

WOMEN'S
ISSUE

COMMUNITIES journal of cooperative living

Still Serving That Dream

COMMUNITIES
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Mothers & Daughters Break with Tradition

no. 33

Introducing this issue...

The original intent of this issue was to feature a 20-25 page "women's section" which was to be guest edited by Rachel Bedard of the Movement for a New Society Life Center in Philadelphia. Rachel co-edited the MNS issue last summer and at that time voiced an interest in editing a women's issue this year. Somewhere along in May, during the ongoing Mikki/Rachel "how are we doing" phone calls it became evident from the range of articles and our enthusiasm that this would be an issue totally devoted to women's articles and that we would both be working fully on this issue.

Because this was an especially busy time for both of us (Rachel working a 60 hour week / Mikki co-coordinating the Twin Oaks conference) it was helpful to us to be living in community and to be receiving ongoing support from the women who live and work with us; from Margaret who put an incredible amount of energy into Resources and Grapevine, Sumathi who spent endless hours transcribing interviews, Ceil, Ruth and the many other women whose enthusiasm, support and help were always there for us to draw on.

In this issue we have tried to present a variety of experiences and a sense of the ongoing struggle that women have to face. Women still fight for equality in jobs, lifestyle choices and personal power. Although the movement is less visible now and therefore less of a support system for us, we have come to a greater consciousness because of its activity in the last 10 years. But we are not satisfied nor have we stopped changing.

What was a good choice for our mother's growth might not be a good choice for our own (see "Mothers and Daughters" in this issue). What was a wise decision for us five years ago may need to be re-examined in the light of new experience, circumstances, commitments or the changing political scene. Society is suggesting as strongly as ever that little girls should grow up to be housewives. We need to be equally strong and steady in affirming that there are indeed many alternatives.

We are excited about the range of articles and opinions covered here: from women in work and herstories of women in community to the broader issue of feminism and its survival. The women speaking out in these pages have made dramatic decisions in their lives and are and are living out their choices. A common thread running through all their writings is the exploration of their own levels of competence. Each of these women can now be labeled "a competent woman" because, having crossed one barrier they now have the tools, the confidence, to cross over others. It's quite a break through; realizing that knowing something **well**, frees us to know, do and be even more.

The women in this issue have come to this point in different ways and at different times in their lives. Kat Kinkade, for instance, never saw the barrier at all. For Heidi Bertould and Joyce Brown it was a very conscious and deliberate choice. Virginia Blaisdell, long competent as a printer for a movement press, is now broaching the challenge of professional photography. Diana MacLeod used the experience she gained working on a women's magazine to publish a growing and successful neighborhood newspaper, Graffiti Sheet. Rachel jumped into a "solo" trip half way across the world and now feels she can go anywhere.

It takes confidence to become competent and competence to become confident. Finding a way to break into that chain is the challenge. Once in it, we're on our way, and each of our lives can be an assertion of how independent and creative women can be.

So here we all are. We are women having much and little in common. We hail from the Northeast, Southeast, and the Northwest. We are mixed in age, nationality, and lifestyle. We are brown, black and white. We are all strong women. We hope you like this issue and we invite you to submit articles for future issues.

Mikki & Rachel

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Continuity

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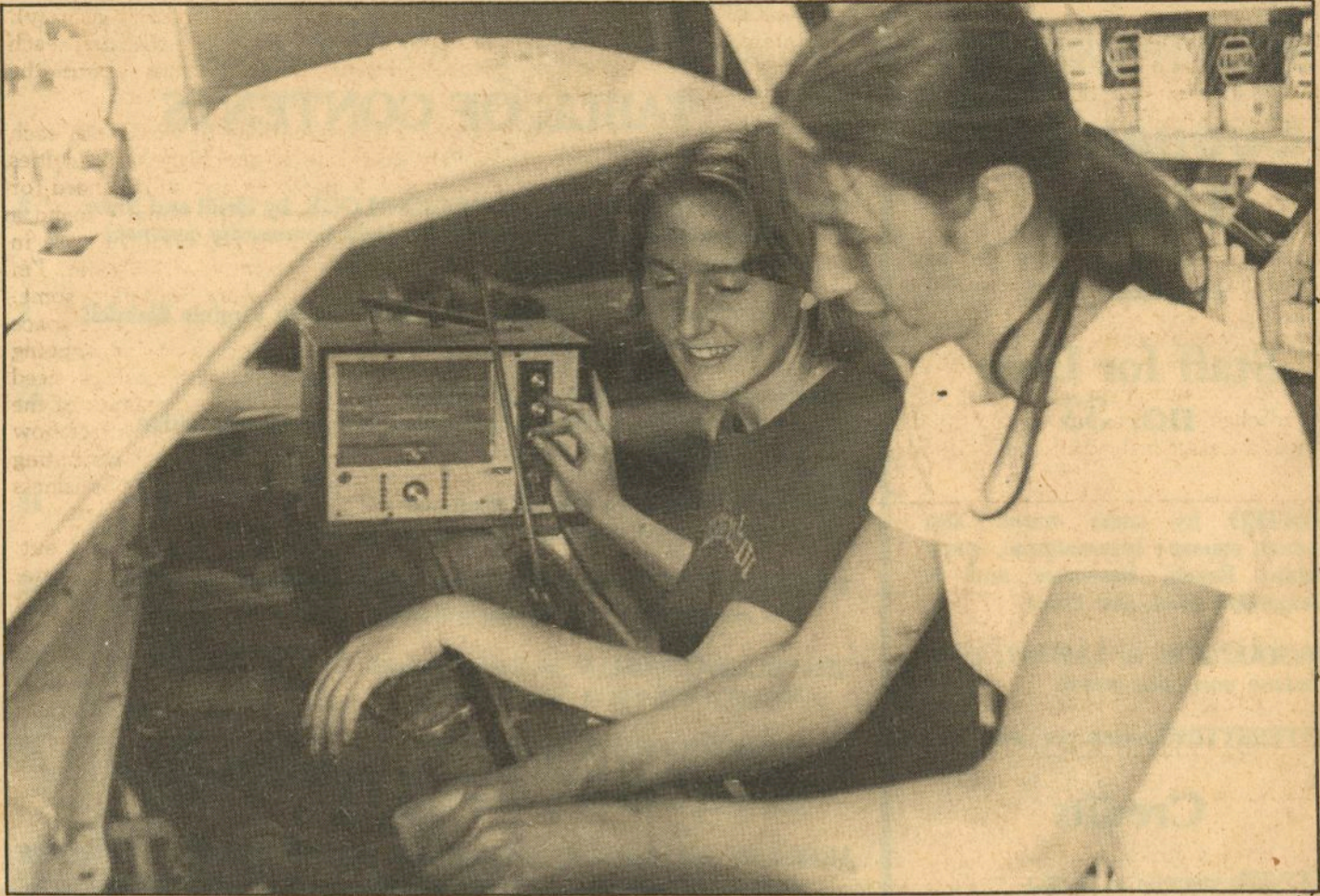
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Heidi and Joyce

Demystifying “MAN MADE” Technology

Egalitarian communities such as Twin Oaks, an 80-member rural group in Virginia, have taken a major step in feminist directions by structuring equal access to jobs. Thus, at Twin Oaks men participate in domestic chores and child-rearing, while women can take on construction, machine work, and leadership roles.

In this conversation, Heidi and Joyce express what it's been like over the past 2 years on Twin Oaks' auto crew, first as apprentices [to skilled men], and presently as mainstays of the crew. Among other things, they touch on some difficult and subtle male/female patterns of interaction that unfortunately remain at Twin Oaks, despite the structured equality.

Heidi I joined the auto crew when I first came to Twin Oaks. It was a toss-up between auto mechanics and construction. I opted for mechanics because there was an opening. I was also most immediately curious about mechanical know-how, having owned a car in the years before joining Twin Oaks, and having felt an easy prey to the oppressive powers of technology. From a feminist perspective, I wanted to be able to relate to men on the levels and information areas they are most commonly into. I wanted to tap into a source of men's power, accepting that access to information and knowledge is power. My intention wasn't to gain power so as to control others (though my skills give me a certain ability to do so, which I find needs sensitive harnessing), but to maneuver better the controls on me. I wanted to know what was happening and not be afraid when I pushed buttons or turned keys.

Joyce I came to Twin Oaks partly(mostly) because of the opportunities to learn something new and interesting to me. I was bored with the succession of non-skilled jobs I held on the outside and didn't see any exciting employment opportunities on the horizon. Owning my own car and trying to keep it well maintained sparked an avid curiosity about its insides. Like Heidi, I felt entirely at the mercy of people who knew all about it. My first visit to Twin Oaks revealed the opening for an apprentice on the auto crew. I expressed an off-hand interest in the job to my friend Deborah whom I was visiting, and by the time I returned for an extended visit many people were aware of and encouraging my interest. Since women apprentices were being actively sought (because even here, most of the people working in mechanical areas are men), my femaleness was, for once, an asset instead of a liability in getting a job.

I wanted to know what was happening and not to be afraid when I pushed buttons or turned keys.

Joyce We began by "mothering" our regular preventive maintenance program: oil changes, tune-ups, inspections, and registrations, with Nathan and Dexter helping us on more ambitious projects. We're now able to do much more work independently. Nathan has almost completely phased out of auto, being there in only an advisory capacity. Dexter still does a good deal of auto maintenance, but we feel we demand less of his time for teaching. Most of the organizational impetus comes from Heidi and me. We keep track of what needs to be done and when.

Heidi Joyce and I expanded our interests to other mechanical areas. Joyce mothers the dump truck and large flatbed, and is the vehicle usage manager. I've been doing backhoe maintenance, and we've both been working on farm equipment. Being on the land planning commission has sparked my interest in road construction and maintenance.

Joyce We've had our share of difficult times. When Heidi and I first started doing auto, Larry was our chief tutor and the organizational backbone of the auto crew. Shortly after the beginning of our apprenticeship, Larry suddenly dropped out of the maintenance scene altogether. His departure was hard for the rest of us to cover - for Nathan and Dexter because organization simply isn't their forte and they had many other responsibilities, and for Heidi and me because we weren't familiar enough with what was going on. We learned and are learning by experience.

Heidi Working out personal relationships with people on the crew has been hard at times. I've had some real problems, particularly with Dexter, in the past (and

continue to, though relations have improved immensely). We've both become more sensitive to checking each other out before jumping to conclusions about the other's actions.

Joyce Getting to know and learning to work with each other has definitely been one of the biggest difficulties we've had to encounter. It has been and still is, hard for me to work closely with someone with whom I spend a lot of time apart from work. This has been the case in the past with Nathan and is presently with Dexter. I'm glad to have the opportunity to work with him some, but there are times when it feels we're in the same space too much and get on each other's nerves. It's an ongoing process and though it gets easier, relationships need constant maintenance. The interpersonal dynamics of the crew and each member's individual problems affect how we function together. We've decided to try instituting weekly feedbacks along with our regular business meetings to facilitate our interpersonal relationships.

Heidi I was easily frightened when I first started out, not knowing how to use tools, where things were, feeling skeptical that books could be good teachers. It was hard having to ask my many questions, often finding that it was lack of confidence that kept me from understanding. I became more and more aware of how my lack of confidence was peculiar to my female conditioning. Giving up when baffled was easier for me, I noticed, than for the men. I feel that generally men are able to be more aggressive because of a conditioned confidence. Often with that comes a pride that mustn't be hurt by failure. I don't find failure as easy to take these days. As my knowledge and confidence have increased, I can expect more of myself.

I wanted to tap into a source of men's power, accepting that access to information and knowledge is power.

Joyce It was hard to learn to look at problems with the attitude "I can" instead of "I can't". It took a radical change of perspective for me to try to be confident and analytical dealing with mechanical problems instead of just mystified. A large part of that perspective is being aware of tools and what they can do for you, the right tool for the right job. I think I often transferred my frustration at my own ignorance to anger toward whomever my teacher was at the time. I wanted to be told what I needed to know but felt my intelligence was being insulted when I was told something I already knew.

Heidi Learning about mechanics by whatever problem came into the shop instead of step-by-step was confusing and frustrating to me. Dexter and Nathan were often too

I've often confronted men putting out information as positive facts when I've found through experience that it's often guess and conjecture.

busy with other skilled work to see a project through with me from beginning to end. I found the manuals incomprehensible, not knowing the basics. My mind emphasized the pressure to get the vehicle back on the road - not a mellow way to learn.

Joyce I don't think I felt that particular pressure as strongly. I would do what I could and try not to feel bad if it wasn't enough.

For quite a while Heidi and I were the only women working in the shop. Basically we've always felt good about one another, but have had trouble working comfortably together at times. I was irritated by what I felt was an annoying attention to inimportant details and thriftiness, and she was bothered by what she saw as my careless lackadaisical attitude. Lots of talking and compromise (like, "I'll put the folders in alphabetical order if you'll quit switching off my drop light every time I turn my back") has brought us to a place, I think, of really positive feelings about each other.

Heidi When Joyce and I do a project together it is psychologically supportive to know that our skill levels are similar. What one of us might overlook or not understand, the other can often fill in. When I work with someone who knows a lot more than me, it is often easier to ask questions instead of thinking it out for myself. It certainly helps women's image to have Phoenix doing welding, Kathy working in the machine shop, Karen driving tractors, Linda doing backhoe and Laurel doing electrical work.

Heidi As far as male attitudes towards us, Dexter and Nathan have come to know what Joyce and I can do. I find that men who don't work with me regularly have varied expectations of me. It feels very good and natural when they ask me mechanical questions, or for "technical assistance" (our term for muscle jobs). Those men who question my abilities by making assumptions about my intelligence or strength rile me. I can come back with a mild "keep the peace" (not mine), unquestioning, compliant attitude, or I can do an angry, aggressive bit. And, there's the know-it-all assert-and-prove-oneself behavior.

Joyce I lose patience with men when I see them dealing with problems as if they were solely business matters, ignoring the underlying personal dynamics that often

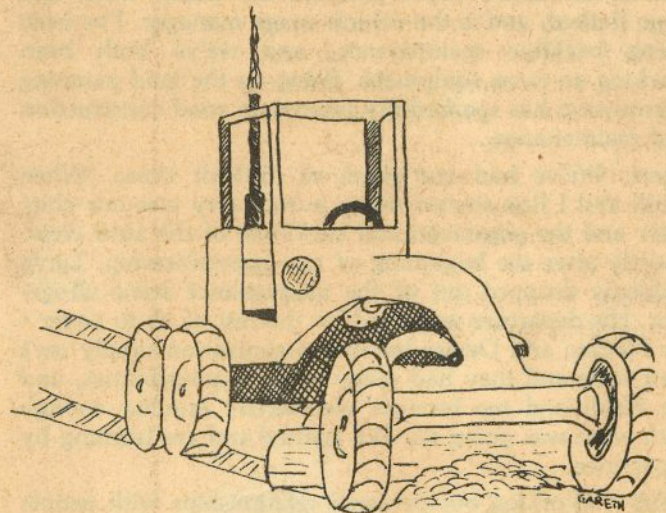
cause the problems. I've often confronted men putting out information as positive facts when I've found through experience that it's often guess and conjecture. I'm easily snowed by a person who sounds like co knows what co's talking about.

Heidi My responses to that behavior vary with my space and the situation. One way I can feel is, OK, this man knows what he's talking about. Another way is to feel intimidated by the man's assertiveness, resulting in a lack of creative confidence in myself. Another response is to develop a lack of trust in that person's credibility. We've put out that there are many frustrations dealing with the men we work with at Twin Oaks. It's also true that we've found them to be less sexist, less condescending, more supportive and more cooperative than most men we've dealt with.

Heidi As for future trips, I like my changes slow, easy on the vibrations. I'd like to see us move away from fossil-fueled or even electrically powered vehicles. I like that we'll be using slow-moving, small, quiet vehicles in the internal transportation system proposed for the community. Regular public road vehicles will penetrate no further than the parking lots on the perimeters of the community. I can imagine us doing some needed basic mechanical and drivers' education for folks here.

Joyce I'd like us to be using gasoline vehicles less rather than more, and for the consciousness about that to be higher among the people of the community than it generally is.

Heidi I like that our kids have women mechanics and male metas (child care people) as role models. It will be much easier for them. Demystifying "man"-made technology makes the world more understandable and easier for me to accept. I can appreciate with awe the capabilities of materials, yet am not as overwhelmed or intimidated. Living in a small community brings me closer to understanding causes and effects. My work sensitizes me to the potentials of a machine or a material, and therefore an understanding of how to deal with them. □



STILL SERVING THAT DREAM

AN INTERVIEW WITH VIRGINIA BLAISDELL

Virginia Blaisdell is a photographer, writer and printer in New Haven, Connecticut. She was active in the American Independent Movement in 1968, and helped to establish the women's liberation movement in New Haven. She was a founding member of the New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band [1970-77], a printer from 1968 to 1978 at the movement-oriented collective, The Advocate Press, and a member of the editorial and production staff of Sister [see Resources section, this issue, for description], an excellent feminist publication... She is currently a full-time photographer. Her work frequently appears in the New Haven Advocate newspaper, and in several photography exhibits.



by mikki WENIG

Mikki - It's 1978 and most of the "heavies" in the left radical movement are out of the public eye. The women's movement appears to be losing ground. Yet you are still heavily involved in political activism in New Haven. What has the movement been like for you? What was it like in the beginning? Who were you in 1966?

Ginny - I got out of college in 1962 and took a job as a secretary at Yale. I felt trapped there but it was either that or teach school and I didn't want to teach school. I got married and that enabled me to stick with the job only part time, which was a relief. Then I got involved in the women's movement and at the same time got involved in left politics.

Mikki - What brought you into the women's movement?

Ginny - I read Betty Freidan in 1966 and in 1968 I went to visit a friend of mine in Chicago. They had a women's movement just beginning there. I was intrigued by it and thought, "Oh boy, we need one of those in New Haven." The only problem was that I didn't know how I'd go about starting such a thing. Then I read in a Chicago newsletter that a new group was forming in New Haven. I called up the contact person and she said, "Well we've had a group for a couple of weeks now but it's started to diminish and nobody comes anymore." I said, "Well, I'd like to come," and just by chance it turned out that about ten other women found out about it at the same time and came to this meeting. There must have been 15 people in the room. It was thrilling. We looked around and said, "We all think this? Together? Look what we could do. We could do anything." Everybody was excited and there was no possibility that the group would disband. We started thinking of things we could do: go picket the legislature, sue the newspaper for sexist ads...

Mikki - This was a political action group, as opposed to a consciousness raising group? Or did it have elements of both?

Ginny - In those days there was no such distinction because the women who began the women's movement were already involved in left politics. Our involvement in feminism came directly out of feeling oppressed as political people by the male-dominated left. We were very program oriented. We weren't into just getting our heads together, eating right and staying fit. We had a critique of socialism. Socialism basically left women's problems to the cultural and domestic sphere, as something that would just naturally get better as the economic system got better: an afterthought. So we did battle with the radical men and women who were not sympathetic to us. We'd make presentations to them telling them how feminism was a viable radical activity. It was a shuffle, what we did, which was sort of sad. But we felt we had to justify ourselves. That was way

before the feminists split off from the mixed left. Most people were very intimately involved with all the men. It was a very coupling kind of situation.

By 1971 the women's movement in New Haven had separated from the radical left which soon became essentially an all male movement. The differences were interesting. For example when we worked with men, we worked on issues that everybody thought were not specific to any sex, although actually a lot of them were more specific to men, like the draft. The women were anti-war and the men were anti-draft. But when issues arose that also had broad social implications but applied to our sex more than theirs it was not an issue that men would share with women. I find it incredibly interesting that something like the health care movement has worked out to be primarily a feminist issue. Women work on health care although men receive health care and give health care. Men are doctors, dentists, technicians, and they run/own hospitals and health insurance. Health care is not a sex segregated thing. Why have they not joined with us in this struggle? Probably because they don't want to do what women are doing. It's the same reason they don't want to be secretaries.



Mikki - How did you come to work at the Advocate Press?

Ginny - I didn't know much about photography and started fooling around with it a little. AIM (American Independent Movement) put out a little newsletter and somebody asked me if I could take some pictures of Bridgeport redevelopment for the newsletter. I said sure, took some pictures and then brought them to Alan

You can't build utopia in the middle of a pig sty.

McKnight at the Press. I went up there and there was this hippie place. Well it wasn't even hippie then. It was "movement". And it was accessible then like it is now. That is you walk in and you can see all its guts. You don't walk into an office or anything like that. I said, "Oh wow, would you give me a fifty cent tour?" He said sure and took me through all the processes. I knew a little bit about the darkroom and he showed me the typesetter and printing press and introduced me to people. I thought, "What a wonderful place."

One of the women who worked there was also in women's liberation and she later said that she wanted to leave the press and go to work on the Yale Non-Faculty Union Organizing drive and did I want to work at the Press in her place. I said, Gee, do you think I could?" She said, "Sure, none of us knew how to print before. We're all on-the-job trained, you can learn." So I started working there and she stayed and overlapped with me for a month.

Mikki - How old were you then?

Ginny - 28 or 29. I was still married and I got paid working there full time only a little more than I was making at Yale part time.

Mikki - But it was part of the movement. Something you could really feel involved with.

Ginny - That's right. It was understood that people were taking movement salaries because there was a political reason you were doing what you were doing. A subsistence wage is what we paid...although we did have a salary differential at that time. The person who learned to print was the Queen Bee in effect because printing took so long to learn. We couldn't have a fly-by-night person in that job.

But a lot of people worked there for free. For instance one guy had some stocks that were given to him by his family. He still believed that it was good to work for a living and he might as well get Shell Oil or whoever it was to pay his salary while we got the benefit of his labor. Other people would come in periodically just to sweep the floor or help out. When we moved the Press to its present location in 1970 there were fully 20-30 people to help us move. We had an entire caravan of

VW buses because people considered us a movement service, and we were.

Mikki - You did mainly movement printing jobs?

Ginny - Mostly. We started taking a little bit of commercial work as we became confident of our ability to do it. Gradually we took more and more just to subsidize the movement work. But we never gave printing away to the movement, just because there were a bunch of people who were willing to work their little asses off all day and night. We believed the movement had to realize how much these things cost. We had to at least account for the fact that we needed to live and eat, that rent needed to be paid and that materials cost money.

Mikki - At that time were you still excited by your involvement in the feminist movement?

Ginny - Oh yes. We were in the middle of it. It was just wonderful. There were also other movements going on too which made you feel that you were one of many movements and were not just this last remaining historical oddity. It was the height of the Black Panther thing in New Haven. The anti-war movement was having its difficulties but there was also the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. We used to print underground newsletters high school kids would put out. At the time of the Erica Higgins - Bobby Seale Panther Trial, several radicals decided that the newspapers were not reporting the trials accurately. So once a week they would write a two-page newsletter and distribute it on a very wide basis. They mailed it all over the country, 12,000 a week. We would stay up all night to print it. It's very exciting when you do something and you think: "Because I'm printing this thing, people are going to find out what's going on." And they have no other way of finding out. Or when the kids are putting out their alternate newsletters. The kids are seizing the means to express themselves. We had a motto which said, "Freedom of the press belongs to those who own one." So if the community felt it owned the press it could have a chance to say what it wanted. That made it really very exciting to do.

The act of being politicized is like learning to ride a bicycle; you don't forget.

Also at this time I was a member of the New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band which started in 1970 and died in 1975.

Mikki - Had you played music before?

Ginny - For about 20 years.

Mikki - I would think that at some level it would be extremely frustrating coming into a band knowing as

much as you did and probably more than many other people.

Ginny - At the beginning even though the skill levels were hopelessly unequal the fact that you thought there was a commitment to learning things made everything seem possible. It later began to be apparent that there was not this commitment; instead there was what my friend, Jessie Lemish, calls "militant amateurism". Someone would say, "Well I don't have to know eighth notes, all I have to do is know the song." Or, "We don't want to be as good as men because they're pigs." Women would say, "I don't want to take lessons from guys." But if guys have all the technology who are you going to take it from? "Well, I'll just pick it up by myself or something," they'd say. Then they wouldn't practice. To make a virtue out of amateurism seems like a natural defense if you really believe you can't do it. Not only don't we do it, we don't want to do it.

It's a hard thing to get at because it's so self destructive that you'd think people would see it. There's a lot of good things about the women's self-help movement, but there's some bad ones too and amateurism is part of it. Why shouldn't we take over the medical schools? Why should we content ourselves with knowing only a little medicine? Being physicians assistants, associates or midwives? Why can't we be the whole damn thing? Midwife is a step better than a nurse and it's another \$3000 a year...but I want it all. I want us to kick them out of the medical schools, have quota systems for them and I want us to run the hospitals, the old age homes.

It was the cult of militant amateurism that got to me because not only was it a denial of the validity of my training but it's like locking yourself up hopelessly forever in servitude. It was dumb, just dumb. But it was a strong message in the movement. It said, "Thou shalt not be slick, thou shalt not do the things that seem to have power because then that would separate you from your less powerful sisters." Carried to its logical conclusion it insisted that you became lame, pregnant, ugly, fat and poor...

Mikki - The lowest common denominator.

Ginny - Not even common, the lowest, the most oppressed. In other words you actively take on all the oppressions that everybody has. Your political validity was judged not in terms of what you did to change social conditions, but who you were. In the case of the band, one woman in the movement seriously advanced

To make a virtue out of amateurism seems like a natural defense if you really believe you can't do it.

For a long time we never played on a stage because that would elevate us symbolically above The People.

the idea that we should not put our names on the record because that would separate us from all our sisters who couldn't be on the record and weren't playing in bands. For a long time we never played on a stage because that would elevate us symbolically above The People.

Militant amateurism also worked its way into the Press. There was the idea that the working class couldn't read well so therefore you couldn't use words that had any more than two syllables. Another issue was that we couldn't produce something that looked too slick. There was the "cult of the handwritten", the crudely drawn, the cheap paper. Glossy paper was a no-no.

One argument I remember had to do with the abortion referral group's needing a brochure, a little two-page thing. My idea was that it should look good. That is, I thought, if I picked up a mimeographed sheet that said, "We'll get you an abortion" I would think I was going to get a coat hanger. But if it was printed beautifully, I would think I was going to get a good abortion. But then people would say, "Well, the type on this abortion leaflet should not be justified, it should be ragged right, because ragged right is more 'natural' and not so machine-like." And there I was fighting for justified type as if it meant something. It wasn't a design consideration, it was a political consideration. It was crazy. I said this should be justified type to show we have the technology to do justified type and because it looks more professional. I would think that the same kind of care would go into the abortion as went into the leaflet. If people buy Crest toothpaste because of its packaging, they'll buy a revolution because of its packaging. Besides, why shouldn't the revolution have beautiful things and why shouldn't printing be one of them?

Mikki - It seems that you have a different view on militant amateurism than many folks in the movement. Do you have any sense of why you didn't buy into that way of thinking?

Ginny - Well, I wasn't the only one with that view. The feeling I had about it at the time was that, like many others, I was embarrassed that I belonged to an oppressed group. It's like admitting a personal failure because this society makes social crimes seem to be personal failures. People internalize that and they say, "Well, I'm a failure if I can't earn over \$20,000. I'm a personal failure if my son is a junkie. I'm not a good mother, I'm not a good whatever, and I deserve it somehow."

So my feeling was part of that kind of embarrassment of belonging to that oppressed group. It made me think that more than anything else, I wanted us to be competent. I wanted our people saying "girls can do it, girls can do it"...I wanted girls to be able to do it and do it better.

Mikki - Somehow, I think we're programmed to be oppressed failures.

Ginny - Social damage, yes.

Mikki - It takes a woman of great strength.

Ginny - I think it's true that it does take a few people who are incredible through some accident of luck or birth or whatever. But more than that, it takes a movement. What happens to individual social behavior in the middle of a movement as opposed to without a movement is like black and white, night and day. The change in people's behavior was just phenomenal in that people had courage or they had uppityness, or they had political thinking whereas before they didn't have any of these characteristics. I don't know about you but I wasn't raised to think politically, in terms of who has power and who doesn't have power and what does it

mean. That's one of the ways they've gotten to us. All of a sudden you had hoards of people thinking politically and asking, "What are the power dynamics of this situation?" Two months before they wouldn't have even known what that meant. It's really very difficult to do it by yourself and sustain yourself and fight at the same time.

A key aspect to a movement is having a bunch of people around you who expect you to do your best - which is why I'm really disappointed when the movement starts expecting you to do your worst. Not disappointed, furious. Any movement that says to its own oppressed people, "You don't have to learn to make refrigerators, play eighth notes, get a PhD in engineering, or be a doctor", is ripping them off horribly. It's criminal to say nothing of counter-revolutionary. If you were a really smart right-wing conspirator you would come up with that as a way to get the movement to fuck itself.

Mikki - You must have been doing some changing along this time, too.

Ginny - Some of the personal changes I went through had to do with my simply growing older and having



more experiences and finding out new things and meeting new people and changing jobs. Some of my personal changes had to do with the fact that there was a movement and I changed my behavior accordingly. But the point of having a movement is not to create personal change, but to create social change. In other words, I think that's a big mistake with the movement: the turning inward to personal salvation, personal survival, personal self-actualization. It's true that you can't build utopia in the middle of a pig sty but it seems to me that it's the internal direction of the movement that caused it to fail. Personal change is so seductive.

The women were anti-war and the men were anti-draft.

Furthermore it fits exactly into what is most reactionary about our culture, that social crimes somehow become personal blames. So to personalize something that is really a social problem is to fit right into the reactionary culture you're trying to fight. Therefore a social movement, it seems to me, has to concentrate very hard and in a much more self conscious way than ours did on what is social and what is personal.

For example, I think sexual liberation helped kill the women's movement. It's very seductive because it provides drama and it's something you seem to have control over. Who is going to go sit in the legislature, or pass out leaflets in zero degree weather when you could be liberating yourself just by fucking? So I really understand why other revolutions in other countries have been very prudish. And it also helps explain why the women's movement and the New Left went right through and vanished.

Mikki - But the culture had to be right for it to happen: for the women's movement to become less political, for the left revolutionaries to become less concerned with politics and more concerned with self-actualization.

Ginny - Historical circumstances also contributed to it, yes. I don't want to give the movement full credit for blowing itself out of the water, although it did set a few of the charges. I mean, granted, it's really very difficult to sustain a movement when the media stops publicizing things people can point to and say, "Isn't this horrible. Look at this awful Vietnam war. Look at this awful racism." And you and I can sit here in New Haven tonight May 9th and know that 25-50 women are in the process of getting beaten up in the city right now. But it's not on TV and it's not horrifying to people. We know a thousand women were raped today, nationwide. It's just not visible enough, not public enough.

Mikki - Are there people you were with in the movement who have left to become housewives or teachers or PhDs that you feel let down by?

Ginny - Yes, there were some women who were really talented politically even though they'd never done it before. They were gutsy, they were imaginative and creative. They were generous, patient, warm and affectionate with new people. They were good organizers. They were just really people you'd want to be like. And something hit them at various stages for various reasons. I'm thinking of a kind of composite of several women I know. I think one of the biggest things that hit them was fear, an oppressed person's fear. It's a form of the self-hatred all oppressed people have. Some way you wanted to be saved from the hideous things that happen to women. Some women I knew were having a lot of difficulty with their husbands and they would go to shrinks, male shrinks, naturally. And the shrinks would say, "I think you have to deal with your hatred of men and so you should sleep with the guy more often. Have a couple of kids." So they did it and gave up their political work.

I don't think that you have to give up your career or family in order to do political work. I think it's harder, but you don't have to give it up. Any movement that requires that of its people is not going to have anyone in it.

This reminds me of the time I used to belong to the Musicians Union. There was a group of people who



wanted to reform it, one of whom was an old radical. So here's this guy 55 or 60. He's got his daughter in college, his wife working in a university and he sells life insurance! He was always reading and he was up on what was happening with the Vietnam War and he had a lot of ideas about it. That was a way for him to be a part of his movement, even though all people at his age had to make a living. He sold life insurance. Our movement will not allow you to sell life insurance. It's a tainted thing to do. But here was this guy, politically active and trying to change something, namely the Musicians' Union. Work was a separate category in his life. Our movement insisted you could not categorize your life that way. So a lot of people who wanted to have careers in something that was not politically right-on came to the conclusion that they had to give up one or the other and chose to give up the movement.

Other people have taken their politics with them into positions of semi-power. And it's a really exciting thing to see. Jennifer Abod (my roommate) talks to 50,000 people every night. Now in the early days, could we have called a rally or teach-in and have 50,000 people show up? It would be just mind-boggling. Well, Jennifer gets to talk to 50,000 people every night and they call her up and she can argue with them. She gets a variety of people on her show; she has feminists on, abortionists, anti-abortionists, and she has internationals economists on. She even called long-distance to Italy once to talk about the Feminist movement there.

Mikki - There really are some good things happening?

Ginny - Yes, there really are when you start to think about it. In 1968 if someone said, "Do you want a radio show where you can reach 50,000 people and talk Feminism?" We would have been so stunned we wouldn't have been able to move... "No, I can't talk... uh, uh, uh."

Mikki - I sense that you haven't stopped being a revolutionary?

Ginny - Well, I'll wait for the next movement to come around and if it's not full of a bunch of crazy two-bit teenagers I'll join it. But I have this awful feeling that it is going to be crazy teenagers. And that I'm going to have to watch a replay of a lot of the idiocy that was present in our movement. The older we get, the more we'll think, "Hey, we learned all these things... how come you don't have the benefit of our knowledge?"

There's no way for us to had it down. We didn't have a good succession and maybe we could blame ourselves for not training our replacements well. But I think a lot of it has to do with historical circumstances and the fact that it's very difficult to establish a left tradition in a country where there isn't one.

The New Left was an anomaly. It was a pimple on an otherwise flat surface. There's the thirties radicalism and there's McCarthyism - back to the flat surface. And there's the New Left, another little pimple, and then we go back to the flat surface again. Because of those gaps, each little pimple is going to have to learn the lessons anew.

Mikki - I think some of the moving away from political stuff and starting to settle down has to do with age. You want a little house or you want something more secure. You want to know that when you're 60, you're not going to have to be out in the street.

Ginny - Yes, I guess so, but it happens because there's no Left tradition in this country. We had a voluntarist movement in a lot of ways, based on personal witness. If you lived the perfect life, then people would see that it's a good revolution and join it. Therefore we had to do all kinds of personal changes, such as living collectively. We couldn't get into being couples, we had to go gay, or bi. Our children had to be raised a certain way, they had to eat certain foods. We couldn't be home owners cause that would be too much like landlords, we couldn't go into business. There were all these severe restrictions on what we could do in terms of our personal behavior. I think that killed a lot of people in the movement. If there was no way of being in the movement, without living an exemplary life, then how were you going to survive? The movement did not address itself to survival, really. Partly because of a Doomsday mentality; "The Revolution is around the corner." That'll happen to a movement that doesn't really attend to having programs: tasks for people to do, things to attack, things to make demands of, outwardly directed actions. And also it has to do with not having a really coherent theory. So a revolutionary became somebody who acted in a certain way, who wore a certain kind of uniform.

The New Left was an anomaly. It was a pimple on an otherwise flat surface.

Mikki - And did you?

Ginny - I tried sometimes. I mean I went through a lot of that stuff.

Mikki - I sense a lot of disappointment.

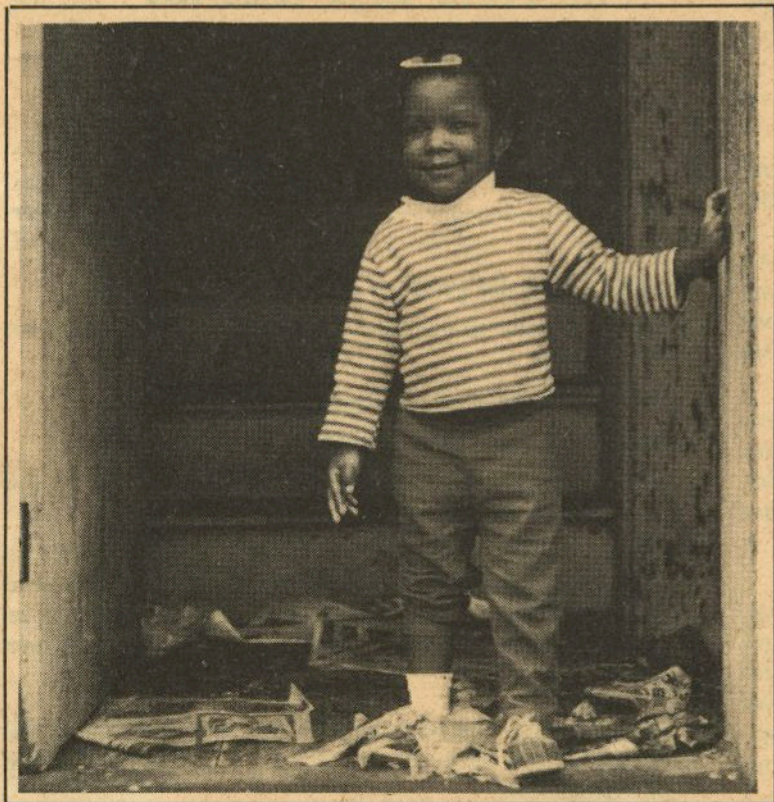
Ginny - Oh sure, don't you have it?

Mikki - I'm disappointed for me... I'm ready for it and it's not there for me.

Ginny - I'm still ready for it and I'm disappointed for me and I'm disappointed for all of us, too. When you read the statistics about how we're losing ground - none of us have any more jobs or get paid any more than we used to.

Mikki - While you were at the Press these last few years, did you still feel that you were doing something movement-like?

PHOTOGRAPHS by VIRGINIA BLAISDELL



Ginny - For a little while, but increasingly less. What has happened in the movement is that many have gone on to good jobs, such as directors of health centers or doctors or legal workers. These people would bring work to the Press. The basic premise of what they do is noble and good and, it has a little money. So, they became "quasi-movement" in my mind. They were legitimized by Federal grants and became part of the power structure in some minimal way and against it in some other ways. That became "political work" at the Press, but there became less and less of that, too.

So I started to consider my work at the Press as mostly just fun work. For my political work I would do other things, such as the band. Working with Sister has been my major political work.

*You and I can sit here in
New Haven tonight, May
9th, and know that 25 to
50 women are in the
process of getting beaten
up in the city right now.*

Mikki - Talk to me about being 38 and what things are important to you now.

Ginny - Let me think of a way to make this sound "right on". I have enough middle class whatever that I think I could matter, or I could make a difference. Women have been anonymous for too many years. I don't want us to be anonymous and I don't want me to be anonymous. I'd like to be known as a photographer - and a good one. I would like to have a name and a reputation. I don't think it's an illegitimate thing to want. And, I like doing photography. I like the way it enables me to make certain kinds of statements. I think I have a little talent at it.

A couple of years ago, I thought of having children, I mean I didn't consider having them but I thought about it. Thought about the people who were having them, the reasons for having them, I wondered if I hadn't blown it by not having them. And then I thought about my own parents and how disappointed they are in me in some ways they can't even express, that I didn't turn out to be what they wanted me to be, and my children wouldn't turn out to be what I wanted them to be.

And that's another part of being 38, worrying about my parents. I feel socially irresponsible, in terms of my parents. I know they have a little money, a little savings account, a little property, but not much. What kind of a daughter am I? I couldn't support them. I can barely support myself. Where do I think I get the luxury to sit around at the age of 38 of all things, pretending I'm a student? And this is a criminal society, this society will

not take care of you. It'll eat you up or let you die and the very least we have to have is a sense of responsibility to each other. I'm not fulfilling mine in regard to my own parents. But I see no immediate way out of that so I might as well take the plunge into photography and hope it works out better than what I have now.

I don't want to die in this job, you know...I'd rather go like Imogene Cunningham, with my Rollei in my hand.

Mikki - Why didn't you take the talent you have in design work and photography, and use it in a non-movement job where you may have gotten a lot more money and prestige? What was it worth to work collectively?

Ginny - Well, it's several things. If there's a movement, it's wonderful, it's seductive, it's entertaining. It's going someplace and making changes. Whereas working in the usual patterns on the usual career ladder or doing the usual things is boring and not historically meaningful, except maybe in some personal kind of way. So the thrill of being a part of history is really enough to take you away...I mean it took everybody away. People stopped working on their PhD's and didn't go back to it until it looked like the movement was dying.

Mikki - But you didn't leave the movement even after it felt like it was dying and you didn't leave the Advocate Press...

Ginny - Well, that's because the Advocate Press was still in some sense, enough of the movement that working conditions there were "movementized". Even though we didn't print for the movement, we had organized ourselves as a coop, so it was a place to work where I had total control over my working conditions within the limits of the cooperative. It was a lot like the American Dream of owning your own business, only you own it with three other partners. And what you make of your life is in your own hands which is also a wonderful thing. It's why people open up gas stations and hardware stores, and work about 20 hours a day. And that was another thing about it. I remember working three or four hours at Yale, sitting in a chair proofreading Latin and getting horribly wiped out by 11:30 in the morning. Whereas I could work at the Press, doing hard physical labor for nine, ten hours a day and not be tired at all!

The Press did represent a lot of the values of the movement. It became sort of a human potential movement of it's own in a sense, in that we've made life a little bit better for ourselves. And if the next movement ever needs cheap printing we'll still be there.

Mikki - And why are you leaving?

Ginny - I'm leaving because I would like to be a photographer full-time. And the Press is a considerable job, probably because it's like the hardware store or the gas station. Often you have to put in 10-12 hour days. You can't take pictures when you get off after it's dark. You can't spend time thinking about things, you can't chase after things, you can't go out of town, and I would like a chance to do that.

Mikki - Much of your work has involved working with collective process. What are your thoughts on collectivity?

Ginny - Collective ways of dealing with things were always important in the movement, still are. But it's a remarkably unexamined thing. People aren't attentive to the way that power works, really. They just say OK we will have an effort of collectivity. No attention is paid to the subtle manipulations that go on in a group. I guess my basic thought is that you don't have enough collectivity, or you don't have smart enough collectivity. If it's not examined thoroughly and you just obey certain outlines, then you really haven't done it. You've just sort of put a different icing on the same old cake.

Let me put it this way... I've been present a lot of times when I thought the process was wonderful, when I've seen it do good things for people; I've seen it encourage the group. I have faith that in a bunch of people to come up with something smart, that five heads are better than one, and we don't need a leader. There are a lot of impediments to that. Some people really can't do it, some people can't delegate responsibility well or make other people feel comfortable. But when things are in balance and it's working it's wonderful.

But the collective process can be subverted. I've seen it happen repeatedly. For example in mixed groups. A classic situation is when, in an attempt to get power, the men will get fights going among the women - either in competition for the male attention or in fury over the abandonment of loyalty. And the women who were not chosen by the men for special attention may be pissed off at their sisters for falling for this ploy. Therefore, the men reap the benefits. They have the loyalty of the women they've chosen to sleep with them and they have a diffused and destroyed group that they don't have to deal with. It's a standard thing. It still continues in all of my experiences.

Mikki - What about in all-women collectives?

Ginny - Well, similar versions of that can happen about sexual issues in some ways. And that's another thing that's never been very well examined. There's sexual power or there's couple power. People can have loyalties to each other and therefore constitute a stronger group within a group. If they're fighting all the time they can make false difficulties, difficulties that are not really generated by the group, but have only come out of the fact that two people were relating to each other in this particular intimate that people fight.

Mikki - Do you feel if you were to do a business again, would you do it as a collective?

Ginny - In a way I would want to. I would want to have collective energy and thought. I wouldn't want to have the fear that I couldn't think of everything. I'm a sucker for that kind of collectivity - I have a soft spot in my head for it, and it hasn't done me any particular good. But I'd have trouble choosing any other way. I'd be very uncomfortable. So I want it to work and it often does.

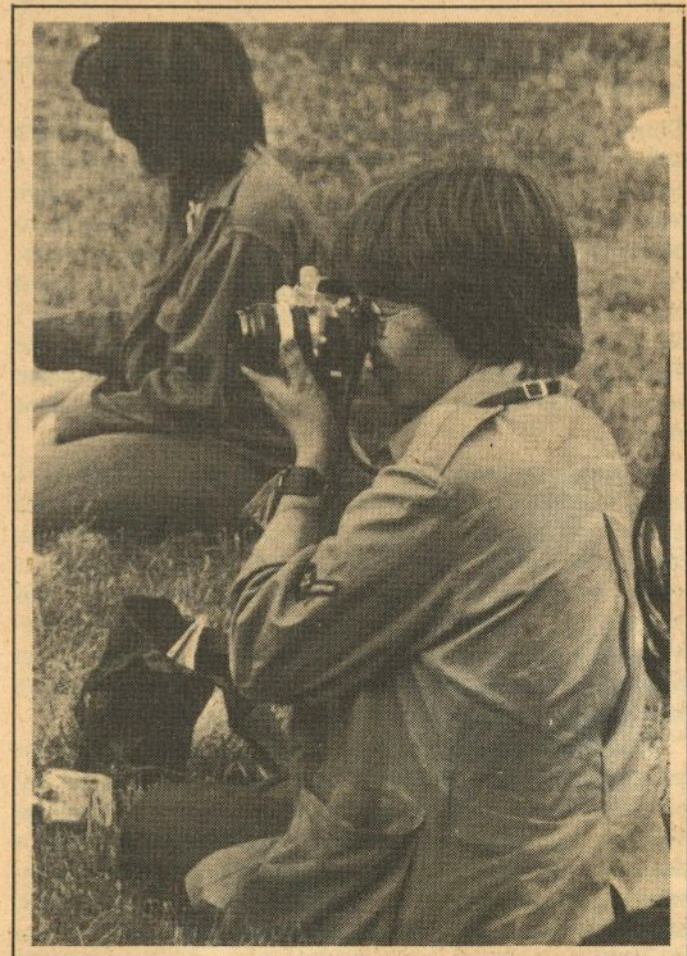
Being a photographer is not an unpolitical thing, although it's not a cooperative thing. I think all the arts

are very political. Another symptom of the backlash, it seems to me, is that people have started to say art is not political. I'm particularly disappointed in photography never really addressing itself to the politics of photography. About the best it could do is "movement" photographers taking pictures at demonstrations of cops beating up on kids, and that was political photography.

It's a dream - fuck it - you know. I guess that's what keeps old radicals and gets new radicals serving that dream: "nobody will be hungry, everybody will work together."

Mikki - Is it worth it?

Ginny - Oh yes, sure it always will be worth it. Part of what makes your life interesting and exciting and just even worth putting up with is the fact that you're working to change your life and other people's lives. That activity itself, whether you do succeed or not, is a life-giving process that you couldn't live without. Once you've been politicized, there are just some situations you can't walk into anymore and deal with in the same way as before. There's some shit you will not eat anymore. You may go through stages, have more or less energy for fighting, having more or fewer friends to help you fight it, but the act of being politicized is like learning to ride a bicycle; you don't forget. In 40 years, if something's happening, if they call a big march on the green, I'll come hobbling in and say, "Oh, boy - go to it kids." □



FEMINISM



IN MNS

by
Cynthia Mallory

CYNTHIA [ARVIO] MALLORY is a feminist, a poet, and a long-time social change activist who has worked against war and racism since the '50's. She raised four biological and two adopted children. She moved out of the nuclear family and into the MNS Life Center in Philadelphia in 1974. She was one of the founding members of a feminist collective which has done assertiveness training for women, written about class and feminism, organized women's day-long and weekend events, and published an annotated bibliography of feminist writings. She is presently en route to Seattle, where she plans to settle.

Four years ago I came to Philadelphia and moved into a Life Center communal house where men did as much cooking as women did and women tried to do as much home repair as men; where men did not call women "Chicks" or "girls" and women did not ask for men's opinions on every subject. The ideal was "autonomy": each person responsible for her- or himself, her work, her feelings, her relationships, without blame or put-downs.

For a time, I thought I was in heaven. The break from being mother in a nuclear family left me weak with relief. No more taking grown children to doctor's appointments, typing husband's papers or mending his socks, no more answering his questions about what I'd been doing while he was at work. (I had been working too, inside and outside the home.)

I jumped immediately into the collective that put out *Dandelion*, the newsletter of Movement for a New Society. Sexist language was out of the question here: "he" did not mean "he and she"; "men" did not mean "everybody". Men were not deferred to as having the right answers or the best thinking. I went to Life Center meetings and learned about the "five and ten": in order to assure that women, who had been brought up to be less assertive, got equal chances to talk, after each speaker women counted to five and men counted to ten before venturing to speak. Equality! It was absolutely wonderful.

There was a good deal of talk about sexism, but not much about feminism. "Let's eliminate what's wrong with society, including rigid sex role conditioning." "Little girls should be brought up with as many opportunities as boys." Sexism was seen as a rigidity left over from the past rather than as an underlying cause of what is wrong with our society. In spite of get-togethers with singing and some consciousness-raising, MNS women weren't together politically around women's issues.

On March 8, International Women's Day, I went downtown to a women's speak-out at Independence Mall. I didn't know anybody there. Grabbing the mike and shouting at the small crowd through the sunny March wind, woman after woman made cogent, strident, well-reasoned speeches about women and health care, women and the law, lesbian mothers' court cases for

custody of their children, the ideas of the "wages for housework" movement, and many more. Transfixed, I sat for three hours on the stone steps, listening.

Finally I saw a friend, the one woman in Philadelphia Life Center who I know to be a lesbian. "Who are all these women?" I asked her. "They're mostly lesbians," she said. "That one works at the women's bookstore, and that one is in a women's theater group, and that one is trying to set up a battered women's shelter, and that one teaches self-defense at the Free Women's School, and that one..."

Why weren't MNS women plugged into this network, active in this women's society, receiving energy from this cultural matrix? I asked around in the Life Center about the story of feminism here and began to hear that, indeed, there was one. It seems that a feminist collective had sprung up in the early seventies, had challenged MNS men in ways too angry or disruptive for them to hear, and had fallen apart in disillusionment. The women involved had left MNS and the Life Center for various women's houses and Marxist organizations. I learned also that in the MNS network around the country there had been a short-lived women's newsletter called Spiderweb, which had ended when energy for it had faded away. I learned about MNS groups in Durango, Colorado, and Ann Arbor, Michigan, centered around strong women - feminists and, in most cases, lesbians - but whose politics were not seen as central in MNS thinking. "Challenging sexism" was seen as important, but concentrating on it was seen as "personal", not "political" change. And yet the slogan, "The personal is political," kept appearing from time to time.

Why didn't I hook in with the wider Philadelphia women's network myself? The answer for me, and I think for others I began to be connected with was that Movement for a New Society was exactly right for me politically at this stage in my life. It has an understanding of what is wrong with society, visions for the future, and especially a careful group process that takes feelings into account but effectively gets things done as well. The wider women's movement seemed too amorphous, and there was too much in-fighting and poor process to attract me. After years of loosely organized anti-war and anti-racism demonstrations, late-night meetings, bad feelings, and confusion, I felt safe in the relatively good space of MNS and didn't want that larger, messier arena. Still, I felt that my strongest gut motivation for action lay with a feminist understanding of my own oppression.

For a time, I thought I was in heaven.

In May I got a call from the woman to whom I had spoken on the steps at International Women's Day. "Would you like to help start a small feminist collective in MNS?" she asked. There were six of us at first,

eagerly sharing our herstories and our wishes and demands that feminism in MNS grow and become vital. We had big plans: a women's day, a women's weekend, workshops in group process for people in the women's movement, a journal that we would write and publish.

Things did not prove to be so easy.

We mustn't blame ourselves for not being as efficient as men - we didn't intend to organize giant corporations or armies!

One of the big reasons for our coming together was to give each other emotional support. As soon as we got closer and began to trust each other, our emotions did indeed come to the surface and begin to spill out. We found that at meeting after meeting our carefully planned agendas had to be laid aside while we dealt with the feelings of one after another of us. Some chafed at this, calling for more efficiency; but others said that it just showed clearly how much women had been hurt and how much they needed the love of their sisters. We mustn't blame ourselves for not being as efficient as men - we didn't intend to organize giant corporations or armies! Let us search for a feminist way of dealing with each other, a feminist method of doing business. It would be slower, but it would be supportive and more organic.

And so a year was spent with a few outward activities and many inward ones. We did hold a women's day, sharing our feelings and hopes for women, songs, and a brainstorm on what it meant to be a "red-hot feminist"! We organized a weekend in the spring, attended by forty Life Center women, with films and workshops and community building - and controversy.

The conflict, around lesbianism, existed not just in the larger Life Center but within our collective as well. Several of our members were beginning to understand themselves as gay, to explore relationships with women, to talk about lesbian politics. Others were uneasy, felt this talk to be divisive, and resented it when the lesbians "spoke out" at the weekend. We spent weeks afterwards sorting ourselves out, our feelings, our connections with each other. Because we were close, people took risks, shared real fears and wishes, and understood more and more. It was a hard but growing period.

At the end of our first year, three members of our group, together with other lesbian feminists, started a women's communal house as part of MNS. It was an exciting prospect and scary for all of us, marking our differences, absorbing their energy. (Judy Lashof has told the story of this house in our MNS Communities issue

no. 27.) Through struggles, attrition, changes of plans, and natural flow, this house has gradually become a part of the larger Philadelphia women's movement and drifted away from MNS. One MNS woman (again, the one who talked with me on the steps) remains in that house. She is the one continuing link between MNS and the wider women's radical community in Philadelphia. (Another, not-so-radical women's house, Phoenix, is associated with the Life Center.)

Sexism was seen as a rigidity left over from the past rather than as an underlying cause of what is wrong with our society.

Meanwhile, the presence of a feminist collective here may have been the push that anti-sexist men needed to band together, seeking support from brothers instead of constantly draining women's energies. Men Against Patriarchy was the most outstanding of these groups; it ran men's consciousness-raising workshops in this community and as far away as New Jersey; but its hope for a men's resource center hasn't been realized.

At the beginning of our second year, working-class members of the group began to challenge us around class background and its effect on women. After initial resistance from middle-class women, we organized forums for women and, later, the whole community around this issue. Inside the collective we conducted a six-week study and consciousness-raising series which included speak-outs by working-class members, identity groups by class background, readings and discussion. In the spring we all got involved in writing for the special MNS issue of *Communities*, which Rachel Bedard and I edited. And we finally did two workshops, on meeting facilitation and conflict resolution, for women from several activist groups in the city.

We had succeeded in becoming a feminist presence in the Life Center. From time to time, other women asked if they could join our group. I really don't know whether we made the right decisions. We were painfully torn between wanting to spread our ideas and share our support, and the great need to huddle close to each other in our warmth, like feminist babies just cutting our milk teeth. We turned almost all of these women down. Some resentment that we did this still exists in the Life Center. The problem remains: how to strike a balance between the solidity and safety of a small group and the importance of openheartedness and inclusivity in the women's movement?

At any rate, other women's groups have arisen in the Life Center since then, for support, study, and action,

and have been laid down when their members' needs changed. Two vital groups which continue are WOW (Wonderful Older Women, about which Ruth Dreamdigger wrote movingly in these pages last year), and the Mothers' Support Group.

Hoping to facilitate the growth of women's solidarity here and at the same time keep our safe support group, last fall FemColl sponsored a larger women's organization in the Life Center, FemWorks, with the idea that it could become an umbrella for a number of small "ad hoc" working groups. A number of women eagerly created such groups, and two still flourish at the end of six months: Women Against Graphic Rape, and a Feminist Macro-analysis Seminar. Both now include women from inside and outside the Life Center. About every six weeks the larger organization meets for a special program, to celebrate, and to share what's going on in the small groups. Some of these programs have been a self-help evening with a local nurse, women's poetry and songs, spirituality, and a sharing of the life stories of older women.

Eager to be known no longer at "the" feminist organization at the Life Center, FemColl changed its name to Some of the Feminist Thinkers (SOFT), to the amusement of those who were used to thinking of us as tough women. We've spent this year mostly in support and study, reading Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*, helping each other to think through difficult situations and prepare to do writing or speaking. We've helped to reexamine some MNS official writings from a feminist perspective.

In the almost four year I've been associated with MNS, I've seen ideas about feminism change from a superficial to a deeper level. I remember a talk two of us did last year at a local school, in which we defined "sexism" as the oppression of women and "feminism" as the importance of women's struggle and a dedication to it. Today we are going further and challenging MNS with the idea that the oppression of women predates, underlies and underlines all other oppression and that whatever necessary changes may be made in economic systems, without the emergence of our half of the human race as free, equal and powerful human beings, there will be no "new society". Feminism means overthrowing patriarchy, not just capitalism, and it means the establishment of new forms of the social contract, based on nurturance and collectivity. But these challenges have engaged people, not persuaded them, and radical feminism has not yet become the solid basis in MNS analysis that I believe it must be. □



THE GRAFFITI SHEET

Creating a Neighborhood Newspaper

by Dianna MacLeod



Dianna MacLeod is a journalist and a secretary. Since coming to the Philadelphia community two years ago, she has participated in the Movement for a New Society and in the Philadelphia women's movement. She was a trainer and organizer at the large nonviolent anti-nuke demonstration in Seabrook, New Hampshire, last spring. She has been part of the MNS collective called SOFT [Some of the Feminist Thinkers] during the past year. She is moving to Seattle this summer with two other members of SOFT.

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Nina and I did not evolve the *Graffiti Sheet* from a carefully designed plan. Our true beginnings arose from Nina's long-term commitment to the neighborhood, my excitement about and experience with publishing a newspaper, and a couple of slightly-drunken conversations at parties, where Nina and I found ourselves in a corner spinning visions of what we could do together. There was no newspaper in West Philadelphia that reflected our politics and spoke to the kinds of people-oriented changes we wanted to see made in this community. There was nothing being written about who controls the money in West Philadelphia, about the housing crisis here and how people have dealt with it, about labor struggles at the University of Pennsylvania.

Nina and I brought complementary skills to the situation. Nina had lots of neighborhood contacts and a thorough knowledge of the neighborhood scene; she had worked politically with her neighbors, and people trusted her. I had skills in writing, layout and design, and journalism. We had a similar outlook on people and politics. Both of us felt the impact of events in our community.

We began discussing the newspaper in September or October; our first issue "hit the streets" in late December. Nina fronted all of the money for the first issue. Neither of us made any money from it. We had to purchase all the "nuts-and-bolts" materials: graph paper, dry transfer lettering, machines which roll hot wax onto the back of copy to make it adhere to the page, paste-up knives. Our two biggest items were lent to us: a light table and a typewriter which allowed us to type articles ourselves.

In the first days of the newspaper it was only Nina and I who worked to produce the whole thing. I worked five days straight, practically day and night, to paste up the first issue - crouching over the light table late into the night. Our major goals back in September were to:

- 1) Exist as a influential newspaper, help to form opinion, raise the political awareness of the neighborhood and move some people to action, and serve as a forum for debate and dialogue about neighborhood issues;
- 2) Serve as an alternative information source, keep readers posted on events having to do with human growth and political organizing, present a political perspective related to what is traditionally defined as "news", communicate frequently with other neighborhood newspapers in order to create a network of alternative media;
- 3) Train neighborhood people in newspaper skills so that local media will thrive and spread.
- 4) Build a cohesive neighborhood by supporting community-related churches, food cooperatives, worker-controlled companies, and investor-controlled credit



unions, as well as small shops which provide valuable services to community residents and which recycle their profits back into the neighborhood.

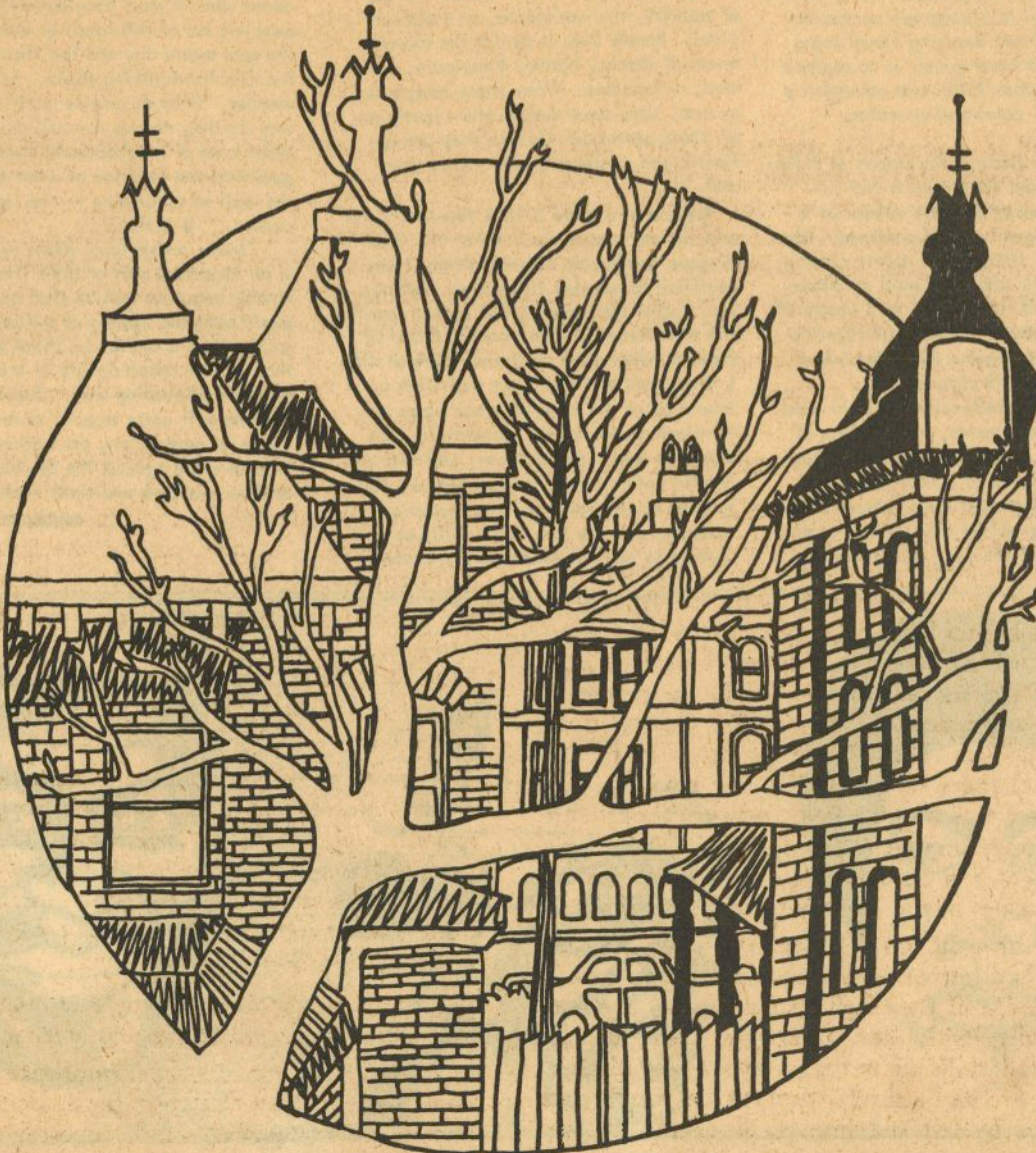
We distribute 1,000 copies a month, selling at 25 cents a copy. There are about 15 distribution outlets (retail stores, news stands) in the neighborhood which carry the *Graffiti Sheet*. Increasing distribution is a major priority for us. We still run into people who tell us; "I like your paper, but I didn't know where to get a copy." Most stores seem willing to carry the paper, but some business people find the contents objectionable (they, for example, support the expansion of the University of Pennsylvania into the neighborhood, whereas we oppose it); others realize they will make very little money from it and aren't willing to bother selling it. But mostly, we've been well received by neighborhood business people.

Each issue costs \$300. We recently found a printer who will print the 12-page, 11½ x 15 tabloid for approximately \$220. The supplies probably total \$40 or so an issue. There is a further cost for having photographs "half-toned". We also pay for film devel-

opment, and we pay a graphic artist a small amount to illustrate the paper. We hope eventually to earn enough by selling advertising space to cover the cost of the newspaper plus pay a few staff members. Right now, we are approaching the point where we might break even.

Of course, we are not setting out only to REFLECT neighborhood opinions and views. We hope to have a hand in SHAPING them. We don't include an editorial page in the *Graffiti Sheet*. Every article we run is an editorial. Nina and I have no pretensions about journalistic "objectivity"; we think the notion is a false one, and that subjective, political decisions are made every step of the way in the news business about what to cover, whether or not to include a historical context, what to cut out, etc.

We want to be clear about the values and biases reflected in the newspaper; that people are powerful; that people are more powerful when they organize together, that most of us live our lives surrounded by the "isms" (racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and heterosexism); that these oppressive influences are





# THE WEST PHILLY GRAFFITI SHEET

Volume 1, No. 3

Published Every Other Month

April/May, 1978

- INSIDE**
- ▷ SMALL BUSINESSES
  - ▷ NEIGHBORHOOD \$
  - ▷ SUN DAY/THEATRE NIGHT
  - ▷ GARDENING
- AND MORE**

25¢

## ART AS IF PEOPLE REALLY MATTERED

By Teri Huppuch  
and Dianna MacLeod

It was a small adventure, but a lot of fun. I borrowed my editor's car and camera and, armed with a list of locations all over the city, I was off to track down city murals. As I pulled away from my West Philly home, I harbored fantasies of photojournalistic assignments taking me around the world to photograph community murals -- bold and inspiring visual sagas of struggle that have sprung up to replace the excess of urban billboards advertising tires, lipstick, colas and un-colas.

As I drove through the streets of Philadelphia, I passed the museums and cultural institutions of the city where art is carefully displayed on and confined within walls, and filing in quiet, orderly lines are people who have paid an admission fee of \$1.00 to \$4.00. As I imagined the calm serenity of the fine art's institutions, I thought about a magazine I had read recently which claimed that,

"Fine art is a reflection of upper class interests, values, tastes, and patterns of thinking. The images found in art reflect and serve the needs of a small group of 'corporate-government elite' (upper class white men) who define culture in America and elsewhere if they can profit from it.

They found, fund, and run art museums, set standards of taste, and have a vested interest in creating, validating, and supporting art whose form and content justifies and furthers a patriarchal, male-dominated social order."

"Rarely does fine art include images of workers, the workplace, or daily survival. Rarely does it depict the experiences of Blacks, Native Americans, women, or lesbians. When these images do appear, they seem outside the experience of those portrayed because they are romanticized or stereotyped, rather than real."

When I reached 57th & Haverford and saw the mural commissioned by the Haddington Leadership Organization, I was gratified to see that this mural, "art by, for, and of the people", did indeed smash the stereotypes of Black people found in fine art (when they are found there at all). I discovered a small, cozy park with a backdrop of the faces of black heroes and heroines staring silent, powerfully, out from the wall. LeRoi Jones, Malcom X, Martin Luther King, Marcus Garvey, Sojourner Truth, Ralph Bunch, Frederick Douglas, and the Rev. Leon Sullivan. It seemed to me that somehow, over the

years, the elements must have served only to make stronger and more durable the faces of those angry and courageous men and women. And as I left the park I wondered what it must have been like to create people's art of this kind, or even to pass the spot every day and see the powerful, familiar forms taking shape. I began to wonder, "Why do people want murals and why do they choose the subjects they do?" What kind of neighborhood consciousness goes into the decision of what to put on the wall of a building -- the "community's canvas." Is it that:

"Many artists (and others to whom art is an important part of their lives) have finally begun to realize that until the monopoly over the display of culture by the ruling class is broken up there is no way that art can reach people in a meaningful and non-alienating way. Just as factory workers will unite to gain control over the means of production, art workers are beginning to unite against the capitalistic use of their products and their lives."<sup>2</sup>

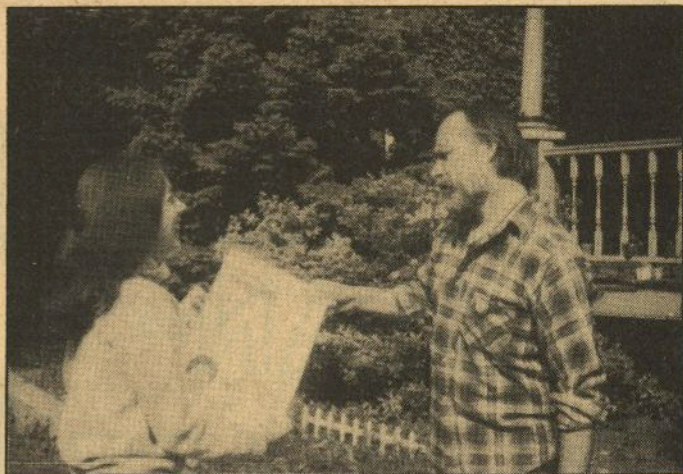
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sometimes invisible to us and almost always hard to challenge; that these dynamics themselves are found in a context of economics and history, capitalism and patriarchy. What we find worth reporting in the neighborhood, then, are activities and lives which challenge oppression and create both economic and personal alternatives. For example, we ran articles on "Art As If People Really Mattered", about neighborhood murals, who funded them, what they express about the life and times of the neighborhood and the political struggles that occur here.

In the newspaper business, work is never finished. Deadlines collide all over the place. We'll barely be "putting one issue to bed" when we have to be thinking about the next one. We might be distributing the March/April issue around the neighborhood in early March and collecting money from advertisers who bought space in that issue at the same time as we are



Dianna and a new reader



Working in the Graffiti Sheet office

generating ideas for articles for the next issue. So the work is never done, although there do exist breathing spells, times of less responsibility when the staff is free to forget (briefly) about the paper. Even though I'd worked on a monthly women's newspaper before the **Graffiti Sheet**, I didn't anticipate the large time commitment and constant attention that the paper would require. Fortunately, the energy we put into the process culminates in some "physical evidence" we can hold in our hands - and that's gratifying.

At this point there are 6 women and one man on the staff, so we've more than tripled our size in the past 1½ months. It was scary to let go of the "dual control" of the paper. Nina and I had anticipated that it would be

important to "put our baby up for adoption" as other people became interested, so we spent long hours talking it over. We had to do some advance planning in order to build in ways to integrate new staff members - giving them a voice in decision-making at the same time as they became familiar with the paper's politics and a working knowledge of its history. It was also important to fight the "me leader, you follower" mentality that too often operates with regard to old-timers in an organization. So recently I have begun taking a less active role in the planning and production of the paper, and - symbolically - the production facilities have been moved from my room to the basement of the MNS office. Because of the planning Nina and I have done, new staff members are indeed beginning to assume responsibilities and initiate new directions for the paper.

Working on the **Graffiti Sheet** has confirmed a number of things for me. The experience has given me a certain confidence in the span of my skills; it has also taught me the value of "letting go" - trusting that others will make good decisions and that the politics behind the paper will grow more sound as more people contribute to the worldview out of which it springs. It's been confirmed to me that as we struggle with, understand, and begin to take charge of institutions which oppress us, we emerge as powerful, whole people with a combination of nurturing qualities, survival skills, humor, durable egos, and politics hammered from the raw materials of felt needs. I'm very, very excited about the expansion of the staff from two to seven; and about the fact that two black women have joined the staff. I want the paper to become as indigenous as possible - organically rooted in the neighborhood - and I'm seeing that happen. □





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# WOMAN- CRAFT

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by Sue Humphries  
and Naomi Pryluck



by Lorraine Schein from *Ins*

Womancraft is a non-profit craft co-operative for women. As far as we know it is the only women's craft co-operative still operating in the United States. The members are the staff, the management, and the consultants. The store itself has become one of those interesting spots that visitors to the Chapel Hill area want to look in on whenever they are in the vicinity. People come to see the work of the members, to hear new women's music, to find non-sexist literature for their children, to inquire about craft classes and demonstrations, and to talk with whoever might be working in the store at the time. The atmosphere is casual and browsing is encouraged. Although it may seem a little bit different from the run of the shop, people are aware of the fact that Womancraft is a business trying to compete with other outlets in town. Once people have visited the store and taken time to really look at what is available there, they seem to instinctively understand that the members are not suburban dilettantes out for a lark. It is hard to say exactly what impresses people most, the variety of crafts which are on display or the consistent quality or the very "uniqueness" that the individual finds in something someone has created. Almost every customer is aware of the fact that they could go to a regular retail outlet and buy, for instance, a box of stationery, but

they seem to get a special kick out of buying hand decorated stationery and knowing who made something beautiful enough to catch their eye. People invariably react positively when they realize that the money they are paying goes directly to the person who made whatever they are buying. But getting the Womancraft message across to the general public is not easy. It has taken quite a while to accomplish what has been done.

In 1972, the idea of a craft co-operative for women took shape in a consciousness raising group that had been meeting for over a year. The members felt that more than talking and self-discovery was in order. They decided that they should focus their attention on a viable alternative which would specifically aid women in their struggles for equality. Womancraft was seen by its founders as a mechanism for bringing together women of many different backgrounds in a positive environment. It was hoped that the shop would give craftswomen not only an outlet for their crafts, but also a sense of worth for their abilities; particularly the amateur craftswoman. By taking part in the operation of the store, the women would hopefully find new areas of their community into which they could project themselves and their talents. It was also hoped that by being a successful business, Womancraft would provide for its members a certain



closeness with other women and help each one to develop a sense of pride in their collective abilities. Patty, Sue, and Linda were the driving force behind the co-operative's conception. They all had full time jobs and were not craftspeople, but their concern for the rights and well being of other women led them to donate hours of their time, the limits of their energies, and even at times some of their hard earned money to a healthy start for the co-operative. Their leadership during those early days kept the other members going.

Members of the group found quarters for their experiment without too much difficulty. The first shop was one room on the second floor of a small brick building on the west end of the main street of Chapel Hill. An ad was placed in the local papers to see what kind of interest there would be, and the response was tremendous.

A meeting was set up to bring the initial members together. The majority of those first members were craftswomen who were practicing their crafts at home. Some had part time jobs and almost all had small children at home. Since Chapel Hill is a university community there were faculty wives and wives of students. One of the earliest members was only eleven years old when she joined, and another had a son in college. At the meeting, the opening was scheduled, membership fees were collected, and operating procedures were discussed. The consciousness raising group invested much of their time and the initial capital to get the shop set up. Shelves were constructed, furniture gathered and repaired, operating format established, crafts gathered and initial display and advertising tasks completed.

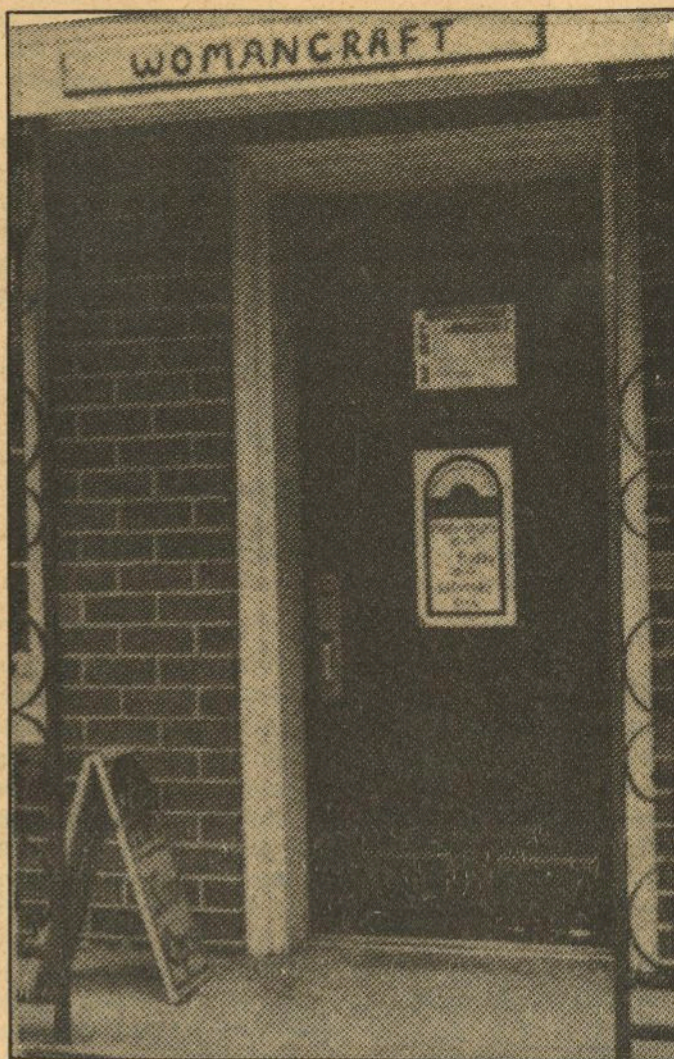
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## *Time was our best friend in these first days.*

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On January 20, 1973, Womancraft was open for business in the front room on the second floor of 407 West Franklin Street. The space was cramped and there was no display window. Customers were brought in by a sandwich board type sign sitting on the sidewalk outside the doorway.

In the beginning there were 30 to 35 members displaying their crafts which ranged from batik to woodworking. Each member was responsible for clerking in the store for two hours each week and paying an initial membership fee of \$5. To cover operating expenses, the store took 10 percent of the selling price of any item sold. The store was able to open only through the efforts of various women in the women's movement who donated time, money, and some items necessary to the store's operation. The first few months were slow, members bought from other members; but gradually the



store's existence became more widely known and women made a conscious effort to come to Womancraft and buy from other women. Time was our best friend in these first days. The longer we could remain open, the better we would become. The effort had to be tackled one week at a time...one month at a time...a craft fair here...a bake sale there...pay the rent and keep on getting it.

In September of 1973 the store's commission was raised to 15 percent to cover shop expenses, especially a second room. The commission has remained at that 15 percent.

The most salient factor in that first year was the continued support provided by members of the original consciousness raising group. The co-operative nature of Womancraft did not evolve overnight but, rather, very gradually over that first year. Clarification and positive re-enforcement were the group's major contributions once the store was going. The responsibilities of the co-operative needed definition as did the individual's responsibilities. The formulation of by-laws and the election of officers was of utmost importance. Many of the members weren't exactly sure what a co-operative was and especially what being a part of a co-operative



meant. All the early speculation led to the formation of a handbook for the store. In it any member could (and still does) find the procedures listed for almost any given situation...lay-away sales, gift certificates, refunds to customers, writing up sales, opening and closing procedures, and so on. Members of the group filled in as the store when members did not show up for their work shift, called meetings of the members to deal with various problems as they arose, and did the bi-weekly bookkeeping necessary to pay the members for the crafts sold.

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## *Suddenly we found ourselves in the middle of a flourishing business.*

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Our second year began with Womancraft operating in two rooms. We were beginning to learn how to deal with our biggest problem, scheduling. The members began to take a more responsible attitude towards their shifts and the co-operative in general. Limits had to be set concerning the number of "no-shows" a member was allowed before being asked to leave the co-op. Each member began to realize that she had to pull her own weight within the co-operative if she was to remain. We could also see how the membership would ebb and flow with the university calendar. At the end of each semester we would lose some members who had become good friends, and as the new semester began new members would appear to revitalize the membership. Sales slowly increased, but the bake sales and craft fairs continued to keep the business above water. It was during this time of the co-operative spirit really took hold. The members were all on committees, each giving that extra time and effort we needed to keep the store going. In order to get the word out about Womancraft, the co-op needed advertising, but lacked the funds normally used by other retailers. So a major effort was launched to let people in our area know about the co-operative. Every newspaper in the area was inundated with news and features about Womancraft. The unique nature of the store was a big factor in our ability to get as much press coverage as we did in those days. The non-profit status of the co-op allowed the membership to avail themselves of newspaper space, shoppers' guide ads, student orientation information, community service bulletins, etc. Any outlet that would not cost a great deal of money was considered. As more people heard about Womancraft, our sales and confidence grew.

In January 1976, Womancraft moved into a third room in an effort to provide more display area for its members. Then in July the big move came at last. The co-operative moved across the street from its second floor accommodations to a street level location with lots of windows. Suddenly we found ourselves in the middle of a flourishing business. Not only did the sales soar, but

the membership also increased drastically. The year was so successful that the bake sales and craft fairs could be dropped as a means of financial support. One major fund raiser was retained, the quilt raffle held at the Open House in the Fall. Shoppers were actually seeking out the store for alternatives to the commercialism that other retailers relied on for their sales. It was a happy time for everyone involved in Womancraft.



1977 was a year of growth and reflection for Womancraft and its members. The growth in the number of members became a bit of a problem. We were running out of display area and had to do something to limit the number of people who would use what area we had. It was decided that we would limit the membership to 70 women and thus be able to assure them that their crafts would at least have a fighting chance when they brought them into the store. Some changes have had to be made in the by-laws to accommodate new situations as they arose. We now know some of the more successful strategies we have tried and keep these in action. The handbook stays right beside the checkout desk ready for a quick referral. New members are oriented during regular shop hours by someone who has worked for a while. Original flyers are still a major portion of Womancraft's advertising.

If there were one word used to describe Womancraft, it would be communication. It is only through the interaction of all the members that Womancraft is able to maintain her high level of handcrafted excellence. The most important part of the communication system is the daily journal. It is kept at the desk at all times and every member is encouraged to enter any questions, comments, or feelings in general in these pages. By keeping a sort of day to day diary of the goings on, the members keep in touch with each other. There are also monthly membership meetings at which things are discussed, but these meetings are not mandatory so we still need the journal. Stagnant and need a new point of view. Advertising isn't imaginative enough to bring in much needed new business. So far, we have managed to work things out. Through the committee system, a member can be as active in the operation of the co-operative as she wants. If a member has a special interest or ability, it can



usually be put to use in one of the committees. The secret of the system's success lies once again, in communication. One committee does not work independently of the others. For example: in early Fall a series of classes will be offered at the store. The class committee will ask for people to teach the classes, usually with a notice posted at the store and in the journal. Once people have signed up to teach, the committee will set up a schedule and give the information to the advertising committee. Advertising will plan ads and flyers to announce classes and give information on exactly what will be taught in each class. The flyers then go to the distribution committee for circulation and posting. The display committee will plan and execute a special display window to help promote the classes. The clean up committee will get the back room of the store ready for the student-visitors. And so it goes. For one event, five committees will have to work together for a measure of success.

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## *1978 finds us in the midst of a new problem, complacency.*

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There are always problems, just as there are in any other business. They range from minor squabbles to major hassles. The landlord needs a raise in the rent. Women join the co-operative and don't remain long enough to show up for work. The displays become stagnant and need a new point of view. Advertising isn't imaginative enough to bring in much needed new business. So far, we have managed to work things out.

1978 finds us in the midst of a new problem, complacency. Perhaps the fact that the consciousness raising group is not having to stand behind and hold us up, has contributed to the general "blah" attitude. Members seem to have lapsed into that "let someone else do it" feeling. We no longer have those dedicated people to be our cheerleaders, our maintaining force. Each individual is expected to be self motivated and, at times, self motivation falls short. We all seem to need a bit of a nudge now and then. As a new season is coming quickly upon us, we realize that we are no longer an experiment, but a business that has to maintain a certain pattern of growth if we are to remain a realistic alternative for the woman artist. This one point becomes a major problem when there are no funds to support expansion or a mass media advertising campaign. Somehow we must find a way to increase our business enough to keep up with rising costs and still not sacrifice our stand against standard commercialism.

But just as the problems were pointed out in the spirit of cooperation, so the solutions will come from the co-operative spirit. Of that we are absolutely certain. It isn't always easy to pinpoint one's shortcomings. Often a new perspective is all that's needed to spur someone on

to a different line of action. At monthly meetings, compulsory meetings, committee meetings, and through the daily journal new ideas and viewpoints are directed to our problem areas. Each member realizes that any action by an individual can indeed affect the whole. And so, through the co-operative we all develop the art of compromise while still adhering to the fundamental principals of Womancraft. There has to be a middle ground for the woman artist to stand upon. It may be that we will have to make that ground, but if that is the case, it shouldn't be too difficult. After all, look at the ground we've covered already.

### *The Committee System at Womancraft*

*The officers and co-ordinators of the various committees carry out the administrative duties of the co-op. The president, or co-ordinator as we know the office, is almost a catch-all office. She has so many duties ranging from dealing with the landlord to chairing membership meetings. There is a secretary who takes minutes at all the meetings and sends out various notifications to the members. The treasurer's job is such a demanding one that she is not required to work the usual two hour shift. Her job is to maintain the books for the co-operative as well as paying each member every month for her sales. The job of scheduling co-ordinator had become so time consuming that one person holds the office for only six months at a time. The committees consist of a co-ordinator and as many members as she needs to get her job done. There is a display committee to oversee not only window displays but also the general display in the store. The advertising committee, which now has a reasonable budget to work with, has to constantly search for new advertising outlets and be sure that people know what's happening at Womancraft. The distribution committee makes sure that flyers and other information are posted throughout the triangle area. It was discovered that some women who wanted to become members simply had a schedule that would not allow them to work during regular store hours. For these women Womancraft has the cleaning committee. The members of this committee come in and clean up for two hours each week instead of working a shift. The construction committee will build anything we might need, such as display units. The supply committee keeps on hand whatever office or janitorial supplies we need for day to day operations. The class-committee handles the scheduling of classes taught by members at the store. The special displays and demonstration people take care of displays and demonstrations outside the store which helps to publicize Womancraft and her individual artist* □



# A TRAVELLING WOMAN

by Rachel Bedard

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RACHEL BEDARD is a writer from the Philadelphia Life center. She has been active since college in nonviolent politics and feminism. She joined Movement for a New Society in September, 1973, and has worked as an organizer, trainer, correspondent, and editor of the MNS newsletter *Dandelion*. From June, 1977, to January, 1978, she was travelling outside the United States. Now she is again in Philadelphia where she is part of a dream analysis group and is looking for work with a magazine.

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Big Ben was striking four. There were snow flurries. I was with a friend from Manchester, waiting in front of a theatre playing "Star Wars". Whoop and a shout, "Raye! Jo!" and we were leaped upon by two down jacketed figures, Sheila and Sally, from Kent. A couple of minutes later, when our kisses and hugs had subsided a bit, Sheryl, from West Yorkshire via her parents' home northeast of London, came swinging across the street in a stylish London outfit. And there we were, five women who had all lived in the same house in Philadelphia, meeting for "tea" in England. Of the five, I was the only one who was headed again for the States. We struggled with my heavy luggage to the Diwana Bhelpuri House, an Indian restaurant, talking and laughing the whole time. Jet-setters do it all the time, but for us alternative types, this meeting was an event of a lifetime.

This is the story of a trip I never thought I would take, but did. Its main purpose is to share my



experiences with women I met around the world, and to say to any woman out there: If travel is your dream, as it was and is mine, don't let anything stop you. It is worth the risk.

I remember the obstacles I had to face. There were enormous costs for air travel. There were visas to get, more and more of them as my deadline for leaving drew closer. There was my giddy fear of flying for 14 hours over the Pacific, not to mention my inability to imagine "where on earth" I would land. At this time I got a lot of supportive and clear-headed input from my feminist collective, even from members who didn't want me to leave for a 6 to 9 month trip. They encouraged me, "If you need the money, then ask!" I did that, though it was difficult for me to write a "fundraising" letter for myself and send it to almost everyone I knew. People responded generously, some with \$25, some with \$200.

One hazy day at the start of June, I got on a jet, flew into Los Angeles, crossed customs, and headed for the Southern hemisphere. I cradled my guitar between my knees and leaned back. I kept a rein on my anxiety by writing in my journal. The entries are very factual and not creative; I was afraid.

It was blessedly dark until we rested in Tahiti for two hours. Then dawn broke over an atoll out from shore, and I took the last leg of the trip over slate-grey seas broken by shadows of clouds. We crossed the International Dateline, and I landed a day later in Auckland, New Zealand. Cass, a New Zealander I'd met in Philadelphia and my companion for the rest of the trip, met me at the airport.

During the four months I was in New Zealand I met Cass' friends and acquaintances, all very active,



political women. I joined a consciousness raising group there. I worked at Herstory Press and on the radical women's magazine CIRCLE; I marched in a women's coalition rally for "a women's right to choose" safe, legal abortion; I attended the trial of several women protesting a film based on crimes of violence against women. I helped organize a group of women musicians who met weekly, and performed with them at the opening of a gay women's coffeebar. I met with sixty gay women at a weekend in Auckland.

I was impressed by the energy of women I met in New Zealand. I found the same spread that I have encountered in the U.S. - from very moderate "women's libbers" to radical and separatist feminists. Yet it seemed to me that these women were able to act effectively and together at important junctures. An example of this was their decision, at the national United Women's Convention, to ban all male reporters from the hall. This decision was of course reported with much venom and name-calling by the male-dominated media.

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## Jet-setters do it all the time, but for us alternative types, this meeting was an event of a lifetime.

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New Zealand is in ways like a younger United States. It is a rapidly changing country, with a mixture of "kiwi" (N.Z.) and many other accents (Scottish, Chinese, Dutch, Fijian, etc.). While the native population, the Maories, are not brutalized as our Native Americans have been, N.Z. is still a very western-dominated culture.

When Cass and I left New Zealand to travel back to the U.S. we spent two weeks in Malaysia, between Singapore and Penang Island, where there is a mix of Chinese, Indian, Malay and Singaporean races. She and I were very conspicuous there. Most people thought of us as wealthy Americans, though Cass isn't American and neither of us is wealthy. However, I had the accent and we both had the freedom to be tourists. We were stared at constantly for the two weeks we were there. When we sunbathed, we were gawked at, first for our swimsuits and for sunbathing "out of season", then for the fact that we, and especially I, turned a bright lobster color from overexposure.

It is mostly men who serve and sell in the fabulous markets of Singapore and Penang. They called to us, followed us, plucked at our arms saying, "Cheap sale!" Sometimes we would react angrily, making it clear, whatever the language, that we wanted the offending party to SCRAM. Other times we took in more in stride. Throughout the trip it seemed our best defense was to act calm and ignore what we didn't want to

hear. In that respect, it wasn't much different from West Philadelphia.

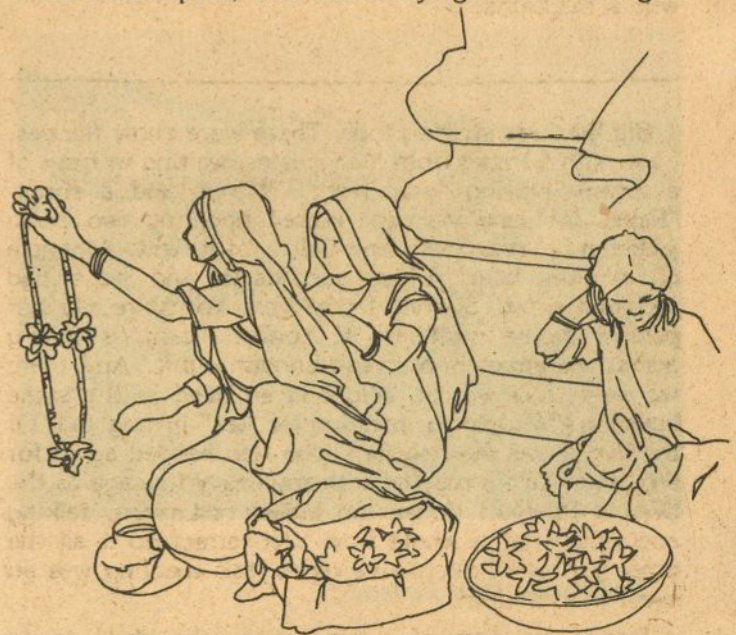
The other side of all this was seeing the impact of the West, especially the U.S., on Eastern life. Everywhere we went we heard "boogie" tunes. The young children spoke English, while many of the parents spoke just Chinese, or just Indian. There were in fact beggars in the streets. In one particularly sad case a woman had laid her two babies down on the dirt and wooden sidewalk and was holding up gnarled hands to passersby for whatever they might give her. Penang Island, I was told, has more millionaires per acre than any other part of Malaysia, but most of the people there, as in Singapore, lived cheaply in dense blocks of high-rise apartment buildings.

Many of the men who had leisure time to drink and talk at our hotel were quite sexist and paternalistic. There seemed to be two types, the ones who wanted to inform us of everything and the ones who simply leered. Fortunately, Cass had met a man from Penang in New Zealand, where he had adjusted to more favorable notions of women's intelligence, rights, etc. He was a very good friend to us while we were there.

Cass and I took a flying leap to Europe after that, and again experienced culture shock. Now we were in a situation where we blended in physically quite well. It was only when one of us opened her mouth that heads turned and we became known as foreigners.

We met many women in hostels in France, seeing some repeatedly in one stop and then the next. It was pleasant to share news and backgrounds and itineraries, to cook dinners side by side in hostel kitchens, to have company on adjoining bunkbeds in underheated dormitories. We shared some of the trials of travelling in two's and three's, and it was helpful to air the tensions we'd begun to feel, which are inevitable when a pair or group of people have to decide on one course of action.

In Paris, Cass and I met an old acquaintance, a friend from Philadelphia, who was studying French. She gave





us a tour of much of Paris, and took us one night to a club, a "very exclusive" bar in the Latin Quarter. Of the three of us only Sarah spoke French, and only Sarah was dressed in a way that measured up to French ideas of fashion; we were unobtrusively told at the door that we did not "look good enough" to go in. This bar is owned by the well-known (in Paris) author of the book, *Femmes Prefer Femmes*. So much for sisterhood!

We travelled south into Spain, and because most of the Spanish hostels were closed or empty through the winter, we stayed in cheap hotels. As a result, we saw more of each other and were cut off from other people we could talk to. Cass had an Interrail Pass which she was eager to use; I did not. It became difficult, tense. In Malaga, on the Mediterranean, we decided to go separate ways and to meet again in Geneva late in November.

En route north, I met Antonia, a native of Barcelona, and we shared a hotel room in Seville for several days. Toni destroyed many of my stereotypes about "the Spanish woman". She was working class, political enough to be a fan of Franco and to think that "people want too much too fast" since he died. She also was quite vocal about the tremendous difference between the money I earned to travel and the number of undervalued pesetas she would have to earn to make a similar trip.

The one time we talked about feminism was the first night, over dinner. I said that in *TIME* and other magazines I'd got the impression that the Spanish woman still was not at all free, that she went from her father's home to her husband's home, and that she could not travel alone as Antonia was doing. I said in my rusty Spanish, "Clearly this cannot all be true, because here you are." I waited. Toni replied, "Obviously!" and then changed the subject. She was a mystery to me to the end.

In the time between Seville and Geneva I had my one really bad encounter with a man. It was about 1 AM on



Wellington, New Zealand

a very empty train, and I was alone. A stocky, bleary-eyed man looked into my compartment, came in and shut the door. At first he just stared at me. Then he leaned closer and closer to me, till his face was just inches from mine. I got up, my anger covering my fear, and stepped out into the hallway. There was no conductor in sight. I took my shoulderbag and whatever I could pick up quickly and left. I sat down in another compartment and finished my book. When I returned to my compartment, my pack - with my

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...in New Zealand. I found the same spread that I have encountered in the U.S. - from very moderate "women's libbers" to radical and separatist feminists.

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journals and address book and all my clothes - was gone.

If I missed having feminist contacts as I travelled on the European continent, I surely made up for the loss in England. While visiting friends there, I absorbed myself in women's activities for several weeks.

Some of the highlights of my times were:

- touring and working one day at Moss Side Community Press, a women's press in Manchester;
- lounging in a women's sauna in Bradford, West Yorkshire;
- attending the tail end of a week-long women's convention in London, and seeing in concert Frankie Armstrong, a fine folk singer, and two U.S. women's favorites, Meg Christian and Teresa Trull;
- spending New Year's Eve and well into the next morning at the Manchester Women's Center, in the old Pankhurst family home, partying and meeting lots of Manchester women.

Of course, nothing rivalled the joy and excitement of seeing people I'd met in the States in their home setting and work context. Their reality came to life for me in a way it had never done in my imagination. I now know that I will see people whom I thought had gone "forever" out of my life, back to their own country across the ocean.

Travelling, for me, was a personal revolution. By confronting all the problems of getting enough money and cutting through the red tape of visas and such, and by - one strange and yet normal day - actually getting on a jet and **going**, I changed my whole notion of what could and could not be done. Now I think that I can do whatever I set my mind to. It's hard to describe how liberating this realization is. □



*Chonita Edgerton is a Mexican woman who has lived in this country for the past twenty years. She has worked in communities since she was in her teens. She has always been active in sharing practical skills with sensitivity, first in poor communities in Mexico, later with the Civil Rights movement and most recently while working with*

*families which have abused or neglected children. She is part of a consciousness-raising group called Wonderful Older Women [WOW], which is a collective within Movement for a New Society. She lives with Tony, Maria and Carlos Edgerton in the MNS Life Center in West Philadelphia.*

## Chonita Edgerton: A HERSTORY



I was born 56 years ago in northern Mexico, the last of eight children. I had a Catholic grandfather, a Basque from Spain. My grandmother and my own mother were Protestants. My father, who died before my birth, was a Methodist minister. My mother raised all of the children by herself with the help of her own mother who lived with us ever since my mother married. My mother was an English, Spanish and Home Economics teacher and an outstanding woman in every respect. She motivated every one of her children to have a profession.

When I was young I was loved by everyone because I was the little one, and with compassion because I didn't have a father. So, it was easy for me to love. When I was around 10 years old, there was a girl of about 3, Isabelita, on our block. She was very bright and vivacious and my family was just crazy about her. But I couldn't quite like her because I was jealous.

One night Isabelita's mother came to leave her in our home as she was going away for the night. My sister Angeline kept Isabelita in her bed. My sister soon fell



asleep. Isabelita woke up in the middle of the night and started to cry. I heard her and went to take care of her. I felt close to her. I still to this day think that my jealousy went away because I was of service to that little girl.

In 1934 one of the last revolutionary presidents of Mexico, Lasaro Cardenas, brought out the injustices toward and the exploitation of the remaining Indians. I was around 13 when all this came out. Before, it was all hushed. I was very impressed and wanted to go see how I could be of some help.

A friend of my family, Heberto M. Sein from the American Friends Service Committee came to my church, and offered a scholarship working in a village with the Indians. I applied and was taken. I went to Mexico City for the orientation with the other participants whom I thought would be Mexicans. But they were Europeans, North Americans, Canadians and very few knew Spanish. I was chosen to be in an Otomi Indian village, a very primitive village of the sort that I wanted to be in.

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*I still think that my jealousy went away because I was of service to that little girl.*

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The Otomi Indians are a native tribe, first enslaved by the Aztecs. A nonviolent and loving tribe, they have been exploited through the years. Unlike other Mexican tribes where the men have two or three wives, the Otomi are a monogamous people who are faithful to each other through life. Family is very important to them. The children take responsibility in the home. They are very poor, they have no furniture, nothing, but somehow the mothers are very gentle and loving with their children. They show little stress, and yet they are very, very poor.

I met Tony Edgerton during the first year I lived with the Otomi Indians. He was a Hiram graduate and a Quaker who had come to Mexico from the U.S. to do his alternative service with the AFSC. We got interested in each other.

After that year we worked for the Service Committee in El Salvador, Central America. I worked in the region where there had been a big earthquake and Tony worked in another unit named El Sito del Nino.

1955 was the end of our time with the American Friends Service Committee. I went to my Mexican home and Tony left for his own home in the U.S. We wrote. In 1957 Tony Edgerton and I were married in my church, a Methodist church. Four days later I moved with him back to the United States. I have lived here in this country since then, but I have kept my Mexican

citizenship. Two or three years after our marriage I became a Quaker.

I was a city girl, and Tony came from a farm. With the help of Tony's father and mother, I learned to make a big garden, to can fruits and vegetables, to milk cows, and to live with and love my in-laws. One of the hardest things for me to do was to answer the phone. It wasn't easy to understand people, and I had to learn to listen to farmers talk through chewing tobacco. We lived there for one year, built our own house nearby in Middleton, Ohio, and lived there for the next six years.

We have two children, Carlitos and Maria Cristina, who are my special joy. Carlitos was the fourth generation of Edgertons to go to the Barnesville Boarding School in Barnesville, Ohio. He graduated last June. Maria will graduate this year from the Community School of Philadelphia.

About 1965 the civil rights movement was on and we were anxious to participate in it. We joined the Fair Housing and Fair Employment Program of the AFSC in Richmond, Indiana, where we stayed for 5 years. Then we went to Muncie and Tony worked with the Antipoverty Program there for 3 years. In 1963 Nixon went into power a second time and closed equal opportunity programs. By then the energy was wiped out of Tony and his co-workers. There was tremendous frustration.

That is when we came to the Philadelphia Life Center of the Movement for a New Society. We moved into a communal family. We decided to live communally for both moral and financial support. Most of our friends were here in the area, working with the AFSC.

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*I found that people were interfering in the discipline and the lives of my kids.*

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We stayed three years in a communal family. Now we are back in a nuclear family situation, though community still is very important to us. There was not enough support for couples with children. I found that people were interfering in the discipline and the lives of my kids. I knew the children would be influenced by everyday dealings with other adults, but I didn't expect that these adults would try to make major decisions about the children. I resented it. Also, I felt an individualism in the Life Center houses, an emphasis on thinking about oneself rather than the family or the group. It is my belief that cooperation is learned in the family.

I gained a lot, though, from living in community. Tony, Maria and Carlos improved their skills in cooking and doing house chores. Maria learned flute



and guitar from adults around here in the Life Center. I learned to assert myself and value my own labor. I had always volunteered in jobs in the U.S., with migrant workers, directing a center in Indiana, being a teacher's aid, etc. But after a few years in Philadelphia I found a paying job. For the first time in the U.S. I am valued for my Spanish-speaking cultural background and my work in poor communities.

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*We decided to live  
communally for both  
moral and financial  
support.*

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This job, which Tony and I share, is in a largely Spanish-speaking community in the city. We work in a hospital with parents accused of child abuse and neglect. We try to mend broken relationships between parents and children in homes where there is a lot of stress. One of our goals is to keep the child with the parents, though there are some exceptions. In my job I am an advocate for both the parent and the child. I have to calculate the qualities of the mother and the father to get the best out of them and to motivate them to change and improve as parents. The mother might be good for the child, or, the mother might try to hurt the child very severely, even kill the child. But, in my estimation, separating the children from their parents and placing them in an institution is not good 99 percent of the time.

I guess I am a humanist. What makes me tick is thinking about the "why's" of human beings. Why is a child from an affluent society shattered and mentally confused? And why do children in a poor society care more for their brothers and sisters?

I would like to share a letter from my daughter, Marie. Recently she went to Florida with a friend, to spend a few days. From there she wrote us:

This place is so affluent. It is hard to believe. I want to accept everything, good and bad, but there are some things I have grown up with, some values that I cannot and maybe do not want to accept... It's wrong when money can buy you the privileges of Winter Park, the space and room to not worry, to have the luxury of freedom, and yet I don't think I hate rich people.

How does one accept something that is wrong? I can fight against affluence out of hate, or out of love. I can love the people for who they are, I can separate them from their money. Is that possible? Can one who has had money all

their life be separated from the values that imposes on them?

I am certainly in no position to criticize the rich. Look at us. I know that we will never starve. I know that we have luxuries like a TV, stereo, a washing machine, food in the refrigerator, a lock on the door...on and on and on... I don't know what it is like to be rich. I don't even know what it's like to be poor. How can I have the feeling that affluence is wrong, if I don't even know what it is like? All I know is that it is unequal...

People can pay to have fresh air and big houses and clean sheets. These things aren't supposed to be luxuries, are they? Please let's talk about it, because I'm lost. What to do with the anger I feel at this injustice? What do you do? Do you feel it too? I know Carl does. Maybe it is how you've raised us. How have we come to be this way?

I love you because you are such good people by nature and heart, not because you have been told to be or because it was the right thing to do. I'm beginning to love you more when I see how mixed up other people are. I see your sanity as well as your own unique insanities, too, more clearly. I'm glad I belong to our family.

Love, Maria

□





# MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

## BREAK WITH T

by mikki wenig  
and chip coffman

*Kat Kinkade and her daughter Josie were among the 8 people who started Twin Oaks Community in 1967, where Josie and her 5-year-old daughter Thrush live today. Kat moved on in 1973 to help establish East Wind Community in Missouri, a kibbutz-like community similar to Twin Oaks.*

*In this conversation, taped during a recent visit by Kat to Twin Oaks, they describe the changes they went through from living an isolated life in Los Angeles to getting involved in the communal movement. They*

*explore the development of their unusual mother/daughter relationship, changes in their feelings and ideology about community after 11 years, and some of the dynamics of male/female interaction at Twin Oaks.*

*In Kat's popular book, **Walden II Experiment**, she describes her daughter as having had "an intuitive understanding of Women's Liberation almost from the cradle". However, as this article reveals, they have somewhat different understandings of the relevance of feminist concerns in egalitarian communities.*

**Kat** - I don't usually say this in interviews, but what I remember very distinctly is that I wanted community because I was looking for a mate. I read **Walden II** (utopian novel by B.F. Skinner) and I knew if I lived in Walden Two, I would find somebody to fall in love with. I suppose this is behind what my friends laughingly refer to as the "Kat theory of turnover"; everybody who comes here is looking for love. At any rate, that is certainly my case. What I was trying to do when I stumbled on to **Walden II** was to get a degree so I could teach in junior college. I was living in Los Angeles, 35 years old, working as a typist during the day and folk dancing at night. I'd been folk dancing for 3 or 4 years. It had been the biggest thing in my life and I was getting bored with it, and I wasn't finding a mate. I knew that it was going to take me forever to get through college.

Then all of a sudden here was this brilliant idea, **Walden II**, the creation of a society of the sort of people that I would want to be around. After reading the novel, I got involved in Walden House in D.C., met this guy who was also interested in Walden Two. We eventually got married and were both instrumental in starting Twin Oaks. When I got here I came in contact with these idealists of the sixties and they turned me on. I got my ideology here at Twin Oaks, as well as from **Walden II**.

**Communities** - Josie, how much choice did you have in coming to community?

**Josie** - I didn't want to leave L.A. I was thirteen and

passionately in love with this most wonderful man (who was actually awful).

**Kat** - We got to Walden House and discovered what a grubby affair it was. It didn't seem to have much promise at all. I remember we went to bed the first night and Josie said, "Well, can we go home now?"

**Josie** - Yeah. I can remember feeling kind of icky, though I'd never seen brick sidewalks and trees on the street before.

**Communities** - Where had you been before?

**Josie** - L.A. and Mexico City.

**C.** - That's a big move.

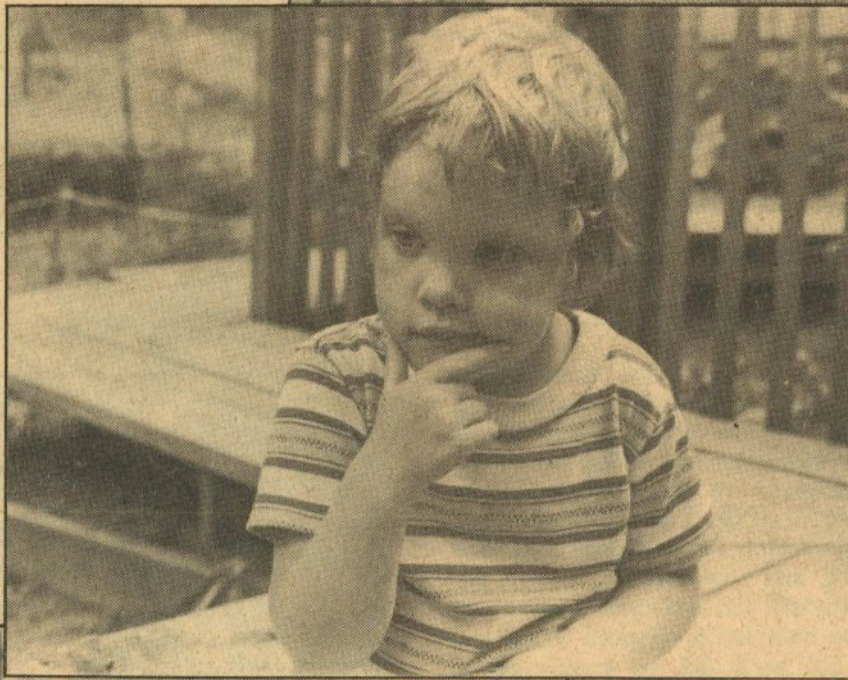
**Josie** - 3,000 miles.

**Kat** - People keep saying, "How brave you were to move to Washington without knowing anyone there!" But it's nothing but miles you see. There are no roots involved. There's nothing but the train trip. One city is like another.

**Josie** - In the end we stayed at Walden House for two years. Usually there were 6 - 8 of us. We had a mini labor credit system and did some form of income sharing. I wasn't involved in the cooperative aspect of the house. I just slept and ate there although I did make a few friends. It didn't have the sense of community that Twin Oaks did as soon as we got on the land. I think by the time I'd been here twenty-four hours, I knew it was where I wanted to stay.



# ADDITION



**Kat**



**Thrush**

**Josie**



but selecting for the nice middle class kids who have every opportunity in the world. We're providing an even better life for the cream of American society. It doesn't strike me as a very important activity anymore.

I had hopes that at some point we would start providing community for people who need it. And we could do that if we were big. But it's very important for the people who get here first to protect their interests. Their interests include keeping out people they don't care about. Now I'm the same way, as far as my personal life is concerned. I don't want to be hassled by people who are not educated, who have obnoxious social behaviors and the like. But if we were big enough we could get something accomplished. What I can't do in two tries, I can't do in ten. Twice I formed a community, got a good start and at a certain point individuals in the community said, "I live here. This is my home. Let's start creating a nice place."

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*Behavioral engineering was supposed to do the whole thing. It never did, and now here we are.*

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Another is that in the 11 years we have made virtually no steps toward education of new members on how to be better human beings. We select for good human beings to start with. We are using selection instead of education because we don't know how to educate. I'm not blaming anybody. I have no idea how it's done. Behavioral engineering was supposed to do the whole thing. It never did, and now here we are. In the face of this inability to educate, I'm less excited about our future. I believe we'll be here for a hundred years and we'll be nice people but we'll not be significant in molding history. That's why it doesn't matter to me as much anymore if Josie stays at Twin Oaks and follows in my footsteps or does something else.

**C.** - And yet, what Josie does is intensely significant to you in other ways?

**Kat** - Yes, I feel more strongly about Josie than I do about any other female on earth. Her's is a personality I like a lot. Now, I believe that the reason I like her so much is that she resembles me, and that we understand each other easily. We don't have to go into long explanations about a lot of things. So yeah, if Josie were seriously ill, I'd fly across the country to get her, that sort of thing. Yeah, there's a real strong connection. But not, I think, as strong as the average mother-daughter connection.

I think that my own alienating childhood has been inflicted on her and that she's working to change it.

**C.** - What do you mean?

**Kat** - Well, I'm a very disconnected person, I have no ties to my family. I left them years ago; they're just

people. I always saw life as social life, as individuals choosing other individuals. I didn't like my family, and I raised Josie without a sense of family. I, myself, had lacked family, and am finally finding it in community. But, Good Lord, here I am 47 years old and just discovering the benefits of that kind of connection. I'm just beginning to see, just beginning to experience that roots can be more important for their depth than for their pleasure bonds. One does not give up an old friend who is a pain in the ass for a new friend who seems fascinating for the moment, because co will be a pain in the ass, too, when it's done. You know, "there's no place like home" and "old friends are best". These things are true, as I'm only finding out now.



Kat folkdancing at East Wind

**Josie** - Yeah, I didn't understand that there was such a thing as family until I was quite old. I had no personal experience, no conception, no feeling for it. People who lived in one town all of their lives, who knew who their aunts and uncles were and visited them! I said, "You're kidding". It just didn't make any sense to me.

**C.** - Josie, my feeling from you is that you'd like to have a family.

**Josie** - Well, it's another one of those things that I don't miss, but I tend to enjoy vicariously through my boyfriends. I tend to like to be adopted by my boyfriend's family and to want them to approve of me. But it's not a big deal, Twin Oaks is my family.



**C.** - Do you want to get married and live in a house with some kids - that kind of thing?

**Josie** - Sometimes. It would be real hard to do that and be a doctor though. I want to get married and have my husband raise the kids and support me. What I really want is a wife.

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## *What I really want is a wife.*

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**C.** - Josie, when you say Twin Oaks is a family, are you talking about people here? It's hard to imagine you are, since that "family" changes all the time.

**Josie** - At any one time I can name the people who are "family" at Twin Oaks. There are enough people so that when one leaves, there's someone else.

**Kat** - You're not personally threatened by membership turnover?

**Josie** - No.

**Kat** - It seems to me that you and I are very hardy in that way.

**Josie** - I never have been affected by turnover. There have been a few individuals who I was sad to see go, but I hardly noticed their absence later.

**Kat** - That's the way I am too. Now the question is, does that mean we have been deprived of something? We were both raised alienated from this kind of necessity for roots, and we both are stronger as a consequence in terms of how much we're affected.

**Josie** - I think Thrush is the same way.

**Kat** - Yes

**Josie** - She, too, has had people going in and out of her life, although she seems to adjust to it very well. So, is she marred for life by this, or is she going to be a wonderful strong individual because of it? I finally realized that she needed somebody who was committed to her. I saw Thrush was going through a series of people the way I've gone through a series of lovers. I don't think that's a real good thing.

**C.** - Josie, you've left Twin Oaks several times over the past 11 years, and yet you've always returned. I have a sense that despite everything, this is your home.

**Josie** - All that is true. Twice I left with a man and once I left to be adventurous with Tamar, who also joined Twin Oaks when she was 14 and is still here. Only once have I ever considered not coming back. That was the last time when I went to Grinnell to be with a lover. It was the first time I understood that Twin Oaks wasn't really the world. (Wow - what a revelation that was!) What brought me back was Thrush. I had left her here as I felt it was important that she remain in the children's program she had been in since she was born. At that time, she had stronger ties with people who were staying at Twin

Oaks than with me. While I was gone, however, I found myself thinking of her a great deal. She haunted my dreams. I missed Twin Oaks, but it was the realization that I had a bond with Thrush that I hadn't been expressing that brought me home.

**C.** - Kat, What do you think you'd be doing if you'd never joined Twin Oaks?

**Kat** - I suppose I might have worked myself up into office management. No, I couldn't have stood it - I couldn't have just gone on and on without any meaning in my life. I would have chosen a meaning somewhere, and the sixties were happening; they would have hit me one way or another. I might have got involved with the women's movement or politics or anything - I would have got involved in something. I would have chosen meaning.

**Josie** - A true existentialist. Yes, an existentialist goes out and creates meaning because there is no absolute meaning in the universe.

**Kat** - Well, that's something I noticed in my teens, that I would choose something to believe in and believe in it. It's a dangerous thing, because you can also choose not to believe anything.

**C.** - Josie, what do you think your life would be like if you hadn't come to Twin Oaks?

**Josie** - I'm not sure. I might have had a few secretary jobs, been married twice.

**C.** - Would you have gone to college?

**Josie** - Well, I obviously would have had a kid because that was the thing to do, and then I'd just be stuck!

**C.** - But Kat wasn't raising you to be one of those people who just blindly followed...

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*But good Lord, here I am  
47 years old and just  
discovering the benefits of  
that kind of family  
connection.*

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**Josie** - No, but I would have because I just wanted to have a kid. I'd have said, "Oh, neat! I think I'll have a kid." I felt that it was an independent decision, just as when Kat had me. But I would have ended up in that same stuck financial situation - you've got to raise the kid. What are you going to do? You haven't got the college education or the money and you haven't got a community to help you along.

**C.** - Kat, do you think you missed anything by raising Josie in community and, Josie, do you think you missed anything by being raised in community?

**Kat** - On the contrary, I think I've still got my daughter because I did. I can't think of a thing we missed.

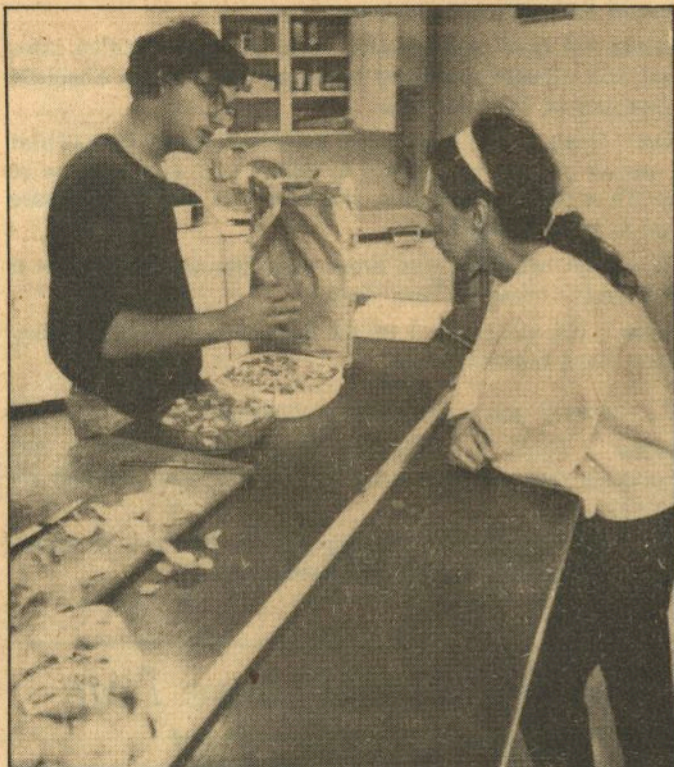


**C.** - Can you say more about that?

**Josie** - Well, I already had a lover when I got here. So that was taken care of. And then freedom hit. Freedom from that awful high school which I went to for two months. And I got to be a grown-up. Since I was already rather precocious, I finally got treated the way I should have been. Now I had this wonderful group of people who agreed with my way of thinking which had never happened before, except with Kat.

**C.** - What was your way of thinking?

**Josie** - Oh, sex was OK, there wasn't any Santa Claus, there wasn't any God. Sharing things was groovy. Capitalism was a drag.



Kat: preparing a dinner for the community

**C.** - Teenage years can be some of the most difficult for both parents and kids. What was the state of your mother/daughter relationship at this point - and how did it change?

**Kat** - Well, we had just been through the hardest year of our mutual lives because when she was thirteen, I thought she ought to take better care of herself. I thought that she ought to reserve her virginity for a few years, and she thought that she wanted to start having a love affair right away. I didn't actually have any choice in the matter at all - I told her, "You may not go out," and she went out anyway. The thing that sticks in my mind was her saying to me directly or through somebody else, "You're not in charge of me anymore; I'm a member, I can make my own decisions." or something of that sort. And I was thinking, "You're not old enough; you don't know what

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*"You're not in charge of me anymore. I'm a member. I can make my own decisions."*

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you're saying." A friend was saying to me, "Remember what you believe; remember what you believe, and let go." I didn't have much choice anyway; I let go.

**C.** - Did that feeling change when you moved to Twin Oaks?

**Kat** - Well, by the time we came here, she was 14, and no longer a virgin. She had chosen one of the young men here to be interested in. He was acceptable to me, and they became a couple. And at that point, they were adults as far as I was concerned.

**Josie** - I remember, and I suppose I wanted to have this feeling, that I felt completely adult and grown up and capable of making decisions. There was no question of the community taking responsibility for me. There was no parenting from anybody. I was just expected to do quota and follow the rules and I generally kind of made quota and followed most of the rules.

**Kat** - We were heavily dependent on every member and she was one of us at the time. About a year after we got here we tried to make her a planner. We were short of people who could do it. She at least had the brains and understanding of what we were about, but she didn't have the maturity.

**Josie** - Yeah, I had the commitment and the ideals, but I couldn't take on that kind of responsibility. One of my main frustrations was being labeled irresponsible. I hated being labeled that, even though I was irresponsible. Actually, for fourteen, I did damn well. I just made the weekly work quota. I used to scrimp and save up a week's vacation every way I could and then take off for a week and go visit my old boyfriend.

**C.** - I have this image of the community being your parent rather than Kat because I carry my mother's voice around in my head a lot saying, "Wash the dishes now, don't leave the lights on, etc." I have this sense of you carrying the community's voice, "Be responsible, be a good communitarian" - Was it like that?

**Josie** - Well...Where did the voice of the community come from then? Who did I listen to most as far as the interpretation of the voice of the community? Kat.

**C.** - Were you friends? Did you have good communication while you were growing up?

**Josie** - Yes, I would say, as a whole, yes.

**Kat** - I had a big thing about treating her as an adult even when she was a small child, and she responded to that by trying to be as much like an adult as possible. I think it's probable that I cheated her out of childhood.



But I needed a companion! Yes, we have been friends for many years.

**C.** - That's interesting that you wanted a companion. I think most mothers that I've had experience with want their daughters to live a certain life for them, like my mother wants me to be what she never was. But you had a real different idea of what you wanted out of your daughter.

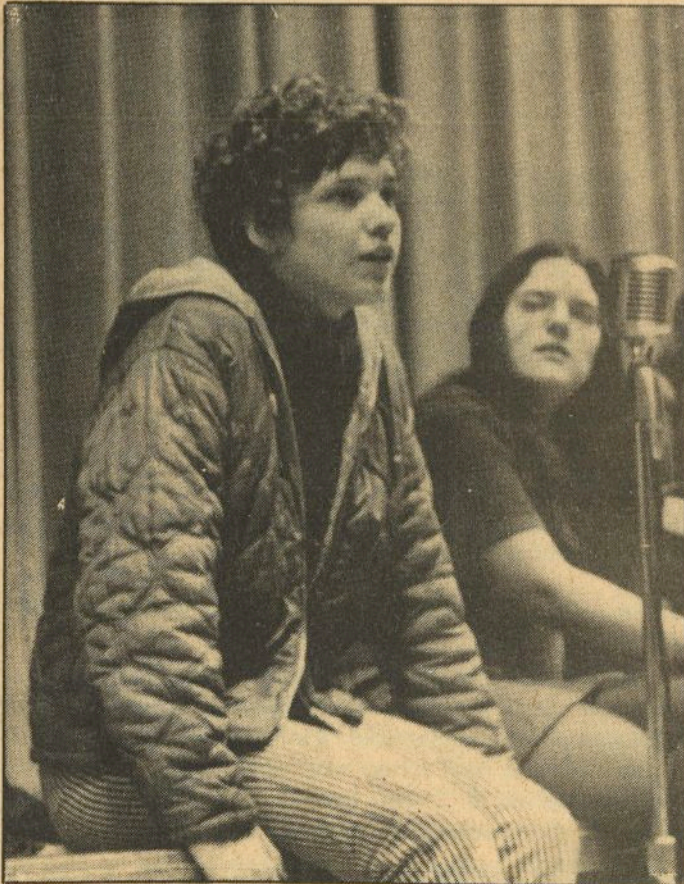
**Kat** - At that time, yes. Later I developed a strong desire to see her affirm my life work, for her to stay in community, and be something like me. One year she took it into her head that she was going to start a new branch. I was gone by then to East Wind Community, but she wrote me with great excitement about Twin Oaks' need for expansion and how Tupelo was the way to do it - my ideas in her words, almost my words. Josie was fully conscious at the time that I was getting a kick out of this; she was writing me saying, "See, I'm following in your footsteps; aren't you pleased?" I certainly was; I was absolutely bursting with pride, and I was considerably disappointed later when she decided that politics was not her thing and dropped out of Tupelo, abandoned it, as a matter of fact...

**Josie** - I'm not a visionary communitarian very much. Just a little.

**Kat** - And I keep wishing you were.

**Josie** - Well, I'm going to be a doctor.

**Kat** - Ha. I'm in the ridiculous position of wanting my kid to become a communitarian and she wants to become a doctor.



A young Josie at a lecture on Twin Oaks

**C.** - Josie, Do you think you're going to go through the same kind of thing with Thrush?

**Josie** - When she grows up, she'll probably get married, have kids and drive a station wagon, and I'm going to hate it.

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*I'm in the ridiculous position of wanting my kid to become a communitarian and she wants to become a doctor!*

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**C.** - Do you find yourself worrying if she will affirm your life in community?

**Josie** - Well, I don't know about that. No I don't think so. If she chooses to go off and live in a Zen monastery that will be all right. My goals for Thrush are that she grow up to be a generous, non-competitive warm hearted person. That she will improve on my shortcomings. But from what I've seen so far her emotional make up is like mine. She's just a regular person. As for the future, I'd rather she not marry a lawyer for a nuclear power plant and she be morally responsible, non-exploitative and non-capitalistic. I hope that she won't be willing to trade morals for money. And all these things do dictate your lifestyle. My biggest fear is that she's going to grow up and be just as competitive, jealous, grasping and greedy as I am.

**Kat** - You're not competitive, grasping and greedy.

**Josie** - I certainly am.

**Kat** - In very minute amounts.

**Josie** - I'm more competitive than you.

**C.** - Josie, I've heard you say these things about yourself. Do you think that being in community had anything to do with you feeling you have those attributes?

**Josie** - Well, with some things, yes. Sometimes, in having to share everything, people get anxious about there being enough for their individual selves and act in grasping, greedy ways.

**Kat** - And you're not proud of being one of them. That's the sort of thing I do and forgive myself easily. I say, "Oh well, this is one of my flaws."

**C.** - Kat, you can still say to Josie; "I want you to follow in my footsteps and be a good communitarian." Over the 11 or 12 years that you've been involved in community has the ideology tarnished some?

**Kat** - I go up and down. Right now I'm at a fairly high place. I'm more interested in community than I have been in a couple of years, which possibly has something to do with my increased involvement with Federation. But, yes, the ideology has tarnished. The reasons are many. One is that we are not only attracting



**Josie** - The Junior Prom! No, not really, I feel like I blossomed when I came into community. That was my final opportunity to express what Kat raised me to be; a free person. Not ever having been in a school, there was no longing to be with my high school buddies; I'd been preferring adults to children since I was eight. So whatever wonderful teenagehood or childhood I missed, I had already missed. Maybe I regret it in my deep subconscious and it'll all come out with my therapist, but I don't regret it, any of it.

**C.** - You've both been strong figures in your respective communities. I'd like to hear your views about women's roles and sexism.

**Kat** - This just isn't a question that has much relevance for me. I've never in my life wanted to be anything that my sex prohibited me from being. I am sure that my character is foreign to my society's expectation of femaleness, to a certain extent. I am aggressive, political, economics-minded, and all of the time since I've been in community, I've been recognized by the prominent males as an equal. I just have no problem. Nobody's ever said, "No, you can't do anything because you're a woman." If anybody did, I'd laugh.



I've been accused of being an Uncle Tom. There was a time when we went to this women's meeting, the first one we'd ever had, and it was implied at the meeting that I was part of the oppressor. I was trying to get the meeting started, and I asked, "Are there people here who really seriously feel oppressed by men at Twin Oaks?" One woman said, "I feel oppressed by you." So Josie said, "I think that what you're trying to tell Kat is that she's some sort of man." I never went to another women's meeting.

**Josie** - Well, its also been true all along that whenever anybody wants to say that there isn't really any oppression at Twin Oaks they say, "Well, look at Kat, she hasn't let it get in her way". It's great that you haven't been oppressed or whatever, and it's also great that you don't have any confidence problems, but that doesn't make the sexism any less.

**Kat** - I didn't say it did. I'm just saying it's no personal problem for me. If I'd wanted to get into construction, I damn well would have. And I think the men would help me. I have no patience with women who say they are oppressed, none at all.

**Josie** - I don't think that very many of our women would say they are "oppressed". But I think there is sexism at Twin Oaks, and it is not deliberate on anyone's part. I think sexism is circumstantial - men come in and naturally have a little bit more confidence with a hammer and therefore it's easier for them to slip into the areas they want to without going through quite the same amount of official apprenticeship that women go through. There have been some blatant things... like when Joseph said there are no apprenticeships open in driving higher industrial, the big truck, and the next thing I knew Steven was driving the truck without ever having apprenticed it. I was furious and I said I was going to go to the planners, and Joseph apprenticed me the next week.

**C.** - It might have been more personal than that.

**Josie** - Well, maybe.

**Kat** - I doubt it. Well, what he said was just that she

was obviously irresponsible and incapable of driving that truck, and he didn't want her in it.

**Josie** - What he said was that there were no openings.

**Kat** - I suspect that his feeling that you were incompetent was based on sexism.

**Josie** - And as it turned out, I was a wonderful truck driver.

Just occasionally it's obvious that we still have leftover garbage. Men will have conversations in which I feel attacked and uncomfortable. It's like you're around when there's several men jiving with each other, and there's just this feeling of "I don't belong here, this is the boys."

**Kat** - Locker room conversation.

**Josie** - Yeah, locker room conversation. The women do it too.



**C.** - Do you personally experience sexism here? Now?

**Josie** - A little bit...in volleyball games, in softball games.

**Kat** - Isn't that just that you're not as competent, that it's not as much fun for you?

**Josie** - Yes, oh yes. I understand all of that extremely well. It's not that the men don't want women there. It's that women in general are not as competent, and we haven't had enough affirmative action. The point of liberating women is not to fight and not to get revenge, and not even so much as to wake us up, but to take steps to heal and to learn. And the difference between our metas and our non-metas, our planners and our non-planners, our competent and our non-competent is not great enough to warrant a lack of affirmative action.

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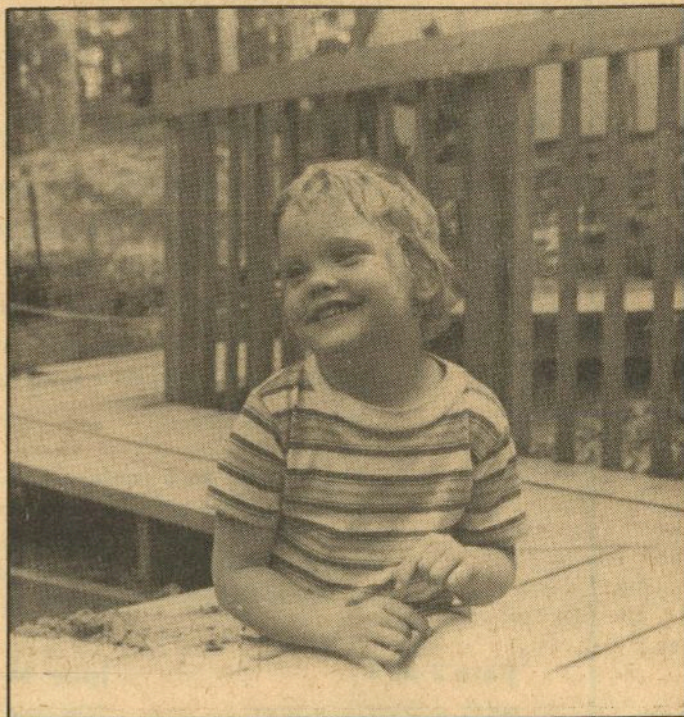
*The point of liberating women is not to fight and not to get revenge and not even so much as to wake us up, but to take steps to heal and to learn.*

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**Kat** - Yet some of us feel very strongly the need of the community for competency. I understand the point of view of the inexperienced woman - "What is this place here for if not for our personal development?" They feel that if a community doesn't go all out on women's issues, it may as well not exist. I don't agree with that. I think women's liberation is part of an overall social problem, and community has to work on the whole thing at once. That's why economic considerations like the sacrifice of efficiency come into play - because they affect the community's survival, the number of people it can serve, the next-generation viability. Training is **terribly** expensive. If we keep training new people year after year for the same jobs, we become a kind of vocational school, which isn't our goal. Because of the high costs of training, we tend to use workers who already have skill. I personally think that we should make a great effort to train women specifically for work that interests them - **after** they have proved their seriousness by sticking around for two years or so. I don't have much patience with the "rights" of temporary people, regardless of sex.

**Josie** - This is an on-going argument at Twin Oaks. However, we have never learned to predict who's going to stay and for how long. It's not valuable for us to wait until someone is here two years to train them, considering the average length of a members stay is three years. More important, I think there's a subtle discrimination in favor of the self confidence of a minimally skilled man that makes us teach him more readily than we would a minimally skilled woman. I believe that in this generation we have to sacrifice some competence. We need to let some unskilled women apprentice jobs. Twin Oaks, at this point, has gone too far towards efficiency and needs to come back a little bit. Several years ago we'd apprentice anybody for any job and the efficiency level was around ten percent. But now, it's at a point where three new men have come into the community and stepped right into construction work when three women who have been here more than a year have struggled to get into construction and haven't been able to. That's wrong. You could say, "Damn it, if Kat or I had wanted to get into construction, we would have." But part of the learning process is teaching women that they don't have to take a subtle no for an answer; they must be assertive.

We need to recognize that lack of assertiveness training is three quarters of the sexism problem and that we, as a community, need unsubtle institutionalized techniques to combat our subtle unofficial practices. □





# Communities Conferences



## an exploration of communal life

This summer the Federation of Egalitarian Communities is sponsoring three conferences, each at an established rural, intentional community.

Our aim is to broaden awareness and understanding of intentional communities which center their lives around values of cooperation, equality and non-violence. We hope to help more people find a communal alternative, to celebrate our own communal lives and to promote the evolution of a more egalitarian society.

We invite anyone who is serious about joining community or moving toward a more cooperative way of life to join us. We also invite representatives of communities who would like to share their knowledge.

### **Workshops and Presentations** facilitated by people living and working communally

- *community values and agreements* • *group process and decision-making* • *community and social change* • *relationships in community* • *therapy in community* • *communal childrearing* • *women in community* • *men in community* • *spirituality* • *work and labor distribution* • *community culture* • *land trusts* • *so you want to start a community?*

The cost for each conference, including meals and a place to camp, is \$25 per person at Aloe and Dandelion; \$30 per person at Twin Oaks. Write for more information, including a schedule of discounts for early registration and for children. For advance registration, send us a deposit of \$10 per person.

#### **June 2 to 5**

*with a special focus on children*

Aloe Community  
Rt. 1 Box 100  
Cedar Grove, N.C.  
27231  
(919) 732-4323

#### **June 30 to July 3**

*100 to 200 people*

Dandelion Community  
R.R. 1  
Enterprise, Ontario  
KOK 1Z0  
(613) 358-2304

#### **September 1 to 4**

*400 people*

Twin Oaks Community  
Rt. 4  
Louisa, Va.  
23093  
(703) 894-5126

**Come, learn and celebrate with us!**





# WILL THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT SURVIVE?

By Naomi Weisstein and Heather Booth

Insurgent movements, movements for social change, do not generally survive their initial momentum. We must struggle to keep them alive in the face of enormous pressures from the standing social order. Today, we are in the midst of a movement to change the lives of women. It is unbearable for us to think that our movement may not survive. But it may not; it depends on what we do

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In England, in the late 1640's, radical groups proclaimed that men and women were equal, and their marriage vows no longer included a wife's promise to obey her husband. Women became preachers since "the soul knows no difference in sex." Private property and the exploitation of one person's labor for the profit of another, were considered fundamental evils.

Twenty years later, these radical groups had been totally crushed. Some lost as a result of military defeats, but most groups were destroyed through the enactment of various kinds of repressive legislation and the failure of the radicals to resolve their factional disputes and organize themselves in sufficient strength to effectively oppose the repression.

"Knowledge, why didst thou come, to wound and not to cure?" mourned one radical, the digger Winstanley, in the last pamphlet he wrote.

"O power, where art thou, that must mend things amiss?  
Come, change the heart of man, and make him truth to kiss."

The organized power of the feminist movement at the turn of this century compelled significant changes in the behavior, if not the heart, of man. Feminism, according to historian Ellen DuBois, reached an overwhelming majority of women through the women's club and temperance movements and through the agitation around the suffrage issue.

Prior to 1860 married women were considered "in the eye of the law, civilly dead."\* They were chattel; indeed, the laws pertaining to slaves drew their precedents from the position of women. The feminist movement changed this. It won for women the legal status of *person*. It gained for women the right to own property, to keep their wages, to have custody of their children. The reforms of the women's movement also changed the face of this country: in cities and towns, everything from public libraries to paving and sanitation—what we think of today as the obligations of municipalities to their citizens—were initiated by the women's movement.

With the exception, perhaps, of the current analysis of sexuality and reproduction, all the ideas of our feminist movement can be found in the writings of the earlier feminists. Yet, De Beauvoir in 1953, and Friedan ten years later, had to name again "the problem that [had] no name." If we had become persons before the law, socially, economically, culturally, historically, and ideologically we were again non-persons, robbed of an insurgent past, living in the shadows of a

\**Declaration of Sentiments*, Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention, July 1848.



## In the year two thousand, will some pioneer activist once again have to expose the horrors of women's lives?

world we were allowed to participate in only through our husbands and children. Our heroines were dead; we hardly knew their names.

In the nineteen-sixties, a new feminist movement began. We have made great advances. This second women's movement has affected our style, our words, our personalities, our children and our parents. We have won victories in the courts, we have put new laws on the books, new positions and careers have opened up, and new agencies have been created to fight for equality for women.

What will happen to our movement? Will this second feminism survive, or will it go under, like the first? In the year two thousand, will some pioneer activist once again have to expose the horrors of women's lives? Will we, like Winstanley, remain only to grieve without end? Will this generations's children, like the children of our great-grandmothers, be forced back into the shadows of husband and home, despised for their labors, doomed to endless service and suffering?

Perhaps this time history will be kind. Perhaps this time we'll drive straight through, our movement gaining such strength and power that we will be able to overturn the inequities in our economic, social and political order. Perhaps this time we will have our feminist revolution, and unlike other revolutionaries ours will be truly universal: we will create for ourselves and for all humanity a just and generous society, a society of dignity, joy, play, knowledge, understanding, meaning, wisdom, honor, love, humor. We will have a world without degradation and without suffering. The incredible resources of this world will be shared by all, and our technology will free us from crushing labor and release in us an infinite social and intellectual energy; our science will be used not to kill and control us but to enrich and delight us. We will emerge from the prehistory in which we live, and come into a truly human community.

Perhaps. We hope so. We want it to happen. But sometimes, what we want is one thing, what we get, another. Since movements, no matter how noble and highly motivated, do not continue of their own momentum, we have a duty to assess, evaluate, analyze, take stock. We must try to measure the health of our movement and figure its chances for growth and, indeed, for survival. And if we see that our movement is in ill health, we must name what we see, and try to cure it. We write this paper to do that.

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## Current Trends: Cultural Recidivism

This is a period of political and social retrenchment by the rich and the powerful. Accompanying this retrenchment in the political sphere is a cultural lurch to the right, and this may be most directly damaging to us as a movement. This lurch is increasingly revealed, reflected, and perpetuated by the media. The idea that society is in any way responsible for our problems is discredited both subtly and blatantly. Unhappiness is assumed to be our own fault, economic privation our individual folly: "buy wisely" at the supermarket, "save energy" at home. Want a job? Improve your "communications skills." To assert

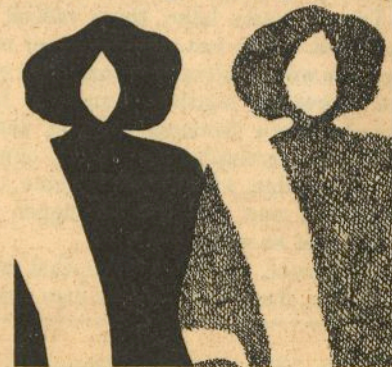
that things are systemically wrong, to demand that they be better, becomes unpardonable conduct.

There's a term for this: recidivism—a return to criminal behavior. What's going on right now is a reversion, by the media, to criminal attitudes towards women, towards the dispossessed, towards the powerless.

This cultural recidivism warns us that those who would question the standing social order will henceforth be quarantined for shrill and disorderly conduct. Stay calm, stay cool. Night after night the national news parades unspeakable horrors before us, but no remedies are offered other than the visual equivalent of Quaaludes—such images of perfect joy as Canada geese gliding back to the Peaceable Kingdom. The message, at least for those who remember the Eisenhower years, is familiar, chilling, and clear: a culture that peddled the oppressive message of "togetherness" rolls back in on us, living color this time: search for inner peace, don't make waves. The birds are flying north, the lakes are still, the boy and girl are running barefoot in the waving grass. Everything is fine, nothing is basically wrong. Only deranged, hysterical women, lone assassins and the like, would want to change a society where nothing is wrong.

We are urged to perform bizarre transformations on our bodies as "high fashion" rides back in on this cultural wave. The pendulum has swung towards the grotesque—towards the mannerist, lifeless dehumanizing notion of female "beauty." Once again, to meet such standards as "swank" and "glamour" our bodies must be elongated, our ankles twisted, our faces erased of all identifying features. The platforms we're supposed to wear would trip a mountain goat. Our eyebrows must be defoliated—wax faces don't have hair on them. Now, the culture goes, a truly liberated woman can choose to do these things.

Cultural recidivism tells us we "women's libbers" have changed things enough, and anyway, we can't change things any more than we have. Don't look a gift horse in the mouth. There's a "natural aristocracy" and we either belong, or we don't. We are then told to identify with the natural aristocracy—the rich, the powerful, the beautiful, the "born winners," and we are told to dismiss, despise, or ridicule those who are struggling for a decent life. Even a supposedly hip, left-liberal newspaper like New York's *Village Voice* instructs us that among women, there are the 'tomboys' and there are the 'sissys,' and the 'tomboys' don't need women's liberation because they were born winners. Born winners and born losers: as if the idea of a society in which a lucky few "win" and the rest of us "lose" is not inherently disgusting; as if the idea of human effort to abolish inequality, to strike the categories "winner" and "loser" is an unworthy goal; as if women's liberation were some kind of secret shame, like a padded bra, an admission of individual inferiority rather than what it is: a determined and heroic struggle against a society so savage toward women that even, as the *Voice* admits, 'tomboys' get raped. And we are being told to love the winners and despise the losers. A culture telling us to despise its losers is telling us to despise the oppressed and its powerless. It is telling us to despise women





## Erosion of Past Victories

We might be less vulnerable to these developments were they concomitant with the worst economic crisis since the 1930s. Overtly and covertly, the current depression is hitting women the hardest. The corporations and the state cry "hard times," and supposed luxuries like jobs for women and day care centers for children are abolished. Those with the least priority "naturally" are the first to be laid off.

Furthermore, the current economic situation is being used as a cover by which many of the advances of the last ten years are being challenged, if not erased. Corporate employers are mounting a campaign to undermine state and federal enforcement of equal opportunity laws. They are using the recession as an excuse to avoid setting affirmative action timetables and goals. They are working to prevent public access to employment data. They have already succeeded in getting pro-business commissioners appointed to the EEOC and in blocking enforcement in the courts. In addition, the case backlog before the EEOC—about three to five years' worth—can't possibly be handled, and there are proposals to turn the cases to the states, where enforcement is even worse. And now it is rumored that the Attorney General may file against Revised Order #4, which gave the basis for mandating goals and timetables from private employers who do business with the government.

One of the greatest concrete victories for our movement was the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. This was won through efforts of a wide variety of groups. Now, well funded and highly visible anti-abortion groups have succeeded in pressuring state and federal legislators to introduce and pass constitutional anti-choice laws, which must be overturned at great cost in time and money.

The Equal Rights Amendment, clearly our greatest show of strength, has passed in thirty-four states. Now insurance and other corporate interests intensify their campaign against it; other stop-ERA groups are joining with anti-abortion, anti-poor and other right-wing groups in a sophisticated offensive against the women's movement.

We've won victories on some battlefields; elsewhere, we've hardly made a dent; and in some areas our victories are being eroded. Meanwhile, the war against women escalates: rape and other crimes of violence against us increase daily.

## Our Organizations and Alternate Institutions

All victories can be lost; we need continuing organized strength to keep what we have gained, and to fight for what we don't have. Strong organizations are vital for our movement's survival. Even if the ERA were passed, with no organizations, (resources to insure that it is implemented, it will be a hollow (though necessary) victory. The first women's movement won suffrage at a time when its vital organizations had disappeared. Despite the vote, the position of women began to decline steadily.

While some of our organizations are strong and healthy, many of them are in weak and fragile form. Our national organizations are moving towards deepening factional convulsions; our mass-based local organizations, present just a couple of years ago in so many cities, have disappeared, or have become so small and splintered as to be almost invisible.

Perhaps the place where our enormous energy and spirit is still the most evident is in our alternate institutions—feminist credit unions, rape crisis centers, abortion clinics, day care centers, film, graphics, music and art collectives, health

projects, print shops and presses, bookstores, restaurants, coffeehouses and theatre groups. Such alternate and service institutions provide us with much needed aid and personal support, and sometimes, with vision and hope. Often, at least in their initial stages, they create islands of sisterhood in a sea of sexism.

But we should recognize them for what they are: institutions for personal support and a base from which we can go out and do battle. They comprise only a partial strategy, and they may even be a partially defeating strategy. Alternate institutions are, by their nature, limited, small, weak, and easily destroyed. They do not alter existing power relations. We use up all our miniscule resources to construct and maintain these institutions. This detours us from making claims on the vast resources of large institutions in society which should be providing us with what we need.

Alternate institutions, like most institutions, demand twenty-four-hour maintenance; most women have neither the time nor the energy for such exertions. And for those who do, is the drain in energy worth the effort? Alternate institutions have impact on only a very small percentage of the population. We should use our energies in ways that will improve the lives of large numbers of women and reach out to those vast sectors of the female population which are as yet untouched by a too-often inward-looking movement. Women's liberation is not for a few hundred or even a few thousand women. It must be for millions of women.

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*Our organizations and our alternate institutions die from internal bleeding long before they succumb to external pressure.*

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The present inward focus and demand for total dedication are among the reasons for the short life-spans of our alternate institutions. Collectives, coffeehouses, graphics groups, print shops in existence six months ago are gone now. What appears at first to be a flowering of institutions is also a needle scratching back and forth across a broken track, a revolving door of misspent energy, a failure to accumulate and build.

Some argue that what appears to be failure is just one of the stages in an exuberant and ever-growing organic process of birth, life, death and rebirth. This argument is a dodge, a feminine mystique, a refusal to hear the cries of a movement treading water, an abdication of the responsibility to try to understand why our alternate institutions keep going under.

It would be difficult under any circumstances to maintain either our organizations or our alternate institutions in the face of all the external pressures against them. To do so would require strong internal cohesion, firm structure. But our organizations and our alternate institutions die from internal bleeding long before they succumb to external pressures. They die because the idea of collective activity for the common good is so foreign to our upbringing. We have so little experience, in this society, of functioning democratic organizations that we don't know what they are, and we don't know how to build them. Our organizations and our alternate institutions die because we become obsessed with process, group dynamics, making everybody happy rather than getting a concrete job done. They die because we attribute real differences of opinion to "personality problems" rather than trying to deal with the concrete issues raised. They die because we pretend that there are no differences in our levels of competence and training. They die because we deny the reality of our conflicts and fail to provide formal, open, democratic channels for their resolution.



They die because we announce that we all have equal power, failing to recognize that announcing does not make it so. They die because we pretend that all of us share the same degree of commitment and energy, so we provide no clear procedures for the delegation of tasks, no rules for who should do what when. They die because some catch the "correct line" or come down with the proper "class" or sexual credentials, and others immolate themselves in guilt. And they die because nothing short of total transformation is acceptable to us, and when total transformation is not achieved, we turn on ourselves.

The grim truths of our organizations and our alternate institutions are repeated again and again: the initial ecstasy, energy and hard work; the developing hostility, splits and recriminations; the final agony and collapse.

## Our Consciousness

Political consciousness includes an understanding that movements *can* die, that social change is by no means inevitable. Political consciousness includes the commitment to try to figure out what can and should be done at any particular period in the history of a movement to insure its survival and then, most important, to *do it*.

The first step in pulling our movement back together again is to acknowledge that many parts of our movement are in bad shape right now. They aren't hopeless. But we must acknowledge that in order to alter what appears to be a deteriorating situation we can't let things passively run their course. We must take active, positive, imaginative steps to give our movement new momentum. We must act. All of us, together, can surmount our current difficulties and come back with a stronger, saner, sounder movement.

However, there is another version of consciousness around which denies the idea that these are rough times and indeed denounces those who would utter such heresy. This is the version which talks about an invincible "women's consciousness." "Women's consciousness" is never quite defined, but we are assured that it will continue to grow no matter what else happens. And as long as this thing called "women's consciousness" continues to grow, victory for our movement is inevitable.



A number of corollaries accompany the proposition that our unstoppable women's consciousness is a sufficient condition for the survival of a movement. For instance, many women believe that fighting against the backlash, which means fighting for power in the real world, is a "male" trip, unworthy or unnatural for women. Some women believe we can create our own islands of utopia and live safely in them (*Wanted: like-minded feminists to start utopian/amazon/matriarchal commune in Mojave desert. Don't worry about food; we'll eat our hearts out*). And since there is some uncertainty about just what constitutes "women's consciousness," we are faced with the prospect of an uncountable number of faction fights and sectarian stalemates over who's got the real thing.

Because the idea of an unstoppable "women's consciousness" is being used at this time to gloss over the real difficulties in our movement, some further comments on the relation between consciousness and social change are in order.

## Consciousness and Social Change

The culture of oppressed groups has often included eloquent and moving understanding of their own oppression. The pain, grief, and sorrow of women's lives have found passionate expression in our poetry, our prose, our traditions. *Political* consciousness, however, includes additional understanding, namely, that our misery is not of nature, due to some innate inferiority, some faulty wiring, some biological flaw. Rather, our misery is the product of a society based on inequalities of power, inequalities which reinforced and maintained by political, economic, social, cultural institutions. Because our problems are therefore so in origin, the product of a sick society, they require a social solution. They require a change in power relations; they require an attack on the institutions that oppress us.

For the women's movement, this coming into political consciousness was best exemplified by that brilliant insight: "the personal is the political." We realized that our "personal failings" were not due not to some secret stigma, but to a society which denies us our humanity at every turn, a society which keeps us powerless, dependent and frightened.

As women, we live in a coercive, threatening, unpleasant world—a world in which one of us is reported raped every seventeen minutes every day, a world which tolerates us only when we are very young or very beautiful. Ignored conversation, patronized at work, hello babied by strangers, ogled on the street, followed into buildings, fondled in buses, attacked in elevators, objects of ridicule and contempt, even the most neutral transaction is often accompanied by abuse. Our inability to obtain anything above the most menial, poorly paid "service" positions, our "inadequacies" as wife and mother, our chronic depression, our supposedly "narcissistic" concern with our appearance, our self-hatred, our "desperate need" for "love," our panic at being left alone, can best be understood by examining a society which refuses to hire us, to pay us, to value our labor, to listen to what we say, a society which refuses to believe that our intellectual and social contributions could be worth anything, a society which allows us only the roles of wife and mother and then blames the rest of its problems on our supposed inability to perform these roles properly (Is your son neurotic? your husband an ulcer case? You must be a domineering/passive mother, a frigid/insatiable wife), a society which defines our worth in terms of the marriage which we are attached (Mrs. Dick Manly, I'd like you to marry Mrs. Peter Strong), or in terms of our ability to attract a man in a society which encourages the most brutal acts of violence against us and then explains to us that we provoked such acts that we were asking for it.

It is important to understand that the notion that we act the way we do because society keeps us powerless, dependent and frightened is not a faith, but is solidly grounded in contemporary social psychology\*. The central fact which emerges from current research is this: for the most part, how we act, who we are, what we do, and what we think, arise from the social conditions under which we live. It is not any other way around. This translates directly into politics: if we change our social conditions, if we re-order power relations, we will be able to change our lives. If we try to change our lives without changing our social conditions, we will, for the most part, fail.

\*For a summary of some of the relevant work, see Nancy Weisstein's "Psychology Constructs the Female" in Gornick and Moran, eds., *Woman in Sexist Society*.



# What Happens to Consciousness When Our Movement Is In Trouble

At some very deep level, seeing is believing. If we do not see real change, we question whether it can occur, and what is preventing it. Our ideas about what is preventing it can point towards real obstacles in the real world, or inwards, toward imaginary obstacles someplace in our heads. Because our movement is in trouble, instead of locating the source of our oppression firmly out there, where it belongs, we have begun to pull it back into our own heads. The wires cross: the political becomes the personal. We think that what we must do is change ourselves, talk assertively, be confident. We forget that there is a limit to what we can do by ourselves. We forget that misery is social, requiring a social solution. We decide that maybe our "head is not together yet," or maybe we should "get out of our oppression complex," or perhaps what we need is to develop self-respect." We turn our energies inward, towards ourselves and of each other. Our groups split into tiny operative fragments, we accuse and counter-accuse, we attempt to purify ourselves, we try to smoke out those who are working for the "enemy," we finally give up on groups together.

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*Because our movement is in trouble, instead of locating the source of our oppression firmly out there, where it belongs, we have begun to pull it back into our own heads. The wires cross: the political becomes the personal.*

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and we lose ourselves in mysticism. In the final days of the American Indian resistance, in the winter of 1890, a phenomenon called Ghost Dancing spread widely among the embattled tribes. According to Dee Brown in his moving book, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, it was prophesied that Ghost Dancing would bring the Indian dead back to life and insure that by the spring all traces of the white man would vanish from the earth. By wearing a sacred garment called the Ghost Shirt, the Indian would be invulnerable to the white man's bullets. Soldiers were no longer to be feared; if they came to stop the ceremonies ". . . their horses will sink to the earth . . . The riders will jump from their horses, but they will sink into the earth also." "The bullets will not go toward you," chanted the medicine man, Yellow Bird, during the massacre of the Sioux at Wounded Knee. "The prairie is green and the bullets will not go toward you." Ghost Dancing was the last desperate response of a defeated and powerless people. It also accelerated their defeat. It excluded other strategies which might have led to somewhat less monstrous results.

The women must not allow ourselves to be seduced by our own visions of Ghost Dancing. Believing that things are true because we want them to be true won't save us. Our amulets and tarot cards, our runes and signs and tea leaves, the ancient

craft of Wicca, the current astrology, lost matriarchies, Mother Rights, won't protect us. Mysticism will divert us from the real struggle at hand; it will accelerate our defeat.

Indeed, the idea of a women's consciousness which is unstoppable is itself a collapse into mysticism. There is absolutely no historical, sociological, or psychological basis to assume that without our bringing about real changes in the social order our consciousness will continue to grow, or even that it will continue to be maintained. The consciousness of the English Radicals—men and women are equal and private property is theft—vanished. The consciousness articulated at Seneca Falls in 1848 vanished. What will happen to ours? Without a movement to support it, consciousness veers off, turns inward toward self-hatred or destructive mysticism, and finally, dies.

## Some Strategies

Our knowledge must come to cure, not to wound. We must use our knowledge, our still vital social energy, to gather our forces and take action.

- We need to hold out a vision that things can be better
- We need to win concrete victories in our lives
- Individually, most of us are powerless. Collectively, we can have enormous power. We need to gain a sense of our own power. We must see that we can actually do something collectively about our condition.

These considerations suggest a strategy which calls for mass participation in national, highly visible programs involving direct confrontation with the institutions that oppress us. We need a national program so that our efforts will have cumulative effect. We need a plan of action—steps outlined so that local and national activity can be coordinated by many different groups. We need to work on highly visible, deeply felt areas of injustice, and we need to bring about real changes in those areas, so that the lives of millions of women will improve as a result of our efforts, and we will see that victory by our own efforts is possible.

We might focus on a national issue such as rape, or job conditions for women. We could then outline local program and coordinated national action. Each area could have a series of potential actions around them. Key in this is identifying the power that women have that will enable us to achieve the specific changes we want: threats to oppose funding of the agencies unless they change their approach, interference with operations, investigation and exposure. At a national level, there could be nation-wide demonstrations combined with lobbying for new legislation and enforcement.

(Two hundred fifty NOW chapters across the country have done something like this, on the issue of Sears & Roebuck discrimination. With local actions at the stores, help from the EEOC agencies, pressure on legislators and legal action, it looks like the company will be forced to pay the largest back pay settlement in history. And the women who participated in it know that they are part of the success.)

Our movement must have an overall program, a plan, a strategy, and a series of concrete goals so that we can organize and use the energy that is being generated before it dissipates. Here are some proposals, intended not as a total strategy, but rather as examples of the kind of thing that can be done.

In Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, New York, and Cleveland, there are efforts to build direct action organizations of working women. They come together around complaints in an industry—insurance, or banking—or as legal secretaries, or in universities. They organize to expose the conditions they oppose with mass attendance at public hearings before the agencies that are supposed to be accountable to us as taxpayers, voters, and employees. If the agencies do not



respond, do not enforce the law against the violators, the women organize against that agency with political pressure—threatening their funding, staffing, anonymity. Where the agencies are responsive, the groups help the agency to carry out its job.

At the same time, the groups focus on the corporations and industries against which the agencies have been doing an inadequate job. Undermining corporate anonymity, they search out the managers and demand that they act responsively. They go to the neighbors of the director, and inform them that he discriminates against his female employees. They pressure other corporations in the field to dissociate themselves from such practices.

With the combination of legal and political pressure and public organizing, such groups have won victories from corporations like Kraft Foods and industries like the employment agencies.

We spoke before about the possibility of a program concerned with the issue of rape. There are, at present, many such programs. But, as noted above in our discussion of alternate institutions, such programs, for all their undeniable value and importance, tend to repair and support, rather than reach out and change things. Rape counseling, for instance, is absolutely necessary. However, to do no more than this is to accept rape as an unalterable condition in society, almost to assent to its presence.

Imagine a more active strategy. Suppose we abandon rape counseling, and form anti-rape patrols: women trained in Karate cruise high-rape areas. Using the cars we salvaged in our Introduction to Auto-Mechanics Class, we clank along, prepared to leap out and deliver a lethal roundhouse kick. Let's not reject this idea uncritically. It has much value: as a demonstration, it would call attention to the inadequacy of existing police patrols; it would prevent some rapes, and it would catch some rapists. But it has all the limits of an alternative institution (which it would be). Consider the workings of our patrol. At some point, we notice that the same path is being followed, probably too infrequently, by a number of vehicles. All of these vehicles have the same color motif; each is labeled "police." Each of these vehicles carries an enormous and diverse armory; each has an extraordinary communications technology. Unfortunately, these wonders of twentieth century technology are piloted by sexist males who look the other way when women scream for help. The vehicles' routing and frequency is determined by people who never felt the pressure of organized women. This society must feel our power, must be responsive to our needs. In the area of rape this means, among other things, effective activity by those with the competence and technology to do the job. For whom do the police work? For whom does the government govern? Not for us, until and unless we make our power felt.

If this society is *our* society, then it must put its resources at our disposal. A direct action strategy on rape would demand that the money we give our state and local governments specifically for our protection actually start being used for that purpose. We would demand that the government allocate resources for rape prevention, law enforcement, and humane treatment of rape victims: increased patrols in high-rape areas, escort and bus service, trained women counselors at hospitals and police stations, speedy trials, rules of evidence fair to the victim. And if the government doesn't do its job properly, we use our power so that it is forced to: we target the legislators

and judges who need our votes, the hospitals that need our co-operation and labor.

With concrete programs, a plan of coordinated activity, we can then recruit large masses of women into our movement. There was a Mississippi Summer for the civil rights movement in 1964. Why can't there be a Women's Liberation Summer getting volunteers, participants from all over to be part of our projects, our activities, our organizational program? At present, it is so hard to join our movement. Where is it? How do you join? The yellow pages? The city directory? You can't subscribe to *Ms.*, but then what? Change your lifestyle? Get a divorce? New marriage? Reconciliation? Come out? Go back in? When political consciousness hits, the resultant energy is large unless we have real programs and real organizations through which that consciousness can be expressed.

The oppression of women is like a typhoid epidemic. In the middle of the epidemic we must do three things: we must inform victims of their symptoms (consciousness-raising); we must treat the victims (alternate institutions, in part); and we must find the poisoned water supply and clean it up (changing society's institutions). Unless we get to the water supply, we will be fighting a losing battle. We must go beyond the emergency measures of treating the victims, and fight the source.

Our task is to eliminate the real differences in power which exist between men and women. But our task is bigger than that: we want to eliminate all social, economic, and political injustices in our society. Other groups which are fighting for social justice are often dismissed as irrelevant to our struggle because they do not exist. Many of these groups *are* sexist, and we have bitter conflicts with them. But we must understand that, much as we despise the sexism within these groups, our allies will be found there, because we have a common aim. Our movement cannot dismiss the history and present struggle of other social movements whose participants fought and died for a better world. We cannot ignore their story: it is part of our own. Their vision may have been narrow, but so may ours. Let us extend to the earlier traditions of fighting for human justice a generosity which hope will be extended to us.

We are two women whose lives have been changed, developed, and intertwined with the women's movement. We worked together in Chicago in 1966, when the women's movement was just starting, when we didn't have the words to describe what we believed in; Women's Liberation didn't exist. We called ourselves radical women, coming out of the experience of the civil rights and student movements. We knew we wanted a society radically different for us, our sisters, and the future. At that time, *sexism* wasn't yet a word in the language and we were trying to identify and figure out what to do about that problem that had no name, the so-called "women's issue." We were part of what was probably the first independent women's movement organization.

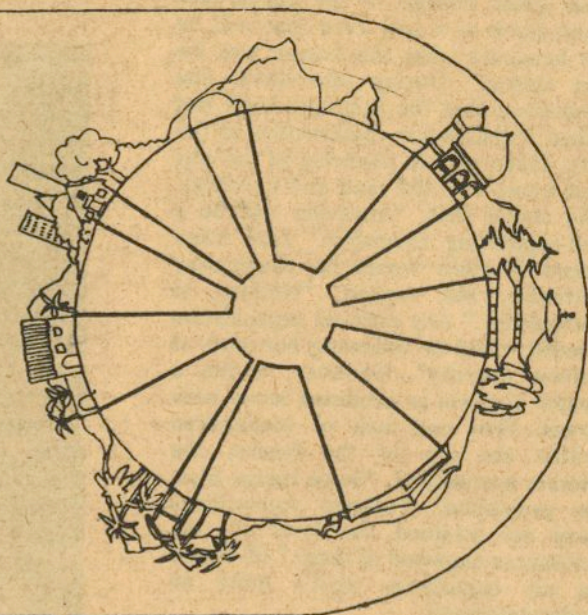
Our lives were utterly transformed by the women's movement. The women's movement gave us our voice, our energy, our spirit. We can declare with the certainty of our own experience: this fight is worth our life's struggle. We are not bitter, defeated, or exhausted. Yet we will not see our women's movement go under. Let us, all of us, carry our movement forward, past defeat, past ignorance, past conflict, past exhaustion, to change the lot of humanity, to drive on through to that better world, that just and generous society.





# international

## AUROVILLE



### Edited by Vince

As a new age community, Auroville is the second largest in existence with more than 550 people, over 200 of whom are youngsters. These people represent over twenty nations, with more than half from Europe and North America. There are about twenty-five active settlements sprinkled over some 600 acres of arid land ten kilometers north of the city of Pondicherry in Tamil Nadu, southern India. The community has been in existence since 29 February, 1968, when it was recognized by the United Nations as the "City of the Future". The people living in Auroville for the most part were drawn by the visions of their spiritual teachers, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The Mother outlined the focus for this city and spoke openly of its significance in changing consciousness on this planet. The Mother was advisor for the community until her death nearly five years ago; Aurobindo died in 1950. Since her death the administration for building this city was overseen by the Trustees of the Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, the largest of its kind in the world, supporting some 2000 people. During the last two and one half years, there has been a gradual break from the legal stronghold of the ashram with the Aurovilians gaining more control in creating the vision of the city. Over the years, there have been

various reports and statements about Auroville, some of which have been misleading. Hopefully, this overview will provide some indication of what the township has been doing lately. It is based on news from reports, some writings from members and from my personal observations while having spent some time at a couple of the settlements.

### The Philosophy

Over ten years ago the plans for Auroville had received much publicity as the Ashramites carried its banner to the U.N. A charter for the city was drawn which states -

- 1) Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville, one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.
- 2) Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.
- 3) Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring toward future realizations.
- 4) Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity.

All this was the outgrowth of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's orientation. Sri Aurobindo produced volumes of writings sixty years ago, touching

upon Indian culture and his approach to spiritual philosophy. One of the key principles in his concept of spiritual evolution is collaboration. That is, humanity as the present apex of the evolutionary thrust, has reached a stage where we can now consciously and actively collaborate with the evolutionary force and thereby hasten the process in ourselves. Collaboration implies harmony and unity, which must be found in the innermost and highest levels of human consciousness. Outer harmony and unity must be the expression of the true inner harmony and unity.

Sri Aurobindo has iterated that we cannot effect our own transformation. We must actively work within to allow the transformation to be carried out by the evolutionary force. The process of this active collaboration is Integral Yoga. The collaboration must be integral, on the various planes of consciousness. The instrumental parts of human nature - the mental, vital and physical - must collaborate by their readiness and responsiveness to the higher will and force that is carrying out the evolution, which is the progressive unveiling and unobstructed manifestation of the Divine in the world. (1)

The Mother's visions began to describe a way for people to collaborate with the Divine manifestation for uplifting planetary consciousness. In her talks and writing, she related: "Auroville is meant to hasten the advent of the supramental reality upon earth.



This great change is the appearance upon earth of a new race that will be for humanity what the human was for the animal." During interviews, she mentioned that the Supreme Lord had taken initiative for construction of the city, taken part in financing of the city and would own the land and buildings. She stated that, "Auroville will be a self-supporting township." And when asked if there would be compulsory activities, she replied, "Nothing is compulsory." Any political organization needed would be following her view of "divine anarchy". However, within a couple of years as problems arose with drugs, fires and lack of cooperation within the city of the future, the Mother commented, "Some things must be prohibited. Perhaps Aurovillians have not attained the level of consciousness expected of them." (2) Based on my experience, that's quite an understatement!

### THE REALITY

It's been 2 and a half years since I visited Auroville for a month. Before I arrived at Auroville, there were not any special impressions of what the "City of the Future" was actually about. I had some uncomfortable reactions to articles that were being printed in the U.S. new age journals depicting the place as the answer for the ills of the universe. Reading these articles though, you would soon realize that the author was future tripping about somebody's visions of the beyond. Some of us need these projections into the future to make the present seem more palatable. That's Utopia! Utopia is a collection of some dreamer's escape into the distant future. Fortunately, we all must continue to take out the garbage daily, and so we can maintain some roots in the present.

Before going to Auroville, I had the opportunity to talk with some people from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in the city. One person gave me a contact for one of the living groups, and I was able to move into a comfortable situation without any hassles. It was great being able to work in a vegetable/flower garden and to share the small space with other Americans and native Tamil people. Within a short time, the concept of Auroville and the visions of Aurobindo began to attract me. There also was the fantastic winter climate, the chance to mingle with native people who have thousands of years of history of living on the land, and to contribute minimally to a vibrant garden area. This was appealing.

After a couple weeks though, there seemed to be a number of peculiar



Aspiration Photo by Cliff Gibson.

incidents arising...mainly around the communication between people and the rather weird relationships between Tamils and Aurovillians. Most of the Tamils were hired help working about forty to fifty hours/week for a salary of three dollars. That may have been okay for Indian wages; also, cross cultural exchanges occurred and probably learning began. Yet, there seemed to be employer-employee dynamic developing. This was further compounded by the general tension between the locals and the foreigners. There existed a level of distrust. The Aurovillians were afraid of being ripped off by the Tamils; and maybe the Tamils were afraid of the Aurovillians due to lack of understanding as to what these strange people were doing building a city in the midst of a barren desert. All this was complicated by the fact that the Tamil language is one of the more difficult in the world to speak, and only a handful of foreigners were able to relate with the locals in a normal conversation.

What finally broke the mystical aura about Auroville for me was the internal dispute brewing between the Ashram Trustees in the city and the people living on the land. It had been revealed that some of the Trustees were corrupt swindlers actually stealing funds from the Auroville project and the Ashram. Unfortunately, these Trustees had control of the Auroville Fund and the legal entity attached to it. Consequently, the people on the land were rightly trying to break from the ashram. In return, the Trustees were threatening to remove troublesome Aurovillians by re-

fusing to help get their visa extended thereby making it impossible for the people to remain in India. Definitely a messy situation!

When all the difficulties with Trustees were surfacing in late 1975 some of the folks at the Aspiration settlement, the largest in Auroville, began to look for means to broaden level of cooperation amongst Aurovillians. Over a year ago, they wrote "The nine year experience of Auroville has shown that it is undesirable centralized decision-making functions in the hands of one individual or group of individuals. Since the restructuring Pour Tous (For All) in December 1974 the principle has been clear: until there is a re-emergence in Auroville of a kind of spiritual authority we all recognized in the Mother, the power administering Auroville should not be centralized in the hands of one or a few. Nevertheless, it is possible to show an administrative body could function within our present decentralized power structure, how this would involve little change in the organization of Auroville, and how it could actually increase the efficiency of our present way of functioning." (3)

Now, the project is watched by a committee representing the Indian government to check on the multitude of problems that have beset the Aurovillians in recent years. In spite of the problems, a member of the community could state the progress in an optimistic way. Shradhdhavan wrote, "About 500 people, mostly young, scattered over a wide area of rural India, face with many physical difficulties, cultu-



sions, psychological strain and de-  
vation, have somehow miraculously  
olved in the space of a few years a  
society which is rich, diverse, intense,  
ative, dynamic, self-confident and  
oyable to a degree beyond compari-  
with any other group of similar size  
l diversity anywhere else on the  
net." It is unclear what basis of  
erience with the rest of the world  
ows her to compare Auroville so  
orably, but presumably her point of  
w has some link to the reality of the  
nation.

n discussing the development of the  
y, David Wickenden mentions, "We  
ould be clear at this point about  
tain facts. Auroville is not now nor  
l it be for some time to come,  
othing resembling a city. It is a loose  
uctured assemblage of 25 communi-  
s, ranging in size from 3 or 4 to 150  
ple, scattered over a vast 20 square  
e tract of flat, defoliated, erosion-  
rred, windswept, sun-baked desert  
d, nestled amidst nine ancient Tamil  
ages, living symbols of rural India's  
terial impoverishment. In consoc-  
nce with the stress given by Sri  
robindo and the Mother to the  
macy of the individual, there has  
n an extraordinary amount of free-  
n given Aurovillians to pursue their  
n interests unhindered by external  
straints. The resulting tendency has  
n towards diffusion and expansion,  
ting a diversity of individual ap-  
aches and avenues of expression,  
outer form taking the shape in  
ponse to immediate needs, the  
ess of circumstance and the general  
te of consciousness of the individual  
group. We have witnessed random,  
oordinated and apparently chaotic  
wth with little outward unison of  
ort; and we have experienced the  
rative results of arbitrary planning  
related to prevailing material condi-  
ions, needs and the collective con-  
sciousness.

Auroville is approaching and begin-  
g to enter the moment when the  
ibilities are great to draw together  
ectively, surrender personal prefer-  
es and transcend the clash of duali-  
s in order to gain the wider vision  
dynamism necessary to make a  
nificant material advance. It is only  
en this step is taken that the  
ividual and group energies will be-  
to be utilized in a clear, progressive  
hion, moving in harmony and unity  
ward a common goal with a coherent  
cept of future development and  
wth."

## WORK

s we can imagine, there are a great  
ber of activities that are on-going

at Auroville aside from the daily tasks  
that revolve around maintaining per-  
sonal living spaces. Not only are there  
the immediate tasks of sustaining exist-  
ence amidst the heat of southern India  
but also, there is the added interesting  
situation with many people of different  
languages all trying to function as  
neighbors in various ways, not to  
mention the overwhelming immensity  
of the challenge to create a city from  
nothing.

Some monies to support activities  
arrive as donations to specific projects,  
while others come from ashram assis-  
tance. Toward realizing self-support,  
Aurovilians are engaged in two cooper-  
ative bakeries serving the broad com-  
munity, reforestation projects, an or-  
ganic orchard, Tamil fund for rural  
development, schools, a proposal for a  
scientific research laboratory for plant  
life connected with the gardens around  
the center, an aquaculture project  
beginning, an incense factory, a handi-  
craft factory that employs up to 70  
Tamil villagers, a printing operation,  
small paper factory, a health center for  
Aspiration and the adjacent Tamil  
village, a craft shop functioning in  
conjunction with local villagers, an  
Ayurvedic clinic for neighboring vil-  
lagers, woodworking unit, general in-  
dustrial workshop and more.

The work in developing Auroville has  
been focused around three main areas:  
widespread and dispersed reforestation  
and agricultural activity in the Green  
Belt, concentrated and consistent activ-  
ity at the center and many-leveled and  
loosely held together activities that

comprise a first phase of Auromodele.  
In talking with various people, it  
wasn't obvious that there was any one  
particular focus for the work at Auro-  
ville. Some would state that the Matri-  
mandir (a huge globe being constructed  
at the physical center of the township)  
must be finished as soon as possible,  
and all other activity was secondary.  
Others had no interest in working on  
Matrimandir. Some were totally oc-  
cupied with getting their settlement  
organized; others were working on  
means for income; others had no  
particular orientation. People in one  
settlement often had no idea of what  
was going on elsewhere in Auroville.  
Some folks didn't even know how to  
get to a settlement two km. away. It  
was indeed astonishing to realize that  
little cooperation between the Aurovil-  
ians had occurred the first eight years.  
Most people were busy attempting to  
achieve their current goals and remain-  
ing within their settlement. This seem-  
ed like an odd approach toward realiz-  
ing the new age city of the future. But,  
some of these people indeed were  
taking an orientation that it would all  
come together when and if necessary.

## THE CENTER

Generally, the people at the Center  
were more directed with the construc-  
tion and the gardens surrounding it.  
The Matrimandir is to be the focalizer  
for the spiritual energy which the  
Mother manifested around the whole  
concept of the Supramental. It is a  
symbol of a culture, as the pyramids in



Games at a women's camp, Fraternity, Auroville 1977. Photo by Rakhal, AuroImage.





Aurocreation. Aurovillian teaching a Tamil woman. Photo by Cliff Gibson.

Egypt. Watching it being built was more reminiscent of watching the latest high rise going up in San Francisco. One obvious difference was the techniques for construction which often were limited to the ways of rural third world existence. The Mother stated, "The Matrimandir will be the soul of Auroville. The sooner the soul is there, the better for everyone, especially for Aurovillians." (6) In 1976, after five years of work on the project, it appeared that it would be at least another five before the huge globe would be near completion. So, it was quite understandable why most people had other activities to accomplish.

The gardens seem to be a specially exciting activity with the collection of rare and endangered species of India, along with seed exchanges from many areas of the planet. All these are cultivated under good conditions, documentation is done and eventually all these varieties of plant life become part of the gardens that are to surround the Matrimandir, being divided into twelve sections with each featuring a particu-

lar color and linked to an aspect of consciousness. This project began 8½ years ago with a budget of \$20/month. It will continue indefinitely with a nursery supplying the 125 acre area with various trees and flowers throughout each season, once the garden is more firmly established.

#### THE GREEN BELT

Covering an area of 1.5 kilometers in width and surrounding the center is the Green Belt. Joss, from Australia and originator of the settlement called Pitchandikulam, discusses the view of what needs to be done now to maintain the landscape and thereby provide an inhabitable area for people to continue to live in the township.

"Soft rains have been blessing the land for the last three days, monsoon has arrived - everywhere a green carpet of peanuts and millet. The ponds are full, the frogs sing night long. We work hard planting young trees raised in Matrimandir Gardens, together with

cuttings and seeds we have collected from the few natural forests of the region. Much energy goes into protecting fields with natural borders of cactus and thorn, for protection is the crux of the problem in Auroville where the landscape now so lush turns dramatically into a desert after the crops are out in January. Then, the barren soil dries to the fine sand which blows in the dust storms of April and May. We have watched during the few years we have been here, the gullies becoming deeper and wider, as with every heavy rain soil washes into the Bay of Bengal, colouring it red for miles from the shore. Work on erosion control goes on, gully plugs, planting the beginning of runoffs with drought resistant shrubs and grasses, but it is inadequate with the enormity of the problem.

This golden circle which Mother has offered to humanity to concentrate energies has been devastated by man, the villager and the goats and cows has brought with him. As the district government forest officer stated in a recent meeting with a young organization leader and local government officials here, this particular place where we aspire to realize Her dream could well become uninhabitable within a short time if a consciousness does not develop to arrest the continuing destruction of the plant life.

Much knowledge has been assimilated, we know which trees are drought resistant, what plants are not eaten by the cattle and goats, how to protect fields effectively and harmoniously, what are the relationships between vegetable life. The Tamils begin to understand and respect the work although many problems arise, for we are still very much crazy people who plant flower trees instead of peanuts. The villagers are showing more interest in our strange activities. Quite often it is heard now that rain is good because we have planted trees, that trees call the clouds.

The knowledge is there, the direct action is there, so clear, so clear, yet the community struggles with its so-called new freedoms and responsibilities. This means to implement the work of the Green Belt, of setting the area firmly on the path of ecological balance, which has been lacking or nonexistent. What is needed more than anything is assured protection of what lands we have planted. We must be alert and vigilant to the forces that would prevent the vision from materializing."

#### THE MODEL

What is referred to as Auromod-









# reach



*Reach is a free reader service of Communities magazine. Ads should be 50-200 words in length and preferably typewritten. We reserve the right to edit. Dated material requires a minimum of 6 weeks lead time. Feedback on ad response is welcome, as are donations.*

## Conferences

### Northwest Women's Music Festival - July 7, 8, 9

The music festival will be in Portland, Oregon, at the Neighbors of Woodcraft building. For further information, contact: Carole Jackson, p.o. box 20472, Portland, OR 97220 phone listed in her name.

### Older Women's Network Workshop - July 12 - 16

Plans for this workshop include organizational work: establishing a structure of our OWN, working on future plans, writing and sending proposals for funding, putting together the next newsletter, as well as constructing a solar greenhouse on OWN's 60 acre farm/forrest land in southern Oregon. See GRAPEVINE, this issue. For further information write: Older Women's Network, 3502 Coyote Creek Rd., OR 97497

### Country Experience for Young Women July 16 - 30

This is a feminist camp for young women ages 7 to 14 held on woman-

owned land in Northern California. Self reliance and country skills are stressed. The women who plan and operate the camp full-time are all lesbians. Lesbians and women who define themselves as feminists do the workshops. The fee for the two weeks is on a sliding scale ranging between \$90 - \$150. Some scholarship funds are available. Donations are encouraged to support the scholarships. For further information write: Sage Mountainfire, 3100 Ridge-wood Rd., Willits, CA 95490

### Small Community Conference - July 28 - 30

(Community Service is a non-profit organization concerned with the small community as a basic social institution, involving organic units of educational, economic, and cultural development.)

"Building Community Where You Are" will be the theme of the annual Community Service conference. This will be a gathering of resource people from around the country who have been dedicated to serving their town and neighborhood communities in diverse ways - through business, the arts, community councils, intentional communities, food cooperatives, etc. The conference will be held in the Outdoor Education Center of Glen Helen forest. Write for more details: Community Service, Inc., P.O. Box 243, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387

## Groups Looking

Wanted: woman-loving-women to live communally in rural Virginia. This is an egalitarian community of 80 people dedicated to non-oppressive, non-violent, non-sexist, non-racist, non-puniting relationships between people and an ecological relationship to the earth. We have a strong work ethic and totally share income and assets. We work in our own rope hammock industry which provides 60 percent of our income. People also work in the following areas: farm & garden, auto machine shops, appliance repair, construction, plumbing & electrical, animals, food preparation and preservation, child care, magazine publication, office work, cleaning & laundry, as well as in the production of rope and hammocks and hammock chairs.

We are primarily a heterosexual community and the few of our woman-loving-women need more of the same. We are looking for people who appreciate the good in any person, who can live with men, and fit in with what's happening here. We like living here, but need more women energy keep us happy. If you'd like to arrange a 3 week visit to see if this may be you, write: Margaret, Twin Oaks Community, Louisa, VA 23093

Community, southeast Ohio, near university. 6 families. 5 acre homestead commons for cooperative farming, cottage industries. Appropriate Tech





... school planned. Especially seek  
... farming, hydroponics, or alternate  
... energy enthusiasts interested in joining  
... community which respects needs for  
... privacy as well as encourages coopera-  
... and offers opportunities for teach-  
... and cross area research in a  
... dynamic new learning center. For more  
... information contact: **Sunflower Farm,**  
... **Bruce Sabel, Rt. 1, Box 90,**  
... **Wesleyville, Ohio. 45711 [614] 448-3078**

Our group has space available. We  
... a group of people living together  
... with the idea of forming a community  
... based on the following: a common  
... spiritual focus - several of us have been  
... Findhorn and would like to go along  
... similar path - worshipping the oneness  
... all life, the god in everything, being  
... thankful and expressing it through  
... group attainments and rituals and in  
... everyday lives; an ecological life-  
... style - living more simply, lightly upon  
... earth. We garden, grow fruit,  
... chickens herbs, nursery plants and  
... tubs, put by all we can and cut our  
... own firewood. We work hard and love

We live on 34 acres of high mountain  
... with views of mountains  
... and valleys, yet close to Putney,  
... Middleboro and Bellows Falls jobs. We  
... occupy a huge old house that holds  
... (formally) 13 people in two groups, and  
... cottage for two or three. Rooms are  
... spacious, woodstoves and fireplaces - a  
... beautiful place that we want to keep/  
... like more so in thanks for the  
... wonderful gift it is. We try to be  
... singly supportive of and honest with  
... the another. We are mostly vegetar-  
... ian, becoming more so. We pay ap-  
... proximately \$85 a month rent - food  
... extra. We love children and folks of all  
... ages.

If you're interested, come talk some-  
... time... Call: **John, River, or Buzzard**  
... **4081 or write RD2 Box 224A,**  
... **Putney, VT 05346**

Stillpoint invites all those interested  
... to come and get involved in the  
... founding of a Taoist Village in Colorado.  
... We have 180 acres of virgin land  
... including forest meadows, streams, and  
... natural springs in the Wetmore Valley  
... bordering on the San Isabel National  
... Forest. Wetmore is 50 miles south of  
... Colorado Springs. The aim is a Taoist  
... "hundred Family Village". That is, a  
... village of many people: scholars, art-  
... ist-crafts-people, students, and her-  
... sages.  
... Teachers as well as students are  
... invited to join ongoing classes in

Tai-Chi, Shin-Yee, and Pa-Kwa, Nutri-  
... tion, Women's Studies, Organic Archi-  
... tecture, and Solar Energy at any time,  
... especially during the summer.

Stillpoint was founded by Chia-fu  
... Feng, a unique man imbued with the  
... Chinese classical culture, and a pioneer  
... in our contemporary New-Age move-  
... ment. At present he is working on a  
... translation of the **I-Ching** and **Tai-Chi,**  
... **Shin-Yee,** and **Pa-Kwa.** Chia-fu is not  
... only writing about the old Chinese way  
... of life; he represents it; he IS it.  
... Altogether he is a wandering, poetic,  
... paradoxical, and inscrutable Taoist  
... sage.

Stillpoint is concerned with the devel-  
... opment of the whole person by observ-  
... ing the processes of nature through  
... self-discovery. Write or call for more  
... information: **Stillpoint University, 616**  
... **Ruxton, Manitou Springs, CO, 80829**  
... **Tel. [303] 685-9990**

**Trans-Synthesis:** Intentional commun-  
... ity is the means: healthy humans is the  
... end... We are forming a community  
... based on two fundamental behavioral  
... mandates that have been grossly dis-  
... torted by contemporary societies,  
... namely, 1) Global or Ultimate Re-  
... sponse-ability and 2) Non-Attachment.  
... The 9 basic principles of the community  
... are a slightly modified version of those  
... developed by the experiences of the  
... Action/Analysis Movement in Europe  
... during the past 7 years: 1) Collective  
... living 2) Open relationships 3) Common  
... property 4) Common economy 5) Com-  
... mon spaces and nourishment 6) Collec-  
... tive children 7) Collective spontaneous  
... emotional expression 8) Collective con-  
... sciousness work and consciousness  
... spreading 9) Collective administration,  
... organization, and consciousness struc-  
... ture.

If this community sounds of interest  
... to you, we can provide you more  
... information: **T.S., P.O. Box 587, Santa**  
... **Cruz, CA 95061 Tel [408] 427-3959**

## Groups

## Forming

There are many excellent ideas  
... which have never been given a chance  
... to prove themselves. Many could be  
... included in the design of an intentional  
... community. Some examples: non-sexist  
... language, a positive attitude toward  
... death and dying, a money-less eco-

nomy, complete openness and honesty,  
... non-monogamous families, etc.

We would like to meet interested  
... people with whom we will negotiate to  
... see if we can agree on the plans for a  
... community. As we meet people, our  
... ranks and the design will become more  
... complete; if we find ourselves or our  
... ideas incompatible, then offshoot com-  
... munities may form which can still stay  
... in contact with each other.

We hope to begin a publication soon  
... to bring together the future co-habi-  
... tants of our Community of Excellence.

If you are interested, please write:  
... **Community of Excellence, P.O. Box**  
... **26211 Seattle, Wa. 98116**

We are a group of city dwellers  
... intending to create a country commu-  
... nity in northern California within a  
... year or so. We are committed to the  
... following principles:

1) Collective Work: simple living,  
... social change, right livelihood.

2) Personal Growth. We intend for  
... this group to provide the emotional  
... base that the traditional family has  
... aimed to provide.

3) Enjoyment of Children: We want  
... to provide an accepting and nurturing  
... community for children, free from  
... sexism and ageism.

4) Problem Solving by Consensus.

5) Full and Joyful living.

We have started a communal house  
... in Berkeley where we are gathering a  
... committed group. We feel that with a  
... clear, cohesive group, we can make a  
... more successful transition to the coun-  
... try. We need more people to join us.  
... There are openings in our house;  
... however, living here is not necessary  
... in order to move with us to the  
... country.

We realize these ideals will take a lot  
... of work to attain. We will have to keep  
... our perspective and sense of humor.

For further information please con-  
... tact:

**Ellen Brophy, 2840 Seminary, Oakland,**  
... **CA 94605 [415] 569-5276 or Jo-ann**  
... **Jaekel, 1716 Blake St., Berkeley, CA**  
... **95703 [415] 841-6500 x 328 - message**

I am trying to get together a self-  
... sufficient, anarchist, vegetarian com-  
... munity. We could start with a larger  
... community and develop stronger ties  
... and iron out social problems.

My vision of a self-sufficient com-  
... munity is one that produces that which  
... it consumes from renewable resources,  
... recycles its wastes, and is not connect-



ed to the political system of the country. I'd like there to be a supportive, open, tolerant, communicative atmosphere without any power structure, ideology, hierarchy or discrimination. I would like the people to be non-sexist, non-racist, environmentally aware, low level consumers, aware of their programming, high on energy and skills for self-sufficiency.

If you're interested, write Dave, P.O. Box 917, Amherst, MA 01002; or meet us at the Rainbow Festival in Oregon in early July. No Nukes, David

## People Looking

Vegetarian seeks to join or begin living collectively with other vegetarian women. Write: Sara, 120 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405

We are interested in creating a community in northern New England. We do not want to withdraw, rather we want to work actively for social change. We want to "live politically" and eat low on the food chain. We want to organize and halt the building of nuclear power plants, and cease our dependence on fossil fuels. We want to live ecologically and non-consumptively.

Our hope is that we can begin to find these things within ourselves and that with the support of a community of like-minded people, we can reach out to influence and teach others.

We want to live with others and share responsibilities and resources. We want communal responsibility for children, but not the negation of family. We want to educate ourselves and our children and have workshops as outreach. We'll need substantial land, including cleared farm land. We need people with a variety of skills, but sharing basically similar goals and lifestyle. If you are interested, please write soon, as a late-summer/early-fall meeting is planned in New England. Write: Joanie Hahn, Environmental Studies Center, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, OH 45387 or Helen Geltman, 720 Jacoby Rd., Apt. 1, Xenia, OH 45385

I'm 26 years old, have a BS degree in elementary education, and I'm interested in joining a cooperative community or school which is composed of people who really care about how their actions affect the world. I am a vegetarian who is fond of such things as alternative education, organic vegetable and herb gardening, beekeeping, and alternative energy.

I value many of the things that J. Krishnamurti talks about and I would like to communicate with a group of people who feel somewhat the same as I do.

It seems to me that the ways which most people live are basically a result of their education and that it is possible for a human being to not be part of a chain reaction. Tom Pietruszka, c/o J. Schopp, 6709 West 89 Ave., Crown Point, Ind. 46307

I am in search of a lay-midwife who would be willing to apprentice me in the art of midwifery. My interest in midwifery began when a friend had her baby at home with a midwife present. After a year of serious thought and reading, and having been personally active in the women's health care movement for two years, I came to the realization that I had to become a midwife.

Would like to move to the Washington-Oregon area, but am also willing to settle in the Virginia-West Virginia area. I'm into hearing from you folks even if you don't live in either area! Write: Ivy Brezina, Liathach, Co-op, 24 E. Johnson St., Madison, WI 53703

We are trying to sell our 170 acre farm in the fingerlakes area of N.Y. state. We are a communal group who have split in 5 different directions. We are asking \$350/acre including a 100 year old farmhouse (fair condition), 2 barns (concrete floors), a new goat shed, 2 fully insulated cabins, 2 ponds, etc. There is a \$24,000 assumable mortgage. For more information, contact: Mike Blum, Box 521, Alfred, N.Y. 14802 Tel. [607] 587-4081

We are in the process of selling a farm and would like the type of people who read *Communities* to buy it. Ours is 117 acres in Highwater, Quebec, near the U.S. border. It would be perfect for groups, community, or

several families. There are 2 hostels, commons building with 2 meeting rooms, kitchen, and dining facility and 8 small cabins. The rolling land has a view of mountains and a beautiful mountain stream. For more information, contact: M. Crampton, Marlowe Ave., Montreal, Quebec H4a 3L7, Tel [514] 488-4494 or 481

I'm eager to hear from land-based communities or people who want to form a community focused on collectively clearing and centering our lives, harmonious relationship with environment. I feel it's essential to balance collective being with individual time and space for the individual. For me, another key is regaining our sense of humor and play.

It will take strength and dedication to realize these possibilities without a charismatic leader or belief system. We of similar vision can do it by supporting our wish to be clear in the present and attuned - to ourselves, to each other, and to the life around us. Write: Elan Shapiro, 324 Myrtle St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060

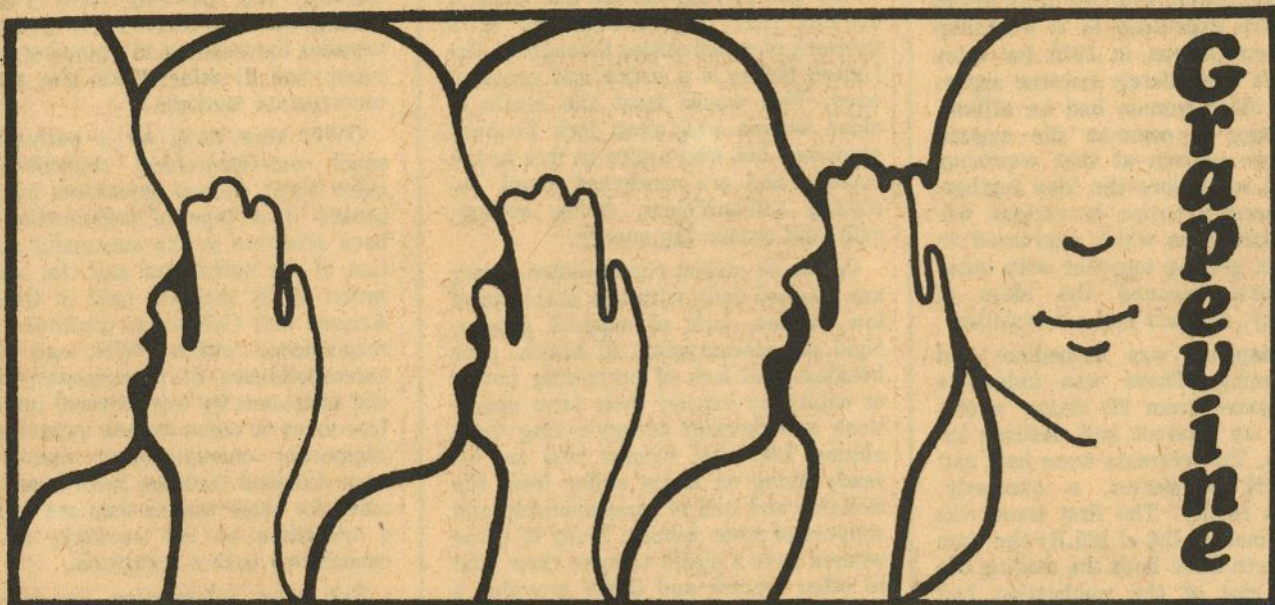
As a Christian who has lived in a Christian communal group over 20 years, I have been very interested in contacting other groups for possible fellowship. I am especially interested in groups in the state of Washington.

Write: James Sanderson, Jr., Prytania St., New Orleans, LA 70119

I am a Swiss guy (23) looking for an emotional community living a simple way of life in the country. I'm interested in gardening and farming and any other creative work, in music and dancing. I have started to practice massage and primal therapy to get closer to my feelings and energy. I would love to find people looking for the same. Write: Patrick Krauchi, Tone Kristiansen, 3530 Stoner Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90066

We are a 3 member family on 100 acres of land just over the border from Buffalo, N.Y. We would like to start a commune corresponding to our lifestyle: nudist-type community, organic gardening and farming.





*Publications*

Diana Press is both a feminist publishing house and a women's printshop. They typeset, print, and bind both their own books and books for other women, women's groups, and feminist publishers. In March '77 Diana Press celebrated its fifth anniversary by moving from Baltimore to Oakland. There they merged with the Oakland Women's Press Collective.

Diana works on the premise that if women are serious about changing the world order, they must learn to produce what they need. Otherwise the revolution will be based on forcing others to do what they themselves do not, or will not do. Learning how to print and bind books has been a slow process; they haven't printed as many books as quickly as they would have liked. But they have built a solid base of skills and equipment that will be a resource to the women's movement for years to come. Every year they increase their capability in both size and

number of books by getting better at what they're doing and by buying more efficient machinery.

Diana sees itself as part of the growing women's communications network of periodicals, presses, and bookstores. They are distinguished from the male commercial press by choosing books according to women's needs - not profits. Although committed to remaining financially viable and independent (they do not accept funding), they are also committed to producing books that speak to the real needs of women, not to male-assessed market potential. Diana Press is distinguished from the literary/leftist small press movement by a commitment to growth and self-support. They do not see themselves publishing books for a minority with advanced taste or consciousness. The press is not a hobby or avocation; they hope to drive the establishment presses out of business, not pressure them into doing more women's books.

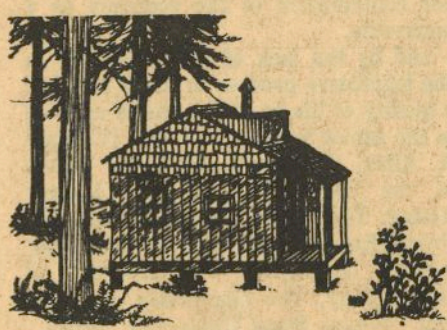
In October '77 someone tried to destroy Diana Press. Every phase of the operation was crippled by vandalism. 5000 copies of the biggest seller were soaked with chemicals - page by page. Ink and paint were dumped on other books. Ink, paint, and abrasive cleanser were poured into presses and typesetting machines. Photo-plates were destroyed - negatives too. Every page of every paste-up book was ripped through. The fall line and the back list were effectively destroyed. Less than half the \$100,000 damages will be repaid by insurance.

The vandalism was aimed at financial

ruin. The destruction of the presses made it impossible to do any commercial printing; the destruction of the fall line and the back list made it impossible to make any money from publishing. Both sources of income were cut off. But Diana Press refuses to go under.

A great deal of support has been received from the women's community. Large and small donations have been received. Benefits have been held. Books have been ordered. (After 5 months, they have recovered to the point they were at before the attack, though it will take years to absorb the financial loss.)

If women writers and women readers support the feminist presses, Diana can continue to publish books for women's needs. For a book order list, more information, or to send a donation, write: Diana Press Publications, Inc., 4400 Market St., Oakland, CA 94608





**Older Women's Network** is a non-profit organization evolving from needs which were expressed at a workshop in southern Oregon in 1975 for older women. It immediately became apparent that older women had an affinity and sharing of common life experiences. Two women at that workshop set about to explore the idea further. They placed a notice in various women's publications which expressed an interest in getting together with other older women around the ideas of community, retreats and a newsletter.

The response was immediate and overwhelming. There was indeed a need. Women from 29 states wrote, revealing an interest and desiring information. Two retreats were held and *Our OWN* newsletter, a quarterly, became a reality. The first issue was sent to a mailing list of 125. By the time of the fourth issue both the mailing list and the size of the publication had doubled. Since no subscription price was set for the newsletter, donations were requested. This was decided upon because of the wide range of financial capabilities of older women. Donations have ranged from a few postage stamps to \$25. Income derived from the retreats supplemented the donations.

One of the discussions at the retreats that inspired the greatest enthusiasm was the idea of establishing a community for older women. Clearly this idea seemed the most pressing need in the minds of many participants.

Speaking categorically, the financial fortunes of the older women today are affected greatly:

- by international economic forces of the devalued dollar and inflation,
- by a socialization which led her to believe a husband would provide everlasting security,
- by the necessity for the two-income family,
- by her lack of experience, opportunity, and equal pay in the labor market,
- by overt and covert discrimination which denied her training and upward mobility to better paying positions,
- by the failure of society to recognize her contribution to the economy as a housewife,
- and by the lack of farsightedness in the legislative process to make possible a quality of life to which she is entitled in the senior years of her life. (Virginia R. Allan, "Economic and Legal Status of the Older Woman," *No Longer Young: The Older Woman in America*. Proceedings of the 26th Annual Conference on Aging, The Institute of Gerontology, The University of Michigan - Wayne State University, 1975.)

Experience with the newsletter, retreats and correspondence has made it obvious that the development of a network of communities throughout the United States is a major and pressing need. This would meet the needs of older women who often lack financial resources but who aspire to live in the country and are concerned about becoming self-sufficient, living ecologically and conserving energy.

Of the 34 million rural women, many are plagued daily with the problems of low income, lack of support groups, rigid sex stereotyping, ill health, poor housing, and lack of borrowing power or capital to expand their farm operations and develop energy-saving techniques. Likewise, women who are already living on farms suffer from the isolation and lack of companionship and support of other women. Many of these women have a desire to open their land to other women and OWN provides a method for seeking out like-minded women.

The OWN community, in addition to providing a remedy for social isolation, could provide economic security, health care in the event of illness in old age, and the possibility of meaningful work through the development of cottage industries or farming. It alleviates the fears that many women face of being "warehoused" in convalescent homes in their final years.

The establishment and construction of a model community which provides for the unique needs of older women has become the short term goal of OWN. The long range view is to see the establishment of similar communities across the country. The focus of OWN has been from the beginning on rural women, or women who aspire to live in the country.

At present OWN has 60 rural acres of farm and forest land in southern Oregon. This land has a potential for growing food both for self-sufficiency and income. A blueprint of the proposed total community and specific dwelling plans have been drawn up by two women architects and builders who have been hired for this purpose and future needs as they arise. This project will fulfill OWN's short term goal of providing good jobs, good housing, employment and an emotionally supportive system for older women and provide the research and development needed to fulfill OWN's long term goal of a network of similar communities throughout the United States.

Funds are needed to provide 1) salaries for the older women who will coordinate the establishment and construction of the communities; 2) field

workers to seek out older women needing and desiring such support throughout the country; 3) necessary supplies for building the housing structures; and 4) salaries for the women construction workers.

OWN sees itself as a network of small non-hierarchical collectives of older rural women governed by consensus. This type of organization has been effective in the successful operation of the newsletter and the organization of six retreats held in Oregon, Arizona and California; continued correspondence within OWN, and inter-correspondence of participants; financial assistance by way of small interest free loans to older women experiencing temporary unemployment and/or illness. Limited facilities have been provided for older women who are making a transition to the country, or are considering such a transition.

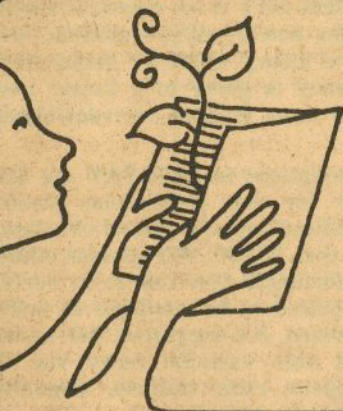
For more information, or to subscribe to the newsletter, write *Older Women's Network*, 3502 Coyote Creek Rd., Wolf Creek, OR 97497

*Sister* is a monthly journal of feminist ideas, opinion, news, and analysis. Each 16 page issue includes news shorts, several book and film reviews, a calendar of events in the New Haven area, and feature articles. Topics addressed have included the following: gay/straight dialogue, reproductive freedom, child care, child raising, work outside the home, mental health, credit unions, rape, fat liberation, sports, and more. *Sister* is a chronicler of women's movement and feminist institutions.

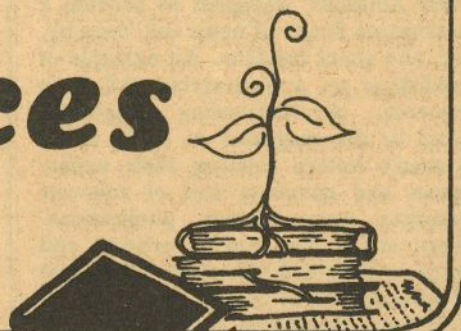
*Sister* is published by a volunteer staff and survives on subscription donations, and advertising income. They are now independent of the Women's Center which used to fund them. Subscriptions are only \$4/year or \$7/2 years. Foster Mother sustaining subscriptions are \$15. Write *Sister*, 250 Howard Ave., New Haven, CT 06519







# resources



this special women's issue of *Communities*, "Resources" is focused on women's publications, films, music, and organizations. Some of the listings are usually long for this column, but it seemed important to print the reasons, the political ideology that gave birth to and sustains these women's groups. By means an exhaustive directory, this column samples the work of women struggling to create alternatives and realize long-needed changes.

--Margaret

## Publications

*Mothering* is a 2 year old publication directed toward families seeking alternative advice concerning natural childbirth, family health, pregnancy, midwifery, breast feeding, alternative education and the various stages of childhood development. Seven quarterly volumes have been published; the first are sold out. Important information for any child care person, like the how and why of homemade baby food, and how to recognize poisonous plants, are presented along with child-focused experience sharing articles by mothers. Each issue includes a section on ethnic customs, several poems, lots of sketch-and photographs. Resources, home-made articles, and advertisements for baby products comprise the balance of the hundred-page magazine. *Mothering* is a natural/self-sufficiency, non-traditional slant on a very basic and additional role. It provides a source of support to women in alternative cultures who have chosen to be mothers. Subscriptions are \$8/year/4 volumes. Write: **Mothering Publications, Inc.**, P.O. Box 3046, Albuquerque, N.M. 87103

*New Women's Times* is a monthly feminist newspaper published in Rochester, NY, the hometown of Susan B. Anthony. The paper is operated by an all-volunteer collective. It was founded in 1974 by Maxine Sobel.

Each month, the *New Women's Times* features such issues as prostitution, abortion, battering, marriage, and the arts, all from a feminist point of view. Articles on health and herstory are regular features. In addition, the paper carries local and national news, editorials, letters from its readers and a calendar of events.

The *Guide to Women's Publishing* (1978) says of the *New Women's Times* that it "contains everything one looks for in a feminist newspaper", and *The New Women's Survival Sourcebook* (1975) calls it "a feminist newspaper that Susan B. Anthony would have been proud of."

Subscriptions to *New Women's Times* are \$5 for one year, \$9 for two years. Institutional subscriptions requiring billing are \$10 per year. **New Women's Times, 1357 Monroe Avenue, Rochester, New York 14618**

*The following resource is taken from the winter '78 issue of C/O Journal of Alternative Human Services. C/O is published quarterly by the Community Congress of San Diego, 1172 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92110 Subs. \$8/4 issues/year.*

**Women's Action Alliance** is a national, nonprofit organization which serves as a clearinghouse for women's resources and information. Its goal is to help women work together across organizational, cultural and economic boundaries to combat sexism and sex discrimination.

Their publications include: *Women's Agency*, a monthly resource publication concerned with current activities in the areas of politics, employment, education, health care, and a book on women workers entitled *The Forgotten Five Million: Women in Public Employment*.

The Alliance also sponsors Project SHARE which offers information and referral, technical assistance, and the Nonsexist Child Development Project.

For more information contact: **Women's Action Alliance, Inc., 370 Lexington Ave., NY, NY 10017**

*Spiritual Midwifery* by Ina May Gaskin is a "spiritual book, and at the same time a revolutionary book. It is spiritual because it is concerned with the sacrament of birth -- the passage of a new soul into this plane of existence. The knowledge that each and every childbirth is a spiritual experience has been forgotten by too many people in the world today, especially in countries with high levels of technology. This book is revolutionary because it is our basic belief that the sacrament of birth belongs to the people and that it should not be usurped by a profit-centered hospital system."

The 480 page book includes complete technical information and illustrations. In it is shared the knowledge and experience of The Farm's midwives. The Farm is a community of 1000 people united by the teachings of Steven Gaskin. Copies of *Spiritual Midwifery* are available from The Book Publishing Company, 156 Brakes Lane, Summertown, TN 38483. Postpaid single copies: \$8.50 paper, \$12.50 cloth. Inquire for reduced price for 2 or more copies.



*The following three women's resources were taken from Lesbian Connection, May '78.*

**LC** is a monthly publication of **Ambitious Amazons**, designed to provide a nationwide forum of news and ideas by, for, and about lesbians. An example of publishing on a shoe-string, **LC** is a low-cost, personal-feeling magazine. Most of the magazine is made up of women's letters relating their experiences and opinions, and of relevant excerpts from various publications. There are a few how-to articles and some reviews and resources. **LC** is free to lesbians and is totally dependent on donations. Suggested subscription rate is \$8/year (more if you can and less if you can't.) Write: **Ambitious Amazons**, P.O. Box 811, East Lansing, MI 48823

**Our Right to Love: A lesbian Resource Book**, produced in cooperation with women of the National Gay Task Force, edited by NGTF Media Director Ginny Vida, Prentice-Hall, publishers. Now available from NGTF 80 5th Ave., NYC, NY 10011. Hardcover \$11.95 (discount price includes postage, handling, and tax) 320 pages, over 80 photos, more than 40 articles and personal testimonies on subjects of interest to lesbians.

**National Communication Network Newsletter**: for those working to end physical abuse of women. Subs. \$6/year. For information write: **Joan Valenti**, 565 Portland Ave., ST. Paul, MN 55102 (Checks payable to NCN)

**MAW** is a bimonthly **Magazine of Appalachian Women**. On one level, it's a beautifully-done literary magazine; it features drawings, poems, fiction, and photographs by women. On another level, its reality and value is in the sharing of life experience by Appalachian women. Recent issues included articles about the new homesteaders, home birth, the threatened closing of Antioch/Appalachian College, the bounties of retirement, the loss of a child, and the relationship of one woman to her mother and how it changed over time. The magazine is more cultural than political. It focuses on life experience and it values strength through cultural heritage, rather than any feminist ideology.

This unusual and excellent magazine is published by **Appalachian Women, Inc.**, a new (est. summer '77) non-profit corporation. **AWI** provides an outlet for women's creative work and for the interchange of ideas, and fosters the spirit of cooperation and support a-

mong Appalachian women. In addition to publishing **MAW**, **AWI** has a workshop program, and is considering making films, putting together a photo-essay book, and purchasing land for holding workshops, seminars, arts and crafts festivals, retreats, and homesteading. Funding is necessary for all these projects. Appalachian women are encouraged to become involved with **AWI**; all are invited to subscribe to **MAW**.

Subscriptions to **MAW** are \$5/year. Libraries and institutions: \$10. Single copy: \$1. Write: **Appalachian Women, Inc.**, 745 7th St., Huntington, W. Va. 25701

**The Feminary** is a local feminist journal by the Whole Woman Press Collective of Durham, N.C. Unfortunately there was only a single issue available for this review.

The issue is the first thematic issue, the focus -- "Lesbian Community". The 64 page magazine included a stimulating variety of articles: a theoretical piece on subculture versus community and the influence of monogamy on community; a critical review of a women's music festival; a personal recounting of male violence toward women, especially lesbians, and how the fear of that works to divide women; a history of the local women's communities, a number of personal stories by women, and an article on separatist versus mush/humanist perspectives of sexism, as well as drawings, photographs, and poetry. All of the articles by the many women authors fit the **Feminary's** editorial imperative that material not be racist, sexist, heterosexist, or in any way exploitative of women. Subscriptions: \$5/year for individuals, \$10 for institutions. Write: **Feminary**, P.O. Box 954, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

**Her Say** is a year-old **Womens News Service**. It is published by a collective on their off hours from full time jobs. The 4 - 5 page weekly presents coverage of women's news that is often ignored, overlooked, or misinterpreted by major media. A recent issue included articles about J.P. Stevens boycott, NOW criticism of the L.A. Rams' all-female cheering section policy, a Senate bill to establish funds for employment training and childcare to "displaced homemakers", about Elaine Noble running for the Senate and much

more. Articles sometimes have telephone resource #'s for more information. **HER SAY** is an essential supplement for newsreading feminists; compared to money spent for major media the money is going to a better place and the news is more relevant/significant.

Subscriptions to **HER SAY** are \$5/quarter for non commercial stations and publications with a total circulation of less than 20,000. \$30/quarter otherwise. It's unfortunate that this news service is not priced to be available to individual women. It's suggested that women request this valuable news via radio, newspapers, radio stations, magazines they already support.

**HER SAY** is distributed by **Zod News Service**, a 5-year-old national radio news service. Subs, **WRIT HER SAY 950 Howard St., San Francisco, CA 94103.**

**Off Our Backs** is a women's news journal published 10 - 12 times a year. 30 pages of newsprint includes international and national news, feature articles, political commentary, letters and poetry. Subs. \$6/year OOB 1720th St. NW, Wash., D.C. 20009

**Country Women** is a feminist counterculture survival manual and a creative journal. Each 64-page issue (5 per year) centers on a different theme. A sampling from the past few years: **Work & Money**, **Homesteading**, **Living Alternatives**, **Animals, Women & Land**, **Mental Health**, **Physical Health**, **Spirituality**, and **Learning**: Numerous 2 & 3-page pieces address the theme. While all articles retain personality, one may share a woman's reflections on her celibacy while another informs how to hang a door. Poems and drawings and photographs are included, as is a regular contact column, and occasional book reviews. A new women's collective is formed for each issue, while another on-going collective provides the continuity necessary to publish a magazine. Subs. \$7/yr/5 issues. Write: **Country Women**, Box 208, Albion, CA 95410

**Sibyl-Child**: A women's arts and culture journal and an alternative press. Our goal is to present the reality of women's participation in all the arts and to explore the variety of women's experience. We feature poetry, feminist criticism, graphics, photography, painting, drama, book, film and record reviews. 3 issue subscription \$8; \$1 for libraries. Write: **Sibyl-Child**, P.O. Box 1773, Hyattsville, MD 20788



Women & Literature Collective presents the revised and expanded edition of **Women and Literature: Annotated Bibliography**. This is a feminist guide to fiction and personal narrative by and about women. The 800 titles reviewed include Black writers, labor movement women, ancient Japanese classics, and feminist science fiction. This edition features an expanded international section, along with literary criticism and author and subject indexes. Single copies: \$3.50 plus \$.30 postage. Bookstore and teaching discounts available from 20-40 percent. For more information, or to order, write: **Women & Literature, Box 441, Cambridge, MA 02138**

**Seven Days** is a bi-weekly current-events publication of the Institute for Women Communications, Inc., a not-for-profit tax exempt, educational organization. A recent issue of **Seven Days** (May 5, '78, Vol. II, no. 7) contained a special section of Women's Health. Featured there were 1 & 2 page articles on the recent firebombings of abortion clinics across the nation, the epidemic of cesareans, the advertisement of a new over-the-counter, but untested contraceptive, and the Nestle antacid and boycott. Two women's books were also reviewed. All the articles were written by women. Subscriptions: \$15 issues/year. Write: **Seven Days, 155 5th Ave., NY, NY 10010**

The following resource was listed in **Country Women**

**Father Journal, Five Years of Awakening to Fatherhood**, by David Finberg. **Father Journal** is included partly in hopes of reaching fathers of the children whose mothers read **Country Women**. It's a small book (96 pages), deceptively simple from the outside. Inside is a deeply moving chronicle of a man learning to parent, as the full-time homemaker during the 5 years the book covers. David's insights into life with an infant and the changes and fears that come with it, should be as meaningful to women as to men. His reflections on the changes brought by either parent working full-time outside the home, provide a frightening picture of "normal" family and work patterns, in the home shared and paid by both child and parents. **Father Journal** is a warm, personal, and honest record of a relationship too often minimized or ignored; it's hopeful to

look at the possible. (Times Change Press, c/o Monthly Review, 62 W. 14th St., NYC, NY 10011. \$2.75 Minimum order is \$4.00, so write Times Change Press, Albion, CA 95410 for a free catalogue of their other publications.)

## More Media

# THE FEMINIST PRESS

The Feminist Press was founded in 1970 by a small group of feminists determined to restore the literary heritage of women to the classroom and to create for children a new kind of literature, free of damaging sexual stereotypes. Toward that end, they formed a non-profit educational corporation and went to work.

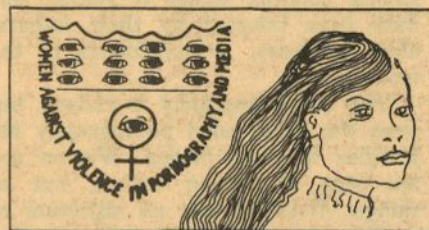
To a very great extent, the work, process, structure, and philosophy at the Press are directly related to the kinds of products produced. Because of commitment to creating an alternative workplace, one in which all aspects of work are valued equally, everyone at the Press earns the same salary. The concept is based on recognizing the importance of all types of skills. It is also a reflection of the desire to work within a democratic, nonhierarchical structure, in which creative opportunity and responsibility are equally shared.

One way in which opportunity and responsibility are shared is through the decision making process. Each staff member is also a member of the Board of Directors, the ultimate decision making body of the Feminist Press. Everyone has a single, equal vote, and the majority rules. The structural foundation of the organization is a system of work committees, two of which everyone is a member. Two committees, personnel and finance, are central to work life and have rotating membership. Chairing and minute taking jobs are rotated among committee members.

From the description of the work structure, it may sound as if the Press is continually at meetings, and they admit it sometimes seems as if that were so. Sometimes the commitment to an alternative workplace is at odds with an equal desire for greater efficiency and productivity, thereby creat-

ing unavoidable frustrations. But the satisfactions and joys are also unavoidable. There is determination to confront work and problems with honesty, sensitivity, and fairness. To create a workplace in which people have control over their work, in which each has a hand in creating systems, policies, and projects; in which power and responsibility are distributed among all. Although this is time consuming, it is believed worthwhile.

In addition to publishing the Feminist Press teaches in-service courses and workshops, provides speakers, and guides people to information on non-sexist education and women's studies. For more information and a book list, contact: **The Feminist Press, Box 334, Old Westbury, N.Y. 11568**



**Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media** is a group of 35 Bay Area women who are meeting because of a shared common concern about the alarming increase in violent crimes against women. The primary focus is the image of women in media, especially pornography. The goal is to put an end to all portrayals of women being bound, raped, tortured, mutilated, abused, or degraded in any way for sexual or erotic stimulation. Increased public awareness about the relationships between images in media and real-life behavior will create a public climate in which media violence toward women is no longer accepted or tolerated.

WAVPM newsletter interprets and explores the media's current trends. The following is excerpted from the April newsletter:

"In sheer numbers, newsstand pornographic publications have increased from 0 in 1953 to over 30 in the last five years. We see this proliferation of pornography, particularly violent pornography and child pornography, as part of the male backlash to the women's liberation movement. Enough women have been rejecting the traditional role of subordination to men to cause a crisis in the collective male ego.

"When the media talks, it always labels it "S/M" (sado/masochism). But



it is not S/M - it's just sadism because it's commercial and it is being foisted on us. By labeling it S/M, the media makers cleverly take the onus off themselves and make it into a mutual agreement. But we have no say in what is coming out.

"We have found that saturation with straight-forward female sex stimulus leads to the need for, and acceptance for things such as child molestation, incest, and sexual violence. Our media has moved very rapidly toward pedophilia. Getting readers used to the forbidden is subtle. Women are already the victims of male sexual violence. The acceptance of child molestation and incest requires a blurring of the age distinctions between mature women, teens, and children. In real-life, adolescents have been the primary targets of sexual abuse, but there is a recent sharp increase in oral venereal disease among children under 5 years, who have been infected by their fathers, older brothers, or boyfriends of the mother.

"Not all pornography is violent, but even the most banal pornography objectifies women's bodies. Women are not seen as human beings, but as things. WAVPM has no objection to explicit sex nor depictions of nudity per se. Movies put out by the National Sex Forum, for example, use explicit sex to educate. Pornography is not made to educate but to sell, and for the most part, what sells in a sexist society is a bunch of lies about sex and women. When not portrayed as happily masochistic victims, women are portrayed as turned on and sexually satisfied by doing everything and anything that men order them to do. Contrary to what we know about female sexuality, this is almost totally penis-oriented, often devoid of foreplay, tenderness, or caring, to say nothing of love and romance. In short, pornographic movies, pictures, and stories are a celebration of male power over women and the sexist wish that women's sexuality and values be totally subservient to men's.

The work of WAVPM is in organization and education. They train women to work against media violence to women, present slideshows (fees on a sliding scale), and publish a monthly *Newspage*. Subscription/membership fee is \$5/year.

**Olivia Records Collective** is the largest producer and distributor of women's records. They started from scratch in 1972, not knowing what they were

doing. Going on their own commitment, with technical assistance and financial help from other women, they've survived and are optimistic about the potential of women's business. Record artists are Meg Christian, Chris Williamson, Pat Parker, and Judy Grahn, Lori Holmes, Teresa Trull, and Linda Tillery. Major performers on one album serve as back-up in another.

Olivia sees its work in concert production and distribution as outreach work because "Women will listen to records and come to concerts when they don't read books or go to lectures. It's less scary." One method of distribution Olivia uses is through local reps who work on commission. Distributors and the collective share trust that comes of dialogue.

For more information contact **Olivia Records, Box 70237, Dept. L, Los Angeles, CA 90070, [213] 389-4243** (info. from Ms. Dec. '77)

**Woman-made Music** is a radio program featuring music written and performed by women, as well as interviews with some of the foremost women musicians. Woman-Made Music can be heard Sat. evening at 8:00 on WHA and on stations of the Wisconsin Educational Radio Network. The program, conceived by Vicki Nonn and Becca Pullian, features artists of several musical traditions -- folk, blues, jazz, opera, gospel, and the new feminist music. Nonn and Pullian are careful not to restrict the program to contemporary women's music because their subject has a much longer history and includes a wider range of musical and lyrical styles. In addition to performances by women musicians, Woman-Made Music consists of interviews with the guests. Interviews range from those with more experienced musicians who give a sense of personal history and musical influences on their styles, to interviews with younger, outspoken feminist musicians who have consciousness, but not experience.

(Information from **OCOOCH Mt. News, March '78, Vol. IV, No. 3**)

"Ain't Nobody's Business" is a 54 minute, color 16 mm documentary film on female prostitution featuring scenes with six different prostitutes, a male member of the vice squad, and Margo St. James, plus footage from the First World Meeting of Prostitutes. Filmed in the homes of prostitutes by the all-woman crew of director Sally

Barret-Page's Mountain Moving Picture Company, "ANB" was made possible by grants from the American Film Institute and the Stinking Creek (TN) Celebration. Cinematographer Ellen Grant. Rental: \$75, five weeks advance. Sale: \$450 Previews: Write: **Mountain Moving Picture Box 1952, Evergreen, Co 80439**

*Like a Rose* is an award-winning documentary about the lonely frustrating existence of two women serving 25-year sentences in the Missouri State Penitentiary. It was produced by **Tomato Productions**, a making company which aims to make films for, by, about, and starring women. Rental for the film is \$250. Please order 5 weeks in advance list an alternate date. Sale price \$250. Order from **Tomato Productions Box 1925, Evergreen, Col. 80439**

**Women in Distribution** is a nationwide wholesale distributor of books by women. The company was formed in 1972 when there were no wholesale distributors actively promoting and distributing books by women. Cynthia Gail Helaine Harris, who started the company with another person, had been active for years in the women's movement and in women's publishing and recording. After 6 months of research and \$1200 investment, the first catalogue was printed. Most of the original 29 titles are still carried today along with 500 other books and recordings by women. **WIND** is slowly reaching its goal of distributing every book by a woman which is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-racist, while supporting the women who work at that distribution business.

Catalogues are free to institutions such as bookstores, libraries, etc. **WIND** needs to charge \$2 to cover the expense of sending catalogues to individuals. Write: **Women in Distribution P.O. Box 8858, Wash., D.C. 20003 [202] 526-7400**

**Music Inside/Out - Oakland** is a nationwide ethnic group of women committed to bringing music to women inside prisons. A sister organization, **Music Inside/Out - Los Angeles** has been doing this for several years. Their concerts have been brought into the federal correctional institution



asanton since November: Baba  
a, a seven women band from  
land, Or., presented an evening of  
n, funk, and jazz; Linda "Tui"  
ery's band of seven women musi-  
s focused on the struggles of Black  
men; and Jerene Jackson's Big Band  
16 swing/jazz women musicians  
e received warmly.

leasanton women have responded  
n high, positive energy, connecting  
each other and to the music. The  
ic Inside/Out Project will continue  
bring in concerts. Women inside  
e also requested more participatory  
ic like jam sessions, music work-  
ps, etc. Donations of instruments  
needed to make this happen. Also  
ded are the following: sound equip-  
at, all music related items such as  
ords, tapes, sheet music, song  
ks, etc. Any donations of instru-  
ats or money will be welcome and  
tax deductible. Contact: Music  
de/Out, c/o 588 58th St., Oakland,  
94609

**Chicago Maternity Center Story** is  
0 minute, 16 mm, black and white  
umentary of the struggle to retain a  
-cost, preventative care, home birth  
ith service. A concrete historical  
lysis shows why modern medicine  
ects the Center's approach in favor  
high-cost, hospital based care. The  
ck, Latina, and White mothers who  
and need the Center tell why it's  
th fighting for and vocally confront  
Board of Directors. The film is  
lable from Kartemquin/Haymarket  
ns, P.O. Box 1655, Evanston, IL  
] 869-0602 Rental: \$75 for hospitals  
universities; \$60 for high schools  
churches; \$40 for community  
ps. Sale: \$400

**Moonforce Media** is a Washington,  
-based, non-profit, feminist enter-  
e founded to promote, distribute,  
produce films by and about wo-  
n. Moonforce strives to create a  
ng, self-sustaining feminist media  
making the products of media  
kers available to wider and wider  
ences and by encouraging people to  
ort media which reflect their own  
lysis of society and desire for  
ge.

ne of Moonforce's main projects is  
National Women's Film Circuit, a  
onwide series of showings of out-  
ding 16mm feminist films. Proceeds  
divided equally among filmmakers,  
l producers, and Moonforce. Di-  
e dramas, documentaries, anima-

tions, and experimental styles are  
available. Contact: Moonforce Media,  
P.O. Box 2934, Main City Station,  
Washington, D.C. 20013.

## Resource Organizations

*The following resource is taken from a recent issue of The Peacemaker. [April 17, '78] The Peacemaker is published by the Peacemaker Movement, P.O. Box 4793, Arcata, CA 95521 and is dedicated to non-violence and the transformation of society through the transformation of people. [See Communities #29 and "Resources" in #30] Subs. \$5/12 issues/year.*

**The Women's Task Force of the Mobilization for Survival** is trying to put together an analysis of the nuclear threat from a feminist perspective. We want to share with you some of the ideas which we have begun to develop and we invite you to respond with ideas and resources which could contribute to this particular analysis.

Feminists have shown how patriarchal attitudes have oppressed women in family, work, education, church, social and cultural situations. They have shown how the male objectification of woman as "other" is played out in classicism, racism and political policies which rape the land, exploit its resources and risk the very life of humanity through war.

The development of nuclear weapons, nuclear reactors, the rampant, arms race and the staggering reality of unmet human needs betray a set of values which feminists have identified with a patriarchal mind-set: hierarchy, secrecy, maximization of profits, competition, alienation from self, others and nature. These values stand opposed to those which inform feminism: community, cooperation, integration of the personal and political, harmony with self, others and nature.

The Women's Task Force wants to work with feminist groups in the struggle to end the ultimate macho which faces us today. Contact: Judy Freiwirth, Barbara Zanotti, MfS, 13 Sellers St., Cambridge, Mass.

**Rural American Women** is an information and support facility to help local women improve their own communities and meet their own needs. Its stance is feminist. A late-winter leadership conference, a first, convened in Washington, D.C. to identify goals and pass resolutions which will be actively lobbied for in Congress. RAW is drawing attention to the injustice of their second class citizenship. RAW assists and encourages the establishment of health clinics, transportation, unions, cooperatives, and other organizations that will help meet the needs of rural women. For information and membership, contact: Rural American Women, 1522 K ST., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005

(info. from Our Own, newsletter of the Older Women's Network, Vol II, No. 1 See Grapevine, this issue)

The following resources for boycott information appeared in the Jan/Feb '78 issue of **The Workbook**, a fully indexed monthly catalogue of resources of information about environmental, social, and consumer problems. **The Workbook** is published by the Southwest Research and Information Center, P.O. Box 4524, Albuquerque, N.M. 87106. Subscriptions: \$10/9 issues.

### J.P. Stevens Boycott

J.P. Stevens is the second largest textile company in the U.S. Workers there have tried through the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) to obtain higher wages (now 31 percent lower than national manufacturing average) and to improve health and safety benefits. Cotton dust levels in plants are at different times 3 to 30 times higher than federal standards. Brown lung disables thousands. Racial and sexual discrimination is a major issue for the 44,000 workers (23 percent Black, 42 percent women). J.P. Stevens has refused to negotiate with the union or respond to citations by the National Labor Relations Board. Hoping to levy economic pressure to force the company to deal with worker demands, the ACTWU has organized a boycott. For more information contact: ACTWU, 15 Union Square, N.Y., N.Y. 10003.

*J.P. Stevens name does not appear on their products, but the following names do: Sheets & pillowcases - Beauti-Blend, Beauticale, Fine Arts, Peanuts [comic strip figures], Taste-maker, Utica, Utica & Mohawk; Designer Labels: Yves St. Laurent,*



Angelo Donghia; Towels - Fine Arts, Tastemaker, Utica; Blankets - forstmann, Utica. Table Linen - Simtex. Carpets - Contender, Gulistan, Merryweather, Tastemaker. Hosiery - Big Mama, Finesse, Hip-Lets, Spirit.



The Illinois Women's Agenda, a two and a half year old project of the Mid West Women's Center, is a state coalition of women's organizations providing information, support, and joint actions to its members. IWA is governed by a steering committee of representatives of issue and geographic coalitions. IWA publishes a monthly newsletter and calendar of events. Subscription \$6/10 issues/year for individuals, \$9 for organizations. The April newsletter contained a substantial directory to Illinois feminist bookstores and libraries, along with legislative news, including the following:

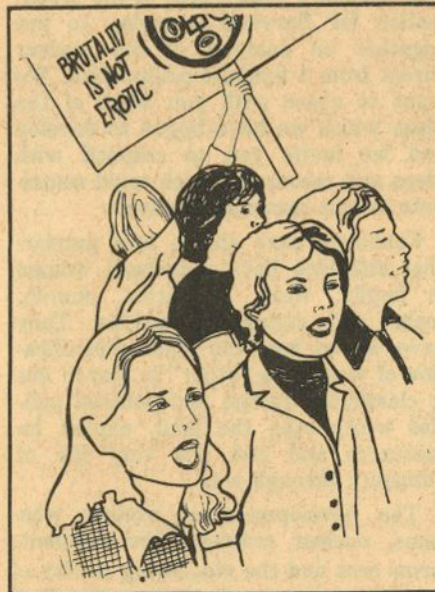
"The U.S. Congress is now considering the Pregnancy Disability Act (H.B. 6075). The bill, if passed, will prevent discrimination on the basis of pregnancy by providing that "women affected by pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions shall be treated the same for all employment purposes" including dependents benefits, hiring and firing practices and seniority and wage computation. Important in the debate on this bill is the definition of the terms "pregnancy", "childbirth", and "related medical conditions". The Senate narrowly defeated amendments which would have excluded abortion from these terms, thus allowing widespread discrimination against women undergoing abortion. Attempts will be made to attach similar amendments to the bill during consideration by the U.S. House of Representatives. Persons or groups seeking up-to-date information about this bill can write or call Phyllis Tholin [Coordinator, Illinois Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, 824 Ridge

Terrace. Evanston, 60201; 312/866-7224 Your support of the unamended bill is encouraged."

**Women Against Violence Against Women** is an activist organization working to stop the gratuitous use of images of physical and sexual violence against women in the mass media - and the real-world violence against women it promotes - through public education, consciousness-raising, and mass consumer action.

Media violence against women perpetrates the myth that women are victims, naturally and happily masochistic. It contributes to an atmosphere which trivializes, condones, and encourages acts of violence (such as rape and battering) against women. It breeds discrimination, dehumanization, and the abuse of women. In these and other ways it interferes with the rights and safety of women.

WAWAW recognizes that the content and techniques of advertising and other



media forms are political issues. The immediate task is to educate people about sexist and violent exploitation. This is breaking the pattern of victimization by providing an understanding of political processes and by offering tools to take action. The intent is to raise community awareness to the point where the general public will demand social responsibility and will take and support action to eliminate violence against women.

WAWAW has undertaken a consumer boycott of Warner/Electra/Atlantic records who are media industry leaders in the use of violence against women. WAWAW suggests people go and complain at album covers and complain in person and in writing to store managers, in writing to company presidents about offensive material, in addition to boycotting these companies' products. Consumer complaints are taken seriously by large corporations. Write: Ostin, Warner Bros. Records, Warner B1, Burbank, CA 91505. Ahmet Ertegun, Atlanta Records, Rockefeller Plaza, NY, NY 10020

To contact WAWAW for speaking slide show presentations, participate in seminars and forums on the image of women in media, or for more information, write: WAWAW c/o FWHC, Crenshaw B1, L.A., CA 90019

The Washington Area Women's Center is a non-profit, non-partisan organization whose primary purpose is to serve all women of the Washington Metropolitan Area. The concept of the Center is woman-defined and guided by the needs of the women's community. They are creating an environment in which women can expand themselves outside the male-defined structures which prevail in society.

The Center believes in a positive Woman Image and firmly believes in the need for "womanspace". Through alternative support services, women can realize their potential strength and valuable self-image. Because women are in a period of transition, and deal with special problems which are not understood by specifically or completely other community agencies, WAWAW provides an information clearinghouse to provide coherence among all services available to women; to provide physical facilities, educational and artistic programming and referral and information services to members of the D.C. men's community.

The structure of the Women's Center enables all members to participate directly. Members are entitled to several advantages: subscription to the newsletter; participation in classes and use of the facilities; discounts in sponsored events; use of the feminist library. Membership dues are \$1.50 for \$1000 income, with \$4. minimum for Newsletter subscription \$3.50. For more information write: Washington Area Women's Center, Summer Seaside, Basement, 17th & M Streets, Washington, D.C. 20036



**Coalition on Women and Religion** is a diverse group, formed in 1973, concerned with the issues of women's religion as affected by religious tradition, history, sacred writings, theology, and contemporary practices. The goals are to examine and reinterpret Scripture and theology from the feminist perspective, confront religious institutions and their inherent sexism and for change, present to the broad community the new interpretations of human - female and male - and interrelationships, and find a way to express the spirituality of women. The following publications are available: **The Flame** - the monthly newsletter (mostly of interest to members); **The Woman's Bible** - which is a recopy of the official Bible, but contains commentaries on passages of Scripture relevant to women and from which women are notably excluded. By Elizabeth Stanton and the Revising Committee, it was published in 2 parts originally, in 1895 and 1897. The work is in demand for the provocative questions it asked then, and for its view of religion and the position of women in it provokes now. Single copy: \$1.50 plus \$.50 postage; **Study Guide to the Woman's Bible** was prepared by coalition members with new introductions about Stanton, her life, and her legacy. It contains questions for personal and group thought and discussion. Single copy: \$3.50 plus \$.25 postage; **Peace Papers by 18 Women** - a booklet of declarations and testimonies by women dedicated to Peace. Free if you can't pay); **The Word** - is a revised English translation of the Gospels of John and Mark, and the Epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians, in which non-sexist language is used. God is not confined by pronouns; humanity is treated to include both male and female persons. Single copy: \$4.50 plus \$.50 postage.

For more information, or to obtain these publications: **Coalition on Women and Religion**, 4759 15th Ave., N.E. 3rd Floor, Seattle, WA 98105 Tel [206] 325-2113

**Lesbian Herstory Archives** exists to collect and preserve records of the lives and activities so that future generations of Lesbians will have ready access to materials relevant to their lives. The process of gathering this material will also serve to uncover our herstory denied to us previously by patriarchal historians in the interests of the culture which they represent. The existence of the Archives

will enable us to analyze and reevaluate the Lesbian experience.

We anticipate that the existence of these Archives will encourage Lesbians to record their experiences in order to formulate our living Herstory.

We will collect and preserve ANY materials that are relevant to the lives and experiences of Lesbians; books, magazines, journals, news clippings (from establishment, feminist and Lesbian media), photos, bibliographies, herstory information, tapes, films, diaries, oral herstories, poetry and prose, biographies, autobiographies, notices of events, posters, graphics, and other memorabilia and obscure references to our lives.

The Archives Newsletter lists and describes holdings and new donations. Suggested subscription rate \$2/3 issues. Available free if requested. Libraries and institutions \$5 or more.

All Lesbians are welcome to use the Archives. Call or write for a visit.

**Lesbian Herstory Archives, P.O. Box 1258, New York, New York 10011 874-7232 / 873-9443**

**Lesbian Defense Fund** works to help Lesbian mothers keep their children. It is a new, non-profit, tax-exempt organization. Write for information: **Lesbian Defense Fund, P.O. Box 4, Essex Junction, VT 05452**

**The National Lesbian Feminist Organization** is a newly founded (Spring '78) group whose purpose is to "act on a feminist platform which deals with the oppression of lesbians in all of its manifestations". Such discrimination includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on sexual preference, sex, race, class, age, and physical disability. The founding conference, attended by 150 women, was inspired by the strong lesbian presence at the National Women's Conference in Houston. The Organization is open to all lesbians and women-identified women who agree with the purpose. Locals are now being formed, and a newsletter is expected. Write **NLFO, P.O. Box 14643, Houston, TX 77021.**

**The Midwest Women's Center** provides comprehensive statewide referral, information, and technical assistance services to Illinois women. **MWC re-**

searches the needs and availability of resources, publicizes existing services, publishes educational materials, provides counseling and technical assistance in organizational development for women's organizations. **MWC** sponsors the following projects: **Illinois Women's Agenda**, **Women's Switchboard** and **Clearing House**, a **Technical Assistance Program** and the publication of a directory of women's organizations special programs. For more info.: **MWC, 53 W. Jackson, Chicago, ILL 60604**

**Transition House** is a refuge in the Boston area for women who have been beaten by the men they live with. They operate a 24-hour hotline as well as an emergency shelter for up to 8 battered women and their children. Although the majority of battered women who stay at the house are from Mass., women from other states who need to escape from a violent situation can also stay at the refuge.

For those interested in learning more about the general issue of battered women or the specifics of setting up a refuge to provide shelter for women and their children, **Transition House** has information packets which can be sent. There is also a legal handbook for battered women and a directory of refuges for battered women throughout the country. The mailing address is **46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02139**, and the number of the crisis line is **[617] 661-7203.**



**Vacations** - Two groups are now offering vacation trips by/for/with women. **Lavendar Horizon Holidays** arranges a week in the California Woman's Community of Los Angeles; **Womyn's Adventures** features a special week's tour of Hawaii (Sept. 7 - 14) led by Ruth Falk. Price tags (at lowest) \$399, \$425. For more information: **L.H.H. P.O. Box 631, Midtown Station, NY, NY 10018 [212] 896-4819** and **W.A., 2532 Cedar St., Berkeley, CA 94708 [415] 841-6500, x 197**



From time to time we have had people staying for a year or so; we were unable to locate individuals that would take the project on a permanent basis.

Anyone that believes that his or her lifestyle is compatible with ours is welcome to come to stay or visit. Take this as an open invitation to you or anyone you may feel could share some experiences with us. **Jerry and Dana Kubias, Box 264, Fort Erie, Ont. Canada, L2A 5M9. Tel. [416] 835-2924**

Financially secure physician and 11 yr. old son are looking for 3 or 4 families or couples to look for and purchase together land or farm in West Virginia, where we can build, work, grow and play together. Our aim is to become self-sufficient, build tree houses, create an outdoor living room of acres of living, flowering well-maintained beauty. We want to live in

modern, clean, easily maintained homes of few rooms but sufficient area, with all conveniences that are available, but preparing also to live without electric, oil or gas. Write **John H. Lentine, D.C.N.D., Chiropractic Physician, 1708 New Road [Rt. 9], Linwood, N.J. 08221, phone 653-0234**

We want to settle in a town that has: 1) less than 10,000 people 2) little chance for "modern development" 3) an alternative elementary school 4) creative people interested in cooperative enterprises and voluntary simplicity 5) intellectually stimulating outlets 6) opportunities for crafts business or cottage industry.

Please write to us and describe your town; why you like it and how much it costs to live there. **Barrett and Sally Rudich, Rt. 1, Spring Green, WI 53588**

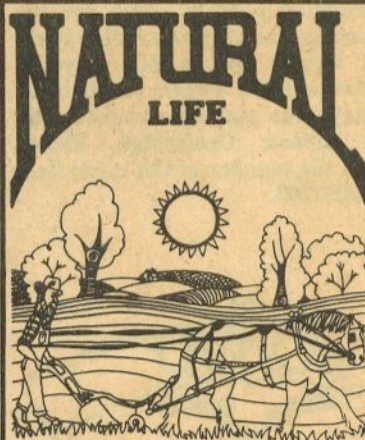
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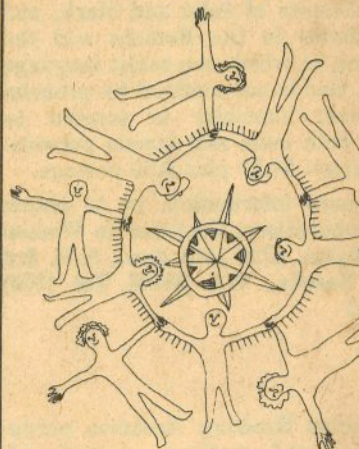
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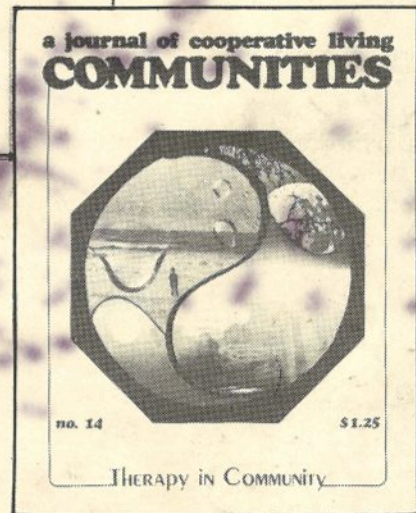
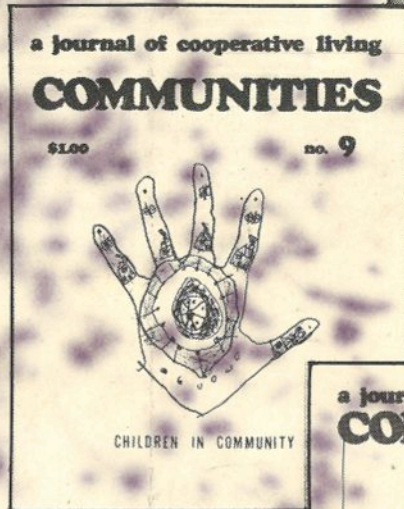
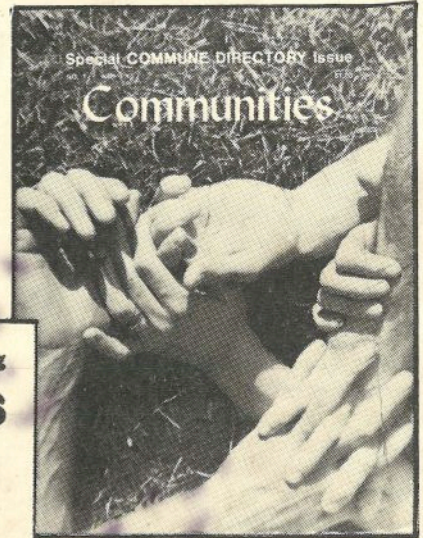
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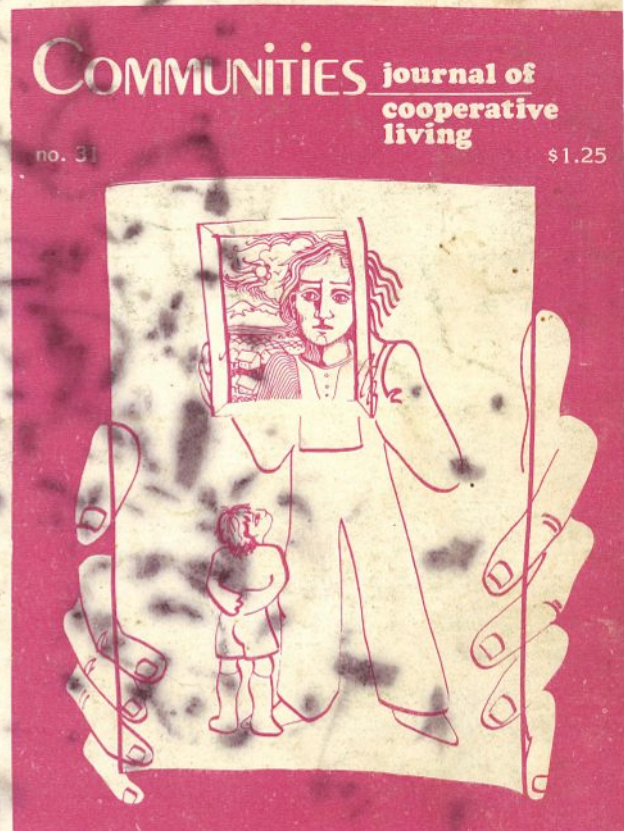
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