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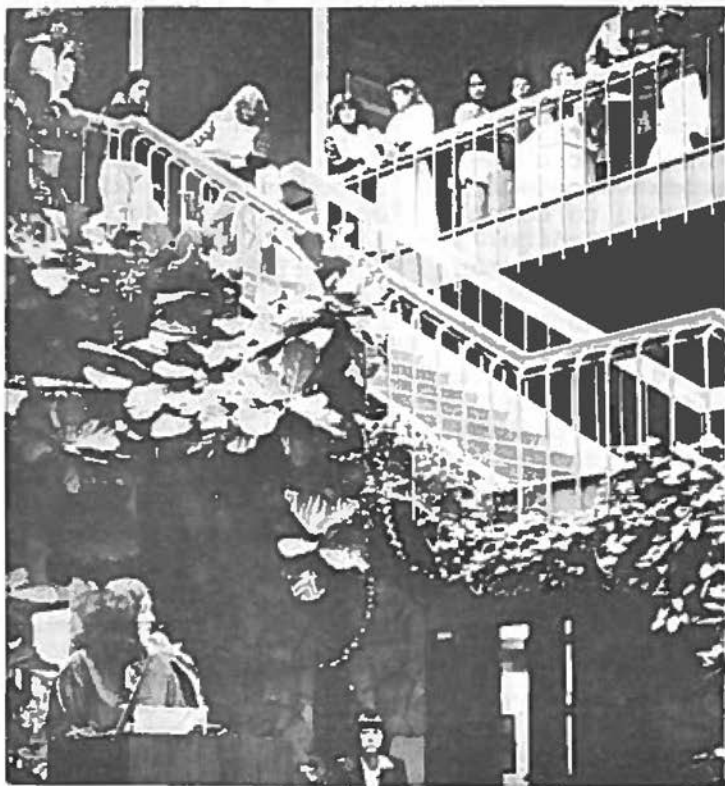
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Vol.5 No.2

Winter '81



# MONTANA WOMEN'S RESOURCE

*jeanne wilkinson*

*lydia v. cary 1980*

# WOMEN CONFRONT SURVIVAL ISSUES OF THE 80'S by Judy Smith

What's going to happen to women's issues under the Reagan administration? The answer depends on what you believe happened to women's issues during the 1970s. People who believe the feminist movement and other social and economic forces promoted a basic American consciousness raising, so that women are now considered full human individuals who deserve equal opportunities in all arenas, view the Reagan years differently than the New Right and others who believe the feminist movement is an aberration forced by a few defective women and the federal government on the American majority who still believe women belong in the home as wife and mother.

The New Right believes it can return to the days of the feminine mystique by removing governmental support for women's rights and by instituting a governmental policy of compulsory motherhood by putting into law basic restrictions on reproductive choice. Many feminists and other supporters of women's rights believe that attitude change on a personal level has already occurred (particularly in women themselves) to the point that the existing institutional support may not be essential in maintaining opportunities for women and that the New Right's attempt to legislate male-dominance morality will only result in extreme societal conflict and eventual rejection of that morality.

Who's right? It all depends on how much change has really occurred. Opinion polls such as the Harris Poll taken immediately before the November election show that large majorities of Americans do not support New Right positions. The 1980 Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll shows that 64% of women and men favor efforts to strengthen and change women's status in society today as

opposed to 40% of women and 44% of men in 1970. Also, women in increasing numbers perceive that the chief obstacle to improving women's status is traditional sex bias.

But can these numbers be mobilized against the well organized and financed New Right minority? (The January 1981 issue of Mother Jones has details on the organization and finances of the New Right.) The New Right leadership can rely on religious groups such as the Mormon Church and fundamentalist Christians and other conservative organizations for bodies accustomed to doing what they are told to do. Kimball, the current Mormon president and prophet, calls the ERA "a threat to the moral climate of the future" and declares its defeat a mission of the church. (NOW Times.) Besides the conservative political action committees which raised millions of dollars for its approved candidates in the 1980 campaign, the New Right leadership can rely on financial resources from groups such as the Mormon Church with an

estimated gross income from business holdings and tithes of \$3.5 million a day and Jerry Falwell's electronic pulpit that brings in over \$50 million per year.

Feminists and supporters rely on grass roots organizations and educational efforts and traditionally have had minimal financial resources available. In the last five years a growing number of feminist organizations around the country have become involved in legislative campaigns on ERA and Pro-Choice issues and are developing fund raising and media skills in order to create access to new membership populations and financial resources. Women's issues were very obvious in the 1980 electoral campaigns and, according to the National Organization for Women, women's organizing efforts for Pro-Choice and Pro-ERA candidates were very effective in many local areas.

A Family Protection Act (S-1808) is being discussed in Congress, an act which opposes contraceptives and sex education for minors without parental consent; which opposes divorce, and funding for child abuse programs and battered women's shelters; which opposes school textbooks that "would tend to denigrate diminish or deny the role differences between the sexes as it has been understood historically in the U.S.": there is every possibility that state legislators may insert a Human Life Amendment into the U.S. Constitution. As the threat to basic rights becomes clearer, more people and money will become available to counter the New Right. The National Organization for Women, the National Abortion Rights League, the Montana Pro-Choice Coalition have seen large increases in membership and financial support since the 1980 elections. Will it be enough and will it be in time? Will years be spent



"Rose in Hand" by Blue Ballou



Continued....

in repealing laws that outlaw behavior that the majority of Americans consider a basic right, as was the case in Prohibition?

The answer once again depends on how much attitude change has occurred. If federal affirmative action programs are removed, will women once again be denied access to higher paid, non-traditional or decision-making positions? (Of course some people question the effectiveness of federal affirmative action programs because the numbers of women in many higher level job categories have not increased since these programs were instituted.) Will states, universities and private industry immediately abandon all efforts to redress past discrimination? Or have women already proven themselves enough times that the old prejudice won't work anymore? Do people really understand that to overcome past discrimination a special program is often necessary and the result benefits the employer as well because there is a larger pool of qualified, competent people? Montana Forest Service employees report that attitudes about women in the field have changed. They definitely feel that having employment targets for women and minorities helped women get into certain positions and areas of work. Now they feel that women, in most cases, are seen as competent professionals by co-workers and supervisors and are encouraged to try out new job options or pursue career interests. Will this change if the Reagan administration removes Federal affirmative action guidelines?

What about the medical and legal professions now that women make up 30% of the law and medical school classes? Have enough women demonstrated their ability so that old exclusions will not be re-instituted? What about non-



traditional areas such as construction and energy development where women have not yet gotten a toehold?

What would happen if abortion again became illegal? Would women give up the right to decide when to have children? Before abortion was legalized in 1973, it is estimated that over 1,000,000 illegal abortions were occurring every year; and at that time the technology was more complex and the procedure itself more risky. Already the National Women's Health Network and other women's health groups are predicting that women have the skills and experience to keep abortion accessible: referral networks would spring up, women's clinics would go underground and some feel that the technology for early abortion is now so simple that numbers of women would do their own abortions at home.

What will happen to efforts at non-sexist education if Reagan cuts the Women's Equity Education Act and Title IX and denies federal funds for non-sexist textbooks? Will school boards throw out new curricula and go back to stereotyped texts, classes and counseling? Will girls' sports programs no longer be funded? Will the National Education Association immediately lose interest and stop promoting educational equality?

What have we learned in 15 years of feminist grass roots education and agitation? How have our lives changed? Even if national public policy and institutions are controlled once again by people who would deny equality, what can we do on a local level to keep progressing towards a non-sexist future? What organizational and financial resources must we develop to survive and continue to grow during the Reagan years?

CONTINUED....

PAGE TWELVE



# The Politics of Violence — by DEB THOMAS

For this article, the definition of violence is: "The abusive exercise of power. The definition of violence is important to me: violence is my "business." I am a counselor to those women who are victims of someone's abusive use of power. I am interested in politics. I am interested in the philosophy of the distribution of power.

Power seems to be a key to understanding relationships of violence between men and women. In a battering marriage (estimates set the number as high as 50% of all man-woman relationships), the husband has most of the "direct" power. His politics tell him that men are supposed to have power over women, husbands have authority over wives. At least on some level, he believes it is his right to exercise his power by doing violence to his wife. Quite similarly, a rapist is also, in his act, taking control over a woman's life and taking her power away from her.

In a broader sphere, we observe the legitimization of this violence directed at women: abusive images of women in mass media and advertising proliferate. Women are posed half-dressed, vulnerable, powerless and victimized. The \$4 billion-plus pornography industry makes violence against women the fashionable stock-in-trade. In porn districts and mainstream theatres, in hard-core and soft-core magazines, one can be "entertained" by watching men dominate, humiliate, rape, beat, bond with ropes and otherwise abusively use power over women.

Let's peer a little further into a still-larger arena. Besides physical and sensory violence to women, there's more. Good ol' Uncle Sam, always guilty, at least by complicity, of crimes against women, has welcomed into power the right-wing conservatives. These politicians, representing the rich-should get-richer folks, have launched an economic battering of women, the bruises of which have already begun to



Detail from Montana Women's History Project poster. Available at WRC

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show in the fear on our faces. Social service cutbacks hurt women severely and Reagan is packing a roundhouse punch. His policy is to deny us of jobs and rob us of the meager economic dignity we've gained; to starve us and our children by reducing food stamps to us and to keep us economically dependent on and subservient to men. It seems to be serving the whims of big business just now to "keep women in their place."

As if the economic battering of women were not enough... the anti-abortion amendment has now been introduced into Congress. There's little doubt that it will eventually make its way out of Congress and to the states for their ratification. The right to violate women by forcing us to carry unplanned pregnancies to term may well become a legal reality. If the government can decide on my behalf what will be done with my own body, then I am the victim of abusive exercise of power and intolerable violence. Further, back-alley abortions make the violation a yet more profound reality.

These forms of violence are directed at women. Other groups are victimized, too. Children are being used, with increasing frequency, by the pornography industry as sexual playthings. Many battering spouses were once

Continued...

abused children. Rapists often grow up with violently contemptuous attitudes about women. These cycles of violence become established and are repeated again and again.

Furthermore, economic violence is directed increasingly and with impunity to other minority groups -- people of non-white races. Anyone who cannot compete successfully for what few jobs there are, must be by nature part of the "riff-raff" who are sucking this economy dry. Those lucky enough to have jobs will be told to take cuts in pay. The anti-labor and racist disguises are thin.

The environment will be another victim of the new violence, for nothing will be allowed to get in the way of big businesses' "investment and production."

Government's abusive exercise of power increases. With military aid to El Salvador's junta, the U.S. supports its institutionalized terrorism which denies the people of their right to self-determination, and supports rule by a regime which does not have interest in the needs of its people.

Vietnam veterans remind us that we haven't healed from the aftermath of the violence of the last undeclared war. Are we to learn no lessons from that experience?

Perhaps the strongest evidence of violence in this government is its military build-up. In fact, while virtually all programs designed to assist women, minorities and the poor are cut, government spending for weapons will be mushrooming. With this fear-induced war fever, Reagan et al threaten us with the ultimate violence: nuclear annihilation.

It would seem easier and somehow "purer" for me to focus only on problems of violence against women. But I fear that limiting will lead me to draw inaccurate conclusions about the sources of such violence or will misdirect my strategy of action against it. Are there parallels?


NARAL\*, while not the first feminist group to do so, has begun to identify some parallels. They see the Right-to-Life movement as inextricably meshed with the "New Right." The "New Right", with Ronald Reagan as their darling, oppose women having power equal to that of men for they are against the ERA. They oppose women's reproductive rights. They oppose programs that would aid women economically, are anti-feminist, and seem intent on returning women to dependence upon male financial support.

What are the parallels between this violence against women and the violence evidenced by Reagan's plans for foreign policy, environmental issues, organized

labor, racial minorities and other "special interest" groups and social welfare programs? It seems the New Right would even have eliminated organizations designed to help people.

One such organization is Women's Place, where I work. Women's Place is a collective which deals with the problems of violence against women. The services we offer for counseling and referral are free so that those people without money don't have to be without help. Many of us at Women's Place fear that as more and more people are victimized by economic violence, physical violence will be introduced and/or escalated in more and more families. So the cycle of violence introduced in this case by the New Right's policies begins: people get poorer, they get more and more frustrated and desperate--and often more violent towards those around them.

Services of agencies such as ours will be in greater demand. But while we anticipate being asked



women's place- missoula, mt.  
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Sakajawea women's run  
& spring celebration  
may 23  
greenough park- 11am

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craft fair, picnic and new games to follow  
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to help more, we will be able to help less.

Our funding for counseling staff comes mostly from CETA (public service). Reagan says these funds will be totally cut by September of this year. Women's Place gets money for a part-time rape counselor/educator from United Way and nearly enough money to pay for telephone and rent of our office from Missoula city government.

Those sources of appropriation come to us, courageously it may be said, over the loud and lashing outcries from the right-to-lifers. Why? Because we perform abortion? No, because we, fully in accord with the law and in consideration of our philosophy that women have the ability and the right to make their own decisions, make referrals to women who inquire about abortion. How long will these local funding sources be able to withstand the pressure? On a national level, Reagan promised specifically to eliminate funds for rape crisis centers. Do I smell a rat? How long will Women's Place and other agencies of its kind continue to offer services to victims of violence?

We need to be asking some questions. Who benefits from violence or alienation between men and women, between black and white, between environmentalist and labor? While all indications are that the New Right will be particularly oppressive and pernicious, the problems described here and elsewhere about violence in America didn't just erupt when Reagan took over. What does form the roots of violence in America? And what strategies are most useful in working against the sources of violence?

The problems can seem overwhelming and so widespread that we as individuals can feel immobilized by them. But we don't have to feel powerless and victimized. We can organize with others around the issues most pertinent to us. Rather than isolating ourselves from each other, we can work together as allies against oppression and violence. We can look for the parallels between our respective issues and build coalitions with our different groups. Collectively we are powerful. We'll need to be. Our lives are at stake.

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\*NARAL (National Association to Repeal Abortion Laws)  
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Deb Thomas, author of this article, is a counselor at Women's Place in Missoula.

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## ORDINANCE ON EMPLOYMENT-----

This job is not for bums or drop-outs.  
Slacking off is not permitted.  
We took you on  
in spite of our better judgment;  
papers were signed, notarized.  
You had time to reconsider;  
now it is too late.  
The work in progress must continue.  
You are essential to its completion.

It is not our responsibility  
that you don't like your co-workers  
and they don't like you.  
Nobody is here to be liked.  
You must do the best you can  
under the circumstances.  
We try to make them better for you.  
The experimentation chamber  
is being moved to another building;  
you should no longer be distracted  
by the sounds produced there.  
The conveyer belts are scheduled  
for upholstering; color and fabric  
were chosen by a top flight designer.  
Ventilator shafts have been refurbished;  
lethal fumes are a thing of the past.  
Outmoded tile in all receiving rooms  
is being replaced with marble.

On order is a new vulture-proof plastic  
for the disposal of carrion.  
There is a spiritual advisor;  
he is efficient and helpful.  
The zoo is being restocked  
with friendlier animals.

Many people think of you as fortunate  
even though you now find the work distasteful.  
We have our own problems,  
working around the clock  
to keep things going.

## Two Poems — by NAOMI LAZARD

### ORDINANCE ON GETTING BETTER-----

The signs indicate  
that you are getting much better.  
For example, you are not nearly as prone  
to feeling abandoned  
when friends don't telephone  
for weeks on end. You understand  
their delinquency has nothing to do  
with the bond between you.  
It doesn't mean anything definite  
about your character. You know  
it is not a judgment; they have not  
found you out. Your suffering,  
these days, is not grand opera.  
You have changed enormously.

A good case in point:  
only this morning you noticed  
half your face was missing.  
It is significant that you were able  
to remark to yourself  
how many people live decently  
with half a face. You might remember  
that just a short time ago  
you would have been distraught  
at such an occurrence. Now  
you appreciate your gifts,  
nor do you label as crazy  
the people who want to be close to you.  
This is all because you are better.

You must not be distracted  
by your dreams. It doesn't matter  
that in your dreams  
trains pull away just as you reach  
the platform, that swimmers  
strike out for the open sea  
without you. Try to forget  
that house in your dreams,  
the light bulb hanging  
in the room you live in,  
and the newspapers which cover the windows.

Naomi Lazard has been the  
Poet in Residence at the  
University of Montana for  
the past two years. Her  
works include: Cry of The  
Peacock, The Moonlit Upper  
Deckerina, Ordinances and  
bilingual (French-English)  
--Ordonnance/et Desordres  
and a book for children  
entitled What Amanda Saw.

Graphic by J.K. Hoffmann,  
Missoula architect and  
artist.





# Illegal Abortion in Montana — a project report by DIANE SANDS

Throughout history, women have sought to control their reproductive capacity, thus the myriad forms of birth control, abortion, infanticide. Our project, now in month four of a year-long study funded in part by the Montana Committee for the Humanities, is an exploration from two perspectives of the history of illegal abortion in Montana.

First, we are interested in both the individual woman's view of abortion, and in the views of family members. How and why did women choose abortion?

We know that some abortionists served primarily poor, unmarried, divorced, and 'fallen' women, while others served the privileged, the married. How did women find abortionists? Or if a woman decided to self-induce an abortion, as many did, how did she gain the information concerning what method to use? How did the values of motherhood, marriage, ideal family size, along with economic factors, influence her decision?

These are a few of the many questions that will be explored in interviews with ten women who know first-hand the illegal abortion experience. Volunteers include a 75-year-old woman who had three abortions, and a woman who, as a teenager in the 1960s, traveled to Miles City for an abortion.

The second aspect of the project looks at public policy surrounding illegal abortions. Abortion had been illegal since statehood, yet abortionists flourished. Evidence of abortion availability in spite of the law exists for Miles City, Shelby, Butte, Great Falls, Anaconda, Missoula, Helena, and Billings.

Homeopaths, chiropractors, nurses, 'regular' doctors, and others practiced abortion. How did they maintain their illegal operations? What was

the response of law enforcement, the medical establishment, and social service agencies?

Research has uncovered at least six trials for illegal abortion, all but one involving a woman's death. In the first decade of this century a Dr. Kellogg, of Helena, was tried for more than one such death. The most recent trial was in 1960. In this case a Missoula doctor was charged with performing an abortion, a felony offense.

There were other attempts to shut down abortionists, such as community 'clean-up' campaigns that often decried other 'related' activities, like prostitution. Some abortionists may have bought 'protection' by paying off law enforcement officials. However, our research suggests that the majority of abortionists practiced for years with little or no trouble. Does this indicate a grudging acceptance of abortion as a 'necessary evil'? These connections will be further examined through interviews with judges, county attorneys, and the like, and the abortionists themselves.

The private lives of women are largely unexplored, especially in the categories of reproduction and sexuality. Where women's private choices conflict with public policy as to abortion regulation, we discover rich insights and information about societal values in transition. Our project, *The Oral History of Illegal Abortion*, will make a unique contribution to our knowledge of the lives and choices of our foremothers, and to our understanding of the Montana experience.

The Project Staff, Diane Sands and Sarah McHugh, seek your support. We need your help in locating information,

and persons to be interviewed. Please contact us if you, or someone you know, experienced any aspect of illegal abortion in Montana before 1970. All inquiries will be handled with extreme care and the strictest confidentiality.

Contact: Diane Sands, 315 South 4th East, Missoula. 728-3041



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# The Women Who Made The West — book review by Shereeliz Caldwell

The Women Who Made the West is a collection of historical essays about the lives of eighteen pioneer women of distinction, women whose experiences span the gamut from prostitute to brain surgeon, from gold miner to international journalist, from trail boss to "The Mother of Equal Rights".

American history is notorious for barely recognizing the role played by women in the settling of the West. This book, covering a period from 1870 to 1915, is one step toward remedying the neglect of standard history texts, while offering exciting, high adventure, and insight into the uncanny courage and strength of all women.

Polly Pry (born Leonel Ross Campbell) was the first woman reporter for the Denver Post. She received world-wide acclaim for her first exposé, "Our Insane Treatment of the Insane," which dared to reveal the horrible conditions in Colorado's asylums. She went disguised as a worker into the mines and reported firsthand on the despicable conditions and possible murders during the Western Federation of Mines disputes. When the Post backed off from publishing some of her more controversial findings, she re-

signed. She started her own magazine, a weekly, Polly Pry. In 1914 she went into revolutionary Mexico and interviewed key leaders and soldiers from both sides, including Pancho Villa. In World War I, she made her way with the Red Cross into Albania and Greece. Her accounts of the war-torn countries were internationally syndicated. Her autobiography is titled, My Life as a Reporter.

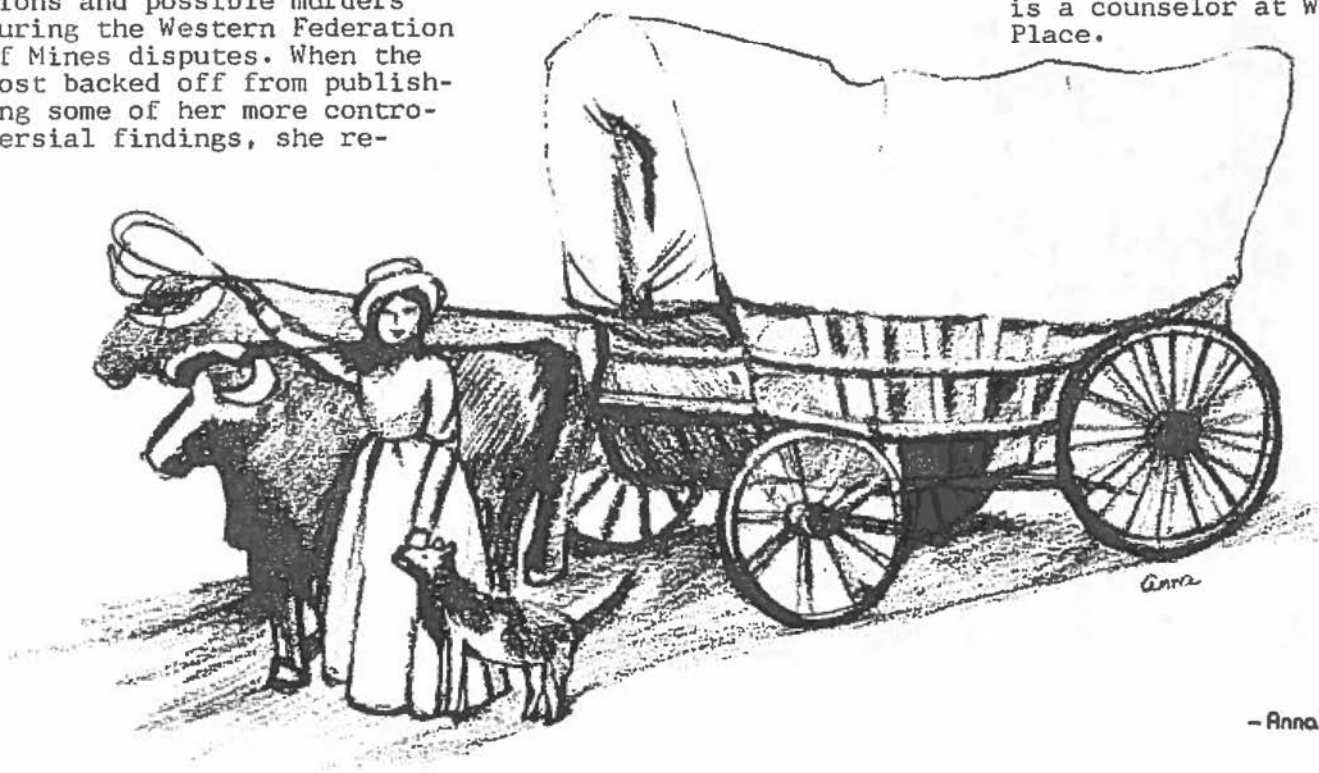
Sally Skull was a Texas rancher and horse trader. Though she had three children, she was known as a "romping, pistol-toting, whip-popping virtuoso" who during the Civil War bossed freight wagons loaded with supplies from East Texas to ports in Mexico. Sally's nickname was Mustang Jane. She rode alone back and forth across the border and gambled in the best company, including John Wesley Hardin. She was a shrewd, tough business woman who had five husbands, ran herds of horses, and left in her wake much folklore.

Esther Morris gave a tea party in her log cabin for the two men who were vying for the position of representative to the Wyoming Territory Legislature. She stated her purpose: that whoever was elected would introduce and work for the passage of an act conferring upon Wyoming Territory women the right of suffrage. Both men pledged their support, and Colonel Bright, who was elected, kept his promise. At the Territorial Council on December 10, 1869, the suffrage bill passed. The women of Wyoming Territory were the first in the world to be awarded equal voting rights.

The essays were researched and written by eighteen western woman writers of today, under the sponsorship of the Western Writers of America.

S. E. Caldwell is a U.M. student, majoring in creative writing/journalism

Anna Saulwick is a graphic artist and potter from Melbourne, Australia. She is a counselor at Women's Place.



— Anna Saulwick

# The Possibility of a Beautiful Life — by BETTINA ESCUDERO

The anguish and turmoil inside me escalate. I am haunted, distracted, horrified by the "issues": the national effort for an anti-abortion amendment; our ever-widening involvement with and support of the military junta waging war against its own people in El Salvador; the dilating momentum of racism world-wide; the repeal by our representatives of the Radioactive Waste Ban (Initiative 84) approved by voters last fall; escalation of nuclear armament and nuclear power; constant fear of nuclear oblivion; our rape of the earth. I am scared. My work suffers from the urgency and exasperation I feel.

What is this desperate need to dominate nature, to subjugate less powerful peoples of the world, and of our own country? Why do we think that militarism and mass consumerism lead to peace, happiness, wisdom and knowledge?

I am torn. Writing is my life. I sit at the typewriter--nothing. There is much work to be done, yet every day for three weeks, nothing. When I'm trying to write, my mind concentrates on the "issues." When I'm out working for the issues, I want to be at my typewriter.

Finally, a friend gives me an insight. He says my state of mind mirrors the destructiveness that surrounds me. It's only a microcosm of the negative energy permeating the world, an insidious energy that destroys creativity. I am a part of it. I am ashamed.

Later I sit beside the Blackfoot River and read a speech by Denise Levertov written in 1970:

"It is hard to be an artist in this time because it is hard to be human. . . . As corrupt and self-seeking politicians erode the Constitution and bring us closer to outright fascism, the poet is turned away from his impulse to sing, to testify in patterns of words to the miracle of life. . . . Shame, despair, disgust, these are the reverberations that threaten to silence poets. . . ."

Graceful river: images from a Mexican village shine in my mind. The wedding: Indian women huddle on the floor making corundas to eat, laughing and talking as they work; children dance joyfully to the music; infants in a different set of men's or women's arms each time I look; neighbors bring in chicken, mole, and frijoles in huge ceramic pots. When I ask why, the answer is simple. "No one can afford a wedding, so we all pitch in. It all evens out."

In my mind's eye a friend and I walk through a village renowned for its carved wooden masks. Men and women sit outside, carving, talking, while around them children play.

Christmas eve we walk through a larger town, lit by fogatas (bonfires) at people's doorsteps; the streets, closed off to traffic, are adorned with homemade decorations. A band plays in a garage. "Who pays for the band?" I ask. "Whoever can afford it," a woman answers, "everybody puts in what they can." People huddle around the fires and drink ponche. We sit at the edge of the sidewalk; a woman comes to offer us jarros (ceramic jugs) of punch. Her husband offers a pinch of whiskey, saying, "Come to the fire, don't sit there like strangers."





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When the festival ends, the children break the pinatas and everyone goes from house to house for their aguinaldo (gifts of candy, peanuts, chocolate, oranges, wrapped in small baskets or crepe paper bags). I see gentle eyes and brown faces.

The deep sense of community, love and sharing embraces me. I am jealous. When I leave, I wonder if these Tarascan Indians will still be here when I return from Missoula, where individuals and families are isolated and alienated from themselves, each other, and the rhythm of life and the earth.

The river soothes me, and I look back at my book and underline:

"The struggle of all artists and all pacifists is to overcome this nausea and actively hold to what their work has caused them to know -- the possibility of a beautiful life."

<sup>1</sup>Denise Levertov, The Poet in the World, New Directions Book, New York, 1973.

Bettina Escudero is in the M.F.A. program at U.M. and teaches.



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721-5238

## NOW In Montana — by Dee Adams

Nationally, NOW began June 30, 1966, arising from the Third National Status on Women Conference in Washington, D.C. The delegates realized that not only were women being discriminated against in virtually every area examined, but that they, as delegates, were prohibited by the rules of the conference from adding a resolution recommending that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforce its legal mandate to end sex discrimination. Christened the National Organization for Women (NOW) by Betty Friedan, NOW was officially incorporated February 10, 1967. Since then it has grown to include thousands of women across the nation, and acts as a powerful force to change current inequities for women.

Although NOW is action-oriented, it does sponsor consciousness raising for its members. Priorities include the national ratification of the ERA (only three more states are needed), and the protection of women's rights to choose to have abortions. Task forces operate in numerous other areas to end discrimination against women.

Yellowstone Valley Chapter in Billings organized in March, 1980. It staffed a state Now booth at the Midland Empire Fair, where ERA calling cards and brochures for and about women were distributed. A Women's Equality Day celebration honored Fran Elge, legislative aid to Jeanette Rankin. During the Primary campaigns local and state candidates were polled and members were able to support and 'make a difference' for several important candidates. Present focus is to continue organizing local women and spearheading a campaign to influence the legislature on issues crucial to Montana

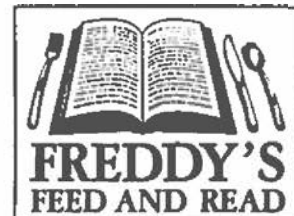
women. Sometimes they don't listen to us, they didn't seem to hear the mandate to defeat the call for a resolution banning abortion. But it was apparent that Montana women overwhelmingly are in favor of protecting that most basic right of control over our own bodies.

On an individual basis, NOW members from Montana have joined with members from other states to march on Washington attend national NOW conferences, participate in the Mothers' Day March in Chicago last May and demonstrate at the Mormon Temple in Bellevue, Washington.

The State NOW Conference will be held in Billings in June. Details of the event will be made known in the spring issue of the MWR quarterly.

Anyone interested in becoming a member or in forming a chapter should contact Theresa Boschert, State Coordinator, at 259-6820, or write her at 124 West 24th, Billings, Montana, 59102.

Dee Adams is the President of the Yellowstone Valley Chapter of NOW in Billings, Montana.



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### WOMEN'S WORKS

Hidden in the Household  
Embroidering Our Heritage  
Sheltered Lives  
Women and Class Society  
Interview with History  
(drop by and Browse)

# Women's Right-To-Choose in Montana

— by Brenda Nordlund

...continued

from Page Three....

On February 19, 1981 Representative Helen O'Connell's biennial attempt to take away a woman's right to choose a legal abortion met with a hollow victory. Montana, much to the dismay of anti-choice forces, did not become the twentieth state to petition Congress to convene a constitutional convention to propose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to prohibit abortion. The 1981 Montana Legislature did pass a resolution encouraging Congress to pass a Human Life Amendment, but the resolution has no legally binding effect on either Congress or Montana's congressional delegation.

Moreover, as HJR 15 was originally introduced in the House of Representatives, it included not only the call for a Constitutional Convention--which was eventually deleted by Senate action, but also expansive language to protect the fertilized egg upon conception. Conscious that a resolution that showed no concern for the pregnant woman would not be acceptable to a majority of legislators, the Right-to-Life cadre was forced to amend HJR 15 to include exceptions for instances where the pregnancy endangers the life of the woman or the pregnancy results from rape or incest. On February 6, 1981, Pro-Choice legislators came within one vote of killing the resolution in the House, instead HJR 15, already weakened substantially, was sent to the Senate.

After the Senate Public Health Committee excised all sections referring to a call for a con-con and recommended that the Senate not pass the amended version of HJR 15, the Senate voted 25-24 to reject the committee recommendation and set HJR 15 for debate on February 14th.

What happened on the Senate floor that afternoon was bizarre. The anti-choice forces attempted to re-amend HJR 15 to demand a constitutional convention. While the Senate debated the niceties of the proposed amendments, spectators in the gallery were left bewildered as Senate President Jean Turnage refused to allow reading of the amendments on the floor. More confusion followed the vote on the amendments due to a mechanical failure that neglected to display the vote of one senator; what momentarily appeared to be a Right-to-life victory, a 25 to 24 vote to adopt the amendments, was instantaneously transformed into a Pro-Choice success as Senator Mazurek's 'No' vote finally displayed on the board. That 25 to 25 vote rendered HJR 15 legally unenforceable. Culled of its all-encompassing protective language and legal effect, HJR 15 passed the Senate by a 31 to 18 vote. Without much adieu, the House voted, 64-36 to concur in passage of HJR 15, as amended.

We praise the efforts of the Montana Pro-Choice Coalition, its co-coordinators, Mary Ann Garrity and Sydne Coghurn, its lobbyists, Edna Mae Leonard and Rev. Jerry Keck, and the thousands of Montanans who actively supported a woman's right to choose a legal abortion. Hopefully an even stronger force can begin work toward the 1983 Montana legislature, which is anticipated to have to contend with either another resolution from the anti-choice minority or a ratification of a Human Life Amendment, if one is passed by the 97th Congress.

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Brenda Nordlund is a member of the Pro-Choice Coalition and a student at U.M. Law School

It's important to remember that Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon were certainly not allies. Changes in public policy that occurred during their administrations did not come because they were dedicated to feminist principles. Changes came because of grass roots pressure and growing awareness that societal forces had already caused a basic restructuring of women's roles.

I don't have answers to all these questions, but I am one who believes we have accomplished important change in the last 15 years. The Reagan years will not be easy and many people will pay a price as the New Right attempts to impose its vision of traditional American society onto current social reality. (A reality where an ever-increasing number of women work outside the home but still earn only .59¢ for every dollar men earn, head families that are dependent on them for financial support, decide to limit their fertility to two or less children.) But we are a part of the historical process of social change, a process that often involves pitting large numbers of committed people against superior organizational and financial resources. If attitudes have changed, if a large number of Americans really do see women as full human individuals, if our grassroots organizing has really created a feminist constituency with a sense of urgency and commitment to action, we can successfully challenge the New Right. For those of us committed to living in a non-sexist society, the issue once again becomes how to best use and expand our personal and organizational resources in what may be a long, hard battle.

Judy Smith is a faculty affiliate with the WRC. She teaches Women's Studies and assertiveness training.

## The Personal Is Political — by Kathleen Coyne

The word 'politics' conjures up visions of legislative bodies, election campaigns, dull speeches and smoke-filled rooms. The political process is one which often excludes women from the actual decision making, while relying on our (volunteer) time and energy to canvas door-to-door, organize fund-raisers and staff phone banks. Feminism, as a political movement, is frequently limited to being seen only as the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion rights, or considered a personal growth movement and not 'political' at all.

Inherent in any definition of politics is the expression of power relationships. In consciousness-raising groups, women's studies classes, and while staffing rape crisis centers and battered women's shelters, women are recognizing the power relationships in our day to day lives. The power dynamic between women and men is expressed in our homes, at schools, in the work place and in the legislature. The realization that inequality is not a problem which exists only between individual women and individual men, but that it is between women and men as groups, has led us to the conclusion that 'the personal is political'. Institutionalized sexism is the way in which our culture expresses the inequality between sexes and in which that inequality is reinforced and maintained.

Just as suffrage did not give our grandmothers the power they wanted, so the passage of the E.R.A. is not the panacea for the ills of institutionalized sexism. As a radical feminist, my goal is of necessity a long-term one, to end institutionalized sexism and change the patriarchal culture in which I live.

Smashing the patriarchy won't happen overnight, or even in the next decade. At times, it

is discouraging to realize that the small gains we have made in the last ten years in employment and abortion rights are seriously endangered; and that the next decade will be spent in maintaining the gains we've made on abortion and other issues. A long-term commitment to making social change is what keeps me working, as well as my belief that the patriarchy can and must be changed. Dropping out or burning out is not an option; instead, I will continue to chip away at the institutions which support sexism, knowing that if enough feminists are working on it from enough angles, eventually the patriarchy will fall.

The personal is political. I will battle the roots of sexism, work to identify the real issues. I must also continue to fight the small and large skirmishes against woman-hating and woman-fear in our culture. My vision is of radical social change, and this vision sustains me through the lengthy, often wearying process.

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Kathleen Coyne works on the Women in Technology Project and is a volunteer at the Women's Resource Center.



Photograph of Alice Lyttle, the child for whom Lewis Carroll wrote Alice in Wonderland.



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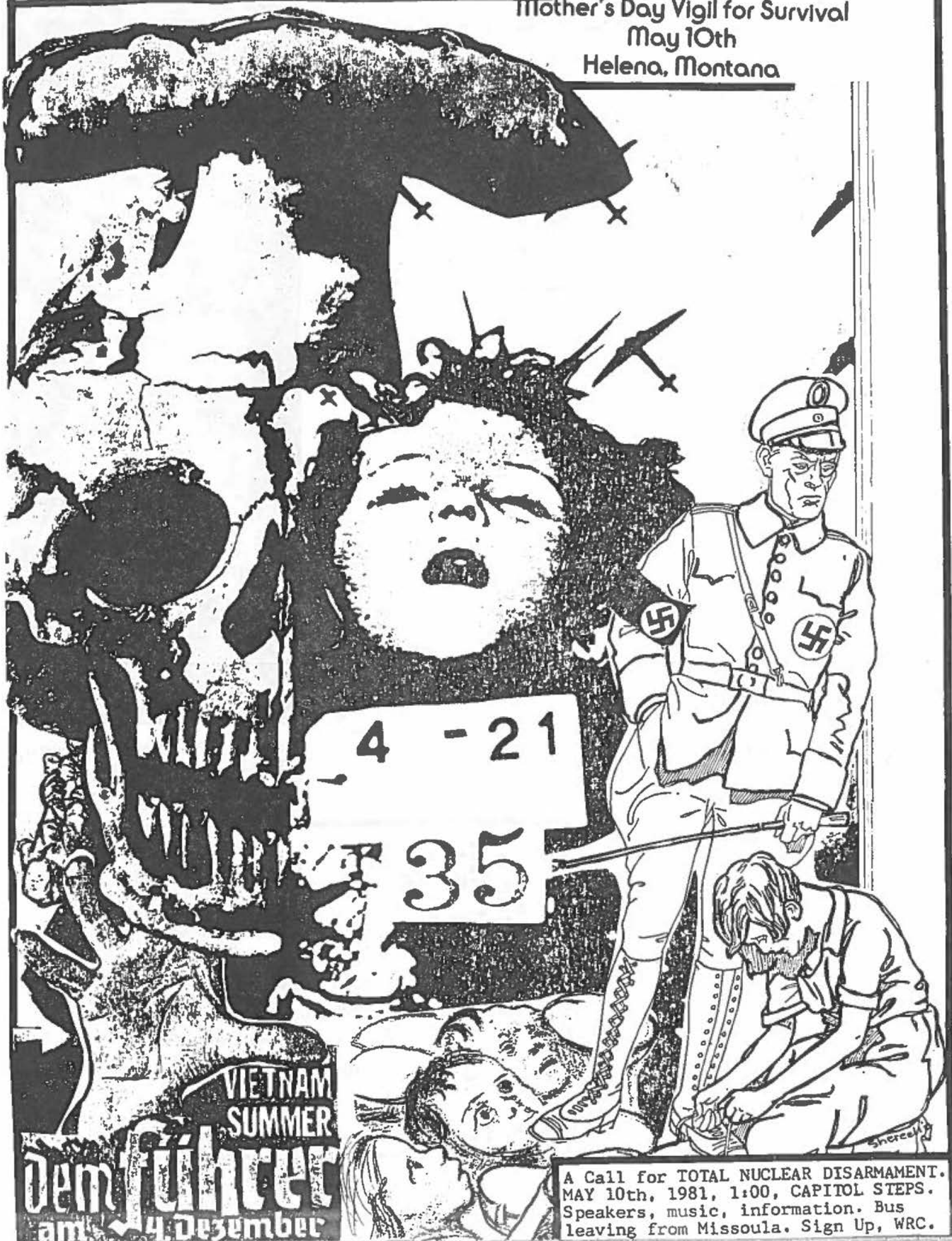
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Mother's Day Vigil for Survival  
May 10th  
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A Call for TOTAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT.  
MAY 10th, 1981, 1:00, CAPITOL STEPS.  
Speakers, music, information. Bus  
leaving from Missoula. Sign Up, WRC.

# Women's Network



In Montana, the impact on women's issues of the new Republican majority is beginning to appear. Republican state legislators seem to be following the national example of using the budgeting process to destroy programs they disagree with politically. As we go to press, the Montana House has voted, almost exactly along party lines, to deny funding to the Women's Bureau which provides employment information and referral for Montana women and to Community Coordinated Child Care (4C's) which coordinates and supervises local day care centers. Arguments that were used to explain the cuts: "there's no Men's Bureau; We don't have any discrimination anymore; child care services don't need to be regulated."

Efforts are being made in the Senate to restore funding but the Republicans also control that body.

ART 451: Women Artists  
Spring, 1981, TTh 1-2:30  
Fine Arts 302, Professor  
Julie Codell.

The first part of the course will survey women's art in the context of general art history. The second part will examine in detail special problems (female imagery social role, education) and include guest lectures by four professional artists. **\*\*SPECIAL SPRING PROGRAM\*\***  
**VOICES**-a stage production of Susan Griffin's radio play, May 1&2, Masquer Theater, University of Montana, sponsored by the WRC. Watch for publicity!

Human Resource Council  
728-3710

Poverello Center  
728-1809 Food, shelter,  
referral.

Hospice  
549-7757

People's Market (Co-op)  
1221 Helen Avenue 721-3460  
To join, Wednesdays 4 to 7

Women's Resource Center  
243-4153 University Center  
Weekdays 9-5 Referrals and  
information.

Battered Women's Shelter  
YWCA 543-8277  
Open 24 hours a day

Women's Place  
543-7606 210 N. Higgins  
Services in the area of violence against women, divorce, self-help health classes, support groups (rape, problem-solving, divorce, compulsive eating).

Blue Mountain Women's Clinic  
542-0029 515 Kensington 24A  
Birth control, Pregnancy  
Testing, Abortion Clinics,  
Gynecological Services.

Crisis Center - 543-4555  
24-hour phone lines, trained  
listeners, Outreach teams,  
Volunteer training

**Spring Brown Bag Lecture Series-**  
**Sponsored by The Women's Resource**  
**Center Wednesday at Noon in the**  
**Montana Rooms**

- 4/8 Risking in Relationships
- 4/15 New Family Definitions
- 4/22 Balancing Dependency and Autonomy
- 4/29 Assertiveness in Relationships
- 5/6 Cross-Sex Parenting: Father-Daughter Mother-Son
- 5/13 Women Loving Women
- 5/20 Marriage: Why Bother?
- 5/27 Female Friendships

The History and Politics of Feminism, a Women's Studies course will be offered spring quarter at the University of Montana. The class meets on Tuesdays, 7 to 10 p.m., starting April 7th. A teaching fee of \$25 will be charged. Credit (graduate and undergraduate) is available at an additional fee.

Instructors: Diane Sands and Judy Smith of the Women's Resource Center. For more information or to preregister call WRC - 243-4153.

The Montana Women's History Project is preparing a slide-tape show on all aspects of Montana women's lives. The Montana Women's History Project is looking for good photographs from every part of Montana. You can help in two ways. First, make the MWHP slides of the photographs you have. Please don't send original photographs. Also send identification of the slide (the story behind it).

Second, any financial contributions toward the making of the slide show will be much appreciated. The slide show will be available for borrowing, hopefully by this summer. Contact: Diane Sands, Women's History Project, 315 South 4th East, Missoula. 728-3041

Student Health Center 243-2122

Birth Control -  
Tuesday classes "The Pill" and other methods (4:00 by app't.)  
I.U.D.s available - Copper 7,  
Lippes Loop (\$20)  
Diaphragms (\$4.85)  
Spermicides  
Pap Smears, Vaginal Checks,  
Breast Exams

University "Walk In"

Peer Counseling, Referrals for psychological problems (Mental Health Center, Center for Student Development, Clinical Psch.) 9 to 5, 8 to 11:30 p.m.

Missoula Planned Parenthood  
728-5490 235 E. Pine

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