

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

The Montana Women's Resource, 1975-1986

University of Montana Publications

---

4-1-1975

### The Montana Women's Resource, April 1975

University of Montana (Missoula, Mont. : 1965-1994). Women's Resource Center

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/womensresourcecenter>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

University of Montana (Missoula, Mont. : 1965-1994). Women's Resource Center, "The Montana Women's Resource, April 1975" (1975). *The Montana Women's Resource, 1975-1986*. 1.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/womensresourcecenter/1>

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Montana Publications at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Montana Women's Resource, 1975-1986 by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

the

# MONTANA WOMEN'S RESOURCE

APRIL 1975

Vol. 1 No. 1

WLC copy

Dear People,

This is the first issue of your newsletter, published by the Women's Resource Center, University of Montana, Missoula. In this issue we have attempted to set out what is happening in Missoula and what we know of elsewhere (legislation, employment, etc.), so that you can be aware of it. For our next issue, we need help from you! Let us know what your group and individual activities and interests are, so that we can share them around the state. Looking forward to hearing from you.

The Montana Women's Resource

*Jennifer Thompson*  
*Deirdre Caughlan*

## WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE REPORT

### Towards Sexual Equality

This year the Montana Legislature considered several sex equality bills. As many of you are aware, the new 1972 Montana Constitution contained an equal rights provision. This ER section of the new constitution made it evident many of the Montana codes would have to be changed or they would be stricken down one by one in court battles. To try to avoid this, both houses of the 1974 Montana legislature passed two joint resolutions, SJR-68 and HJR-62, to set up a joint sub-committee of the Judiciary to study the codes and recommend changes to comply with the new constitution. The committee met in May, and received criticism because it had no women members. Sen. Glen



Drake and Rep. Joe Roberts then resigned, and Sen. Antoinette Rosell and Rep. Pat Regan were appointed in their places.

Several bills were proposed by the subcommittee. Some were merely a matter of semantics--changing words such as "man" to "person", or to indicate that masculine gender words would be used in the generic rather than the sexual sense. Other bills had more important aspects. The Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act and the Uni-

Continued on page 6

## ABORTION RIGHTS COUNCIL

The Abortion Rights Council, the Montana Chapter of the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws, was established as a result of the Abortion Rights Conference held in Bozeman in September, 1974. Jane Sunshine of Missoula is the state-wide coordinator. The organization, which has its national headquarters in Washington, D.C., originally worked to repeal the federal laws making abortion illegal, and now concerns itself with the continuing threat of legislation that would cut off funds for legal abortions. Presently, the Abortion Rights Council is attempting to establish a hot line across Montana so that people opposing the proposed bills can be quickly organized to send letters and telegrams to their congresspeople.

Currently the ARC is concerned with opposing the Buckley amendment to Bill S-66. This bill, the Health Revenue Sharing and Health Services Bill, is a comprehensive bill extending family planning, community health, migrant worker and mental health centers, and state comprehensive health grants. Bill S-66 would also establish rape preven-

Continued on page 2



## BOOK REVIEW

### Our Bodies,

### Ourselves

Our Bodies, Ourselves:  
A Book by and for Women  
is a lengthy and satisfying work as well as a practical tool for any woman. First published in 1971 by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, it remains one of the best books available for clear, intelligible explanations of our bodies' various functions.

The Boston Women's Health Book Collective is a group of women who began meeting originally to discuss their feelings about themselves physically and their attitudes toward the medical profession. They began a project to research topics pertinent to women's bodies, and to prepare them for presentation in the form of a course by and for women. The course was popular, and the prepared papers were so much in demand that as a result they were revised, gathered together, and published under the name Our Bodies Ourselves by the New England Free Press. The demand for this book increased until commercial publication became more practical, resulting in the Simon & Schuster edition we have now. The papers, or chapters, are written by the various members of the group, but the book as a whole is cohesive and well documented.

Perhaps the primary characteristic of Our Bodies, Ourselves is that it is comprehensive. The

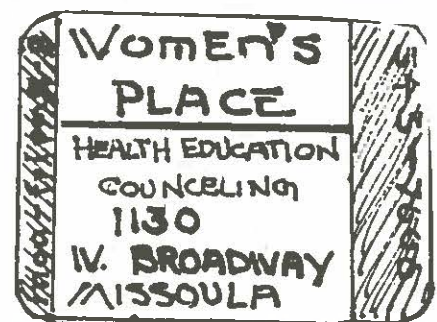
topics of reproduction, birth control, venereal disease, abortion, child-bearing, and menopause are discussed in considerable detail, so that the reader can understand just what, where, and how things happen in her own body. Just to cite a few items, the book explains: how hormones work to bring about the menstrual cycle and how birth control pills interact with these hormones to prevent pregnancy; what are some common menstrual disorders and what causes them; descriptions of vaginal infections and how to treat them; advantages and disadvantages of "prepared" childbirth; and the emotional, physical, and social contexts of postpartum disturbances. There are chapters on various other important aspects of our bodies: Nutrition and the Foods We Eat, and Women in Motion (concerning physical fitness), as well as our bodies in society (sexuality, our relationships, deciding whether to have children, and lesbianism). Though the book of course tends to take a feminist viewpoint, especially in the first chapter, "Our Changing Sense of Self", and in the last chapter, "Women and Health Care", in most cases all sides of an issue are examined. The text is interspaced with comments and feelings of women in the group, reinforcing the idea that all women experience wonder and doubt at their physical and emotional responses. Ample footnotes are provided and one of the most useful aspects is the annotated bibliography for further reading included at the end of each chapter.

In sum, Our Bodies Ourselves is useful for every woman, not only

for herself, but for answering questions from her daughters and her friends, or for organizing a women's self-help group. It remains the most complete publication for making our bodies less of a mystery and for better understanding ourselves.

**Abortion Rights Council-cont.**  
tion centers and home health care personnel. Sen. James Buckley, an arch-foe of abortion, has added an amendment to the bill stating that no funds under this act or any other act can be used to provide or encourage abortion directly or indirectly unless it is to save the life of the mother. The ARC is asking interested Montanans to write Senators Mansfield and Metcalf to state their opposition to the Buckley amendment. They are also asked to write Sen. Harrison Williams who is the chairman of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee (the committee to which the bill is assigned). The bill is scheduled to come up for a vote after Easter, so people are encouraged to write soon. The Senate address is the Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C.

People interested in Working with the ARC, or who want further information, are urged to call 543-7606 in Missoula, 2-8 pm weekdays.





# RAPE:

## CHANGING ATTITUDES NATIONWIDE AND IN MONTANA

by Jennifer Thompson

Rape as a women's issue has been gaining in national attention lately and has become a popular topic of discussion. This enlightened freedom of discussion is certainly welcome. With the subject out in the open for the first time, women can begin to examine the crime that particularly afflicts them and understand why it occurs and what we can do to eliminate it. The root causes of rape lie within basic societal attitudes toward women and toward sexuality. Women are beginning to realize and confront these attitudes by establishing rape crisis centers and self-defense classes.

Rape crisis centers began to spring up across the United States several years ago as women began to review society's attitudes toward rape victims. All too often, the victim was made to look like the guilty party, and she even became convinced of it herself, assuming that she had somehow provoked the rapist's uncontrollable sex drive or was in a place she shouldn't have been (walking home at night, etc.). Before, she had also been discouraged from talking about the attack and expressing her feelings at the resulting mental and physical injuries. The crisis centers began to combat the isolation,

guilt, and frustration of rape victims by a number of steps. First, they try to go to the victim, to be with her during the difficult time following the attack. Counselors encourage the woman to verbalize and thus confront what has happened to her. Getting the story straight is also important if the woman wishes to prosecute.



Medical and legal procedure are explained so that the victim, who is possibly in shock, won't be bewildered and manipulated by what is happening. Counselors at the crisis centers encourage women to prosecute, but the decision is ultimately left up to her. Perhaps the most important function of the counselors is the constant reassurance offered to the victim: reassurance that she did not "ask" to be raped, nor

is she the guilty party; reassurance that anger, depression, or other emotional reactions are to be expected. By dealing with the realities of the attack, the woman can get back to her normal routine as soon as possible.

In Montana, the first organization dealing with rape crisis counseling is Women's Place in Missoula. They have dealt with 25 rape victims since announcing the availability of rape counseling in May 1974. Two members of Women's Place recently attended a conference on rape at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, and there heard the most up-to-date research on causes of rape and theories on counseling. There, many of the widely held beliefs about rape were exploded on a national level, corroborating the findings of local crisis workers. For example, it is a commonly held belief that rapists are overcome by an "uncontrollable sexual drive", while in actuality a majority of rapes nationwide and in Missoula are planned, and are committed by men who have an available sexual outlet. Another widespread and widely accepted idea is that rape occurs in places where women shouldn't be anyway, and that women provoke attack by their behavior. The fact is that one-third of all rapes occur in the victim's homes. In Missoula rape counseling,

Continued on page 4



## **RAPE - continued**

none of the victims felt they "asked" for it or enjoyed it; the Federal Commission on Crimes of Violence reports that only 4% of reported rapes involved precipitative behavior on the part of the woman. To combat these myths, make women more aware of the problem, and what they can do to defend themselves, Women's Place offers rape education programs which are presented to various local organizations. These programs are given in the format of seminar-discussion, and the audience is encouraged to express their views and feelings, in order to realize that the problem potentially affects them.

Some of the most important changes now in the works in Montana are the modification of current rape laws. This is important because all too often society's attitudes toward rape are institutionalized in the laws. Women's organizations throughout the state are now working for the changes. Since the adoption of the new criminal code in 1973, the basic sexual offenses are sexual assault and sexual intercourse without consent (the latter replaces the crime "rape" as such). Sexual assault, a misdemeanor, is defined as "a person knowingly subjects another not his spouse to any sexual contact without consent." The establishment of this offense is designed to allow women who have been molested in a sexual way to be able to press charges (for example, a woman who has been grabbed on the street or had her breast fondled, perhaps in a rape attempt). Sexual intercourse without consent, the new rape law, is "a male knowingly has

sexual intercourse without consent with a female not his spouse." "Without consent" is defined as force, threat of harm, or that the victim is incapable of consent because she is mentally defective or incapacitated (i.e., drugged), physically helpless, or less than 16 years of age. The phenomena of having to "prove" consent is peculiar to rape as a violent crime; for example, in the case of burglary, the victim need not prove that he or she tried to convince the robber not to take his or her money. Another aspect of the law that needs to be changed is the clause requiring that the victim be other than the attacker's spouse. This is a result of the old and outdated belief that the wife is property of her husband. For practical purposes today, separated and divorcing women especially need protection from rape committed by their husbands. Another needed change that is approaching completion is SB-283, which is currently awaiting Gov. Judge's signature. This bill would provide that the victim's past sex life cannot be brought as evidence in a trial unless deemed relevant by the judge. This bill, already passed in similar versions by Michigan and California, would go a long way in eliminating, at least legally, the idea that the woman provoked and is somehow responsible for the crime perpetrated against her.

Women working together have proven that attitudes about rape can be changed by confronting and disproving myths, working with victims, changing laws, and especially being aware of

the problem. For more information on legislation, statistics, or rape education programs, contact Women's Place in Missoula.

## **WOMEN'S PLACE**

Women's Place of Missoula is located in the new YWCA building at 1130 W. Broadway. WP opened in November of 1973, and offers health counseling, information and referral services to women around the state. WP information includes gynecological, abortion, birth control, menopause, sexuality, and self-breast exams. WP also makes referrals to doctors in the Northwest as well as in Montana.

WP is run as a collective, and is staffed entirely by volunteers from Missoula and the surrounding area. Their ages and background vary, but they share in common a genuine interest in the changing roles of women and women's health care.

One vital service provided by WP is the rape relief line. Any woman in the Missoula area who has been raped or assaulted can call WP or the Missoula Crisis Center after hours. A member of WP will go to the woman to talk, and accompany her to the hospital or the police station if the woman wishes. Women from WP are available to provide moral support through the trial should the woman wish to prosecute. WP is also available to do rape education talks or to discuss the problem of rape with individuals.

Women's Place invites interested persons to write, call, or come by. The hours are 2-8 pm Monday-Friday, and the telephone is 543-7606.



## MONTANA WOMEN WORKERS

The number of women workers in Montana is growing. Women now comprise 51% of Montana's population and over 35% of the workforce. The majority work in traditional female jobs: women comprise 98% of all Montana household workers, 77% of clerical workers, 19% of managers and administrators, and 3% of craftsmen and foremen.

Paralleling the national trend, a growing number of women workers are married and have children. 63% of Montana women workers are

married and living with their husbands. Of all married women, 38% are in the labor force. 40% of mothers with children under 18 years old are working.

Reflecting the salary differential between men and women, Montana families headed by women

had a mean income of \$5358, as compared with \$9662 for all families. 8% of Montana families are headed by women and 35% of these fall below the national poverty level.

Montana women suffer a higher unemployment rate than men. In 1970, women had a 6.8% unemployment rate while the rate for men was 5.8%.

Minority women make up a very small percentage of the female population. Minority women workers are concentrated in the service and clerical professions.

\*Statistics from "Women Workers in Montana, 1970" Women's Bureau of U.S. Dept. of Labor.



### Assertiveness Training for Women

Competition and confrontation are inevitable challenges of today's women. Failure of a woman to assert herself, to defend her rights, results in ineffectiveness, exploitation, and unhappiness. Workshops designed to teach women to express their feelings and attitudes without denying the rights of others are held at the Women's Resource Center. Two workshops using group support techniques and role playing have been held, and another is planned for April. For more info, contact the Women's Resource Center in Missoula, 243-4153.

## Women's Resource

### Center

The Women's Resource Center (WRC) is located on the ground floor of the University Center on the University of Montana campus. It serves as a place for women to meet, share ideas, and work together. The WRC has been in operation since May of 1974, and it is open during the school year as well as summer quarter. It is staffed by volunteers from UM and the Missoula community. The WRC include counseling and information referral, a library, programs and speakers, and just a place to talk and relax with other women.

Spring quarter scheduling will include many interesting and varied activities. The Tuesday noon "brown bag" lecture series will explore the various aspects of the Women's Movement. The first lecture will feature Judy Smith discussing radical feminism. The first issue

of the new women's literary magazine, Gilt Edge, will be coming out at the beginning of the quarter. The WRC is also sponsoring a women's photography exhibit April 6-20. Currently the WRC is planning two conferences. "The Politics of the Family" conference will deal with the aspects and changing concepts of family (May 7-9). "Women and the Criminal Justice System in Montana" will be the topic for a conference scheduled for May 21-23.

If you are in Missoula, we invite you to visit or call us at 243-4153.

### WOMEN'S PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

APRIL 6-20

Women's Resource Center

U of M



### Legislation - continued

form Parentage Act are outstanding among those being currently considered by the legislature.

The sub-committee was conscious of the criticism directed towards equal rights legislation, implying that chaos would imminently take over the family and society at large. With this criticism in mind, the subcommittee worked hard to promote equality within the law, while at the same time promoting orderly societal and family relationships. One of the most important features of the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act is the "official" recognition of the services of the homemaker. In considering the disposition of property in divorce proceedings the "contribution of a spouse as a homemaker to the family unit" would be considered. This is important in that the option of being a homemaker remains open for women (or men). Another important feature of the UMDA is that it outlines the rights of the child in a divorce proceeding. These rights

would include the right of a child to have an attorney appointed by the court to look after his/her interests.

HB-10, the Uniform Parentage Act, would make substantial changes in the laws concerning the parent-child relationship. The bill

children. The UPA would establish a procedure to determine the paternity of such children, and to notify the fathers of their rights to the children. Under the UPA, both parents would have equal rights concerning their children born out of wedlock.

Another important bill considered by the 44th legislature concerns credit discrimination. SB-7, introduced by Sen.

Pat Regan, prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, or marital status in credit transactions. This is especially important for married women who wish to establish their own credit, and for divorced women who must begin to establish credit. Such women previously experienced discrimination in credit because of unfavorable credit policies based on popular misconceptions about women and credit. The act also gives the Human Rights Commission the power to investigate and act on any complaint of credit discrimination. SB-7 has been passed by both houses of the legislature, and is awaiting Gov. Judge's signature.

There are many other bills concerning women and their rights. It would take up too much space to mention them all. If you wish copies of these bills or any others, you may write the Legislative Mailroom, Capitol Basement, Helena, Montana 59601. Bills cost 25¢ per copy.

The Montana Women's Resource  
Women's Resource Center  
University Center  
University of Montana  
Missoula, Montana 59801