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The Dickinson College

# Women's Resource Center Newsletter

Carlisle, Pa.

Vol. 2 No. 2

## Tomato?

by Cathy Andriadis

I was sitting at my desk the other night trying to write a paper. I couldn't think of the specific word I wanted, so I decided to look through my trusty thesaurus. As I flipped through the pages, I happened upon a section with synonyms for women. Hmm. I thought, "Maybe they'll have a couple of cute slang words people use towards women, but that's probably all." I began reading the page and soon found myself on the next page, still going strong. The more I read, the more I wanted to write about this incredible exploitation. I decided to collect as many as possible (a couple were unprintable) and ended up with a good number - 42. Some were from earlier times, but most were recognizable. Along with these words I included five phrases, some of which were said by noted authors. Get ready for a good laugh.

We'll begin by quoting Kipling, that famous 19<sup>th</sup> century author, who once referred to women as "a rag and a bone and a hank of hair." Then there was Meredith, who cynically stated that we were "the last thing civilized by man." And, notably Oscar Wilde, who termed the stereotyped gossipy woman as a "sphinx without secrets." A couple others worth mentioning include a Latin proverb, "a necessary evil", and "one of nature's agreeable blunders". Too bad they weren't born women.

Getting on with the other 37 notables, we'll start with terms like, "weaker vessel", "beloved object" (note the choice word "object") and of course, the "weaker sex". There was other term which I didn't quite know how to interpret. "The sex". I didn't know whether it was referring to us as **THE** sex, or whether it was just a physical reference, or both. At any rate, it didn't seem quite the term one wanted to be regarded as. Before mentioning the animal references, I'll simply add on the common words associated with women. Here we have a variety of names: baggage, bid-dy, petticoat, skirt, Jane, jenny, broad, calico, curve, wench, dame, hussy, old lady, gold-digger, gyp, and bossy. Between the material possessions (like baggage) and the other female-associated nouns, I was beginning to wonder whether I could make up a list of synonyms for men and send it into Roget. At this point, things were getting to be a little too much.

I came across quite an assortment of animal references. The most outstanding were: chicken (chick), filly, heifer, mare, bird, vixen, sow, shrew, tigress, she-bear, lioness, peahen and guinea hen.. Besides the usual sensual interpretations encountered with tigress and lioness, it was interesting to note that Webster's defined "vixen" as female fox first, but then came up with "shrewish ill-tempered woman" as its second definition. Maybe we should start revising the dictionary too. Two more ascriptions followed in the food category: tomato and cream puff. So there you have it-- a well balanced diet of inedible quips. It's too bad this is considered a man's world..With women running it,,things might be a lot more digestible. And besides that, who wants to be called a "tomato" anyway?

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During a week in which her husband and all three children were sick at home, the harassed young wife commented "The toughest thing about being a housewife is that you have no place to stay home from." - Patricia C. Beaudouin 1978 Reader's Digest Calender

# PROTECTING OURSELVES

## BY GAIL BORJESON & ELLEN PALZER

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A college campus and a small college community can seem deceptively safe. While we at Dickinson have been rather fortunate in that we have experienced relatively few incidents of rape, the danger is always present.

Women on campus should always remember to take precautionary measures to avoid an attack. Do not walk alone at night (any distance) unescorted. Ask a friend to accompany you. If you must go alone try to remember these suggestions:

Know where you are going and keep a steady pace

Look around you and notice the people you are passing. If you hear someone coming from behind you - say a jogger - don't stop, but turn and get a good look at him (or her).

Walk down the middle of the street

But rapes don't always occur when you are walking down a lonely street or crossing a deserted parking lot. And it isn't always the stranger in a dark, FBI-looking raincoat. It can be a boyfriend, friend, relative, or neighbor.

As a rule one should take as many precautions as possible but there may come a time when you are completely off your guard and you will face the possibility of being raped. Although there is no full-proof way or rule on how to escape an attack, whatever defence you use be sure that it is immediately effective and quick. The following suggestions have been made: poke the eyes, smash the nose, punch the Adam's apple, squeeze the testicles, etc.

If you can not prevent the rape, the next step after it happens is to contact a friend or someone who you can lean on and who will take care of calling the police. As much as you might like to, don't remove any clothing or take a shower, for you might destroy valuable

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# Poets Corner

The Dictionary is an HISTorian  
(A found Political Poem)

Woman, women

1. An adult female person, as distinguished from a man or child; sometimes, any female person, often as disting. from lady (sense 7).

Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible. Shak.

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman.

Gen ii. 22.

2. The typical member of the female sex; used as a generic singular without an article; the female part of the human race; womankind.

Man is destined to be a prey to woman. Thackeray.

3. With the. Distinctively feminine nature, qualities, characteristics, or disposition; womanhood; womanliness; as, subduing the woman in her; sometimes in the phrase the woman of it, the characteristically feminine factor, action, response, reaction, or the like.

4. A female attendant or servant.

5. a A paramour; mistress. b pl. Females as partners in sexual intercourse or irregularities; as, to refrain from women.

6. A wife. Familiar.

7. A female person of a position, calling, or standing specified in a phrase with of (sense 15); as a woman of breeding, of color, of title; a woman of all work, of letters; the woman of the house; often in contemptuous epithets connoting easy virtue; as, a woman of pleasure, of the town, of the streets.

8. The reverse of a coin, originally as bearing figure of Britannia. Brit.

9. Bringer of woe; by whimsical etymological derivation from woe + man. Obs.

by Judith McCombs

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# Movie Review & Reflections

by Gail Borjeson

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"An Unmarried Woman" is a movie about how a woman learns to cope with life on her own. But even more, it is a movie which you think about what it really means to be alone. How do other people fit into the lifestyle of an "independent" woman, and how does one cope with the conflicting feeling one experiences by being alone?

In this particular movie, Erika - the protagonist, is forced to deal with being really alone when her husband leaves her. She learns to explore her own feelings about herself, her freedom, and her relationships with other men. Ultimately she learns to accept and even enjoy her new independence.

"An Unmarried Woman" raises some issues which may pertain to young women today. While one can find themselves estranged from any relationship, many young women choose to live alone. Magazines, books, and even television shows glorify the single, independent woman. Her lifestyle is exciting, and she possess an indomitable strength. Or at least she seems to.

"An Unmarried Woman" presents a somewhat more realistic view of a woman "alone". Erika gets scared, lonely, and makes a lot of mistakes. But she survives. There are bad times, good times, and then bad times again. But isn't that true of all things? Even within a relationship (any relationship) one can feel isolated and alone.

A woman who is alone - through choice or necessity - learns to cope. As long as she accepts the facts that there will be difficult moments, she can survive aloneness; furthermore, she can even learn to enjoy it.

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# Outstanding Women in History

by Ellen Palzer

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Have you ever wondered, being a college woman or having a college background, who the first woman graduate was? After extensive research headed by Professor Paolo Sambin at the University of Padua's Institute of History, they found and established (as of 1972) Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia as the first woman to get a degree.

She graduated on June 25, 1678 from the Padua University in Italy. Originally, she wanted to be tested and given a degree in theology, but was turned down by the religious authorities. She then petitioned to be examined in the discipline of philosophy. On the above date, she stood in front of a crowd of scholars and townspeople, defending two philosophical theses which had been given to her. The doctors of the college were so impressed by her defense, that they unanimously decreed on her the title of Master and Doctor of Philosophy. She dedicated her life to learning, religion, and serving the poor. However tragedy struck, for six years later (1684) she died. She was buried in Padua's Basilica of Saint Justina and forgotten for nearly 300 years.

It was not until 1969, when Ruth Crawford Mitchell, who admired the Cornaro along with a committee of women, began to restore the deteriorating gravesite. Finally in 1975 a book was published about the lady entitled: Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia 1646-1684. Unfortunately there are limited copies and only 500 libraries have it.

The United States Committee for the Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia Tercentenary is setting up various programs in honor of this great woman. There was a world

wide celebration in Padua the first week in September. Colleges and women's organizations are also participating by dedicating scholarships in her name or having a slide presentation and exhibits.

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

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Lately I have noticed a certain advertisement in various magazines. It is the E.P.T.<sup>tm</sup>. In Home Early Pregnancy Test. Though I have found no other articles pro or con concerning this new method of pregnancy detection, the advertisement claims to have been successfully tested in thirteen European countries as well as the U.S. The ad goes on to describe how one does the test and is supposed to have a 97% accuracy if positive and a 80% accuracy if negative. If the statistics are correct, women can find out themselves if they are pregnant within a few weeks rather than a month or two. What will they think of next!

*Women's Resource Center  
Newsletter*

*Ellen Palzer... Editor*

*Staff for this issue:*

*Gail Borjeson*

*Cathy Andriadis*

*Amy Schrom*

Equal Rights Amendment  
Passage of the E.R.A.  
has been extended until June 1982. There is much work to be done to gain support for this much needed law. Keep your eyes open for future meetings and campaigns.



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evidence. The Harrisburg Area Rape Crisis Center is an organization with trained counselors, as well as, volunteers, that can escort you to the police and hospital and give advice on legal and medical procedures, but most important they **are** there for support. If ever you need their assistance or would like more information call 238-RAPE.

The poem on p.4 was published in I Hear My Sisters Saying, edited by Carol Konek and Dorothy Walters, Thomas Y. crowell company, New York, 1976. pp.249-50

The biography on pp.6-7 was based on the pamphlet entitled "Prima Donna Laureata Nel Mondo. Background material was written by Monsignor Fusco and the pamphlet was published by the United States Committee for the Edna Lucrezia Piscopia Cornaro Tercentenary 1678-1978.