

N.O.W. Bay Area Chapter

NEWS

National Organization for Women

VOL. IV, Number 2 - February 1976



Program/Business Meeting

8 P.M.

5 February 1976

Uniting Church, El Camino Real & Reseda, Clear Lake City, Texas

"JOYOUS SUBMISSION?"

A panel discussion centering on the male dominance/female submission philosophies espoused by such books/classes as Total Woman and Fascinating Womanhood will be the topic of the February meeting. Panel members will include Donna Reed (Librarian, Fairbanks Branch), Evie Whitsett and Sonia Carmean (NOW members and Total Woman course alumnae), and Mrs. Tony Redding, former president of Women's Aglow. Public is welcome.

For further information: Evie Whitsett (488-1777) or Sonia Carmean (488-1431) - presiding officers for February.

NOW Calendar for February

- February 5 Meeting at the Uniting Church, Clear Lake City, at 8 p.m.
- February 7 Task Force on Rape, 1908 Fairfield N., League City, 8 a.m.
- February 14-15 Southern Regional Compliance Conference, Atlanta, Ga. Workshop training in anti-discrimination laws, how to plan an action, "How-to" of meetings and confrontations. Linda Eichblatt has info & forms.
- February 15 Susan B. Anthony was born this day in 1820.
- February 26 Program on child abuse. League of Women Voters, Uniting Church, 8 p.m.

Texas NOW State Council Excerpts

The Texas NOW Council held its regular meeting in San Antonio January 17. Business included:

- *Voted to send money to Texans for ERA and continue working with this organization.
- **Noted that there will be a national demonstration for ERA April 20 and 21 in Springfield, Illinois. The Illinois legislature barely turned down ERA last year and, hopefully, this will "turn the tide" and put pressure on Phyllis Schaffly's home state for passage. Each NOW Board member and officer pledged to bring 100 persons each, which means Texas must provide 300 persons!!! Transportation information is being formulated by a San Antonio NOW person.
- ***Allocated money to the State Education Task Force for textbook review.
- ****Gave monetary help to a lesbian mother from Dallas who lost her children in December in a custody suit.
- ****Heard concern expressed by State Legislative Coordinator over the national Board's actions to close the national legislative office in Washington and replace it with one staff person in this crucial year for ERA.
- *****Elected Nancy Kuykendall of Houston State Treasurer after Sue Rickett's resignation.
- *****Selected Abilene as the site for the State NOW Convention on Memorial Day weekend. Possible workshops and committees were discussed.
- *****Set next Council meeting in Austin for February 28.

---Submitted by Frances Hicks

ERA Update

The Texans for ERA are alive and well in Austin with Barbara Vacker, the State Coordinator for the ERA efforts last year. She is sending out a newsletter to all member organizations of the Texans for ERA to keep all informed of the latest developments on the ERA front.

*A California project is operating with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to educate the public about the Equal Rights Amendment. There are two contact persons in Texas, Shirley Miller of Dallas and Barbara Vacker of Austin. A monthly newsletter is published with ERA information from across the U.S. ERA information center phone number is (916) 322-5194.

**AAUW now joins the National Association of Commissions on Women, Business & Professional Women's Clubs, the N.E.A., and the National Women's Political Caucus, and the National Democratic Party in boycotting non-ratified states in all future conferences and conventions until the ERA is ratified!!!

***WWW (Women Who Want to be Women) have incorporated and are sending out a newsletter. They are opposing many other things than just ERA now.

****A special task force has been established in the Texas Women's Political Caucus to identify those districts that are vacant and those in which the incumbent is vulnerable. Once these districts have been selected, they will recruit pro-ERA candidates and advise them on how to run the campaign and win. They are also supporting pro-ERA and incumbent legislators. Contact: Barbara Vacker, Texans For ERA, 603 W. 13th, #203, Austin, Texas, 78701.

Houston Area Council

Representatives from 5 of 7 N.O.W. chapters in the Greater Houston area met in Houston on January 5 to discuss formation of an area council with these purposes:

1. Exchange information; coordinate activities and action alerts; make proposals for joint programs or work-shops.
2. Publish a monthly calendar to include events of general feminist interest and individual chapter programs, a copy to be sent to each chapter for selective inclusion in that chapter's newsletter.
3. Work out a procedure for making public statements which will truly reflect the unanimity or diversity of opinion which exists among the 7 chapters on a particular issue.

It was the concensus of Bay Area membership at our January general meeting that these purposes are good, but that this purely advisory council should avoid setting up with a formal structure. Marilyn Kinard, Rachel Reed, Dorothy Pearson, and Jeanne Saletan represented Bay Area at this first organizational meeting. A second is planned for Monday, February 2. Any member may attend. (Call Jeanne at 471-2862).

----Jeanne Saletan

Rape Task Force

The Task Force on Rape has set as goals public education and the opening of a local hospital to rape victims. Although we have just begun, we are already seeing progress in both these efforts. We have visited two police stations for lengthy interviews. The officers we spoke with agreed with us about the need for local treatment facilities for rape victims and said they would cooperate with us in working to arrange this. Evie Whitsett has invitations to speak twice at Clear Creek High School, and we have been asked to do a CR program for the Clear Lake Hospital emergency staff.

We need input from the community. If any of you has been a rape victim, please share this information with us. Complete anonymity will be preserved; you need not even give us your name - just CALL. We need these statistics to demonstrate to the police, the hospitals, and the public the need for what we are doing and recommending. Call Evie (488-1777) or Nora (554-6738).

The next meeting of the Task Force will be Saturday, February 7, at 8 a.m. (Yes, really 8 o'clock in the morning. Breakfast is served to soften the blow; whole wheat waffles this time.) at 1908 Fairfield N., League City. Anyone interested in this work is invited.

----Nora Mertz

Working In America: WOMEN'S PLACE

A series of programs will look at ways in which ideas about women and women's roles influence their occupational choices and their employment opportunities. Programs will include periods for informal discussion.

- February 5 7:30-9:30 p.m. - Equal pay for Equal Work: Beyond the Slogan
- February 6 1:30-5:00 p.m. - Moving Up in the World of Work
- February 7 9:30-4:00 p.m. - Working in San Antonio: Women's Place

The programs on Feb. 5 and 7 will be at the San Antonio YWCA, McCullough at Broadway, and the Feb. 6 program will be at the San Antonio Convention Center. Call Frances Hicks for additional information.

Head Start

Dickinson Head Start day care center, 23rd St. at Dunbar School, serves 44 children ages 3 through 5. Needed for use in the center are: clothing, children's phonograph records, books, old nature and sports magazines, ball, sturdy (non-sexist) toys in good repair, helping hands, money. Call Dorothy Pearson (332-3993) to arrange delivery, or get more information.

Women's Educational Equity Act: Advisory Council Meets

Bay Area N.O.W. members Mary Buxton and Twiss Butler constituted the entire "public" attending public meetings of two committees of the Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs in Irving, Texas on January 15 and 16, a situation which permitted an unusually close-up view as some 13 distinguished women from many areas of the U. S. educational establishment and bureaucracy sought to define goals for administering legislation directed toward eliminating sex bias, sex-role stereotyping, and "socialization" which prevent full participation of women in education programs and in American society.

With a Congressional appropriation of 6.27 million \$ for 1976, the Office of Education (HEW) expects to award between 25 and 40 general grants each year, ranging from \$5000 to \$200,000. These grants will be made to public agencies, non-profit organizations, and individuals for projects at all levels of education. In addition, 10 to 20 grants to \$15,000 will be awarded for innovative projects. Final regulations concerning these grants should appear soon in the Federal Register, with a 45-day period following for preparation and submission of grant proposals. Since program priorities appear to coincide with the objectives of the Continuing Task Force on education for Women, a proposal may be submitted for funds to support the 1976 Texas Textbook Protest effort.

Those who claim to perceive a faltering of the Women's Movement would be well advised to attend a meeting of this Council (which convenes at about 6-week intervals at various locations around the country). It is my belief that we observed the organizing of a new permanent bureaucracy placed in the policy makers' communication network. Its first priority is to mainstream women's issues - a process of legitimizing our goals. This Council appears to represent a new phase in the evolution of the Women's Equality Movement. It is probably significant that one of the first consultants to be brought in to serve the Council is Kathryn Clarenbach of the University of Wisconsin - a founding member of N.O.W.

---- M. Buxton, (T. Butler)

Review: AGAINST OUR WILL: MEN, WOMEN AND RAPE - Susan Brownmiller, Simon & Schuster, \$10.95

The first reviews of this book suggested that it would be a major contribution to feminist theory. After reading it, I must confirm this judgement with considerable enthusiasm. It is so good for the feminist cause that its very publication is a considerable victory (not to mention its selection by Book-of-the-Month Club). Attitudes toward traditional sex roles are surely never going to be the same again.

One of the best features of Brownmiller's work is the inspired selection of words for their feminist political implications. The first example of this is of course the title-- "Against our will..." Put that up against, "She asked for it," or any other belittlement of the event you may have heard. Only by using such mental evasions have men been able to maintain a comfortable self-image while exploiting the intimidation value of rapists against women. See Brownmiller on the heroic image of Jack the Ripper.

That men do so exploit rape by some of their number in order to limit the autonomy of all women is perhaps Brownmiller's most controversial thesis. Certainly her male reviewers are resisting or even failing to comprehend it.

But this is a very scholarly and well-researched book. Brownmiller's evidence for all her consciousness-raising theses is going to be very hard to refute. And a lot of it is going to be very useful to us in debate. Did you know that 43% of rapes reported in one recent study were gang rapes? Brownmiller has a chapter on women's vague fantasies of being overpowered by their lovers---but a gang of lovers? (Hunter Thompson's study of the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang notes their use of gang rape to "punish" female associates. Ed.)

Two other clever word-usages deserve mention. On page 176 we find, "Freud himself, remarkable as this may seem, said nothing about rapists. His confederates were slightly more loquacious, but not by much." This label is justified by later obloquy laid on the school of psycho-analysis (p. 315): "The dogma that women are masochistic by nature and crave the 'lust of pain' was first enunciated by Freud in a 1924 paper titled 'The Economic Problem of Masochism'." Brownmiller believes that this made the "she asked for it" school of un-thought

respectable in our culture. On another page, she speaks of black and white women recognizing an enemy, in a sentence where readers expect the plural form, thus underlining that we are victimized as and by a class, and not only as and by individuals.

If reading this book seems to be emotionally difficult, I believe the difficulty is the same that we have always had as feminists, which must have contributed to our foremothers' limiting of goals--it is not cheering to review the stark evidence of men's contempt for women. Brownmiller identifies rape, that crime unique to humans, as the ultimate expression of contempt. And yet the book is liberating. It is better to know these things than not to know them. We are at last beginning to resist in our own minds all the de-meaning concepts of our sex fostered by human cultures for political reasons. Some of us are now successfully resisting the idea and the act of rape, as detailed near the end of Brownmiller's book. Courage, sisters, "We're going to make it after all." *-M. Rendal*

About Paying Dues to National N.O.W.

One point to consider: Reports of the dismissal of the 13 National N.O.W. Executive office staff and the hiring of five new staff people led me to conclude that it is unlikely that this staff can process or cash checks for National dues.

Since I am employed at the headquarters of a national professional society of 26,000 members, I did some checking. I found that processing membership applications and dues checks alone requires fulltime effort by 3 or 4 employees, including a highly efficient staff member who has held the job for six years. The work is facilitated by an in-house computer and computer staff.

While circumstances surely differ from one organization to another, note that National N.O.W. is reported to have 60,000 members. At this office, nearly 50 people service such member needs as legislative involvement, education, membership communication, development, and accounting services. It would seem that N.O.W. has similar obligations to its members.

On the basis of this comparison, I inevitably conclude that if National N.O.W. dues are paid, the National N.O.W. office, as presently organized, will never know it.

----Mary Buxton

COMMUNICATIONS

From Houston Area Feminist Federal Credit Union (HAFFCU): With the close of the first operating quarter, HAFFCU has (December 31, 1975) loans of \$20,765 and shares of \$27,311 with the membership standing at 224. The annual meeting will be held Mar. 11 at 7 p.m. in Capital National Bank's auditorium. The purpose of this meeting is to report the current status of HAFFCU and elect board and credit committee members. Further information can be obtained by calling Rema Lou Brown, 488-1896.

From Linda Eichblatt: For a variety of reasons, I am resigning my position as treasurer of Bay Area NOW. I have held the position for about a year and a half; it is time for someone else to assume the duties of "financial manager" of the chapter.

The job takes only a few hours per month and requires no special expertise other than reliability and accurate record-keeping. It is an ideal job for anyone who wishes to become closely involved with the activities of Bay Area NOW.

If you are interested in this position, why not nominate yourself at the meeting on February 5? I am, of course, available to explain the necessary procedures to my replacement, as well as to answer any questions that might arise in the future.

From Frances Hicks: Four months have passed since we voted to try a new structure for Bay Area NOW which has no elected officers, with chapter jobs being performed by volunteers on a monthly basis. I have enjoyed seeing so many members taking on new responsibilities and growing in feminism. Increased publicity of meetings and programs which reflect members' varied interests have surely brought more women out to meetings. The only problem with having only one meeting a month is finding time after programs to visit with members and guests and having adequate time to discuss and carry out NOW business. Maybe we could have an informal meeting between program meetings only to discuss issues and ongoing projects and have the official voting after our program meeting as we do now. Bring your thoughts on this matter to our February meeting so that we can decide how Bay Area NOW will be most effective!

A Work of Artifice

The bonsai tree
 in the attractive pot
 could have grown 80 feet tall
 on the side of a mountain
 till split by lightening.
 But a gardener
 carefully pruned it.
 It is nine inches high.
 Everyday as he whittles back the branches
 the gardener croons,
 It is your nature
 to be small and cozy,
 domestic and weak,
 how lucky, little tree,
 to have a pot to grow in.
 With living creatures
 one must begin very early
 to dwarf their growth:
 the bound feet,
 the crippled brain,
 the hair in curlers,
 the hands you love to touch.

---Marge Peirce, Civil Rights Digest

READ ALL ABOUT IT IN THE NEW

FEMINIST NEWSPAPER:

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DUES DUE!!!

Reach into your pockets PDQ and deliver those dues! The future effectiveness of our chapter depends on your response! Mail your check to Linda Eichblatt, 16589 Buccaneer, Houston, Tx, 77058, or deliver your \$15 in person at the next meeting.

JOIN N.O.W.

_____ I would like to become a member of Bay Area NOW and National NOW. (\$15)

_____ I want to join but can only afford \$_____.

_____ I am not a member but wish to receive NOW NEWS for a year. (\$3)

_____ I would like to make a contribution of \$_____ to NOW.

NAME _____ HOME PHONE _____ OTHER PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY AND ZIP _____

Bay Area N.O.W. has my permission to include my name, address, and phone number on its membership roster. YES _____ NO _____

Interests and/or skills which I can contribute to Bay Area N.O.W. projects:

Criticisms of Bay Area N.O.W.'s programs, organization, and goals:
