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the MONTANA WOMEN'S RESOURCE

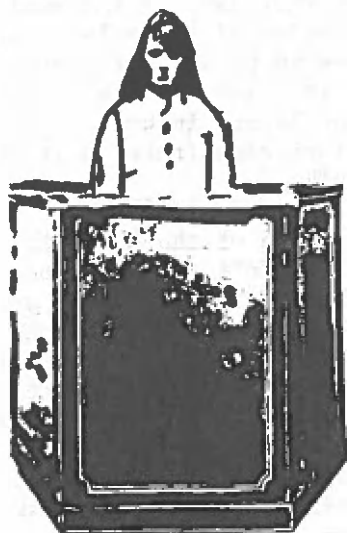
September-October 1975

Vol. 1 No.3

DIVORCE SURVIVAL

WORKSHOP

This summer, the Women's Resource Center initiated and sponsored a four-week Divorce Survival Workshop. The workshops were intended to help anyone who was contemplating divorce, going through the proceedings or who was adjusting to life after a divorce.



Each session covered a different topic for which local speakers and WRC members helped coordinate discussions.

The first session dealt with the legalities and proceedings of divorce. Two women lawyers spoke, giving information about self-help divorces, property rights and divorce contracts.

The second session concerned the financial resources available to the newly divorced person. Representatives of the Missoula Welfare Department, the U of M Financial Aids and Missoula Day Care spoke.

At the third session, members of the group discussed the emotional problems of divorce and a member of the UM counseling staff directed the session and gave some ideas for help.

The final session was basically a group discussion centering around the shared experiences of three divorced women who had survived.

The WRC hopes to continue the workshops next year. The large attendance at the summer workshop indicates that there is a definite need for programs of this type in Missoula.

HELENA WOMEN'S

CENTER OPENS

The new Woman's Center in Helena was officially opened September 7 with the beginning of a week-long Women's Festival. The Woman's Center is the realization of the interests and need of many Helena women, and it provides a space for meetings, classes, a library, and just relaxing.

The Women's Festival included various areas of interest to women and was successful in drawing quite a few new people (those who were not previously affiliated with Helena women's organizations). It was great to see that the center was already fulfilling its purpose of allowing women to meet others with similar experiences and to provide mutual support.



Sunday's initial festival events were an art show with works of nine Helena women artists and a benefit performance of a rock band, Papa Jay. Monday night featured a presentation on the history of the women's movement by three women from the Missoula Women's Resource Center. The talk included a brief review of women in history before the 19th Century, the Suffrage Movement and its outstanding participants, and what has happened since women got the vote in 1920. The developments of the "new" women's movement, since 1963, sparked the most interest among the women attending.

On Tuesday evening, two Helena women conducted a session titled "Our Changing Sense of Self." This session involved some exercises designed to establish each woman's highest goal, what it would take to get there, and what was preventing her from getting there. Each woman drew pictures of what she thought best represented these images, and then they were shared with other women in groups of three.

Wednesday's program was put on by the Helena's Women's Political Caucus. It was the HWPC's first meeting of the fall and new members were welcome. Women on the March, a



ANTONIA:

A Portrait of a Woman

In May, the Women's Resource Center at the University of Montana brought the film Antonia: A Portrait of a Woman to the U of M campus for two showings. The film is a character study and biography of Antonia Brico, an American orchestra conductor, who, because she is a woman, has been thwarted, disappointed, and ignored in her career.

The film, made by her former student, now folksinger, Judy Collins, and film editor Jill Godmilow, alternates between a casual glimpse of Dr. Brico in her Denver home, describing her friends and experiences and with her students, and montages from her life including film sequences, stills, and clippings that tell the extent of her skill and recognition. The opening footage is from a Fox Movietone Newsreel of Antonia conducting in the Metropolitan Opera House in 1933. Conducting was such an oddity for a woman that it was made into a newsreel.

Dr. Brico studied piano from the age of five and received her degree from the Master School of Conducting at the Berlin Academy. In 1930, at the age of 28, she became the first woman to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic. She went on to conduct in the Hollywood Bowl and Carnegie Hall, all to rave reviews. But her career has been sporadic, because she was not well received by boards of directors and managers of symphony orchestras. None would hire a female conductor.

These brief grasps of success proved to be emotionally draining for Dr. Brico. She tells of crying all night once after a performance in New York, not knowing when or if she would get another chance. She also rages at the unfairness: "The orchestra is my instrument. How would you like to be able to play your instrument only five or six times a year when you're able to play five or six times a month?"

In defiance of discrimination, she started an all-woman orchestra in New York in the 1930s. This orchestra was forced to disband after the novelty wore off. After that, Dr. Brico struggled on with periodic engagements as guest conductor in the US and abroad. She formed close friendships with Bruno Walter, Jean Sibelius, Arthur Rebenstein, Igor Stravinsky, and her beloved inspiration, Albert Schweitzer. For the past 27 years, she has conducted her own non-profit, semi-professional orchestra in Denver which performs four or five times a year. After conducting the orchestra for twenty years, Dr. Brico had the honor of having the orchestra named after her.

Today, at 73, her time is divided between rehearsing her orchestra, giving piano lessons in her home, and occasionally guest conducting. The film Antonia has re-established her fame and brought new admirers from all over the

world. Most importantly, it has brought to the public's attention sexist attitudes toward conducting. Hopefully, music, and conducting in particular, as a career will be easier for women in the future.

Jennifer Thompson



Helena Women's Center. . .

film dealing with the Suffrage Movement in England in the late 19th Century, was shown. On Thursday, an informal discussion of sex-role stereotyping in popular literature was held. Images of women in novels and in women's magazines constituted most of the talk.

Friday night saw a celebration of the different forms of women's art. In spite of the fact that several artists who had promised to come didn't show up, the evening was relaxed and comfortable, and featured poetry readings and musical solos. Jane Lovelady and Marilor read original poetry, and Mary and Jan and Carla sang.

Ongoing functions of the Woman's Center include classes of all sorts, among them upholstery, macrame, auto tune-up, and poetry workshop. With the exception of the auto tune-up class, which is taught by a man, all the courses are taught by women. Another important activity sponsored by the Center is the Rape Task Force, which is now organizing to form a rape crisis line in Helena.

Judy Pollard is the coordinator of the Helena Woman's Center. For more information, go by the Center at 107 W. Lawrence, or call 443-5353.

FOR YOURSELF

The Fulfillment of Female Sexuality

Lonnie Garfield Barbach,
Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1975

For Yourself is an excellent personal guide to female sexuality and self-discovery. It is probably the best and most extensive book of its kind dealing with the sexual experiences and problems of women. Ms. Barbach, a sex therapist at the University of California Medical Center, uses a successful women's sex therapy group as a model for the book. The group consisted of women from many backgrounds and differing relationships. All the women had problems with orgasm, and all improved after the program. For many women, this program was better than the Masters-and-Johnson type of couple treatment, as many had unwilling or no steady sexual partners.

Ms. Barbach takes the common sense approach that there is no "right" way for a woman to discover herself sexually and become orgasmic. Each woman must be willing to try many things and discover what works best for her. "Since there is no right or wrong, abnormal or normal way to be sexually stimulated, the book makes no attempt to fit you into a mold. Rather, its purpose is to encourage you to explore yourself in order to discover your unique sexual responses, at your speed and with your own goals in mind." Ms. Barbach contends that with very few exceptions, all women can become orgasmic. She therefore refers to the women in the program as "pre-orgasmic", rather than non-orgasmic.

The book helps to dispell many of the myths that surround female sexuality. Many women still believe the incorrect old Freudian idea that clitoral and vaginal orgasms are different. The book reaffirms the fact that all orgasms come from the same

source, regardless of stimulation. Women have been given much misinformation about sexuality and orgasm by physicians, well-meaning mothers, and friends. Many women enter into a sexual relationship with misconceptions about what to expect sexually. This can create confusion and resentment towards a partner.



The book is also helpful for the woman who is ignorant about her body. Many sexual problems stem from the fact that women have been kept in the dark about their physical selves. A common physical myth is that women's genitals are somehow unclean and she should avoid touching them at all times. The book encourages masturbation for self-discovery and pleasure. For many women this is a new experience because female masturbation is discouraged during childhood if it is even discussed.

The book outlines the exercises used in the group. They deal with sensitivity, self-awareness, and partner communication. Some are done alone

and some with a partner. All the exercises are designed to make a woman more aware of herself and her body.

The book also devotes itself to specific areas of sexuality that are frequently questioned but often ignored, such as sex and pregnancy, menopause, and sexuality of the aging. There is also an excellent chapter on bringing up children sexually. Many sexual problems of adults are the result of a negative childhood orientation towards sex. Responsible parents must change this for their children.

The book is written in a very easy reading style and can be a useful tool for any woman who wishes to improve or expand her sexuality. Although For Yourself is primarily for women who have orgasmic problems, it is an excellent book for all women who are interested in sexual self-discovery and sensitivity.

Summer Brown Bags

The summer Brown-Bag series of luncheon seminars was directed to the topic of Women in Education. Various local speakers covered the topics of sexism, Title IX, discrimination in education, the history of women, and sex education.



Montana Women's

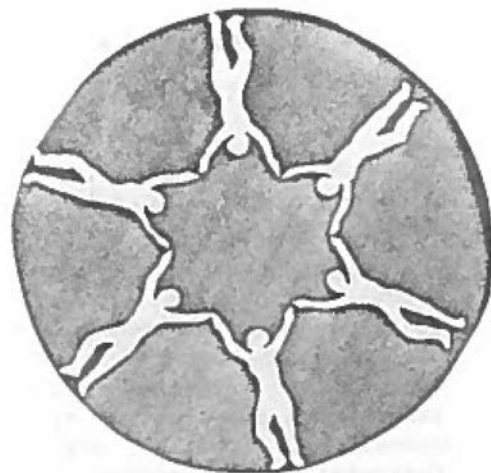
History Project

The Women's Resource Center is currently in the process of planning a women's history project. We hope to collect the personal and public histories of Montana women from all areas and occupations. Many older women all over the state have lived varied and interesting lives as pioneer housewives, ranch wives, educators, etc. Most of this history has been missed because of the bias for political and public history--which is usually men's history.

We hope to sponsor a workshop on collecting oral history for women who would be interested or know women whose stories they would like to record. We are also interested in obtaining copies of letters, journals, and photographs of pioneer women.

We have been considering a history project for some time, and we were further inspired by the visits of Belle Winestone and Freida Fligelman of Helena this spring. Both women were active in women's activities during the campaign for women's suffrage. Ms. Winestone also went to Washington

with Jeannette Rankin and was active in her campaign. Anyone who is interested in working on the project, has material they would like to submit, or who has ideas is invited to contact the WRC.



International Women's

Celebration

As part of the International Women's Year Celebration, Montana is planning programs for all university communities. On October 27-28, a wide variety of activities are being organized by women's groups around the state.

The U of M Women's Resource Center is planning an international potluck dinner and panel on the status of women around the world on October 28. The potluck will be held in the Women's Resource Center at 6:30, and the panel will follow. Everyone interested is invited to bring their favorite international dish and help celebrate.

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Women's Resource Center
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