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**Breakthrough**  
Where Women Are News

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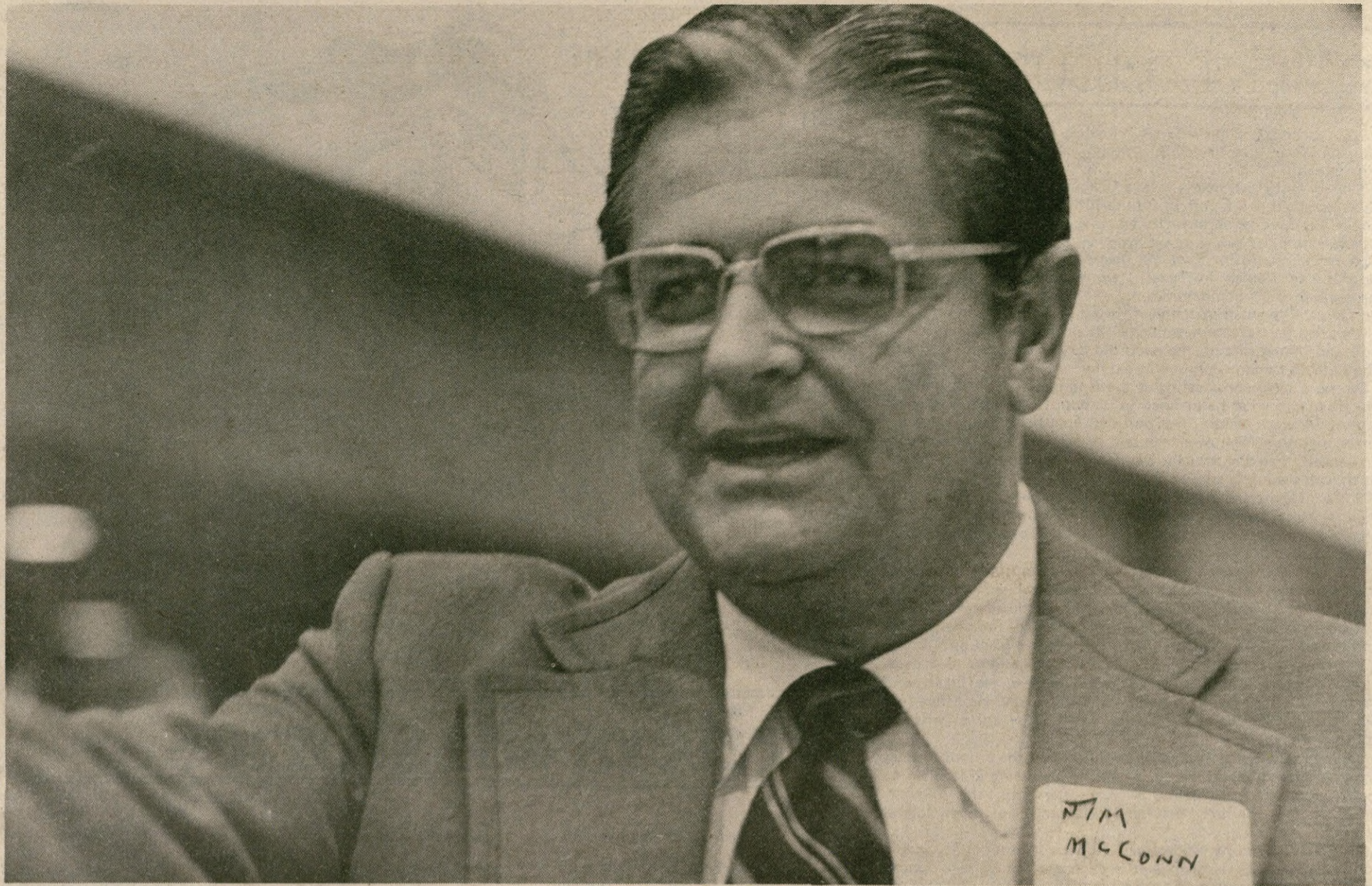
February 1978

50 cents

tribute  
to  
nikki



see  
page 2



Betsy Siegel

*"I will be the women's advocate and the advocate of all the people."*

# Meet the Mayor

By Dixie Lee Hawkins

Campaigning to become "Houston's Next Great Mayor," Jim McConn promised to abolish the women's advocate position at City Hall. He kept that promise—in rather spectacular fashion. Whether he will also keep his promise to be "the women's advocate and the advocate of all the people" remains to be seen. McConn says he will. Others suspect his handling of the women's advocate situation is not overly encouraging for the future.

Dr. Nikki Van Hightower came away from a post-election meeting with McConn with the impression that she would remain in his administration in some similar capacity, particularly since she was no longer an appointee of the previous mayor, but a city employee covered by civil service. Instead, on January 6, McConn told the all-male Downtown Rotary Club that both the women's advocate position and Dr. Nikki Van Hightower would have no place in his administration—an announcement McConn had failed to make to Van Hightower. She was not officially notified of her dismissal until several hours after the rest of Houston had been informed.

McConn's public revelation came in response to a series of questions from reporters during the luncheon panel session. "I have apologized to Dr. Van Hightower personally and publicly for the way that

it came about," says McConn. (Dr. Van Hightower states that she has not received a personal apology from McConn.) "That was unfortunate, and I admit my error in doing it, but I have pledged to be very open and very honest and candid with the media. The question was asked and I really didn't see any way to dodge the question. I don't want to be dodging media questions."

In an interview with *Breakthrough*, McConn adds he is not interested in a "dollar a year" volunteer for the position or a woman "loaned" by a company that pays her salary. Instead, the Mayor says the women's advocate post will be "absorbed" by other positions at City Hall.

"We have two women executive assistants and an administrative aide who is a woman, and we're very hopeful that during our administration, throughout the various departments, we will have women at decision- and policy-making levels. I think this is a better approach to it than a single women's advocate, and let me try to explain why.

"Without casting any ill light on Dr. Van Hightower, I think a single person trying to represent all of the women of Houston is going to fall short. I got a lot of feedback from a lot of women that, 'Dr. Van Hightower did not represent me.' I think that, of its natural traits, a person in that position tends to build their own position rather than to serve the needs of all of the women of Houston.

"Women's needs are varied and different, depending on their own philosophies, depending on ethnic and some-

times religious backgrounds. So I think our approach to it makes more sense than a single women's advocate."

McConn's approach appears to focus at least some attention on Executive Assistant Marsha Wayne, who holds a Master of Business Administration from Harvard and works for McConn's administration at a dollar a year. Wayne describes herself as a "liaison" with all women's groups and women in general, "not an advocate so much, but a sounding board." Wayne says part of her job is handling calls and requests that used to go to Van Hightower and briefing the Mayor on requests and issues involving women.

Despite controversy over the women's advocate, McConn thinks he's been treated "very fairly" by women's groups, particularly feminists. "We've had some very serious, but I think sincere, objections to the Dr. Van Hightower matter, but that was expected. You know, as long as people are expressing their sincere belief, they have every right to do that, and I think that they've been very fair about it. I think that they have put out a challenge to Mayor McConn to 'Let's see if you're going to handle the women's problems of this city without a women's advocate.' I think we can."

Q. How do you intend to do this, Mr. Mayor?

A. With the inclusion of women at high positions in city government who can answer all of the women's problems,

not just the feminist' problems—because if you were to take the city of Houston and say the population is divided 50-50 male and female, I suspect that among the females, it might be 50 percent feminist and 50 percent others. I don't want this office devoting all of its attention to half of the women. I don't think that's fair.

Q. Did it seem to you, then, that the women's advocate position had become a feminist position?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Was it controversial in symbolism, as opposed to substance?

A. Yes, yes it was, in my opinion, and that's the reason it no longer exists. I don't think, for example, that a common, ordinary housewife who elects to be a common ordinary housewife, and likes her position as a common, ordinary housewife, was at all represented by the women's advocate. I think she can be with our approach to it.

Q. And the feminists?

A. I think they can be, too. We don't intend to exclude feminists. They have their problems, and we want to hear what their problems are and try to address ourselves to them, but not to the exclusion of that other fifty percent, or whatever that percent is, of people who are not or do not want to be a member of the feminist movement, and there're a lot of women like that—a lot of them.

Continued on page 20

# nikki tribute

Sally Chalmers, Supervisor of Primates, Cats and Bears at the Houston Zoo, has named a "special leopard" after Nikki Van Hightower.

"She is feisty but gentle," says Chalmers, "and one of a kind, so she seemed like a perfect tribute to Nikki Van Hightower for all she has done for women city employees."

Van Hightower has also received abundant national acclaim. Two recent examples: *Redbook* magazine named her one of the outstanding women in Texas, "women initiating change and progress in their communities." *Ladies Home Journal* nominated her as a "woman of the year." And Mayor McConn fired her.

It was all part of the new-mayor ritual. The big business luncheon and dinner circuit, the good old boys clubs, the pressing of the flesh, as Lyndon Johnson called it.

During a luncheon meeting at the Rotary Club, a reporter asked the mayor what he planned to do about Dr. Nikki Van Hightower. (A week before, McConn had voiced his opinion to the press that Van Hightower's public image was "much more controversial" than she actually was. He was impressed and it looked as though she might stay on.)

Not so. Maybe there was a temptation to win over the Briscoe-supporting Rotarians. Whatever the reason, McConn replied that there would be no place for Van Hightower in his administration.

The audience hooted and clapped their approval for several minutes. Observers commented that McConn seemed "carried away" by it all. Within the hour, it was on all the airwaves.

Reporters burst into Van Hightower's office, broke the news to her and filed their live reports on her stunned reaction.

She tried to reach the Mayor before responding to their questions, but was told that he could not see her. He finally met with her at 6:30 p.m. He had very little to say. He offered no apologies for his handling of the matter, contrary to what he told reporters.

Van Hightower was "personally injured" by the callous manner in which he chose to get rid of her. (Addressing a seminar on battered women at TRIMS shortly afterwards, she told the audience that she had "first-hand experience" of psychological abuse.)

Dr. Van Hightower deserves public tribute, not public humiliation. She has been a true advocate for women - vocal, visible and courageous. She has fought for the needs of all women. Her social conscience extends to those who have opposed her. She has politicized the women of Houston, both for and against her, and none of them will go back to what they were before.

We challenge the capabilities of a man who admits to a limited understanding of women's concerns, and yet feels he can be the advocate for all the people of Houston.

Dr. Van Hightower is a hero, a respected national proponent of women's rights, and we are angry at the cavalier way she has been treated by the mayor.

It is an arrogant abuse of the power of the office.

# little rapes

Hey, baby, where ya goin', whatcha doin', what's happenin'? Ya lookin' good, sugar. Nice ass. Looka them legs. Wanna give me some? Mama. Hey, look at those. Where's your bra, honey? Don't they get cold that way? I'll keep 'em warm. What have you got there? What a nice piece. Wanna drink? Where ya goin' so fast? Can I come too? Ha, ha, ha. Ain't ya goin' to talk to us? Ain't ya even gonna smile? Whatsa matter with you? You stuck up or something? Think you're too good, huh? Ugly bitch anyway, fat legs. Hey, wanna come up to my house? Show ya a real good time. You got nice legs, honey. Got anything between 'em for me?...Hey, look at that one, what a pig...Hey you, your blouse is undone. Whooooo. Ain't ya gonna give me a peek? Bouncy, bouncy, bouncy. Doin' anythin' to-night? How much? Huh? How much for it? Ten bucks? Five? Hey, whatsa matter with you? I'm just trying to be friendly...

Rape, as we define it, is any sexual intimacy, whether by direct physical contact or not, that is forced on one person by another. If you are subjected (many of us are) to this kind of violation every day, a gradual erosion begins—an erosion of your self-respect and privacy. You lose a little when you are shaken out of your daydreams by the whistles and comments of the construction workers you have to pass. You lose a little when a junior executive looks down your blouse or gives you a familiar pat at work. You lose a little to the obnoxious drunk at the next table, to that man on the subway, to the guys in the drive-in.

In themselves, these instances are disgusting, repellent—in fact, intolerable. Acceptance of them as normal is dangerous. This is one of the many ways in which women are prepared to be victims.

[reprinted from *Against Rape* by Andra Medea and Kathleen Thompson]



# writers & stories

Dixie Lee Hawkins	1	Meet the Mayor
Carol Bartholdi	3	The Right to be Informed
Diana Potts	4	Three Women in the Mayor's Office
Victoria Hodge Lightman	6	On film: <i>The Turning Point</i>
Anita Davidson	7	Cezanne and Women
Beth Rigel Daugherty	8	On stage: <i>The Mound Builders</i>
Deborah Diamond Hicks and Nancy Landau	9	Caribbean Cruise
Gabrielle Cosgriff	10	Pats, Pans, and Dead Pans
	11	Poetry
Wendy Haskell Meyer	16	On health: Dr. Marrie Richards
Susan Mac Manus	17	Up with Umpires
Neal Barrett	17	Another Great Start on the Week
Maxine Atlas	18	Streetfarmer's Co-op
Rachel Burke	19	A Classroom in a Living Room

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Business	Deborah Diamond Hicks
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Proofreading	Neal Barrett, Ruth Barrett, Marshal Lightman
Typesetting	Gabrielle Cosgriff, Cheryl Knott
	Cheryl Knott, Victoria Hodge Lightman, Lynne Mutchler

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# Rape: media vs. police

## The right to be informed

second in a series

By Carol Bartholdi

During 1977, there were 1,080 reported rapes in Houston; more than twice the number reported in 1976. Crime Analyst Gary Nathanson of the Houston Police Department estimated that there was one rape every eight hours.

These figures are conservative because the police department estimates are based on reported rapes. They also estimate that only 40 per cent are reported. (The FBI says that only 10 per cent of rapes are reported.)

If the rape rate is so high, why do we read so little about it in daily newspapers? Why do the local television and radio station give us the details of car accidents, fires and murders, but seldom report on the high incidence of rape?

"There are so many, one by itself isn't really news unless circumstances make it so," said Phil Hevner, a police beat reporter for the *Houston Post*.

"There are too many," said Christy Drennan, police reporter for the *Houston Chronicle*. "I could spend every day down at rape squad. Usually when someone commits a long series, then we'll report on it. There must be an added element."

"One poor woman getting raped is not a news story," said Mike Capps of KPRC television news. "In my way of thinking, it is the single hardest story to cover as far as t.v. is concerned."

Capps stressed that the biggest concern is for the victims of rape. When a story is written about a rape case, the name and address of the woman are not published. Rape is the only crime in which the identity of the victim is concealed.

"There is so much emotion involved," Capps said.

"It is seldom that a reporter has reason or occasion to speak to a rape victim," said Hevner, "because most are not anxious to talk to the media."

Women often do not report rapes and would like to avoid the media because they do not want their friends and people they work with to know what happened. Some want to avoid the ordeal of a trial, and fear prying in to their personal lives. Sometimes the attacker was a family friend or someone they work with, and therefore they would like to avoid publicity.

The media show an "awareness of the sensationalism that can be in stories about rape," said Linda Cryer, director of the Rape Treatment and Prevention Center. "If the coverage is not careful, and extensive details are published, it would preclude any reporting of rape by other victims."

While the media do try to protect the identity of women who have been raped, they also feel a certain responsibility to report certain rapes to the community.

"You get back to the old conflict," said Judd McIlvain, reporter for Channel 11 news. "The people's right to know and to be cautious and protect themselves and the police department wanting you to hold off on reporting so they have a better chance to catch the guy."

McIlvain said the reporters hold back on certain stories but that a series of rape incidents creates a special situation. "People have the right to know if the rumors are true or not," he said.



logo of Houston Rape Crisis Coalition

Mark Delaquis

**"Rape should be publicized and politicized in Houston because it is not being investigated well enough."**

**—Gail Padgett, co-director  
Houston Rape Crisis Coalition**

McIlvain recently broadcast a story about a series of seven rapes believed to be committed by the same person. The police were against any publicity about the rapes. McIlvain said he went to Montrose, to the area where these rapes had been committed and asked a young woman who was walking alone if she was aware of the rapes.

"She had no idea it was going on," McIlvain said. "The rapist would have to be pretty naive to think the police do not know anything about him—that no one had reported the rapes."

Most reporters feel that the people of the community have a right to know certain details of a crime so that they may take precautions. If they do not know that a rapist is operating in a certain area, they might not avoid that area or be cautious.

This attitude often comes into direct conflict with the police desire to keep details of a pattern quiet, so that they may predict certain things about the next crime and try to capture the man before he can commit another rape.

"They ask us not to print something every day," said Drennan. "They think every crook in town reads the

*Chronicle*. I'm told that every single day."

"Where you have a series that appears to be done by the same person, the police department is in a dilemma. You want to tell everyone so that all are forewarned, but if you do you take the chance that the person will disappear for a while and surface later," said Vic Driscoll, Assistant District Attorney and a board member of the Houston Rape Crisis Coalition.

McIlvain said Lt. Larry Earls of rape detail believes the press did have a negative effect on at least one rape investigation in recent years. The press published reports of a rapist who ran into the cars of women who were driving alone. When the women stopped to exchange insurance company names with the man he attacked and raped them.

After these attacks were publicized the man stopped. However, some time later a rapist with a similar *modus operandi* appeared in Dallas.

McIlvain said reports on the "beer-belly rapist" had one effect, though the rapes continued. "He went on a diet."

Gail Padgett, co-director of the Houston Rape Crisis Coalition, said the issue of rape should be publicized and politicized in Houston, because it is not being investigated well enough.

"The police have been telling us they do not have enough people to investigate rapes."

Padgett said she was at the police department recently speaking to one of the detectives on rape detail. Two police officers approached them, carrying a pair of blue jeans. The zipper of the jeans was covered with dried blood. They were found at the scene of a rape in Montrose. One of the officers suggested that they should have been examining the scenes of this series of rapes.

"The jeans had been there several weeks and no one had been back since," Padgett said. "I see the ever-rising rape rate as a bad thing against the police department, since it is the only major crime that is rising so much. Why shouldn't efforts be concentrated on it?"

"The media have not latched on to this monstrously increasing rape rate. It is still considered a woman's problem rather than a community problem."

Padgett says it is a question of priorities. "Which of the city problems will get money? Rape will not get the money unless we can make a ruckus about it."

Padgett said Mayor Jim McConn's firing of the women's advocate has placed the burden of representing women's views on the women employed by the city government. The Rape Prevention and Treatment Center is a city program, and therefore its director, Linda Cryer, is in a prime position to represent this concern of women, she said.

"The city should be concerned with the prevention of rape, and should put more interest into such measures. If rape were more of a political issue, it could produce more staff and more money devoted to it," she said.

The Houston Rape Crisis Coalition, a non-profit, all-volunteer organization, also could be of help, Padgett said. Its members, besides operating a hot line, have spoken to groups of women at many companies, schools and city departments in Houston. It now is planning a seminar about rape for employees of SETEC, a large security firm which protects Galleria and all Gerald Hines properties in Houston.

Carolyn Craven, a professional television journalist, is one person who has gone to the media with the story of what happens to a woman who has been raped. Craven is a television reporter in San Francisco. She reported on a series of 60 rapes believed to be committed by the same man in the Bay Area. Last month, this man sought her out, broke into her home and raped her.

Craven, unlike most rape victims, is not shunning the media. Jan. 30 she appeared on ABC's Good Morning, America program to speak about rape. She also wrote a story about her experience and the outrage, anger, guilt and shame a woman feels after being raped. This story was published in newspapers across the country.

Craven said she is using television as her weapon to help stop rape. She wants to encourage every woman who is raped to report the crime to the police. "This is the only way to stop it," she said, "to report it and get those men arrested for the crime."

"I'm pleased that the mayor let us women come in here and do the job that we can do, and there is no more restriction put on us than men. There's no difference. We were just hired to do a job...He doesn't give us any more orders, and he's not hovering over us to see if we're going to goof or not. He just seems to trust us to do the job we need to do. I can truthfully say that I have seen nothing in his attitude that makes him feel any differently toward those of us who are women."

This statement by Fleda Coats, a newly appointed administrative assistant to the Mayor, seems representative of the attitudes of executive assistants Florence Neumeyer and Marsha Wayne, as well. Neumeyer said she had "equal pay and equal treatment." Her salary is \$30,000, Coats earns \$25,000 and Wayne has agreed to work for \$1 a year.\*

All three women bring strong business backgrounds to their office—real estate (Neumeyer), construction (Coats) and corporate management (Wayne). They gave gracious and confident interviews. Yet they were wary of publicity and two of them voiced anxiety about the tape recorder. "I see tape recorders and I go ape. I see cameras and I go ape. I guess I'm just not geared to publicity for some reason or another," Fleda Coats said. These women are not accustomed to being in the public eye, and they seemed to feel that their positions on various issues—particularly women's issues—were irrelevant to the performance of their jobs. They seemed reluctant to express opinions or take stands.

Two of them have been active in conservative political campaigns, and the third (Wayne) describes herself as "apolitical." Only one (Neumeyer) has had any contact with women's organizations through her work with the Republican Women's Clubs.

What power they do have is access to information and access to the mayor. McConn says his doors will be open. If specific programs are presented to his assistants, they will be obliged to evaluate and present them to him. Now that the women's advocate office is history, Houston women and those employed by the city should contact Marsha Wayne, as one of her duties will be acting liaison with women and women's groups.

In fairness to these three women, it should be noted that each has been in her position for only a few weeks, and they all said they were still trying to find out all the things they didn't know—departments, personnel, board members, and the myriad interconnections. "Now, if you come back in three months or six months, I may be screaming my head off, but I can tell you more," said Coats — Diana Potts

# three women in the mayor's office Who they are - how they see their role.

Interviews by Diana Potts



fleda coats

Whenever a disgruntled citizen calls the mayor's office to file a complaint, the person she is most likely to talk to is Fleda Coats, administrative assistant to Mayor McConn. "You'd be surprised," explained Coats, "at the number of people who, instead of going through the various departments, would rather call the mayor. When they do, it's my job to try to get back to these people, let them know that we're trying to help them, and then go to the proper departments, tell them these people need help, and then see that it gets done. And, of course, in a lot of instances it gets done very slowly. But we try."

Coats seems like a person to whom diplomacy comes naturally. She has a casual, unaffected conversational style, and it is easy to imagine her calming irate citizens and convincing them that she is on their side and doing everything she can to help. It's the good old girl school of politics, and she's very skillful and direct.

"The reason I wanted to start out helping is because I know so many people in Houston, and they're good people, and it's sort of a pleasure to be able to help them out. Just yesterday a lady called, and she had had sewage in her house for five days. You know, when it rains and everything just starts...Well, that woman was just nearly crazy. Now bear in mind, this might get old to me. I've only been here for a month. But it sure does give you a good pleasure, when you know some poor soul who's been mopping for five days, and you can keep on and try to get her some help...I like my job."

Coats was born in Arkansas and has lived in Houston for 25 years. She spent the WWII years in Oklahoma City, but from the way she talks about Houston, you would think she had been here all her life. Much of her business background is in construction, her husband's business interest. She was the office manager of an architectural firm for a

number of years and she has also been active in several political campaigns.

"I worked for Mayor Welch all of the years that he ran, and I worked in Mr. McConn's council race, some Congressional races, the Lt. Governor's race back when Wayne Connelly was running, and for some legislators. I've watched through the years what good people in office do for a city. Witness, we've got Houston, because we've got some real good, qualified people in that office. You can take cities that start out like Houston, and they're for all practical purposes bankrupt, and they have very high unemployment, whereas Houston was handled by competent men and this is what has resulted. It's a good city. It's made my living for all of these years and I'm real proud of it and I'll tell you I am."

Given the right race, Fleda Coats could probably win some votes herself,

Continued on page 19

Florence Neumeyer is an executive assistant to the mayor, and her biggest job during the next two years will be serving as liaison with the Houston Independent School District. She will also be the liaison with other school districts and with intergovernmental bodies, which means she will be helping to coordinate and research any city project involving county, state, or federal collaboration. She will also be working closely with the Houston-Galveston Area Council, an organization of about 13 surrounding counties. Any one of these duties will require a tremendous amount of work, and taken together the responsibility seems staggering.

Before coming to the mayor's office, Neumeyer's professional background was in real estate. She is a native Houstonian and a licensed realtor. Aside from

her business interests, she has devoted time to church, school and political activities. "I have worked for Congressman Archer. I have worked for Senator John Tower. I have worked for the school board elections. I could just go on and on, but those would be the ones that are well-known." When asked if her real estate background would have any practical value in her present position or a direct effect on her job, she replied, "I don't think it will have any direct effect, except that I am used to dealing with contracts and people."

The first major HISD project that Neumeyer will be working on is the proposed criminal justice/police science magnet school. Although during his campaign McConn described the school as a "pre-academy" for the Houston Police Academy, Neumeyer visualizes the school

as "a good training ground for those who wish to go into criminology in any phase. It could lead into a number of careers, whether it's being a police officer, to going into law, to working perhaps in the business or administrative end of it."

Neumeyer expects the magnet school project to be non-controversial. "This looks like a project that will come about, and it seems to be very well accepted by the community. That's one that we have great hopes for." However, since McConn has spoken of the school as a possible solution to the problem of minority recruitment on the Houston police force, there are a few questions that come to mind.

Q: Don't you think that 14 or 15 is sort of an early age to be deciding to turn towards police work? Don't you think that's a decision that requires a mature judgement?

A: I can put the question back to you again. Do you think that's too young for a person to decide that they want to do something in the medical field or the performing and visual arts or engineering?



florence neumeyer

Continued on page 19

\*Mayor McConn told Breakthrough (see page 1) that he was not interested in a "dollar a year" volunteer to fill a position similar to that held by Dr. Nikki Van Hightower. Wayne will act as a liaison with women and women's groups.

In addition to serving as the mayor's liaison to women's groups, Executive Assistant Marsha Wayne will also work with public transportation, public services, health, library, and planning coordination.

She will be working for a dollar a year. Her husband worked for a dollar a year for Fred Hofheinz, and when Mayor McConnell asked Bill Wayne to suggest candidates for executive assistant positions, he told the mayor about his wife.

Last year Marsha Wayne worked for Barry Goodman in public transportation. Before that she was at home raising her children for several years, and earlier still she was in private industry. Her undergraduate degree is in psychology from the University of Cincinnati and she holds a Masters in Business Administration from Harvard.

"I worked for Elizabeth Arden as a product manager in charge of their treatment products. I went from there to Beck industries where I was an executive in charge of women's retailing, which encompassed about \$22 million worth of stores around the country. The presidents of the stores reported to me, and I reported to the president of the conglomerate. I did financial analysis, liaison work, surveys of possible acquisitions, general administration and personnel hiring."

Wayne's class at Harvard was only the second one to admit women. Of 700 students, 13 were women, and 10 of those graduated. "It was interesting. I had professors who swore they had never taught a woman before and they weren't going to do it now. The first day I went to class, I saw a vacant seat, and I said to the man sitting by it, 'May I sit down?' He said, 'No you may not. My roommate applied to Harvard, and he didn't get in. And you got in? No, you may not sit down.' So it was very interesting. I enjoyed it. With 700 men there and only 13 girls, it was some place to go. It was hard. I think there are more women there now, and I think the professors are more used to having women there, so they're not quite as disgruntled about it."

Wayne describes herself as "bright." "I remember that during high school and college I was always used to being number one in my class and king of the mountain. And then when I got to Harvard, everyone else had been number one in his class and king of the mountain, so the competition was fierce."

The treatment of women at Harvard prepared her for prevailing attitudes toward women in business, where the most obvious sex discrimination was in salaries. "They said, 'well, you're 25 years old, and you're making \$20,000, so why are you complaining?'" Even though I was doing the same work as men who were much older—if they couldn't handle it they would give it to me—and they would be making \$50,000."

Wayne has lived in Houston for seven years. During this time, she has not been associated with any women's groups. Now, in addition to dealing with women's groups, she will probably be the person who will deal with the problems of individual women that were previously referred to Nikki Van Hightower. She has expressed a willingness to talk to any groups or individuals who wish to see her, although thus far only a couple of organizations have set up appointments. As a liaison, Wayne seems to see her job primarily that of "listening."



marsha wayne

### on women and her work

**WOMEN'S CONCERNS:** I'm not really familiar enough to tell you. I have been talking to people, and I assume I will be talking to more people. I will be a liaison with outside groups. But when it comes to pro-life or anti-life, or this or that, those are really federal issues, and I don't think that what I feel is very important to their getting passed or not getting passed. I see my area more within the city. I have been checking somewhat with affirmative action, trying to find out what some of the areas are, but I just can't tell you at this time, because I am not familiar enough with it.

**NIKKI VAN HIGHTOWER:** Oh heaven help me! I don't know her, and I haven't followed what she's done and what she hasn't done. As I understand it, my job is to be more of a sounding board for all women, whether they're fat or skinny or housewives or whatever. And I think her job was probably restricted more to one area of women (feminist women).

**FEMINISM:** It depends on what kind of feminist you want to talk about. There are so many different people who say they are feminists. I'm concerned about women and women's rights, if that's considered being a feminist.

**ERA:** Personally I am for the ERA, but I don't feel that what I think is going to influence whether it is passed or not, so I don't see that it is my role to say whether I'm for it or against it. As I understand it, the laws are pretty much there that say there can be no discrimination because of sex. There has to be equal pay, (an) equal chance to do the same job...So I don't know that the passage of the ERA will make that much difference.

**IWY CONFERENCE OR ANTI RALLY:** Oh my goodness. (Silence.) OK. I'm going to try to duck that question. I obviously could have gone, if I had wanted to go, and I didn't go. I stayed at home with my children. I don't think where I would have gone is important to my job, OK? And so I would rather just kind of duck the question.

**POLITICAL AFFILIATION:** I am apolitical. I vote independently.

**COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:** I try to do my thing and when I'm not doing that, I try to spend most of my time with my children and my family, so I don't really have too much time to join things. I belong to a church choir and I'm on the board of the Symphony, but that's about all.

**CITY PREGNANCY BENEFITS:** As I understand it, there isn't any pregnancy policy at all. It's kind of a departmental thing and not a city-wide thing.

**PRIORITY IN OFFICE:** Well, obviously public transportation. I've worked in public transportation before, and there's so much that needs to be done. It's so vital to Houston, so I really think that it's a big concern of everybody's. ...We have the Metropolitan Transit Authority election coming up soon, and that's very important.

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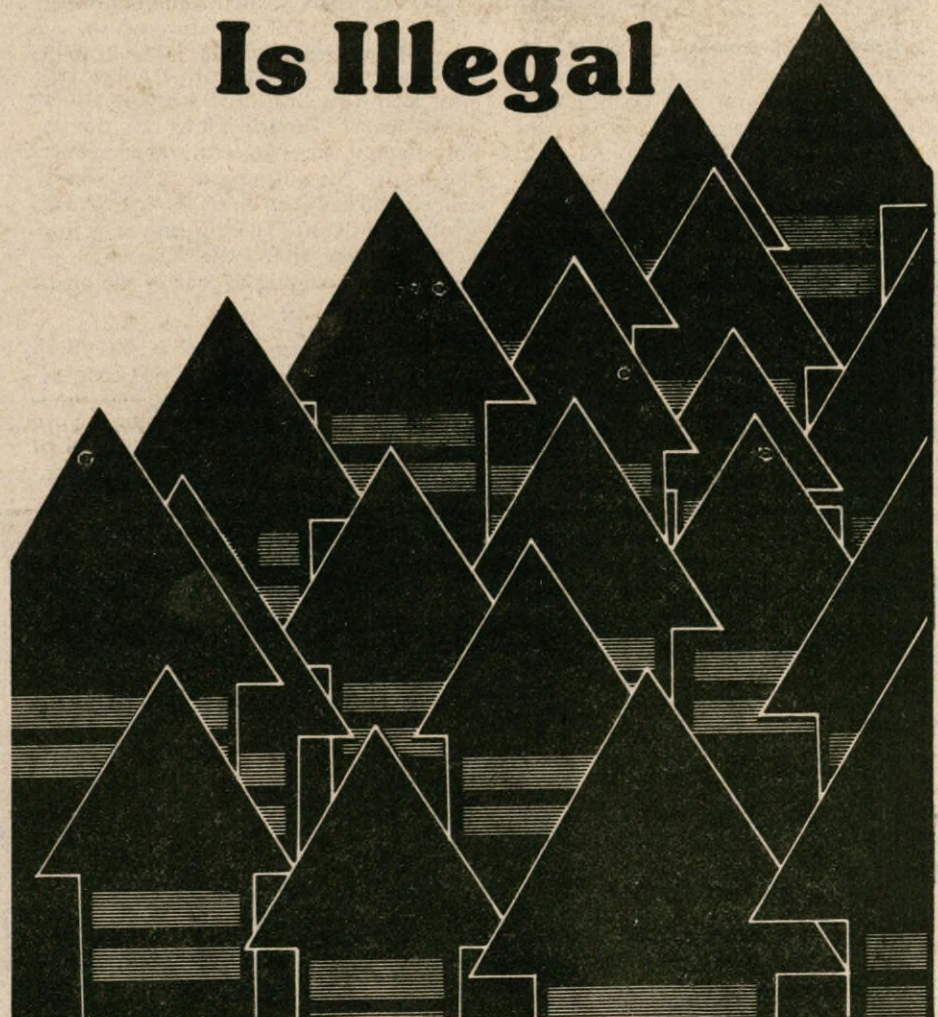
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on film  
by Victoria Hodge Lightman

If *Saturday Night Fever* made you want to get up and dance, *The Turning Point* will seduce you into rushing right out and buying a season ticket to your local ballet troupe. The industry seems to have found the secret of making musicals with the realism we insist on having in our entertainment. So even if we're not singing yet, we are dancing and loving every minute of it. Or as the gangster's moll in the Marx brothers' *A Night at the Opera* exclaims, "I want to live! I want to dance! I want to ha-cha-cha-cha!"

*The Turning Point* is more choreographed than directed by Herbert Ross (*The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*, *The Sunshine Boys*). Ross' career began as a choreographer in the ballet and then he went into Broadway and films. Ballet seems to be his special love, and the dance sequences in *The Turning Point* are exquisite. His wife, Nora Kaye, is the executive producer for the film. She was billed as America's "foremost dramatic ballerina" until her retirement from the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) in 1960. It is odd then to see a parallel character to Ross in the film. Rosie, played by Anthony Zerbe, is a man who gave up conducting ballet for Broadway and is reproached as being "a man without soul."

The best reason to see *The Turning Point* is to watch Mikhail Baryshnikov and Leslie Browne of the ABT. Baryshnikov is the first ballet superstar and the first to be so well documented on film while he is still in his prime. His movements are powerful and magnificent; he reduces the audience to involuntary ooh's and ah's. He is the quintessence of physical perfection. It's ironic that after all the years of persecution and ridicule that male dancers have had to contend with, our next male sex symbol could be a ballet star.

Leslie Browne, who plays opposite Baryshnikov in the somewhat hokey (almost Ken Russellish) love story, is also a lovely dancer. Though not as inspiring as Baryshnikov, she is graceful and energetic. She has all the enthusiasm of the young dancer who has been given her first chance to show her stuff. There is no real acting necessary here as Browne's life is an almost perfect parallel to that of the character Emilia.

There are two stories in this film, and Ross' strength obviously lies with the ballet sequences. The story going on behind all this is a fairly simple one that deals with the classic "road not taken" and "What curious memories we all have." The actresses, luckily for Ross, require little direction. Anne Bancroft plays Emma, an aging prima ballerina; and Shirley MacLaine plays Deedee, her long-time friend who gave up a similar career for marriage and a family.

Emma and Deedee are involved in a complex relationship where they love, hate, admire, despise, envy, respect, support and abuse each other. When they were younger they competed for the role in Anna Karenina (a fictional ballet created for the plot). At the same time, each chose the life she wanted: "...and you got pregnant," "...and you got 19 curtain calls." Twenty years later they find themselves in competition again, each envying the other's life. Was it really what they wanted; how different might it have been? Or, as Deedee puts it, "What's it like to be you now?"

They influenced each other during that first turning point, and it is only logical that they should seek each other out now. They are struggling to redefine their egos. They need a reassurance that will only be satisfied when it comes from each to the other.

# WOMEN AND POWER

How is power used? Who has power? How do you get power? Does oppression truly end with women's liberation or does the concept remain the same while the oppressed group changes?

These and other questions will be considered in *Women and Power: A Workshop on New Definitions of Power* on Saturday, March 4. Sponsored by The Women's Group of The First Unitarian Church, an organization devoted to awakening consciousness of women's position in society, the workshop will benefit the new Houston Area Women's Center. Registration is \$10 and proceeds will benefit the planned Houston Area Women's Center.

Leadership for this event will be provided by a distinguished group of local women, plus special guest, Zillah R. Eisenstein, faculty member at Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York. Her book on the subject of women and power will be published in March.

Participants include Theolo Petteway, past president of Black Women for Social Change; Nikki Van Hightower, former Women's Advocate and President of the Board of the new Women's Center; Cilia Teresa, businesswoman and feminist philosopher; Helen Copitka, psychologist and Commissioner of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles; and Hilary Karp, clinical psychologist and faculty member, The University at Clear Lake City.

These women offer a broad range of ethnic backgrounds, professional achievements and personal lifestyles. All are activists in the women's movement.

The First Unitarian Church is located at 5210 Fannin. Workshop hours are 8:30 to 5:30. Daycare will be provided at \$2 per child. Lunch can be purchased at the workshop and an hour of relaxation and sharing will end the day. For further information, call 664-2915, 524-8898 or 668-8919.

Deedee mistrusts the admiration that her daughter Emilia, played by Browne, has for Emma. Her children confront her with the true source of her dilemma—was she as good as Emma? "I was different."

Emma, for her part, is more than aware of all the young ballerinas who are anxious for her to retire so that they can step into her place. Emma encourages

tisements. They promise us a film about two women "at the crossroads of their lives," with the ballet as merely a landscape against which they play out their doubts, fears and jealousies. It appears that the co-producers, director Ross and writer Arthur Laurents (*West Side Story*, *Gypsy*), have attempted to cover too much ground. Perhaps they sensed that Mikhail Baryshnikov and Leslie Browne would not draw as di-

"...and you got pregnant."  
"and you got 19 curtain calls."

Emilia's admiration and tries to become her mentor, usurping Deedee's position. Emma wants to choose her own successor. Emilia is the likeliest candidate for this artistic transference.

The resentment and frustration between the two mount to a final showdown at the ballet's gala opening in New York. It begins in the bar where Deedee hisses bitterly, "Dearest friend, you're one thing that Emilia will never be. You're a killer." Emma throws a drink in her face and they challenge each other to "step outside." Here we see two women who have been tutored a life-time in the art of discipline and self-control finally let loose. They stand on the deserted concrete expanse of Lincoln Center shoving each other around. They push, kick and tear at each other, hurling bitter truths that scrape the nerve endings like fingernails across a blackboard. The wrestling soon becomes an embrace, the yelling subsides into laughter. Deedee points out to Emma, "If there had been a photographer here, you'd have had a whole new career." And Emma finally concedes to Deedee that she did encourage her to leave the ballet for a very good reason, "You were good, you could have hurt me."

The major disappointment about this film is the result of misleading adver-

vised an audience as established stars like Bancroft and MacLaine—especially at \$4 a head.

Both Ross and Laurents claim that they are fully satisfied that they have made a "woman's film." They haven't. They have made a fine musical, but a lousy woman's film. Unlike *Julia*, *One Sing's the Other Doesn't*, and *Wives*, all the women in this film are involved in competition with each other, just like women are supposed to be, right? We don't have to settle for this. And worst of all, the name Deedee scrapes my nerve endings like fingernails across a blackboard.

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# Cézanne and women

By Anita Davidson

When Paul Cezanne saw Manet's *Olympia*, he is reported to have remarked, "That would please me well enough: to pose nudes on the Arc's banks! Only understand, women are cows, calculating, and they'd put the *grappin* (grappling hook) into me."

The painter who translated the traditional into the modern, imprinting his unique vision upon the course of 20th century painting, suffered crippling anxiety when confronted with a nude woman, and never overcame the fears and inhibitions that prevented him from realizing his lifelong dream of painting out-of-doors from nude models. Although at the age of 56, he did finally paint from a nude model in his studio, most of his bathers are taken from prints and photographs; a situation that conflicted with his sincere espousal of the importance of painting from nature: "The truth is in nature, and I shall prove it."

Cezanne was a man torn by conflicts. His almost total inability to relate to women had as its obverse side an extremely close emotional bond with his mother and his sister Marie. His mother appears to have recognized and cherished elements in her son which she felt to have been callously thwarted in herself; and his strong sympathy for his mother brought about an identification with her subservient situation, contributing mightily to both his antagonism against his father and his omnipresent anxieties.

Cezanne's father, Louis-Auguste, on the other hand, must have hidden a great deal of forbearance for his son under his authoritative manner, for although making money was his sole interest and criterion of worth, until his death he supported Cezanne with an allowance with no hope of a cash return.

Further conflict resulted from Cezanne's relationship with the only woman (apart from his mother and sister) who ever penetrated his isolation. The bubbling vivacity of Hortense, who gamely took on the roles of model, mistress, mother of their child, and wife, is never revealed in the many portraits of her which Cezanne painted. Rather, she stares mirthlessly, a solemn, stolid presence.

After Hortense gave birth to their son, they lived apart in an effort by Cezanne to conceal from Louis-Auguste the existence of both Hortense and the child. He feared the loss of his allowance. They did eventually marry, but the marriage was principally for the protection of the legal rights of the boy whom Cezanne adored, and Cezanne and Hortense continued to live apart, apparently losing all feeling for one another. Cezanne became more and more the recluse; strange, solitary, obsessed, vehement.

Cezanne's conflicting attitudes toward women were reflected in his attitude toward his art: devotion and rejection, hope and doubt, optimism and despair. Never truly satisfied with his work, he pursued relentlessly an elusive harmony; not a lyrical praise of nature, but a harmony of all the elements, balancing permanence with impermanence, the stable structure with the tensions of change. In the last decade of his life, his incessant return again and again to the same subjects transformed his search for nature's truths into explorations of light and color never before attempted.

It is the work of these final years that has been gathered from all over the world into the grandest and most comprehensive exhibition of paintings we are ever likely to see. *Cezanne: The Late Work*, contains 59 oil paintings, 44 watercolors, and six lithographs focusing on his recurrent themes in portraiture, still lifes, landscapes, skulls and bathers. If one word could describe this exhibit, it would be "searching." There is no one "style," but a wide range of stylistic innovations from the deep, somber tones of the three Vallier portraits, to an Oriental delicacy in the watercolor *Foliage* and certain views of Mont Ste-Victoire in both watercolor and in oils inspired by the watercolors.

The exhibit has been organized by William Rubin, director of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in association with Prof. John Rewald of the City University of New York Graduate Center and Prof. Theodore Reff of Columbia University. It has been produced in collaboration with the Reunion des Musees Nationaux, Paris, and facilitated by an agreement signed by the French government and the Museum of Modern Art providing for the exchange of art loans. The exhibition is supported by major grants from IBM Corporation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Museum of Fine Arts is one of only three art institutions—two in the United States and one in Europe—to host this landmark exhibition. It opened first at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, where it surpassed previous attendance records, and following its Houston stay, it will be shown at the Grand Palais in Paris.

Supplementing the exhibit is an orientation gallery which includes a slide program. Scheduled with the exhibit are a 40 minute film, *Paul Cezanne*, from Sir Kenneth Clark's *Pioneers of Modern Painting* series, a four-part class on "Cezanne and His Times" presented by David Brauer, visiting lecturer at The School of Art: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and a major symposium and series of lectures discussing Cezanne and his art.

All events are open to the public free of charge. The exhibition opened Jan. 26 and will be on view through March 19.



*Three Bathers. c. 1878. This is an early attempt to solve Cezanne's composition problem of nudes in a landscape.*

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# on stage The Mound Builders

By Beth Rigel Daugherty

Neil Havens, director of The Rice Players, chose *The Mound Builders* because he was fascinated by its strong feminist theme and challenging structure. "I don't like a play in which everything is immediately apparent," says Havens. Certainly, *The Mound Builders* meets these qualifications. It is a play filled with both parallels and conflicts—a work that allows ample room for audience speculation.

On a January evening, the actors arrive for rehearsal of *The Mound Builders*. No men tonight—the work will center around an important women's scene which Havens calls "The Nurturers." As they talk, then warm to each other and the mood of the play, the women unconsciously reflect one of the work's major conflicts—that between men and women. They talk about rape.

Subtly, they move to another level of interaction in which they create a world of trust and support. They play what Havens calls warm-up games. In pairs, they lean on each other, imitate each other's body and facial expressions, share each other's weight, explore each other's faces. They rehearse, move from reality into the reflection of reality, and Juli Havens, Nancy Dingus, Margaret Elsea, and Vicki Bell become Kirsten Howe, Jean Loggins, Cynthia Howe, and Delia Eriksen. As they progress, they transfer the support and warmth exhibited during the games to the women sitting in the living room of an old farmhouse in Blue Shoals, Illinois...

The title of the play may conjure up grade-school images of ancient Indian burial grounds. But in Lanford Wilson's play, the mound builders become both a metaphor and a vehicle for questions about the nature of civilization—men, women, and the relationships between them.

While two archaeologists dig for clues to the lives of the mound builders, the four women around them search for meaning in their own lives. Thus, Wilson forces the audience to do some digging of its own.

Tension between the men's and women's work is established early in Act 1. August Howe, an archaeology professor, and his assistant, Dan Loggins, arrive at the dig in Blue Shoals, Illinois. With them are their wives, Cynthia Howe and Dr. Jean

Loggins. Both women have careers of their own. Cynthia is a photographer; Jean, a gynecologist.

Cynthia uses her talent to take endless pictures of her daughter, Kirsten, and to document her husband's progress, while Jean, pregnant, falls behind in her own work as she types Dan's field notes.

August mocks his wife's work, telling his secretary that "Mrs. Howe, with stunning evidence to the contrary, persists in believing she is Diane Arbus." His assistant, Dan, rewards his wife's decision to type for him with a pat on the head.

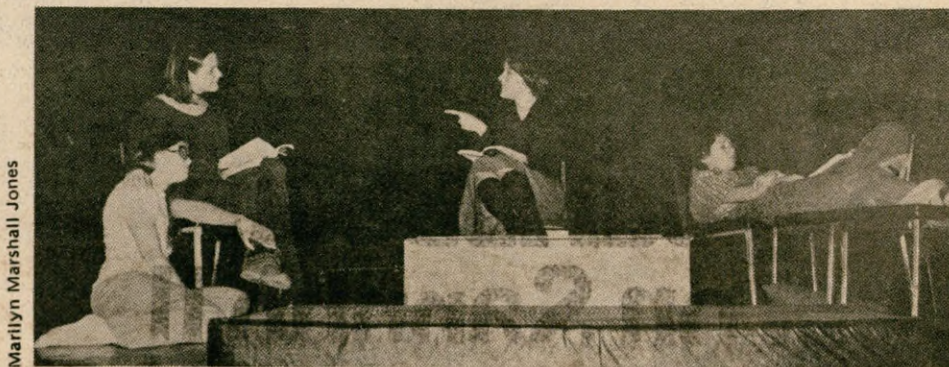
Delia Eriksen, August's sister, has been sent to Blue Shoals to recover from a bout with alcohol. She does not want to be there, and August clearly shows the feeling is mutual. He tells Cynthia to "laugh at her, ignore her. Father did."

Chad Jasker, whose father owns the land where the dig is located, has a grand commercial plan for the site. An interstate highway and a dam will turn the spot into a tourist attraction, complete with Holiday Inn, restaurants, marinas, and tennis courts. Poor and uneducated, he dreams of being rich. Chad's idea for the land obviously conflicts with the archaeologists' plans; he makes the conflict even more personal by chasing Jean and sleeping with Cynthia.

Director Havens makes the bond between the women very clear in Act 1 by physically grouping them on the stage in "The Nurturers." Later, when the underlying tensions of Act 1 explode into the deception and violence of Act 2, he again arranges them to form a unified background in stark contrast to the men's destructive conflicts.

Havens seems committed to plays with strong female characters; last year, The Rice Players appeared in an excellent production of Chekov's *The Three Sisters*. He encourages actors to analyze their characters' motivations; he asks questions and makes suggestions as they rehearse, but when they want to talk about their interpretations, he listens. Usually, he combines their comments with his own interpretation in his direction.

Kirsten (and Juli) Kirsten Howe, 11, is chiefly a silent presence on stage.



Martlyn Marshall Jones

The Mound Builders, presented by The Rice Players, will run February 13 through February 18. Performances are at 8 p.m., Hamman Hall, Rice University. For ticket information, call 527-4040.

Director: Neil Havens. Assistant director: Sheila Louis. Lighting: Scott McDonald and Peter Redding. Publicity and costumes: Barbara Ford. Set: Randy Guzzardo.

She observes and listens intently, preparing herself to be a woman. There is an implied pressure on Kirsten to give up her innocence—her father shares secrets with her that he does not share with his wife. Kirsten never articulates her own needs, and only in the presence of her aunt Delia does she become somewhat animated.

Juli Havens, who plays Kirsten, strongly identifies with the character. "I also grew up in an adult world. I was always watching, observing." Juli, in contrast to Kirsten, is confident and talkative. A student at Lanier Jr. High School, she knows that she wants to study biochemistry for its practicality, but she won't give up acting, which she loves—"I can always act in community theatres."

Joan (and Nancy) Jean Loggins, married for less than a year, impressed Chad Jasker as an independent woman who knew what she wanted. Yet, as the play opens, she suppresses her strength and plays her role in the marriage by the book—Dan's book. Nancy Dingus, a German major, understands Jean. When she was 18, Nancy went to Germany alone for a year. "I know what it's like to be completely on my own, and I don't want that kind of independence."

Nancy also identifies with Jean's self-effacement—"I often do what is easiest to avoid conflict." In fact, the similarity between Jean and Nancy is so strong that Nancy insists, "I was typecast!"

Rather than read her medical books and articles, Jean becomes a secretary for Dan; yet, she resents Cynthia's implication that she may give up her career after the baby is born—or go into pediatrics.

Jean was a bright child, a champion speller—a freak, as she says. Delia's comment is, "We're all freaks—all us bright sisters." Not only bright, Jean is very much in touch with her emotions and the atmosphere around her. She feels close to the baby within her, and very early senses that something is odd about this summer.

Cynthia (and Margaret) Cynthia Howe realizes she has suppressed her own identity, and feels trapped within it, but she needs the protection marriage affords. She has invested a great deal of herself in August's work. It is a sacrifice difficult to discard, even though August refuses to admit how important her talent is to his own career. Her bitterness leads to her affair with Chad. Cynthia likes her daughter and doesn't patronize her, but seems unaware that Kirsten might need more guidance. She has subordinated career to family and suggests that Jean will do the same. Her early hint that women will always serve men is reflected in Margaret's memory of automatically making her brothers' beds.

Margaret Elsea sympathizes with the character of Cynthia. "I remember I always defined myself through men. All my friends were boys, and I thought girls were dumb." Just as Cynthia gains strength from her relationships with the women at Blue Shoals, Margaret has discovered at Rice that she can talk to and be friends with women.

Delia (and Vicki) Delia Eriksen, a physical and spiritual wreck at the beginning of the play, gains strength and courage as it progresses. Although at one time more dependent on male approval than

either Jean or Cynthia, she comes to realize that she drank to cope with her fear of rejection: "I have been humiliating myself because people expected it of me." In the end, she is strong enough to thank August for telling her their father laughed at her writing. "Dad's opinion was always too important to me."

Often abrasive, Delia can also be sensitive, even prophetic. She knows more about the relationships at Blue Shoals than anyone else; the others are often unaware she is sitting in the dark, watching. Although she is not infallible, Delia's powers of observation and vision make her comments about men, women, art, and life carry a great deal of authority in the play.

Vicki Bell feels close to the role of Delia. "For me, security would be knowing I don't have to depend on anyone for anything." She describes herself as a loner who does not allow men to be overly important in her life. Vicki finds it is easy to live by an independent creed, particularly at Rice. "I think women are perceived as equals here. At Rice, it's a joke to say a woman can't do or be something."

Neil Havens and the actors agree—one of Lanford Wilson's main points is that women see and think differently from men. Some women may be uncomfortable with this dichotomy; the "rational/intuitive" argument has been used often enough in the past. However, this and other oppositions in the play are not rigid ones, and Wilson generally presents women's intuition, introspection, and endurance as positive, rather than negative, traits.

In contrast, his portrayal of the men in *The Mound Builders* is often a harsh one. Although these characters can be lovable, helpful, or friendly, they turn from problems they don't want to face, and are unaware of the women's needs. August, Dan, and Chad each seek different goals—but each, in his own way, tends to separate and organize, label and compartmentalize, divide and conquer.

August, played by John McConnell, talks only about his work, a search for data with a trowel. He either bores people or sarcastically derides them. Kirsten is his "alleged daughter"; Cynthia is an "ex-relation by marriage" and a "horse," and Delia is dying "again."

Dan (Steve Ortego) is the partner with a dream, but his vision of harmony with nature is strictly a male vision—subservient women make that harmony possible. He wants Jean to play the admiring squaw to his Cochise.

Chad, played by Roger Heymann, finds it hard to comprehend the value of archaeological discoveries—to him, they are abstracts that cannot be translated into cash. Materialistic, sensual, and literally capable of anything,

Many conflicts and parallels exist in *The Mound Builders*, making it a rich study of life, and of the people who live it. Wilson has written a play which demands audience concentration, but the intensity of his lines will both reward and stimulate the playgoer. Some may feel ambivalent about the ending; this is what Wilson intends. *The Mound Builders*, Neil Havens explains, "does not provide answers; it deliberately leaves the audience with questions."

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# Sailing the Caribbean on Sappho II

By Deborah Diamond Hicks and Nancy Landau

During the IWY, The Daily Breakthrough ran an ad for all-woman Caribbean cruises. Conference-goers had the opportunity to place their name in a draw for a free one week cruise. Patsy Lee, a Houston teacher, was one of the winners. She was unable to take time for the trip but we inherited it and set sail January 8. —D.D.H. and N.L.

The man stood at the stern of his 60-foot sailing yacht and turned to watch us go by, letting an entire tray of luncheon silverware fall into the sea. Maybe it was the sight of six bare-breasted women and no men aboard an elaborately teaked sailing ketch, or maybe it was the name that caught his eye. In any case, he's bound to remember the day he dumped service for eight when the *Sappho II* cruised by.

agines all sorts of lechers, single and otherwise, perched on the railings, waiting to insinuate themselves into your vacation. The presumption is: no woman goes on a cruise unless she is looking for a man. Two women alone *must* be looking, too, or something queer is going on. Women come to know these presumptions—they are the same ones that keep them from enjoying the night air, or going on safari, or to a restaurant or movie, or having a drink alone.



The original Sappho, of ancient Greece, lived on the Isle of Lesbos, wrote love poems that were sometimes directed to other women, and thereby gave name to lesbianism (Sapphism in the archaic version), the phenomenon of women loving other women. She was a poet, scholar, teacher, wife and mother, and a respected citizen, who spent much of her life encouraging young women in academic and cultural pursuits.

She was Sappho I. *Sappho II* is an adventure designed to give women an opportunity to sail, dive, windsurf, enjoy—within a small group of women, learning from each other—just as Sappho provided an opportunity for girls and women to learn together.

Considering the ambiguity of Sappho's reputation, perhaps the name of our boat has created an unnecessary obstacle to women considering this alternative adventure. In fact, *Sappho II* is open to charters for any individual or group, mixed or otherwise. Her home port is St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, 1,200 miles southeast of Miami and \$318 round-trip from Houston.

We'd always pictured cruise ships as huge pleasure tankers that travel at night (while everyone aboard gets full and tipsy), then stop during the day for liquor-cigarette-and-perfume shopping. One im-

We arrived in St. Thomas by way of Minneapolis and Nashville, northern refugees with suitcases full of gloves, hats, boots, and ski jackets. We thawed our frozen bodies at the Hotel 1829 (both the phone number and the year it was built)—bright pink stucco, brick terraces, tile staircases, and oddly shaped little rooms carved out of stately old ones. There was exotic seafood to sample, and a Honda 90 that worked best when we got off.

Captain Marge McKeever called Sunday morning to confirm our arrival and welcome us aboard. We stashed our belongings, ready to brave the seas with cut-offs and bathing suits—and t-shirts for formal wear. We chose the aft cabin, downed a few Bonine tablets to placate our inner ears, and waited for the other four passengers to arrive. But no one else ever came! So, the captain took on a third crew member to give her additional experience. And so we set off—six women out for six days of sailing. The general response to *Sappho II* was incredulity—all women?!

The boat herself is a 51-foot ketch that sleeps nine, crew included. The interior is teak and holly with cupboards everywhere—"whiskey box," "equipment," "guest," "head." Our first lesson was on marine toilets and the proper pumping procedures. Everything was brilliantly



photos by Nancy Landau

compact; everything had its place—underwater movie camera, diving gear, plasticized fish observing books, nautical charts, cruising guides, fishing tackle, plush towels and tasty snacks.

Four of us continued our vegetarian lifestyles, which was another real treat. Imagine a place where it's cool to be a woman and a vegetarian! We had freshly blended pina colodas, all sorts of cheeses, fresh vegetables, fruit salads and baked breads. And there was plenty of roast beef, lasagna and ham for the carnivores among us.

After Sara Lee coffeecakes or some such for breakfast, we would secure all moving parts (remember "batten down the hatches"? ) and set sail "over the bounding main." Interesting how these phrases suddenly take on new meaning. We were welcome to participate in sailing preparations and maneuvers, and each of us took a hand in lowering the sails, securing the shackles, handling the winches, making up the lines (the nautical version of ropes) and plotting our course. We took as much sun as our winter bodies could bear (18 degrees North latitude being more direct than Houston's 30 degrees).

We would sail until late lunch-time, then pick a protected bay for swimming, snorkeling, windsurfing, or reading up on the area. Sometimes, we took a dinghy to shore for a hike. Surprisingly, after days of sailing, we were dizzier on land than we ever were at sea. Back on board, we'd find everything "ship shape" again. It was quite pleasant to leave meals and clean-up to the crew. (Women need to remember to relax when they get the chance—and this was our vacation.)

Evenings included star gazing from the deck, entertaining visitors from other boats, and a local fish fry. Still, there was ample time for solitude.

Most interesting of all were the conversations—talk ranged from C-R style to political debate. It was an opportunity for each of us to speak out in a group of other women, share common experiences and learn from each other. We didn't have to give equal time to football, or humor a guy proud to announce he was an MCP. We began at a common point, as women, and we went on from there—birth control, abortion, sexuality, parenting, ERA, travel, adventure.

McKeever, the skipper, told tales of her days as a home economics professor, pilot, hot-air balloonist, Albuquerque silversmith, five years on her own sailboat, and living aboard *Sappho II*.

The other crew members live on St. Thomas and earn their living near the water—varnishing masts, crewing, waitressing, bartending—anything to stay near the sea. Often, they talked about going "down island" some day, and owning a boat of their own. The *Sappho II* gives them a chance to work in positions which have traditionally been closed to women. Here, they can get away from the stove and galley and onto the decks for some actual sailing.

We cleared customs on St. John, as most of our time was scheduled for the British Virgin Islands. There was hiking to the sugar plantation ruins at Caneel Bay, and windsurfing in the Great Harbor of Jost Van Dyke. Once, we anchored for the night off Norman Island (Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*) and snorkled near the Caves, passed Deadman's Chest, and crossed Peter Island on foot.

Back in the "real world," our mid-winter tans reminded us that it's hard to come down from such a journey. One starts thinking of alternative lifestyles, and going *down island* from it all...

## hous'ov·kol'man

n. 1. A woman-owned business specializing in quality graphics and printing. 2. A large red brick house in the heart of Montrose. — *adj.* Having many and varied features. — *v.* Producing design, illustration, camera work, printing and bindery. — *adv.* 1. To increase the client's business manifold. 2. To satisfy the client.

House of Coleman

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# pats, pans & dead pans

Editor, Gabrielle Cosgriff

The pitter PATter of tiny paws: Last December the Houston Zoo had its first black leopard births, one male and one female, reports Sally Chalmers, Supervisor of Primates, Cats and Bears. (Does this make her a cub reporter?) She says they are healthy and beautiful and since the female is both "feisty and gentle" they have named her "Nikki" as a tribute to Nikki Van Hightower.

If politics makes strange bedfellows, then Mayor Jim McConn wins the bedPAN of the month for the insulting way he fired Dr. Nikki Van Hightower. All Houston knew about it hours before she did. (McConn made the announcement at an all-male Rotary Club Luncheon in response to a question from Ch13 TV's Dave Ward.) Lynn Ashby, *Houston Post* columnist and world traveller, PANicked and missed the boat again, as he usually does on women's issues. In his awards-for-January column he said: "Local Quote of the Month (The Last to Know Div.): 'I'm just shocked.'—City Women's Advocate Nikki Van Hightower upon being told she was fired by Mayor Jim McConn, who had said throughout his campaign that, if elected, that's exactly what he'd do."

The Houston Club has lost its clout with the Houston Bar Association. The HBA board voted not to hold a luncheon there in January because the club does not allow women members (wives of members have limited access). Congressmembers Bill Archer and Bob Eckhardt were scheduled to speak at the luncheon, and even though alternative arrangements had not been made, the board voted unanimously to cancel after being advised of the club's discriminatory practices. They also voted to move their annual meeting, usually held at the Houston Club, to the Hyatt Regency. A PATently fair decision.

We've always been drawn to Garry Trudeau, creator of the *Dooniesbury* comic strip. One recent series had President Carter going through department catalogues picking out items for his half a trillion dollar budget. In this PATicular strip he is on the phone to HUD's Patricia Harris. "Patricia...I just don't think we can afford everything you've checked...I know, Pat, I know, but life is very, repeat, very unfair! The poor can't always..." (Interruption.) "Excuse me, Mr. President, I wonder if you could approve this new order for coat hangers?" "That's not funny, Midge!" "I couldn't agree more, sir."

PAN to all Houston news media for failing to identify Samuel Harwell as the official fired by the University of Houston for violating the school's investment policy until *The Wall Street Journal* set the PATtern. The *Houston Post* broke the story that the state Securities Commission was investigating UH's short term investments. The *Houston Chronicle* quickly joined in the coverage. But for more than a week, both newspapers and broadcast media honored UH's wishes to keep Harwell's name quiet. Even after the board of regents acted Dec. 5, the *Chronicle* could only note it "officially fired a financial analyst." Finally, after the *Journal* identified Harwell Dec. 8, Houston papers followed suit.

TV commercials PANned: *The San Francisco Examiner* recently ran a reader survey to find out the "most-hated" commercials on TV. Tickle, that condom-shaped deodorant with its giggling young women, was voted the most odious. Geritol, with its "infuriating images" of women who can "skillfully juggle marriage, maternity, business and pleasure all at once," made readers' blood boil, and Wisk laundry detergent didn't wash either. "Why," one reader asked, "doesn't that man just wash his neck?" The Screts ad, where the man wakes up his wife to complain he has a cold, was hard for some to swallow. "Watching this whining, nagging slob intrude on the tranquility of his selfless wife is an insult to all men and women who sleep together..." wrote a reader.

Dave Roderick informs us that the Landmark Bank, Tampa, Florida, is touting its new 24 hour cash/banking service on radio and TV in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area. It's called "All Day, All Night Marianne" and the jingle (sung to the calypso tune) goes "She's always open, she's fast, she's easy to use and she's all yours." We are now in the process of moving the Landmark Bank to the Florida PANhandle.

A nifty idea and a PATriotic gesture from that giant of suppliers Nifda (National Institutional Food Distributor Associates, Inc.). They have come out with an individual sugar package featuring a series of "Outstanding American Women," including Margaret Sanger, Susan B. Anthony, Clara Barton, Elizabeth Blackwell and many others. There is a drawing of the woman on one side of the package and a short biography on the other.

Harlan Ellison, noted science fiction author, was interviewed recently by Tom Snyder on NBC's *Tomorrow*. Ellison said he had been invited to be the guest speaker at a sci fi convention in Arizona. He was going to decline, since Arizona has not ratified the ERA, but then he changed his mind and decided he would attend and use the occasion to educate his listeners on the ERA. He will also appear on radio and TV shows while in Arizona, and will take every opportunity to speak out on the benefits of ratification. (He feels it will help guarantee the rights of both men and women.) Buy simPATico.

Is sexism all washed up in New York? It is at least in the 166-year-old City Hall men's room, which was reclassified a "person's room" by newly elected Mayor Edward Koch. (He had promised during his campaign to open the doors of government to everyone.) The unisex washroom was the idea of City Council President Carol Bellamy, the first woman elected to citywide office. The overwhelmingly male press corps reacted with predictable outrage. The room had been a man's domain since 1812. But the administration is standing PAT on its decision.

Turin, Italy, has a TV program that is outstripping all its local competition. Women volunteers appear on the show; the host dials a local number and asks a general-knowledge question. If a man replies and answers correctly, the woman takes off an article of clothing. If he answers incorrectly, she puts something on. If a woman answers the phone the procedure is reversed. Feminist and other organizations have denounced the program as insulting to women, but it is wildly popular and women are clamoring to participate. They apparently enjoy the exPANded exposure.

Today the world, tomorrow the stars! *The Texas Observer* reports that the American Astronomical Society has announced that it will no longer convene in states that have not ratified the ERA. At its annual meeting in Austin last month, the AAS council adopted the new policy in a close vote (six to five, one abstention). Dr. Margaret Burbidge, an astronomy professor and first woman president of the 77-year-old AAS, explained that the council's intent was to support opportunities for the advancement of all capable astronomers, regardless of sex. She hopes that, as times change, women will be encouraged to enter science and mathematics, rather than be confronted with the "severe discrimination"—including the denial of viewing time at some observatories—which women in astronomy have encountered in the past. Women comprise eight percent of the AAS membership of 3,400. A PAT to the far-sighted Burbidge and the AAS.

The University of Texas' prestigious DeWitt Carter Reddick award for outstanding achievement in the field of communication has been won in the past by such people as Walter Cronkite, broadcast journalist Bill Moyers, communication theorist Wilbur Schramm and former FCC head Nicholas Johnson. This year it goes to Captain Kangaroo, otherwise known as Bob Keeshan. Kenny Denenberg, president of the UT Communication Council, thinks Captain Kangaroo is outstanding in his field. "All students can identify with him," he says. "He marks an interesting aspect to television." Faculty member Bill Anderson, for one, was hopping mad. "The criteria used to make this selection must be very bad. This is a joke." The PANdits at UT don't seem to be communicating.

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### The Midwife

*Each evening as the sky bruises  
and then turns painless,  
the old woman moves  
toward the spine of the hill.  
She has given up every  
kind of garment,  
and her eyes have drained  
of the names of things.  
They pick at her faith  
with their thorny mutterings,  
but she no longer notices.  
She continues her pilgrimages  
carrying only the smile  
that has been her life's work  
and a clay doll  
which she fondles till it sings  
of the heavy water  
in the earth's belly,  
soon to break  
with the new child.*

—Rosemary Catacalos



Totsie

### "And Where Are The Women Poets?", A Reply

*this woman is no moon;  
what you see, she owns  
and more;  
pain, fruit, visions  
push between her legs  
into the mexican streets,  
into office building mail slots,  
into musicians beds  
and political strategy meetings;  
she piles them on altars,  
fills her daily coffin with them,  
celebrates easter  
at every opportunity  
with candles, bread, red eggs;  
she owns her laughter,  
her incest, her grief;  
owns portions of her compassion,  
of all the hands she's ever held,  
of all the vagabonds, tramps,  
magicians, gypsies, jokers,  
wanderers, all the blessed  
who ever sought the garden;  
owns constantly, every second,  
over breakfast, in the car,  
at the ocean, through the windows,  
in the music, with the madmen,  
in the churches,  
at the desk,  
at the well,  
the wonder at why blood isn't blue,  
a color to ward off the evil eye;  
owns the mirror, owns the labor,  
owns the fever,  
the pain of labor,  
the ecstasy  
of bearing illusion,  
the necessary child.  
still, men stop her in the street  
to pummel her womb  
and ask angrily  
why she will not give birth.*

—Rosemary Catacalos

# Rosemary Catacalos

### Overheard at the Basilica

*The old woman spoke of harder days,  
days when children flew in the windows  
like flies,  
eyes glued shut from hunger,  
crying "Mama, Mama!"  
and carrying knives with which they  
threatened one another  
as they all dove for the pitiful  
pile of beans she had  
laid out, steaming, on her belly.  
She had done her best for them all.  
A few had died, boys with the stench  
of urine or fever stuffed up their noses,  
girls with their spines arched like bows  
and their own blood between their legs;  
but many had survived  
and lived now in the big, government  
housing towers,  
and lit candles themselves,  
and came less and less often to see her,  
except for the stone-eyed boy  
who said he was her grandson  
and went through her purse  
when he thought she was occupied  
among her few flowers in coffee cans.  
Ayyy, this was how she had earned her sainthood.  
"Jesus, Mari, Jose..."  
Now there was the luxury  
of being hungry alone.*

—Rosemary Catacalos

women of the dream  
 we are sometimes of Silence  
 and then again we shake the mountains  
 till its rattle is heard  
 three encampments away  
 our most difficult job each day  
 remembering who we are  
 women of the dream  
 we pull the drum skin tight  
 we make our feet ready  
 for the long dance into the Future:  
 oh! this dance always over the abyss  
 some of us will not make it  
 some of us will not make it  
 each Spring then we will return to this cliff-edge  
 tossing fresh flowers to their sun-lit bones  
 and our daughters and their daughters, and their daughters will return each spring  
 wailing our losses celebrating our ancient griefs  
 each spring then we will let them know  
 the dream was worth it  
 as their bones whiten the purest alleluias of hope  
 —martha courtot



Totsie

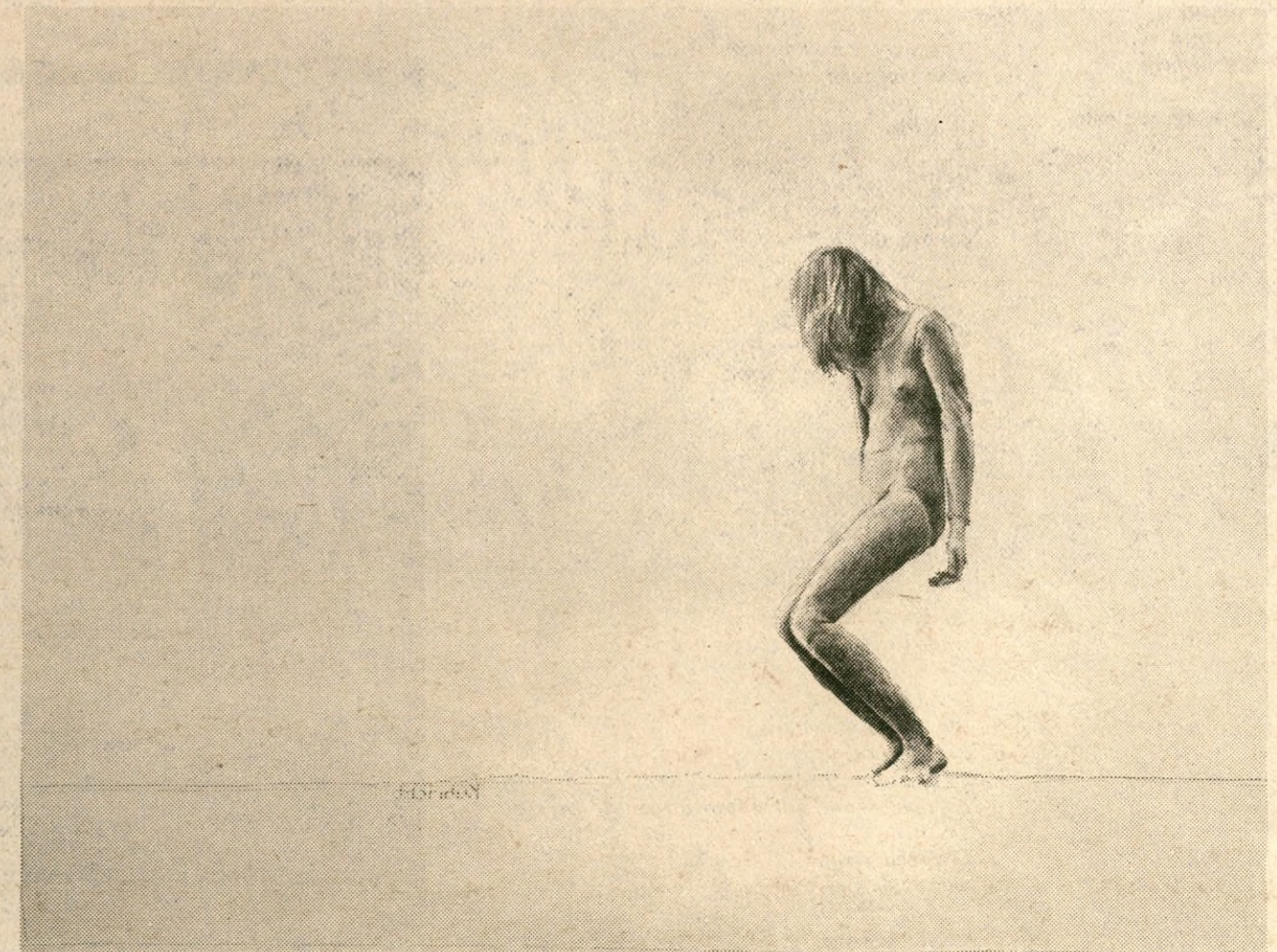
the last time we met  
 the moon was small pale and still  
 dropping behind clouds  
 tonight she is half-full  
 my pain too is at the half-point  
 soon it will swell, round and burst  
 then i will cover myself with darkness  
 name myself New-Moon Woman  
 and slip silently away  
 away farther than even you can see  
 —martha courtot

i am far from home menstrual  
 i can feel the blood rising up my spine  
 but if i paint a red crescent on my forehead  
 who will there be to touch with their fingertips  
 gently the soft places to heal?  
 this is the meaning of leaving  
 the loss of distinctions fine as winter rain  
 there is no one to see me here at home  
 we share a tribal language now i carry it with me  
 into the streets, cities, and hills  
 syllables nested in bones they continue to speak themselves  
 out of a need to be heard  
 i am far from home caught in a damp cold  
 the women here are alien more distant than the future  
 they tremble on  
 menstrual last night i dreamed badly  
 awoke to darkness and rain  
 today i will paint a small red moon on my forehead  
 i will carry myself through the stillness  
 of alien lands  
 surrounding me breathing them in like air  
 the women i love the children i love  
 full-energied doing their tribal dances  
 through the beats of my menstrual flow  
 —martha courtot

red fox in a green wood on an autumn night  
 and the moon rising  
 this is my life now: a mountain woman of my time  
 my hands learning the scent of berries  
 my eyes narrowed by split horizons  
 seeing everything in circles  
 do you see me changing? do you see me coming toward you?  
 slowly a woman of my time  
 and i am wearing a beautiful face  
 all this rising and falling the stars rising and falling  
 round my head they snap in my dreams  
 someday i will touch you a red fox on a lonely road  
 into the pines  
 into the risings and the fallings into the stars  
 we will all go together women of our time warriors  
 rising and falling stars  
 —martha courtot

the woman who would decorate a tree  
 for something wild  
 is herself a little wild thing  
 chewing on the edges of things  
 she acts human boiling the water for tea  
 or re-settling the objects in a house  
 she seems human  
 but she walks like an animal at night  
 in her dreams she remembers  
 comes to the tree to feed and nibbles the fat of death  
 hanging on she is a solitude of graces  
 —martha courtot

# Martha Courtot



graphic/Charley Kubricht

What Gertrude Stein Felt  
When She Walked Through A Doorway

*It was always  
everything awake  
alive  
whether she  
liked it  
or not  
it was not  
nothing  
It was  
partially  
a way  
of walking  
Two feet  
and by that  
I mean  
two  
I mean  
not sliding  
Each one  
touching earth  
in different  
little spots  
and feeling  
every bit  
of it*

*That is  
what*

*Today is  
Saturday  
Light  
comes  
through my  
window  
in strips  
It is not  
looking  
for anything*

*It is coming through  
touching plants  
scars on the old wood floor  
in a new light way  
I have  
everything  
to say  
I could begin  
anywhere*

—Naomi Shihab

Waxing Cars In Paris, Texas

*is one of the options.  
Or you can walk around town  
& let people stare at you.  
Read William Saroyan on a creaky swing.  
Listen to the local pharmacist sing  
"To Dream the Impossible Dream"  
at the outdoor band concert.  
Scrape the plates into a plastic bucket.  
Chase a cat who won't come.  
Smell the cotton oil  
you don't smell too often  
in the suburbs of Dallas.  
Imagine who lives anywhere.  
Gobble cobbler.  
Cruise up backstreets  
waving at old men on front porches  
who rock & smoke  
& haven't read a book in twelve years.  
Watch the paint peel.  
Feel like singing.  
Or you can drive over to the  
Paris Junior College Library  
where they have a stack of POETRY magazines  
("PLEASE KEEP THESE MAGAZINES IN ORDER")  
& find an assortment  
of perfectly ordered images  
sophisticated enough to be called poetry  
though they don't have anything to do  
with Paris, Texas,  
the way people talk,  
or the way you feel.*

—Naomi Shihab

The World In Translation

*it was a long climb  
out of the soil  
  
she counted off whole continents  
as she lifted each foot  
  
imagined her dark years  
falling away like husks  
  
soon she could feel  
objects come to life in her hand  
  
the peel of banana,  
a lightly waxed pepper  
  
she accepted these into her home,  
placed them in bowls where they could be watched  
  
there was nothing obscure about melons  
nothing involved about yams  
  
if she were to have anything to do with the world  
these would be her translators  
  
through these she would learn  
secrets of dying  
  
how to do it gracefully  
as the peach, softening in silence  
  
or the mango,  
finely tuned to its own skin*

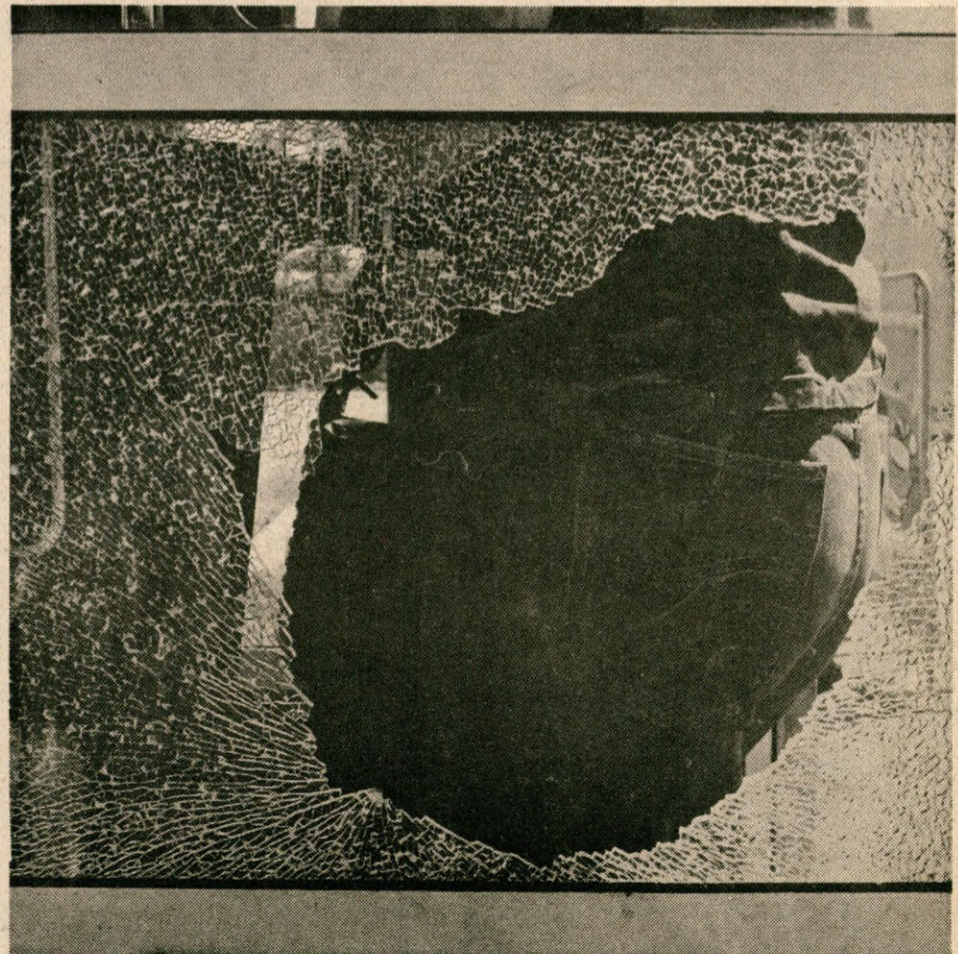
—Naomi Shihab

I Could Not Curse The Hook

*I cursed the lawnmower  
that sliced the rock  
that shot from the blade  
& gashed my leg  
  
I cursed all the way  
to the emergency room  
my wound throbbing.  
an old pump  
  
I cursed the woman  
who fumbled paperclips  
while I bled on her floor  
  
she filled out my form  
I cursed the form  
  
I cursed the slowness  
the room I lay in  
while nobody came  
  
the doctor arrived  
while I was cursing the ceiling  
  
he had one hand  
the other was a hook  
he pulled on gloves  
he threaded a needle  
the hook sewed a neat seam across my leg  
  
I left that room  
without a voice*

—Naomi Shihab

# Naomi Shihab



Lou Cinda Holt



CYNTHIA MacDONALD

MIKE PETERS

*Elsie sat, reading "The Cat in the Hat,"  
Analyzing its rhyme scheme.  
The cellar flooded. Elsie put Chopin  
on the record player and turned the volume higher.*

*The house caught on fire;  
It was completely burned.  
Elsie moved the family to an apartment and painted  
the flames, calling the picture "Winter Overturned."*

*Her husband, because she ignored him,  
Developed a series of psychosomatic ailments.  
She painted his portrait, complete with boils,  
In oils.*

*When her children turned to slate,  
She realized what she had done,  
But although she sang to them and painted  
Their gray bodies flesh pink,  
They remained stone.*

from "Amputations," George Braziller Publishing Co., New York

## POET IN PERSON

By Patricia S. Fuhrer



### Suzanne Paul dogs

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Many mothers bronze their babies' shoes as keepsakes. Cynthia Macdonald, American poet and coordinator of the creative writing program at the University of Houston, has her son's feet in a velvet-lined box.

In the poem "Departure," from her collection of poetry entitled "Amputations," Macdonald figuratively amputates and saves her son's feet.

Her first collection was published in 1972 and was followed by "Transplants" in 1976. This spring a third book of poetry, "(W)holes," will come out.

Macdonald's hectic schedule includes traveling about 4,000 miles each month. She commutes to Houston every other week from Baltimore where she is professor of a writing seminar at Johns Hopkins University. Previously she taught at Sarah Lawrence after earning a master's degree there in 1970.

Before she began publishing poetry, Macdonald was a lirico spinto (soprano) opera singer. Fifteen years ago she won the San Francisco Opera auditions and placed third in the West Coast Metropolitan Opera auditions.

"I probably could have had a successful career as a singer," Macdonald said in a recent interview at her University of Houston office.

"But poetry is like a disease; it comes on you," she continued, quoting American poet Robert Penn Warren. "I write because I must write." "I could choose to give up singing, but I could never choose to give up writing."

Although Macdonald spends a great deal of time commuting from the east coast to the gulf, she stays in Houston for special events. The University of Houston and P.E.N. (Poets, Essayists and Novelists) cosponsored a national writing conference in November. The senior editor of Doubleday and Co. and the editor of panel discussions, Houstonian Donald Barthelme, fiction writer for "New Yorker" magazine, Macdonald and others presented an evening of readings for the public in conjunction with the conference.

Prior to the P.E.N. conference Macdonald attended the National Women's Conference.

"Yes, I'm a feminist," Macdonald said. "I support the ERA. Women should have a chance to realize their ambitions."

However, she said, many of the conference slogans were "simplistic," probably because simplicity is necessary to achieve political goals.

"Equality will come," Macdonald said, "but it will require grass roots work which will be slower and less fun than going to a convention."

Macdonald knew since her early teens that she wanted children and referred to her two, Scott, 18 and Jennifer, 21, as centrally important in her life. She believes strongly that pursuing a career while rearing a family is possible.

She paused for a moment and looked out of her office window.

"You know," she began slowly, "women come to me and say they don't have time to write. I tell them they do have time to write. What they don't have time to do is give dinner parties."

Macdonald's family is rooted in Houston. Her grandparents lived in Houston for many years and Macdonald often visited here though she is a native New Yorker. She has incorporated aspects of Houston into her poems and says she would like to see the city become a center for writers and writing.

Macdonald is often asked how much autobiography her poetry contains. She considers the question irrelevant.

"I use dramatic monologue," she said. "It is one of the ways a poet has of shaping emotional experience and making it 'art.' I don't like to separate fiction and self."

Then she laughed, snapped her lorgnette closed and leaned forward in her chair. "You wouldn't ask a fiction writer if all his stories were 'real' would you?" she asked.

# on health

## Marrie Richards, M.D.

We are delighted to announce an important addition to Breakthrough. Beginning next month, a column by Dr. Marrie Richards will appear in each issue. Dr. Richards will answer general questions about women's health care.

A graduate of Rice University and Baylor College of Medicine, she is a general practitioner with post graduate training in obstetrics, gynecology and family practice.

Dr. Richards is interviewed in the following article by Wendy Haskell Meyer, health columnist and editor of Houston Home and Garden. —ed.



Sharman Petri

By Wendy Haskell Meyer

There's a great deal of hoopla these days about consumers taking responsibility for their own health. Unfortunately, the professionals who could support this cause are generally unavailable. Few physicians have the time to serve as consumer health advocates or information sources. They're busy saving lives and paying malpractice premiums—operating in a system which functions fairly well for us when we're sick, but does little to help keep us well. Consumers want to know more about staying healthy—but the average medical institution is primarily concerned with diagnosis and treatment of illness.

By default, then, the new "expert," the non-credentialed, sometimes wise and sometimes otherwise pop doctor is telling us how to feel radiantly alive again in 17

days or less. All for an investment of only \$1.95 in his/her best-seller.

Trouble is, you can't really get all the answers you need from such sources. How do you find out where to get good prenatal care, if you also want to deliver your baby at home? And where do you get information about the effectiveness and safety of the new tampon contraceptive, Encare-Oval? It's been available at Walgreen's since last fall, but you haven't seen or heard a word about it from a respected medical source. You feel guilty about calling your own doctor—if he/she is available. And, unlike many other cities, there is no Medi-Facts or Medi-Call in Houston where you can phone in and ask to hear tapes on specific medical or health subjects. And there is no directory available for getting good information.

To add to the frustration, many women feel that some male doctors—and it's still hard to find women doctors—are, if not biased, simply not in tune with women's needs, concerns and feelings.

It's refreshing, then, to find a woman doctor who is not only willing but eager to answer the questions so many of us have about staying healthy, and about our medical problems in general.

**Q.** Doctor, why a health column by Marrie Richards?

**A.** People are asking me questions all the time, and I think getting answers is imperative. For one thing, everyone has—or should have—a natural curiosity about their body and their health. A person who is in touch with their body will have more productive doctor's visits—the person who recognizes her own symptoms and has some ideas about causes, saves time, usually saves money, is not as apt to require unnecessary testing. By the way, a patient's history is the most valuable medical tool there is. Finally, she is more likely to understand what the doctor is doing. An added plus is that the patient is not as apt to misunderstand the doctor and choose to sue for malpractice. Another: if you know your own body, the less medication you'll be getting. I am very cautious prescribing pills because they often create more problems than they solve.

**Q.** How can we become better informed?

**A.** For one thing, use your doctor as a resource.

**Q.** How?

**A.** Lots of patients don't make demands on their family physicians. I think many doctors are willing to help, but people don't ask. If your doctor is not responsive to your inquiries, go find one who is. Perhaps we as doctors have been conditioned by patients who say, "Fix me but don't tell me about it," and we've gotten into that mode.

**Q.** There's a lot of talk about self-help. Are patients showing interest in it?

**A.** Yes, lots of them are coming to me who don't want the doctor to play a

and from city family planning clinics. They probably get more information from these sources than from doctors.

The doctor is just one of several tools you can use to get maximum health from your body. Good nutrition, good sleep habits and exercise are some others. Remember, your health is not your doctor's responsibility. It's yours.

**Q.** What do you think about the health food trend?

**A.** A lot of it is just Madison Avenue gimmickry. We're really still very much in the dark about nutrition. It's a relatively new science. Most people eat junk food—they should be taking a good look at their diets. I tend to be a health nut and I'm a vegetarian, but I can't recommend it for everyone. We should all try to get away

"(Women) ask 'How does my body work?' rather than 'What's wrong with my body?' That's a good sign."

magic role...take us off our pedestals. A lot of young people, especially, are asking me about how to stay healthy—mostly questions about nutrition, and normal body function. And women especially are being very critical of birth control methods—they want to know all about how it works, what complications may occur. They're less willing to go along with what I say...more willing to use me as a resource to stay healthy and to ask "How does my body work?" rather than "What's wrong with my body?" That's a good sign.

**Q.** Where are these women getting their information—for example, about the dangers of contraceptives?

**A.** From women's magazines like *Ladies Home Journal*, from columns like yours, from gossip with friends who may have aborted with an IUD, for instance,

from heavily processed foods and eat more fruits and vegetables.

**Q.** What sort of questions will you be willing to answer in your column?

**A.** General questions about health care, facilities, disease processes and normal body functions. Where are the affordable mental health facilities in Houston? Where can a woman go for prenatal care if she wants to deliver at home? What medications are harmful to take during pregnancy?

As for specific questions about an individual's health, I may or may not be able to help. If your problem is abnormal vaginal bleeding, you should most likely see your personal physician, but I might talk about the most common causes of vaginal bleeding. I won't diagnose or prescribe.

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# Another great start on the week ...

By Neal Barrett

10 a.m. In the car and on my way through a gray Houston morning. The radio says low 30s till nightfall, with petro-sleet and rain by Tuesday.

10:20 a.m. The new client is okay. He reads both *Time* and *Atlantic Monthly* and makes up his own mind. He knows, by my beard, that I am a liberal thinker, too. He also knows I have a partner/wife and tells me he encourages women in business. He believes if women really work at it, they can get to the top and still retain their femininity. I make a note to tell Ruth.

11:30 a.m. I find it easy to keep a finger on socio-sexual thinking in the business world. I am a man, and an automatic member of the club. I am also a writer, as well as an advertising person—so people tell me things they might not confide to another. They know that we writers are



radical and amoral folk, and can be trusted with the truth: that *they* are not all they appear to be, either.

There is a talk show on the radio. The Rotarians or whoever have applauded the mayor's decision to rid us of Nikki Van Hightower. Some of the callers are pleased with this. One says it is another step in warding off the evils of ERA. For some reason, she does not wish to share my urinal at hockey games, or serve with me in the armed forces. Another call. From a man. I get an uneasy feeling about this one. He is breathing too hard, and he wants to know more about wife beating. Is it true what he hears? "I mean, a lot of them kinda like it, don't they?"

12 noon I call the office. Ruth is pounding out advertising gems, can't go to lunch. There are bills in the mail, even a few checks. The printer is being unreasonable again. She reminds me I am to attend a meeting that evening. I remind *her* we are an equal opportunity company, and that we will draw straws for this one. I am not enthusiastic about attending. I feel I am gaining little from this group. And they are certainly getting even less out of me.

Among these people is a token successful woman, a person who has risen through the ranks of this band. She makes money. She is an inspiration. What she is, is a female good ol' boy. She has made it in a "man's world" and she is anxious to remain the solitary hen among these admiring roosters. She is the resident expert on women's rights. She has explained to us that ERA is a crock—an excuse for sexually frustrated women

who want rights without responsibility. Mostly, these women are lesbians. Some—worse still—are intellectuals. They do not appreciate what their husbands go through in the business world. They could get somewhere if they would only follow the rules. Like she did. She frequently tells us how to recognize an ERA supporter: They carry bent coathangers in their purses, for emergency abortions.

1:30 p.m. My afternoon client is one I have met before. We are consolidating our deal, which promises to be a good one. When we are finished, we engage in a little small talk. He is curious about the advertising business. Which part, exactly, do I do—and which part does Ruth do? I have heard this question before. He is smiling, but behind this smile is hesitation. The copy he wants us to do is heavy industrial stuff. He is thinking he is not at all sure how *I* would look in a hard hat—and he is certain he doesn't want some woman working on his ad.

"I guess your—wife—does a lot of fashion stuff, right?" Wrong, I tell him. Placing foot in mouth again. I explain that Ruth is some better at financial and petrochemical writing, while I turn out pretty fair home furnishing and cosmetic copy. I leave him to ponder this. He will see me again, because I come highly recommended. But he is an astute businessman, and a keen judge of character. My manhood is on the line. He will be on the lookout for tell-tale gestures and mannerisms—and he will quickly spot any girl stuff in his copy.

2:15 p.m. The talk show continues. A woman has the answer to the abortion question: The Bible tells us we must kill all doctors who take a human life. She is also against lesbian teachers undressing in the classroom. Especially below sixth grade level. A man calls in. He is the same one interested in wife beating. He agrees—we ought to send all the lesbians back to Russia. If we don't, though, which Houston schools do they ordinarily undress in?

3:30 p.m. Back to the office. Ruth on the way out to haggle with printers. She will also stop by and talk to our attorney about bringing suit against a former client. This fellow is really not a bad sort. Some months ago, after a few drinks, he gave Ruth a friendly pat and told her by God, honey, if there's one thing he was for it was equality for everyone. He informed us that just as the Lord had seen fit to "make a couple of pretty smart nigger businessmen," He had also turned out some damn competent women.

This man practices what he preaches. He ignores his bills equally, without regard to race, creed, color or sex.

5 p.m. Not for the first time, I am wondering exactly where we are going. I am not sure we are getting anywhere fast in the equality game. And I have decided we talk too much about bright, successful women. Whatever it is, it isn't equality.

Equality is the right to get to the top without displaying a great deal of talent. It's the right to gain professional status while retaining your mediocrity. The right to be accepted for your half-assed efforts, and get paid for it.

This is not to say the male business executive is generally incompetent or inept. Some are, some aren't. The fact is, a great many men get—and keep—high-paying jobs in the worlds of commerce, industry and government without ever being quite sure which end is up. Men can get away with this. You can't. At least, not yet.



Jeannie Mouton

"The first time I asked why I couldn't umpire anything other than the center line, they told me in all seriousness that 'women can't see as fast as men.'"

## Calling the shots

By Susan MacManus

Julia Collier is an effective—and outspoken—women's advocate in a profession dominated by men. An active member of the Houston Tennis Umpires Association (HTUA), she serves on that organization's board of directors, and is a member of the Operations Committee which chooses chief umpires for all HTUA tournaments—including the annual Virginia Slims event.

She was the first recipient of the Most Improved Umpire award given annually by HTUA. Collier currently holds the status of both a Section Chair Umpire and National Life Umpire. These titles allow her to serve in Houston-area tournaments, and national tournaments sanctioned by the U. S. Tennis Association.

Collier encourages women who enjoy tennis to get involved in HTUA. At present, she points out, membership is about 90 percent male. "Some women quit from sheer frustration—because they're not allowed to umpire anything but the center line." (The center service line is generally recognized among umpires as the easiest—and least prestigious—to call.)

Julia Collier feels that many women involved in the profession never get either the nerve or the confidence to tell the chief umpire they want to move up from the center service line to a more "whistled-at line." Whistling, she explains for non-tennis fans, is an audience reaction to a questionable call. "The whole tennis umpiring scene needs to be opened up—and women can do it, if they are aggressive and interested enough in the game."

Collier notes that "very little special attention or encouragement is bestowed upon new women in the organization who

show potential—unless they are outspoken. If a man shows promise, the other men will go out of their way to help him develop. A woman simply has to fight her way up."

Collier has met the challenges of her profession by being both outspoken and good at what she does. At the Woodlands tournament two years ago, she was the only umpire who received a perfect rating.

Although Collier is guardedly optimistic about changing attitudes among some male members of HTUA, she thinks the association should be making a more active effort to encourage the participation of women. She also believes respect for female members of the profession should be demonstrated in other ways: Many chair umpires continue to refer to line umpires as "linesmen," even though official USTA rules call for the term "line umpire."

Collier is also concerned by the fact that women are not chosen by HTUA to serve as chief umpires in the large, prestigious tournaments, where such officials are paid an average of \$350. Instead, she says, women are judged "competent enough" to serve as chief umpires in tournaments where there is nominal pay, or no pay at all.

Collier feels less than optimistic about women's chances for umpiring on the national level. "Women don't stand a chance," she says. "It's almost impossible to get involved in Team Tennis officiating. About all we can hope for is more equity in participation at the local level."

Still, Julia Collier isn't about to give up. "Listen," she says firmly, "I can definitely see as fast as any man out there..."

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Marilyn Marshall Jones

# Streetfarmers' Co-op

By Maxine Atlas

What do you do when the grocery bill gets larger and larger—and the sacks you bring home get smaller and smaller? Or maybe you want produce which hasn't been loaded with chemicals somewhere along the line? More and more, the great supermarket serach for nutritious food reveals items which have been processed to death, treated with unfamiliar chemicals of unknown properties, and, in some cases, list wholly unrecognizable ingredients.

There are a number of neighborhood food buying clubs in Houston where families share in the task of purchasing wholesale quantities of produce. It's a plan that offers one solution to the economics of food buying, but it contains an inherent disadvantage: Sometimes, families find themselves with more fruits and vegetables—in quantity and kind—than they bargained for. Some people have attempted to solve this problem and gain more direct control over the kinds of foods they eat, by establishing member-owned and operated food cooperatives.

The first successful consumer cooperative, still in operation, was begun in Rochdale, England, in 1844, by 28 weavers who had been fired and blacklisted after an unsuccessful strike for higher wages. At the suggestion of Ann Tweedale, the only woman among them, they organized to obtain staple foods at lower prices. Twenty-five years before married women were legally permitted to own property in England, membership in the "Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers" was open to women on an equal basis with men. They could receive dividends, hold shares, and vote—a remarkable achievement for the time. Since then, co-ops have continued along the principles of democratic control, political and religious neutrality, and non sexist membership.

In Houston, there is only one store front food cooperative where members have joined to collectively provide themselves with a cheaper source of more nutritious foods. This co-op is an outgrowth of the now defunct Houston Food Co-op and General Store, which was located on Welch Street in the Montrose area. The store was begun before the Texas Cooperative Association Act was passed, and it had no bylaws. One person was able to gain control simply by signing all the papers and conducting all the store's business. It soon became a sole proprietorship, heavily indebted through financial

mismanagement. When a group of Houston Food Co-op members realized the store's progress towards non co-op status could not be halted, they met to collectively organize a "real" co-op. They named themselves Streetfarmers' Cooperative, and incorporated as a non-profit cooperative under the Texas Cooperative Association Act. Streetfarmers' has been in existence for about two years, and is governed by bylaws carefully designed to guarantee a democratic organization giving every member equal voice in the determination of store policy and the election of the board of directors.

All the stock available at Streetfarmers' is purchased, delivered, displayed and priced by co-op members. Fresh produce comes into the store on Saturday mornings. Two members of the produce buying collective turn off their alarms in the predawn hours to bargain with vendors in the Farmers Market. It takes a good memory to move from one seller to the next, remembering individual prices and quality. Armed with the produce inventory and shopping list compiled by the produce buying coordinator, the buyers make a second tour to pay for the fruits and vegetables they have selected. Produce is picked up by car or truck, delivered to the co-op, displayed and priced.

The buyers' busy morning brings eager co-op members to the store. The tight heads of green broccoli, fresh stalks of celery, closed button mushrooms, colorful boxes of bananas, oranges and apples, along with tomatoes, avocados, carrots, potatoes, onions and seasonal fruits and vegetables disappear by the end of the day. Many people who come to shop stay to visit. Artists, carpenters, teachers and accountants, students, doctors, housewives and office workers. Young, middle-aged, and the older, and less affluent all meet here as friends.

Curiosity about the white plastic pails lined up along floors and on shelves leads buyers to the discovery that natural foods, some organically grown, are also available. There are beans and peas, cereals, flours, dried fruits, grains and flakes, granola, nuts, seeds and nutritional yeast. In refrigerators, coolers and freezers are offerings of bread, cheese, eggs, frozen fish, nut butters, oil, whole wheat pasta and yogurt. Honey, molasses, tamari, and natural fruit juices occupy the shelves. A variety of cheeses at prices well below retail prices are available. Jarlsberg, muenster, havarti, komminost, mozzarella, monterey jack, baby swiss, brie and feta

are purchased from a local importer. White, raw milk cheddar comes from a cooperative warehouse in Austin, along with most of the bulk items available. Bulk purchase, of course, means savings for the consumer, so members do their own packaging, in containers brought from home. Shopping at Streetfarmers' takes more time than the local supermarket, because buyers service themselves. Still this casual approach to shopping allows time for talking with fellow members, and enhancing the communal sense of people working together for their common good. And this, after all, is the foundation of a cooperative endeavor.

Because it is a member owned and operated store, all members are expected to contribute at least three hours each month to the operation of one of the four collectives which run the co-op. There is a non-working category for members whose schedules limit active participation—these members pay an added surcharge. Since the co-op has no other labor source, it is important that people who *can* work, do work. People over 65 and handicapped persons are exempted both from working and paying the surcharge.

It has been difficult to find enough people either willing or able to provide sufficient work hours to keep the store open for long during the week. To compensate, Streetfarmers' has developed a unique policy. New members who make a commitment as active workers may, after two months' membership, purchase a key to the store from the coordinator of their particular collective, enabling them

to shop between shifts at their convenience. All financial transactions are on the honor system, and the universal honesty displayed has been a source of pride to the membership.

The desire to find cheaper and better food has been the primary reason for co-op membership. However, members who have become actively involved in the operations find there are social rewards as well. There is a sense of community within a co-op difficult to find elsewhere. Members have diverse backgrounds, talents and experience, but all share an interest in the concept of a cooperative organization.

Streetfarmers' Cooperative occupies the front of an old gas station at 1800 Waugh Drive in the Montrose area. There is no sign advertising its presence, and it isn't easy to find. Still, people interested in cooperatives as an alternative social institution manage to get there. Because the business establishment views cooperatives as a potential threat to their control of production and marketing, cooperatives do not have ready access to funding. They are always in financial need, and welcome the cash flow generated by new members. At Streetfarmers', limited financial resources mean members must accept humble surroundings and must participate in operating the store. Those persons willing to make a real commitment will be rewarded by a congenial association with like-minded people.

Store hours are: Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Phone: 527-0375.



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Debbi Du Bose

# Community Classrooms

By Rachel Burke

The classroom is a livingroom. The students are women who are sharing their attitudes and fears about rape. The atmosphere is relaxed and informal. One of the women asks the teacher, Joan Morgestern of the Rape Crisis Coalition, whether it is best to resist or remain passive in a rape situation.

"The most important thing to remember is survival—whatever happens you want to come out alive. Don't be passive but use your head. Keep in mind, if you are going to use a weapon or some sort of self-defense, that you had better do it right because if you fail you are only going to make your attacker more angry. Keep talking, forcing the rapist to see you as a person, an individual, rather than as an object to overpower. Do whatever you think is most likely to work for you in the particular situation you're in."

This seminar on rape prevention is one of several courses now being offered by The Class Factory, a new Houston business started by Donna Gerdin. Says Gerdin, herself a volunteer at Crisis Hotline, "Rape prevention is a pet issue for me but I would like to offer more of these very necessary public service courses in the future." Other classes currently being taught include Consumer Rights, Assertiveness Training, Our Bodies, Ourselves, Demystifying Computers, and a tax-deductible class on preparing your income tax. There is also a variety of skills one can learn ranging from creole cooking to simple car maintenance.

Before moving to Houston, Gerdin worked with a non-accredited educational program in Washington, D.C. "A friend of mine started it a couple of years ago and needed some help getting it off the ground. Also, as a single woman in a large city who didn't enjoy going to bars, it served as a social outlet for me. I think the same holds true for Houston. There isn't a very strong community base here, a place where people can meet each other and participate in enjoyable activities together."

So Gerdin began thinking of starting a similar program in Houston. "I asked my friend to come down and work with me for the first few months and she said no. Really I wanted her to come down and do it (start the business) for me but she wouldn't let me get away with that." So Donna brought the service to Houston herself.

"We printed up 10,000 catalogs and distributed them in office building snack bars, health food stores, grocery stores, laundromats . . . places people pass through every day. The most difficult job

was locating teachers. We put ads in several local newspapers and called on several small businesses." Most of the classes for the first session were taught by friends. Demystifying Computers, for example, is being taught by Gerdin's husband and Printing Production is being offered by the firm that prints the Class Factory's catalogs.

"Public response to the catalog was excellent," says Gerdin. "Along with registration we got lots of support—suggestions for classes, requests to be on our mailing list, and people just writing to say they were interested and excited by the concept. . . . I'm very excited by how many people I've gotten to talk with. The more participation, people liking it, the more energy and strength I have to go further. . . . It is vital for me to keep getting feedback. Once I cut myself off from listening to people I might as well fold."

Gerdin believes the Class Factory is different from Adult Education and programs like the Sundry School in several ways. "Most of all we are trying to capture a community structure. Courses are usually taught in the teacher's home, which makes the atmosphere more informal, less a part of the traditional academic structure. It also makes location more convenient because people can usually find a class that's right in their neighborhood. We want to attract people not only to the variety of classes we're offering but also to the social element."

"I try to keep prices as low as possible," says Gerdin. Most classes cost between \$4 and \$25 and tuition is split evenly between the teacher and The Class Factory. Some classes, like the rape prevention seminar, are free. "We handle all administrative work from registration to advertising, and offering a class with us gives the teacher good publicity. Also, the social structure is there as much for teachers as for students.

"I would like to be able to have child care available as well as more community services—a book exchange, for example," says Gerdin. "I would also like to offer more seminars and discussion groups on things like Life After Divorce and Being Single in Houston. I would like to expand beyond the Southwest and downtown areas where I am currently concentrating my efforts." The next session of classes will begin in March and run through the end of April. For more information about The Class Factory call Donna Gerdin at 526-9069 or write The Class Factory / 1907 Southwest Freeway / Houston, Texas 77006.

NEUMEYER cont'd from page 4

All of these magnet schools are there for young people who have a potential toward some specific field, and certainly it is a voluntary thing. So if a young person is turned toward that kind of thing, they will have the choice of going.

The precedent of a governmental agency recruiting potential police officers from its adolescent population may be disturbing to some civil libertarians, and the issue of this particular magnet school may turn out to be a hotter one than Neumeier anticipates. Whether the school will feature a broad based criminology and law curriculum or merely serve as a ghetto for police recruits is a question the mayor will have to answer soon, and this issue will probably provide challenges for Neumeier as well. She was not prepared to comment on a projected date of completion of the magnet school proposal.

Other projects that Neumeier describes as "rather special to me" are opening the schools to senior citizen activities and working with the parks and recreation department to set aside some recreational areas for people of all ages. These programs are still being researched, and no estimates of budgetary impact were available.

Neumeier's manner was friendly, if somewhat formal. She answered questions carefully, with attention to the shape her language was taking, and every response came in the form of a complete sentence. She was patient and she was precise, even when she was evading a direct answer. For example, she

would not answer the question "Do you support the Equal Rights Amendment?"

"Well, let me say this. I do believe that we do have our rights under the Civil Rights Act, and I think that the issues can be really well-defined through legislation, if that's necessary. If there's an inequity or inequality in something, I believe that it can be done through specific legislation that really pins it down, rather than through broad statements that still have to be defined later."

Similarly, she would not say whether or not she was a feminist. "I think before I can really say yes or no, I would need to know what you define as a feminist. There are a lot of problems and concerns of women that are very just and I share. Then there are probably certain other areas that I feel are not that important, and I tend to just sort of hone in on some of them that to me look like they are more important than the others. I'm not just an across the board type person that thinks anything that a group per se wished to do is exactly the thing to be done. I guess I'm kind of an independent thinker."

"Gradually we're seeing that more people are becoming aware that a woman can be very much in place in several roles. Women have certainly the capabilities to be career people, mothers, housewives. I think that one of the problems is having everybody accept this fact, and if I were really to think that everybody would or should I would be a little too idealistic. I think that acceptance of whatever role that a woman wished to be in is the most important thing."

COATS cont'd from page 4

with her gregariousness and flair. She has the "What's Right About America attitude and expresses it vivaciously, clearly.

She did not commit herself in her remarks on abortion:

"Well, people who feel very strongly, like on the pro-life thing, the abortion issue, that's their business, and if they want to get out and fight for what they believe in, I think they ought to. I think we all ought to. What you want to do, what you want to be, go out and do it. That's what I have done. There's no religious reason, no anything, other than I just wanted to do it. And that's how I am about the ERA, any of those things. However they feel, do. In this country the majority rules it anyway, and if a person feels strongly enough I feel like they're just obligated to be a voice."

Similarly, she skirts the ERA. "Well, I think the ERA is great. As far as I'm concerned, I don't need it. I've got a completely happy marriage, and I've always laughed and made a joke about this, that my husband's always treated me better than he treats himself, and I sure

wouldn't want it put back the other way. But I realize that's a silly argument, because of the fact that things are not always that way anywhere else. I happen to be happy with my particular role in life, but I think if I were not happy in it, I would be out trying to better it."

Aside from filtering the calls and letters that the mayor receives, Coates will also be serving as the liaison between the mayor's office and the Civil Defense Department, a job which she says she is "thrilled to death" about. Her enthusiasm for her job seems as great as her enthusiasm for the city itself. A rectangular poster-size photo of downtown Houston at night hangs on her wall, an array of skyscrapers and lights overlooking the frame houses of the inner city. "I'm getting up in age now, my kids are grown, and I can indulge myself. Whatever I want to do now, I can do, and I choose to work to help the city. You know, somewhere along the line you carry your own weight, or you pay your dues. I'm thoroughly enjoying it."



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"Where are you going to find a woman Curly Culp?"

Q. Do you feel any particular commitment toward women?

A. Oh, certainly. I feel that women are the equal of their male counterpart in most anything that they desire to be. I think that if somebody wants to argue that, they could carry it to the ridiculous. You know, where are you going to find a woman Curly Culp, for example? Well, I'm not interested in a woman's Curly Culp.\*

I don't think all of the talent lies with the male with any stretch of the imagination. I think women are very effective workers in government or in any other procedure they may want to be in, but I have no hangup with women at all. I think women do have some peculiar problems that maybe their male counterpart doesn't have.

Q. For example?

A. Well, let's talk about rape, for example, on the women's side. I think that is a very touchy subject and a subject that needs some special attention through our Houston Police Department. It is receiving some special attention, but I would like to see that special attention improved upon—the rape squad and so on.

Q. There've been several stories lately in the media about shortages in the rape squad in terms of personnel

A. I don't think that's a designed thing. I don't know of a division of the Houston Police Department that isn't fighting a shortage of personnel, but I have had some meeting with Chief Caldwell. He's aware of the problem, and we're doing everything we can to beef the thing up so that those rape victims are treated just as well as is possible to do—and because it helps us in clearing some of the cases.

"I don't expect him (the police chief) to completely deplete the burglary and theft department to staff that (the rape squad)."

Q. Do you have specifics in mind?

A. We have, but within the limitations that the Chief operates under. In other words, I don't expect him to completely deplete the burglary and theft department to staff that. It has to be done with some input from the Chief as to where his weaknesses and strengths are. But he is aware, as I am, that there are some still existing problems.

Q. I've also been told, by a representative of a woman's group, that there is a tremendous problem in getting the Houston Police Department to handle battered women cases, that the police department is very reluctant to interfere, particularly if it's a divorce case wherein the husband has returned to the home and is beating up his wife.

A. There are, and there are reasons why. So often, they're called out in a domestic squabble and before they get out of there, they're being hit by both—the man and the wife—because she has a certain love, respect, whatever it is, for her husband. She doesn't want to see him loaded into the car, so pretty soon, she's beating them over the head with her purse, and she's the one who called them out there.

I think that if you put yourself in the position of the police officer and when nine out of 10 of them go sour on you, pretty soon, human nature is human nature. You decide, 'Hell, we'll go out and investigate and make sure nobody's been killed and leave it alone.' But that needs to be improved.

Q. And if the woman really is willing to have him carted off, or he's already gone by the time they get there?

A. I don't think there's any problem...if he's there, and she really wants to charge him. If we do, I'm not aware of it. They'll pick him up if she will agree to file charges...When he's already gone, there sometimes is a problem because they go out and pick him up, and she refuses to file charges for one reason or another—either fear or, you know, 'all is forgiven and forgotten' and they're back making love. That's one of the problems. I must be honest about it, I never realized until recently that the battered woman situation was as bad as it is.

"I must be honest about it—I never realized the battered woman situation was as bad as it was."

Q. What made you more aware?

A. I guess the exposure that was brought about by the campaign and the election.

Q. What else did you learn in relation to women's issues?

A. I think a lot of it I probably already knew...but had no control over it at that point in time. For several years, I have realized that women in the marketplace, for example, do not and have not received the same pay for similar or like jobs. In doing some review with our civil service department, I find that is certainly true in city government, as well as in business, and we are trying to do something about it.

Q. What specifically are you trying to do?

A. By changing the salary range of women. Now, obviously, and I would hope that everybody could understand this—we cannot do that tonight because the budget impact is too severe. It has to be done on a graduated and gradual scale—but it can be done.

Q. Another one of the big complaints has been the city health insurance policy, specifically the maternity disability wherein the woman has to be married and her spouse also covered by the policy. The maximum is \$100 for hospitalization and \$75 for delivery. Do you anticipate any changes in that?

A. No, I can't say immediately because the council defeated that, and we have practically the same council.

"I've had to pay for six childbirths in my lifetime and even the first one many years ago, I don't think \$175 would have handled it."

Q. But the legal department has said those requirements ... have been held to be illegal in other cases...

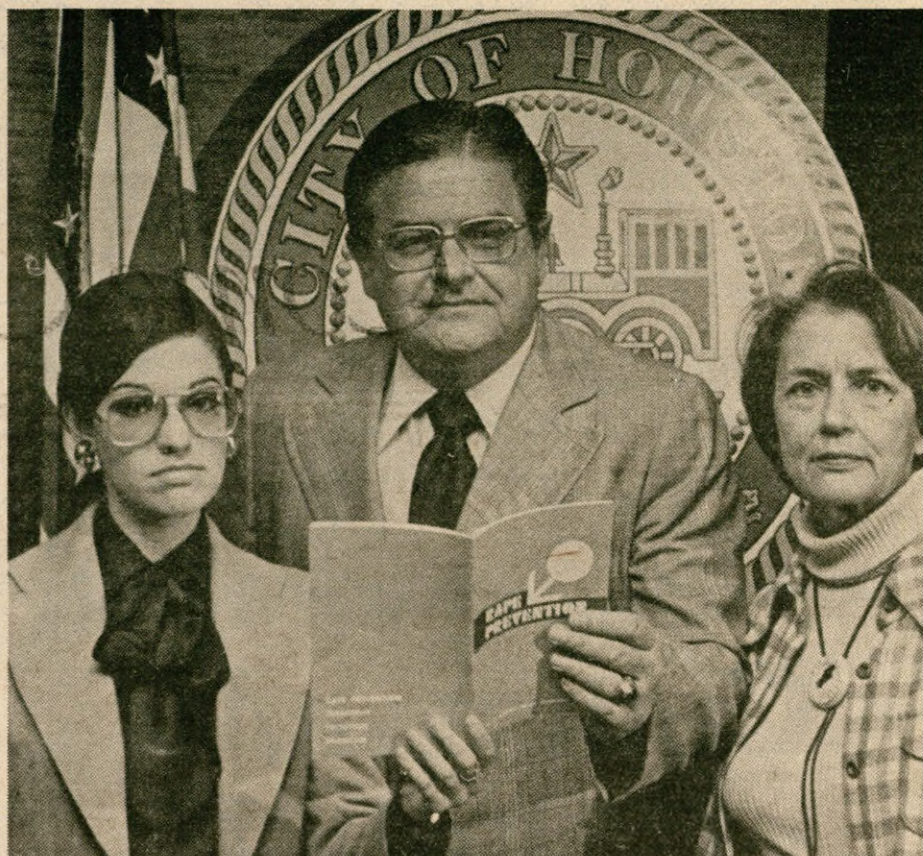
A. I don't doubt that it has been found illegal in some other areas, but I think that a great deal of attention must be placed on the fact that some of the council members feel that they do not want to underwrite the pregnancy of unmarried women.

Q. Is that what it's gotten down to?

A. I think so. That's exactly what their hesitation would be and very candidly, when I was on the Council I had a little hesitation about that. I don't know that it's the taxpayer's responsibility to be paying for the pregnancies of unmarried employees.

Q. Leaving that aspect aside, say she's married and her spouse is covered and so forth, what would be the disability payments for a man who, say, has a hernia operation?

A. I don't know. Probably out of line. It's (pregnancy benefits) obviously too low. I've had to pay for six childbirths in my own lifetime, and even the first one many years ago I don't think \$175 would have handled it.



Seminars on rape prevention will be offered at recreation centers in parks throughout the city. Mayor McConn (center) announced the joint project between the city's health and parks departments. Linda Cryer, (left) who heads the Rape Prevention and Treatment Center in the health department, will give a series of lectures on "Rape Occurrences and Prevention" to any group requesting it. Barbara Dillingham (right) public information officer in the parks and recreation department, said groups may call 641-4111 or apply to their local recreation center for the rape seminars. Tim Hart, acting director of the parks department, helped implement this new city service due to the increase in rape assaults. The city is averaging 130 (reported) rapes a month. Reported rapes increased 34% over 1976.

Q. How do you feel toward the Equal Rights Amendment?

A. Well, I'll tell you honestly that I think it has some problems. I'm not sure that some of the problems it creates have really been addressed by some of the people pushing the Equal Rights Amendment.

Q. Such as?

A. Well, if we were to go back into selective service, do women really want to be drafted? Maybe they do, I don't know. I relate to the women I know. I don't think that most of the women I know, both my children's age or my own age, want to fight that. I think that parts of the Equal Rights Amendment are needed and necessary, particularly such things as credit which has already been done, but it needs to be beefed up.

"... If somebody said 'Jim McConn, you have to go to one of these two meetings (the National Women's Conference or the 'Pro-life' Rally) under penalty of some threat, I would have attended the Pro-life meeting. That would have been to stay out of jail or something of that nature.'"

Q. If you had been the Mayor in November, would you have been at the National Women's Conference...

A. No, I would not.

Q. or the Pro-Life Rally?

A. I would have stayed away from both. Again, the confusion that that thing brought about. Somebody's going to have to sit me down and explain to me just exactly what we're trying to achieve by what we're doing along those lines. We obviously are divided among the women's groups, you see, and before I lend the power, if that's the word, of this office to either one of them, I'd have to see what they're about. I don't really know what they're about. Obviously, they are fussin' and feudin' and can't seem to come to grips with their own problems internally. I think until they do that, the best thing the Mayor can do is to stay away.

Q. If you were not the Mayor, but Jim McConn, an individual who has the right to do whatever he wants to do? Your gut level instinct?

A. My gut level instinct I think, would have been the same, to stay away because there wasn't a hell of a lot I could have accomplished by going over there. But from my own religious background (Catholic), if somebody said, 'Jim McConn, you have to go to one of the two meetings under the penalty of some threat,' I would have attended the Pro-Life meeting. That would only have been to stay out of jail or something of that nature.

Q. I asked a moment ago, 'Do you feel any commitment toward women?' This time the question is, do you feel any commitment toward the feminist movement?

A. I don't think that I do. I think I feel a deep commitment towards women, but the feminist movement—somebody

would have to really sit down and define to me just exactly what the goals of the feminist movement are because I'm not sure I understand what they are.

Q. Is there anything in particular you would like to say to *Breakthrough's* readers?

A. No, except that I don't want to be classed as, you know, 'anti-women,' because I am not. Admittedly, I have some problems I think, as most males do, with understanding the complete thrust of the feminist movement—just exactly what they're trying to achieve. Perhaps they can tell me. I'll be glad to listen.

I honestly don't know, at this point in time, just exactly what their goals are, and I'm not going to exclude anybody from visiting with Jim McConn, and I think I'd find it very interesting to sit and talk and find out what their goals are, what they're about, so to speak. All I know is surfacely, and all I know is what I read, and perhaps I'm not reading the right periodicals.

\*Curly Culp is a 300 lb. defensive lineman for the Houston Oilers.

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*Nikki Van Hightower, KTRH-Radio*

**Awards - two o'clock**

# network

Network is a new monthly feature intended as a forum for Breakthrough readers to communicate with each other or with the newspaper. Network will replace our letters to the editor and To and From page. Please send announcements, letters or art to Breakthrough, P.O. Box 88072, Houston, Texas 77004.

Two Houston women have been nominated by *Ladies' Home Journal* as a "Woman of the Year" for 1978. Nikki Van Hightower, Ph.D., Women's Advocate, City of Houston, is a nominee in The New Politics and Government category and Sarah A. Nunneley, M.D., research medical officer, U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, is a nominee in The New Scientific Community category. Voting ballots will appear on Pages 77-78 of the February *Ladies' Home Journal*.

The third annual Houston YWCA Outstanding Woman's Luncheon, giving metropolitan businesses a way to honor their employed women, will be held February 22 in the Imperial Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. National President of the Girl Scouts, Dr. Gloria Scott, has been named keynote speaker, and will be joined on the program by Reverend Helen Havens of St. Francis Episcopal Church on Piney Point. For further information concerning the luncheon, call 523-6881.

The Women's Hall of Fame, Inc. is seeking new members to join the supporting organization of the hall. This national hall of fame's goal is to provide a permanent place of honor for America's most outstanding women of achievement. This museum for contemporary and historical figures is to be erected in Seneca Falls, New York, where Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott convened the first Women's Rights Convention in 1848. To obtain a membership form and informational brochure, send your name and address to Women's Hall of Fame, Inc., P.O. Box 335, Seneca Falls, New York 13148.

Free tax assistance is being offered in many locations in Houston and a few outlying communities. The service is co-sponsored again this year by Children's Educational & Development Centers and the Voluntary Action Center, in conjunction with the Internal Revenue Service. For locations and other information call Children's Educational & Developmental Centers at 228-2879 (English & Vietnamese assistance) or 228-6730 (Spanish assistance); or call United Way Information & Referral at 527-0222 (English & Spanish assistance); or call Internal Revenue Service at 961-1767 (English recording of times & locations).

If you have experienced role changes in your present life and feel that the exchange of feeling and thoughts with other women might be helpful, contact Heidi Rosenkranz at 529-0971 to discuss the formation of a group of Women In Transition. Heidi is a psychiatric occupational therapist whose function in the group would be to encourage self-expression and self-direction in the group members, and to facilitate accurate perception of self, others and the presented areas of concern. Techniques of verbal exchange, sensitivity exercises, roleplay and art methods will be used to increase self-expression, understanding of personal assets, and awareness of social roles.

"Getting It Together," a new publication which describes the planning functions of selected government agencies within Harris County, is now available from the League of Women Voters of Houston. The 37-page booklet was financed by a grant from the Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and may be obtained by the public with a charge for postage only.

Texas Para-Legal School, a non-profit educational corporation located at 608 Fannin, Suite 1903, is now accepting applications for enrollment in part-time evening classes. For registration information call 227-2220.

Houston Lesbians is sponsoring a general questionnaire on formation of a national lesbian organization. All Texas lesbians who would like to express opinions or ideas on the formation of such an organization may write for the questionnaire to: Questionnaire, P.O. Box 14643, Houston, Texas 77021, or call Linda at (713) 524-0342 after 5 p.m. Please enclose a S.A.S.E. if possible.

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Last year, Alley Theatre's Nina Vance and seven other prominent American directors were invited by the Soviet Ministry of Culture to attend contemporary Russian Theatre in Moscow and Leningrad. Impressed by the quality of Soviet drama, Ms. Vance invited Galina Volchek, artistic director of Moscow's Sovremennik Theatre, to restage her production of Mikhail Roschin's *Echelon* in Houston. *Echelon* made its American debut at the Alley Theatre January 26, and continues through February 26.

The presentation of *Echelon* is an historic theatrical event: the first time a Soviet director has recreated a play precisely as it appeared in the Soviet Union—with American actors. *Echelon*, described by Ms. Vance, is the story of women being evacuated from Moscow during Hitler's advance in 1941. The women were placed on special trains for Siberia, moving through dangerous open country under the sights of German bombers. *Echelon* recounts the events of one such journey. "In a larger sense," Ms. Vance points out, "*Echelon* is a play about survival."

Director/actress Galina Volchek attended the Moscow Art Theatre Studio School, the mecca of Soviet theatre. While there, she met the young director Oleg Yefremov, who organized the Sovremennik (contemporary) Theatre. Later, Madame Volchek became the Sovremennik's artistic director, choosing as her debut presentation William Gibson's *Two for the Seesaw*. She has included several American plays in her repertoire, including Edward Albee's *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*, and David Rabe's *Sticks and Bones*.

A popular performer on the Russian stage and screen, Madame Volchek has appeared in many motion pictures, including *Don Quixote* and *King Lear*. Upon her return to the Soviet Union, she will appear as Martha in the Sovremennik's production of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Tickets for *Echelon* are available at the Alley box office, 615 Texas Avenue, 228-8421, or at all Foley's Ticket centers.

SER-Jobs for Progress of Houston, Inc., (SER-JFP) will submit an application for \$175,000 for the 1978-79 school year to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, under the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA). The funds are being requested to support the Jose Vasconcelos Preschool, a SER-JFP Project designed to supplement and complement the Houston Independent School District Early Childhood Development Program.

The Jose Vasconcelos Preschool program is designed to provide bilingual and multicultural education to four-year olds who are from environments in which the dominant language is other than English. For information about the program, contact Margaret Acosta at 225-3508.

Women In Action, a coalition of 53 organizations, needs volunteers for its WIA Welfare Committee's Food Stamp Office at 600 E. Crosstimbers. The need is urgent for volunteers to make telephone contacts with Social Security and Handicapped (SSI) clients to keep them informed of any changes in the price of Food Stamps. To offer your help, call Irene Schneider at 527-0718 or 695-7313.

A workshop on male sex role and stereotype will be led by author and psychologist, Dr. Hershul Thornburg on Saturday, February 25, from 9 to noon and 1:30-4:30 at The First Unitarian Church, 5210 Fannin. Thornburg, a University of Arizona professor, will structure the all-day session around his male sex role manual called *Punt, Pop*. For information call Susan Lee at 688-4293.

A founding convention for a national lesbian organization will be held March 17-19 in Los Angeles. Lesbian feminists who live in West Virginia, Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas, or Texas, and who would like to be representatives to the convention, should contact southern regional coordinator Linda Lovell at P.O. Box 14643, Houston, Texas 77021, or call (713) 524-0342 for more information.

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The Canterbury Association presents Another Evening of One-Act Plays! *The Dumb Waiter* by Harold Pinter, directed by Susan Madigan; *The Orchestra* by Jean Anouilh, directed by Rebecca G. Udden; and *Revue Sketches* by Harold Pinter, directed by Matt Cooper. Main Street Theater at Autry House. Feb. 9-11 at 8:00 pm. Reservations 524-6706. Tickets: \$3.00 and \$1.50.

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