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NOW at the University of Houston

Vol 3, #5

Montrose NOW

MAY 1983

Vol 8, #5

President's Column

In April, NOW at UH presented two programs: "The Nuclear Freeze Movement" with guest speaker George Broze from the Houston Coalition for Peace and "Insurance: Fair Discrimination?" with guest speaker Elaine Kinsey, past president of Northwest Houston NOW. There is further information on the results of these two program meetings inside the newsletter. I would like to thank both guest speakers for their participation in making the programs a success.

On May 5th, Dr. Karen Holmes will speak at our program meeting at 7:30 pm on Rape. She is a professor at the Social Work Department at UH, has done extensive research on this subject and has written "Justice For Whom? Rape Victims Assess The Legal-Judicial System." Holmes is co-author with Joyce Williams of The Second Assault: Rape and Public Attitudes. This program will be held in the Aegean Rm., UC and everyone is welcomed.

On May 10 is the NOW at UH business meeting. I hope everyone will try to attend. We will talk about the direction NOW at UH will be taking in the future and input of all members is greatly encouraged. Also, we have not yet voted whether or not to renew our membership with Women Lobby Alliance for 1983. We will also vote on whether to join and/or endorse the Houston Nuclear Freeze Coalition, which asks both the Soviet Union and the US to stop - to "freeze" - all testing, production and deployment of new nuclear weapons.

On April 14th, I was present at the University Center Policy Board (UCPB) meeting (see president's column in March newsletter) hoping to discuss the passage of a NOW proposal to "oppose the sale and distribution of literature and the showing of films that portray the torture, rape, humiliation or sexual objectification of women or men or children," and request that the UCPB prohibit such activities in the UC. When the magazine issue was opened for discussion a motion which requested "the prohibition of sales of Playboy, Playgirl, Penthouse and Forum" (which are presently sold in the Candy Shoppe) was brought forward by Carol Cavazos. The motion was defeated by two votes. I expected my name to be called after that first motion was defeated so that I could introduce the policy NOW thought should be adopted, but the chairperson ruled that the issue was closed. The policy, (see above), refers to all pornographic magazines not just the ones presently sold. I felt it would not be possible to re-open the issue at that time for further discussion. Instead I decided to be present at the next UCPB meeting to have NOW's proposal discussed and voted on.

This newsletter, which is published every month, is of great importance to the people who work to make it possible because it allows the feminist community to be in touch with issues which affects us directly or indirectly. We hope that it is of equally great importance to you the reader. If so, we would like to see you get involved with this publication. Feel free to contact us if you are interested in any of the variety of work which Herizon's publication entails. Little time is requested; we usually get it done with a planning/writing assignment meeting and a weekend of work, editing, typesetting and pasting-up. Your participation is welcomed. Call Jeanne at 799-1234 X373 (Monday-Friday, 5-9) or X571 (Saturday and Sunday) for information on schedule for June newsletter.

Rossann Daumas

MONTROSE MESSAGE

Our next meeting will be held at the Houston Area Women's Cntr on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 8th, 5-7 pm. I thought about changing the day but I then decided we could celebrate ourselves and our mothers at a NOW meeting better than any other place. (Montrose NOW meetings are pot-luck suppers and rap sessions.)

We are in the midst of a special membership drive highlighted by Kathy Webb's visit. We are close to the number of members necessary for 3 delegates to the National Conference. If you have considered asking a friend to join, this is the moment. National will give us 1/2 of the usual \$20 national dues until June.

Most people quickly learn that Montrose does not represent mainstream Houston; I have always believed that Montrose NOW should be a haven for non-mainstream feminists. Although I just this minute urged you to increase our chapter membership, I have grave misgivings about our expanding membership and enlarged budgets. Some of the growth is inevitable but "bigger is better" may prove a poor model for an agency of social change.

I want to end with a thought for the future. Do we want a County Commissioner whose personal belief is that women on AFDC should be forcibly sterilized? That "making a living by having babies is a crime?" I suggest you review the current (April '83) statements of Bob Eckels.

Peggy



SELECTIONS IN HONOR OF MOTHER'S DAY

Mother's Day, declared by an act of Congress in 1914 to fall on the second Sunday of May, falls this year on May 8th. The idea for a national day in honor of mothers belongs to Julia Ward Howe, the author of "the Battle Hymn of the Republic", and a founding member with Lucy Stone of the American Woman's Suffrage Association. She put it forward in 1887. It was proposed again by Ann Jarvis in 1907. It is probably no coincidence that for the whole year before the act was passed, Alice Paul, the Chairwoman (sic) of the Congressional Committee of the National American Women's Suffrage Association, had focussed her new committee's intense energy on the Congress, reviving the long dormant demand for a federal amendment to secure the vote for women. How typical for lords and masters to attempt to fob women off with a mere courtly wave of the hand.

The "holiday" arouses great ambivalence in feminists, especially, I believe, in female feminists. On the one hand, we are angered at the trivialization of motherhood (and of women) that giving praise to mothers on one day of the year reveals, and by the commercialization by florists, jewellers and candy sellers; on the other we wish there were some easy, non-guilt laden, not-too-threatening way to gracefully recognize the debt we owe our mothers. Some may remember our mothers in bitterness and anger, yet there wells up in us an insatiable, intractable, longing for the love of our mothers.

continued to p. 4

FEMINIST COURSES

GAY PRIDE WEEK REPORT

Early this year, NOW at UH voted to send two representatives to the monthly planning meetings for Gay Pride Week to be held in June. We also voted to work to get a change in the name of the celebration which would be inclusive. At the February meeting, Cindy Funderburke and Jo Ann Evansgardner presented the following statement which was accepted as a motion:

"We realize that the question has come up before but we at NOW at UH think that this group should consider changing our name from Gay Pride Week to Lesbian/Gay Pride Week. We feel this because there are those in the community who believe that it is necessary to actively include "Lesbians" -- using "Gay" alone does not address everyone in our community.

Larry Bagneris, chair of last year's GPW and of GPC, turned the gavel over to Marion Coleman, the newly elected chair, for the debate on the motion. Accepting the gavel, she said that she didn't see what all the fuss was about, that she personally had never liked the term "Lesbian" and concluded with "Gay is good enough for me!" Larry added, in a conciliatory tone that "the community" had been surveyed and the majority supported "Gay Pride Week" in a previous year, pointing out that holding the meetings in Kindred Spirit was part of their "outreach" which was obviously working since about 30% of those present were women. With that, the vote was called, the motion voted on and overwhelmingly defeated with accompanying hoots and howls.

The chapter is still committed to holding a program on the effect of homophobia on young people on Thursday of Gay Pride Week on the University of Houston Central Campus. Help is needed with this effort.

Cindy Funderburke & Jo Ann Evansgardner

NOW 1983 SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE

"WHEN WOMEN JOIN HANDS ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE" was the theme of this year's Regional Conference held in Arlington TX, April 16-17. Thanks to Tarrant County NOW, the conference went quite smoothly. Mary Jane Calk and Bonnie Huval of Texas and Tricia Gallegos of Colorado were elected to the National Board.

Over the two day period, nine workshops were offered. The one I found most interesting was "Where Lesbianism and Feminism Meet: Issues that Bring us Together." The workshop presented by Diane Berg and Judith Hoffman included history of lesbianism, myths, homophobia and the parallels of lesbianism and feminism.

During the discussion a NOW member from Oklahoma related the negative effect that separatism had had in her chapter. It appears that there were women/separatists in her chapter who did not want to associate/work with men on any level. This caused divisiveness in the chapter and ultimately led to a breaking away from the chapter by the separatists. Another woman at the workshop commented that although she didn't necessarily agree with separatism, she could understand why it exists: the individual oppressors of women are usually men, in fact, and women are angry about this! However, separatism has no place in NOW. It is not in accordance with the feminist principle of advocating social, economic, and political equality between women & men.

The fact that the atmosphere in this workshop became rather tense indicates that discussions of separatism are important. But with all the talk about separatism, no one noticed that the theme of the conference was slightly separatist! Wouldn't it have been better if the theme had been "WHEN FEMINISTS JOIN HANDS ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE"

Cindy Funderburke

We feel the following courses are of interest to feminists. If they are in your major or if you need an elective, you might consider taking one of these. There is one class offered in the First Summer Six Weeks:

Course	Section	Time	Professor	Title
GENB 7336	0184	10-11M-TH	Stead	Women in Admin.
GENB 4336	2034	6-8 M-TH	Stead	Women in Admin.

The following classes will be offered in the Fall:

ENG 2305	2565	830-10T-TH	Feld	Intro. to Fiction
HIST 3394	7702	9-10MWF	Mintz	Women in Am. Exp.
PHIL 3375	8339	10-1130TTH	Nelson	Law, Soc. & Morality
HDCS 4396	5693	430-730TH	DePoe	Sexuality in Fam.
PSY 3331	5889	1-230TTH	Hill	Psy. of Women
SOC 3315	8481	7-10pmW	Simon	Sexuality & Soc.

NOW at UH has committed itself to computerizing the complete NOW membership of our area. This is over 3,000 names and addresses to be put in the system. As this is for a legislative alert system designed to insure that we can let feminists know when is the most crucial time to contact their legislators, we then must look up precinct numbers and put those into the system. WE NEED TYPISTS. You don't have to be fast (they even let me do it) just accurate. If you can spare time in the next few weeks, call Jo Ann at 741-4009 for a time to help.

Jeanne Sommerfeld

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION FORM

NOW at the University of Houston
&
MONTROSE NOW

(Please check blanks as appropriate for you)

1. I wish to join the National Organization for Women, NOW at the University of Houston OR MONTROSE NOW (Dues for NOW are on a sliding scale from \$11 to \$35. This amount is divided among the Chapter, Texas NOW, and the National. Please send an amount for your dues according to your circumstances.)

2. Enclosed are my dues in the amount of \$_____.

Make your check payable to

NOW at UH OR MONTROSE NOW
and send to

NOW at UH, Box 509, UC
4800 Calhoun
Houston, TX 77004

MONTROSE NOW
1803 Fairview
Houston, TX 77006

3. I do not want to join NOW at this time, but I would like to subscribe to this Newsletter. Enclosed is \$5 for one year's subscription (next 11 issues.)

4. I would like to talk to someone to get more information about NOW. Best time to call is _____ at _____
NAME _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

TOWN, STATE, ZIP _____

Here is my precinct number from my voter registration card. I wish to be contacted when my particular legislators should hear from me on feminist issues.

Home phone _____ Other _____ (hours) _____

UH Campus mail address _____ Campus Phone _____

The basic feminist principle is that there is no such thing as "fair" sex discrimination, a principle which the ERA would establish as a national legal standard. Sex-segregated pricing of insurance gives incentive to the insurance industry to block ratification of the ERA. The continuing existence of legally sanctioned sex discrimination by the insurance industry threatens present laws against sex discrimination in other areas. The advance of women's rights depends on widespread understanding by the public that all sex discrimination hurts women.

For insurance against loss of income, the insurance companies collect \$2 billion in premiums for individual policies and \$5 billion for group policies. Men and women however, do not pay equally for their disability protection. For individual policies, women usually must pay about 50 percent more than men for the same coverage. For group policies, employers pay higher rates as the proportion of women employees increases. This relationship is used to justify setting lower wages for positions in a company predominantly filled by women. For a typical policy started at age 35, a man is charged \$216.50 a year for coverage. A woman starting at the same age must pay \$328.85 for the same coverage, a 51 percent difference. When they both retire at age 65, the woman will have paid \$3,368 more than the man (or \$7,831, had she been able to invest the \$112.25 yearly difference at 5 percent interest) for identical insurance against loss of income.

In the case of auto insurance, insurance companies levy a lower "youth" surcharge on women than on men. This difference in surcharge does not compensate for the difference in driving performance of young women and men. Recent studies have shown that the accident rate of men at all ages is 1.43 times that of women at all ages. Research has also shown that women drive fewer miles and are more careful drivers than men. In Texas, there is a marriage discount for auto insurance, but upon divorce, divorced women must pay more than divorced men for continuation. If the reasonable reason for a difference in rates, such as driving record and mileage totals, were to replace sex of the driver as a basis for auto insurance prices, such objective bases would be of greater benefit to more women than the present determination of accident rates by sex.

Surveys of life insurance prices indicate differences in average mortality between women and men are not major factors in prices. Many companies offer "discount" prices for non-smokers, but it is often specified that "pipe and cigar smokers" will be considered. Such discounts, applied at the discretion of the seller, lower men's prices considerably below the prices for women who are not eligible because they can't afford the larger policies or have the wrong smoking habits. The discount for women is 21% whereas that for men is 27%. Women on the average are paid lower wages than men and therefore the average size of women's life insurance policies is considerably less than men's. In 1981, women's average amount of protection, \$16,900 is 44% of men's \$38,400. Smaller policies cost more per \$1000 unit and these are the policies that are being sold to women. A majority of women are paying more than men for life insurance although the unit claims cost for deaths of women is 60% of the unit claims cost for men. A further injustice - Survivors who receive payout as guaranteed income receive 10-15% less if female, than if male.

Legislation to ban discrimination in insurance has been repeatedly introduced in Congress, but has been blocked, not by any consumer opposition, but by the insurance lobbies. Strong support for such legislation by feminist groups is firmly based on clear evidence for the major economic benefits women would gain through equality. As a constitutional principle, the ERA will ban legal sex discrimination in all areas. It will provide the constitutional bases for the non-sex discrimination provisions of civil rights laws such as Title VII. Debate is in progress over which of the institutions responsible, insurance industry, employers, or government, must pay the cost of putting women's insurance

Alert

DATE: April 14, 1983
SUBJECT: LETTERS FOR HR 100/S 372

SENATE HEARINGS CONTINUE ON S 372, THE NON-DISCRIMINATION IN INSURANCE BILL. MOST LETTERS BEING RECEIVED BY CONGRESS ARE AGAINST THE BILL. OUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION NEEDS TO HEAR FROM US. FURTHER HEARINGS ARE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 25 AND MAY 19. INSURANCE INDUSTRY IS WORRIED AND IS LOBBYING HEAVILY. NOW THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION AND THE EAGLE FORUM IS JUMPING INTO THE FRAY AGAINST THE BILL.

PLEASE HELP PRODUCE LETTERS TO:

SEND COPIES TO:

The Honorable Lloyd Bentson
United States Senator
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Packwood
United States Senator
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Tower
United States Senator
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable (Your U.S. Representative)
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Letters need not be long to be useful. (Short is probably better). Just two or three sentences is great. Ask for support for the Non-Discrimination in Insurance bills (HR 100 & S 372), as they were drafted.***

Fact Sheet on H.R. 100/S.372

Nondiscrimination in Insurance

This proposed legislation prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, and national origin in the availability, price, and payment of every type of insurance and pension contract. As a federal statute applying to interstate commerce, H.R. 100/S.372 would nullify all sections of state codes which currently sanction or require sex discrimination in insurance and pension contracts. It specifies that complaints first be processed at the state level, with federal remedies to be used in the event that state agencies fail to respond satisfactorily.

Use of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin in marketing and customer selection (underwriting) makes availability of reasonably priced coverage a severe problem for consumers. Of these factors, sex discrimination is the only one given open legal approval. With the consent of state insurance departments, sex is used either invariably or arbitrarily as a basis for prices and payouts, as well as in defining coverage, for major types of insurance.

Although each discriminatory provision may at first appear to advantage one sex or the other, analysis shows each always works to the advantage of insurers and their employer-customers. Furthermore, as consumers, women are consistently more disadvantaged than men are by the discriminatory arrangements. State legislators, insurance regulators, and courts have not only failed to protect women consumers, but are often aligned with the insurance industry and employers against them.

Insurers selectively use real or imagined "differences" between women and men to manipulate prices and payouts. Across all lines of insurance—auto, life, old age income (annuity/pension), medical expense, and disability income—"differences" that advantage insurers are used as pricing factors. "Differences" that might hurt sales or lower profits are ignored. The industry's name for this practice, and for the state laws that support it, is "fair sex discrimination."

The Nondiscrimination in Insurance Act will end sex-discriminatory price and payout abuses by insurers, employers, and government, such as the following:

- Life Insurance: Imposing heavy surcharges (not cost-based) on smaller policies—all that most women can

afford. These surcharges recoup severers.

- Auto Insurance: Overcharging most women throughout their driving lifetime for auto insurance that ignores women's lower mileage (averaging half of men's) and women's resulting lower accident rates. Imposing smaller surcharges on young women than on young men is using sex as a crude substitute for mileage. Publicizing this short term lesser surcharge as a "break for women" distracts consumer attention from lifelong overcharges.
- Annuities and Pensions: Cutting payments to women 10-15%. "Justified" by women's marginally (14%) greater average life expectancy, regardless of individual health, but motivated by savings in employment costs for employers and by sales for insurance companies.
- Taxes: Levying a higher tax on women's pension and annuity payouts than on men's, a secondary longevity penalty on payouts already reduced by the primary longevity penalty.
- Joint and Survivor Pensions: Paying less to retired men and their presumably longer-lived wives than to retired women and their husbands. Large employers, prohibited by Title VII from cutting the pensions of women employees, still gain large savings in employment costs by reducing pension payouts to dependent women.
- Medical Expense and Disability Income Insurance: Charging women for limited medical coverage up to levels exceeding 100% more than men are charged for full coverage, despite the fact that sex is a poor predictor of health. To compensate for group coverage that is inadequate or nonexistent, insurance companies sell individual coverage—\$5 billion in medical expense and \$2 in disability income insurance in 1981. Severe surcharging forces many women to forego insurance protection.

As a ban on illegal sex discrimination, the ERA would provide the essential constitutional basis for civil rights laws such as Title VII and the proposed Nondiscrimination in Insurance Act. It would make them realities to be enforced.

National Organization for Women, 3/14/83. Further data in NOW Testimony on H.R. 100, 2/22/83.

on a non-discriminatory basis. This cost is now being borne by women and time consuming debate should not be a substitute for action.

Mother's Day

continued from p. 1

In honor of Mother's Day, and my mother, who died too early for feminist understanding to help us see our stormy relationship as anything other than our mutual inadequacies, I offer the following thoughts by other women and feminists about mothers, daughters and mothers-in-law.

It is never too late while life lasts.

Jo Ann Evansgardner

"...mothers of the race, the most important actors in the grand drama of human progress."

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1867

"Every nursing mother, in the midst of her ... dependent brood, has far more right to whine, sulk, or scold, as temperament dictates, because beefsteak and coffee are not prepared for her and exactly to her taste, than any man ever had or ever can have during the present stage of human evolution."

Antoinette Brown Blackwell, 1875

"I know that to (me) my Bel-Gazou is alternately the center of the universe, consummate masterpiece, a possessed monster from whom the devil must hourly be exorcised, a champion runner, a dizzy abyss of perversity, a dear little one, a baby rabbit. But who will tell me how my daughter appears to herself?"

Colette, 1922

"It was Mother who fought! Fought! to keep me up to par! To make me study and improve. Fought! To keep my name in the large type she believed I merited. Fought for heat in trains to protect my health. Fought to make ends meet, when each week she had finished sending money to many dependents that automatically arrived on the high heels of success. Invincible! best describes her."

Elsie Janis, 1931

"For in all the world there are no people so piteous and forlorn as those who are forced to eat the bitter bread of dependency in their old age, and find how steep are the stairs of another man's house. Wherever they are, they feel themselves a burden. There is no humiliation of the spirit they are not forced to endure. Their hearts are scarred all over with the stabs from cruel and callous speeches."

Dorothy Dix, 1926

"The first knowledge any woman has of warmth, nourishment, tenderness, security, sensuality, mutuality, comes from her mother. That earliest enwrapping of one female body with another can sooner or later be denied or rejected, felt as choking possessiveness, as rejection, trap, or taboo, but it is, at the beginning, the whole world. Of course, the male infant also first knew tenderness, nourishment, mutuality from a female body. But institutionalized heterosexuality and institutionalized motherhood demand that the girl-child transfer those first feelings of dependency, eroticism, mutuality, from her first woman to a man, if she is to become what is defined as a "normal woman" -- that is a woman whose most intense psychic and physical energies are directed towards men.

"... Many of us were mothered in ways we cannot yet even perceive; we only know that our mothers were in some incalculable way on our side. But if a mother had deserted us, by dying, or putting us up for adoption, or because life had driven her into alcohol or drugs, chronic depression or madness, if she had been forced to leave us with indifferent, uncaring strangers in order to earn our food money, because institutional motherhood makes no provision for the wage-earning mother; if she had tried to be a "good mother" according to the demands of the institution and had thereby turned into an anxious, worrying, puritanical keeper of our virginity; or if she had simply left us because she needed to be without a

IMPORTANT WORDS

Finding and using phrases that best describe our goals and intent can be a tedious and often thankless task. At the first National Conference of NOW that I attended, there was at least 30 minutes of discussion on the floor of the plenary session about the language of a well-intentioned resolution which thoughtlessly referred to minority women as non-white women. Three thousand people trying to fix the offensive language quickly became a frustrating task for those who felt strongly about language, for those who felt strongly about racism, as well as for those delegates who wanted to "get on with business." Yet unless we take the time to think about what we are trying to express, we will constantly discover that we have thwarted our own efforts through our lack of forethought, as well as offended people working on the issue that we are trying to address. Lesbian/Gay Rights is perhaps the one area where there has been the most discussion of language. There has been so much discussion about what is or is not "politically correct" that it has become a joke to many people and annoying to many others. But the issue remains. Not whether a term is "politically correct" but whether it says what we mean to convey.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION V. SEXUAL PREFERENCE

Sexual Preference is the term currently most often used by NOW members when a term is needed to express the fact that a person may be either homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, or celibate. It is often used in suggested legislation banning discrimination on the basis of one's sexual practices or lifestyle. As such, it is a phrase that has been increasingly heard because we have been able to make more strides into creating positive legislation rather than defeating negative legislation.

Sexual preference is not the best phrase to use. The word, preference, implies that it is something freely chosen. The dictionary definition is that it is something one has a greater liking for, something one inclines more toward. Preference reinforces the many myths surrounding homosexuality in our society. That lesbian/gay people choose to be "that way" and that therefore they can be cured. That Lesbian/Gay people should not be allowed to teach in schools because they might unduly influence young people to choose to become homosexual. And that being Lesbian or Gay is not natural or normal, but a perverted way of living chosen by people who defy Biblical teachings. These ARE myths, but they are myths that we unconsciously encourage through our language.

The term, sexual orientation, does not carry the same connotations as sexual preference. The dictionary definition of orientation is an adaption to or alignment with a particular situation or environment. Sexual orientation does not provide an internal explanation as to why some people are heterosexual and some people are homosexual. Nor does it carry an implication of greater value of one individual decision over another as the word preference does. Sexual orientation does sound like more of a clinical term precisely because it is more impartial in its meanings.

Consider what you are saying and implying through the term, sexual preference. And if you agree that there is more to this phrase than what is desirable, please begin insisting that the phrase, sexual orientation, be substituted at every opportunity.

Jeanne Sommerfeld

child - whatever our rational forgiveness, whatever the individual mother's love and strength, the child in us, the small female who grew up in a male-controlled world, still feels at moments, wildly unmothered. When we can confront and unravel this paradox, this contradiction,

Letter to Editor

RE: Year of the Bible? in April 1983 Issue

Rossann Dumas' article "Year of the Bible?" is timely and thought provoking. It is unfortunate that she chose to quote a passage by Anne Gaylor containing a conspicuous error in biblical interpretation. I refer to the quotation of Genesis 3:15:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman,...

Ms. Gaynor and Ms. Dumas both erroneously state that this is the biblical god speaking to Adam and misinterpret it as a sanction of the "war between the sexes." A quick check of the source would have shown that the biblical god is speaking to the serpent, not to Adam. Referring to Genesis 3:14 one finds:

So the Lord God said to the serpent. . . .

Clearly the passage has nothing to say about the "war between the sexes" and cannot accurately be interpreted to sanction such an idea.

It appears that both Ms. Gaylor and Ms. Dumas have been lead astray by something I thought only the "opposition" capable of, and that is BLIND CRITICISM. They prove themselves to have no precise knowledge of the bible and are therefore not qualified to criticize it. This is extremely unfortunate because other valid criticisms they voice can be justifiably negated by said opposition using this error to "prove" that feminist criticism of biblically sanctioned ideas about women and about female-male relationships comes from a bunch of uppity women who don't know what they're talking about.

I wish instead of Genesis 3:15 she had chosen Genesis 3:16 which is the biblical basis for oppressive attitudes and treatment of women:

To the women he said, . . .

Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you.

That my friends is IT in a nutshell. Biblically sanctioned subjugation of women as punishment for tasting "the forbidden Fruit." It is interesting to note that if one does tend towards a literal interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, one must assume that in the "paradise" of the garden called "Eden" according to the biblical god's original plan, the woman was not only not ruled by the man; she had no "desire" for him!! That brings up some interesting food for thought. I wonder why fundamentalists have never considered that as God's true plan??

Thanks for the opportunity to sound off. . . and remember the commandment: Know that which Thou wouldst criticize!

Sincerely and in Sisterhood,

K.L. Havard

EDITOR'S NOTE:

We appreciate K.L. Havard's response to our article and encourage anyone with any comments to please write us.

While we appreciate also your clarification of the biblical quote in question, we reject your statement that without "precise knowledge" we are "not qualified to criticize" the bible.

Like everyone else, feminists are not all knowing. We too can make errors. But the fact that we are human does not negate our right to speak out about our experiences as women. We are uppity women and we do know what we are talking about despite this one error. If we believe that until we are absolutely sure that everything we do or say is undoubtably, verifiably correct, we should do or say nothing; we will accomplish nothing but giving ourselves headaches.



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE CAPITOL
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

March 7, 1983

MARK WHITE
GOVERNOR

Ms. Rossann Dumas, President
National Organization for Women
at the University of Houston
P. O. Box 509
University Center
Houston, Texas 77004

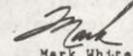
Dear Ms. Dumas:

Thank you for your letter expressing concern about the confrontation between police officers and certain members of the crowd at the recent Ku Klux Klan march in Austin.

Both the Austin Police Department, whose officers were involved in the confrontation, and a Travis County Grand Jury are investigating the incident to which you refer. I prefer not to comment on this case pending the outcome of those investigations. I certainly do not, however, condone unprovoked violence of any kind.

Thank you again for your comments on this matter.

Yours truly,


Mark White
Governor of Texas

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face to the utmost in ourselves the groping passion of that little girl lost, we can begin to transmute it, and the blind anger and bitterness that have repetitiously erupted among women trying to build a movement together can be alchemized. Before sisterhood, there was the knowledge -- transitory, fragmented, perhaps, but original and crucial -- of motherhood and daughterhood. . . .

"Matrophobia" as the poet Lynn Sukenik has termed it is the fear not of one's mother or of motherhood but of becoming one's mother. Thousands of daughters see their mothers as having taught a compromise and self-hatred they are struggling to win free of, the one through whom the restrictions and degradations of a female existence were perforce transmitted. Easier by far to hate and reject a mother outright than to see beyond her to the forces acting upon her. Where a mother is hated to the point of matrophobia there may also be a deep underlying pull toward her, a dread that if one relaxes one's guard one will identify with her completely. An adolescent daughter may live at war with her mother yet borrow her clothes, her perfume. Her style of housekeeping when she leaves home may be a negative image of her mother's: beds never made (or always made) dishes unwashed, (or instantly washed), in unconscious reversal of the immaculately tended (or untended) house of a woman from whose orbit she has to extricate herself. . . . (material in brackets added by JE)

(In matrophobia) "The mother stands for the victim in ourselves, the unfree woman, the martyr. Our personalities seem dangerously to blur and overlap with our mothers'; and in a desperate attempt to know where mother ends and daughter begins, we perform radical surgery."

Adrienne Rich, 1976

(1st five quotations from Quotable Woman, Elaine Partnow, editor; concluding quotations from Chap 9 "Motherhood & Daughterhood" in Of Woman Born.)

Women require perfection of themselves that they do not require of others. Think of all the statements Reagan's staff has had to re-interpret for the press and public. If Reagan was as critical of himself as most women are, then his staff would be considerably less busy.

Opinion

Setting sexism straight

Advertising may push men to rape

By Laura Linn

I'm relieved to see Lorie Arnett put sexist advertising into perspective. In my ignorance, I had thought that sexist advertising was advertising that depicted women in a subordinate, humiliating or dehumanized manner. I had no idea that truly sexist advertising was simply advertising that celebrated feminine beauty. But after reading Arnett's column I now see that attractive women just love being exploited and devoured as many *Cosmopolitan* magazines as possible in an effort to become sex objects.

After reading research done by Dr. Ed Donnerstein (University of Wisconsin-Madison), I'd thought that the negative and even violent attitudes toward women in our culture were reflected in, and

reinforced by, sleazy advertising. But thanks to Arnett, I now see the light: just because a few Hollywood model types pose for sleazy ads doesn't mean that we should take this seriously and reject these negative attitudes.

I'll admit it, I was offended by a recent *Daily Cougar* ad. This ad, promoting a sweepstakes sponsored by Fingers Furniture and Maxell tapes, was the one I'd reckoned as the nastiest I'd seen all semester. This ad featured a cropped, almost cartoon-like picture of a woman's body from below her navel to her upper thigh. The picture zeroed in on—you guessed it—her vagina. Now guess what was going on in this picture. Four men were jamming a flagpole, "Two Jima"-style into this piece of a woman's body. But I won't let this violent

image disturb me now that I know the advertisers are only trying to "associate the product with something their target audience finds pleasurable." Assuming that both men and women like to enter sweepstakes, then it must be true that the advertisers think: 1.) men find rape pleasurable and 2.) women find rape pleasurable. Intriguing.

I'd thought that part of the damage these negative images cause is insensitivity toward violence against women. At least, Dr. Donnerstein's research indicated a very real effect on those who view these types of images and their response to real life situations: the viewers tended to see rape as a less serious crime. So I was concerned that this type of advertising, symbolizing a gang rape, was part of the cultural

reinforcements that might lead bystanders to cheer rapists on instead of aid the victim. But now I realize I shouldn't worry about this since the woman who rented out her vagina for the pose is "smirking all the way to the bank" and advertising probably doesn't have anything to do with the real world anyway. So let's just close our eyes. . . .

I never worried before about a woman's "right" to pose for sleazy advertisements. I used to worry about a woman's "right" to be an assistant news editor or an engineer. But now I worry that if *The Daily Cougar* ever decided to stop accepting these nasty ads, then a few models might have to stop smirking or pose elsewhere.

Laura Linn is a sophomore majoring in chemical engineering at the University of Houston.

The Daily Cougar Tuesday, April 19, 1983

Letters

How it goes away

Wade Magruder would like to be able to pick up a copy of *The Daily Cougar* and find "no articles, no commentaries, no letters, nothing about anyone's opinion of sexist advertising."

He refers to an article written by Lorie Arnett and says that he believed her article would have put an end to letters about sexist ads. Why would he have thought that?

Arnett's article was based on a ridiculous assumption which she never even pretended to prove—i.e., if you ignore something offensive it will go away. What her article should have done was to cause an increase in letters from people who know better.

Magruder agrees with Arnett that if you ignore offensive things, they will go away. If she is right, then if we all ignore rape, murder, poverty, the budget deficit, nuclear arms buildup and James Watt, they will go away.

Activists for all causes can relax. We don't need to be concerned about the depletion of world energy reserves, fluorocarbons in the ozone, or radioactive wastes. All we need to do is ignore them.

Are there really people who believe that if you close your eyes and wish hard enough, when you open your eyes the things that you wanted gone will have disappeared. This might be true for losing a lover, but I can't think of much else that it will work for.

Wade Magruder would like to see articles and letters concerning "more important and fresh ideas." The importance with which an issue is regarded is subjective. What is important to me may or may not be important to someone else. Sexism is a very real and serious problem for women and men. Sexist ads encourage harmful and wrong perceptions about women. That is important to me.

If Magruder wants to see an end to letters concerning sexist ads, I can think of at least two things he can do—1) he can work towards the elimination of these kinds of ads in *The Daily Cougar* 2) he can ignore these letters and articles and see if they go away.

Debbie McKenna

CHOOSING AN ABORTION PROVIDER

If you wanted an abortion a few years ago, you might have taken the first name that was offered and rushed to obtain the procedure, regardless of quality. And, you would have been grateful.

How do women choose an abortion provider today? Through the yellow pages of the phone book, according to most referral source data collected from abortion research. That's not as silly as it sounds, when you consider that a woman may need this service only once in her life and avoids asking the people she knows for advice.

Let's examine the initial search process: If you notice "Abortion" is an absent yellow page category. All over the U.S., anti-choice adherents (the so-called Right-To-Lifers) have badgered telephone companies to delete separate abortion listings. Many abortion providers have encountered difficulties in having themselves listed in both the white or yellow pages in an accurate and desirable manner. The various companies that make up the entire Bell Telephone system adopt policy of their own, one which frequently bears no uniformity to other Bell companies. In many places, the yellow pages are printed not directly by local Bell Tele. but by the Reuben H. Donnelley Corporation, one of the nation's largest printing concerns. Donnelley Corp. frequently adopts its own policy in these regards.

These policies take various forms and include not allowing the word "abortion" in the white pages even though it may be part of the clinic's legal name, and have arbitrary, capricious policies surrounding yellow page advertising.

Efforts to change these policies have met with varying degrees of success. Generally, contacts by consumers or facilities directly rather than through their legal counsel have accomplished little. Change has been obtained by attorneys like Frank Susman, of the National Abortion Federation, legal team, against several Bell companies by threatening them in an appropriate fashion with allegations that the present policies may constitute a deprivation of constitutional rights, be in violation of applicable State and Federal tariffs, and be in violation of State and Federal anti-trust laws prohibiting certain forms of discrimination and concerted efforts to impair or to destroy commerce.

It would be interesting to review Southwestern Bell's policies, which come out of Dallas and where our yellow pages are printed.

As it stands, the consumer must now wade through all kinds of legitimate sounding Ads under "birth control" or "clinic" listings. I have called at random over twelve listings and discovered some disturbing phone misinformation. Phone staffers from Abortion Abuse Information Service (also listed as AAIS and Abortion Alternatives Information) read to you about the "incredible physical risks and exploitation of abortion" and "you're not safe anywhere" and other anti-abortion propaganda.

Another call to Abortion Action Center (also listed answering as women's clinic, Aaron Women's Clinic and Family Planning Information Service) all refer to the same doctor, same place in Houston.

"Abortion Acceptance Line" is also "Abortion Access", "Abortion Action Assistance" and "Texas Problem Pregnancy Center".

Pretty neat trick isn't it? Turns out that many of these phone Ad listings are just "front" referrals of a particular doctor practice, who like any other businessmen, seeks a profit off out health needs.

NOW at University of Houston Officers

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REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ALERT

The senate judiciary committee voted on the Hatch-Eagleton Amendment on April 19th. It was a 9-9 tie vote, so will be sent to the full senate without any recommendation.

VOTES

FOR AMENDMENT

PAUL LAXALT
ORRIN HATCH
JOHN EAST
CHARLES GRASSLEY
JEREMIAH DENTON
DENNIS DECONCINI
ROBERT DOLE
HOWELL HEFLIN
STROM THURMOND

AGAINST AMENDMENT

CHARLES MATHIAS
ALAN SIMPSON
ARLEN SPECTER
JOSEPH BIDEN
EDWARD KENNEDY
ROBERT BYRD
HOWARD METZENBAUM
PATRICK LEAHY
MAX BAUCUS

Write or call Senator Bentsen and Senator Tower asking them to vote against this amendment. Write thank you's to the senators who voted with us, especially Senators Simpson and Biden who switched their votes from last year.

When abortion was illegal, Women's Liberation groups continually investigated quasi-legal and illegal providers and some groups established intricate illegal abortion routes to obtain the care we desired. Women's Abortion Referral Service (WARS) in California, established a concrete service. They accompanied women to the hospital or wherever, provided patient advocacy, complete counseling and support, arranged transportation and child care, forced the practitioners to recognize the value of these support services and initiated progressive delivery techniques. Pregnancy screening by lay women has become routine. It's important to show the woman her urine test and how it works, how a good bimanual and uterine size check is accomplished with little discomfort or embarrassment; how to be more assertive with practitioners and how to recognize quality abortion care.

Controlled by businessmen, today's clinics may serve as financial investments because abortion, like surgery, and obstetrics is a profit-making gynecology trade. The priority is not to give women control over their own health care or to even ensure quality health care for women. Many clinics utilize women counselors but counselors in Houston clinics have NO CONTROL over clinic procedures, policies or financial management.

Abortion is a simple procedure that is part of keeping control of our bodies and lives. Doctors, by keeping us uninformed, perpetuate the attitude that we are not able to relate to the lower parts of our bodies; genitals; and we couldn't possibly understand the complex, abortion technology. Women are often too sedated during procedure to be aware of exactly what's going on or how things could be different. Feminist abortion providers realize that with complete understanding, increased coping skills, counseling/support throughout a decent procedure, the woman will have more control of the whole situation.



Honor thy mother

N.O.W. Horizon
Box 509, UC
Univ. of Houston
4800 Calhoun
Houston, Texas 77004



MAY 1983 FEMINIST CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thu 5 7:30pm NOW at UH Program Meeting - Professor Karen Holmes - "Rape, Why it Happens" UC Aegean

Sun 8 9:45am Unitarian Women's Group - Barbara Ellman, feminist therapist "Mothers & Daughters" 5210 Fannin at Southmore

Tue 10 5:30pm NOW at UH Business Meeting Apaloosa Rm - Very important to all NOW/UH members - PLEASE TRY TO ATTEND!

Wed 11 8pm Spring Branch NOW - "Killing Us Softly" a film on image of women in advertising. Las Dos Hermana Restaurant, Long Point at Wirt.

Sat 14 Rape Crisis Volunteer Training Workshop, Houston Area Women's Center. If you want to help rape survivors, call Michelle Trotta, 528-6798, for more information.

Sun 15 9:45am Unitarian's Women's Group - slide presentation on THE BIRTH PROJECT. 5210 Fannin

Mon 16 In 1929, ADRIENNE RICH, poet and author of Of Woman Born, and On Lies, Secrets and Silences, was born on this date.

Sat 21 10-12am ALL AREA 3 NOW CHAPTERS - Deborah Bell "Networking and organizing among chapters" (Members only) Palo Duro UC

Mon 23 In 1810, Margaret Fuller, transcendentalist, intellectual and feminist ideologue, renowned for her conversational gatherings with Boston women was born.

Tues 24 HAWC, 4 Chelsea Pl: Book review on Women's Self Help - Social, Physical & Economic. Information from Ginger Miller, 528-6798

Wed 24 7pm & 9pm Alix Dobkin Performance, Berring Memorial Church, 2 shows. For information, 520-7302

For Newsletter schedule call Jeanne at 799-1234,x373 (M-F,9-5) or 799-1234,x571 (weekends) or at home. Jeanne's schedule is irregular, so keep trying.