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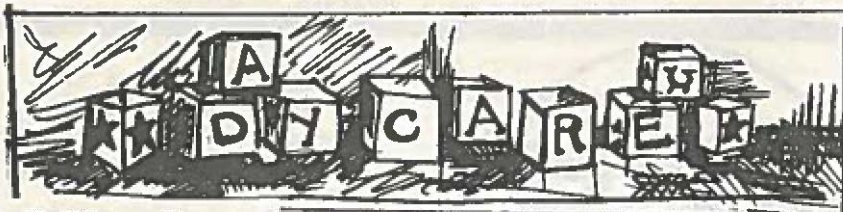
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the MONTANA WOMEN'S RESOURCE

MAY 1975

Vol. 1 No. 2



by Kathleen Clowers

A few years ago Missoula had a critical shortage of good licensed day care. The situation is better now, but many children are still being placed in unlicensed private homes which may be little more than "television babysitters", and which may or may not meet safety standards. The 1970 Census showed 1,249 working mothers with children under six in Missoula County. Missoula has fourteen licensed day care centers and sixty-four licensed homes, with a total of less than 800 openings.

Social and Rehabilitation Services, 818 Burlington, is the licensing agency in Missoula. Presently they are concentrating on improving existing facilities rather than pushing for new ones. They see themselves as a resource, not as a police force for catching violators, and work to help homes meet standards or to improve. Many of the newer day care homes in Missoula may be ones that decided to become licensed through these programs, rather than totally new facilities.

Another Missoula agency involved with day care is 4-Cs, Community Coordinated Child Care. Parents seeking information are referred to 4-Cs, who keep current files on availability and quality of licensed centers and homes. 4-Cs also has a library of toys to give day care operators new ideas for their programs.

Many UM students have small children, and Special Services has provided some day care in the past for disadvantaged students. The Home Ec department has spaces for a number of children in student-observation classes. A parents' committee is in the process of expanding the program originated by Special Services with student money and funds from Aid to Dependent Children.

Cost is a major problem with day care. Most licensed homes and centers charge \$3-\$4 a child per day. For many women in low-paying clerical or service jobs, that is 20% of an already inadequate salary. There is some assistance available. Welfare recipients in school or vocational training can have day care costs paid. Single parents who are working or in school or training, and make less than 150% of welfare payments can also have day care paid for at licensed facilities by the Missoula County Department of Social Services. But for the average lower-income Missoula parent, especially the single parent, day care is still a painfully large expense.

It's interesting, in this light, to recall that during World War II the Federal Government and defense industries, desperate for workers, managed to find funds for day care centers at industrial sites all across the nation. One, in Portland,

Contd. page 6

CONSCIOUSNESS

RAISING? YES!

by Nancy Nichols

Consciousness raising, the starting point for many active feminists, is alive and well in Missoula, Montana. But there are a few people, women and men, who aren't too clear about what "consciousness raising" is or what it does, and it's time that they did.

Consciousness raising means exactly what it says: to raise one's consciousness. The American Heritage Dictionary defines conscious as "having an awareness of one's own existence and environment". This awareness is a vital part of the women's movement and often a necessary "first step" for many people in their search for a meaningful life style.

Consciousness raising groups or CR groups as they're sometimes called, take many forms. They can be comprised of people with similar or special interests such as married or divorced women, women and children, older women, and women in similar occupations. However, since the basis of a CR group is to broaden one's environment and awareness, groups with a variety of ages, lifestyles, and occupations are often the most rewarding.

Groups are usually small, ranging from 5 to 10 people and meet on a weekly basis. In the beginning, and for several months, the group spends most of its time getting to know each other; discussions on topics such as role models as a child, family life, childhood fantasies

Contd. page 6

**"New Feminism & The
Cowboy State":
CASPER CONFERENCE**

Jennifer Thompson

"New Feminism in the Cowboy State" was the title of the symposium recently held in Casper, Wyoming, but many other topics were presented and assailed by the women who attended. The conference, held at Casper College, was sponsored by Casper NOW, Casper Women's Political Caucus, and the Wyoming Girl Scout Council, and was funded by the Wyoming Council for the Humanities. The symposium was well publicized with flyers and in various publications; the attraction of the big-name feminists, Florynce Kennedy, Margaret Sloan, Sissy Farenthold, and Karen DeCrow, drew some 400 women from the Rocky Mountain States, as well as Idaho, Utah, South Dakota, and Alberta, Canada. As far as I know, all of Montana was represented by myself and Jane Sunshine of Women's Place in Missoula.

Sissy opened the symposium with the keynote speech entitled "Women--The Questioning Caste". She is a politician and former member of the Texas State Legislature; she was also second in nomination for the Vice-Presidency (after Eagleton) at the 1972 Democratic National Convention. She spoke of women as the "questioning caste" from her own experience; as one of the few women in the Texas House of Representatives, she led a group of male legislators that exposed corruption in the governor's political machine. She urged women to pursue non-traditional careers and thereby come to positions of power, and she also discussed the rip-off imposed on us by the United Nations in the form of International Women's Year. Her idea is that IWY's theme of "equality, peace, development" is an attempt to placate women. According to her, we

THE MONTANA WOMEN'S RESOURCE is published by the Women's Resource Center at the University of Montana. Our purpose is to provide information on all women's organizations and activities in Montana. We are in need of articles describing your organization, women's center, and club activities! Please send them in!

We function as a collective, sharing all the various tasks of assembling a newsletter: writing, typing, lay-out, and mailing. Kathy White does the graphics.

Jennifer Thompson
Deirdre Caughlan



should respond openly, showing our anger at our second-class citizenship, and only afterwards concerning ourselves with peace. Development is necessary--but are we sure we want equality in the system as it exists?

Karen DeCrow, the national president of NOW, continued in a similar vein with her speech "Green Power". She is the author of Sexist Justice, a book that came out of her experience as one of the few women in law school (Syracuse University, 1972). She spoke of the literally thousands of laws that discriminate against women that are still on the books; without the ERA, each one must be struck down individually. She also clarified a point regarding the movement to rescind the ERA; legally a state loses the power to deal with a proposed amendment after it has been ratified, so that an approval cannot be rescinded. A significant comment, however, was that the forces against the ERA and for rescinding the ERA in states which have already

ratified it take so much time and effort from the Women's Movement which could be used for more forward-moving activities.

Margaret Sloan and Flo Kennedy stayed the longest at the conference, talked to more people individually, and generally made themselves known as persons, not figures behind the podium. Margaret, who spoke on "Sexism and Racism", is one of the founders of the National Black Feminists Organization. Flo, perhaps one of the best known feminists in the United States today, is an attorney, co-founder of NOW, author, and one-person guerrilla theatre. Their collective message seems to me to be: "To change things, start by being outrageous to get attention; don't swallow automatically what the system deals out without questioning; and political power must be gained before women can be liberated."

All of the women who spoke, in spite of some rather surprising tactics advocated by a feminist like Flo, were basically conservative and traditional politically. In other words, although Flo dresses outrageously (false eyelashes, jodpurs, cowboy hat) and talks what some would call obscenely (in fact some of the Casper women were so affronted they walked out), she advocates working within the system. All of the big-name speakers urged women to run for office, and they all emphasized legislative reform as an important priority.

Other conference-planned activities were several panels. I attended the ones dealing

Casper Conf. Contd.

with Health, Minorities, Women in Politics, and Welfare. The Women in Politics Workshop was dominated by Flo; the Welfare Panel was highlighted by Flo debating with a nurse who supported a PhD program for nurses (why Flo chose this cause to oppose I don't know). The two other panels were composed of people who were very poorly selected. I can summarize by saying that the Health panel consisted of a token male intellectual humanist who spoke at length or why school buildings should have windows and a doctor's wife telling us why socialized medicine is a disaster in England. The Minorities Panel was a ludicrous (but I only thought so afterwards) free-for-all with, among others, a

very tired Margaret Sloan and a Chicana woman without feminist consciousness; and non-directed topics of discussion that got worse and worse. In general the planned portions of the conference accomplished the least; but just seeing why was an experience for future reference.

The most exciting, constructive part of the conference was the gathering of women and the contacts that were made. It was really great to know that other women from the mountain areas are working for goals such as ours and to exchange ideas for methods and resources. Five women from the Big Mama Rag, the western women's journal out of Denver, came seeking contacts and correspondants. Media people from Denver and Boulder did

video and tape recordings of all the activities. News on women's studies proposals and projects was traded around. An intermountain rape task force was formed to set up contacts on how to start crisis centers and how to change laws. All of the women from various places were very pleased to meet and talk to each other, and an annual conference of the same genre was discussed.

All in all, the conference was fun. The planned content was the least rewarding, but still very profitable. The Casper women were so glad to see us, and we were all glad to see each other. It's good to know that there are other sisters, not too far away, in the same struggle.

HELENA WOMEN'S FESTIVAL

by Judy Smith

Jill and I traveled to the first Helena Women's Festival on May 10. When we arrived, the Plymouth Congregational Church was crowded with women. Helena women's groups had organized information-rap tables and craft exhibits. Many women were wandering around the rooms talking, picking up materials, and enjoying being with each other.

The festival included a series of workshops in the morning and in the afternoon. Women had a choice in the morning of attending discussions on "The Gentle Art of Being Single", "Taking Care of You", "How You Can Influence the Legislature", women and sexuality, and assertiveness training (that's why Jill and I were there). The afternoon workshops included "Who Am I and Where Am I Going", resume writing, and "What's New Over 60". Following the workshops were group sessions to discuss new definitions of success and to evaluate the Fair.

Jill and I could only stay through noon, but we were really glad to see the numbers of women of different ages and the energy and enthusiasm

at the Fair. Maybe someone from Helena will write the Montana Women's Resource a more detailed account of the Fair.

Develop Your Self Image At The Gynceologist's

When I was 14 there was a big discussion at my yearly checkup about whether to inject my breasts w/foam my mother and the doctor decided against it because w/time the stuff got crunchy rice krispie breasts they figured was worse than being small I wasn't asked for my opinion I just lay w/my bare bottom on the examining table (they didn't use sheets in those days for adolescents) getting colder and colder and colder and littler and littler and littler

Polly Joan
N.Y.

Reprinted from
Big Mama Rag
Denver, Colo.

Criminal Justice Conf.-Cont. working with Entropy, Ltd. on a Department of Labor grant studying alternatives to incarceration for women offenders; Janine Bertram, Seattle COYOTE prostitute's union; Delores Munden, Director of Classification at the Montana State Prison; and Pat Reuss, Montana Criminal Justice Goals Commission.

Self Help-Cont.

that the medical decisions that affected their lives were out of their control. They formed groups to help themselves and to explore the various questions that they wanted to raise. These groups came to realize that not only were they more knowledgeable about their own bodies, but that by their awareness, they were able to better help the doctors in their roles. Only by a thorough understanding of her own body, can a woman be responsible for decisions concerning her own body's health.

An excellent source book for anyone interested in self-help is Our Bodies, Ourselves that was reviewed April's Montana Women's Resource.

Consciousness Raising...

vs. present life style, give every member of the group an opportunity to compare their pasts and how it has contributed to the personality of the person as she is today. Other topics such as motherhood, guilt, jealousy, women alone, sexuality, lesbianism, careers, patriarchy, freetime, etc., explore different experiences and perspectives on topics of interest to women. After several months many groups want to "do something" and often incorporate movies, books, articles, hikes, camping trips, etc. into their schedule.

Another important thing to remember is that a CR group is made up of many personalities, not always compatible. If, for some reason, you feel a group isn't right for you, feel free to change. Not everyone in a group can expect to get along with everyone else, but there must be some rapport among all members or the group will fail.

Probably the most important question asked about CR groups is "why?". What good are they? the most obvious answer is to find friends, but another reason is for support and cooperation. Traditionally, women are taught to compete with one another for men, jobs,

status, etc. The women's movement, however, stresses cooperation rather than competitiveness, and in a CR group women can explore their needs in the face of their changing status and offer support to those who need it.

Although CR groups began within the women's movement, there is a need for men's groups as well. Ideally there would be mixed groups with both sexes dealing honestly with emotions, role playing, and relationships; perhaps someday there will be, but at present there is so much history to overcome for men and women, that initially groups make more progress if they are of one sex.

(For more information on CR groups, contact Nancy Nichols in Missoula, 728-9493.)

Day Care-Cont.

Oregon, was open around the clock and had a take-home dinner service. After the war, the funds and the centers vanished, making more jobs available to the returning men.

Missoula--and all Montana--needs more high quality, low-cost day care services. The care of children under six is as important, and as much a community responsibility, as their formal education after they reach the magic age of six.

RAPE CRISIS CENTERS

New rape crisis centers are being formed in Montana and women who would like to help with this important issue are needed to help organize centers, do support counseling with rape victims, and give rape education seminars to community groups.

The Great Falls Learning Center and Urban 4-H sponsored a day-long rape workshop at the YWCA in Great Falls on April 19th. Three women from Women's Place in Missoula were present to explain popular misconceptions about rape, laws and what needs to be changed, and what setting up a crisis center entails. Out of this workshop a group of women came together who decided the need for rape relief counseling exists in Great Falls and are going to set up some way to make it available. If you would like to work with these women, contact Mallory Clarke, Great Falls Learning Center, Great Falls, Montana 59401.

In Billings, some efforts have been made to establish a rape counseling hotline. If you can help with this needed project, contact Mary Beth Gloege, Cooperative Education Program, Liberal Arts Rm 515, Eastern Montana College (657-2271).

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