

TRANSFORMATION

Volume 3, No.1. Women's Project, 2224 Main Street, Little Rock, Arkansas 72206, 501/372-5113, March 1988.

April 4th Orientation Scheduled Countdown to Job's Project Launch

The Women's Project has received funding from the Levi Strauss Foundation and the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation to initiate a nontraditional employment project for women. Through this project women will receive preparation and support for beginning training for work in the trades. They will also work together to advocate for more skills training and job opportunities for women.

In the summer of 1987, the Levi Strauss Foundation funded the Women's Project to research the status of women in non-traditional employment in Arkansas and to plan a program to increase their numbers by eliminating the barriers to gaining and retaining non-traditional employment in jobs such as highway construction, utilities (electric, telephone, gas), housing construction, building maintenance, etc.

The research showed that while more women are in the workforce, the number of women in poverty is increasing. Two out of every three adults in poverty are women. Women still work in the lowest paid jobs. Though they make up 44% of the national labor force, 77% of these women are in non-professional occupations, those with the lowest pay and fewest benefits.

In Arkansas women make \$.48 for every dollar a man makes. The per capita income for women in Arkansas is \$8,479, the second lowest in the nation. Inadequate job training, few job opportunities, and low wages translate into increased poverty for women and children in the state. Of the 76,000 single heads of household, 35% are at or below poverty level.

So-called non-traditional jobs for women are those that offer good salaries and benefits, and women are poorly represented in these in Arkansas. Of the 2,200 employees in highway construction in the Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department, only 70 are women. Men outnumber women 30 to one in the 105 apprenticeships programs registered with the Bureau of Apprenticeships and Training. There are only 13 women among the 2,524

union members in the construction trades in Arkansas. Out of the 1,259 people employed by the 35 companies reviewed by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs in the last 2 1/2 years, only 24 were women.

The research also showed that there is little information available to women about entering the trades, and no programs designed specifically for helping women enter these fields. Schools still put primary emphasis upon traditional jobs for women. Hence, they neither prepare women for the trades nor help them to know that such work is available and is a viable choice for women.

One of the most difficult barriers for women, Doles said, is the harassment women receive on the job. This intimidation ranges from unfair treatment to sexual harassment. Unfortunately, just as the U.S. Navy just discovered in their massive study that there is little recognition by men at the workplace of behaviors which are sexually harassing or unfair, the research in Arkansas shows the same to be true here.

The U.S. Navy is approaching this problem by opening jobs for women and simultaneously providing awareness training and workshops for men about sexual harassment. The Women's Project will take a similar approach by working to eliminate women's internal barriers and by

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The Women's Project presents Jane Sapp in concert. See page 6.

**Conference Registration Deadline:
March 18, 1988**

**Women and Work:
Organizing for Change**

**Saturday, March 26, 1988
University of Arkansas at Little Rock**

8:30 am - 9:15am
Registration. Fine Arts Auditorium

9:15am - 10:15am
Economic Issues Facing Women.
Wendy Johnson, Executive Director, Southeast Women's Employment Coalition

10:30am - 12:30pm
Workshops. Business Administration Building

A. Working Women and Children: Childcare Issues.
Maggie Chafin, Director of Arkansas State Employees Association Childcare Center

B. Employment Discrimination: Sexual Harassment, Pregnancy Discrimination and Other Forms of Discrimination.
Arkie Byrd, Attorney, Mays and Crutcher

C. Breaking the Welfare and Low Wage Cycle.
Sally Kirst, Director of Counseling Services, University of Arkansas at Monticello

D. Working for Higher Pay: Non-traditional Job Training and Opportunities.
Janet Perkins-Doles, The Women's Project

E. Older Women, Work and Poverty.
Joy Pritchett, Lifelong Education, UALR; Marlane Stakemiller, AARP Senior Community Service Employment Program

F. Labor Laws Affecting Women Workers: Fair Labor Standards Act, Unemployment Compensation, and Workers' Compensation.
Sandra Halbert, Compliance Specialist, U.S. Department of Labor; Pat Humphries, Workers' Compensation Commissioner; Mary Ann Mc Gowan, Chair, Employment Review Board

G. Arkansas Legislative Issues Affecting Work and Poverty.
Debra Milam, Public Policy Project

12:30pm - 1:30pm **Lunch.**
Participants are responsible for their own lunch

1:30pm - 3:30pm
Workshops. Business Administration Building

A. Overcoming Barriers to Work.
Margie Powell, Area Supervisor for Guidance Counselors, AR

Department of Education.

B. Double Jobs: Keeping It Together at Home and at the Workplace.
Linda Rickel, Assistant Professor, University of AR at Pine Bluff

C. Unions: A Vehicle for Change in the Workplace.
Ernestine Weaver, International Union of Electrical, Electronic, Technical, Salaried, and Furniture Workers, AFL-CIO

D. The Connection Between Economics and Domestic Violence.
Erma Brown, Coordinator, Victims Witness Program, Camden; Pat O'Brien, Advocates for Battered Women

E. The Economics of Teenage Pregnancy.
Annie Abrams, Parent Involvement Coordinator, Little Rock Public Schools

F. Small Business Development.
Mildred Holley, Small Business Development Center, UALR

G. A Woman's Right to Know: Health Hazards on the Job and in the Community.
Bernica Tackett and Tamra Barrett, OSHA Working Training Center, Labor Education, UALR

3:30pm - 4:00pm
Organizing for the Future.
Fine Arts Auditorium

7:30pm
Concert by Jane Sapp.
The conference registration includes a ticket to this concert. All others are asked to make a donation. \$5/adults, \$2.50/children.

Conference Notes
• Childcare will be provided. In order to reserve childcare, participants must pre-register and indicate the ages of their children
• Registration deadline: **March 18th.** Late registration will be accepted at the door. Call for details: 501/372-5113
• There will be books and Jane Sapp's records for sale at the conference and at the door.

Women and Work: Organizing for Change
Clip and return by March 18 to the Women's Project, 2224 Main Street, Little Rock AR 72206. Call for late registration.

Name _____
Occupation _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone/day _____ Phone/night _____

Workshop choices: (Choose one for morning & one for afternoon)

Morning A B C D E F G
Afternoon A B C D E F G

[]\$10 registration fee enclosed.

Bad Budget Dreams: The President's FY '89 Budget

For the last few years, the President's budget has been dead on arrival to Congress. This year, however, the picture has changed, but not because the President has impressed Congress. Rather, the budget has life because it was actually created by Congress and the President last November.

During a budget summit, convened in the wake of the October stock market crash, a two year (FY 1988 and FY 1989) bipartisan agreement was reached to lower the deficit. This agreement contained limits on spending for the following categories: Defense, Domestic Discretionary, Entitlements, and International Affairs. It also required additional revenues to be raised, which was done through an omnibus budget reconciliation bill last December. The President's proposed budget abides by that agreement. Only within specific categories will there be controversy.

The greatest potential for controversy in the President's budget is likely to be his method for adhering to the Domestic Discretionary spending limits. While providing significant increases for AIDS initiatives, some education programs, and more, he also proposes some massive cuts to human services programs.

The striking thing about this budget is that even if Congress were to accept it fully, it will not likely reduce the deficit enough to meet the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings (GRH) deficit target of \$136 billion. When the bipartisan agreement was developed last November, it was based on economic assumptions developed prior to the stock market crash. Since that time, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) while still using rosy assumptions, has revised downward its forecast. This revision will have an effect on revenues and outlays, and will mean a higher deficit than Congress anticipated when developing the two year bipartisan budget agreement.

To deal with this problem, the President places heavy emphasis on new proposals for privatizing government functions. Some of these proposals are designed to save money; others are purely ideological imperatives to reduce the size and scope of federal government.

In the past years, Congress has largely rejected these privatization proposals. Many criticized them as a "National Going Out of Business Sale." In the context of an election year in which the deficit is likely to exceed the

GRH target, however, Congress appears interested in reviewing the President's privatization proposals.

Another important aspect of this year's budget lies not in numbers, but in the message. Given the major constraints imposed by last November's budget agreement, the President had little leeway in this budget regarding taxes, defense, entitlements, and domestic discretionary spending. As a result, he has had to look elsewhere for the tools needed to accomplish what's left of his agenda.

One method will be for the President to continue to use executive powers to achieve his programmatic goals. For example, in the Appendix to his state of the Union message to Congress, he said he would rely heavily on two new Executive Orders -- one on federalism and the other on family. These orders will be used in the President's regulatory review process to guide agency programmatic decisions.

The President also indicates he will continue to rely on OMB's regulatory and paperwork reviews to eliminate "burdensome" government activity.

Since FY 1986, a "Management Report" has been appended to the budget to describe savings and added efficiencies projected from the President's proposed management reforms. This year's management appendix will not be released until next week. However, it is known that the President will again propose a number of initiatives, some not requiring legislative approval.

Reagan's Family Policy

Through Executive Order 12606 President Reagan established the Family Policymaking Criteria. These are applied throughout the Administration to grant decisions and other discretionary matters. The criteria are in the form of questions used to assess policies and regulations that may have a significant impact on family formation, maintenance, and general well being:

(a) Does this action by government strengthen or erode the stability of the family and particularly the marital commitment?

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Winners & Losers in the Reagan Budget

Losers

Urban Development Action Grants (-122%)
 Education Services to the Homeless (-100%)
 Community Services to the Homeless (-100%)
 Juvenile Justice Program (-100%)
 Women's Education Equity (-100%)
 Rural Rental Assistance
 Rural Housing Subsidized & Unsubsidized Grants (-100%)
 Developmental Disabilities Services Projects & University Affiliated Facilities (-100%)
 Community Food and Nutrition (-100%)
 Aging Research, Training & Discretionary Programs (-100%)
 Federal Council on Aging (-100%)
 Impact Aid - Payment to "B" Children (-100%)
 Ellender Fellowships (-100%)
 State Student Incentive Grants (-100%)
 Follow Through (-100%)
 Work Incentive Program (WIN) (-100%)
 Perkins Direct Student Loans (-90%)
 Public Health and Indian Housing (-88%)
 Health Professions Education (-82%)
 Health Care for the Homeless (-76%)

Elderly and Handicapped Housing (-52%)
 Child Abuse Challenge Grants (-47%)
 Library Assistance (-46%)
 National Health Service Corp. (-36%)
 Health Initiatives (-35%)
 Child Nutritional Studies and Education (-35%)
 Mental Health Protection and Advocacy (-27%)
 Low Income Home Energy Assistance (-25%)
 Refugee Assistance (-23%)
 Community Services Block Grant (-17%)
 Legal Services (-21%)
 Higher and Continuing Education (-19%)
 Community Development Block Grant (-17%)
 Special Milk Program (-11%)
 Handicapped Pre-School Incentive Grants (-10%)
 Summer Youth Employment (-8%)
 Indian Services (-8%)
 Indian Economic Development (-7%)
 Indian Education (-7%)
 VISTA (-7%)
 Vocational Education (-6%)

Winners

Education Income (+1,020%)
 Trade Adjustment Assistance (+166%)
 Foster Care (+38%)
 AIDS Initiatives (+32%)
 Adoption Assistance (+20%)
 Adult Education (+10%)
 Chapter 2 Educational Programs (+7%)
 Supplemental Medical Insurance (+9%)

Commodities Procurement (+8%)
 Child Support Enforcement (+8%)
 Infectious Disease Prevention (+7%)
 Pell Grants (+7%)
 Childcare Feeding Program (+7%)
 Immunization Program (+6%)
 National Council on the Handicapped (+5%)

Materials for this article were excerpted from Nonprofit Resources, a publication of Nonprofit Resources. For information about how to obtain their monthly newsletter, write 5312 W. Markham, Little Rock

72205. The original source of the materials were the February 18 issue of OMB Watch Analysis, 2001 "O" Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Reagan's Family Policy

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(b) Does this action strengthen or erode the authority and rights of parents in the education, nature, and supervision of their children?

(c) Does this action help the family perform its functions, or does it substitute governmental activity for the function?

(d) Does this action by government increase or decrease family earnings? Does the proposed benefits of this action

justify the impact on the family budget?

(e) Can this activity be carried out by a lower level of government or by the family itself?

(f) What message, intended or otherwise, does this program send out to the public concerning the status of the family?

(g) What message does it send to young people concerning the relationship between their behavior; their personal responsibility, and the norms of our society?

Women's Project Annual Awards Dinner Planned

Project for Victims of Family Violence to be honored



June 11, 1988 • 6:00pm • \$10.0

Liberty Hill Baptist Church • 1215 S. Schiller, Little Rock

The Women's Project is pleased to honor the Project for Victims of Family Violence of Fayetteville with the Evangeline K. Brown Award. Each year the award is presented to a woman or women who have made a difference in her/their own community and in our global community, who epitomizes the Women's Project goal "the transformation of the world."

Celebrating their tenth year of providing shelter and support services to battered women and their families, Fayetteville's Project for Victims of Family Violence has been the cornerstone for the battered women's movement in Arkansas, a regional resource, and the voice of

conscience at the national level.

The Project is known statewide as an effective advocate for battered women and as eager to assist others with initiating new programs and services. Project staff has trained widely throughout the region and nation, sharing skills on working with children and with rural programs. Their publications series, including "And Then We Went to A Safe Place" and "Reaching Rural Battered Women," have extended their reach to many communities across the country.

During the Project's eleven years, it has consistently received the support of its community through donations of time, money, and materials.

Join us in honoring their accomplishments. Look for your invitation to the dinner in the mail next month.

Upcoming Women's Project Events

MARCH

- 26 Women and Work: Organizing for Change**
A conference on women and economics. 9am - 4pm. \$10. UALR. Pre-registration requested. Scholarships available.
- 26 Jane Sapp in concert**
Jane's music is folk, blues, and gospel in the black tradition and her subject is peace and justice. 7:30pm. Donation \$5 adults, \$2.50 children. UALR Fine Arts Auditorium.

APRIL

- 4 Breaking the Barriers**
Orientation for those interested in training for non-traditional jobs. Liberty Hill Baptist Church, 1215 S. Schiller, Little Rock.
- 11 The Search for Spirituality**
A discussion of the many ways women discover and develop their spiritual selves. 7pm. The Women's Project.

- 30 Yard Sale**
To benefit the Women's Project. 8:30am - 5pm. Call if you have items to donate.

MAY

- 9 Violence Against Women in the Black Community**
A discussion of the various forms of violence black women face in their lives. 7pm. The Women's Project.
- 13 Effective Grassroots Fundraising.**
With Kim Klein. \$25 per person, including lunch. Third person from same organization \$15. Liberty Hill Baptist Church, 1215 S. Schiller, Little Rock. 9:30am - 4pm. Pre-registration requested.

JUNE

- 4 Mardi Gras Ball**
A benefit evening for the Women's Project, AR Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Helping People With AIDS, Metropolitan Community Church, and Dignity. Tickets \$20. Call the Women's Project for details.
- 11 Annual Evangeline K. Brown Awards Dinner**
Honoring the Project for Victims of Family Violence in Fayetteville. 6pm. Liberty Hill Baptist Church, 1215 S. Schiller, Little Rock. Tickets \$10. Reservations needed.
- 13 Women's Legal Rights**
A discussion of what every woman needs to know about her rights. 7pm. The Women's Project.

Women: Out of the House But Not Out of the Kitchen

By Marian Burros. New York Times, February 24, 1988.

It has been at least 25 years since women began campaigning to have their husbands share the household chores, but according to a recent New York Times nationwide survey, they have not made much headway. A quarter of a century after Betty Friedan wrote the "Feminine Mystique," the book credited with igniting the feminist movement, women are still doing almost all the cooking and grocery shopping.

Unable in most cases to persuade the men they live with to pitch in, women at all income levels have devised their own ways to lighten the load, primarily by cutting back on time spent in the kitchen. But this is only a makeshift solution to a more intractable problem.

Equality at home is just an illusion.

The results of telephone interviews with 1,870 people, conducted between October 29 and November 5, 1987, show that even though more women are in the work force and have less time at home, they are still the primary caregivers and the people who pay attention to how, when, what and where their families eat.

The survey shows that the idea of equality at home is an illusion.

Preparing meals "is still considered a woman's role," said Faith Popcorn, chairwoman of BrainReserve, a marketing consulting concern in New York, "and women are accepting it more." "They are too tired to fight some of these issues," she said.

Ann Weber, a social psychologist at the University of North Carolina at Asheville said: "Women feel bad if they don't do what is expected of them, and men think they have a right to expect it. It will take a lot longer than a couple of decades to see changes."

After centuries of clearly defined roles for men and women, a couple of decades is not enough to make a difference, said Dr. Joseph Pleck, the Luce Professor of the Family at Wheaton College in Norton, Mass. "The

family as an institution changes rather slowly," he said".

Just how slowly is clear from the survey. Among married couples questioned, only 18 percent of the men said they do the main food shopping for the family, with 6 percent more saying they share responsibility with someone else in the home.

But 91% of the married women said they do the shopping, with 3 percent saying the chore is shared. Employment outside the home did not free these women: 90 percent of the married women who work full time do the primary shopping for their families.

In the survey, 90 percent of the married women reported doing most or all of the cooking in their households, while only 15 percent of the married men said they were responsible for meal preparation.

Differences do appear when married women who work full time outside the home are compared with women who do not: 86 percent of those so employed do most or all of the cooking, compared with 93 percent of the women who stay at home.

For some working women, the strain of two jobs seems to have made an impression on the men with whom they live. But when household chores are divided between spouses, women do 30 hours of the work, and men do 4 to 6.

Sharing Chores and Meals

Who does most of the food shopping in the household?

91% of married women say they do

18% of married men say they do

Share the shopping with someone in the household

3% of the married women say they do

6% of the married men say they do

Who does most of the cooking?

90% of the married women say they do

15% of the married men say they do

Share the cooking with someone else in the household

4% of the married women say they do

6% of the married men say they do

Women's Project Offers Three Week Training Program

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working to change consciousness in educational institutions, labor unions, and in men at the workplace so that barriers can be eliminated.

Women have much work to do on internal barriers, those areas of low self-esteem that are created by a society that does not believe in the equality of women. Therefore, much of the work of the Women and Work Project is to increase women's sense of self worth and their empowerment. That work is necessary so that women come to believe that they deserve good jobs and adequate benefits in return for contributing their labor to this society.

To achieve this goal, the Project will offer a three week preparatory program to women who want to pursue a career in a non-traditional trade. There will be an introduction to the trades and their requirements, discussions of barriers to empowerment and participation, coping skills at home and on the job, physical fitness

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training, introduction to tools, discussion of health issues, training on women's legal rights, assertiveness training, safety training, assessment of skills and necessary skills building, counseling and placement in training programs or apprenticeships.

For those women who enter the trades, there is little support for them and their work at home, on the job, or from society at large. Provisions for childcare and transportation for working women are inadequate at best. Women are still expected to do a fulltime job in the home while also providing financial support for the family by working outside the home. Men, of course, are expected to do only the latter.

Much of the work of the Women and Work Project will be to help women gain a sense of their power and worth. Many women in Arkansas, while providing significant paid and unpaid labor to this society, do not yet think of themselves as people who deserve good, safe jobs and adequate benefits. It is the belief of the Women's Project that everyone in this society deserves the education and training for and placement in a job that pays a decent

living wage and provides good benefits. For a single mother with two children to live a reasonable life of moderate spending, we estimate that she needs to earn at least \$8.00 an hour.

To help women gain a sense of their power and worth, the Project will organize support groups both for women seeking jobs in non-traditional arenas and for those women already holding those jobs. In those groups we will look at women's individual economic histories and their socialization, the ways society contributes to women's low place in the labor force through negative attitudes toward women, the causes of the feminization of poverty, the kind of support women need to make changes in their lives, and the kind of support women need for working in jobs where men dominate in numbers and authority.

Both the staff and the women participating in the Project will work together to make societal changes. There need to be more non-traditional jobs made available to women. For example, those companies receiving contracts in excess of \$10,000 in federal monies must employ 6.9% women in each craft category. While we insure that this percentage is met (as it is not currently), we must also advocate for greater numbers of women to be employed.

We must require our schools to eliminate gender roles in their approaches to training and education for employment. Women, from very young ages, must be encouraged to enter all areas of work, and they need to be educated for and introduced to those work possibilities in an unbiased way. The same is true for colleges and especially vo-techs. Counselors must be trained to open up opportunities for women, to present possibilities without restrictions of gender. Attitudes must be changed in the public arena.

The Women and Work Project is about women seeking economic independence and freedom. It is about equality and parity. It is about changing societal attitudes toward women so that women are treated as whole people and are provided all the privileges and benefits a democratic society has to offer. Every woman is a working woman. The Women and Work Project is about equal opportunities and equitable pay for the world's work they perform.

The Project is currently recruiting women for participation in the first of its five yearly training sessions on April 4, 1988. Any woman interested in entering the training or participating in the project in any way should contact the Women's Project at 372-5113.

current work

Women and Work: Breaking the Barriers

A training and advocacy project to make non-traditional jobs accessible to women.

Technical Assistance to Domestic Violence Programs

Workshops on organizational management.

The Homophobia and Racism Project

Workshops on understanding racism and homophobia and developing methods to eliminate them.

Monthly discussion groups

Topics of interest to women and their lives are held the 2nd Monday of each month.

Coalition Building

Committed involvement and work with other community groups on issues affecting women and people of color.

Communications and Events

A quarterly newsletter, a lending library, statewide and regional conferences, and production of women singers, poets, and novelists.

Women's Project -- Our Goal

Our goal is social change, or as the poet Adrienne Rich writes, "the transformation of the world." We believe this world can be changed to become a place of peace and justice for all women.

We take risks in our work; we take unpopular stands. We work for all women and against all forms of discrimination and oppression. We believe that we cannot work for all women and against sexism unless we also work against racism, classism, ageism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism, and homophobia. We see the connection among these oppressions as the context for violence against women in this society.

We are concerned in particular about issues of importance to traditionally underrepresented women: poor women, aged women, women of color, teenage mothers, lesbians, women in prisons, etc. All are women who experience discrimination and violence against their lives.

We are committed to working multi-culturally, multi-racially, and to making our work and cultural events accessible to low income women. We believe that women will not know equality until they know economic justice.

We believe that a few committed women working in coalition and consensus with other women can make a significant change in the quality of life for all women.

We invite you to join us in our work by becoming a member of the Women's Project

Name _____
 Phone day () _____ night () _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I would like to contribute

___ \$ 500

___ \$ 100

___ \$ 50

___ \$ 25

___ \$ 10 general membership

___ \$ 5 low income, students, single mothers, senior citizens

I would like to pledge _____

___ monthly

___ quarterly

Enclose this form with your tax deductible check to the Women's Project, 2224 Main Street, Little Rock AR 72206.

**The Women's Project
2224 Main Street
Little Rock, AR 72206**

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Organization
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Lynn Frost/Amy Edgington
2224 State Street
Little Rock AR 72206

TRANSFORMATION

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Toward a Concept of Wholeness Some Thoughts on Homophobia

By Suzanne Pharr. Presented at the Little Rock Unitarian Church – April 1988

I give these comments with the understanding that I am in the sanctuary of a justice seeking church. Therefore, I present these thoughts to those who love and seek justice.

There is a traditional song that repeats this line: "I woke up this morning with freedom on my mind." That's how I woke up this morning with freedom on my mind. And I've been thinking about just what freedom means. I can't think about freedom without thinking about liberation, about justice, about integrity and wholeness. My talk today is going to focus on these concepts of freedom, especially integrity and wholeness as they relate to gays and lesbians and homophobia.

I want to begin with this poem written by Barbara Deming, the great Civil Rights and peace activist, a lesbian who loved this earth and the people living on it:

Spirit of love
That blows against our flesh
Sets it trembling
Moves across it as across grass
Erasing every boundary that we accept
And swings the doors of our lives wide –
This is a prayer I sing:
Save our perishing earth!

Spirit that cracks our single selves –
Eyes fall down eyes,
Hearts escape through the bars of our ribs
To dart into other bodies –
Save this earth!
The earth is perishing.
This is a prayer I sing.

Spirit that hears each one of us,
Hears all that is –

Listens, listens, hears us out –
Inspire us now!

Our own pulse beats in every stranger's throat,
And also there within the flowered ground beneath our feet,

And – teach us to listen! –

We can hear it in water, in wood, and even in stone.

We are earth of this earth, and we are bone of its bone,
This is a prayer I sing, for we have forgotten this and so
The earth is perishing.

We live in a time in which millions of people are perishing and the earth is perishing with them because so much of human power is used to control and exploit rather than to nurture and support growth. We have understood for years, at least since the sixties, that we must see the earth as a small planet whose many facets are delicately interconnected and rely upon each other for survival. We cannot destroy large parts of it and expect other parts to survive and to sustain us. For greed and profit, we destroy our natural resources, destroy the ozone layer, wipe out our forests, and produce toxic wastes to spread across the land. We must learn, before it is too late, to see the entirety of the earth, its wholeness, the interdependence of its parts.

We live in a time in which millions of people are perishing and the earth is perishing with them because so much of human power is used to control and exploit rather than to nurture and support growth.

We face the same crisis with human beings. We cannot survive as communities or as a planet if we continue to see countless groups of people as inferior, as incomplete, as lacking in human dignity and human rights. In South Africa, people, because of the color of their skin, are exploited for white economic gain. Husbands and wives and children are separated into work camps where they

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THE WOMEN'S PROJECT
2224 MAIN STREET
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72206
372-5113

Toward a Concept of Wholeness

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live in harsh conditions. And the right to assemble, to protest, to communicate openly, to travel freely is denied. And why? Because black South Africans are not seen as whole human beings who deserve basic human rights. Because of their race, of **who they are**, they are seen as inferior and incomplete people who must be controlled for the good of those who hold economic power.

In this country, over 50% of married women experience violence in their marriages and according to Diana Russell, 38% of girls under the age of 18 are sexually abused. And why? Because we have a social climate that still says women because of **who they are** as female gender are inferior to men, may be used by men, controlled and exploited for sexual and economic benefits.

What is at issue here is an old-fashioned word – integrity. What does integrity mean? Wholeness, integrated beliefs and values that we bring together in action. We live in a world in which society and individuals lack integrity because we are fragmented, divided off from one another. We live in communities in which whole groups of people are excluded from participation in the life of the community. Society has two ways of preventing wholeness: the first is by defining just what wholeness is allowed certain groups, and the other is by controlling and limiting opportunities for living complete lives.

We forcibly control behavior of people through sanctions and punishments or lack of access to opportunity. For instance, we place barriers to physically disabled people's access to full participation and a sense of completeness in society by our refusal to interact with them, to provide adequate transportation, accessible buildings that allow them all the privileges the temporarily able bodied enjoy. We say to them, you are allowed only an incomplete role in our society. We define what is sufficient and say, what is the matter, isn't this enough? you should be grateful to have this much, given **who you are** and the condition you are in.

And finally, we come to lesbians and gays, the heart of today's subject. Society's treatment of lesbians and gay men displays so very clearly the controls and limits placed on a particular group's ability to achieve wholeness. It says to a lesbian or gay man, as long as you are self-negating and act without wholeness, without integrity, we

will accept you. As long as you hide who you are as a human being, the truth of your reality, we will accept you. On the other hand, if you act with integrity and wholeness, if you are open about your life and let us know you are a lesbian or a gay man, we will punish you by taking your job and economic survival from you, by taking your children and access to other children from you, by limiting housing, health care and insurance, by providing you no legal protection, by attacking your credibility and your character, by isolating you within your community, or by threatening your life.

What are the justifications people use for denying wholeness to lesbians and gay men? Usually, it is either sin or sickness. The sin theory rests on two premises: that the Bible says it is wrong, and that gays and lesbians wilfully choose this sin. Dr. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, in an essay in *Christianity and Crisis*, states:

"Much of the discrimination against homosexual persons is justified by a common misreading of the Bible. Many English translations of the Bible contain the word *homosexual* in extremely negative contexts. But the fact is that the word *homosexual* does not occur anywhere in the Bible. No extant text, no manuscript, neither Hebrew nor Greek, Syriac, nor Aramaic, contains the word. The terms *homosexual* and *heterosexual* were not developed in any language until the 1890's, when for the first time the awareness developed that there are people with a lifelong, constitutional orientation toward their own sex. Therefore the use of the word *homosexuality* by certain English Bible translators is an example of the extreme bias that endangers the human and civil rights of homosexual persons." (pp.383-4, Nov. 9, 1987)

She goes on to add that two words in I Corinthians 6:9 and one word in Timothy 1:10 have been used as evidence to damn homosexuals and that until well into the 20th century, the first of these was understood by everyone to mean masturbation, and the second was known to refer to male prostitutes who were available for hire by either women or men. There are six other Biblical references that are thought by some to refer to homosexuals but each of these is disputed by contemporary scholars. For instance, the sin in the Sodom and Gomorrah passage is less about homosexuality than it is about inhospitality

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"This Time, Our Patience Ran Out"

By R.G. Gentry. (Reprinted from the *Washington Post*)

The decision to name a hearing educator to the presidency of Gallaudet University shocked deaf people everywhere. What seems to have surprised the hearing world was the intensity of our reaction. We shut down the campus and marched on the Capitol, a style of protest not seen since the 1970s.

We forced Dr. Elizabeth Zinser to withdraw as president and Jane Bassett Spilman to step down as chair of the board of trustees for her part in the selection. We will not fight this battle again. In the future, the president of Gallaudet will always be deaf.

I have been hearing-impaired since age 3, but I never met a deaf person until I was 25. Only then did I realize the importance of sign language and the beauty of deaf culture; for thousands of others, it has provided opportunities no other institution anywhere could offer.

Now I live in two worlds, one hearing, one deaf – and I can assure anyone who is interested in breaking through this barrier that enormous sacrifices of time and energy are required to function competently in deaf culture.

Many whites were not ready for the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling and the wave of desegregation that followed, but blacks were ready. Male-dominated hierarchies were not ready for the consequences of the feminist movement, but women were ready. The hearing-dominated hierarchy of deaf education is not ready for us to assume control, but we are ready.

This is directly related to the deaf community's major objection not only to Zinser but also to Spilman and the hearing members of the board of trustees of Gallaudet. They do not live with us, sleep with us or eat with us. A hearing person cannot possibly understand what it is like to be deaf, any more than a white person can understand what it is like to be black, or a man understand what it is like to be a woman. Lacking that understanding, they cannot possibly make logical decisions in our best interests. You have to be deaf to understand.

In our view, it is now unacceptable for a Gallaudet University president not to possess a degree or experience in deaf education. Not to have any experience in deaf culture is to perpetuate what Dr. Allen Sussman, professor of psychology, called the "plantation mentality."

Gallaudet's president, at the apex of deaf education, holds a highly visible, prestigious position with enormous power over decisions affecting deaf people: The job pays \$80,000 to \$90,000 and comes with a residence and an automobile. Someone without even a rudimentary knowledge of deaf culture, who has not participated in the grassroots struggles for the acceptance of sign language as a true language, the establishment of an interpreting profession, or the expanded use of television captioning, is not entitled to occupy a position coveted by deaf people for generations.

Much has been made of the symbolic significance of having a deaf president of the university. Obviously, the positive role model provided by a deaf person will be inspiring to all of us.

But a second, far uglier symbol has been at issue here. Many of us have experienced the disappointment of being turned down for a job or promotion because we were told communication barriers were too great, or we lacked insufficient training in specific areas – excuses the board

has traditionally used to deny a deaf president. In the past, we felt there was nothing we could do but accept these false excuses and keep patiently plodding on. This time our patience ran out.

Democracies are not smoothly functioning systems. Ideas and beliefs evolve before the system is ready. Many whites were not ready for the *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling and the wave of desegregation that followed, but blacks were ready. Male-dominated hierarchies were not ready for the consequences of the feminist movement, but women were ready. The hearing-dominated hierarchy of deaf education is not ready for us to assume control, but we are ready.

In the long term, we hope our example inspires deaf people everywhere to continue to fight against discrimination of any kind. We hope all people, in these cynical and despairing times, will realize that with courage and

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WP Welcomes Charlye W Crawford to Staff

The Women's Project is pleased to announce that Charlye W Crawford has joined our staff. Charlye joins our team as a member of the Women and Work Project staff.

A native of Gould, Arkansas, Charlye comes to us from the media industry where she worked in personnel for three years. A long time Women's Project supporter, Charlye hosts a weekly television show on Channel 14, *A Woman's Diary*, and is the former president of Black Female Action. Her son Cedric is 11.

Her duties at the Women's Project include seeking job placement opportunities for Women and Work training participants and acting as a liaison to numerous community organizations including Association for Children for the Enforcement of Support (ACES) and Association for the Sexually Harrassed (ASH).

Upcoming Women's Project Discussions

*All take place at the Women's Project
2224 S. Main Street • Little Rock
7 p.m.*

June 13
Legal Issues for Women

August 15
**A discussion of the novel, Mama Day,
by Gloria Naylor**

September 12
Incest and Sexual Abuse

October 10
Domestic Violence: Women Who Kill

November 14
Single Mothers

New support groups form

Association for Children for the Enforcement of Support

ACES is a national organization working around issues of non-support for custodial parents. A new chapter is currently being formed in Arkansas. For more information, call 834-4581.

The Association for the Sexually Harrassed

ASH was founded in Little Rock in February 1988 and wants to eliminate the practice of sexual harrassment and educate the public on the traumatic effects it has on us all. For more information, call 225-5886.

Women and Work Project Graduates First Class

On April 29 the Women's Project was so very proud of seven women who made a decision to go through our employment preparation program and complete it. Twenty women had come to the orientation to hear about the program, and out of that twenty, seven had the courage to take a risk to go through the program.

Often times I have wondered, who benefited the most; the Women's Project or the women that received the training. We left those three weeks of training with seven new friends who were had an opportunity to be exposed to the Project. Many of our new friends came to us feeling very disconnected from life and were very undecided about what they were going to do with their lives. Now there are seven women who have gained some confidence in themselves and in others and have a vision for the future.

Among the participants there were wide ranges of interest and talents. One woman is determined to become a heavy equipment operator and at some point in her life she wants to own her own construction business. Another participant has always enjoyed cooking, but could never see herself earning a living doing something she likes to do; but now she has her goal set to be a chef. One of our participants is presently a LPN at the Veteran's hospital,

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Toward a Concept of Wholeness

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and gang rape.

Lets look at Genesis 19:1-10 (King James version):

1. And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;
2. And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.
3. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.
4. But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:
5. And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.
6. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,
7. And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.
8. *Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing: for therefore came they under the shadow of my own roof.*
9. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break down the door.
10. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

The law of hospitality was universally accepted and Lot was struggling to uphold it against what we assume are heterosexual townsmen threatening gang rape to the two male angels in Lot's home. While people dwell on this passage as a condemnation of homosexuality, they bypass what for my politics and beliefs is the central issue or, if you will, sin: Lot's offering his two virgin daughters up to the men to be used as they desired for gang rape.

Here is a perfectly clear example of devaluing and dehumanizing and violently brutalizing women.

The eight Biblical references to alleged homosexuality are very small when compared to the many times the Bible sanctions slavery and affirms the inferiority of women. Yet I would hope that justice seeking people would never again accept either of these attitudes to be our truth. And how do we reconcile that the Bible condemns divorce throughout its pages? Are we then to require that couples stay together no matter what violence the relationship contains?

We can point out that there have never been any statements about homosexuality attributed to Christ. In fact, when we read the many references John makes to himself as "the disciple Jesus loved," and we think about the relationship between these two unmarried and supposedly celibate men, then we could also present evidence that there are just as many Biblical references to the goodness of same sex love.

The second premise of the sin theory is that gays and lesbians wilfully choose their sexual identity. All evidence points to the contrary. With both homosexuals and heterosexuals we do not know how sexuality is formed. There are many theories and no one prevalent accepted theory. Sexual identity simply is. The only choice we have in relation to it is whether or not we choose to act on it. And this is the question of wholeness. It is very difficult for one to be denied the life of a sexual being, whether expressed in sex or in physical affection, and to feel complete, whole. For it is our loving relationships with humans which feed the life of the spirit and enable us to overcome our basic isolation and to be interconnected with humankind. This seems the most basic of human rights.

It is not a sickness to be gay or lesbian or heterosexual; nor is it a sin. It simply is. It is **who we are** and not something we are to be praised or punished for. As the American Psychological Association states, it is no more abnormal to be homosexual than to be lefthanded. We have to come to understand that it is as good to be homosexual as heterosexual.

Homosexuality, heterosexuality, bi-sexuality are morally

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A Concept of Wholeness

(continued from page 2)

neutral. A particular sexual identity is not an indication of either good or bad health. What is important is not the gender of two people in relationship with each other but the content of that relationship. Does that relationship contain violence, control of one person by the other, is the relationship a growthful place for the people involved? We must hold all relationships, whether opposite sex or same sex up to these standards.

Many people are obsessed by the form of the relationship (i.e., the gender or race of the two people) when the real issue is the content. Marital or date rape, battering, incest, economic control are often the content of relationships and should be judged as damaging and wrong. However, for two adults of the same sex or opposite sex to love one another with respect and equality can only lead to wholeness for them and all they encounter.

You may say, but I am a liberal and I don't care who you sleep with; it's simply a bedroom issue to me, and I don't see why you have to talk about it. Such a statement suggests that to be heterosexual or homosexual is simply a matter of sexual activity when we know either sexual identity is about ever so much more: about how we express ourselves, how we interrelate with other human beings, how we make the connections that keep us from isolation. It is about who we are in the world, our whole selves. And because we live in a world where homophobia and heterosexism prevail, lesbians and gay men are threatened with terrible losses if we bring our whole selves, the truth of our complete lives into any setting. We sometimes choose to live half lives for fear of losing our entire life, and some of us risk our lives in the name of wholeness, of freedom.

We must ask, then, if the sickness and sin theories don't apply, why do people and institutions remain so steadfast in their homophobia? I've just finished writing a long essay on this question, but I'll try to be brief here: because homophobia is the most effective weapon known to man to enforce sex roles and the subjugation of women. Because virtually everyone feels vulnerable to its threat – because there's no way to credential or prove one's heterosexuality – the label of homosexual, with all the potential for loss that society threatens, works effectively to keep both women and men frozen in place, acting out sex roles in which men have power and control

over women's lives, both economically and socially. Homophobia is not so much about gays and lesbians as it is about society's structure that prohibits wholeness on the part of men and women everywhere. I do not believe sexism could survive without the backing of homophobia and its brother, heterosexism.

The issue is not that women who love women or men who love men are sick, sinful, perverted, outrageous, abnormal or strange. Lesbians and gay men, for good or bad, represent every kind of person in society. Like heterosexuals, some are good, kind and loving, and some bad, vicious and cruel; some are extraordinary and brilliant, and most are very ordinary people trying to do the best they can with the lives given to them. The central issue is that homophobia is sick, sinful, perverted, outrageous, abnormal and strange and is perpetuated to keep the strong front of sexism from being shattered. It is homophobia, sexism, racism and all the -isms that keep our society from wholeness, not the victims of these oppressions.

Judy Grahn's poem, "A History of Lesbianism," speaks to the ordinariness of our lives and the source of the real problem:

How they came into the world,
the women-loving-women
came in three by three
and four by four
the women-loving-women
came in ten by ten
and ten by ten again
until there were more
than you could count

they took care of each other
the best they knew how
and of each other's children,
if they had any.

How they lived in the world,
the women-loving-women
learned as much as they were allowed
and walked and wore their clothes
the way they liked
whenever they could. They did whatever
they knew to be happy or free

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A Concept of Wholeness

(continued from page 6)

and worked and worked and worked.
The women-loving-women
in America were called dykes
and some liked it
and some did not.

they made love to each other
the best they knew how
and for the best reasons

How they went out of the world.
the women-loving-women
went out one by one
having withstood greater and lesser
trials, and much hatred
from other people, they went out
one by one, each having tried
in her own way to overthrow
the rule of men over women,
they tried it one by one
and hundred by hundred,
until each came in her own way
to the end of her life
and died.

The subject of lesbianism
is very ordinary; it's the question
of male domination that makes everybody
angry.

(Lesbian Poetry, Bulkin and Larkin, 1981, p. 69)

And now some final comments on the subject of wholeness. A primary tenet of liberation theology is that people must have the freedom to be **who they are**, have the information and power to make choices about their lives, have autonomy and independence and the fullness of life in which basic physical and emotional needs can be met. It requires that we see the world as a whole, that we see that we are all part of one another, that we are interconnected in our survival. It does not give any human the right to control another nor to destroy any part of the earth. It says we must find wholeness, we must allow each other the path to wholeness or we all suffer and die.

A society cannot be whole, cannot have integrity if it requires over ten per cent of its population to hide the

reality of their lives, to be self-negating, to live without legal protection – a society that says you do not have the right to love the adult of your choice, that you are to be condemned, punished and ostracized for the very fact of who you are as a human being. For a healthy society and for survival, we must become connected, we must join together; again, we must recognize as Barbara Deming says, we are all part of one another.

Finally, I ask of you, a justice-seeking church, who do you cast your lot with? Do you cast your lot with those who say to lesbians and gay men, you do not have the right to your lives? I must say with Emily Bronte, I cannot live without my life. We are on a liberation path. We're beginning to wake up each morning with freedom on our minds. We ask ourselves, how many of us will have to die in order to live whole lives, free lives? We ask ourselves, how many of us are dying now living half lives, secret lives? We are ready to be free. We ask justice-seeking people to join us on the long road that leads to wholeness and freedom for all of us.

We must make change and we can. We can be individually and collectively **who we are**, our whole, integrated selves and work together in our passion for liberation and freedom. In This Bridge Called My Back, a collection of writings by radical women of color, Cherrie Moraga, a lesbian activist and poet, has a poem called "The Welder" which speaks to the necessity of our coming together to take power into our own hands:

I am a welder.
Not an alchemist.
I am interested in the blend
of common elements to make
a common thing.

No magic here.
Only the heat of my desire to fuse
what I already know
exists. Is possible.

We plead to each other,
we all come from the same rock
we all come from the same rock
ignoring the fact that we bend
at different temperatures
that each of us is malleable

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"You Can Do Anything If You Really Try"

(continued from page 3)

solidarity our governments can be made to respond to the challenges facing us. We are continuing not only the proud tradition of the struggles of deaf people, but putting into action principles deeply rooted in democracies everywhere.

The students, courageously supported by the faculty and the staff, have been the shock troupes of this deaf protest. It is we who have for the first time in history placed the university under deaf control.

Our deaf brothers and sisters all over the world watched us in wonder and pride. Many traveled to join us. Others sent money and messages of love and concern. Our fellow deaf, still misunderstood, still discriminated against in schools, workplaces, financial institutions and courts, depended on us. We love them. We did not fail them.

All our lives parents, parents, counselors, therapists and leaders have sung this litany to us when we were tired, discouraged, ready to give up: "You can do anything if you really try."

We've shown you what happens when you really try.

R.G. Gentry is a senior at Gallaudet University.

TRANSFORMATION

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The Women's Project

2224 Main Street
Little Rock, AR 72206
501/372-5113

Staff

Charlye W Crawford
Janet Perkins Doles
Kerry Lobel
Suzanne Pharr

Toward a Concept of Wholeness

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up to a point.

Yes, fusion is possible
but only if things get hot enough –
all else is temporary adhesion,
patching up.

It is the intimacy of steel melting
into steel, the fire of our individual
passion to take hold of ourselves
that makes sculpture of our lives,
builds buildings.

And I am not talking about skyscrapers,
merely structures that can support us
without fear
of trembling.

For too long a time
the heat of my heavy hands
has been smoldering
in the pockets of other
people's business –
they need oxygen to make fire.

I am now
coming up for air.
Yes, I *am*
picking up the torch.

I am the welder.
I understand the capacity of heat
to change the shape of things.
I am suited to work
within the realm of sparks
out of control.

I am the welder.
I am taking the power
into my own hands.

I want to close by saying that we have the power to
create a world of wholeness that is inclusive of everyone.
We must take that power into our own hands.

The Women's Project 7th Anniversary and Awards Dinner

Saturday, June 11, 1988
6:30pm

Liberty Hill Baptist Church
12th and Schiller
Little Rock

**The Project for Victims of Family Violence of Fayetteville
will receive the Evangeline K. Brown Award
for outstanding contributions to the transformation of lives of women**

The Women's Project is pleased to honor the Project for Victims of Family Violence of Fayetteville with the Evangeline K. Brown Award. Each year the award is presented to a woman or women who have made a difference in her/their own community, who epitomizes the Women's Project goal, "the transformation of the world. Celebrating their 10th year of providing shelter services to battered women and their families, Fayetteville's Project for Victims of Family Violence has been the cornerstone for the battered women's movement in Arkansas, a regional resource, and the voice of conscience at the national level.

Please fill out this form and send it along with your check by June 7, 1988. For telephone reservations call 501/372-5113.

Don't cut before you complete your membership form on the other side!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (h) _____ Phone (w) _____

_____ I will attend the Women's Project 7th Anniversary and Awards Dinner on June 11 and am enclosing a check for \$10.00

_____ Other people are coming with me. Here's my check for \$_____.

Women's Project • 2224 Main Street • Little Rock, AR 72206 • 501/372-5113

current work

Women and Work: Breaking the Barriers

A training and advocacy project to make non-traditional jobs accessible to women.

Technical Assistance to Domestic Violence Programs

Workshops on organizational management.

The Homophobia and Racism Project

Workshops on understanding racism and homophobia and developing methods to eliminate them.

Monthly discussion groups

Topics of interest to women and their lives are held the 2nd Monday of each month.

Coalition Building

Committed involvement and work with other community groups on issues affecting women and people of color.

Communications and Events

A quarterly newsletter, a lending library, statewide and regional conferences, and production of women singers, poets, and novelists.

Women's Project -- Our Goal

Our goal is social change, or as the poet Adrienne Rich writes, "the transformation of the world." We believe this world can be changed to become a place of peace and justice for all women.

We take risks in our work; we take unpopular stands. We work for all women and against all forms of discrimination and oppression. We believe that we cannot work for all women and against sexism unless we also work against racism, classism, ageism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism, and homophobia. We see the connection among these oppressions as the context for violence against women in this society.

We are concerned in particular about issues of importance to traditionally underrepresented women: poor women, aged women, women of color, teenage mothers, lesbians, women in prisons, etc. All are women who experience discrimination and violence against their lives.

We are committed to working multi-culturally, multi-racially, and to making our work and cultural events accessible to low income women. We believe that women will not know equality until they know economic justice.

We believe that a few committed women working in coalition and consensus with other women can make a significant change in the quality of life for all women.

We invite you to join us in our work by becoming a member of the Women's Project

Name _____
 Phone day () _____ night () _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I would like to contribute

- \$ 500
- \$ 100
- \$ 50
- \$ 25
- \$ 10 general membership
- \$ 5 low income, students, single mothers, senior citizens

I would like to pledge _____

- monthly
- quarterly

Enclose this form with your tax deductible check to the Women's Project, 2224 Main Street, Little Rock AR 72206.

Invisible Veterans A Legacy of Healing and Hope

Efforts are now underway to erect a monument on the grounds of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial that recognizes the role played by women veterans. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project is conducting this drive as part of a larger effort to educate all Americans about the vital services provided by over 250,000 women, military and civilian, during the Vietnam war.

Since the beginning of American history women have served our nation. Often these contributions have been accepted without comment, without recognition, without memorials. This is the situation for over 250,000 women who served during the Vietnam war.

Of the approximately 250,000 women who served during the Vietnam era, ten thousand of them served in Vietnam. Ninety percent of the women were nurses. Others served through the Red Cross, USO, other government, church or humanitarian organizations in various capacities.

The Project's goals are three fold

To teach the American public how all women Vietnam veterans sacrificed and labored in their various roles as soldier, friend and supporter.

To locate all women who served during the Vietnam war. There is presently no accurate record of the number of women who served in Vietnam and other areas. This activity is designed to promote a healing process for these veterans, often ignored by traditional methods of outreach.

To place a monument, honoring military women who served in Vietnam on the grounds of our nation's memorial to Vietnam veterans in Washington, D.C.

Your contribution, large or small, will help ensure that these women's sacrifices are not forgotten. And that an important chapter in America's history is not lost. To contribute, write VMWP, Box 45, 511 Eleventh Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55415.

The Vietnam Women's Memorial Project will display a replica of the proposed Women's Memorial in the rotunda of the Arkansas State Capitol from June 4 - 11, 1988.

Women and Work Project

(continued from page 4)

but now she is going to pursue a career as an auto mechanic. Many came with nontraditional backgrounds and desires, but never had the avenue presented to them to make their dreams a reality.

The Women and Work: Breaking the Barriers project has proven to be a needed resource for women seeking employment. We encourage women to not just go looking for a job just because they need work. If you got to work, make sure that you seek the very best employment opportunities that will give you decent wages.

The second training will begin on Monday, June 13 thru July 1. The orientation will be held on Monday, June 6. Again the training will be held at Liberty Hill Baptist Church at 1215 So. Schiller Street, Little Rock.

The community support we have received on this project has been overwhelming. Various organizations and individuals have readily given their time and valuable resources to this project.

Any information about possible employment opportunities, women working in nontraditional jobs that would like to be role models or any resources that you can offer, please call Charlye Crawford or Janet Doles us at 372-5113.

We Need You

The Women's Project is looking for a few energetic volunteers willing to commit to a few hours per week. There's a task to fit most talents including fundraising, responding to requests for information, copying and mailing, publicizing the work of the Project and more. For more information, call Kerry at 372-5113.

Operation Switchboard needs volunteers to staff line from 6:30pm - 10:30pm, two nights per month. The hotline is sponsored by the AR Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Arkansas AIDS Foundation. For more information, call Bob at 666-2318.

**The Women's Project
2224 Main Street
Little Rock, AR 72206**

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TRANSFORMATION

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Women's Burning Issues During An Election Year

Just about everyone knows by now that 10 million more women than men are expected to vote this fall in the presidential election, yet thus far in the campaign season there has been a remarkable silence on issues important to women--or at best, some simplistic or token references to "women's issues."

It wouldn't take so very much for a smart politician to get our vote. It would take more than being just another pretty face, however: we want some real substance in the public discussion of our issues and in the creation of programs for change. It is time for politicians to get real in their concerns about the issues important to our 52% of the population.

We are so very familiar with the lament that male politicians just don't know what women want, so even though we are sick to death of that ignorance, we are going to be patient one more time and offer a working list of women's concerns. Here they are, politicians, an unprioritized list of concerns--you'll have to figure out the priorities yourselves--that you, both Democrats and Republicans, can have for building a genuine platform that begins to reach all of the population.

1) **Safety.** We live in a war zone where safety is not guaranteed either in the home or in the streets. According to the research of Diana Russell, 38% of all girls will experience sexual assault before the age of 18. Dr. Joycelyn Elders of the Arkansas Health Department tells us that 75% of pregnant teenagers have experienced incest during their childhoods, and that this is approximately the same percentage throughout the country. Women everywhere still live in fear of rape and are forced to limit their own freedom in order to try to be safe. Women battered and raped in their own homes by those who live with them number in the millions. The issue of violence crosses all racial, social and economic lines: we live in a society that does not support the safety of women.

2) **Children.** We must have free or affordable, safe, quality child care for our children so that we can work to support our families. There are legions of single mothers supporting their families and doing it without the benefit of child support. In Arkansas, 80% of the children deserving child support do not receive it.

Families that rely on AFDC are forced to live below the poverty level. We are concerned about teenage pregnancy and the lack of accurate, responsible sex education in our schools. Education is always a major issue to us, for we want gender and racial bias eliminated from our schools and our children given an education that teaches critical thinking about the very complex issues and options life offers them.

3) **Economics.** Over half of all fulltime working women make less than \$10,000 a year. Of the people on minimum wage, two-thirds are women. Only 9% of all working women make over \$25,000 a year. Women and children make up the majority of those in poverty. The majority of women work two jobs, one for pay and one in the home, and their outside job is needed to support their families. Education and training for jobs are woefully inadequate. Despite efforts by women's groups, women are still admitted at very low numbers into nontraditional jobs. Pay equity is a must. The minimum wage must be increased; and welfare benefits increased to levels that insure the survival of the recipients.

4) **Health.** Health care is beyond the purchasing power of great numbers of women, especially poor and rural women. For most women, it is still abusive and exploitive, particularly for women of color, old women, lesbians, prostitutes. Our bodies and our lives are still not taken seriously by the medical profession except to the degree that we can purchase expensive services. We must have a national health plan that insures adequate health care for all citizens. We are concerned about AIDS and the lack of research, information and services relating to women and AIDS.

(continued on page 3)

DON'T LET THIS BE YOUR LAST ISSUE OF TRANSFORMATION.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO STAY ON OUR MAILING LIST, COMPLETE THE FORM ON PAGE 7.

Women Struggle for Equality and Respect

By Charlye Washington Crawford

Every day women struggle with the reality that they are viewed as second class citizens. They experience it in the workplace, throughout society and in their family lives.

Although more than 80% of single females participate in the workforce, at least one third (1/3) of them live in poverty. Women continue to linger behind men in the pay structure making approximately 67% of what men earn. Less than 10% of working women earn \$25,000 per year. Instead, women make up two thirds of the minimum wage earners in the United States. Of the people earning less than \$10,000 per year, women make up more than 50% of that number.

Women were not allowed to vote until the 1920's. Prior to that time women were forced to live in a society where their voices were not heard, even when given the opportunity to speak.

Women still experience a silencing on issues relevant to family and personal lives. The issue of family violence whether directed to the children or to the spouse, is still silenced. In the United States, a woman is beaten every 15 seconds. Yet, when women report physical abuse to family members they are often told, "that's ok, men are just that way", that they "bring it on themselves" or that they "deserve to be beat".

It is reported that in Brazil if a man kills his wife to protect his "honor" this act of murder is then 'justified'. That holds true to some degree even here in America.

Police officers often refuse to become involved in domestic quarrels saying that they are not really clear on where privacy ends and enforcement of the law begins.

One of the saddest things about domestic violence is its ability to grow and to thrive in our youth. Children of violent homes witness verbal and physical abuse and know it as a way of life. Those children are targeted as potential abusers. But far more people than victims of domestic violence carry on the acts of abuse. Where do they learn this behavior? Watch your television sets and see how much abuse is directed toward women whether blatant physical or subtle verbal abuse. A

recent study presented by the National Symposium on Child Victimization in Anaheim, California stated:

- 51% of the boys and 41% of the girls said a man has the right to force a woman to kiss him if he had spent a lot of money on her (a lot of money was defined by 12 years olds as \$10 to \$15).
- 50% of the students said a woman who walks alone at night and dresses seductively is asking to be raped.
- 65% of the boys and 47% of the girls in seventh through ninth grades said it is acceptable for a man to force a woman to have sex if they have been dating for more than six months.

One out of seven women experience marital rape. This is another form of control and abuse to women yet it is considered legal in some states. Society must be educated of the fact that when someone says no to sex and sex is forced upon them, that is RAPE.

Even after all the fighting for equal rights for women, a woman is still looked upon as a sex object walking the face of the earth to do her duty of giving sex to whomever desires it from her. Ask women who have trusted men only to be raped by them later. One woman told me that a male acquaintance who had wooed her in almost every possible way, and his numerous advances were unfulfilled, finally retreated and said "You know, I never really liked you, you're really not my type. I just thought I could get into your panties".

The struggles for equality and respect for women are far from over. No matter how much women fight for equality and respect the battle will never be won as long as women give birth to soldiers who go and fight for the other side.★

PUT DECEMBER 3 ON YOUR CALENDAR

AROUND TOWN

Association for the Sexually Harrassed (ASH) has formed a support group – for more information call 372-5113.

The disabled lesbians support group invites any woman interested in participating to call Ruth at 227-4034.

Poverty Remains High Despite Economic Recovery

New Census data on poverty issued in August shows that the economic recovery is leaving many poor Americans behind, according to an analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

The analysis found that despite five years of economic recovery, the poverty rate in 1987 – which was 16.3% – was higher than in any year of the 1970s, including the recession years of 1974 and 1975. The Center also noted that while the unemployment rate was at approximately the same level in 1987 as it had been in 1978, the poverty rate in 1987 was far above its 1978 level when it stood at 11.4%.

Some 32.5 million Americans were poor in 1987, eight million more than in 1978.

The poverty rates for blacks rose from 31.1% in 1986 to 33.1% in 1987, while the number of poor blacks rose by 700,000 to 9.7 million. One of every three black Americans was poor in 1987.

The poverty rate for black children climbed from 43.1 percent in 1986 to 45.8% in 1987 and the poverty rate for black children under age six jumped from 45.6% in 1986 to 49% in 1987. Nearly one of every two black children lived in poverty last year.

The Hispanic poverty rate increased from 27.3% to 28.2%, with the number of poor Hispanics increasing from 5.1 million to 5.5 million from 1986 to 1987.

The poverty rate edged downward for the elderly as a whole, from 12.2%, but rose among the black elderly from 31% to 33.9% and increased among the Hispanic elderly from 22.5% to 27.4%.

The analysis also found that the poor grew poorer in 1987. The gap between rich and poor families in 1987 hit its widest point since the Census Bureau first began collecting these data in 1947. In addition, the income of the typical poor family fell further below the poverty line than at any time since the Census Bureau began collecting those data in 1959. The wealthiest 40% of

Working for the federal government in Pulaski County? Designate your Combined Federal Campaign Gift to the Women's Project.

American families received 67.8% of the national family income in 1987, the highest level ever recorded. The poorest 40% of all families received 15.4% of the national income.

The income of the typical poor family fell \$4,165 below the poverty line last year. After adjusting for inflation, this represents a larger "poverty deficit" than for any other year on record.

The income of the typical lower income family (the typical family in the bottom two-fifths of the income distribution was \$741 lower in 1987 than in 1987, after adjustment for inflation, while the income of the typical family in the top two-fifths of the income distribution was \$3,031 higher in 1987 than in 1978, and the income of the typical family in the top tenth climbed \$8,119 above 1978 levels.★

Burning Issues

(continued from page 1)

We are concerned about drugs and the way they are destroying our children, our communities, our lives.

5) **Self-determination.** We want to have power over our own bodies and the uses we put them to. It is not the privilege of sanctimonious males to make our choices for us but for women to have the right to choose abortion or adoption, sterilization or childbearing, to live openly our lesbian or heterosexual identity, or to use our bodies sexually as a means of making a living.

6) **Global politics.** We are concerned about the interconnectedness of all our lives on this earth, and we want an end to the pollution of the environment by military/industrial indifference, an end to the exploitation of women workers in other countries by our corporations, and an end to the U.S. support of dictatorships around the world that destroy women and children. We want disarmament and world peace. And we want to start right now, right here, not tomorrow.★

Begin practicing your
Pictionary:
Tournament Coming

Reflections on Women at Work

By Janet Perkins Doles

The Women and Work: Breaking the Barriers project is succeeding at its goal of presenting women the idea of working in jobs that have primarily been dominated by men. Once the idea has been explored, women have been presented with information and resources to effectively move into apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and educational facilities so that they can have the opportunity to get into jobs that are over represented by men.

The Women's Project is proud of how widespread the project has become. Initially we projected that participants in the program would come primarily from the Little Rock – North Little Rock areas. The past three trainings have attracted women not only from these areas, but women living in Guy, Springfield, Pine Bluff, Benton, Searcy, Greenbriar and Beebe.

Clearly women are in great need of training and employment that will give them the option to apply for jobs that have the potential for higher earnings.

One woman in particular worked two jobs, which meant her day started at 3:30 a.m. when she went to her first job. From 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. she worked her second job. She went home, took care of the needs of her four children and then came to the training sessions. This woman was present each night of the three week program.

To date, three trainings have been completed. Seventy seven women have been introduced to nontraditional employment opportunities by attending Women and Work orientations. Thirty-two have completed three weeks of training.

The first two training cycles were held during the day. The third employment training cycle was held at night. The majority of these women worked during the day and made the sacrifice to come to the training at night. One woman in particular worked two jobs, which meant her day started at 3:30 a.m. when she went to her first job. From 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. she worked her second job. She went home, took care of the needs of her four children and then came to the training sessions. This woman was present each night of the three week program.

Remarkable? Yes. But this is the story of just one woman willing to make the sacrifice to come to the program. All of the women who have completed the program deserve loud and long applause.

But I'm very troubled – and this by no means expresses the emotion and concern that I feel.

In recent weeks I have talked to women that made the choice to take a risk – go for a job that we basically see men performing. Now please understand, these women did not just go out screaming "I want this job just because I'm a woman." No, these women sought the needed training to give them the ability and knowledge to perform these tasks as anyone would be expected who was hired for these positions. Each of these women excelled during their training and have received high praise. They did not go on these jobs expecting some one else to pull their load, they are very capable and willing to handle their share of the work and responsibility that these positions require.

They're hanging in. Unfortunately training, a willingness to perform, and ability are not enough for women to be recognized as capable co-workers.

In recent months I have had conversations with men about women working jobs that are predominantly held by men. Too often their comment will be, "a woman can have any job she wants as long as she can pull her weight and do the job." This is so far from the truth. Women are still being told that they don't belong and are being forced out of these jobs. Women are required to perform tasks that are not required of men in the same job classification. More stringent methods of evaluation are used to determine the performance levels of women. Many women fight as long and as hard as they can, minus support from family and co-workers. Many times they must give in because the battle is more than they can endure alone. Then the common response is, "I knew she wouldn't be able to perform the job."

Many myths surround women and their participation in the job market. Among them, is that women don't want to work and that when they do work it's only to buy extra things for themselves.

Approximately 51 million women were working in 1980 as reported by the Department of Labor. Female wages still lag behind male wages. In 1987, women

earned 65 cents for every dollar earned by men. More than 32 million Americans are living in poverty. Many of those families are "working poor" – people who work but do not earn enough to rise above the poverty line. 23% of American children under the age of five are in poverty. The proportion of poor families maintained by women was 48% in 1984.

Women are not choosing to work just to have something to do. Women are working out of need. Also women are attempting to get into occupations that will give them the opportunity for higher wages, not to provide luxuries, but to provide the necessities that are required to live.

I really don't understand how the world operates. Many express that nonproductive occupants in our society are a burden on the system. But when minorities and women strive to earn their own way, they are still told that they are wrong for doing so.

The women who have completed our employment training program are committed to improving the quality of their lives. We are equally as committed to aiding them in their goals. We want them to have that chance to see change occur. We work daily with the business community informing them about our program, hoping to gain their cooperation. We speak in our community to draw attention to the needs of women and the viable alternatives for positive change to occur.

Women who have come through our program have made the choice to seek education and training in apprenticeships such as avionic/electronic technicians, welders, and carpenters. Hopefully these women will be allowed to participate in these occupations as productive workers instead of being shut out and told they will never survive, because we won't let you.

All we are asking for as women is a chance to survive, a chance to see our children grow strong and healthy with all of their needs met and be able to provide them with some of their desires. I want to know, is this asking too much?

On the last day of training during our second cycle, Shirley Pierce summed up her impressions of the three weeks. This is an excerpt...

...We can all agree that we came here, not as strangers, but as friends whom we had not as yet met. In the short period of three weeks,

we have developed a bond that sometimes takes years to form. Usually, when you put a group together, you find situations where two people become friends, or you end up in small clusters. It has not been my experience to be involved in a group where there is as much genuine caring, concern, and support as within this group. I'm sure that it has something to do with our destinies that we all signed up for the workshop. We have learned from each other. We have shared with each other feelings, that often times are hard to share, because we have trusted one another to the point where we can feel comfortable enough to do that.

I would like to share with you a part of something I wrote 8 years ago, for a very special occasion, because I feel it is fitting...

I vow to commit myself to you...to secure your happiness and to minimize your sorrows..to share your laughter and feel compassion for your moments of tears... to provide encouragement for you to grow, first as another human being, but also as a woman..with God's help, to have the patience to develop an understanding of your special needs and ambitions..to consider you my equal, so that you do not walk in my shadow, nor I in yours.

We all made this vow to each other, without knowing it, the first time we walked through the doors of this church. I, for one, am thankful for that opportunity, and proud to know all of you.

Upcoming Women's Project Events

October 10
Domestic Violence: Women Who Kill

November 14
Single Mothers

December 16
Women's Project Open House

*All take place at the Women's Project
2224 Main Street • Little Rock • 7pm*

December 3: Pictionary Tournament

Library Brings Hard to Get Books to Arkansas

Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, the Women's Project library is nearly ready for its grand opening.

The library will be an important source for many books not found in bookstores and libraries in Arkansas. The collection includes fiction and nonfiction books and periodicals and focuses on the works and literature of women, people of color, and the struggle for social change in this country and internationally.

The library needs your help.

Volunteers are needed for

- fundraising/grantwriting
- entering book titles on computer
- preparing books for shelving
- publicizing the library
- reviewing books
- finding sources for books
- staffing the library
- staffing special events

Supplying the library depends on selling books, calendars, note-cards, and datebooks as well as contributions from the community.

The Women's Project Library needs donations of books and periodicals in the following areas:

- black literature
- racism
- black history
- nonsexist children's books
- women's issues

Buy A Book

Partial list of children's books needed

Everybody Needs a Rock by Byrd Baylor - \$4.95.

Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown - \$2.95.

Just Us Women by Jeanette Caines - \$3.95

Sarah, Plain & Tall by Patricia MacLachlan - \$2.50

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell - \$3.25

Tatterhood and Other Tales by Ethel Phelps - \$8.95

William's Doll by Charlotte Zolotow - \$3.95

Partial list of periodicals needed

Off Our Backs, feminist newsjournal - \$15

Conditions, literary magazine - \$25

Trivia: A Journal of Ideas, radical writing - \$12

Broomstick, for women over 40 - \$15

Sojourner, the women's forum - \$15

Feminist Teacher, multidisciplinary mag. for teachers at all levels - \$12

Lesbian Ethics, a forum for ethical issues - \$14

IKON - Art Against Apartheid - \$7.50

Inkind donations of books are tax-deductible. You may donate money to buy particular books by selecting books from the list above and sending a check to cover the cost of the book. Or let us pick the book for you.

We will print your name inside the book, acknowledging your contribution. Checks should be made out to the Women's Project. These donations are tax deductible.

For more information call the Women's Project at 501/372-5113.

Attend a Methodist Church?

We're an Advance Special. Call us for details at 501/372-5113

Yes, I'd like to help the library

I'd like to staff the library

I'd like to donate used books which will be sold to buy new books (need to have at WP by Nov. 1)

I'd like to help with fundraising.

I'd like to contribute \$_____ to buy the book:

I'd like to contribute \$_____ You pick the book.

I'd like to pledge \$_____ per month to support the library.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone/day _____

Telephone/night _____

Return this form to the Women's Project

2224 Main Street
Little Rock, AR 72206

current work

Women and Work: Breaking the Barriers

A training and advocacy project to make nontraditional jobs accessible to women.

Technical Assistance to Domestic Violence Programs
Workshops on organizational management.

The Homophobia and Racism Project

Workshops on understanding racism and homophobia and developing methods to eliminating them.

Monthly Discussion Groups

Topics of interest to women and their lives are held the 2nd Monday of each month.

Coalition Building

Committed involvement and work with other community groups on issues affecting women and people of color.

Communications and Events

A quarterly newsletter, a lending library, statewide and regional conferences, and production of women singers, poets and novelists.

Women's Project - Our Goal

Our goal is social change or, as the poet Adrienne Rich writes, "the transformation of the world." We believe this world can be changed to become a place of peace and justice for all women.

We take risks in our work; we take unpopular stands. We work for all women and against all forms of discrimination and oppression. We believe that we cannot work for all women and against sexism unless we also work against racism, classism, ageism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism and homophobia. We see the connection among these oppressions as the context for violence against women in this society.

We are concerned in particular about issues of importance to traditionally underrepresented women: poor women, aged women, women of color, teenage mothers, lesbians, women in prisons, etc. All are women who experience discrimination and violence against their lives.

We are committed to working multi-culturally, multi-racially, and to making our work and cultural events accessible to low income women. We believe that women will not know equality until they know economic justice.

We believe that a few committed women working in coalition and in consensus with other women can make significant change in the quality of life for all women.

YES, KEEP TRANSFORMATION COMING

Name _____

Phone/day () _____ night () _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

____ Please send me membership information

*Send this form to the Women's Project • 2224
Main Street • Little Rock, AR 72206*

**The Women's Project
2224 Main Street
Little Rock, AR 72206**

**Non-profit
Organization
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**THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST ISSUE OF
TRANSFORMATION - See Page 7**

Address Correction Requested

TRANSFORMATION

Volume 3, No.4. Women's Project, 2224 Main Street, Little Rock, Arkansas 72206. 501/372-5113. December 1988.

The Mercurial Face of Covert Racism

As a white Southerner, I have no claim to being an expert on racism, but I have struggled with it, both within myself and within society. The more I come to understand racism, the more all encompassing it seems to me, and the more I see its connection with all the other oppressions.

What do oppressions hold in common? Among other things, they hold in common the desire and ability of one group of people to exert power and control over the lives of those within a different group. Those who exert power and control define the limits of freedom, of wholeness, of possibility and hope for the other group.

Those who oppose oppressions support empowerment of individuals and groups of people. And what is empowerment? Empowerment is being able to speak one's own truth in one's own voice and having a part in making the decisions that affect one's life. That doesn't seem like asking too much, does it? And yet at the core of racism – and all the other – is the silencing of people and the systematic exclusion of people from decision-making in both social and economic arenas.

Some examples:

1) Congress recently passed legislation to create a Lower Mississippi Delta Commission to study conditions in a seven state area and prepare a 10 year plan to im-

prove economic conditions of the people who live there. Three of the most "progressive" young governors in the South govern the three main (and poorest) lower Mississippi Delta states – Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi – and they recently agreed in a much publicized meeting to work cooperatively to improve this region that has such fertile soil, such extreme poverty, such wonderful culture, such a large black population, and such limited educational and social service delivery systems. Who was appointed to serve

Empowerment is being able to speak one's own truth in one's own voice and having a part in making the decisions that affect one's life.

on this new commission? Nine white men, three of whom are the young governors who appointed themselves. Not one black person, not one woman. Black leaders from the Delta responded with outrage and despair. The response to their concern was one we've seen many times: these commissioners will set up an advisory group that will have black people and women on it. That is to say, a group without power. An afterthought. An appeasement. When this idea was not met with overwhelming approval, the Governor of Arkansas said the group would hire a black executive director, if they "could find a good one." And he went on to assure

us, "I'm sure we can." (*Arkansas Gazette*, 12/10/88) When do we ever hear white people saying, "We'll hire a white man if we can find a qualified one."

2) A local foundation that has a commitment to educational change became interested in the diminishing numbers of black teachers in public schools in the state. It organized a committee to examine the problem and make recommendations. Who was on that committee? Not one black person.

3) Two national organizations sponsored conferences to set national gay and lesbian agendas, one for gay and lesbian activism, one for work against homophobia. The organizing committee of the former was almost all white males. When confronted, the leaders said, "We just turned our rolodexes out on the table to get a list, and these are who showed up." And guess who showed up at the conference? Primarily white people. The organizing committee for the latter was all white men. No people of color. No women. When confronted, their spokesperson said there was no ill intent. "It was just your garden variety racism. We called on who we knew."

Continued on page 9

Women's Project
Library Hours – 10am - 2pm
Thursday, Friday & Saturday
2224 Main Street • Little Rock

Sexism in Buying

Take a man with you when you go to buy a car. Those words echoed over and over in my head recently as I naively attempted to purchase an automobile in the Little Rock area.

Now, I acknowledge that I, like many, have survived my share of financial difficulties. Nonetheless, the treatment I received in terms of service should be inflicted on no woman and I dare say would not be inflicted on any man.

One Toyota company advertised "No credit problems here", so I called them. When I arrived there I was greeted by a smiling face who assured me that they could get me financed because the owner had recourse with a local bank.

I met with one of the owners and after being subjected to questions and comments like "do you have a boyfriend, - you have to pay for your past mistakes in life - and - you don't get out much, do you?", from the owner, he finally agreed to take recourse with the bank. We made a verbal contract. If I could raise a specified additional amount as a down payment, we would (the owner and I) go to the bank before 2:00 p.m. that day to get the car I had chosen.

When I called him back in less than two (2) hours to say that I had raised the money, he said, "I have a better deal for you". I have a "repossessed" car that you can get. We can't get the other car. The bank will finance the repos-

sessed car for you but not the car that you want, is the crux of what I was told.

I was outraged at his blatant disrespect for me as he hustled to get the monkey off his back. He was perfectly willing to attempt to push me up against a wall. While we both would get something, he would be the only one to get what he wanted.

I was told by them that "I had to crawl before I could walk". I explained to that gentleman that if I am to be mobile at all, if I am going to make a substantial car payment anyway, I am going to pay

Nonetheless, the treatment I received in terms of service should be inflicted on no woman and I dare say would not be inflicted on any man.

for something I want to drive. I had absolutely no interest in buying the car he needed taken off his hands.

I rejected the "repossessed" offer and picked up my deposit refund check.

That night the salesman called me and asked me to "hold off" on another car (at another dealership for which I had expressed interest) because he was certain that he could get the Toyota I wanted. He said he knew that I had been treated unfairly, he was sorry and really wanted my busi-

ness. I agreed to wait, explaining to the salesman that I was renting a car and needed to terminate that arrangement. He assured me to the extent of promising to pay rental fee on my car if the deal did not go through. The deal did not go through.

Then another automobile company also behaved in a way which leads a customer to think that the car dealership is doing the customer a favor, rather than the other way around.

After talking to the salesman, completing a credit application and leaving a deposit for a car, they said they would run everything through and get back with me. The salesman later called me and said that I needed to come back into the dealership, because while they had run the credit check, we needed to talk numbers so they would have something to take to the finance department.

When I arrived to "talk numbers" I discovered they had not run the check. By this time I was carless, having to borrow someone's car to go and look on my lunch hour. Again, I asked them to take care of the paperwork and if we could do business, I would be back.

When I went back the third (3rd) time, they said that I could be approved for a loan but not for the car I wanted. They could sell me a car of much less quality. Not only was that their feeling on the kind of car I should drive, the deposit, which I left a day before, was no longer sufficient. They

Continued on page 7

Upcoming Events

January 9. Homeless Women. Women's Issues Discussion. Led by Estella Morris. 7-8:30 PM at the Women's Project, 2224 Main, Little Rock.

January 16. Martin Luther King Parade. Come march behind the Women's Project banner. Call for details about where to meet and for more details about the march.

January 21. Women's Dance. 8 PM at the Unitarian Church on Reservoir Road. Put on your glad rags and come join us for a drug and alcohol free evening of music and fun. \$5 admission.

February 13. Women and AIDS. Women's Issues Discussion. Led by Joy Pritchett. 7-8:30 PM. at the Women's Project.

March 11. The Faces of Poverty: Women and Children in Arkansas. Women's Project statewide conference. 8:30-4:30. Liberty Hill Baptist Church, 12th and Schiller. Brochures will be mailed in early February.

March 12. AIDS Vigil. 5 PM. At the Capitol. Watch for publicity.

March 13. Women and Disabilities: Differently Abled Women. Women's Issues Discussion. 7-8:30 PM. Pulaski Room in the UALR Student Union.

March 24-26. 1st Gulf Coast Women's Festival. To get on the mailing list, write Southern Wild Sisters Unlimited, 250 Cowan Road, Gulfport, MS, 39507 or call 601/896-6453.

March 27. Women & Work: Breaking the Barriers. Four week training program begins. Call the Women's Project.

Other upcoming events to get on your calendar now:

April 8. Mardi Gras Ball. A community event for gay men and lesbians.

April 21-22. Women's Retreat. Two days of relaxation, discussions, music, community building and fun at a state park. Call the Women's Project for information.

April 28-30th. Making a Living and Making Change. Regional women's conference sponsored by the Southeast Women's Employment Coalition. Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. The Women's Project has scholarships and travel money for 10 low-income women who are working on women's economic issues in their communities. Call us for information.

May 27 - 28th. Second National Tradeswomen Conference. Chicago. The conference will address the needs of women who work in or seek to enter nontraditional blue collar jobs and those who support this goal. Call us for information.

June 10. Women's Project 8th Annual Awards Dinner.

December 2. Season Sampler.

December 15. Holiday Open House.



For more information about any of these activities, call the Women's Project at 372-5113.

I Woke Up This Morning With My Mind On Freedom and Injustice

I had been pondering on how to write another article on the Women and Work: Breaking the Barriers nontraditional training program and make it come alive to our newsletter audience. I recognize that this program means so much to the Women's Project and provides us with endless conversations; but it's hard to transfer that same enthusiasm to those who are not there to witness the events of the program.

On Tuesday, December 13 the opening story on "Good Morning America" was "Congress is looking at voting themselves a 50% pay increase." This got my attention. I wasn't real sure what their current salaries were, but I did know that a 50% increase was a lot.

I've got to admit, I generally am not very attentive to information such as this. My usual response is "those that got will get," but on this morning, this headline had a more gripping effect on me and immediately influenced my morning routine.

Each morning I rise with a commitment to have a good day no matter how dismal my life may be, despite the current events of the world or how difficult the chores that await me at work. This positive approach to each day generally works, but not today. This 50% increase story followed by the second news story of the day about taxes being placed on medicare benefits which will be a burden on so many older Americans took my positive approach to this day and stomped it in the ground.

At this point I was walking through the house talking to myself in dismay that Congress would even think of such a move, when each day we hear of the billion dollar deficit in this country, the number of homeless being on the rise, budget cuts for social programs, how more and more people are being classified as the working poor, and there not being enough money for various educational programs. I just kept saying over and over 50% increase, 50% increase.

I have yet to work at any job that provided me with a

50% increase, and have been made to feel as if I was being ungrateful when I didn't jump on top of my desk and dance a jig when I was informed I was getting a 5% increase.

As guests on *Good Morning America* to address this issue of increasing the salaries for Congress, top executive and judicial employees were former Senator Howard Baker and the Chairman of the Commission on Federal Pay, Lloyd Cutler. When asked by the commentator to address how they can justify such a large increase in salaries, he replied that it's a heavy financial burden for those who are in elected federal positions due to their having to maintain two homes; one in their home state and one in Washington. This coupled with other exorbitant expenses, Senator Baker added that means many are leaving federal positions or choosing not to run for office because of the low wages. Wait, it gets worst. Also, if the in-



Sheriffon McMorris / Jewels Graphics

crease is awarded, it is being recommended that speaking fees and other honorariums that are received be discontinued, which Senator Baker explained, had always been a source of conflict for the American public. Currently, members of Congress receive \$2000 per speaking engagement; house members can receive up to \$26,850 and senators \$35,800 in fees each year which generally comes from groups seeking to influence legislation. Now for the clencher. This increase would raise congressional salaries from \$89,500 to \$135,000. Many feel that this increase is much needed because they are concerned about being able to provide for their families and college educate their children, which at the

present salary of \$89,500, is becoming more and more difficult.

I had not an ounce of compassion or an empathic ear. To be exact, I was insulted at the reasons given to us, the American public, why Congress, and top executive and judicial employees felt they were justified in exploring an increase, a 52% increase in their salaries. This was one time I wished there had been an 1-800 number to call to voice my opinion.

I started to wonder about our legislative body and their awareness of the economic conditions of the majority of the American people. Will their healthy increase come from the taxes that are being placed on medicare benefits, that will be paid by older Americans, many who are barely existing on their SSI checks. Older Americans who oftentimes suffer from malnutrition because they do not have the money to eat a healthy diet, who can not qualify for public assistance because they receive a check that puts them in a bracket just a little above the required level. The majority of our aging society have spent the most productive years of their lives in low paying jobs that they supported their families on. If you are a woman, age 65 or over, that has retired, more than likely you have no retirement benefits, because only 20% of women are fortunate to have been able to work in jobs that provided that kind of fringe and for retired men the figure is just slightly better at 40%. This is pathetic. Out of the millions of people that work for so many years of their lives, only 60% are privileged to have some kind of retirement package. And I know there are many out there that ask the question, "why didn't they save for this time in their lives." This is equally an unfair question.

Most Americans are living from pay day to pay day, providing the basic needs for their families and having to face other financial uncertainties that occur in our lives...there's not very much to tuck away for those golden years.

My rage wells even more at the thoughtless justifications that have been given for this 52% increase.

Worries over maintaining two homes. Concerns over providing for their families. Wanting to be certain they can provide a college education for their children. Don't we, the unemployed, underemployed and working poor have these same concerns? How insensitive can this body be to suggest that their needs and concerns are greater than the majority of Americans. We all attempt to find solutions to these puzzles of life, and most of us do it on a budget far less than \$89,500.

Since April, 1988, the start of the Women and Work: Breaking the Barriers employment preparation project to November, 1988 we have talked to more than 350 women who have expressed their concerns about surviving. Many of them are single-heads of households who have worked most of their adult lives in minimum wage jobs.

Forty-nine women were willing to sacrifice three weeks of their lives to take a risk of being in our program without any guarantees of having a job....yes, because they are attempting to answer the question of how am I and my children going to make it. And for those who are married, their incomes are still very important to providing the basic needs for that family.

We ask women to take a chance at receiving some information and training to be able to go into a non-traditional occupation that has the potential of paying a higher salary than what they generally earn in the traditionally female jobs. Many women would be satisfied to have the earning potential of \$20,000 since nationally only 9% of us, and in Arkansas 0.6% earn that amount of money. For most of us,

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Injustice on My Mind

Continued from page 5

having a \$20,000 per year job would ease many of our financial ills and just think what we could do off of \$89,500 with the possibility of getting a 50% increase.

I haven't heard of one senator, house representative, or judge and their family having to leave their home because they couldn't make the payments...this year I've met women who have.

How many times has any elected official had to deny their child the privilege of participating in a sport because there might be a chance for injury and they couldn't afford the medical bills...common for many of the women I have met this year.

Tell me who on the Hill witnessed their child struggling with their homework and know this child is not just dumb, but just requires some extra attention on their educational requirements and did not have the resources to get a tutor.....Many mothers in our training have bright, talented children but have absolutely no means of cultivating and developing those treasured abilities. Nor do these women have that extra time to sit with that child to give her or him that so much needed support, because they work two or sometimes three low wage jobs to keep food on the table, a roof over their heads, and clothes on their backs.

When I hear and read about our lawmakers and power brokers taking this kind of action, then it becomes so clear to me why the distribution of wealth in this country is so disparate and I start to feel that those that have in this country think that those of us that don't have, are o.k. with our lot in life. If we really wanted to go for the big bucks, fame and fortune that we would have postured our lives from day one in that direction. To paraphrase Martin Luther King, Jr., "it's a little unfair to tell a man to pull himself up by his boot straps when he doesn't even have a pair of boots". And for the nations poor, women and children and people of color, I think this says it all. We are expected to run this race with the same vigor, vitality and confidence with those that have never been denied entry onto the track.

I'm always amused how there will be these commissions made up of top legislative officials that make recommendations on the lives of others, you know, like that Commission on Welfare, which is made up of those that have never seen a hungry day. Well, it has always disturbed me for people that feel that they are in the know to decide for other people how they should handle their lives. But now I would like to be a Commission made up of one to give Congress some suggestions for easing their economic woes.

I can't tell you how many times I have heard news commentators announce that our economical status in the U.S. is in the red and Americans are going to have to tighten their belt buckles.

And that is my suggestion to you Congress, top executives and judicial employees. Tighten your belt buckles. Cheaper housing, bargain shopping, less expensive vacations; see the U.S. instead of Europe. There's a lot to be said for working your way through college, many of us do it, and believe me you really appreciate that education when you have to pay for it yourself, and your kids will too. This is the advice we have heard from you for years. Don't give advice you can't take yourself.

Janet Doles

The Faces of
Poverty:

Women and
Children
in Arkansas

Saturday, March 11,
1989

8:30 - 4:30

Liberty Hill Baptist
Church
12th and Schiller
Little Rock

Look for details soon

Sexism in Buying

continued from page 2
 wanted a larger deposit.

I maintained my stance that when I buy, I buy what I want. Again, I retrieved my deposit.

I will spare you the sordid details of the other unpleasant encounters I had with local car dealerships. I will say that I now have a new car. A car that I like. It even has extra little amenities I want in a car, which none of the others I attempted to purchase had. This car was sold to me by a woman.

I defied the advice I heard as early as my childhood by not taking a man with me on my car search. Every other time I had purchased a car, a man was present. And, while I can not claim that respect was a major player in the process of getting the automobile, it was clearly more evident when a man was around.

Men always questioned who else would be on the note with me. Even when I looked at cars when I had a trade in to offer, they always asked if this was "just my" car.

I have to wonder what role my color played in this process. I have a very good white female friend who accompanied me on a few occasions, and I seemed to get more respect during those times.

No. It was not my imagination. No. I did not make this up nor am I exaggerating. Among the car dealerships in the Little Rock

area, I experienced a strong resistance to be respectful to me, a single Black woman who strives for nothing less than the best her money can buy.

It's hard to determine how my race played in this scenario. Many white women have also expressed extreme apprehension toward their efforts to make major purchases, i.e. cars and houses. One woman, who is a homeowner, was asked to acquire the signature of a co-owner when attempting to purchase a car. How-

They expect women, particularly poor women and women of color, to forfeit any options that may be available to her to anxiously participate in the purchasing power of America.

ever, she was successful in purchasing a house without such a guarantor prior to buying the car. And so, the power struggles go on. The desire to control women rears its head once again in the economic arena. Car dealers and big ticket merchants are fully aware of the potential power they possess over the female consumer. They expect that she is not aware of what she wants and what options are available to her. They expect women, particularly poor women and women of color, to forfeit any options that may be available to her to anxiously participate in the purchasing power of America.

What some merchants obviously overlook is the extent of the female purchasing power. Those who see women as "kept objects" waiting for permission to make their major purchases will be forever waiting for patronage from "mighty strong women" like this writer and thousands of other women.

We deplore the arrogance of merchants who inflict their antiquated ideas about women's roles and their place in the economic structure. It is not enough that they oppress us when we are powerless and can exert little opposition to their tactics. They go one step further in carrying out their greed toward their cause. They will practice their ignorance while jeopardizing their financial well being.

I am still not convinced that one should "take a man with you when buying a car". I am convinced that one should ask for a sales representative who is a woman.

Charlye Washington Crawford

Support Groups

The Women's Project sponsors four support groups:

- Women in nontraditional jobs
- Lesbian support
- Lesbians with disabilities
- Battered lesbians

Two new support groups are forming:

- Adult survivors of incest
- Families and friends of gays

Call 372-5113 if interested.

Women in Arkansas

Seeking the Land of Opportunity

In December, the Arkansas Women's Economic Coalition completed work on *Women in Arkansas: Seeking the Land of Opportunity*. The report presents information in seven key areas of women's economic lives – aging, household relationships, education, occupation, earnings, overt, and barriers to women's economic equality and presents strategies designed to move women toward full economic equality.

Although there are many important key findings in the study, of much interest are those findings related to earnings and women in poverty.

Eighty-three percent of Arkansas women earned under \$10,000 in 1979 compared with 62 percent of men.

Men were seven times more likely to earn \$15,000 per year than women.

Men were eleven times more likely to earn \$20,000 per year than women. Only 1.5% of working Arkansas women in 1980 earned \$20,000 or more.

Eighty-seven percent of Arkansas black women earned under \$10,000 in 1980 compared with 81 percent of white women.

Sixty-one percent of black women earned under \$6,000 compared with 53 percent of white women.

White women were twice as likely to earn \$20,000 or more compared with black women.

Poverty has a disproportionate impact on the state's black population.

4 out of 10 blacks lived in poverty, compared with 1 out of 7 whites.

4 out of 10 black families lived in poverty compared with 1 out of 8 white families.

5 out of ten black female headed households lived in poverty, compared with 1 out of 5 white female headed households.

The report presents strategies which are designed to move women toward economic equality.

These include:

Provide opportunities for adult women to gain literacy.

Review and increase the state's sex equity efforts in vocational education.

Increase funding and availability of career counseling for young women and women re-entering the work force.

Provide incentives for childcare on campus and at the worksite.

Institute comparable worth policies in state job classifications.

Raise the minimum wage.

Work toward increased representation of workers by unions.

Make economic development efforts inclusive of women.

Develop systems for determining progress in meeting women's economic needs.

Supplement the food program for women, infants and children (WIC).

Raise AFDC benefits for low income families with children.

Provide general assistance to low income singles and childless couples.

Support school and community based clinics.

For copies of the report, send \$7.75 per copy to the Women's Project, 2224 Main Street, Little Rock, AR 72206

UALR Offers Winter Women's Studies Courses

- 3315 Female/Male Communication
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TRANSFORMATION

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Published four times each year

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Covert Racism

Continued from page 1

In each of these cases, the people in power – those making the decisions, naming the agendas – no doubt would say that their intentions were good, that they were trying to do what was best for people. That is the nature of covert racism. With overt racism, the intent is openly to hurt, to limit, to cause harm, but with covert racism, the intention is positively stated but the result is harmful. Needless to say, the latter is much harder to deal with because of its mercurial nature: just when we think we have identified and pinned it down, it slips out of our fingers. We name the injustice, and the perpetrator says, "Oh, no. That's not what was happening. I was doing this other thing. I was trying to help you." That is, what's wrong with you? Why are you always reading discrimination or injustice into everything?

This covert racism exists everywhere, even in social change organizations. So many of them work with communities of color,

and yet the boards and staffs – where decisions are made – are made up of white people with (if any) a few "representative" people of color. So very often this configuration exists in direct service organizations such as battered women's shelters where many of the residents may be

No matter how much power and privilege we possess, no matter how good our intentions are, we do not know what is best for another person or another group of people.

women of color and yet the vast majority of the staff and board will be white. As we know, those who make the decisions hold the power. Yet, among white people there is so often the lament that people of color just will not participate in the organization's events, no matter how much outreach they do. Is anyone surprised? The invitation is to come take part in an event or a service where one has no voice, no power in de-

cision-making, no place except as what so often seems an afterthought.

We get confused sometimes in our social change organizations: we begin to think that empowerment is naming someone else's power for her/him. Empowerment recognizes that every person's voice is important, that no one can speak for another as that person can for her/himself. No matter how much power and privilege we possess, no matter how good our intentions are, we do not know what is best for another person or another group of people.

Empowerment implies, demands equality. We have little hope for eliminating racism until we confront issues of equality.

Suzanne Pharr

Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism

By Suzanne Pharr

The first book of its kind on the subject of homophobia and sexism. Essential reading for those whose lives and organizations are affected by homophobia and for those who do trainings on homophobia.

Table of Contents

- Homophobia: a weapon of sexism**
An analysis of why homophobia exists and the way it works
- The effect of homophobia on women's liberation** A discussion of the ways homophobia stops our work
- How the oppressions are connected**
The common methods used by sexism, racism, homophobia/heterosexism, etc., to keep people oppressed
- Women in exile: the lesbian experience** internalized homophobia and strategies for setting ourselves free

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Thanks to you all.

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Volunteers are needed for the newsletter, library, bulk mail, clerical and support work, research, fundraising, organizing special events, video projects, leading support groups and more.

For more information, call Kerry at 372-5113.

current work

Women and Work: Breaking the Barriers

A training and advocacy project to make nontraditional jobs accessible to women.

Technical Assistance to Domestic Violence Programs

Workshops on organizational management.

Women's Watchcare Network

A project to monitor incidents of racial, religious, and sexual violence and hate groups in Arkansas.

The Homophobia and Racism Project

Workshops on understanding racism and homophobia and developing methods to eliminating them.

Monthly Discussion Groups

Topics of interest to women and their lives are held the 2nd Monday of each month.

Communications and Events

A quarterly newsletter, a lending library, statewide and regional conferences, and production of women singers, poets and novelists.

Women's Project - Our Goal

Our goal is social change or, as the poet Adrienne Rich writes, "the transformation of the world." We believe this world can be changed to become a place of peace and justice for all women.

We take risks in our work; we take unpopular stands.

We work for all women and against all forms of discrimination and oppression. We believe that we cannot work for all women and against sexism unless we also work against racism, classism, ageism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism and homophobia. We see the connection among these oppressions as the context for violence against women in this society.

We are concerned in particular about issues of importance to traditionally underrepresented women: poor women, aged women, women of color, teenage mothers, lesbians, women in prisons, etc. All are women who experience discrimination and violence against their lives.

We are committed to working multi-culturally, multi-racially, and to making our work and cultural events accessible to low income women. We believe that women will not know equality until they know economic justice.

I would like to join the Women's Project.

Name _____

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- _____ \$ 25
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