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The Dickinson Women's NEWSLETTER

*Published by The Advisory and Planning Committee
on Women's Programs*

"The Women's Newsletter" is pursuing a different outlook this year. Its most important service will be as an information source for the Dickinson women. Reporting will center on topics dealing with the college women such as the "Commission on the Status of Women," the Women's Film Festival, and a newly-planned Women's Center to housed in the basement of Montgomery. The development of self-worth, one of the main tenets in the Women's Movement, is a goal that we can strive towards while here at college. This goal can become a reality by making sure women know what opportunities are available to them, both in career pursuits and creative interests. One example of this is the recent trip for Dickinson women to Philadelphia. This day trip, held on November 14th and sponsored by Student Services, focused on employment outlooks for women after college.

The Newsletter's function is not to be merely a collection of articles concerning the rights of women. While this role must continue to be explored, it will not be the central theme of this paper. It is interested in helping Dickinson students pursue a more active, satisfying experience; now and in the future. Just remember: to make our work successful, we need the help of many people. Check the tear-off sheet at the end of this newsletter if you could devote any time to helping with one of the different program ideas. The help will be greatly appreciated and you are guaranteed some fun in the process!

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GETTING TO KNOW: Pamelee McFarland

This is the first in a series of articles dealing with women on the different kinds of interests they are pursuing. Recently, I talked with Ms. Pamelee McFarland, academic and personal counselor for the Educational Development Center (EDC).

As I talked with Pam about a diversity of topics including her outlook on the women's movement, Dickinson and its impact on careers and growth opportunities, the sunny, warm office seemed to reflect Pam's openness and congeniality. She is a deeply committed person: to herself, her job and career, and to others. A graduate of Grinnell College with a major in social psychology and history, Pam came to Dickinson as a graduate intern in the Office of Student Services while she completed her Masters degree in administration and higher education counseling at Shippensburg State College.

The brainstorm for the formation of the Educational Development Center was a joint effort on the part of Dr. Ian Sturrock, Professor Richard Wanner, and the late Professor Anthony Mach. The purpose of EDC, located at 30 Mooreland Avenue, is to provide much needed aid to students laboring under possible study problems. The center, with director Swindell Sutton and Ms. McFarland, is currently developing a strong tutoring program open to the entire student body. EDC sponsored the reading comprehension course offered in the beginning of the semester and is now finalizing plans for various Academic Skills and Personal Development Programs.

During our conversation, we explored the job opportunities available to college graduates. Ms. McFarland raised the point of having additional programs available on campus for providing informative, helpful advice to aid students in attaining their desired goals. In discussing women in particular, Ms. McFarland was curious about the existence on campuses today where women appear to have become much more aware of definite career goals and have realized that a college education has other values besides merely "catching a husband." For awhile, the tables were turned as she asked me where I thought the Women's Liberation Movement stood in the eyes of the Dickinson woman. Had it progressed to a higher, more sophisticated level where women had some idea of their own worth and the various channels open to them? We both agreed that Dickinson seemed to be experiencing a time of quiet acquiescence with little visible action either for or against the movement for freedom and equality for women.

Pam stressed the importance of a woman's freedom of choice - to mold her life into one that is free to experiment with a widened, enriched lifestyle as a wife, career woman and mother. We talked about the need for a series of group sessions that would focus on answering one of the basic questions facing college women: finding the key to combining a liberal arts college education with interesting work in a world where the job market is shrinking and college graduates are being warned of problems of unemployment. College can be the perfect time for exploring and growing, but without some concrete support and aid, the exploring will lead to a dead end and the growing could very well be stunted. But, with ambitious creative women like Pam working to help others, Dickinson has a decided advantage over other educational institutions.

- Denise Grycky

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A BASIC RECIPE by Debbie Slager

When words are put down, collectively on a piece of paper, they are supposed to reveal a great truth; to follow a basic theme, to remain loyal to one thought. This we all learn in elementary school when our English papers are returned with red marks indicating that "this thought does not belong here" or "new paragraph".

The fact that disjointed thought is a truth connected to a real self is not considered. Irrelevant thought must be channeled as should irrelevant actions or beliefs until there is a common ground for communication, belief and existence; a bland, blaze norm held forth as the ideal.

And so we have thousands of people running around seeking different paths to normalcy; running away from self to the emphasis of the "others" normalcy. They gather together in groups and label themselves Women's Liberationists, Republicans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Monday Night Bowling League.

In these groups they reaffirm the normalcy of one another, escape into the abstract of collective thought and carefully sift out "irrelevancy". In this manner the individual is not responsible for her or his own actions or beliefs; they are the beliefs of others so they are relevant, affirmed, good, in short, a collective truth.

We escape to these groups when we have become discontented with ourselves, when we are frightened, when what we see in ourselves becomes too true, too real. We escape to security, falseness and a non-reality, a reality that is only good for the all, not for the individual.

So if you truly wish to know what a woman is, what a Protestant is, what is true and what is false, listen to the voices of your body and senses. Truth is within you, reality is what you perceive. What is good and bad in life is within us all. And we must accept these in ourselves as well as in others.

So, what are some situations where women I've known have been deeply hurt or used or humiliated and have put on the strong woman "I can take it" act when inside they're falling apart?

Let me mention a few situations - you'll recognize them. First, there is the male boyfriend, lover or husband who makes all the claims in the relationship while allowing the woman to make none. He makes sure his expectations are met, his needs are fulfilled, with little thought for the needs or expectations of the woman, which may be similar to or far different from his. He controls when you meet, where you go, how you act with his friends, when you make love, etc., etc. Most women I have talked to who are in this situation and don't want to be just sit by and take it. Things are fine on the outside, but inside there is confusion, fear and dissatisfaction.

There's an example closer to home. At Dickinson "the quad" is still a phenomenon. It's not just a place on campus or a group of men - it's a huge social presence, and every woman at Dickinson must at one point or another decide how she is going to relate to it. Some ignore it, others manage to break through the mythology and get to know individual men there are close and good friends. But many freshmen go back again and again for fine reasons like peer pressure (from men and women), like status on campus, like escape, pretending to themselves that it's the best thing that's ever happened to them! Yet, inside they cringe at being picked over in cattle-fashion, at having to pretend to like men they really don't like, at getting drunk and sleeping with someone because that's what you do at the quad, when that's really not what they want to do at all. If it hurts, don't keep going through it. Tell someone it hurts. There are alternatives to personal relationships where with far more integrity than being a pick-up at the quad - and if women started talking about their feelings with each other, these could be realized.

I'll end with one more situation that is widely-accepted and that makes me livid! As we all know, women can stand pain and suffering more than men can. And, as we all also know, men have stronger sex drives than women and should therefore, always be pleased in a sexual relationship. So, women are expected to accept the pain and discomfort of child-bearing and menstrual cramps silently with clenched teeth and a smile. Well, if I ever make the decision to have children, and I feel like screaming because it hurts, I'll scream! And as for the sexual drives - all of you who are women and still think you have to hold back, accept pain, live with the fact that you don't have as much pleasure as your lover - wake up! It's all a bunch of lies somebody once told you. If it hurts, tell someone. If you're unfulfilled as a woman, admit it to yourself and do something about it.

The first step is finding other women to listen to where it hurts and tell you where they hurt as women. When you get that out, you can begin to tell each other where it doesn't hurt, what makes you feel good about being a woman. There are women on campus who would like to share these things. Find them. Begin to talk to each other and some of the hurts you have accepted may go away.

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The Commission on the Status of Women at Dickinson meets for lunch at 12 noon in Room 218 of the Holland Union Building on the 3rd and 5th Fridays of each month. Everyone is invited to join them. Brown bag or carry your own tray.

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Contributors to the "NEWSLETTER"

Editors-In-Chief: Barbara Burns and Denise Grysky
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There is no group that can give you truth, no person that can give you yourself, but you. Learn to love yourself, all of you. Even society's good and bad, is a part of life and life is good. Do not separate yourself from it seeking the truth and reality of others.

To be a woman is to be true to yourself. Within you lies the answers to all your needs -- love, truth, reality, courage, comfort, pain, anger, joy. Seek to find these on the roads within, not on the paths leading away. Do this so that when you seek others you do so in the strength of self rather than in the shell of others. Be not afraid.

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MEANDERINGS by Barbara Chaapel

If I had to give these paragraphs a title it would be "Tell Me Where It Hurts," stolen from a television drama of the same title that was aired for the second time in August 1974. I hope many of you who read this saw it. It was one of television's better offerings, and for me and many women I have talked to, seeing it was a truly cathartic experience - a washing clean of my feelings as a woman, a peeling away of all the fronts I use so often to help me deal with society, job, men - a re-discovering of the value of my very own feelings, an affirmation of the fact that I could hurt as a woman, and that it was alright to let others know that I hurt and not keep playing the strong woman, nerves of steel game.

The drama starred Maureen Stapleton as a middle-aged housewife, married to a cabbie and mother of a college-age daughter. It is her story, as she joins with four or five of her "housewife neighbors" and decides that they really can do more than discuss Tupperware and food prices. They make a pact with each other, at the urging of the college daughter, to meet regularly and talk about themselves - their feelings, things that make them happy and things that hurt them, their marriages and families, their conceptions of what it means to be a woman, a wife, a mother.

The meetings become more and more important to them, in several cases lives radically change (one woman leaves her husband, another secures a job against her husband's wishes). But the outcome was secondary. What was important was the timid sharing among five women who had been friends for a lifetime of the stuff of their lives - their feelings, their their fears, their uncertainties, their hurts. It was beautiful to watch - I wish it happened more off the screen. What I guess I really want to say is that I wish it happened more at Dickinson.

What prompted this whole discussion is my growing awareness of a whole lot of women of all ages in situations where they are hurting and feeling that hurt deeply, yet doing nothing about it, just "taking" it, because "women are strong," "women are good at silent suffering" or "nobody will take me seriously if I show those weak, female emotions."

I feel like screaming back - Why not let someone know they're hurting or oppressing you if they are? Why let people determine your lives in directions you don't want to go? If it hurts sometimes to be a woman, why don't you tell somebody where it hurts?

Obviously, you don't tell just anybody just anytime and anyplace. That's political wisdom and self-preservation. But to admit to friends, to other women who are in the same situation, even to men, that you can be hurt, that others can treat you badly, use you, handle you without care, reduce you to half a person - that can be an unbelievably affirming experience if you can get yourself past the fear stage.

There are many activities being planned throughout the 1975-76 academic year for Dickinson Women. These include: a Women's Center now being set up in the basement of Montgomery. It will serve as a career center, a reception area for Women speakers, a consciousness-raising group area, and general information center. In addition, a film festival is being planned by Shelley Wright, and a community feminist theatre for those who want to get it started. The "Dickinson Women's Newsletter" needs typists, photographers, and journalists. These activities will not grow unless you, the concerned women of Dickinson give them the help they need to get started, and continue their progress by your interest. Please indicate below which area(s) you are interested in working on and return this sheet to Holland Union Box #729.

_____ Women's Center

_____ Women's Newsletter

_____ Film Festival

_____ Feminist Theatre

Your suggestions are encouraged as to other programs that might interest the student body women.
