

the Red Shawl

In Dedication to Susan B. Anthony's Badge of Visibility

Volume 2 Issue 2

February 1977

COUNCIL NEWS

POWER STRUGGLE

by Barbara Wilson

During the past month City Council meetings have, for the most part, been concerned with Community Block Grant spending for fiscal year 1977-1978.

We have all read and heard much about citizen apathy-especially when something or someone with political power abuses or misuses this power. It's always the "people's" lack of participation that is held responsible-right? Well, Hallelujah! and Amen! The citizens of Saginaw for the past month could never be accused of apathy. The "standing room only" attendance and active participation of people at these meetings has been terrific to see and hear. People from all walks of life, i.e. clergy, business, women's organizations, neighborhood organizations, young, old, middleaged, have rallied to bring their concerns and proposals to the Council. What a boost for the community-involved citizens, volunteering not only their ideas and suggestions concerning the spending of these monies, but actually volunteering their time and efforts to guarantee success. Well, it's all true, and it's all wonderful! But- there's one catch! The Saginaw City Councilmen obviously are not a political group encouraging citizen participation.

First came their refusal to explain why they were not going to fund the two programs for women so desperately needed in Saginaw. Then came the threats to clear the council chamber because of applause and scattered laughter. When this didn't have the intended effect, the council appeared to calm down and listen. Appeared is a good word- because at the final council session, it was made loud and clear how the councilmen were really handling citizen participation. Statements were made by two councilmen implying that citizens had been organized and led by councilwoman Platte to harrass and threaten the council. One member even used this as his reason for voting against the Perfect Place and the Underground Railroad. This turn attack is pretty scary. It basically says to the community, "We are the power, We make the decisions, and you, the people, be quiet!"

BLOCK GRANT \$\$

by Connie Smith

On February 21, the Saginaw city council gave the final approval to the \$3.35 million application of Community Block Grant Funds. The application will now be reviewed by county and state agencies before it is formally given to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on April 15. The programs and their funding are as follows:

Riverfront Development, \$300,000
West Side Business District Study, \$12,000
Central Business District Renewal, \$551,227
Rehabilitation Loans and Grants, \$300,000
Relocation (for families, individuals and businesses) \$200,000
Code Enforcement, \$250,000
Neighborhood Development, \$350,000
Neighborhood Parks, \$62,000
Neighborhood Lighting, \$50,000
Neighborhood Housing Services, \$30,000
Public Services (includes eight human service programs which will be third-party contracts with nonprofit organizations) \$758,873
Administration, \$492,400

In the weeks following their preliminary vote the council heard record numbers of audiences urging funding of the five human service programs deleted from the Human Planning Commission recommendations.

Councilwoman Ardeth Platte moved that the \$250,400 needed for the five projects be taken from the \$300,000 expenditure approved for riverfront development. The five projects voted on separately were; Perfect Place, Underground Railroad for battered women, citizen participation plan (SUNA), a center for the central city historic district and money for rehabilitation grants in the historic district. The vote on each project was identical 5-2 against, with Sister Ardeth and Pam Leckie casting the affirmative votes on all five of the human service programs.

Opinion

By Pat Parthe

Last month, Pope Paul VI issued his final decision on the question of a female priesthood. In his statement, Paul pointed out that the Bible forbids female priests, and he concluded that since Christ "was and remains a man," and since no woman was ever called to be an apostle, if women were ordained as priests, "it would be difficult to see in the minister the image of Christ."

In recent years, the Church has often seen fit to suspend scriptural literalism, when biblical scholarship gave her a better historical perspective. In this case, the Vatican has chosen to ignore the cultural milieu of the early Christian era in which women were seen to be valuable primarily as property of husbands or fathers and as unclean and corrupting by nature. In maintaining the biblical ban against female priests, is the Church also maintaining this view of women?

As though speaking from a different age, the Pope ignores the growing social trend to stop defining people in terms of sex roles; more surprising, he ignores modern theological thought in his own church, which regards God, not as male, but as a person possessing both "male" and "female" characteristics.

In essence, the Pope is maintaining that men and women are different forms of humanity, and since only one of these forms is "worthy" of priesthood, the clear implication is that the other form is inferior. The Pope has closed the door to women; when it is finally opened, there may be very few women left who still want to come in.

Viewpoint

Letter to the editor:

I have just read The Married Feminist by Angela Barron McBride. In feminism, as with all "new" ideas, the difficulty is that its proponents and its opponents tend to oversimplify its history, its goals and its problems. The feminist movement is not a series of given truths: rather it is a mix of attitudes, of needs, of perceptions. Homogenization is not the aim; freedom and liberation require that everyone shall have room to move around in the total society.

And this is precisely what Ms. McBride discusses. "In this book, I have looked at new things to be angry with, at those I find comforting, at sexism in others and myself, and at how disturbing and yet invigorating being a married feminist is."

PERSPECTIVES ON FEMINISM*

By Louanne Smith

Feminism: A doctrine that advocates or demands for women the same rights granted men, as in political or economic status.

--American Heritage Dictionary

This is the beginning. The first step toward the liberation of women is equality under the law. However, we must not let equality be the end of the struggle.

We have seen and experienced the result of centuries of a male dominated culture. That culture idealizes attitudes and actions which, although not innately male, have come to be synonymous with masculinity. Aggression, competition, dominance and the like have created a fertile breeding ground for war, rape, murder and wife beating. If we are to become merely 'equal' to men, what will be the result? More wars? More murder? Husband beating? We will not improve the world for ourselves or our descendants by achieving equality, and not becoming free. If we join men in practices which destroy lives and define (thereby restricting) human potential, we join the ranks of oppressors, and in doing so - remain oppressed.

We must find new ways to use our power. We must all - women and men - refuse to abide by sex role stereotyping and the hierarchy of power that presently controls and confines us. This goal must be realized in many ways, from the way we raise our children to the ways we run our country. Change is desperately needed, and only through change can we become liberated.

* With this issue, the Red Shawl staff wishes to introduce a new column to its readers. Being a newsletter dedicated to feminist viewpoints on many issues, we feel a need to explore individual viewpoints on feminism. We encourage you to submit to the Red Shawl your views on feminism, or reactions to the views expressed here. (Word limit-250)

That is the theme of the book. It is the loving solution we need to seek, even as we understand that there are no absolute, no fixed solutions. To discard with contempt, those who are not making the move as fast as the leaders of the movement, is to condemn them to second-class citizenship forever.

The "war between the sexes" mentality will do nothing for either sex, but will assure the extension of that oppressive society which the true feminist, the true liberal, the true reformer finds most repugnant.

Mildred Katz

ISSUES

by Diane Craig
& Doris Craig

Over the past months, many people recognized it. Recently, more people know for sure that there is an obvious imbalance on the City Council. And that imbalance has (among other things), negated the needs of a very large segment of the Saginaw Community.

The imbalance stems from the fact that there are only two women on the Saginaw City Council, Sr. Ardeth Platte and Pam Leckie, and no matter how hard they may try - votes concerning "women's issues" bite the dust with a (very often) 7 to 2 vote. Certainly it's not just women's issues which suffer from the closed "maleness" of the Council. Policy decisions regarding realistic spending (e.g. more land purchases for a low-priority Congress Street Bridge), accountability for federal monies (e.g. administrative salaries being paid by Block Grant monies) and more community input ("open" nominations for vacancies on the Council, Boards and Commissions) have, all too often, resulted in the same 7 to 2 vote.

Votes to maintain Saginaw's status quo every Monday night at 7:30, are virtually secured, if one knows that citizens have only Sr. Ardeth and Pam Leckie to address the issues, discuss them (or attempt to), ask probing questions and vote their consciences. Who worries with such an overwhelming majority?

Certainly, we must: for elections are this November with six positions to be filled.* If we, as women, vote as a block to elect women and men who respond to citizens, who are committed to optimum citizen input and participation and who will truly represent all of the community, then Saginaw's City government will be truly a model of democracy.

However, if we don't - then we can rest assured that the vote will continue as it has been. Now is the time to begin surfacing good women and men who will truly represent the people. The task ahead is a large one - but one we must put our energies into - now!

*The six positions are: Kim Shraeder's (recently appointed), Joe Stephens', Sandy Spence's, Rev. J.P. Wilson's (recently resigned), Sister Ardeth Platte's and Pam Leckie's.

What Does The Equal Rights Amendment Say?

- Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.
- Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.
- Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

ACTIONS

Law

by Barb Klimaszewski

Discrimination in extension of credit on the basis of sex is prohibited by both state and Federal laws. This article will deal with the state law provisions.

The Michigan law on discrimination in credit went into effect August 1, 1974. It provides that discrimination in extending credit or granting a loan on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, sex or physical handicap is prohibited, with a few exceptions.

In order to be exempted from the non-discrimination provisions in Michigan, the person extending credit must be a non-profit corporation whose members share the same religious, racial, ethnic, marital or sexual characteristics (or a combination of these characteristics), and extends credit or grants loans only to its members.

The Michigan statute similarly bars discrimination in the rating of credit worthiness on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, sex or physical handicap.

A person who violates the Michigan law is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000. In addition to this criminal penalty, the injured party may initiate a civil suit for damages against the person or organization that violated the law. If the act of discrimination is proven in the civil action, the offending party is liable for a minimum of \$200. in damages. If the actual damages suffered are greater, the offending party is liable for all damages which reasonably resulted from the discriminatory act. In addition, whoever wins the civil case is entitled to receive court costs and attorney's fees from the losing party.

In the next issue, I will outline the federal law on discrimination in credit.



Now, women do not ask half of a kingdom but their rights, and they don't get them. When she comes to demand them, don't you hear how sons hiss their mothers like snakes, because they ask for their rights; and can they ask for anything less? But we'll have our rights; see if we don't; and you can't stop us from them; see if you can. You can hiss as much as you like, but it is coming.

Sojourner Truth, 1853

The Critique

by Mary C. Shepherd

The War Widow

a play by Harvey Pear
Channel 19

Lesbianism has never been treated as sensitively on T.V. as it was in this play. Perhaps the historical time frame (World War II) was responsible for this because there was a subtlety throughout that echoed a more gentle way of life and verbal expression than we use today. Underneath the nuance there was ugliness and fear, but the Victorian life-style and mode of expression in an upper middle class atmosphere took away the sensationalism that has usually been associated with the subject on television. The result was a real gem.

Amy's husband is fighting in France. She and her little girl, Beth, live with Amy's mother in a lovely 19th century house on the Hudson. The reading of a letter in the first scene establishes the emotional sterility of the marriage. Lovely, gentle Amy only comes alive in the presence of her daughter.

Amy meets Jenny in New York City. Jenny is a photographer, a career woman, independent and self-assured. On meeting her, Amy's mother says, "I've never met a woman who works before." Amy's friendship with such a person of the world was a threat to the way of life the mother sees as being natural, and above all, correct.

The scenes between Amy and Jenny are beautifully done. Amy is so fragile; she thinks of herself as a china tea cup with a crack in it. She fears that her growing realization of her love for Jenny will drive her insane. But in the end she goes to Jenny and leaves her mother's house. There is no question of keeping her daughter, and the goodbye scene between Amy and Beth is tragic. One can only hope that the tea cup does not break.

HERSTORY

By Pat Parthe'

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) was a brilliant woman who struggled to free herself from the stifling mores of her time. The modern feminist will gasp in amazement at her personal courage. Her genius was ignored and finally buried by a society which could see only the scandalous aspects of her private life.

Mary Wollstonecraft was the second child in a large family whose financial resources were dwindling because of the mismanagement of an irresponsible father. She worked as a paid companion and later as a governess to help support her family but finding both situations intolerable to her independent spirit, she turned to writing - a move so revolutionary, she dared not even tell her own family.

In 1792, she published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, addressed to proponents of the French Revolution who had neglected to include women's rights in their glorious prescriptions for a new social order. The basis of her theory was that the adult woman can be no better than her conditioning and education have prepared her to be. The key, she thought, was changing women's education.

At 33, she fell passionately in love with Gilbert Imlay, an American and became pregnant and bore his illegitimate child, Fanny. Despite her desperate attempts to continue the relationship, Imlay ended it soon afterward.

Her life's long struggle was to satisfy the needs of her passionate nature and still maintain her intellectual and personal independence. She finally achieved this with the brilliant writer/philosopher William Godwin but unfortunately, she died less than a year later at age 38, following the birth of their daughter Mary (later Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein*).

DOES SEX DISCRIMINATION EXIST?

by Sister Ardeth Platte

Yes, on the local, state, and federal governmental level and in all phases of life. There is overwhelming evidence that persistent patterns of sex discrimination permeate social, cultural and economic life. It manifests itself in:

1. the chance women have to exercise their God-given talents
2. their chance to get a job
3. their pay schedule for equal work
4. their measure of equality before the law
5. the data on employment: who works, what women earn, occupational choices available, insurance costs, in governmental roles, and decision-making, in news media and communication
6. in housing
7. in training and advancement in employment
8. in social security, credit, community property laws, inheritance laws and pension plans
9. in the courts

Women's Center

By Diane Craig

things to do...

places to go...

Several months ago, the staff of the YWCA pulled together a meeting to discuss the direction the YW might take in the future. From the women who attended (about 10), came information on new (and existing) services that were available to women in the community and the possibility of the Y assisting some of these groups, either by providing space for workshops or co-sponsoring speakers, etc. However, the emerging theme was that, while there were several programs meeting needs of the area's women, there was also a tremendous lack of knowledge about all the different types of services and programs that many women (still) didn't know about. The need became apparent then: to somehow coordinate all the available services in such a way that any woman (whether new to the community or not) could discover what's available to her.

This led to the solidification of a (proposed) Women's Resource Center, to be housed at the YWCA, but staffed independently of the Y. According to the bylaws (adopted by consensus, Jan. 25), the purpose states that the Women's Resource Center shall work: to provide opportunities for all women of the greater Saginaw area for learning and growth; to initiate specific services not currently being provided for women; to support and promote existing services in the community.

The Center shall be a place where all women may come. The objectives are: 1) to provide information that responds to the unique needs of women, including but not limited to, child care, emergency services, employment concerns, feminist activities, housing and library resources; 2) to develop individual and group programs meeting the needs of women, including overcoming the barriers of diversity, community building, career development and counseling through education and workshops and Chrysalis outreach; 3) to be an advocate for women and 4) to raise funds for programs and administrative responsibilities.

Membership is open to all women in the area who are interested in participating and/or can donate \$1 for membership. Women interested in learning more can call Sally Lemaire, Executive Director of the YWCA, at 755-0571.

- Mar. 2 F.U.S.R. Mtg., 1626 N. Mich., 7:30pm
- Mar. 3 Skills Fair Day, Saginaw Valley College. call 793-9800 for information
- Mar. 7 Red Shawl Mtg., Shuch, 5pm; City Council Mtg., City Hall, 7:30pm
- March 10 Women's Resource Center Meeting, 11:30 am YWCA
- Mar. 11- Rape Crisis Center Counselor Training, more volunteers are needed, call 755-6568 for details
- Mar. 14 City Council Mtg., City Hall, 7:30pm
- Mar. 21 Red Shawl Mtg. (stories due), 5pm, Shuch, City Council Mtg., City Hall, 7:30pm
- Mar. 28 City Council Mtg., 7:30pm

Support The Red Shawl!

The Red Shawl is published monthly by Diane Craig, Barb Klimaszewski, Pat Parthe', Linda Prohaska, Connie Smith, Louanne Smith, Sheila Smith and Pam Blondin Sommerfeld.
Artwork is done by Linda Prohaska of Picture This, Inc.
Typing is done by Sher Smith.

The Red Shawl was created to provide the women of the Saginaw area with a forum to express their ideas and concerns in the hope that we may gain support, encouragement and inspiration from one another.

Contributions, financial and informational, may be sent to The Red Shawl, c/o 1839 N. Mich., Apt. 1, Saginaw, Michigan 48602

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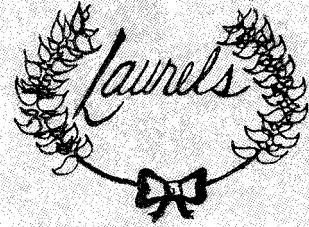
By Sheila Smith

Diane Rehak has been an active participant in and motivating force behind many projects in the Saginaw area which have been concerned with raising the quality of life and meeting human needs. She worked for the passage of the Michigan Criminal Sexual Conduct law, helped realize the Saginaw County Rape Crisis Center, and serves as member of its board of directors. Recently she and Maria Tanner organized Womansong II, an annual fund-raiser for the Center. The audience at least tripled in size this year and the evening proved to be emotionally as well as financially rewarding.

Several years ago Diane was part owner of Saginaw's first Head Shop 'Winds of Change' and is currently in partnership with Fred Rehak and Frank Amrhein in the creative business of making wooden toys. Her commitment to positive change and her courage in efforts to bring about change deserve much praise.

Rape is no excess, no aberration, no accident, no mistake- it embodies sexuality as the culture defines it. As long as these definitions remain intact- that is, as long as men are defined as sexual aggressors and women are defined as passive receptors lacking integrity- men who are exemplars of the norm will rape women.

Andrea Dworkin
OUR BLOOD



By Sheila Smith

In this little thank-you corner we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for so much active concern to Helen Burzyck, a Steering Gear employee who finds time and energy to reach out and help the people of this community. For her efforts in the area of rape, drug abuse and many other worthy causes we say "thanks."



Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, outward obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of a man; and should they be beautiful, everything else is needless, for, at least, twenty years of their lives.

--Mary Wollstonecraft (1792)

The editorial staff of The Red Shawl asks that all articles submitted please contain non-sexist language.