in over land."

and maim.)

In a column (July 11) that apparently seeks to be humorous, Doggett unleashes a confused, vicious attack on what appear to be threats to his masculinity.

He is "insulted and offended by this sell-out labeling of storms . . . Whoever insisted that a proportionate number of tropical storms must now sprout whiskers certainly couldn't be from around here . . . The storm, for better or worse, is a lady."

Doggett is convinced that all things marine are ipso facto feminine. "The sea is a 'she' " he proclaims. So a hurricane named Bob has got to be a little fishy, right?

"As if protesting his own injustice," Doggett continues, "Young Robert kicked up . . . Bob, the first manchild of the National Hurricane Center, marks the first time ever that seafarers must wait to receive a gentleman caller. Unless you frequent certain Montrose environs, that doesn't have quite the same ring."

So there we have it. The ultimate in stereotyping. All hurricanes are female, therefore Bob's sexual identity is suspect.

And if homosexuality is raging, can communism be far behind? Doggett comes through on that one, too.

"The tempests of legend, the Carlas and Celias, will now be tempered with a few Freds and Franks. Come to think of it, 'Fidel' would be a fairly appropriate name, but I doubt seriously that the lightweight compromisers who started this whole thing would have enough nerve to pull a really classic one out of the 'windbag.' At any rate, when Bob comes twirling his skirts ashore he will have an effect on the upper Texas coast."

Let's hope that Doggett recovers from his tropical depression in time to give a more intelligent report on the next hurricane.

## When John Wayne died, Bob Hope said "We've lost a jumbo in this business," as if bemoaning the demise of a Big Mac.

us to fight it. Also, we received support from the local chapter of the ACLU, which offered to file the lawsuit if we did not."

"It's the principle," said Baldwin. "I don't think city council is deliberately violating the law. I just don't think the law has been well enough defined. That's why we went to court.

"The subject they were discussing in closed session is of vital importance to the citizens of Houston and should not be discussed in closed session. This was exactly what the open meetings law was intended to accomplish."

Martinez said she was very concerned about the matter because she was a reporter in San Antonio when they went through the same thing with the Justice Department. "The circumstances were almost identical," she said. "San Antonio was being sued (by the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund) and was ordered to come up with a districting plan because recent annexations had diluted the voting strength of Mexican-Americans.

"When they first received the order, they went into executive session to decide if they should go to court or revise the charter. But once that was decided, the whole process was open. As a matter of fact, instead of the council members drawing up the districts themselves, they appointed a citizens charter revision committee to come up with a plan.

"San Antonio knew they couldn't get away with something like this if they tried," said Martinez, "the people would have jumped on them immediately. Clearly, Houston's council felt they could try to get away with whatever they wanted."

disappointed his own plan, 5-5-1, did not receive as much support as he had hoped."

"At our first bite at the apple, we did not have a sympathetic forum," said Don Johnson, attorney for the plaintiffs. "The case is pending. We had a preliminary hearing and we have not yet set the matter for another hearing."

On July 19, the Justice Department ruled that only the 9-5 plan submitted by the city could be considered by voters on August 11.

"This doesn't affect the thrust of the legal action," said Johnson. "The issue is still the secrecy of the executive session. We have no intentions of abandoning the case at this time."

"I hope not," said Martinez. "It will never be too late to open up city council as long as they keep only their own political interests in mind."

**W**hen John Wayne died (see p. 5) the eulogies came thick and fast. He was a hero, a role-model, the personification of American values.

One of the most interesting, if crass, observations came from Bob Hope. "We've lost a big one, a jumbo in this business," said Hope, as if bemoaning the demise of a Big Mac.

In a way, it was the most honest remark of all. Wayne was a commodity, a quintessential example of the American way of selling. When we buy toothpaste, we buy sex-appeal. When we buy a Big Mac, we buy the wholesome family image. When we buy John Wayne, we buy the good guy.

Whether he realized it or not, Hope said a mouthful.

## After Wojtyla Disco Dance, the next logical step is a disco mass—*Sunday Morning Fever*, maybe.

Imagine the headlines if the same sexual connotations given female-named hurricanes had been applied to Bob. Maybe "Bob can't get it up," or "Bob peters out," or "Impotent Bob slinks ashore."

Intriguing as the possibilities are, we have to feel relieved that at least every other hurricane will now be called "it," if Bob is any indication. Who knows, reporters may even get into the habit of describing hurricanes seriously as dangerous natural forces that threaten lives and property.

With the possible exception, that is, of Joe Doggett, outdoors writer for the *Houston Chronicle*. (His column tells you where to find all the furry, fishy, feathered things you can legally kill

**H**e's the groove, he's the man, the new pope in the Vatican." It's not great poetry, but the new disco single on Pope John Paul II is the hottest item on the Italian scene this summer. Called *Wojtyla Disco Dance*, the record is the latest example of papal exploitation.

His poems and a play have been published, books have been written about him and movies are being produced. The next logical step is a disco mass—*Sunday Morning Fever*, maybe.

But the media's current infatuation with the head of the Catholic Church should not obscure his unrelenting attacks on women's rights and freedoms.

During his recent visit to Poland, the

pope lectured his audience on the evils of contraception. (UPI June 9.) In a predictably sexist harangue, he proclaimed: "If man's right to life is violated at the moment in which he is first conceived in his mother's womb, an indirect blow is struck also at the whole of the moral order which serves to ensure the inviolable rights of man."

**I**t was a pleasant surprise to see a local commentary on the editorial page of the *Houston Post* (July 10). It would seem a natural function of our local papers to present such 'think-pieces.'

## The *Post* commentary is a numbing illustration of how a "distinguished scholar-scientist" is not necessarily able to communicate in plain English.

Unfortunately, the pleasure was short-lived. The commentary, by Norman Hackerman, president of Rice University, is a numbing illustration of how a "distinguished scholar-scientist" (*Post* description) is not necessarily able to communicate in plain English.

Hackerman's article, "There is no energy crisis," begins with the words "The title is not at all polyanna, but is instead realism." It's all downhill from there, as he tries to explain why the present energy situation should be viewed as normal.

"The effect of approaching the present state of affairs as a long-term problem rather than as a reaction to a crisis is to begin the necessary adjustment to the real problem. Instead of a series of debilitating oscillations, the system should be damped while a modicum of control is still possible.

"This will permit true long-term responses to be focused and put in place. If the latter are truly available, it will be enough then to upgrade again our standard condition to a state to which we had become accustomed.

"... But consider that the oscillations leave each of us at the mercy of an uncontrolled system and provides no basis for planning our own activities, the latter impinging on our freedom to an even greater extent."

Note that his "latters" are unfettered by "formers" and his "oscillations . . . provides." Even "polyanna" would frown on that.

"Without question there are in these words irritating, perhaps ignorant arguments," he admits. "Yet it seems clear," he continues, "that the proper approach is to consider the current condition as the normal one rather than that of the past few decades, and one with which we can be more at ease since it eliminates non-existent dilemmas."

The *Post* informs us that Hackerman, former president of the University of Texas, is "Chairman of the National Science Foundation. He was awarded the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Chemists in 1978." So maybe he can eliminate non-existent dilemmas.

One wonders, though, why the *Post* did not have Hackerman eliminate them on the *Sound-off* page rather than the commentary page. Were the editors perhaps intimidated by his credentials?

Commentaries are a valuable part of a newspaper. They communicate a point of view. If that point is obscured by poor use of language, it becomes difficult to accept its validity.

This is the only point made clear by Hackerman's commentary.

**H**ouston's news media have never exactly been known for a hard-hitting, skeptical approach to reporting the nation's adventures into space. It doesn't take much thought to see why the National Aeronautics and Space Administration ranks second only to the oil industry on local news organizations' list of sacred cows.

But during the recent saturation coverage of the fall of Skylab, the *Post* sent up record-high gushers about NASA's adventure out of space. Wednesday, July 11, the day the most massive object humans have ever sent to orbit the planet was expected to crash, science writer Jim Maloney described the troubled

craft in the lead of a page-one story as "the derelict space station which has done everything asked of it." (Poor thing!) The headline on the continuation of the story inside read, "Skylab likely to land today."

Portraying the imminent plummeting breakup of the multi-million-dollar satellite as a landing was not the worst of it, though. In an article Tuesday on upcoming television coverage of the space station's demise, the *Post*'s C. W. Skipper offered a terse, tortured tribute to technology. Skipper had just the puffery to describe the potentially disastrous 77-ton smash-up. He dubbed it simply "Skylab's last experiment."

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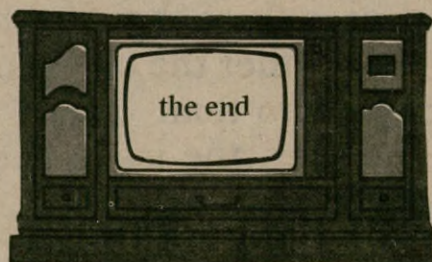
The Federal Communications Commission ruled three years ago that phone companies must provide a free dual listing for customers who request it.

Southwestern Bell spokesperson Ken Brasel draws a blank when it comes to specifics. He is not aware that his company must provide this service. He "presumes" that there was a need, and that the phone company is filling that need voluntarily.

"It's there," he said, "and all people have to do is ask for it." So ask for it. They certainly are not going to offer it. The deadline for the next Houston directory is AUGUST 17. So call the phone company if you would like a dual listing.

After all, Brasel says, "It's nothing we're hiding."

This public service message is made available by *Breakthrough*, at no charge to Southwestern Bell.



Gabrielle Cosgriff is an editor of *Houston Breakthrough*.

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JANICE BLUE

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by Red Zenger

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Houston is now embroiled in the most important political battle in at least a decade. The outcome of the fight almost surely will determine the shape of city politics for many years to come. Quite simply, the issue is the size and method of electing the city council of the nation's fifth largest city.

The dispute is certainly more important than a general election of city officials, since the elaborate machinations that have unfolded so far threaten to delay for months—even years—the next contest, which would normally be held this November.

In the shorthand of debate, the topic is called the single-member district issue.

The council make-up question affects virtually every other current topic in city politics, including annexations and growth of the city, bond sales, tax reform—even whether the city should have an office of vice mayor pro tem.

Most of all, however, the issue is seen as one vital to Houston's minorities—black, Hispanic, gay, poor and liberal. But in a larger sense, it is much more.

## **“The city council and the Chamber of Commerce don't want any minority on council they can't control. This just scares the hell out of the real estate industry in this town.”**

“This issue is not a minority issue, it's a responsive government issue,” says L.A. “Al” Greene Jr. Greene is the attorney in charge of court battles being waged by more than a dozen plaintiffs against the present system.

The challengers include the Greater Houston Civic Council, Inc.; the Harris County Council of Organizations, a black coalition; the Harris County Women's Political Caucus; U.S. Rep. Mickey Leland (D-Houston); Anthony Hall, a black former state representative and congressional candidate; state Rep. Ben Reyes (D-Houston), a Mexican-American; County Commissioner Tom Bass; state Rep. Herman Lauhoff (D-Houston); Mike Noblet, Bass' former aide and state representative candidate; Joe Pentony, former state representative and county judge candidate; Don Horn, Texas leader of the AFL-CIO; Lawrence Pope, a defeated black candidate for city council; the Political Alliance of Spanish-speaking Organizations, and Moses LeRoy, an HCCO leader.

The defendants are the city council members and former Mayor Fred Hofheinz, who was in office when the first of four federal law suits was filed in December 1973.

Green's clients contend the present city council set-up is unconstitutional, that it discriminates against minorities.

Under the present system, there are eight city council members. Three run at-large, five are required to live in the geographic districts they theoretically represent. But despite the residency requirement, every voter may vote in all eight council races. So the entire council really is an at-large body.

The effect is that Houstonians live in the nation's largest city council district, both in terms of geography and population. Each Houston city council member has a constituency larger than that of 16 governors and 32 United States senators.

The five districts which have been drawn here do more to confuse the electorate than promote neighborhood representation. “Many people think we already have a mixed system (that is, some at-large and some single-member districts),” Greene says.

The unfairness of the scheme can easily be seen in District D, a predominantly black district in southern Houston. Incumbent Homer Ford, a white conservative, has failed several times to carry

the area. At least once the district voted 80 percent for Lawrence Pope, a black. But with the support of west side whites and a bulging war chest, Ford has consistently been returned to City Hall to do the work of the downtown power establishment.

The absence of single-member districts is not the only way the current set-up discriminates against minorities, though.

Chandler Davidson, a Rice University social scientist and expert witness for single-member district advocates, says, “Houston has a full complement of anti-minority mechanisms. So it's a tough system.”

The city has a place voting system. In other words, candidates run for specific seats. Elections could be structured so that each voter would have eight votes, and the top eight vote-getters would be elected. It takes a little thought to see, but if a voter were to cast fewer than eight votes, he or she would in effect be casting negative votes for those not voted upon. This would help minority candidates, Davidson has shown in his 1972 book *Biracial Politics: Conflict and Coalition in the Metropolitan South*, which is about Houston. So the city doesn't have such a system.

The city could hold elections with the rule that the candidate receiving the most votes for a position, even if it is a plurality and not a majority, would be elected. But this, too, would help minority candidates, Davidson says, so the city has run-offs.

The city could allow parties to function in city politics. Since Democrats (not to mention some minor parties) are more likely to nominate minorities in primaries, the city charter mandates non-partisan elections. With Alice-In-Wonderland logic, the system bans a key element of politics from elections.

Since 1955, when the present system was adopted, 96 city council seats have been filled by election. White, Anglo-Saxon males have won 92 times. No Mexican-American has ever won. No woman has ever won. Ten times, blacks or Mexican-Americans have carried their districts, frequently by 2-1 or 3-1 margins, but have lost in city-wide voting.

The only minority candidate ever to win a seat is Judson Robinson Jr., a black millionaire real estate broker. He won the District B spot in 1971, 1973, 1975 and 1977. Significantly, he failed to make the

run-off for the inner-city congressional district once held by Barbara Jordan and now held by Mickey Leland.

“I think there is ample evidence the council and the Chamber of Commerce (headed by former Mayor Louie Welch) don't want any minority on council they can't control,” Davidson says. “This just scares the hell out of the real estate industry in this town.”

Harris County's legislative delegation was elected under an at-large, place voting system until federal court-ordered re-districting. Under that scheme, even such a consummate black politician as Jordan was unable to win a seat in 1962 and 1964.

Houston Independent School District created single-member districts for trustees when the legislature told it to in 1974. But despite repeated efforts single-member district advocates have been unable to get a similar mandate from Austin for city elections.

While virtually the whole deck is stacked against Houston's minorities in city elections, Green's clients decided to concentrate on the most repugnant element, the at-large system. In 1973, they filed suit in federal court to overturn the system in favor of single-member districts.

With approximately 40 percent of the city's population black or Hispanic, city officials cannot deny minorities have been underrepresented on council. So the city presented witnesses who testified the election system was not the reason minorities are underrepresented.

Susan A. MacManus, a University of Houston political scientist, testified the inequality is due to “socio-economic factors,” such as lower education and income levels among minorities. She said her city-financed study of 243 large American cities shows minorities are underrepresented regardless of council election plans.

After being paid at least \$4,700 for her research and testimony, MacManus took the same data and wrote a scholarly article with Delbert Taebel of the University of Texas at Arlington drawing opposite conclusions, however.

After Davidson howled in the academic community, MacManus removed her name from the article and wrote a new one with conclusions in line with her court statements. The two articles are scheduled to be published side-by-side

in the fall issue of the Austin-based *Social Science Quarterly*.

Another expert witness for the city, political scientist George Antunes, is on record outside the courtroom 180 degrees opposite his testimony. With a colleague, Antunes wrote in a chapter of *The New Urban Politics*, “In larger communities at-large council elections dilute minority representation.”

Antunes says he was merely summarizing the views of most scholars, not expressing his own. No such caveat is made in the book, however. Greene was not allowed to introduce Antunes' written statements, made before the trial, in court.

Even the plaintiffs concede underrepresentation on council does not by itself prove the city's government has been unresponsive to minorities. The city's attorneys pointed to the city-wide election of Mexican-American Leonel Castillo as controller and said minorities' voice in every council contest has insured city services are equitably distributed.

They argued single-member districts would polarize the council and still not give minorities control, since they could not win a majority of the seats. Davidson disagrees. Minority “hell-raisers” could at least publicize minority issues and reveal what goes on in closed-door council meetings, he says.

The plaintiffs made their case for inequitable distribution of city services largely in four areas: police brutality, municipal employment, Spanish language services and representation on boards and commissions. The city's response to each was weak at best.

The city acknowledged police brutality is “a source of continuing frustration for the minority community” but said a civilian review commission is prohibited by state law.

It said “nothing but improvement” has been made recently in discriminatory municipal employment but added the problem “cannot be solved overnight.”

Of the problem of few Spanish language services, the city merely said it is “working toward its resolution.”

More non-Houstonians have been appointed to city panels than have minorities, Greene notes, adding, “Most blacks are appointed to the arts board and things like that.” The city merely contends there is no evidence minorities have

## The city's expert witnesses made the near-legendary assertion that streets are only "psychologically rougher" in Houston's ghettos and barrios than in River Oaks.

been excluded due solely to racial considerations.

It was during five weeks of testimony on city services that the city's expert witnesses made the near-legendary assertion that streets are only "psychologically rougher" in Houston's ghettos and barrios than in River Oaks.

The downtown establishment apparently thought it could squelch the growing discontent with the council election set-up in 1975 with a non-binding referendum on the panel's make-up. To force the electorate to choose between the two extremes, it offered voters only two alternatives—all at-large and all single-member.

"It came out a cigar that exploded right in their faces," Davidson says. Single-member got 53 percent, at-large 47 percent. So the city argued in court the turnout was too low to be significant.

Davidson has found that is the only instance in six straw votes since World War II in which the city did not subsequently go along with "the will of the people."

It was not the first time the city had been told to change its council system, either. A "blue-ribbon" citizens' commission studied the matter in the 1960s and recommended the city adopt a mixed plan.

Ironically, the present system was put into effect with the support of minorities. In 1955, the city still had the ward system, though the wards were gerrymandered in such a way that blacks didn't even consider running for city council.

Roy Hofheinz, Fred's father, was mayor, and he had angered the conservative establishment in many ways. He had done such outrageous things as forcing the desegregation of country clubs and paving streets in black parts of town. So the powers-that-be got an election set on 18 charter changes designed to clip his wings.

Hofheinz retaliated against the city council with Amendment 19, which abolished the ward system, established the present at-large system and led to the defeat of some of his foes at the hands of a Hofheinz slate.

While Hofheinz could not have instituted the system without the support of blacks, "it didn't occur to them how bad it would be down the road," Davidson said. There had been no involved discussion of council make-up; the plan was seen merely as a stratagem to help Hofheinz.

Now, single member district foes raise

the specter of a return to the era of narrow-minded, big-city ward heelers. Reform advocates respond that single-member districts would not give the council new, administrative powers; it would only force council members to be more responsive with the powers they already have.

Remarkably, the single-member district suit, tried in 1976, resulted in a victory for the status quo. Perhaps the aging Judge Allen B. Hannay was more impressed by the race of the lawyers than by the evidence. Then-City Attorney Otis King, a black, was in charge for the city. Greene is white.

The suit is currently on appeal to the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. It is the busiest appeals panel in the nation and has not announced when it will rule.

In 1975, largely through the efforts of then-Congresswoman Jordan, Congress amended the Voting Rights Act of 1965, extending its coverage of southern states to Texas and giving single-member district proponents new hope. The law requires Justice Department "pre-clearance" of any change in voting "standards, practices or procedures" by any political entity in the state. Greene's clients eventually filed three more law suits, two of which are still pending, alleging VRA violations.

When the city annexed 17 parcels of land and some 140,000 new citizens in 1977 and 1978, including mostly white, middle-class suburbs of Alief and Clear Lake City, the Justice Department had the city over a barrel. The feds objected to 14 of the additions, saying they diluted minority voting strength. That probably wasn't the reason the downtown establishment wanted the new territory, just a happy coincidence. King testified last December that the city had spent \$100,000 in its legal effort against single-member districts on just the annexation matter. A spokeswoman for City Controller Kathy Whitmire's office said it would be impossible to determine the total costs. But Greene estimates the tab has already topped \$300,000. Other significant costs include hiring the Dallas law firm of Bob Strauss (of Jimmy Carter's inner circle) to have a Mexican-American associate represent the city in Washington.

City officials could have elected to fight Justice in U.S. District Court in Washington. The cost of transporting witnesses to the nation's capital would have severely drained the finances of single-member district advocates here. Even though such suits are rarely success-

ful, it would have held reformers at bay for years.

But the city sorely wants to hold a \$400 million capital improvements bond election. And Justice will allow no city elections to be held until the other matter is resolved.

Although Mayor Jim McConn has blasted the "nameless, faceless bureaucrats" for interference, one councilman has admitted the city met its comeuppance in not getting Justice's pre-clearance of the annexations.

"When you break the law, you're subject to all sorts of things. And we broke the law," Councilman Louis Macey told reporters, with unusual candor.

The Justice Department said the situation could be righted if Houston were to change its council plan to include some single-member districts. So this July, city council started listening to citizen groups about new council plans to put on an August 11 ballot.

A veritable army of interest groups marched before council with a wide variety of plans. But the groups realized that if they were to get a shot at anything like an acceptable plan, they would have to rally behind one.

More than 30 groups formed a coalition to back the plan presented by Mary Schlett, chair of the Harris County Democrats, a group of liberal Democrats. It called for 16 single-member districts and four at-large seats, plus the mayor, elected at large, who has a tie-breaker vote on council.

George Brown, the godfather of the downtown establishment and the Brown of Brown & Root, Inc., also appeared before council to urge the present system of no single-member districts and eight at-large seats be retained.

McConn first suggested a five-five plan, but that was nixed immediately by the Justice Department.

The single-member coalition met with City Attorney Robert Collie to work out a compromise. The coalition was willing to accept a 14-4 plan.

The plan council finally approved putting on the ballot calls for nine single-member districts and five at-large seats. It is a plan no group had suggested publicly. The council also voted to put a zero-eight plan, a very slight modification of the present system, on the ballot.

Coalition leader state Rep. Ben Reyes charges Collie negotiated in bad faith and did not even take the 14-4 plan back to council. Collie denies the charge.

The council had originally hoped to get the bond issue on the ballot, too. But Reyes and Moses LeRoy, a black community leader, went to Washington and

persuaded the Justice Department it would be giving up its leverage over the council were the bond issue to pass.

The council did vote to put seven other proposed charter changes on the ballot next month. Two were property tax limitation proposals. The other five, the council claimed, were innocuous "housekeeping" matters.

But while such items as establishing a vice mayor pro tem post seemed harmless on the surface, there was a rub. The state constitution provides that cities may not amend their charters in any way for at least two years after a change is approved. So if no new council make-up plans passed but any one of the "housekeeping" proposals were approved, single-member proponents would be stymied by state law for two years.

The Justice Department apparently recognized this and ruled that Houston may vote only on the nine-five plan in August. As a conciliatory gesture to city officials, Justice offered to help the city go to court to void the two-year wait requirement in this special case. But the city, anxious to have Justice seen as "the bad guys," so far has said only that such a legal effort would fail.

The Justice Department did not, however, approve the nine-five plan itself. Federal officials indicated they probably would but said it would depend on how the district lines are drawn. A three-judge federal panel here upheld Justice.

The city council's nine-five "compromise" has infuriated the single-member coalition. They say it is simply not good enough, the districts are too big (189,000 people each, using a 1.7 million estimate for the city's population) to allow neighborhood campaigns and give candidates without funds for media campaigns much of a chance. Each district would be larger than the population of Shreveport, Louisiana.

Virtually every spokesperson for the groups in the coalition has come out against nine-five. They vow to defeat it at the polls and then work to get 20,000 signatures to force another charter change referendum—on a more acceptable plan.

The prospects for the coalition's success are murky, though. The issue is complicated, and Houston's big media have done a poor job of explaining it. Neither daily newspaper has taken time to put the matter in perspective, giving a historical review of the issue. They have stuck to blow-by-blow coverage of the political and legal maneuvers.

One point city officials have harped on, both in and out of court, is that there has been no "groundswell" of public opinion



Janice Blue

Members of a broad-based coalition appeared at city council in support of single member districts. Virtually every spokesperson for the groups in the coalition vowed to defeat the city's 9-5 plan at the polls on August 11 — and then to get 20,000 signatures to force another charter change referendum on a more representative system of city government.

in favor of single-member districts. The city's attorneys ask why the plaintiffs went to court to seek change instead of gathering signatures to call a vote on a proposal of their own.

That route was tried, spearheaded by the League of Women Voters, in 1973—just before the first suit was filed. But the requirement then was for 50,000 signatures. And the issue, which is difficult to explain quickly in door-to-door canvassing, had received little publicity.

"It's not like going up to somebody on the street and asking, 'Hey, how'd you like to have your taxes lowered,'" Greene said. That is an allusion to the success of tax reform groups in getting a tax limitation proposal on the ballot.

Even though Justice later knocked it off, most of the tax reformers appear to be staying with the coalition efforts. Their support, along with that of Alief and Clear Lake City residents (most of whom never wanted to be part of Houston in

the first place and certainly want better representation on council if they have to be), could give the coalition the margin of victory. It is not often blacks, Mexican Americans and gays are joined in political battle by any part of the white, middle-class, suburban electorate.

It is one of the ironies of this complicated condition of the body politic, however, that the downtown establishment is now able to steal the basic arguments of single-member proponents. This has not been lost on city council, which sent its lone black member, Robinson, to make an appearance in a debate on the issue on KUHT-TV, Channel 8, July 15. Robinson was able to espouse the virtues of single-member districts, since the nine-five plan does have some such districts.

The downtown establishment can be expected to fall in line behind nine-five, since the Justice Department has made it clear zero-eight simply won't cut the mustard. The single-member coalition must

explain to voters that nine-five isn't good enough while all this is going on. That's no mean task, considering most Houstonians don't even know what a single-member district is.

But the coalition's hopes have been bouyed by the fact that there will be only one issue on the ballot August 11. Simplicity may be the saving factor.

Another irony is that a defeat of the council plan could be of help to the incumbents, since it will delay the next general election. Justice has said it will not permit any other elections until the council make-up is changed. Richmond, Virginia went five years without a general election recently during a similar brouhaha.

Although McConn almost daily bemoans the prospect of having to push the election ahead, some say he is crying crocodile tears. Some single-member advocates say privately that McConn wants the election delayed to get as much dis-

tance as possible from the scandal surrounding former city purchasing agent Jack Key. This would be especially helpful if McConn himself happens to be indicted in connection with Key sending him money in Las Vegas to cover gambling debts.

If one thing is clear from the single-member district debate, it is that many, if not all, the present city councilmen will be in serious trouble whenever the next election is held. The inevitable change in the election system will spell defeat for some. Others, such as McConn, will suffer the wrath of the coalition.

McConn didn't exactly have the unanimous support of minorities in 1977, but without the help he did get, he couldn't have won. And many of the coalition's groups have no doubt already told McConn to kiss their support goodbye.

*Red Zenger is a pen name for a Houston journalist.*

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Cilia Teresa grew up in Bluefields, a coastal city in Nicaragua. She was Cilia Fleming then, the daughter of the port's British consul. Her mother is Nicaraguan. The oldest of six daughters, she was 16 when her father died and she was sent to the United States to live with relatives. Her mother still lives in Nicaragua.

Teresa is 49 years old now and for as long as she can remember, a Somoza has been president of Nicaragua. The father of Anastasio Somoza, the recently deposed leader, came to power in the early 1930's. He was assassinated in office. A son succeeded him and when he died his younger brother, Anastasio, took power. Twenty-seven year old Major Tachito Somoza was the heir apparent to the Somoza dynasty before his father's recent fall from power.

"Power corrupts," Teresa says. "In Nicaragua people say each generation of Somozas was more ruthless than the last.

"There is so much hatred for Somoza that the people do not want to claim him as Nicaraguan. The Sandinistas called him "the last U.S. Marine in Nicaragua." This refers to the presence of U. S. Marines in Nicaragua during political shifts of government in the 20's and early 30's. Guerillas fought against the U. S. occupation. Somoza's father came to power pledging he would take care of the rebel leader, Cesar Augusto Sandino. Somoza brought the exiled leader back from Mexico, pretended to honor him and soon after Sandino was assassinated.

The marines left the country, but "the Somozas have retained the power and established an empire through the power of the United States," Teresa says. Somoza was "militarily trained" in the United States (at West Point) and the people saw his loyalties more to this country than to Nicaragua.

When they got rid of him, they felt they would also be rid of foreign occupation. Hence "the last marine."



# Nicaragua

by cilia teresa

Anastasio Somoza Debayle, "the last U.S. Marine in Nicaragua," finally left that country on Tuesday, July 17, 1979. In his private jet with an entourage of 45 people, he landed at Homestead Air Force Base near Miami. His motorcade was then escorted by the Florida highway patrol to his estate on Sunset Island.

As I watched the news reports on television, I thought: this man is being welcomed as a hero, he is using U. S. tax-supported facilities such as the air force base and the highway patrol, and even perhaps the three jets which transported his party to Florida. And then I thought: he will probably become a much respected resident of the state of Florida.

Somoza left Nicaragua bankrupt and with a huge national debt—over \$1.3 billion. I watched on TV the aerial views of his American landholdings and saw the exclusive network interviews with him in the luxury of his island estate, and I wondered whether Somoza is not regarded by Americans as a western movie hero—the bad guy in the black hat who takes all. People seem to admire Somoza for the power he had to do all this—and get away with it.

How different it is for those Mexicans, Nicaraguans, and other Central Americans who cross the border to come to the United States. But, then of course, they do not come with a fortune (\$500 million, a conservative estimate) and they are not dictators who have plundered a country for some 40 odd years. All they are doing is crossing the border to seek employment.

But then, of course, they come empty-

handed. They probably have little schooling. They are certainly not West Point graduates. They are humble, unpretentious refugees. If you ask them why do you come here, they say simply *buscamos trabajo*. No one welcomes them.

As I write this, it hurts to think of the pain of the Nicaraguan people. It is hard to imagine until pain becomes part of one's own experience. What I feel as I watch Nicaraguans suffering is a deep sadness.

The neighborhoods that suffered the most were the poor ones. That is where the Sandinistas drew their strong support. The lower strata had nothing to lose. The revolution started with them and with the students, artists and intellectuals.

During the guerilla war people were forced to stay close to home. They were afraid they'd be killed. And with martial law imposed, everyone walking down the street was suspect. They ran the risk of being questioned and arrested with no right to trial. People were terrorized.

My mother lived in Leon. During the September 1978 seige on that city my sisters and I lost all contact with her. We tried to reach her through the Red Cross. Finally, a relative who worked in Managua (50 miles away) found her. She had gone into hiding at the home of friends. They lived on staples, mainly rice and barley, for over a week.

We brought her to the states for her safety. My mother wanted to return home before the second outbreak of fighting in May. This time the Sandinistas declared they were fighting to the end. And Somoza insisted he would not step down.

She is still waiting to return to Nicaragua. It has been so difficult for her. Whenever I call her she is very sad. One day last June she said, "I feel like Nicaragua is going to disappear and that nobody cares."

It has been difficult for me and my sisters, living around the country, to find out what was *really* going on in Nicaragua over the past 18 months. We felt helpless. We could not get any real news over the phone from Managua; our relatives were always worried that someone was listening. Most of our family left Nicaragua for other central American countries or the United States.

Because first-person accounts were so difficult to come by, we had to depend heavily on the media for news. The media never pursued it until the fighting escalated. When Iran was in the news there was nothing on Nicaragua. Iran was *the big event*. After Iran, Nicaragua was in the news. I don't understand the mentality of the news media.

I still do not know if it is true, but someone told us that the University of Leon was destroyed by Somoza's troops. They say he drove tanks and demolished the buildings because his national guard believed the Sandinistas had strong backing from the University element.

The university is the pride of Leon. It is a jewel of Moorish architecture. I am afraid to return and see that the reports are true. I ask myself how could a Nicaraguan himself destroy a center of learning? It wasn't a foreign invader. It was a Nicaraguan. It is like an act of punishment against the people—because they wouldn't



*Women and children took up arms with the Sandinistas to overthrow Somoza.*

behave.

We heard, too, that the people burned the house of a doctor, a relative of ours who was with the Somoza national guard. Another relative, an engineer, we are told is on the Sandinista list. A female relative, a Marxist, jailed by Somoza, was recently freed by the Sandinistas. It is the same with just about every Nicaraguan family.

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America and yet the most sparsely populated (fewer than 2.5 million people). In a small country everyone's related. Almost every family in Nicaragua lost a relative in this war. Everyone was involved. Not only the men but the women and children took up arms against Somoza — 13-year-olds were fighting and dying. A month before Somoza was deposed, he started drafting women.

I keep thinking of Somoza as another product of the U. S. military, just like the rest of the military products designed to keep communism away from the American people. Never mind that those products hurt, maim, kill people in other countries such as Vietnam, Nicaragua, Iran (the shah was another military product). Our government supported the shah and Somoza almost to the end, as it continues supporting the production of more weapons and other military products governing other Latin American countries.

One of the things that turned the American tide against Somoza was the slaying of an American TV news reporter. Now that was really going too far—thousands of Nicaraguans were killed; but, how can they kill one American? It was as if his life was really the only important life taken during the conflict. U. S. Vice Con-

sul John Barger said, "This is a war of murder . . . Nicaraguans are killed like that every day." The government of Mexico broke diplomatic relations with Somoza last May charging him with "genocide against the people of Nicaragua."

It seems strange that Somoza, the ultimate dictator, can own so much property in the U.S., the ultimate democracy. I wonder if the American people associate Somoza's investments in the United States with the plunder of the Nicaraguans. After the Managua earthquake, it was reported in the U. S. that Somoza appropriated relief food for the national guard and loans for his private enterprises. Was this the money he used to purchase his U. S. loans for his private enterprises. Was this the money he used to purchase his U. S. properties? Isn't the acceptance of stolen goods as punishable by law as the act of stealing itself? But then maybe all this going around the law is necessary "to keep communism away." I wonder if a Marxist regime would be much worse for the Nicaraguans than Somoza's "benevolent dictatorship."

And what is going to happen to Nicaragua now? One of my sisters and I discussed that this morning. It occurred to me while we were talking that two years ago, even in May of this year, I doubted that the Sandinistas could depose Somoza. He kept saying he would not leave until 1981, and with strong U.S. backing and Israel continuing the sale of arms, I could only think that he would indeed stay forever. (Strange alliance indeed between "oppressed" Israel and the despot Somoza.)

But the Sandinistas deposed Somoza. And now how to reconstruct Nicaragua—

the economy is in a shambles and thousands of refugees are without food and shelter while Somoza lives in luxury. I was told that at some community shelters children were given one tortilla a day to keep them alive. Stores have been ransacked. Businesses are closed.

The junta says all properties belonging to Somoza, his family and his allies will be assigned to state control as part of the "national patrimony." The government will thus own his farm, factories, and even La Nica, the national airline!

At the moment, it seems to me that reconstruction is impossible. But that's what I thought in May about Somoza leaving Nicaragua. I know that the immense courage and sense of purpose of the Nicaraguan people will make reconstruction happen.

The U.S. ambassador to Nicaragua, Lawrence Pezzullo, said in Washington last week that the United States played a large part in ousting Somoza. "Our role was to get Somoza out," he said, "and we did it...there was great foresight on the part of the U.S. government in seeing the problem and bringing about a solution through political change."

In spite of what Pezzullo says, the solution will be brought about by Nicaraguans for Nicaraguans, as the war was fought by Nicaraguans for Nicaraguans.

Other nations will be helping in the best interests of Nicaraguans. I hope the United States will be one of them.

*Cilia Teresa is a Houston businesswoman. She is a former national NOW board member and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Ms. Foundation.*

# pecan shellers strike

A recently published essay booklet, *Women in the Texas Workforce: Yesterday and Today* is the product of two and a half years of research and oral history interviews by members of People's History in Texas, a group founded in 1976 to produce non-sexist and non-racist educational materials. The group's first project was the 1976 *Women in Texas History Calendar*. Glenn Scott, project coordinator, describes their research problems:

"The only histories that were relatively accessible were those of women who had been elected to office, or born to affluence or were married to someone important in traditional terms. However, there was a vast number of women whose history was hidden—those who cleaned, sewed, cooked, picked vegetables, kept house, reared children, shelled, ironed, milled, rolled cigars, served food. In fact, their very absence brings the message to students of Texas history that these women's lives were really not part of history.

"We began to shape a project to research and produce a history of working women in Texas. To do the research, it quickly became apparent that interviews or oral histories of working women would be essential because traditional historical resources provided so little. Unions are one of the few non-elite organizations which leave written records. We selected the period 1930-1950 because it marked the entry of women into Texas labor history."

One essay in *Women in the Texas Workforce: Yesterday and Today* documents the 1938 San Antonio pecan sheller's strike. Here is an excerpt from Croxdale's account of that strike...

by Richard Croxdale

In San Antonio in the spring of 1938, 12,000 pecan shellers, mostly Chicanas working in one of the lowest paid industries in America, conducted a three-month long strike, defeating both the owners of the factories and the San Antonio political machine. They not only gained significantly higher wages, but many claim they laid the foundation for Chicano civil rights activity in San Antonio 30 years later.

Texas pecans accounted for 40% of the nation's production in the 1930's. With pecan trees growing rampant along Texas rivers and creeks, local promoters often grew mystical over the possibilities of the pecan. Seeing no possibility of overproduction, they claimed that marketing potential had not yet begun to be exploited. The Governor of Texas, James T. Hogg, was one such enthusiast: "I want no monument of stone or marble but plant at my head a pecan tree... and let the pecans be given out among the plain people that they may plant them and make Texas a land of trees."

As Hogg desired, the pecans were given out to the plain people, not to plant but to shell at a wage of \$3-5 a week. Primarily Mexican women and Chicanas, 12,000 workers were employed at shelling pecans in San Antonio in as many as 400 small shops. San Antonio was the Texas shelling center because half the Texas pecan crop grew within a radius of 250 miles from that city.

## The Industry

Conditions in the shelling factories resembled those existing in late 19th century sweatshops. Whereas other industries had increasingly become more mechanized during the 20th century, there had been a reversal of this trend in the pecan shelling industry. When the Southern Pecan Shelling Company began operations in 1926, hand shelling, cracking and shaking replaced all machines in San Antonio.

Using to full advantage a large and low-paid Spanish-speaking population, Julius Seligmann, owner of the Southern Pecan Shelling Company, introduced the contracting system. Contractors were essentially employees of the large pecan dealers who controlled the supply of nuts as well as the prices for shelling. According to Senora Perez, a small contractor, "They would give you the whole pecan on credit for about 10 cents a pound, and they would buy the nuts back for 30 or



Workers in pecan shelling shed, San Antonio, early 1930's. Conditions in the shelling factories resembled those existing in 19th century sweatshops. Photo courtesy of Anita Perez.

36 cents... You could furnish the building, the electricity, the water, and a clean place to work in and have some left over for profit." The contracting system permitted Seligmann to eliminate expenditures of fixed costs during slack times and to reduce responsibility for management.

Women constituted 70-80% of the pecan-shelling work force. As the Depression progressed, however, men had to enter the shelling factories. Alberta Snid's father was one of these: "As a last resort, my father had to go in and shell pecans. There was nothing else." According to a federal study, the average annual family income of shellers was \$251, and the average individual weekly income was \$2.73.

Alberta Snid remembers that people were paid not in money but in staples such as beans, potatoes, rice, coffee. "And I don't mean there was a bunch of it, [it was] a pound of this, a pound of that, whatever they felt like giving you. My mother never allowed that, though, she fought for her money."

The working conditions in the small plants were abysmal. "As many as 100 pickers sat at stalls around long tables in a room perhaps 25 by 40 feet long, wielding picking knives with quick deft move-

ments." Illumination was poor, inside toilets and washbowls non-existent, and ventilation inadequate. A normal workday was 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. every weekday.

Pecan-shelling was seasonal, the peak coming from October or November to May, with the summer months being generally slack. Workers often joined the agricultural migratory stream in these off-months, picking cotton and beet-sugar in Texas, and sometimes followed the harvest all the way to Minnesota.

The market for pecans was national and was dominated by a few large firms. Southern Pecan Shelling Company, owned by Julius Seligmann, shelled 1/4 to 1/3 of the nation's entire crop of pecans. R. E. Funsten of St. Louis also shelled 1/4 of the total crop. Between the two, a high degree of monopoly control of the market was firmly established. Using this market position, Seligmann bought a huge surplus in 1935 and when a shortage occurred in 1936, Seligmann reaped a windfall profit of \$500,000. In federal testimony, however, Seligmann claimed that he could not make a cent on pecans and hence couldn't pay higher wages.

## Labor Organization

Organization among agricultural

workers and packing shed workers has always been difficult due to the seasonal and transitory nature of the work. [But] formal union organization among the pecan shellers began in 1933 with the Pecan Shelling Worker's Union of San Antonio, led by Magdeleno Rodriguez. Rodriguez was supported financially by Seligmann who believed that a union would prevent small operators from undercutting the scale paid by the larger companies. According to Latane Lambert, he [Rodriguez] was also connected to Chief of Police Owen Kilday's political machine. While he might not have had an overt connection, he was one of the people upon whom the machine depended. Rodriguez had a large following and Alberta Snid's impression of the union was good: "He really organized the people and he was almost as good as Emma Tenayuca. Unfortunately, he was gone from one day to the next, and we never heard from him any more." Latane Lambert, however, characterized Rodriguez as a representative of caudillismo and was glad "that the action of people participating in the pecan strike blasted once and forever whatever political machine there was on the West Side."

On the national scene, a group of unions calling themselves the Congress of

Industrial Organizations became disgruntled with the conservative policies of the American Federation of Labor. They split with the AFL in 1936, and began actively encouraging the organization of the unorganized.

The Worker's Alliance, a national organization [was] formed by the Communist Party during the Depression for the purpose of advancing the interests of the unemployed; the dominant force in the San Antonio chapter was Emma Tenayuca. A well-known figure in San Antonio politics, Tenayuca had led sit-downs in the City Hall and had battled pay cuts in the WPA. In addition, her husband, Homer Brooks, had run for the governorship of Texas under the Communist Party banner.

According to Latane Lambert, Tenayuca was in the front because "... as in any movement, you would take the ones who were the most articulate, who appealed to the crowd, and she was a good speaker. It was right she would be [called] La Passionara because in her shrill little voice she would make your spine tingle."

During the '30's, Emma Tenayuca was probably San Antonio's most dedicated and persistent organizer and advocate of the unorganized. Her background

"The struggle to improve wages and working conditions by the women working in the pecan factories... constitutes an episode in labor history equally as dramatic as any of the better known CIO struggles of the northern-mass production industries," points out Croxdale. "The fact that the conflict goes unmentioned in labor annals is one more instance of women's history being ignored. With the help of a number of oral interviews, we are prepared to tell that story."

# “Women led the demonstrations, took part in the decision-making process, and formed the bulk of the front-line forces in the pecan shellers’ strike of 1938.”

was diverse as her mother was Spanish, and her father was an American Indian. However, she was practically raised by her maternal grandfather, who kept his granddaughter informed about the revolutionary events happening in Mexico. Tenayuca got involved in labor struggles in 1932. Just out of high school, she belonged to a discussion group which the authorities called the “who-gives-a-damn-gang.” The group discussed socialist literature and current events. They even had an office downtown. So when the Finck cigar workers walked out on strike in 1932, she joined their picket lines. She helped with that strike, she maintained contact with the emergent garment workers and she also offered tremendous help with the pecan shellers’ strike in 1938.

## The Strike

The events leading up to the strike of 1938 are somewhat confusing. Shed committees had been formed all over the West Side during Rodriguez’s time, but they were weakened when Rodriguez disappeared.

The strike did appear to be spontaneous. The pecan workers pulled out on strike January 31 after a pay cut. Shellers who had made 7-6 cents a pound (7 cents for pieces, 6 cents for halves) were reduced to 6-5 cents a pound. Wages for crackers were cut from 50 cents to 40 cents per 100 pounds. Although the president, secretary and treasurer of the union were men, Emma Tenayuca was elected strike leader.

The strike continued for three months, primarily because of strong opposition from the San Antonio political machine. Over 700 arrests were made. Lambert [observed] the opposition stemmed from a fear that the West Side would become aware of its own power: “The establishment and the community were quite frightened. They had been exploiting these people and here was an uprising. The chief of police was reacting as a frightened man—totally senseless arrests were made. This made national headlines and there was some support in the community. Very much like the civil rights movement in the 60’s.”

Owen Kilday, chief of police, stated under oath the reason for the overreaction led by the “establishment” was that the strike was part of a “Red plot” to gain control of the West Side. Rebecca Taylor, president of the San Antonio I.L.G.W.U., professed sympathy with the strike. But due to the presence of communists in the leadership, she would offer no assistance to her sister CIO union. In fact, pecan shellers complained that Taylor drove around with the police pointing out union activists as potential communists.

In February Donald Henderson, president of United Cannery and Agricultural Processors and Agricultural Workers of America (UCAPAWA), flew to San Antonio to personally direct the strike. The list of demands formulated by Henderson included 7 cents a pound for halves, 8 cents for pieces, 60 cents per hundred pounds for crackers, plus union recognition, supervised weighing by a worker, and owners to be responsible for payment of health exams. Also, due to anti-communist sentiment, UCAPAWA support was conditional upon Emma Tenayuca *not* participating in strike activities. Under this concerted pressure, Tenayuca and the Worker’s Alliance withdrew from formal leadership of the strike.

## State Activities

The events of the next week involved confrontations with the city over normal strike activities of picketing and soup kitchens. Cassie Winfree, State Labor Chair of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and Minnie Rendon asked permission from the city to solicit funds to support the strikers. Although this was permitted, it was the only encouragement the strikers got from the city. The strikers primarily aided themselves. Soup kitchens spontaneously appeared on the picket lines. Alberta Snid’s mother and others cooked beans, tortillas, and tacos. “Different people, who they were, where they came from, where they got the food, I don’t know. But what little they had, they would share. There was always something to eat.” However, the city health department condemned the strikers’ soup kitchens as unhealthy, although they had never been able to find time to investigate the unsanitary conditions of the pecan shelling factories.

Chief of police Owen Kilday claimed that there was no strike and proceeded to disperse demonstrators and to arrest pickets. In one week in March, 90 male pecan shellers were arrested and imprisoned with 200 others in a county jail designed to hold 60. At one point, a riot in the prison had to be quelled with a fire hose. Altogether, an estimated 700 arrests were made during the strike. Women who were arrested were generally allowed to go back home if they had children, but many others were incarcerated. Alberta Snid, who was 16 at the time, was imprisoned. She met her father coming out of the jail as she was going in. All she remembers about her stay was that there was “standing room only.”

During the violence between strikers and police, negotiations were ongoing. The mayor, the governor and the factory owners all joined the effort to settle the strike. Donald Henderson initially handled the strikers’ side of the bargaining, but according to Latane he always conferred with Louisa Moreno first. Moreno, who had no public exposure, apparently exerted considerable behind-the-scenes influence. “The Communist Party sent Louisa Moreno in. Louisa was a sensible, caring person. She was Spanish-speaking, whereas Don and the others were not. She, more than anybody else, did the direction of the strike. When Don Henderson came to town, he would go to her apartment for direction and consultation.”

The mayor became involved in the strike by publicly asking what wage would allow owners a profit at the going market price of pecans. Julius Seligmann, acting as spokesman for the owners, responded that they wanted to pay better wages, but the industry was too competitive and that they had to compete with other parts of the state and country where labor was cheaper. The owners also claimed that a union in pecan-shelling would be ineffective, so they weren’t going to waste their time or their workers’ time by dealing with UCAPAWA. They threatened that wages were low, but they were better than “no wages at all.”

The negotiations were complicated on February 15 by a Texas Industrial Commission [investigation] into the possible violation of civil rights in San Antonio. Governor Allred, a New Deal governor somewhat sympathetic to labor, feared that pickets were being denied the right

of free speech by the city’s use of tear gas and firehoses. The hearings concretely established the anti-union bias and practices of the police and the employers. During the investigation, police witnesses labeled the entire strike a Red plot and blustered that Emma Tenayuca was still involved. They cited newspaper reports that had Emma shouting, “The police can stand me up against the wall and shoot me down, but my blood will still protect the people.”

In one four-hour, dramatic meeting, the police blamed all the commotion on 200-300 people in the Worker’s Alliance, the organization of the unemployed directed by Tenayuca. They claimed that there was not a strike in the first place. According to their figures, only 500 people were out on strike, less than a majority of the workers, therefore the strike was not legal.

During the inquest, Julius Seligmann protested that pecans cost 33 cents a pound to produce, but could only be sold for 27 cents. In spite of the accounting loss, Seligmann admitted clearing \$800,000 in eight depression years of operating the Southern Pecan Shelling Company. Justifying the below-subsistence wages he paid, Seligmann claimed that pecan shellers were only picking up “pin money” even though police asserted that some shellers had asked to be arrested because they were hungry. Also, a study financed by the WPA indicated that pecan shelling was the predominant source of income for most shellers during the shelling season.

Despite the inquest and the interference by the authorities, negotiations continued between the union and the owners. In March, they agreed to arbitrate and the workers went back into the plants, ending the largest mass strike in San Antonio labor history on a victorious note. An initial settlement of 7-8 cents was rapidly increased to 25 cents when Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938) which created a minimum wage of 25 cents an hour.

But the importance of the pecan-

shellers strike overshadows simple wage agreements. As mentioned by several of those interviewed, the strike approached the level of a mass movement, like the civil rights marches of the ‘60’s. The wage gains turned out to be relatively minor, but the sense of pride workers gained lasted a lifetime. Alberta Snid said, “Yes, I think we learned a whole lot. I think we learned how to even defend ourselves more. I think we forgot a little bit of the fear we had. Because before we couldn’t say nothing, we couldn’t talk. Afterwards, it was entirely different. . . We learned that through organization we could do something. Maybe we didn’t win that much as far as money-wise was concerned, okay? But we learned that being united was power. A single person cannot do anything, alone we cannot do anything. People are power.”

The failure to support local leadership might account for the ultimate defeat of the union. The local had fallen to a membership of 800 by 1942. When the minimum wage was increased to 25 cents, the owners asked for a dispensation from the federal government. When it was rejected, the owners mechanized the industry. Total employment fell from 12,000 to 2,000. None of those interviewed expressed any disappointment over having victory snatched from them. The lack of concern could be due to the fact that better-paying jobs opened up with the advent of World War II. Pecan-shelling had always been a “job of last resort.”

In what can only be described as a mass movement, more issues than wages were discussed. The role of women in society and the lack of public assistance and social services were questioned, the need for a minimum wage dramatized, criminal justice procedures criticized, and more control of the political process as well as the right to vote demanded. And in all of this, women took a prominent role. Women led the demonstrations, took part in the decision-making process, maintained the relief efforts, and formed the bulk of the front line forces.

*C 1979 People’s History in Texas, Inc. The booklet excerpted above is available by mail (\$2.00 and .50 postage) from People’s History in Texas, Inc., P.O. Box 7953, Austin, Texas 78712, and locally from B.D. & Daughter, 520 Westheimer and The Bookstore, 1720 Bissonnet.*



Woman separating bits of pecan from shell.

Library of Congress, Farm Security Administration Collection, Russell Lee 1936

# Women's center looks for a home

by Sue Maney

"What do you say to someone who has just given you \$25,000?" asked Nikki Van Hightower. She was speaking to Ralph Waite, star of the TV series *The Waltons*, who had just announced that he was giving this large gift in memory of his sister, the late Joan Waite Hanlon, to help fund a women's center in Houston.

"God, it was a lucky break," Van Hightower said. She is the executive director of the center. Waite called from Hollywood last spring and wanted to meet Joan's closest friends and co-workers. Waite simply said he wanted to talk about a way to carry on Joan's work in the women's movement, cut short by her unexpected death last January (see *Breakthrough*, February 1979).

The group met in a conference room at the University of Houston in April. When Waite walked in, he settled back in his chair and gave his full attention to the group. Each took a turn talking about Joan and the many projects they shared together. Some spoke of their work with her in volunteerism, some recalled struggles they faced together in graduate school, some reminisced about Joan's political endeavors.

Waite finally asked them to name one program that could not get funding from traditional sources. After proposing and discussing many worthwhile projects, they all agreed a women's center was needed—an actual building, a community center for women in Houston.

"Okay, then," he said. "that's what we'll do. I'll send you \$25,000 for capital funds."

It was an emotional meeting. The women shared memories of Joan that brought both tears and laughter. Waite smiled, obviously touched by the occasion. "I hope that whatever comes in the future will be done so that Joan's name will be remembered for generations to come," one friend said. "She was a role-model for us all, she set a fast pace for us to keep, and she left a spirit that must linger."

With some humor, Waite replied, "I can see you all won't be happy until Joan's name is up in neon lights in front of the center."

**"It became clear to me that a women's center would really be in the spirit of Joan's life."**

**—Ralph Waite**

No neon lights, perhaps, but the group which became the board of directors of the Joan Waite Hanlon Foundation decided to raise capital funds for the Houston Area Women's Center and to name the center after Hanlon. The board, of which Waite is a special member, is called the Joan Waite Hanlon Houston Area Women's Center Foundation.

With this substantial contribution, the search for a women's center facility began. An abused women's shelter already exists, but in a private location, for the safety of its occupants.

The history of the Houston Area Women's Center may be short, but the work it has accomplished with limited

funds since its inception in 1977 is impressive.

Center director Nikki Van Hightower has pulled together many organizations, working toward the same goal. Results like the shelter for abused women, now beginning its second year, have clearly shown the effectiveness and purpose of the center. But there are limitations. Too many women and their children have to be turned away from the shelter each day. The current women's center, which is to represent all the women of this large city, is housed in a small office in the UT School of Public Health.

One telephone line, usually jammed with calls, is the only access the women of Houston have to their center. The Houston Area Women's Center desperately needs more space, a large facility made up of offices, meeting rooms and some residential space.

The purpose of the center and the energy behind it is personified by the purpose and energy of the woman—Joan Waite Hanlon.

Joan Waite Hanlon was a political and social-change activist whose concerns touched all facets of life—women's rights, political participation, the rights of minorities.

To her family, she was someone who spent many years as a suburban homemaker and mother of five children, then went back to school at age 40, graduating with a M. S. W. magna cum laude, to begin a new life. To her brother, Ralph Waite, she was "young and dynamic." To her friends she was energetic, generous to a fault, and possessed a sense of humor that would make light of the many trying times they faced together. "But she wasn't a saint," a friend cautioned. "Joan wouldn't want you to think she was a saint," she insisted, smiling.

"What she was, though," commented a close friend, "was a renewed person." She had been a suburban homemaker for many years who knew she had moved beyond that role. She needed more for her life.

Her reentry into what her friend called "the outside world" began with an American Association of University

Women (AAUW) workshop called Project Reentry. There she met other women starting a new life, a new career, women like herself, "retreads" as she called them.

And that workshop—a meeting place for women at all stages in life—is the idea behind the women's center. "It is very important that the women of Houston have a place to go, to meet, to grow and develop," Waite said of the center. The gift, he said, is to women like his sister Joan. "When Joan went back to school I saw this incredible development of a human being from age 40 on," he said. "It was beautiful! It became clear to me," he said, "that a center would really be in

the spirit of Joan's life."

While spirits are high, fund-raising for the center's facility is just beginning. Additional donations have upped the working figure to over \$50,000, which is not a large amount when applied towards the purchase of what may turn out to be a \$1 million facility.

"Friends of Joan's have come forth with generous donations, waiting for an opportunity to do something in her



Houston Area Women's Center president ADELYN BERNSTEIN (l) confers with executive director NIKKI VAN HIGHTOWER (r) in the center's one-room office.

memory," said Hattie Thurlow, chair of the foundation and a close friend of Joan's. "Our goal is \$1 million. Once the campaign plan is under way, the next step is selling the women's center to the community to make it truly what it is intended to be—a community center, a women's center."

Foundation board members have spent the summer in weekly brainstorming sessions for fund-raising ideas. Several projects are already developing: an August celebration in honor of Ralph Waite; fall workshops offered by women's organizations and women's businesses; a women's fair and a benefit concert for the center with Willie Nelson and his friends.

"Nobody argues against fund-raising for a shelter for battered women," said Van Hightower. "At the same time, many of those who are supportive of a shelter for battered women aren't supportive of a women's center."

Thurlow said: "Why do women need a place to meet together? I am asked this question often." She shook her head, a little weary. But her enthusiasm is infectious and the people she talks to find it easy to understand.

She tells them that the women's center will be a comfortable place to share problems, to learn, to discuss ideas and solutions, and to make contact with other women. "I see it as a place for women to come and share struggles and successes—whether they are in a strong place in their lives or in a crisis situation. I talked to a woman the other day who had no preconceptions of what a women's center should be. She told me that in her experience, when women share their problems, their problems lessen; when they share their joys, those joys grow."

The center will also provide office and meeting space for other organizations.

"I think the whole spirit, purpose and excitement of the center will come to life once we have a facility, a place to pull together all the information and activity going on with all the women's groups in Houston," said Adelyn Bernstein, president of the board of the Houston Area Women's Center. She has worked closely with WIRES, (Women's Information and

Referral Service,) and Women in Action. "The other organizations can always use more space," she said.

Phyllis Tucker, coordinator of the Women's Rights Coordinating Council, which is made up of 32 women's organizations, stated, "There are so many things going on with the different organizations but not enough direct communication flowing among them. In order to be more productive, we've got to become a more unified, organized force, and this would be possible with one women's center. My God, there are so many needs out there, so many things to be done."

"Now the foundation faces a serious job," said Thurlow. "We hope it will be a continuing endeavor to give financial support to a women's center. We finally have a substantial gift to start us off and we must not let the dream die. We hope to have a center and continue to expand to include workshops, lectures, musical events and art exhibits. We also hope to fund scholarships for women like Joan," she added.

In closing, Thurlow suggested that readers who believe in building a women's center and would like to invest their money or time in such a goal, should contact the foundation. "We need the cooperation and support of all sectors of the community," she said. "We would like to hear from you."

Sue Maney is a journalism student from Ohio State University interning with The Ford Bend Mirror.



Photos by Jim Youngmeyer

# clay gallery opens

by Velma Cato

As far as Ethel Bilyeu knows, there is no other clay gallery in the country. Bilyeu plans to introduce the *Phoenix Gallery* to the community in late July. It will deal exclusively with porcelain and pottery as an art. "We will have the works of ceramicists (who are) contributing unique styles to the field of clay work," Bilyeu says proudly.

She worked hard to get ready for her opening (July 21). Bilyeu paneled, painted, wired the gallery for indirect lighting and built the display pedestals for the work. "I didn't know how to do any of this (before); but no one was going to do it for free, and I couldn't really afford to pay someone." So she learned new skills and together with some pottery students, their parents and a few friends, the work got done.

At age 37, Ethel Bilyeu is getting to know herself, but she says she doesn't know if the revelation would have come on its own. "Eight months ago my husband left me, so I had to fend for myself, and that was frightening. I can't ever

remember being alone."

Bilyeu has been married twice and has three children: 18-year-old twin daughters and a nine-year-old son. "There has always been someone around, which has been my affliction. Now the focus is on me. Sure, I still have the kids, but there's more time for me."

Although she was initially unprepared to deal with the dislocations in her personal life, she did have the advantage of owning her own business. "I had something to build on. I was already in business, (even though) my earnings didn't make me economically independent."

Bilyeu owned and operated *Pottery Works* in the same location as her new gallery (South Shepherd at Bissonnet), and taught pottery in the back room of her shop. "That was mostly a hobby. Teaching pottery helped pay the rent."

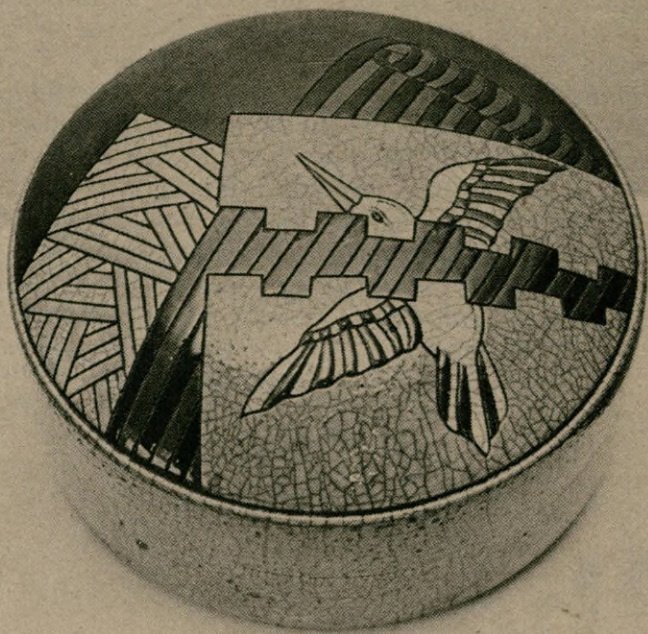
Now Bilyeu needs more than just to pay the shop rent. So she set about obtaining other survival skills. "I enrolled in two courses: an automotive repair

class and a self-defense course." During this time the concept of a ceramics gallery came to her.

Pottery has been considered more craft than art. But Bilyeu says, "All of that is changing. Pottery is finally being recognized as a legitimate medium of creativity. It takes just as much skill and ingenuity as painting and sculpturing."

Robbin Hopper of Canada, one of the artists in the opening show, is acclaimed as a master in the making of porcelain. "He is one of the few potters who has learned to control coloring in the firing process," Bilyeu notes. "Hopper's work has officially gained the label of *art* by his peers and the U.S. Customs Office, which certifies imported pieces and affixes their value."

Bilyeu's opening features the works of national and international award winning ceramicists. She is particularly pleased with her *Raku* pieces. The *Raku* process requires that the clay be slowly fired until red-hot. It is then placed in reduction, along with newspapers or hay, to cool



and solidify. "The glazing effect is unique and the physical quality is much different from conventional pottery," she says admiring one of the unusual pieces. "The artist usually hand-carves designs onto the work, because the porcelain is very delicate."

The new gallery owner was so concerned about the delicate nature of the pieces, she made a 2500 mile round-trip journey just to insure their care. The trip turned out to be an adventure. "That was the first trip I've ever made alone. I struck out in my dilapidated van and journeyed through seven states. In five days, I drove through Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri and Oklahoma. On the way back coming through Dallas, the van broke down. Thank goodness, though, for my automotive course. Now I didn't whip out my trusty tools and fix it on the spot, but I knew exactly what was wrong with it. I had the van hauled to a service station, told the guy what was wrong, (it was the ignition switch module) and

supervised the repair.

"For the first time, too, I ate in restaurants by myself. I refused to be drowned by my fear of being alone. Plus I was sufficiently armored with the self-defense course. So I went out, and to my amazement, enjoyed myself."

Ethel Bilyeu launched her personal revolution some years ago. Now she says, "I'm waging the battle for ceramicists, and the legitimacy of ceramics as an art."

The opening exhibit at the *Phoenix* will be on display through August 11 at 5228 South Shepherd. Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

*Velma Cato is morning news editor at KTRH radio. She also serves as a member of board of directors, Houston Cultural Arts Council.*

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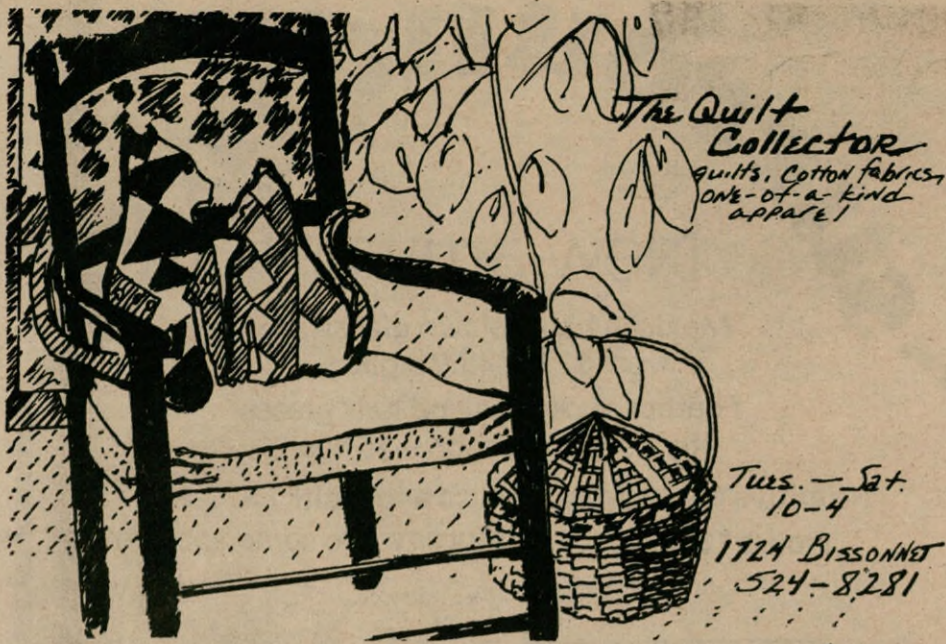
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Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. The army last month unveiled its new main battle tank, a weapon that it hopes will dominate the battlefields of the 1980's. In an impressive display of martial joie de vivre, the 59-ton behemoth cavorted across the Maryland countryside at speeds averaging 30 miles an hour, at times briefly airborne as it soared with elephantine grace over the hilly terrain. Firing on the run, with the aid of a laser range finder and ballistic computer, the new tank shot at targets three-quarters of a mile distant, a bright flash of metal against metal signaling a hit every time.

Nicholas Wade  
 Science magazine, August 11, 1978  
 (see letters page)

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Your senses

# The violent sex

Reviewed by June Arnold

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*The Violent Sex: Male Psychobiology and the Evolution of Consciousness*, by Laurel Holliday. Bluestocking Books (Berkeley) 1978. 254 pp. \$5.00.

This book begins with the historical premise that males have universally been just that, the violent sex. Laurel Holliday (co-founder of the late *Amazon Quarterly* and of Bluestocking Books) states at the outset her motive for researching male violence: "I wanted to know why, for example, sex is the most reliable predictor of how violent a person will be in all cultures, races and classes in recorded history."

In setting out to examine male aggression, Laurel's motive was not to prove that women (herself included) were superior to men. Instead she says, "I am making an effort to understand what makes men violent and how they can go about changing, rather than merely listing their atrocities and angrily telling them to clean up their act. I had to understand men this way to ever come to love them, which I found I must for my own growth and wellbeing."

This is a book which many women may not be ready for. There are women who will close their ears to all sex-based generalities, those who are terrified of being accused of hating men and those who cannot give up that hating. But for anyone who wants to know what has been happening in biological sex-based research, this is the only book that has been published on that subject.

*The Violent Sex* begins with a stunning chapter on psychobiological sex differences and aggression. At eight weeks (fetal time) the male brain is androgenized. There is a direct correlation between androgen and aggression.

On some level everyone has always accepted this fact: animal caretakers castrate males in order to tame them. On another level virtually no one accepts this

fact—no one suggests that crime could be lessened by decreasing "maleness."

Laurel then examines and documents the connections between androgen and aggression. Studies on human males have been limited to measuring the androgen levels already in their blood and correlating these with aggressive behaviors or feelings. The higher the level of testosterone (which is the major androgen in most species) in their blood the higher they scored on standard aggression tests.

A description of how the male brain is androgenized follows. Unless the fetal brain is made androgen-sensitive, the baby will be a girl. In the case of most genetically male children, the tiny testes of the fetus secrete androgen which then flows through the bloodstream and reaches the brain, and the nervous system of the individual is permanently altered.

Known microscopic sex differences in the brain are that in certain areas of the female brain nerve cells are larger and shaped differently from those in male brains, and that certain cells in the female brain absorb estrogen more readily than the corresponding cells in male brains. Behavioral implications of these differences have not yet been explored. Environmental differences, including the uterine environment, also affect the brain.

Because the male fetus must pause during the period in which its brain is being androgenized whereas the female fetus proceeds directly in growth, the female is almost one month ahead of the male at birth. It is now thought that the male infant is more seriously damaged by sensory deprivation in infancy because his slower brain maturity is less able to perceive what little sensory stimulation there might be.

Research on the physiology of the brain is just beginning but we have hints that there are size and structure differences between the two hemispheres of the brain which are sex-related. Example: a

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major vein in the right hemisphere is larger than its left brain counterpart in girls but not in boys; this may be related to the female's superior verbal skills. Example: the greater number of functional neurons in the girl's brain produces an earlier development of brain specialization—the ability to use the left brain for verbal tasks and simultaneously silence the right brain—which may explain girl's language superiority. Example: boys' superior spatial ability is transmitted hereditarily and may have evolved because of its value in hunting and fighting. Worse, it may be the result of insufficient development of the left (verbal) brain hemisphere. There is evidence that androgen slows down left (verbal) brain development and in extreme cases may produce criminal pathology; the outstanding single feature of the sociopath's test profile is the systematic high score on the performance (right brain ability) as opposed to the verbal part of standard tests.

Two chemicals secreted by the adrenal glands prepare the body to flee danger or to stand and fight. In aggressive animals there is a higher ratio of the fight chemical to the flight chemical (norepinephrine to epinephrine or NE/E) than in less aggressive species.

But experience also influences the individual's chemical responses. The major experience that causes more NE (fight) to be secreted is severe physical punishment in childhood. Then the increased secretion of NE results in more aggressive behavior and more subsequent punishment—i.e. is self-perpetuating.

The implications of this for future (and present enlightened) childrearing are important and heartening. The implications for dealing with already grown women whose conditioning makes them dangerous to society are far more disturbing.

Equally disturbing is the result of one study which found that while boys and girls did not differ in the amounts of

chemicals NE and E secreted while watching a comic movie and a scary movie, when a sexually arousing film was shown the males secreted significantly more of the aggression chemical.

Another study discovered that testosterone interferes with the action of an enzyme whose job it is to inactivate neurotransmitters in the brain. The brain would then be more sensitive to stimulation, to pain, and possibly to psychological pain or threat. Men may feel called upon to fight given much less cause than it would take to so motivate a female, even if our conditioning were equal and females trained to fight as frequently as males. Men may be, chemically, paranoid.

The remainder of *The Violent Sex* deals with how the culture shapes male violence, the possible evolution and survival value of male aggression, an analysis of our present culture and how it supports a hunter psychology.

These chapters draw from writings in anthropology, sociology, psychology, nutrition, feminist writings, and from Laurel's own investigation and understanding of power. As she states at the beginning, "There is hardly any discipline which does not have some bearing on the study of maleness."

This section of the book will be more familiar to many and possibly more accessible. Those who find the chapter on brain research initially difficult might want to begin the book with chapters 2-5, which deal with the following: how physical punishment tends to decrease a child's reliance on internal moral standards and promotes aggression and violence. One team of researchers pointed out that nearly all of the Nazi war criminals had been seriously mistreated in childhood, and that a recent West German poll showed that "up to 60% of parents believe in beating, not slapping or spanking, but beating their children." Television violence is clearly connected to later aggres-

sion in boys—but not in girls.

How did men, in the very beginning, learn to kill and what were the social and evolutionary consequences of killing?

Why did women not learn to kill and how did they attempt and/or fail to control the aggressiveness of males when it worked against them? What traits of Hunter Man remain? Why are some men violent and others not?

Sections in this part of the book deal with the biological causes of war, the emptiness and negativism of this century's art, prenatal diet and the role of drugs in increasing or decreasing violence.

Laurel's final chapter suggests ways in which we can use the information in her book to restructure society. The book ends with two appendices, one titled "How to Have a Girl," and the other, a condensation of a theory that all males are mutations—a genetic blunder that threatens the life of the planet—by a male, Jerome Cobb.

*The Violent Sex* is a must to read. For women, it is the first step in taking our brains back. For nonviolent men struggling against a macho world, it is crucial support and validation. It is already clear that research on the brain will be top priority in the 1980s.

*The Violent Sex: Male Psychobiology and the Evolution of Consciousness* may be ordered from Bluestocking Books, 1101 Keeler, Berkeley, CA 94708 for \$5.50 postpaid. It is also distributed by Women in Distribution and Bookpeople and will be found in feminist and other serious bookstores.

This book is carried by *BD & Daughter*, 520 Westheimer, and *The Bookstore*, 1728 Bissonnet.

June Arnold is the founder of *Daughters, Inc.* and the author of *Sister Gin*.

## Unto the Breach

We women need to act.  
We have a task besides those imperatives  
For which we've drawn the lines:  
Equal rights, day care, etcetera;  
And, of course, that great issue  
Of issue or nonissue.

The thing is this: there is a dearth,  
An absence, an almost total omission  
In our language (perhaps all languages)  
Of proper epithets with which to address  
The other gender (*sex* has nothing to do  
with this)  
When he has gone far beyond the pale—  
When *jerk* or even *double-ass* won't do.

Time-honored expletives, almost without  
exception,  
Have this in common: they dishonor  
Not the subject, but his mother  
Or other female figure.  
We all know the words—no need to repeat  
Those choice endearments.

These new-minted coins  
Must be original art  
And should roll from the tongue so  
smoothly,  
Each should seem to have been waiting  
To be found and pitched  
Like a just-right, palm-sized stone.

Please, my dears, no pigs, donkeys,  
dogs, snakes,  
Or other of that genre.  
What we must set ourselves to is pure  
creating, definition—  
Wrought, carved, honed, polished,  
And used—discreetly.

Pronounce one with a smile  
And go about your way.  
If pressed, a vague, embarrassed  
Definition will do.  
You might attribute your word  
to ancient Sanskrit  
Or other esoteric origin;  
Or grin, as if caught in the cookie jar.  
And so shall we overcome, one by one.

—Diane D. Hicks

### Addendum of appellations for outrageous males

**Castarf:** Abandoned by his mother as an unsuitable runt.  
**Noduvvert:** A pervert so boring, he puts you to sleep with his act.  
**Nerdvert:** A pervert so boring, he puts you to sleep with his act, the nerd.  
**Zeef:** As in Zed, Zee, Zeef.

**Old Squerd:** Male version of old maid  
**Stud:** Said only with total derision.  
**Shotstud:** Son of a stud; said only with total derision.  
**Spermbank:** Good for something, anyway.  
**Tarzip:** Thinks he's hot stuff, but lemme tell you.  
**Trithunk:** Can't get his mind off his equipment.

D.D.H.



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# A MOVEABLE FEAST

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It rained the morning of Friday, July 13. The grass was still wet on the playing field at six that evening for the all-star women's soccer game. West Berlin was playing Houston.

Even from a distance, the German team was easy to spot. Dressed in purple satin, with blond, short-cropped hair and muscular bodies, they performed their warm-up exercises in perfect symmetry.

"I think they've done this before," one spectator commented. "They look like they've played together for years."

Sameness characterized the German team; diversity was the hallmark of the Houston all-stars that day. In gym shorts and tennis shoes, they displayed a variety of hair styles and shades, all accented by colorful bandanas.

"This team is definitely a melting pot of all different types," observed Becky Morris, wing-back for the Houston all-stars. "We have lawyers, a ballerina, a librarian, a couple of secretaries, housewives, an ex-rugby player and one with a masters in music."

But team sports and the team concept are still new experiences to American women.

"Playing on a team has put me with a group of people I thoroughly enjoy," said Morris. "This is something I missed all of my life. These are not just my teammates, they are my friends."

Morris said when she moved to Houston she was lonely and did not know how to meet people. "I never have liked the idea of singles bars, so I just went to work and came home."

"Then one day I read this article in the paper about women's soccer," she said. "I had never participated in team sports, but I thought I'd give it a try."

That was two years ago. Morris is now the star wingback of Houston's Women United soccer team.

At half-time Morris talked about how much the team had matured over the last few years. "The experience adds a new dimension to personal development. You are constantly trying to improve your ability to work with others," she said.

"It is not so much making the goal yourself," said Morris, her face flushed with the heat of the afternoon. "It is when the team works together all the way down the field to make it happen." The whistle blew, signaling the start of the second half.

Houston lost that game to West Berlin 2-0, but the defeat seemed only to heighten the determination of the Houston players. "Next time we meet, the score will be turned around," one Houston team member predicted as she congratulated the victors.

After the game one of the coaches joined some fans sitting on the sidelines and talked about his experience of coaching women's soccer.

"It takes time for women to learn the team concept," said coach Larry Bolen. "Women never had a chance to do it before. I get plenty of swimmers and tennis players, but very rarely anyone that has ever played on a team."

But things are changing.

It is estimated that over 45,000 women in the greater Houston area participated in team sports last year. Not only are they out for soccer. They're playing rugby, fast pitch and slow pitch, volleyball, and basketball.

Kathi Chappell is now the head coach of the Houston Hearts, one of the seven women's rugby teams in the Houston area. She first learned to play rugby when she was a student at Florida State University.

"Whenever anyone gives me a hard time about playing rugby, I simply smile and say 'It's dirty, sweaty, hard work . . . and I love it!'"

"It is such a release to get out there and be so physical," explained Chappell.

"There is just nothing like the feeling you have after a game or a hard work-out. Your body feels all tingly and your mind totally alert. It is a wonderful feeling."

Nineteen year-old Charlene Brunson has been playing slow pitch for 13 years. She has seen many changes.

"I remember when I was six. I had to play T-ball," she recalled. "They would put the ball on this T-like stand, and you would stand there and hit it. Women's baseball has certainly come a long way since then."

What makes her continue to play year after year?

"That's easy to answer," she smiled. "I love the people I play with, I love the game, and frankly, I love to win."

It has often been said that one reason women do not excel in the competitive field of business is that they never learned the "rules of the game." Now that women are participating in team sports, perhaps the score will begin to even out.

"You learn lessons that only working with a team can teach you," said Chappell. "It is a constant striving to get along with each other, trying to motivate each other to excel, without conflicts among yourselves."

Melanie Mayeaux



# Teamwork

by Melanie Mayeaux

"You have to learn to lead, as well as follow," she continued. "You learn to adjust to criticism, and learn how not to take problems home with you. I feel all of these things are extremely important for women who go into business," she said. "It is not only a joy to play with a team, it is an education."

Marion Coleman, a successful businesswoman and president of the Greater Houston Area Women's Fastpitch League, agreed with Chappell. "When I am playing softball or basketball regularly, I feel better physically and have a better mental outlook. I feel more creative and alive, and that has a positive effect on everything I do."

"I have made many lasting friendships through women's athletics, and I've learned a lot about team spirit, pride and having a good time," she said.

But the women participating in team sports are not only learning the philosophy of the team concept, they are learning that in order to succeed, one must have a strong desire to win.

"You have got to want to win," explained Chappell. "If there is not 150% effort on the field, your chances of success are nil."

"Learning to compete also teaches you how to keep the competition only in the appropriate situation," she continued. "After beating each other's heads in for a few hours, you all walk off the field arm in arm. You learn to be a fair, honest and strong competitor."

The joys and advantages of playing with a team are not limited to aggressive sports such as baseball, soccer and rugby. Bowling provides an important outlet for those women who wish to participate in a sport that is a little less physical.

Rai Fisk has been bowling for 35 years. She is now the General Office Manager of the largest organized women's sport organization in Houston. The Houston Women's Bowling Association membership totals over 31,000.

"Playing on a league gives one the chance to go out there and perform, and be recognized for the effort," said Fisk. "It provides a great sense of companionship and competition."

"You meet people from all walks of life," she continued. "It is like being in a totally different world. Bowlers, as a group, are such caring people. The feeling of support is overwhelming."

But whether it is the physical endurance of rugby, or the Friday night competition of the bowling league, the women that come out to play are as varied in their backgrounds and occupations as they are in their appearances.

"It is always a shock when one sees the different types of women that come out to play rugby," said Chappell. "This year we had waitresses, nurses, secretaries, lots of students and a truck driver. Last year we had a mother and daughter on the team."

It is the evolution of a group of individuals into a cohesive unit that fascinates Coleman. "I suppose the thing I like best," she stated, "is watching a team grow—individually and collectively—into a group where everyone is supportive and where each person realizes that she is an important, necessary and unique part of a total team effort."

Morris, relaxing after the loss to the West Berlin team, expressed the same commitment to her teammates. Then she smiled as she revealed a more personal satisfaction. "Running down the field with all your adrenalin flowing is like all your childhood fantasies coming true."

*Melanie Mayeaux was a journalism student at College of the Mainland and plans to continue at UH in the fall.*

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
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# Network

Editor, Hildegard Warner

The Texas Women's Political Caucus Convention will be held August 10-12, at the Red Carpet Inn in Beaumont. To pre-register, send \$25 to the Texas Women's Political Caucus, 815 Brazos, Suite 304, Austin, Texas 78701. Registration at the door will be \$35. Registration includes two breakfasts, drinks and hor d'oeuvres at a cocktail party. The ERA luncheon charge is \$10.

Houston area NOW chapters invite you to a picnic on Sunday, August 26, to celebrate the 59th anniversary of women's right to vote. Music, food, cold drinks and beer will be provided from 12 noon until 8 p.m. at 6726 Desert Rose. To get there take I-10 to the FM 149 West exit, take a right at Champion Forest, a right on Deer Ridge, and a right on Heather Hill which becomes Desert Rose. A \$4 donation will go toward supporting the constitutional battle to ratify the ERA. For more information call Lee Lanoo, 864-1772 or the Women's Center, 522-1849.

Psychotherapist and human relations consultant, Miriam Edelman, S. P., will speak on *Brain Power* on Tuesday, August 7, at the First Unitarian Church, 5210 Fannin at Southmore, at 7:30 p.m. "First Tuesday" discussions on women and power, are sponsored by the Women's Group at the First Unitarian Church. Edelman will speak on discovering how good your mind is and how you may tap more of your potential. Edelman is in private practice in Houston and consults with the University of Texas Schools of Nursing, Houston-Galveston Area Council and the University of Houston.



**WOMEN IN JAZZ—ADD LIB**, an all-woman's jazz group will be featured for a month-long engagement in August at MUMS, a new jazz place near downtown Houston. Four members of the jazz sextet appear above with Astrid Sheil (second from left), program director at KUHF. Sheil worked with Cy Brinson (center), the group's vocalist, to get the group together.

The musicians Lynda Corbin (l), Brandy Anthony (second from right), and Janice Chappelle (far right), recently appeared at the Second Annual Women's Jazz Festival in Kansas City and they kicked off the Alley Theatre's Jazz Festival last month.

Singers Brinson and Marsha Frasier (not pictured) will be featured during *ADD LIB*'s August performance at MUMS (2016 Main at West Gray). Frasier also plays keyboards for the group. Linda Corbin plays the trombone and is an accomplished flutist. Janice Chappelle plays saxophone, clarinet and flute, and Brandy Anthony keeps the band on beat with her syncopated rhythms on the bass guitar. Anthony also plays the jazz guitar and the steel guitar. Also in the group is drummer Lucy Flohr.

"There is a new awakening of jazz in the city," says Sheil. "*ADD LIB* got together to showcase Houston's top female jazz musicians. We hope the community will enjoy hearing them."

A new booklet *Getting Uncle Sam to Enforce Your Civil Rights*, is available to help persons who feel they have been discriminated against in credit, education, employment, housing, law enforcement, voting and other fields. It covers unfair treatment due to race, color, sex, religion, age, handicap or lack of citizenship. Special information is included for American Indians, institutionalized persons and military personnel. The booklet contains regional and local addresses for 13 agencies which accept complaints filed at those levels. Free copies may be obtained by writing the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Publications Management Division, Room 700, 1121 Vermont Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20425.

The second Lesbian and Gay Seminarians Conference, *We are a People*, will be hosted by the Harvard Divinity School, November 8 to 11. The interdenominational gathering will feature a wide-ranging program of panels, workshops and symposia designed by and for gay and lesbian seminarians.

The conference planning committee is calling for papers on subjects relating to homosexuality and the various seminary and school of religion disciplines: New and Old Testament, Ethics, Comparative Religion, Psychology of Religion, Pastoral Psychology, Theology and Philosophy of Religion. These papers will be presented during the conference. Papers received by September 15 will be given first priority and none will be accepted after September 29. Questions and submissions should be sent to Bradley Prunty, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University, 45 Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138, or phone 617-623-6489.

# LUCIA



*Lucia*, an epic three-part film by Humberto Solas, will be shown at the Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet, on Friday, August 24 at 7:30 p. m.

The film dramatizes three separate periods in the Cuban struggle for liberation in order to show the participation of Cuban women in that fight.

Each of the episodes, which take place during the 1895 war of independence from Spain, the 1933 overthrow of the dictator Machado, and the social changes of the 1960's under Castro, evokes the spirit of its era and the historical progression, emphasizing the changing role of women.

At the same time, each beautifully-filmed episode is an entertaining and engrossing story. *Lucia* is both a unique view of Cuban history and Latin-American culture and a dramatically engaging examination of women's world-wide struggle for social equality.

*Spanish, with English subtitles. 1972. 160 minutes. Black and white.*

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**The Houston Area Women's Center invites**  
**You or your women's group to participate**  
**in the planning of the first annual Women's Fair to be held on**  
**November 17 and 18**

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**art crafts music**  
**In the spirit of an old country fair**  
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**over the summer**  
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**An event sponsored by the Joan Waite Hanlon Houston Area Women's Center Foundation**

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**A series of workshops will be held, starting in september, on**  
**Women and aging**  
**Women and religion**  
**Women and writing**  
**From volunteer to career**  
**Proceeds will benefit the Houston Area Women's Center**  
**More in our next issue**

Citizens for Animal Protection (C.A.P.) will sponsor three Pet Adoption Days in August at the following locations:

Saturday, August 4 Westhill Village, Westheimer and Hillcroft, 11:30 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Saturday, August 11 Stafford Plaza, Murphy Rd. at Southwest Freeway, 11:30 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Saturday, August 25 Foley's Special Event Room at Memorial Shopping Center, 11:30 a.m. until 4 p.m.

C.A.P. has hundreds of homeless puppies, kittens and adult animals which have had all necessary shots, wormings and health check-ups and have been spayed or neutered. For more information call Betty at the C.A.P. office, 871-1221 or 871-1228.

Crisis Hotline needs more volunteers to staff its telephone lines. Training sessions will be held on Saturdays during August and on weekday mornings in September. The training concentrates on the problems people call Crisis Hotline about—family trauma, suicide, advocacy for rape victims, drugs and the daily pressures of living in a fast-paced city like Houston. The only requirements are that volunteers be caring, non-judgmental and have the ability to listen. Crisis Hotline takes calls 24 hours a day, every day. Volunteers work 4 hours per week. For more information call 228-1505.

LISTEN TO *The Women's Show*, Sundays at 5 p.m. on KUHF FM 88.7 on your radio dial. Host Astrid will play music and conduct interviews to bring you "the world through women's eyes."

*Talkin' Union*, an oral history film about four Texas women and their union organizing activities from 1930 to 1960, will be shown on Channel 8's public-access program "Territory" Tuesday, July 31, at 10:30 p.m. The film portrays four women battling the same problems working women face today: low pay, few benefits and poor working conditions. Although some of their attempts to solve these problems through union organization failed, these women remained convinced of the importance of their experience in their own lives and in the lives of others. The film was produced by People's History in Texas. For additional information on the film write PHIT, P. O. Box 7953, Austin, TX 78712.

*Toward an Understanding of Bakke*, a resource book on the Bakke decision, has been published by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. This 189-page book contains the full text of the 1978 Supreme Court decision, the voluntary affirmative action guidelines prepared by the Federal Equal Opportunity Commission, President Carter's July 20, 1978, memorandum on affirmative action programs, and two affirmative action position statements by the Civil Rights Commission. Single copies may be obtained free by writing the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Publications Division, 1121 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20425.



The newly-formed New York Feminist Art Institute will begin classes in September. The institute will serve as a school and resource for women in the arts, providing a nurturing environment as well as the power of an institution to manifest feminist ideas in art. For a brochure and enrollment information, write Carol Stronghilos, P. O. Box 798, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. Locally, call Pat St. John Danko, at 523-6917 for more information.

Information for *Network* should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the page and sent to Houston Breakthrough, P. O. Box 88072, Houston, TX 77004. We regret we cannot take information over the phone. Announcements of events that are free and open to the public are published free of charge. August 15 is the copy deadline for the September issue (to publicize events September 15-October 15).

## MOVING?

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When you plan to move, let us know *six weeks* in advance, so that *Breakthrough* will get there with you. This will also lower our postage costs. *The post office charges us 25 cents each time they notify us of your change of address. Each year this costs us almost \$200. Please help us put this money to better use.*

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# classified ads

*Breakthrough* is the largest women's newspaper in Texas. Get your message to our network of readers through the *Breakthrough* classifieds. Rates are 30 cents a word. Enclose your check with copy as you want it to appear. Mail to: *Breakthrough* Classifieds, P. O. Box 88072, Houston, TX 77004.

Roommate to share expenses, Montrose area, large, bright upper duplex—contact Judy at 528-2640 after 5 p.m.

Interested in creating a Houston group of the National Association of Working Women to build trust among working women, gain rights and respect on the job as individuals, and build a strong and effective Houston network? Send \$5 for national membership and a newsletter to Lena M. Shipman, 5500 N. Braeswood, No. 242, Houston, 77096, or call 721-6027.

Wanted: All women crew including an architect, a carpenter and a structural engineer to design and build an art studio. I am interested in being an apprentice on this project in order to learn carpentry skills. Call Susie at 723-4245.

Looking for adventure? Want to expand your horizons? There's a new program in town . . . *Leisure Learning Unlimited*. Get on their mailing list for a class schedule. Call 721-7299.

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SOUND-OFF DISCUSSION GROUP FOR WOMEN NOW STARTING. All females welcome. Evening Sessions. For information phone Anne Wilder after 6 p.m., 522-9948.

Women's Music—Discover the Difference . . . Music for making love, revolutions, or just merry. Written, engineered and distributed by women for women. Available in Houston at The Bookstore, Wilde 'N' Stein, Cactus Records, B.D. & Daughter. Take an album home for a test spin from the new Women's Music Rental Library at B.D. & Daughter, 520 Westheimer, 529-3609.

Enrollment has begun for morning and evening classes at Potworks Handbuilding and Wheelthrowing, 5218 South Shepherd (at Bissonnet). Beginner through advanced clay techniques will be taught. Discounts are given to senior citizens. For more information, call Ethel Bilyeu at 467-6502.

Montrose on Emerson: 1 Bedroom condominium mortgage assumable—perfect for single or commuter—S. Kay Little, Going & Company Realtors, 523-8877, 524-1586.

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Needed: Information and photographs of women who have contributed to the history of Houston. Contact: Missy Hauge, 661-4979, or leave a message at *Breakthrough*, 526-6686.

Writing book on alternative printing, publishing and distributing. WANTED: WOMAN IDENTIFIED INPUT to compile *complete* directory of alternative print shops and book distributors. Please send names and addresses to: Jim Dandy, Rt. 3, Box 550, Siletz, OR 97380. All input much appreciated.

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THIS IS AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL GAY WOMEN: It's time for all gay women to unite into one family! We need each other to help each other, for if we are not for ourselves no one else is for us. A new movement has been started by gay women for gay women. We need all the members, ideas, and skills of all gay women to help in this movement. THIS INCLUDES YOU! You are the most important part of the movement. You know the problems. You know the answers. No one person can do anything, but, all of us WORKING TOGETHER can do everything!! Meetings are on Friday nights from 7:30 p.m. til about 10:00 p.m. (for those who have an evening planned). So come to the meetings. Look in the discos, women's bars, for notices of time and place. WE NEED YOU!!! It will be fun! If you have a skill, an idea, or are just tired of the way things are and would like to meet other women and change what's going on—come to the meetings. FAMILY OF SISTERS.

Soliciting manuscripts for an anthology on *Women Writing About the Art of Women Writing*. Essays, short fiction, novel excerpts, journal entries, and poetry. Previously published or unpublished works. Can relate either symbolically or literally to the experience of woman as writer. Deadline: January 15, 1980. A self-addressed, stamped envelope must accompany manuscript. Send to: Cathryn Diane Miller, 4615 Filmore Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213.

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