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The Montana Women's Resource

The Montana New Rural Feminist

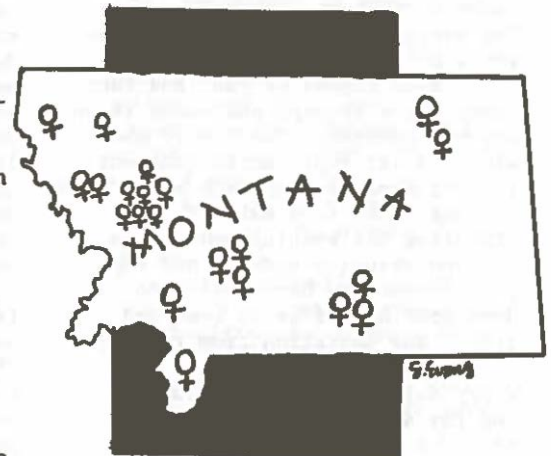
It is important to define the above terms and explain why I so carefully chose them for a title. I believe that what I am about to discuss is very unique to the state of Montana because Montana is a very unique state. There are few places left in this country which allow for such privacy. This is primarily due to the small number of people and the great distances between cities. This, combined with the fact that Montanans do not tend to be very accepting of newcomers, can quickly turn privacy into isolation. When speaking of Rural, I am referring to women living more than twenty miles from a good sized city (Havre, Billings, Helena etc.) and living on a farm or ranch or developing a small parcel of land. The word New carries with it two meanings. In part I am speaking of the people who have chosen to move to Montana from other areas and are not living here because of birth or marriage. New also implies that these women are experimenting with lifestyles and are attempting to combine the old traditional values into their lives along with learning new skills and developing new role patterns. For the purpose of this paper I will define a Feminist as someone who is actively working for the equality of the sexes and views this as a primary aspect of her life.

With the above definition in mind I would like you to stop and think of all the women you know who would fall into that category. If you come up with more than ten, please go back and check my qualifications. Better yet, please send me their names and addresses. As I have travelled around the state for the past two years to various feminist functions, I find very few women who can relate to my life. I consider myself extremely lucky to have some very meaningful relationships in this little town which didn't even make it onto the state map this year. Seriously though, the fact of the matter is that there are a scant few of us. The reason, stated very simply, is that it is a very difficult life; men-

tally, emotionally, and physically.

As strange as it may seem, the physical aspect is the reason many of us have moved to rural settings. We get pleasures in various ways which may sound peculiar to our city sisters. Some of us really enjoy carrying a fifty pound pack up a steep mountain, just to look off into the distance at the top. Others prefer a warm comfortable house with the knowledge that they helped build it from beginning to end; from the pouring of the first yard of concrete for the foundation, to nailing the last soffit on the roof. Others endure the long days and tight restrictions of having a milking animal, to be rewarded by the taste of cool, fresh milk and rich creamy butter. Many spend days and nights gardening (which isn't easy in Montana), harvesting, canning and preserving, in order to experience the pure joy of sitting down to meals all winter with the knowledge that everything before them was produced by them and their loved ones.

There are many more physical aspects that don't have such clear cut rewards but must be accepted as part of the lifestyle. Put very simply, it is a fact that you cannot buy services in the country. Even if one could afford it, there is usually no one to do the work. When the septic system backs-up, it is you who dig down to the tank and then cheerfully (?) shovel the shit. When your water line freezes you either figure out how to thaw it or you carry water for the rest of the winter. When a flood washes out your driveway, you get a shovel and haul loads of gravel and then be prepared to have some means of clearing the snow in winter because the county doesn't do private driveways. It is one thing to feed hay to your animals in the winter, but quite another to buck 80 pound bales onto a truck and then again into your barn. The problem with this physical aspect is not that it harms the body. Although we generally start



out with lots of aches, and are always finding new muscles, most of us feel better for all of the experiences. The real harm is that the physical drain leaves us less strength to deal with the mental/emotional aspects of our lifestyle.

A significant drain on the woman is the sheer stress of learning to live in the new lifestyle. The multitude of knowledge required, which is taken for granted by the person who has done it all of their life, is just overwhelming. From the very "simple" question of the different watering troughs and feeders required for sheep, horses, cows, chickens, and pigs; to the correct temperatures for canning fruits and making cheese (cottage, colby, etc.); to learning the correct way to tamp a fence post and stretch a fence; to the more complex aspects of building, wiring, and plumbing a house; right on out to figuring why that chicken died or how to butcher that rabbit. (Test yourselves; How many words or ideas about country living that I have mentioned do you know anything about?) The means of acquiring the knowledge is often by trial and error because the books are not written for the real novice (even if they say they are) or they are inaccurate or incomplete. Combined with the entire process of attempting to acquire the skills which we have been deprived of due to our sex, is the necessary and very difficult procedure of establishing new ways of sharing our knowledge.

continued on next page

continued from page 1

If one is experimenting with new manners of life, the woman is ultimately subjected to insult and hurt from the people with whom she comes in contact. The man who laughs in your face when you are the only one there when he comes to make the concrete pour. The electric repair man who quotes you a price, takes a check from your hands signed by you, and then makes out a receipt and hands it to any man present. The family who will not let their child come out to your home to play with your child because there is a male at home preparing the evening meal. The men who visually undress and rape you because you have chosen to have your body free to bend and lift. Any deviation from the norm of marriage, children, pies for every sale and regular volunteering for 4H is grounds for isolation. A veteran of twenty years or more may get by with supporting equal pay for equal work (but could never voice support of reproductive freedom) but the newcomer is suspect if she is not married. The woman who views herself as a feminist and attempts to raise the awareness of those around her is viewed as a life threat by the community and is isolated and oft-times maligned.

All of this leads to the major reason why there are so few feminists who remain in rural settings. We are people who generally come from intellectual surroundings and we want and need intellectual stimulation. So many of the people around us are just not from that way of life and the enforced community isolation oft-times prevents them from sharing even if they so chose. This lack of stimulation leads a feminist to a great deal of self-questioning and self-doubt. As with all people, the feminist is in need of support. For a large variety of reasons this is not forthcoming. First is the small number of people with whom she can relate in the local situation. Second is the isolation from the feminists in the city. There is a lot of love expressed but not much understanding. There does not seem to be much appreciation of what the country woman is trying to do.

The feminist movement needs more women in order to bring about the changes desired. We need a strong base all over the state in order to make our demands heard. Many of us "out here" consider ourselves "front line" organizers. We see ourselves as educating and informing our sisters around us and, in addition to hopefully making their lives more meaningful and en-

joyable, providing them as a base support for our sisters in the city.

Needless to say, our methods, tactics and manner of behaving are very different from the traditional view of a feminist. We cannot start luncheon seminars and we cannot negotiate with the legislature. We can provide new role models for the women around us. The small town living allows them to see how a different lifestyle operates and shows them what it is like to live in a mutually respectful relationship. We cannot open women's centers, but we can monitor the local press which is the major means of misinformation to the people. We can counteract the sexist (and every other "ist") articles, and try to get accurate information to the women. We could not have a rape crisis line, even if only for rape, because the "local" police are 50 miles away and there is so much fear. We can speak to the women on a one to one basis, but that is a long, slow, difficult process requiring very creative techniques. To women without children, the usual meeting place for women, the PTA, is out. Others find the county extension meetings to frustrating to attend. So, many have worked into local fire departments, some others have started food buying cooperatives, others have started women ambulance squads, all with the purpose of reaching our sisters. We cannot establish battered women's shelters, but many of us view our places as retreats for our feminist sisters and as possible havens in times of backlash. Finally, the skills we are learning would be essential for survival in the event of a national breakdown.

The problem with all of this is that there are not often any immediate, tangible gains and it is a draining process when combined with the rest of the lifestyle and the lack of support.

There are two suggestions I would like to make which would go a long way to providing the support needed and to help along the women in the field and hopefully encourage more to join us. One is the hope that our city sisters would try to consider us more. Be sure newsletters get to us in time for us to make plans to travel to events. Plan events with our travelling time in mind. Filter new information and ideas and literature to us. By all means plan visits and go out of your way when you are in the general area of one of the rural feminists. Secondly, I would like to suggest that the sisters in the field should get to know one another.

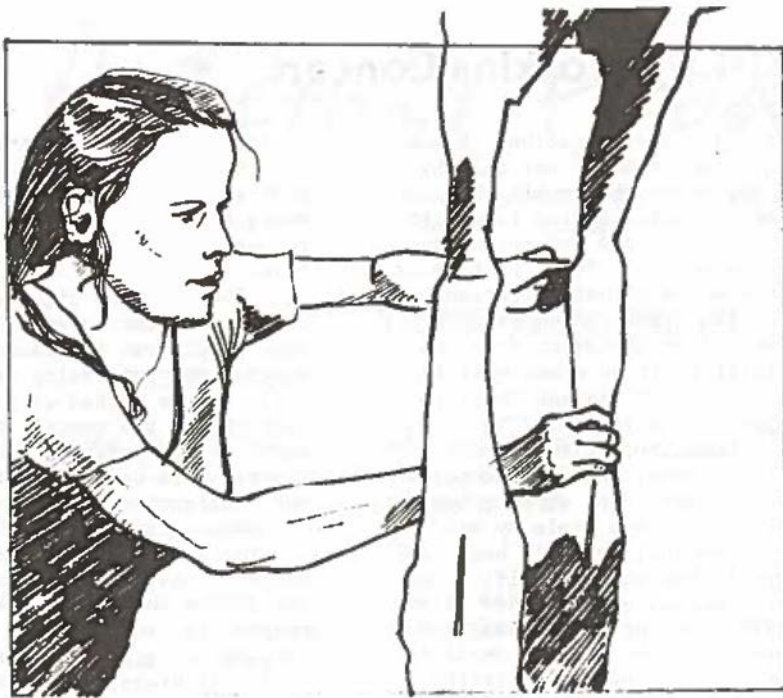
To begin this process, anyone who is interested, write me with your ideas. We could begin a letter/literature/idea exchange and develop a chain visitation program. If there is enough response we may be able to get a little room in this paper for a column or develop our own newsletter.

We are all doing what we are doing because that is what makes us most happy. That is reason enough that we should share our energies and help each other over the difficult spots.

One final sobering thought about this matter. From my experience, all evidence indicates that women who move to the rural Montana areas as feminists and then are frustrated and demoralized by their role, do not leave the country. Rather, they remain in the country and cease being active feminists.

-Kayla Weiner
Route 3, Box 4
Heron, Montana 59844





Resource Center.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is another area which adversely affects women's work performance. From sexual jokes to rape, harassment of Montana women is a fact of life which often makes a work situation hell. More information on the Montana woman's situation needs to be collected and a plan of action determined to end harassment. For a questionnaire if you have been hassled, or to work on this important project, contact the Women's Resource Center.

Public education is an important key for creating new employment opportunities for women. Many people operate under outdated ideas, which often never reflected reality concerning proper work roles for men and women. Who

New Career Information Service Opens for Montana Women

A woman forester? Electrician? Mill worker? Owner and operator of her own print shop? It is happening in Montana!

In a rural state such as Montana a major source of jobs are those fields which have traditionally excluded women. While women comprise about 40% of the labor force, we are concentrated in low paying, low status jobs. In Mt., women hold 57% of jobs and only 1% of jobs are in the crafts. (Others are in clerical and service) The combined pressures of affirmative action on employers and changing work expectations by women are transforming the traditional world of work. A recognition of women's need for economic independence, the rewards of personal growth in a demanding field, and the realities of a 25 year future at work for the average married woman (45 years for the single woman) have resulted in movement toward new careers, non-traditional jobs for women.

As part of this changing work world a new free service has been created for Missoula area women and, to a limited extent, Montana women. In September, a Women's Non-Traditional Employment Counselor, Diane Sands, was hired by the Women's Resource Center, Missoula, to assist individual women as well as community organizations, schools, and employers.

For individual women help is available for those who are just beginning to think or rethink a career, for those who are at the

job-hunting stage, and for those women who already have jobs in non-traditional areas.

Women are invited to come in and explore various traditionally "male" careers, especially the skilled trades, science or environmental fields, and small woman-owned businesses. Help is available from the start of the process--accessing a woman's background and interests--to referral for appropriate training or placement. While some job openings are posted at the WRC, this service is not an employment agency.

Job-hunting itself is the hardest work a woman will ever do. Assistance available includes developing a resume, filling out application forms, learning interviewing skills, building confidence and looking for a job (where and how). All of these are an important part of selling yourself to an employer.

For women already on the job, Sands offers support services in several areas. Beginning in Jan., she and Kate Campbell, switchperson for BN Railroad, will be teaching Assertiveness Training focused on work situations, especially problems arising from work in traditionally male-dominated fields. Assertiveness training develops skills in the areas of saying no, dealing constructively with anger, giving and taking compliments and criticisms, and non-verbal communication. Those interested in taking the 6 week course should call the Women's

Resource Center. doesn't remember hearing that working mothers cause juvenile delinquency? I heard it from a state official just last month. Who hasn't been asked by a potential employer, "How does your husband feel about your working?" Or, often heard in times of high unemployment, "Do you think it is fair for a woman to take a job from a man who has a family to support?"; or "This equal opportunity stuff has gone to far. Reverse discrimination is giving women jobs they aren't qualified for when a man who is qualified can't even get a job." Education can arm people with the facts rather than myths about changing work roles for both men and women. The history of work in America, the law and women's work, supervising women in non-traditional jobs, and career options for high school girls are among the programs that have been presented to schools, organizations and employers.

For more information or an appointment, call or write Diane Sands, Women's Resource Center, Women's Non-Traditional Employment Counselor, U.M. Center, University of Montana. (Phone 243-4153 or 243-6724. A wats line is available to return Montana calls.)

P.S. What Color is Your Par-
achute by R. Boiles is a very practical and entertaining job-hunters manual for anyone. It is the best thing readily available on a glutted market and will save job-seekers a lot of mistakes.

-Diane Sands-

Holly Near/Mary Watkins Concert

Holly Near and Mary Watkins appeared in concert in Missoula on Oct. 15, as part of the Violence Against Women Conference. Holly Near has been a political activist for some time, but recently she has been turning her energies more and more towards creating woman-identified music and culture. She and Mary Watkins met in a workshop on women's music in Los Angeles on Labor Day 1976 and have been performing together since then.

Although a woman musician, Near does not feel that she has always been making women's music. She commented on her changing consciousness, and why and how her music reflects reflects it. Several years ago she was writing what she considered "feminist" music. Someone pointed out to her that although the women in her songs were strong, they were always shown in relation to a man. This was the beginning of her "conscious understanding that we need to figure out our own lives apart from male identification". Near finds women's music very revolutionary and exciting in the way it is being presented as a part of how women are learning to express themselves independently

from male-identification. Woman-identified is music not only by and for women, but music that speaks to our changing lives, to our struggles and our strengths. It is a positive force that deals with women and their relationships with each other in new ways. This is radically different from non-feminist music by women musicians who sing about men and their relationships with men, ("You treat me so mean, but it is a woman's fate) or about women as competitors for men ("You were my best friend until you stole my man").

Near has not only been dealing with her male-identification in her music, but also her heterosexism. During the concert she spoke about her growing realization of the king of oppression Lesbians face in our society. She said earlier, in an interview that to sing "I love you, I love you in a monotone is radical if it is being sung by a woman to a woman". She can no longer differentiate between the personal and the political and she feels that in order to make political changes in your life, you have to "change your insides to carry it through". Near has been using her music as an organizing tool for some time, but now she is focusing her energies on organizing herself, to discover her own oppression as a woman.

A frequently heard criticism of women's music is that it is "boring" or "too personal". Watkins answered this by saying that she finds just the music itself is excellent harmonically. In reference to popular rock music she said, "I got tired of listening to the personal that didn't validate reality for me. These things (Lesbianism and women's lives in patriarchal culture) are painful to deal with, but they must be." Watkins finds commercial music alienating and feels that the way women's music can avoid this alienation is to have "all women writing, singing and distributing it."

Both women talked about the relationship between women's music and the women's movement. Watkins believes that the power of music is that it acts as a re-energizing tool. Near expanded on this idea by describing women's music as a "healing force". It can be a reason to come together, focus our energy even though outside forces try to get us to focus on our differences." She feels that in a pecking order of who you can "get to", that it is "easier

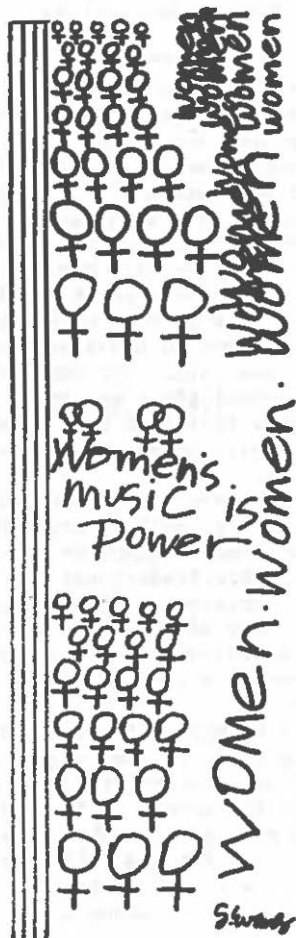
to attack other women than the patriarchy." Watkins and Near both agreed that the ability of music to reach all kinds of women is one of its most valuable attributes.

The Saturday night concert was an excellent example of how many people can be reached with music. The University Center ballroom was packed with people even though the concert didn't begin until almost 10:30 p.m. The barriers between "performers" and "audience" were broken down as woman-energy filled the room and the audience sang along on choruses, even singing parts on the chorus to "The Rock Will Wear Away". The music showed women in various roles, as mothers, organizers, fighters, daughters, sisters and lovers but always it spoke to women loving other women on all these levels. Near definitely had the stronger voice of the two, but Watkins plays a mean piano and her piano solos were among the highlights of the evening, particularly "The Sword That Heals", a piece she wrote about the Black struggle for liberation.

The music of both these fine musicians is unfortunately rarely, if ever, heard on the radio, nor are their records available in local stores. Watkins has recorded on the Olivia label, and her work can be heard on a number of their records, including a vocal number on "Lesbian Concentrate". Near records on her own Redwood label. These records are available in Montana through Artemis Productions in Helena.

The success of the concert was due in large part to the excellent job of the women who produced it and made all the necessary arrangements. Particular thanks to Artemis and the Women's Resource Center and in particular to Linda, Merrye, Jane, and Sheila. Having worked on womens concerts before, I was extremely appreciative of their attention to the myriad of details necessary for bringing the women of Montana such a wonderful evening.

-Kathleen Coyne-



Artemis Productions

"Distributors of fine women's music and producers of cultural events for the Montana women's community."

602 N. Warren
Helena, MT. 59601
443-5464

SELECT FROM OUR GROWING LIST OF ALBUMS...

OLIVIA RECORDS

- _____ "Face the Music" -- Meg Christian.
At last! Her concert favorites +
"Mountain Song", "The Rock Will
Wear Away".
- _____ "Linda Tillery" -- Linda speaks of
the passion, pain, struggles of
black women.
- _____ "Oregon Mountains" -- Woody Simmons
- _____ "Live Dream" -- Cris Williamson's
second album.
- _____ "Foxglove Woman" -- Trish Nugent
- _____ "Virgo Rising" -- one of the first
all woman-produced albums.
Malvina Reynolds, Janet Smith,
Kit Miller, etc.
- _____ "Lesbian Concentrate" -- anthology
of upfront lesbian material.
- _____ "The Ways a Woman Can Be" --
Teresa Trull
- _____ "Be Be K'Roche" -- latin/rock band
- _____ "Berkeley Women's Music Collective"
- _____ "Where Would I Be Without You" --
Poetry of Pat Parker & Judy Grahn
- _____ "The Changer and the Changed" --
Cris Williamson. A classic.
- _____ "I Know You Know" -- Meg Christian
A "must" for your collection.

REDWOOD RECORDS

- _____ "You Can Know All I Am" -- Holly Near
About women in prison, organizing,
in relationships. Includes "Nicolia",
"Sister-Woman-Sister".
- _____ "A Live Album" -- Holly Near.
Includes many of her best-loved songs.
- _____ "Hang in There" -- Holly Near
Songs about war and social change.

WISE WOMEN ENTERPRISES

- _____ "Debutante" -- Willie Tyson, a singer
you'll enjoy. Blues/jazz/ country.
Strong, satirical lyrics.
- _____ "Three Gypsies" -- Casse Culver
Country/folk
- _____ "Mooncircles" -- Kay Gardner
Classical, mostly flute.

WOMEN'S WAX WORKS

- _____ "Living with Lesbians" -- Alix Dobkin
Includes Montana favorite, "Mary B".
- _____ "Lavender Jane Loves Women" -- Alix
Dobkin, Kay Gardner, Patches Attom

PLEIADES RECORDS

- _____ "Songwriter" -- Margie Adam
Beautiful vocals & piano compositions

Check the albums you want to receive and
enclose \$6.00 for each album (Redwood
Records' releases \$5.50 each). Artemis
will pay the postage and handling costs.
Make check or money order payable to
Artemis Productions.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Women and Work

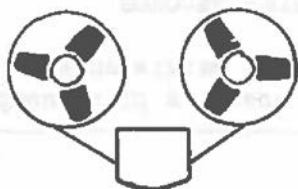
"Believe It or Not" About Women and Work

1. A man with an 8th grade education makes about the same salary as a woman with a college degree.
2. 90% of all women will work for wages at some point in their lives.
3. For full time work: the male median income is \$11,4000 today, the median income for women is \$6,400. (57% of men's income)
4. This income gap has widened since 1956. In 1956 fully employed women's earnings were 63% of men's; in 1970 they were 59%; in 1975 they were 57%.
5. In Montana, 1975, there were 173 men in apprenticeship training programs and only 6 women.
6. Occupations and % of women in each:
 1. clerical--34.5%
 2. service--20.3%
 3. professional/technical--15.6%
 4. operatives--13%
 5. sales--6.8%
 6. managers/administrators--5%
 7. craft and kindred--1.4%
 8. laborers--1.0%
 9. farm workers--1.4%

Statistics from Handbook on Women Workers, Women's Bureau, Dept. of Labor, Washington, DC, 1975

Sound Reinforcement & Recording

CONCERTS, MEETINGS, DEMONSTRATIONS



Contact:
Artemis Productions
602 N. Warren
Helena, MT. 59601
443-5464

Divorce Survival

Women's Place is now offering Divorce Survival Counseling for women and men.

WHAT IS DIVORCE SURVIVAL COUNSELING?

IT IS :

Talking about how you feel about ending a long term relationship; support to rediscover, or discover for the first time who you are-by yourself; learning different ways to cope with stress, confusion, anger; working in groups or individually with the purpose of personal growth.

A referral service: how to find a lawyer; where to go for help with taxes, financial aide, credit, and other social services; where to find child care; where to look for housing; where to get counseling.

WHO IS IT FOR?

All workshops, groups and individual counseling are for people married or unmarried, dealing with the termination of a relationship.

WHERE IS IT?

Women's Place is located in the YWCA building on West Broadway behind the Black Angus Restaurant.

WHEN?

My office hours are:

MWF 11-12, 1-2

T Th 9-12, 1-2

Appointments only after 2 p.m.

In November and December, workshops are being presented on five areas of divorce: Children of Divorce, Emotional Aspects, Living Alone, Financial Aspects, A discussion group for women who are not staying with their children after divorce is now being formed.

Starting in January, a Support and Personal Growth Group for divorcing people will meet. The group will include exercises in communication skills, assertiveness, values clarification, and setting goals, as well as group discussions of different aspects of divorce. Other activities being considered are: Assertiveness training for women and men, and Parent Effectiveness workshops. Anyone interested in these activities should contact Women's Place.

Currently I am assessing the needs of divorcing people in order to develop a program to meet those needs. All interested people are encouraged to contact Women's Place.

Marti Adrian
Divorce Survival Counselor

Lesbian Column

A group of gay women meet every Friday night of each academic quarter at 7:30 in the Women's Resource Center. This rap group provides an opportunity for gay women who are new to the community, women who are just realizing their gay identity, and women who are straight but who would like to know more about their gay sisters, to come and meet with us. The meeting itself is unstructured and ranges from serious discussions, to the faint beginnings of some political action, to badly needed socializing, joking, supporting each other, and blowing off some steam. Members within the group are currently working on setting up a gay coffee house in conjunction with gay men in town, putting energy into women-only functions, checking out the possibility of starting up an MCC church in Missoula, building better means of letting other gay women in Missoula know of our existence, and of getting a gay women's assertiveness training group off the ground for winter quarter. If you are shy about coming to a big group but would like to talk to someone about being gay, or if you just don't like meetings but would like to know some folks, call the Women's Resource Center and one of us will be happy to set up a time to talk with you.

On the state level, the Montana Lesbian Coalition has just gotten itself formalized enough to start a newsletter. It will come out bimonthly, starting in mid-January, and include articles, news, announcements of events, poetry, listings of women-owned businesses in Montana, book reviews, etc. Besides having a newsletter to improve communication among Montana lesbians, the coalition is planning to sponsor Lesbian events, set up a speaker's bureau, and organize politically at a state-wide level. This organization is a good way to find out what's already happening, who some of the gay women are outside of your own home town, and to make a lot more positive things happen by and for Lesbians. There is a \$5/year donation to join, including a subscription to the newsletter. To get your name on the mailing list or to send in information for the newsletter, write:

Montana Amazons Unlimited
P.O. Box 523
Helena, Mt. 59601

Poetry Page



MOON PERIODS

Child of Mine, let us sit together in a Circle of Two 'round the Fire.

Grandmother Moon peeks at us rising up from the wilderness, gliding 'round beyond the Mountains.

It is a Good Night, the Loon Wails

We shall talk of the Womb, Little Sister,
it is Time you should Know
how it Comes and Goes, rising
and emptying
for the Little Ones yet to be
Born.

Small as your fist: circular, small
tight sphere,
glistening in the deep dark
never yet prepared for Landings,
nor shed itself in the Absence
of them,

Yours is empty and quiet as yet.

For a few days a Nest is my Womb,
of Red, dear, not White like
our Relative;
Mine lies full, like grandma up
there.

Yours too will fill with vast
nourishments
to empty Life's Bright Red
River
trickling toward the Light of
Sun.

Then the quiet time, while other
growings carry on,
when Roots grow Strong and
the Egg grows silently and
Moon goes Invisably on her Path.

Smoke with me, Child, there is more
come.

What stops this great Silent
Rhythm?
How does it Cease, then to resume?

Circles, child, two circles
becoming One Circle to grow
to two, alike yet so unlike
to grow to four and eight and
on and on,
to Fill the Nest.

Nine moons filling the great
Circle

Then to push on Out, Another of
Life's Rivers
Meeting the glare of Sun and
Growing
on the Air and Soil of Mother
Earth.

The Red River trickles on, cleans-
ing the now-stretched sphere;
and Ceases, for the other grow-
ing to begin
again, and again, and again.

Forever you ask? Hush Child, the
Loon calls.

You are to soon have your Beginn-
ings:
The end of your childhood of
freedom.
I am soon to have my endings
The beginning of my final
Freedoms.

Small cycles, making larger ones,
Circles, child of mine, circles
'round the Fire.

Glasgow, August 1976

Morning Star

SEX SYMBOLS ON CHARTS

Male is
represented by
a square
and Female by
a circle.
Chart makers were
not the first
to notice this:
good women are
nice and round
but they don't roll
away. Oh! Four square
city of God, even
Kings wore square
crowns.
But Boadicea
queen of the Iceni
wore none. She
and her shaggy pony
people smashed Rome.
They never should
have raped her daughters.
Or in charts man
is the same as woman
(but for his precious pointer
directed at God) (and
her filled up with it
to the hilt)
Can I go to the
toilet with the
flower on the door?
The little stick
person has a skirt
on: see? And I
don't.

Blythe



♀ Artemis Productions has a
representative here in
♀ Missoula who is selling
records! Her name is Kathy
♀ Byrnes and she can be reached
♀ at 728-0001. If you want to
♀ hear women's music in your
♀ home, call her!

Women's Studies Newpage

National Women's Studies Association

The NWSA has a new, national coordinator, our 1st, to carry out the vision of women's studies as set out by the founding convention held one year ago. Elaine Reuben, past director of Women's Studies at George Washington University, Wash. D.C., has the amazon task of setting up a national office at the University of Maryland, raising funds, and acting to support women's studies across the country. We wish her and our new national office our best.

NWSA has had an exciting first year forming regional networks of women's studies persons and programs from universities, K-12, and the community. The task of information exchange, program support and defense of women's studies requires our active support. That support can be given by becoming an active member of our regional Northwest/National Women's Studies Association, and by joining the NWSA, which also includes a subscription to the excellent "Women's Studies Newsletter".

If you are a member of NWSA or wish to be on the mailing list for our region (North and South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana) please drop the regional address a card.

Addresses:

National Women's Studies Association
4102 Foreign Languages Building
Un. of Maryland/College Park
College Park, Maryland 20742
(301-454-3757)

Diane Sands
Northwest/NWSA
Women's Resource Center
Un. Center, Un. of Montana
Missoula, Montana 59812
(406-243-4153, we have a Wats line and will return Montana calls.)
Conferences:

Plans are being finalized for a number of exciting spring conferences in the Northwest area which are of interest to Women's Studies. Plan now to set aside these dates. If you know of others please let us know so that word can be spread.

May 12-13: All persons interested in Women's Studies activities in North and South Dakota, Wyoming and Montana will be getting together for an informal day and a half. We will inform

ourselves of what programs, courses, funding sources, and innovative ideas have been tried in our 4 state area. It will be a good chance to meet others and determine what support we can give each other as the Northwest Region of the National Women's Studies Association. Films, books, and periodicals, brochures etc. will be available. Again, students, K-12 teachers, community and university people are welcome. A regional meeting of National Women's Studies Association will be held at this time. The meeting which will be at Eastern Montana College, Billings Mt., will be free and housing will be provided. For more information please write or call Diane Sands, Women's Resource Center, U. of M., Missoula.

May 4,5,6. "The Women's Studies Challenge to Tradition" conference will be held on the Eastern Washington University campus, Cheney, Wa. 99004. Pat Coontz, Coordinator of Women's Studies has called for papers, reviews, and outlines of talks presenting new research or current scholarship in Women's Studies. Feel free to suggest topics in which you would be interested or would like to present a paper. It looks like an exciting conference and we hope to see a number of women's studies people from our area there. If there is anyone who would like to join a car pool leaving Missoula, please drop us a line. Housing will be provided in Cheney.

June 14-16. "Women in Sports" will be the annual conference of the Women's Resource Center, Missoula. Plans are still being made but it is anticipated that the major audience will be K-12 teachers. Workshops being planned include Title IX, the future of women's sports, sociobiology, the history of women in athletics, etc. A national woman sports figure, such as Billie Jean King, is being sought. The U.of M. will also be offering a week long course on Women in Sports in conjunction with the conference. Stay tuned for further developments.

April 20-22. "Women Aware" annual conference in Bozeman, Mt. will have three themes: Women in the Arts, Women in Health, and Women in Economics. Speakers

will include Virginia Carter, V. Pres. of Norman Lear Productions and Suzanne Renton, metal sculptor. The conference will be preceded by a 2 day professional seminar for women in business and management. It will be led by Philomena Warihay, Take Charge Consultants, Philadelphia. For more information contact: Focus on Women, 211 Montana Hall, MSU, Bozeman, Mt. 59717.

TABS: A new journal.

"A new journal of aids for ending sexism in classroom and school" is available. TABS focus is very practical and badly needed: ideas, materials, lesson plans for use in K-12 to stimulate non-sexist teaching. Order a preview copy for yourself and your teaching friends: TABS, 744 Carroll St., Brooklyn, NY. 11215.

National Women's Studies Association

Membership in NWSA is open to all individuals and programs interested or involved in feminist education on any level and in any setting.

Membership includes a subscription to the Women's Studies Newsletter.

Individual Memberships are open to students, teachers at every educational level, program staff and administrators, and people involved in any aspect of feminist education and organization in the community.

Individual dues have been established according to the following schedule:

INCOME	ANNUAL DUES
Under \$5,000	\$5.00
\$5,000 - 9,999	10.00
10,000 - 14,999	15.00
15,000 - 19,999	20.00
Over \$19,999	25.00

Program memberships (\$50.00 annually) are available to women's studies programs and community women's centers and organizations. Unfunded community groups should use the dues scale for individual members.

No person or program shall be excluded from membership because of inability to pay dues.

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NWSA members from North and South Dakota, Wyoming and Montana automatically belong to the North West subregion of NWSA. For further information, contact Diane Sands, NWSA Coordinating Council member, Women's Resource Center, U of M, Missoula MT 59821.

Individual Program
Membership Membership

NAME _____

AFFILIATION _____

ADDRESS _____

City State Zip Code

Are you interested in receiving information about one or more of the following caucuses?

Community College Staff
Third World Student
PreK - 12 Lesbian

Other: _____
(please describe)

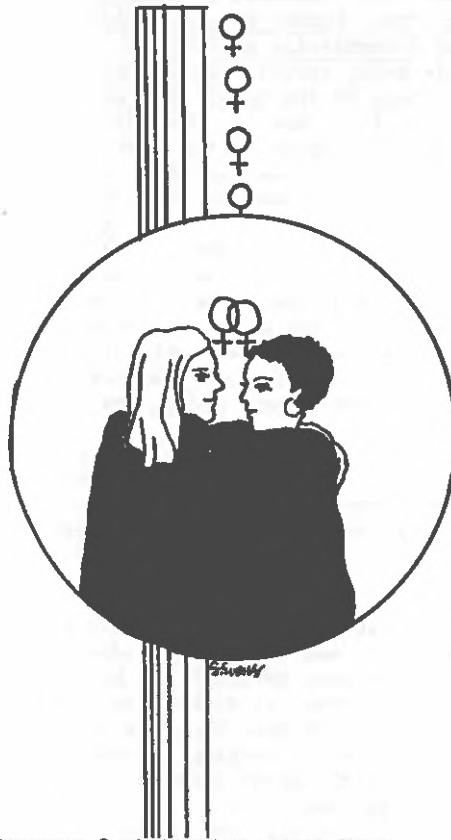
Send this form, with a check made out to the National Women's Studies Association, to:
Barbara Hillyer Davis, Treas.
National Women's Studies Ass.
Women's Studies Program
Univ. of Oklahoma
Norman, OK 73019

Helena Women's Center Group

I've been asked to share information about the women's support groups which are being facilitated by Judi Pollard and myself at the Helena Women's Center. These groups are being formed in response to a demonstrable need for women to get in touch with each other's lives. The rape crisis line, for example, has put us in touch with many individual women who were feeling alone and in need of support through a crisis or transition. Seeking help from one or more of the various local human service agencies--which ignored or aggravated their feelings of powerlessness--these women had very often been encouraged to adjust to their situations, rather than to work for positive personal or social changes.

In an effort to create the opportunity for women to work together to find lasting solutions

to problems in their lives, we at the Women's Center have been organizing support groups, starting with an initial series of five meetings, and with five to ten women in each group. Each weekly session includes structured exercises and "process facilitation". The exercises are designed to develop specific skills that will help the participants express themselves clearly and learn to trust each other. Exercises in self-disclosure come first, while learning to recognize how power is gained and given away within the group (and within our lives) comes later.



Process facilitation means that we are constantly looking at the dynamics within the group, with the objective of the group learning how to function effectively on a continuing basis without Judi or myself.

The emphasis on our own ability to help ourselves grow and learn problem-solving is, in my view, an important departure from the usual process, in which women relinquish responsibility to an authority figure. I have observed a "dominance/submission archetype" being repeated in various helping relationships between women and health care professionals, teachers, social workers, and therapists. Help-seeking behavior under these circumstances can become habitual

and destructive, encouraging dependency rather than fostering a woman's sense of her own power. In sharing the experiences of each others lives, however, we find we are helping each other integrate the personal and political aspects of ourselves. Many of us, for example, are exploring new ways of defining our love relationships in non-oppressive terms. We are learning by sharing, listening, trying on new attitudes, different behaviors... absorbing positive messages about being a woman (being ourselves). We are finding that breaking down the barriers between our individual lives begins a growing process with potential for many positive changes. And feminism, because it brings us together, provides the vehicle through which we learn and grow.

With new groups to begin in January, we are now in the process of gathering feedback from women who have already completed the initial five sessions. Two groups have done so...one continues to meet and the other has disbanded. In the new groups, as before, to encourage trust-building we limit membership to those who participate in the first meeting. The fee which includes membership in the Woman's Center, has been \$20 (or an equivalent barter). All monetary proceeds go toward the Woman's Center operating funds. Judi and I would appreciate reactions and/or criticisms from anyone who cares to comment. We can be reached through the Helena Woman's Center, 107 W. Lawrence, Helena MT 59601.

Liz Manley

Goings On

Women's Place is currently working on a grant to fund a "Rape Awareness Week" to be held in the fall of 1978. The Missoula program will be held in conjunction with a state-wide program organized by Rape Crisis Centers around the state. Focus of the week will be rape education with an emphasis on rural out-reach. The program is in the preliminary planning stages. Women interested in working on it should contact Women's Place, 543-7606 in Missoula.
YWCA JOB PREP WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN

A series of workshops designed for women looking for work. Discussion and exercises will have particular emphasis on women re-entering or entering the job market after extensive homemaking experience.

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All workshops are on Thursday evenings 7:00 - 9:00.

Feb. 2 How To Write a Good Resume

Feb. 9 Interviewing for a Job

Feb. 16 Career Exploration

Feb. 23 Training Opportunities

March 2 Part-Time Jobs/Creating Your Own Job

There is a \$1.50 fee per session for the whole series. The Y operates on a sliding scale. For more information call Tracy Bier or Jo Waldbillig. 543-6768

FEMALE SEXUALITY GROUP

The group workshop is designed for women who have never or rarely had orgasms. Previous group participants have been 95% successful in attaining orgasm by the end of the sessions. The discussion Group meets twice weekly with some daily homework exercises assigned. The groups will be small including 6 to 8 members and two female group leaders. We stress confidentiality. Only the other group members will know you. The meetings are held in a private Montana Room in the University Center. The group is called a "discussion of female sexuality", the content of which will only be available to group members.

Groups begin when enough women have signed up. They will meet Monday and Wednesday nights 7-8:30.

For more detailed information call:

Betty McQuirk 728-7134 evenings
Jo Barnes 549-1212 evenings

Book Review

How to Save Your Own Life by Erica Jong, published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

How to Save Your Own Life is Erica Jong's thinly disguised autobiographical sequel to Fear of Flying. While Fear of Flying was at least mildly amusing as soft-core porn without many feminist/political implications, How to Save Your Own Life has few (if any) redeeming qualities. If Jong was exploring her (Isadora's) strengths in Fear of Flying, in

How to Save Your Own Life she relentlessly exposes her weaknesses.

The novel opens with the line: "I left my husband on Thanksgiving day." The remainder of the novel deals with the trauma of leaving her husband, her myriad lovers (including a woman), and the man she finally meets, coming to the conclusion that she needs a man around whom she can center her life.

The novel is bad on so many levels that it is difficult to know where to begin. If, as she states at one point, "A poem is a one-night stand, a short story an affair and a novel a marriage" this novel has convinced me that the institution of marriage is indeed doomed. The copyright information reveals "Parts of this book first appeared in Playboy, New Dawn, Family Circle, Vogue, and Mademoiselle magazines." This helps explain the stylistic failings of the novel; it lacks continuity, moving awkwardly from one chapter to the next. But the individual chapters are not tightly enough written to succeed as a series of vignettes. They are mostly character sketches of the great and near-great and their groupies who all admire Isadora's frankness. The only thing about the novel which I enjoyed was figuring out who the various characters are in real life.

If the style leaves something to be desired, the plot is even more disappointing. Jong fearlessly exposes all her weaknesses and vulnerabilities as she goes through all her friends and lovers. To be able to admit one's weaknesses does take a certain strength, and if the novel dealt with the ways in which the heroine overcame them, it might have some potential. Rather than dealing with Isadora's working through her feelings about fame, love, marriage, and personal fulfillment, she merely runs through a series of lovers, none of whom can satisfy her needs. It is the classic story of a woman looking for fulfillment in a lover and she, of course, finds one who has all the requisite qualities, and who especially is totally unlike her husband. How to Save Your Own Life doesn't even bother

to have feminist pretensions. At one point Isadora "confesses" that despite all her feminism, what she really wants is a man to tell her what to do with her life.

At a time when many women are struggling to change their lives, questioning traditional values and roles, Jong has written a novel about a woman who is searching for her prince in shining armour, who will rescue her from her failing marriage. The answer to Isadora's discontent is too easy - if Bennett doesn't make her happy, then what she needs is a different man. I have little faith in such happily-ever-after endings, and I can not help but wonder how long it will be before her relationship with the perfect man, Josh, becomes as oppressive as the marriage to Bennett. Rather than examining her life and making fundamental changes, Jong's heroine has found a new man on whom to depend.

How to Save Your Own Life is a misnomer. Rather than saving her own life, Isadora is only getting more of the same in her new relationship. Many women are writing about the new ways we are learning to make our lives. These don't always have the stereotypical happy endings, but they are presenting women struggling in realistic ways to change their lives. It angers me that Jong can get such a poor novel published and get the media coverage necessary to make it a best seller. The myth of the man who can instantly solve all of a woman's problems and provide total fulfillment and happiness is just that - a myth.
Kathleen Coyne

The Montana Women's Resource is put out 4 times a year through the Women's Resource Center, University Center, University of Montana, Missoula, Mt. Staff: Sheila Evans, Kathleen Coyne

The Montana Women's Resource is open to input from any women around the state. Please write us!

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