The Montana Women's Resource, Spring 1982

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“We’ve already taken control of the conservative movement. And conservatives have taken control of the Republican Party. The remaining thing is to see if we can take control of the country.”

—Richard Viquerie, New Right Fundraiser

“IT WAS HORRIBLE— I DREAMED I WAS PREGNANT, UNWED, AND ON FOOD STAMPS, AND THEY WERE BUSING ME ACROSS TOWN TO AN ABORTION CLINIC WHEN WE WERE HIJACKED BY WELFARE CHEATS WHO FORCED ME TO SIT IN THE NON-SMOKING SECTION AT AN E.R.A. RALLY.”

FIGHTING THE NEW RIGHT
New Right Conference
Focusing on Issues and Strategies

"What We Can Do About the New Right" was the theme of a conference sponsored by the Women's Resource Center on May 14-15 at the University of Montana.

The conference provided an increased awareness of the New Right, a sense of commitment to feminist ideals and a practical focus as to what people can actually accomplish.

Some key questions were raised about the New Right throughout the conference. In what way is the New Right different from the old conservative Right? Is there an identifiable New Right in Montana? It was discussed that the New Right differs from the old in that it focuses on the private life of the individual, whereas, the old Right concerned itself with fiscal policy and international issues but left personal decisions to the individual. The New Right is not as well established in Montana as it is in some other states with the exception of the Right-to-Life organization. However, the New Right mentality is evidenced in many organizations and communities.

The goals of the conference were twofold; first, to share information about the Right, who they are, what groups they target and what their tactics are. The second goal was to plan strategies for people in Montana to counter the New Right.

Many organizations, NOW, Women for Peace, OIM, etc. were represented.

The conference began Friday afternoon with three sessions. A workshop on using computers presented by Barbara Burke and Judy Smith; a media-skills workshop presented by Bruce Ballinger and the movie "Pink Triangles" which dealt with gay and lesbian rights. Friday evening's speaker was Bella Abzug, president of Women USA and former New York Congresswoman. Saturday morning opened with a panel discussing the New Right in Montana. The keynote speaker on Saturday was Charlotte Bunch, member of the National Gay Task Force. Saturday afternoon people attended one of four roundtables. The topics were: education, employment, the family, and reproductive freedom. The first half of each roundtable was discussion of the particular topic and the New Right's action in that area. The last half was spent planning specific strategies for working on each of the issues.

At the plenary session participants were asked to take responsibility for organizing in their own communities to counter the New Right; i.e., plan rallies, become involved in local politics, boycott certain businesses, develop alternative media, establish a "yellow pages" of women's groups throughout the state, etc.

Each person wrote three things they would commit themselves to and signed their name. A complete list will be distributed among the conference participants so that activities can be coordinated throughout the state.

A direct result of the conference was the planning of ERA rallies across the state on July 1. Missoula, Helena and Billings are having events on that day.

—Terri Harned
“This woman’s place is in the House—the House of Representatives.”

Bella Abzug, 1970 campaign slogan

Abzug, who was elected to Congress in 1970 after practicing law for 25 years, had enthusiastic support from her standing-room-only audience at the university’s Underground Lecture Hall on May 14.

Abzug urged women to “create increasing recognition of our worth and capabilities.” She said that in order to do this, women must “be increasingly willing to lead both men and women.”

She called Reagan’s policies “a form of cowboy capitalism,” and said Reagan was “shooting from the hip,” aiming at the needy.

Abzug stressed her feeling that war is something created and propagated by men, and that for this reason, women have nothing to lose by opposing war.

“Standing roan...only we can end this,” Abzug said.

The audience responded with cheers and positive ad-­lips as it listened to Abzug’s voice swell with emotion and then fade back into its usual diplomatic tone. Abzug’s well-known sense of humor kept the atmosphere light, though the issues she discussed were not to be taken lightly.

“We are not prepared here at this college to trade school lunches for draft cards, now are we?” she asked.

“No!!!” the audience responded.

Women will never gain equality, Abzug said, “in a society that has no soul,” and in a society in which “a fetus may be declared a person before a woman is declared a person.”

She said women must change the priorities that affect all people...ourselves...our children...all of human kind.

Abzug, who hinted in a Missoulian interview the day before the speech that she might run for Congress in the future, compared the Reagan and the Nixon administrations and cracked on their economic and foreign policies.

“Our century has been one of wars and revolutions, and I think it’s something we’ve had very little to do with,” she said, referring once again to the comparatively minor role women have played in the propagation of war.

Abzug attended Columbia University and originated laws prohibiting banks from discriminating against women trying to obtain loans. The 61-year-old Abzug was also a staunch supporter of the Title IX Equal Opportunity in Education Laws in her first term as former New York Congresswoman.

—Melinda Sinistro

Bella

Bella Abzug’s message at the New Right conference was clear: feminists must unify more than ever to gain the power needed to unseat the Reagan administration and its New Right ethics.

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Montana Groups Countering the New Right

*Action for Eastern Montana
   707 Main, Miles City
   232-2538

*Blue Mountain Women's Clinic
   515 Kensington Ave., Msla.
   721-1646

*Candy Brown
   Human Resource Development
   Institute of the AFL-CIO
   P.O. Box 1176, Helena
   442-1708

*Montana NPIW (National Organization for Women)
   315 S. 4th Fast, Msla.
   728-3041

*Montana Coalition for Intellectual Freedom
   Claudette Johnson, English Language Arts Specialist, coordinator
   Office of Public Instruction, Helena
   1-800-332-3402

*Montana Lesbian Coalition
   902, Great Falls, Mont. 59401
   453-4129

*Montana NOW (National Organization for Women)
   2212 First Ave. North
   Great Falls, Mont. 59401
   442-9213

*Montana Pro-Choice Coalition
   P.O. Box 902, Helena
   442-9213

The Montana Panel of Saturday, May 15, offered a variety of perspectives on the New Right in Montana. Each speaker shared her idea of who the New Right is, what the New Right's effect on life in Mt is and some possible responses to the New Right's effect on life in Mt. introduction by moderator Lind Skaar of the Women's Political Caucus, Pat Harper from the Board of Global Ministries for the United Methodist Church and MontCEU spoke about the Religious Right.

Pat mentioned the Moral Majority and the Mormon Church as major forces in the "holy war against feminism." She explained that the popularity of the Religious Right comes about because we are in a period of transition which is causing widespread fear and paranoia. The Religious Right with its religious vocabulary elevates this fear of change.

Pat characterized members of the Right as single-issue people, but warned that they coalesce extremely well. She pointed out that the Mormon Church is one of the world's ten largest corporations. She said other factions on the Right may be dwindling in terms of numbers of people involved, but warned that the machine behind them is still alive and well; rich and powerful men like Joseph Coors and Jesse Helms.

Pat mentioned the Montana Association of Churches as an example of the mainline church's response to the Religious Right. MAC opposes the Religious Right's doctrine that one must subscribe to a certain religious and political agenda to be a Christian person. However, Pat cautioned, many mainline churches share some concerns of the Religious Right on issues such as pornography, abortion, and tuition tax cuts.

Pat described the theology of women of the Religious Right as "one of submission. It sees a God who requires women to return to traditional roles in order to be moral women." In contrast, she called the feminist liberation theology a "vision of hope."

Linda "Jake" Jacobson, a lesbian feminist from Helena, emphasized the New Right's effect on lesbians and gay men and offered valuable information profiling the New Right.

Jake pointed out that the National Republican Party has approximately 90 million dollars while the Moral Majority's financial statement revealed a net worth of 16.7 million with monthly expenses of 2.5 million. The National Religious Broadcasting Co. reaches an estimated 115 million people by radio and 14 million by TV and evangelists reach approximately one third of the world's population. Also, the NRBC estimates that one new religious radio station opens per week and one new TV station opens per month.

Jake explained that the national activities of the New Right affect Montanans regardless of whether or not the national New Right organizations have local groups in this state. The national groups create an atmosphere that gives moral sanction to the abuse and oppression of lesbian and gay people.

Jake pointed out that the New Right is new because they have figured out how to produce bodies for their agenda. Traditionally the
Left has always had large numbers of people, while the Right had large amounts of money. Today the New Right has both money and numbers.

The organized anti-choice forces are not motivated by a concern for life, Judy asserted. She pointed out that there is a strong correlation between anti-choice votes and anti-women votes. The so-called Right-To-Lifers vote against the ERA, the Women's Bureau, and Planned Parenthood. The organized RTL movement is motivated by concern with sexuality (especially women's sexuality) and prevention of change in traditional sex roles.

Next Judy outlined the tactics of the New Right. Aside from using language of "sin" and "morality," the Right is very good at intimidation. She said they are able to instill fear especially in elected officials because they are perceived to be so powerful. Judy advocated a move away from debating the anti-choice forces because of their tendency to use outright distortion and lies.

Pregnancy Counseling organizations established by the New Right display the Right's willingness to terrorize people in pain, as well as lie to them. If a pregnant woman goes to one of these organizations with an unwanted pregnancy, she is told unfounded lies about the emotional and physical damage that would result from having an abortion. The final tactic mentioned was the personal attacks the RTL's are willing to use, such as midnight phone calls to abortion clinic workers who pick up the phone to hear a baby crying on the other end.

Jeanne Edor, a Santi Sioux and an Indian Historian, spoke on the New Right's effect on Native American people. She stated that for the Indians, there is nothing new about the New Right.

"Nothing is new about the threat of destruction and annihilation to the Indian race of people. Nothing is new about the threat of termination of Indian reservations in this state. There is nothing new about the continued push to make all Indian people become assimilated, to become like those of the white Moral Majority. It is not a new experience that once again our very existence is threatened. We have lived with these threats for hundreds of years, since the White Man first set foot on this continent."

Native Americans will continue to use passive resistand to combat the endless attempts at cultural genocide. Jeanne said that a return to traditional Indian religion will be the source of strength necessary to survive the oppression of the New Right.

Jeanne defended the Native American people's right to free education, saying that the Indian people gave up American lands for the price of free education for Indian children forever. She advocated that in education it is important to return to cultural values, to teach self worth and cultural identity to the Indian children.

Pat Regan, a state senator from Billings, was the final speaker on the panel. She asserted that there is "some of the Right in all of us, that we share the kind of moral values in essence." She used herself as an example saying that she was pro-life, but that she is also pro-choice, (being pro-life is her individual choice).

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More Groups...

*Montana Teen Pregnancy Project
315 S. 4th East, Msla.
728-3041

Education and Community organizing to prevent teen pregnancy.

*Rape Crisis Line-Billings
1245 N. 25, Billings
259-6506

24 hr. crisis line

*Out In Montana
P.O. Box 8996, Msla.
728-6589 hrs: 3-10 pm
local resource and supportive center for lesbians and gay men in Mt., newsletter.

*Women in Transition
Displaced Homemaker Group
909 Wyoming, Billings
245-6879

P.O. Box 1375, Bozeman
587-1238

220 2nd St. N., Gt. Falls
727-0966

P.O. Box 1509, Havre
265-6744

2715 Dickinson St., Miles City
232-3031

1130 Broadway, Msla.
543-6768

*Women's Place
127 E. Main, rm218, Msla.
543-7606

Services in the area of violence against women, divorce, support groups, 24 hr. crises line.

*Women’s Political Caucus
Linda Skaar
P.O. Box 1099, Helena
Pursues women’s issues through electoral politics (helps elect women candidates, etc.)

*Women's Resource Center-Dillon
P.O. Box 846, Dillon
683-4817

24 hr. help line

*Women's Resource Center-Msla.
University Center
243-4193
summer hours 10-2 or by app.
referrals and information.

Montana Women's Resource/5


"We are no longer working to preserve the status quo. We are radicals working to overthrow the power structure in this country."

—Richard Viquerie, Direct Mail Strategist of the Radical Right

"A direct ramification of national ratification of ERA would be that women will eventually stop having children. If people decide not to have children, they should be forced to sign a piece of paper saying that they will forswear Social Security benefits. Even if they have worked all their lives. If they're not willing to have children... they shouldn't be entitled to Social Security."

—Myllis Schlaflay

"I agree with capital punishment and I believe that homosexuality is one of those that could be coupled with murder and other sins."

Dean Wycoff, spokesperson for the Moral Majority, Santa Clara, California

"There is a vicious all-out Satanic attack upon the American home—the whole concept of anti-submission and independence... when two people in the family become absolutely equal, there is no head, both become independent of each other and love is destroyed."

Dr. Charles Stanley, Board member, Moral Majority

"At the foundation of the women's liberation movement, there is a minority core of women who were once bored with life, whose real problems were spiritual problems. Many women have never accepted their God-given roles. They live in disobedience to God's laws and have promoted their godless philosophy throughout our society."

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Montana's New Right, cont.

Pat suggested that we use some of the tactics of the New Right such as the Mormon Church's approach of getting involved in every community organization that exists. She encouraged us to take back the political parties through precinct work.

Pat also mentioned the passage of the battered spouse bill as a legislative victory which was achieved by using a tactic of the Right: getting ministers to testify for our legislation.

In looking ahead to the next legislative session, Pat stressed that the final issue will be money. There is going to be less to go around. She said, "In general, we can't allow women's issues to lose again."

--Martha Newell

Charlotte Bunch

"There are no such things as women's issues."

Charlotte Bunch, a theorist, activist, teacher and public speaker, has been organizing feminist activities since 1968. A founder of The Furies and of Quest: a feminist quarterly, she has edited six anthologies on feminism and has written for a variety of publications. She is presently working on issues of international feminism, through Interfan Consultants, a feminist business based in New York.

Charlotte Bunch's address to the New Right Conference was both an analysis of the tactics of the New Right, and of action feminists need to take to combat the Right Wing agenda. Bunch pointed out the success of the New Right is not only a threat to feminist goals but also a compliment: The New Right is taking the feminist agenda very, very seriously.

Bunch spent little time bemoaning the failures of the women's movement other than to stress the "lack of public visibility" crucial to any social change movement, a visibility the New Right has capitalized on. The emphasis of her talk was primarily on what needs to be done now, and in the future.

"My feeling is, the transition we are in first is about taking the movements successes of the 60's and 70's—not our failures, but our successes, in consciousness raising, in community and culture building, in identifying and raising new issues for the public agenda—to take those successes and begin to transform them into political and economic power and structural change."

Bunch repeatedly emphasized the critical importance of gay and lesbian rights to the progress of feminism, and pointed out how the New Right hopes those rights will be "the weak link" through which they can expand their attack on all individual rights.

"The Moral Majority stumbled onto the gay issue as their best scapegoat. They believe that this is the minority that can be scapegoated and isolated; they believe that the rest of the women's movement and the rest of the progressive groups will not stand behind gay rights, and that therefore this is where they can make their first inroad. It's critical to see that the first inroad is exactly that. If they're successful on that point they will simply go on to the next one, and the next one."

Charlotte Bunch, conference speaker.
Bunch sees feminism not as "special interest" but as a "world view"—a "political" that needs to be clarified as such:

"We're talking not only about the issues that were once defined as "feminist issues" or "women's issues", a term which I think we have to reject; there are no such things as 'Women's issues.' There are issues that women have brought to the forefront as legitimate political concerns of all people. The other issues they want to make sure we have nothing to say about, like the military budget, or the international economic order, etc.

Those are not women's issues. We don't have to feel that we have to abandon feminism to take on these issues, but rather we bring feminism to these issues. The feminist vision is a very integral part of all of the questions of the late 20th century."

Bunch spoke of the intimidation, of fear and discouragement, but reminded her audience that: "Things have been worse. Other dreamers, resisters, organizers have kept moving. We are part of a very proud tradition in this country and the world; and I think a part of what I hope will be a better world in the 21st century, because we dared to do what we wanted to do, and thought was impossible."

—Sally Mauk

FINANCIAL REPORT

Final expenses of the conference, "What We Can Do About The New Right", were $6, 462. Income totalled $6,243. A deficit of $219 remains. There is no back-up source for this money but you, the people who believe in the importance of the conference and in continuing anti-right work. We need your help.

Your contribution is tax-deductible. Please indicate if you would like a copy of the final budget of the conference.

Mail checks to New Right Conference, Women's Resource Center, Un. Center, Un. of Mt., Missoula, Mt. 59812.

Yes, the conference, "What We Can Do About The New Right", was important to me. I can help with expenses in the following way:

Enclosed is my contribution for $________ to print and mail the conference directory of anti-right contacts in Montana.

Enclosed is my contribution for $________ toward remaining pitstanding conference expenses.

Arrow Graphics & Typography
224 North Higgins
Missoula, Montana 59802
406/543-7357

The Lily Restaurant
"Relaxed, elegant dining"
lunch & dinner
515 South Higgins
542-0002

Montana Women's Resource
New Right's Repressive Tactics

International Women's Year
Conference in Helena (1977)

The Mormon Church in conjucntion with the John Birch Society, Eagle's Forum and Right-To-Life, organized and sent busloads of people. Mormon men equipped with walkie-talkies took charge of the meeting, telling Mormon women where to go, what to do and say. The Mormon coalition succeeded in passing anti-women's rights, anti-ERA and anti-choice resolutions, in direct contrast to what the conference initially intended to accomplish. The Mormons also elected all of their own delegates to the national conference.

Elections in 1980 resulted in the defeat of moderates and liberals. Republicans controlled the legislature in 1981. Legislation included:

1. Women's Bureau funding was cut off under the guise of unnecessary government. The Women's Bureau was the only public or private agency in Montana to offer comprehensive educational, informational and referral services to women on employment and employment related issues. Gary Ackeland (R), Shelby, and Jack Moore (R), Great Falls, were instrumental in this effort.

2. A provision to remove all state monies used for contraceptives from family planning budgets. When asked what low income women were to do to prevent unwanted pregnancy, Jack Moore responded, "Let them use Saran Wrap."

3. Removal of provisions which insured quality child-care in the name of eliminating unnecessary governmental regulation.

4. Displaced Homemakers bill was killed.

5. A proposal to abolish MT Human Rights Commission was introduced by Carl Seifert (R), Polson. The HRC investigates complaints of discrimination in employment and housing, as required by the Montana Constitution. Seifert also wanted to abolish the Human Rights Act. Though the Commission survived, the budget appropriated for the next biennium is not adequate to erase a backlog of cases.

6. A call for a Constitutional Convention to outlaw abortion was narrowly defeated (79-71). Helen O'Connell (D), Great Falls, introduced the call both times. The Montana Right to Life, the Catholic Church and the Mormon Church were involved in the lobbying effort. The call included a non-binding resolution of support for the federal level Human Life Amendment which was passed by the '81 Legislature.

7. During the fall '81 interim session when the legislature met to allocate federal book grant monies, ADF benefits were cut for first trimester pregnant women because, according to Harrison Fagg (R), Billings, women "don't show" in the first trimester and therefore, don't need medical or nutrition services. Foodstamp benefits were also reduced 20% (2/3 of the food stamp recipients are women).

Education/Censorship Issues

1. Attempts to rid school systems of objectionable materials, e.g., Catcher In the Rye, Our Bodies, Ourselves, Seventeen Magazine, in Helena, Arlee, Florence, Miles City, and Whitehall.

2. The Gabler's, a husband-
wife censorship team, was invited to speak in MT by Mrs. Chuck Cozzens, whose husband is a conservative MT legislator and a bishop in the Mormon Church. The Gabler's founded Educational Research Analysts, a text-book review clearinghouse, which has its own religious and social views. They send out a list of books they recommend local groups censor from the highschool library which includes Catcher in the Rye, Huckleberry Finn and The Grapes of Wrath.

3. Our Bodies Ourselves was checked out of the Helena Public Library along with several other books by a local member of the New Right. She refused to return the books, alleging that they were obscene. An assistant in the Attorney General's Office, Marc Racicot, stated that books like Our Bodies, Ourselves contributed to the delinquency of minors and should be removed from the shelves. He went on to say, "We have genuflected too long at the altar of the First Amendment." Racicot urged prosecution of the Boulder Women's Community also.

4. There have been a number of efforts to block family life or sex education in Montana schools. Last year the MT Board of Education considered the need to combat the increase of teenage pregnancy in Montana by recommending education programs in the schools. Fundamentalist ministers, Right to Life and other anti-sex education groups organized in opposition, packed hearings, conducted letter-writing campaigns. However, enough positive response came to the Board that they went on to issue a recommendation that family life and sex education be included in grades K-12 in all Montana schools.
Every participant was allowed to share her/his viewpoints at the New Right Conference.

New Right Organizations in Montana

ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) has been responsible for:
1. introduction of drug paraphernalia law.
2. a bill to limit bars in Darby.
3. a bill concerning tax breaks for religious schools.

Citizens for Decency through Law advocates strict local laws against pornography; pornography being broadly defined to include all "morally objectionable" material. Ordinances were proposed in several communities, approved in Kalispell, defeated in Livingston and on the ballot in Hamilton.

M.O.D. (Montanans Opposed to Discrimination), an anti-Indian organization, has lobbied for the termination of the reservations and appropriation of all Indian resources by private (non Native American) owners.

The Mormon Church—has been involved in Right To Life and anti ERA campaigns as well as some of the censorship cases in MT. They are actively supporting these candidates in the '82 election: Andreasen (Nsla.) Matsko (GF) R. Silvertson (Havre) C. Seifert (Polson)
D. Switzer (Richey County) L. Kitzelman, D. O'Hara, C. Winslow, T. Hannah all of Billings N. Wallin (Bozeman) Briggs (Dillon) J. O'Hara (GF) E. Severson

(Stevensville) who are all Republican candidates.

The Moral Majority —
Headed by a Baptist minister, Donald Jones, brought Jerry Falwell here to speak last year. (A counter group, Montana Moral Majority has been incorporated by a Montana Feminist).

NCPAC (National Conservative Political Action Committee) has helped to recruit candidates for public office; has supplied their candidates with poll results, political advice and ad campaigns. In June '81 NCPAC held a secret meeting with 25 Republicans to discuss polling information on Sen. Melcher. Attending were Harrison Fagg and James Felt of Billings, and Larry Williams of Kalispell. (now a candidate opposing Melcher in the '82 election).

Right to Life and other anti-choice forces—these groups include the Montana Right to Life, Mormon Church, Catholic Church hierarchy, Moral Majority and John Birch Society. They have access to money and bodies through organized church groups. Suzanne Morris (R) Nsla, a leader in the Right to Life organization, is running for Congress.

Thanks to Diane Johnson for gathering much of this information.
**upcoming events**

**June 27**  **FIGHT BACK!** Pelice Newman and Frederique Delacoste, editors for Fight Back! Feminist Resistance to Male Violence, will speak on the Feminist Resistance Movement: Tactics for Survival. Room 336, Social Science Building, University of Montana, 7:30 p.m. $1 Admission.

**June 28**  **SELF DEFENSE FOR WOMEN** Pat Palmer, a local instructor in self defense for women, will present a workshop in Kiwanis Park. This event is open to the public, is free of charge and will begin at 7:30 p.m.

**June 29**  **WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MISSOULA?** A panel discussion featuring local area women on the topic of what is being done in the Missoula area about violence against women. Panel members include: Lee Rock, YWCA Battered Women's Shelter; Martha Iverson, Blue Mountain Women's Clinic; Anna Saulwick and Kate Wenninger of Women's Place. The discussion will be held in the Meeting Room of the Missoula City-County Library at 7:00 p.m. and is free to the public.

**June 30**  **ABUSIVE IMAGES OF WOMEN IN PORNOGRAPHY AND MASS MEDIA** Margo Schaefer, media specialist, will narrate this slide presentation at noon in the University of Montana Montana Rooms at the University Center. The slide show is open to the public and free of charge.

**July 1**  **NEW DAY—BEYOND ERA** In conjunction with events planned in cities across the nation, a rally will be held in Missoula to draw attention to the deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. A march will begin at 6:00 p.m. starting at Circle Square at the north end of Higgins Avenue and ending at Caras Park. Speakers, music and theater are on the agenda for entertainment in the park. Everyone is encouraged to bring picnic goodies!

**July 1**  **OUT IN MONTANA STATE COUNCIL MEETING** The meeting will be held at the Mounted Quadrille Hall in Billings. A dance scheduled for that evening will be held in the same building. For more information, call 728-6589.

**THURSDAY AFTERNOONS WOMEN'S CLINIC FOR NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN** A representative from Missoula Planned Parenthood will be available each Thursday afternoon from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. to answer questions about pregnancy, prenatal care, family planning, nutrition and other areas of women's health care. Appointments for special exams can be scheduled. Most service will be free of charge or for a minimal fee. For more information call Susan Tall Bull at 329-3905 or drop by Qua Qui Indian Center, 508 Toole.

The Montana Women's Resource Center
University of Montana
Missoula, Montana 59812

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