

Committee Closeup: CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING



Harriet Perl, Consciousness Raising Committee Coordinator, Leads a CR Group Leader Training Session.

Photo by Dawn Armstrong

Letting and Getting the Feminist Out

By Dawn Armstrong

Ask seven intern CR leaders what it's all about and here's what you'll get:

- ...personal growth.
- ...(discovering that) my problems are not mine alone.
- ...awareness of what being a woman is.
- ...experiencing sisterhood and at the same time being aware that this is what you're doing.
- ...changing (the value system and (finding) deeper involvement with women as sisters.
- ...understanding myself and other women as members of an oppressed class.
- ...fantastic experience at a bargain price!

Harriet Perl, Consciousness Raising Committee Coordinator, sums it up "...it's a fantastic introduction to feminism and at the same time it has something to offer every woman, no matter where she thinks her head has arrived."

CR Controversy

Some hold the view that Consciousness Raising is just a new phrase for brain-washing. Statistics do show that most of the most active and most angry feminists are CR graduates. However, this is felt to be a natural result of the discovery that society and not the individual is the source of a great many frustrations and guilts. CR does not in-

corporate rote learning of feminist doctrine.

Another common inaccuracy is the idea that CR is Group Therapy. Although L.A. NOW trains and screens CR leaders, no leader presumes to be a Therapist. A NOW leader might define Therapy as an experience to help you exist (cope) with the way things are, whereas CR is intended to support your actual change as a woman if you want it.

CR offers an understanding of the politics of the Movement. At the same time, it touches a woman with the warmth of sisterhood. For many, CR is the first real experience of sharing, listening, and valuing other women without the pressure and insecurity of "female competition" that society creates between women.

New York to L.A.

The CR concept originated in New York. In the Fall of 1971, Ivy Bottini, a past President of New York NOW, came West and discovered that no one here knew much about CR.

A NOW group formed and met for three-and-a-half months. The participants were so enthusiastic about the experience that a leadership training program was planned for the Summer of '72 so that a CR program could be offered to the NOW membership.

In the Fall of '72 an official Council Resolution called for the formation of a Consciousness Raising Committee with the immediate purpose of putting all the practical knowledge together and to work

for NOW. Harriet Perl was elected Co-ordinator.

Currently, NOW CR's are open to women, members and non-members, on a regular basis. Three new CR Groups are formed each month and new leaders are trained continuously in a manner similar to "student teaching" methods, complete with seminars.

CR and You

As soon as you request it, your name is placed on the CR waiting list. Most new members do so at the Demonstration CR given each month. When you are placed in a new group, you are scheduled for four meetings at the NOW Center.

After this point, you are "committed" to a minimum of four more meetings, held at a member's home. It is not unusual for a CR group to go on for the maximum leader commitment of 10 weeks, and then to continue, leaderless, indefinitely. One group met for two years.

Every group has its own "dynamic" and leaders are trained to quickly define and work with this unique identify. Although topics are similar for each group, the timing and approach will differ. Some groups never do "come together" and some mesh at the second meeting.

All discussion is confidential and friends, roommates or others with "outside" social relationships are discouraged from participating in the same group. Personal topics are discussed when the group members have naturally become intimate with one another so that there is no confrontation or judgement involved.

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Photo by Jeanette Calmette

Ivy Bottini, CR Consultant, Norma Adams, Producer, Susan Heick, Camerawoman, review footage for the educational feminist documentary to be released Spring '73.

FEMINIST FORUM

All NOW Members are invited to contribute to Feminist Forum, subject to editorial selection. Opinions expressed here are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent NOW attitudes or policy.

NO SPOONFUL OF SUGAR

By Debbie Padgett

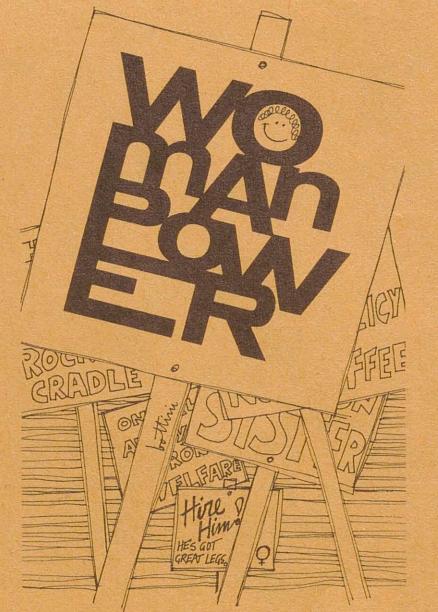
First, it was that we hated men, then the lesbian issue, and now that we take ourselves too seriously. Everyone knows that we all wear hobnail boots, paperclip necklaces, and bush jackets...without bras. It is a criticism difficult to fault since laughter has always been considered the best medicine. Answering one of the boys on a late night talk show, Gloria Steinem pointed out that oppression is never funny, but no one heard her.

Actually the laughter is a symptom of a greater ill and not a medicine at all. Not taking things too seriously means that one does not have to confront the

reality of her or his self and perhaps come to admit that one's personality may not match society's sex role expectations. After all, women are not supposed to be serious.

We cannot neglect the fact that much of this criticism comes from men. But, taught the masculine mystique, can we vilify them? Facing our humor, they must feel terribly uncomfortable.

How can our critics choose to ignore the cartoonists who portray the movement favorably and then laugh all the way to the bank? Lichtry has done it in "Grin and Bear It," Trudeau in "Doonesbury," Gauerke in "The Alumnae" (which you'll find in the View section of the Times), and, of course, Feiffer. How can they overlook the beautiful feminist guerilla theatre that has gone on? Making a bonfire of padded bras, spiked heels, sheath skirts, girdles, false eye-



lashes and wigs at the Miss America Pageant would have been serious business to them. How can they fail to see the wit in "the hand that rocks the cradle also cradles the rock," "make policy, not coffee," "hire him, he's got great legs," and "Womanpower?" Why? Because this time the joke's on them.

GET CREDIT FOR NON-PAID WORK

Individual Resources, a national computerized placement service, is offering women the opportunity to list their unpaid as well as paid experiences. This acknowledges the value of volunteer work. Information about the organization and a copy of their placement information sheet appeared in the December '72 issue of Spokeswoman.

Karin Kauffman, Employment & Compliance Coordinator, who drew L.A. NOW's attention to the form and its possibilities, feels "Here's a chance for a job, and here's a chance to let employers know that we do have talent."

The service is free. Forms and more information may be obtained from the firm at Box 5346 Grand Central Station, New York, New York 10017.



Photo by Jeanette Calmette

Put Your Face In This Happy Picture!

NOW! Has Joyful Jobs Sharing Sisterhood and Sweat at home . . . at the NOW Center . . . wherever you can contribute whatever best. Experience helpful, but not necessary. Learn as you go/grow!

IMMEDIATE NEED for:

Reporters (writers and non-writers)

Production Artist • Researchers

Circulation • Subscription • Advertising Staff

and lots of other stuff.

MEETING SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1:30, NOW Center or Call Dawn Armstrong at 462-1133 or 278-0286 (leave message on tape).

NOW! IS YOUR VOICE. HERE'S HOW TO USE IT:

FEMINIST FEEDBACK

Address open letters in care of this department as you might to a "Letter to the Editor" section.

FEMINIST FORUM

Essays, extended thoughts in regard to the Women's Movement, may be submitted from any NOW member.

HOW TO PUT UP WITH PUT DOWNS

How do you answer standard questions? Submit the question(s) and simple, single-phrase answers.

FEMINIST VIEWPOINT

All members are encouraged to comment/review current TV/Movies/Books/etc. from our side.

PROVOCATION & INSPIRATION

Poetry and artsy-craftsy expression, visual or written. Also legitimate "case history" pieces which demonstrate women's current status and wants for the future. (This section will develop as the newsletter prosters.)

Address all correspondence to the specific department, in care of NOW, Now Center. Original cartoons and photos are welcome in addition to written material. Editor assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. All submissions are subject to editorial selection with priority given to material from NOW Members. Anonymous submissions will not be considered. Please include your name and telephone number. Ideas and comments for the newsletter are also welcome. Send to attention of Editor.

NEW L.A. OFFICERS

Elected Jan. 16

Chapter Coordinator:

Four Area Coordinators to serve 3-month consecutive terms for 1973.

First Coordinator to be announced at General Meeting Jan. 23.

NOW Center Director:

Carol Wood

Members-At-Large:

Edie Berman Doris Katagiri

Paula Bernstein Kay Mahaffey

Carol Desser Carol Mohlman

Crenshaw Center Closed

According to a former Crenshaw Women's Center staffer, the Center closed due to a shortage of funds and a decline in staff organization and responsibility. The Center newspaper will be published on schedule. Mail should still be addressed to 746 Crenshaw Blvd., but telephone calls should be made to the Westside Women's Center, 823-4774. Plans are now underway to re-open a Crenshaw area Center in another building.

All Members Come Rap

All NOW members are urged to participate in the experimental Problem-Solving Group project. The purpose of the non-structured Group is to provide a forum for any member who wishes to make a comment about working within NOW's existing structures. Through group discussion, a variety of alternatives and solutions will be made available to every member who is experiencing difficulty. As a result, it is hoped that the work of the Movement can be accomplished with maximum efficiency through maximum Sisterhood. The next meeting date is February 12, 7:30 p.m., at the NOW Center.

Susan B. Anthony
(Continued from Page 1)

The lesson plans, written by Marilyn Wiczynski, also of the L.A. Education Committee, are a compilation of ideas and resources that first through fifth grade teachers can use in class on February 15th.

The Los Angeles Education Committee will distribute the letter and lesson plans to all members of the local chapter who are teachers, and on a personal basis to neighborhood schools and friends who are teachers.

Anyone who would like copies is invited to stop by the NOW Center or to call and leave a message on tape at (213) 278-0286.

Many books are available to teachers and others interested in Ms. Anthony. They are listed at the end of the historical notes on the February Calendar Insert.

FEMINIST VIEWPOINT

"LIMBO" WOMEN ARE THE REAL POW'S

By Debbie Padgett

"Limbo" is a finely sensitive portrayal of POW wives, their families and the problems they face. It is a film any woman will easily identify with, liberated or not.

The plot of the story is not as important as the portraits that are drawn of the women who, according to a Universal Studios news release, are "sentenced by war to a life of desperation" because they have lost their men. A closer look, however, points out how women alone are the victims in a world that is not of their making, best illustrated by the men who pursue the wives insensitive to their real problems. Clearly, it is a man's war in a man's world. In a performance hailed by critics as Academy Award caliber, Kathleen Nolan plays a 35-year-old mother of four who has waited almost five years for her husband to return home. Eschewing glamour, she gained 38 pounds to look the part.

"Limbo" indicates that Hollywood has finally recognized women as human beings. More importantly, women played key roles in its production: producer was Linda Gottlieb; story by Joan Silver; film editor, Dorothy Spencer; and music by Anita Kerr.

SPEECH CLASSES BEGINNING

Members interested in learning how to speak to your mother-in-law, brother, son, boss and others, in addition to outside groups, about the feminist movement can now attend weekly classes.

Learn The Answers to THE Questions; You and the Camera; You and the Mike; The Hostile Audience; How to Start; Innovative New Methods in Speaking; How to Involve Your Audience in Participation; and more.

If interested, leave a message for Eve Norman on the Center tape, 278-0286.

NOW Bills Bell \$4 Billion

NOW Chapters across the country used the first week of January to present American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) a bill for \$4 billion representing the amount women employees have not received as a result of sex discrimination.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's report on the Bell System, "A Unique Competence," Bell's female employees "given their age, education, and experience, are paid an aggregate of \$500 million per year less than males with comparable personal characteristics." With the passage of the Civil Rights Act eight years ago outlawing sex discrimination, it makes the total \$4 billion.

Here in Los Angeles, Cathy Timlin, AT&T Task Force Coordinator, and Virginia Bratfisch have been talking with southern California AT&T officials. Cathy reports that on the lower entry level, they are nominally complying with the Affirmative Action Plan. There are about eight women installers in the area (and Cathy was served by one of them when she recently had a phone put in her new apartment). However, women working as customer representatives get on the average \$100 less per month than women working as customer representatives with other utility companies.

The situation is even bleaker at the management level. While there are many women employees at the supervisory and 1st management levels, men are concentrated in the high paying upper management positions. When Cathy called to discuss the problem with AT&T officials, she was told to call back late January (more on that next month).

The EEOC report also described Bell as "without doubt the largest oppressor of women workers in the United States," and calls Bell's policies towards women "morally and ethically indefensible."

The January bill for \$4 billion is just one in a series of NOW AT&T actions. In 1971 NOW won a significant legal victory against AT&T in the case of Lorena Weeks vs. Southern Bell.

Last Fall, at the General Services Administration and White House joint press conference to announce accept-

ance of Bell's Affirmative Action Plan, NOW National Officers Ann Scott and Whitney Adams denounced the Plan and demanded its rejection.

A combined protest by NOW, the NAACP, the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund and the Women's Legal Defense Fund, succeeded in reversing GSA approval and transferring jurisdiction over AT&T's Plan to the OFCC.

Late in October, National NOW representatives met with AT&T's President to offer NOW's expertise as a resource for assisting AT&T in achieving its stated objective to bring women into all levels of the corporate structure. The offer was not accepted, nor were other suggestions for improving equal opportunity.

Consciousness Raising (Continued from Page 3)

CR and the Movement

Harriet Perl states the ultimate objective: "We're geared now to place 45 women every month, and more and more as new leaders are trained. . .until every woman in the U.S.--the world!--has experienced CR. CR is a critical step in achieving the overall goal of true sisterhood."

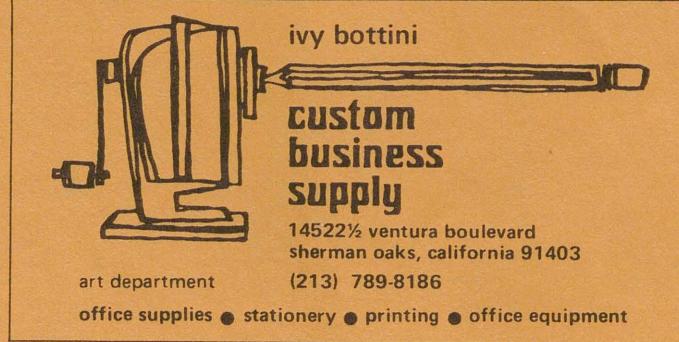
NOW CR leaders often offer their services to others. Ivy Bottini has organized many non-NOW groups and is currently acting as a consultant for a film to be distributed by BFA Educational Media, a division of CBS. The film is being produced by Norma Adams as a documentary of the Women's Movement, and, significantly, uses footage of a specifically formed CR Group to elaborate on the sexism and stereotyping theme.

Women from all walks of life are emerging from the CR experience with a profound sense of themselves, their sisters, and with a new enlightened anger that can be channeled into the most effective kind of thrust for the Movement.

As the new experts in CR, the L.A. NOW CR Committee is putting together a Handbook for national distribution. This Handbook may well help bring about not only the full realization of sisterhood, but also the broadest possible acceptance of the humanistic ideal.

Working With the CR Committee

The CR Committee has jobs for non-leaders as well as for leaders and trainees. As participation grows, so does the need for administration of the program. Contact Harriet Perl, Coordinator, if you are interested in this important work.



west coast lesbian conference

APRIL 13, 14, 15 AT UCLA

HOSTED BY WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER OF UCLA