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The Dickinson College

Women's Resource Center Newsletter

October 11, 1977
Carlisle, Pa.

Vol. No. 1

The Women's Resource Center has been revived! We've only had three meetings so far, but much has been said. Our first meeting certainly was a success.....many women attended and contributed to discussion of just what a women's group at Dickinson ought to be doing. A gynecological service seems to be a top priority, for sure. Women expressed concern for such services right on campus, somewhere to go to receive adequate information about birth control and gynecological examinations. A second priority is for a series of speakers at our weekly meetings; our first speaker, Gail Tyson of the Harrisburg Rape Crisis Center, was a great success. Ms. Tyson spoke in a packed room in Denny, offering much desired information about the subject of rape to the women of the College. Other speakers are being planned for the future; let us know who you'd like to hear. Another priority includes educating students about the E.R.A....what it is, and why it's important. A third priority discussed, and one which is being actively realized, is our weekly newsletter. Here is where a major effort is being made to reach all the women of the Dickinson community. We want your contribution; speak out on some issue concerning women here. The newsletter is your vehicle for voicing your opinion, expressing your creativity, and truly becoming part of a women's resource center.

(Send contributions to Box #1821.)

PROTECTING OURSELVES AGAINST RAPE

by Jocelyn Daniels

On Wednesday, September 28, the Women's Resource Center sponsored its first speaker, Gail Tyson from the Harrisburg Area Rape Crisis Center (HARCC).

Ms. Tyson, a recent graduate of Dickinson, spoke on the topic of rape to an audience of approximately 100 concerned students. Beginning her talk, Ms. Tyson explained that her first realization of rape stems as far back as her early childhood, when some of her closest friends had actually been raped by their own relatives as children.

This destroys the myth many of us grew up with about rapists being strangers in trench coats with hats pulled over their eyes. "The unfortunate fact is," Ms. Tyson continued, "that the typical rapist is not any different in looks, values, or in other common areas than the average man on the street, except for one thing, that is, that he might react a little more violently in a threatening situation such as an argument. He might resort to physical violence a little faster than the average person." Rapists, as pointed out by Ms. Tyson, can be strangers, relatives, friends, or even your own boyfriend.

However, there are some things known about rapists. One, there are basically four types of rapists:

1. The incidental rapist/crime of opportunity rapist, is one who, while committing another crime such as burglary, decides to rape the woman in the bedroom. Another example is a boss who threatens an employee's wife by telling her she must have sex with him (the boss) if she doesn't want her husband to lose his job.
2. The psychotic rapist, is one who has deep-seated psychological problems and hates women. He uses rape as a way of getting back at all women. This type of rapist is a potential danger because he not only rapes women, but also beats them among other things.
3. The average rapist, is one who is non-violent and rarely hurts his victims.
4. The child rapist, is one who rapes children because he stands a better chance of not being challenged, reported, or convicted on charges of rape.

Another thing found out about the average rapist, is that they generally plan their attacks, perhaps not to attack a specific woman, but nevertheless, to rape a woman. There are generally five steps to a

rape:

1. There is the initial decision to find a victim, one who is vulnerable.
2. Next the rapist will test a method of approach to see how a woman will react to it. This woman may or may not be the actual victim.
3. While the victim is being attacked, she is threatened. This can be with a weapon, or verbally.
4. The actual rape takes place.
5. The good-bye threat is made, saying, if she tells, he will come back to get her.

This evidence breaks down such myths that say women's dress can trigger a spontaneous rape.

Likewise, just as a rapist cannot be defined, neither can its victims. Rape victims can be any race, age, or sex. Rape, after all, is not, as Ms. Tyson emphasized, defined by the rapist or victim, but by the act itself. Legally, rape is defined as forced sexual intercourse without consent. Just because a woman chooses not to fight her attacker, does not mean that she consents. There is a difference between submitting and consenting. A woman can submit to rape, but verbally object to it. In this case, it is still rape because she didn't consent.

"So far," Ms. Tyson added, "we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg, at least this is what we believe. Law enforcement officials throughout the United States, feel that perhaps only 1 in every 10 rapes are actually reported. And, in Pennsylvania alone, 2,156 rapes were reported last year. Multiply this number by 10 and you get a more total picture."

There are many reasons why a victim may not report a rape, Ms. Tyson explained. One reason is because of the myth that most "good girls don't get raped." This is not true! Anyone can be a victim. Some women subconsciously feel guilty because they think they may have, in some way, provoked the rape. This is also usually untrue.

Along with these myths, some women feel intimidated by the whole process of reporting a rape. Rape, being a very personal and traumatic experience, is not easy to discuss, particularly with male policemen, strange doctors, or lawyers. A person may also be frightened that the rapist will try to attack her again if she reports the rape. Even the thought of possibly having one's past or personal life revealed in court can be a threat.

On an ending note, Ms. Tyson stressed the point that despite the social stigma that rape carries, women must start fighting against rape in every possible way. Women must abolish the role of being passive, helpless women by taking necessary precautions and actions

whether in Philadelphia or in Carlisle.

HARCC recommends these suggestions:

1. Call the police immediately! Report the incident exactly how it happened.
2. Keep all articles of clothing you were wearing at the time of the rape. Do not wash anything! Do not bathe or douche!
3. See a doctor and have a complete physical AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! This is important to treat any physical damage to you and to obtain evidence for future court proceedings.
4. Call a friend or a HARCC volunteer to accompany you to the hospital emergency room. Friendly support can help ease the painful situation.
5. Take a change of clothes with you to the hospital.
6. Show the doctor ALL cuts, scratches and bruises.
7. Have a follow-up examination for VD and pregnancy.

Comment...

The problems that have been faced in trying to establish the Women's Resource Center as a viable group on campus have been many. In the few weeks that the revived Women's Resource Center has come into being, it has fallen into an identity crisis. Questions dealing with how tempered our stance should be on many issues in order not to turn off any segment of the College Community have taken much of our time. But at this point, these questions should become less important since they tend only to confuse our goals and restrict the effectiveness of any action that is taken. What is important however, is that the Women's Resource Center provide the core from which the activities and resources of the women in the College Community can be developed. If the Women's Resource Center can bring together all of our diverse talents, energies, and ideas, the result would be a truly rewarding experience for the entire community.. women and men alike. By pooling our resources we can learn more about ourselves and in doing so come into closer touch with what it means to be a woman at Dickinson in the 1970's, and in the world around us. So let's not limit ourselves by getting bogged down in ideological terms. Let's begin by devoting our efforts to finding out what the needs of the women on campus are, and in turn offering a broad program that will fulfill these needs and, in effect, provide a rewarding experience for all involved.

Women's Resource Center Newsletter
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Assert Yourself!
by Ellen Palzer

How assertive are you? Do you want to be more assertive? When you feel you are being assertive, are you effective? What exactly does the word assertive mean? These and other questions were and will be dealt with in an assertiveness discussion group conducted by Diane Smith. Diane, who is doing her graduate work with the Dickinson Counseling Center, started conducting the first of four classes on the 19th of September.

She opened the meeting by asking us what the word assertive meant. Some of the answers were: Taking risks, self respect, speaking one's mind, confidence, strong or self governing, determined, and able to say 'no'. When defining assertiveness the question was raised concerning the difference between assertiveness and aggression. We all agreed that there is a thin line between the two. One cannot be so assertive that one makes others mad or hurt; one can be assertive without going overboard and becoming aggressive. Diane explained that assertiveness is "a learnable communication skill" that helps "increase person to person understanding, keeps others from making unreasonable demands on you and helps you approach goals."

During the second part of the meeting, we discussed areas in which we felt we had problems being assertive - parents, men, employers, friends, room-mates, teachers, etc. Then, during the last part of the meeting, Diane acted out a few skits with the help of Diane Ronningen and Howard Figler (Dickinson Counselors). In the first part of the skit, Ms. Smith showed us how and why some approaches are not effective and then showed us how she would handle the situation. Basically there are four points to remember when confronting someone:

1. Once you get their attention, maintain eye contact.
2. Facial expression is important.
3. Maintain an even, calm voice.
4. Maintain a confident position, don't fidget or move around.

Don't start off by yelling, or worse, speaking in a timid voice and giving in. Be firm, yet open to the other person's opinions; take responsibility for yourself and express the way you feel, but remember to respect the other person's feelings, too.

Once you start talking, the content of what you say is very important. Explain specifically why the behavior of that individual upsets you. Center the conversation around the problem, don't be swayed onto other subjects. Describe how you feel and try to be concrete; do you feel mad, hurt, used, intimidated, and so on. Then, if you can, tell how the problem can be resolved.

To me, the most interesting and informative part of the class was the role playing and discussions we had. If there was a specific problem we wanted to see acted out, then Diane and another person would role play. One person would be assertive and the other not, or both would be assertive in different ways. One must realize that even if you do all that was said above, you won't necessarily get your own way.

In talking with Diane, she brought up a good point: You don't always have to be assertive; "Be in tune with yourself." Being assertive one time doesn't mean you can't say 'yes' another time. "Assertiveness is a skill, not a weapon."

INTERESTING WOMEN IN HISTORY

by Elizabeth Pincus

Zatae Longsdorff (Straw): First Woman Student at Dickinson

Although Dickinson College was founded over 200 years ago, women have been students here only since 1884. The debate over the advantages of coeducation lasted for a longer time than almost any other issue of the governing authorities of the College. According to records, it took eight years from the time of trustee General Rusling's motion for the appointment of a committee of three to consider the advisability of admitting women, until the motion was carried out and the first woman - Zatae Longsdorff - was admitted. The reason given for the long deliberation on the matter was that some of the dorms had to be renovated before they could accommodate women.

As a result of the prolonged consideration, Zatae Longsdorff entered Dickinson in 1884 as a sophomore. She spent her freshman year at Wellesley and transferred when Dickinson finally came to the decision on coeducation. Asked about her reasons for choosing Dickinson for her college career, Dr. Longsdorff Straw responded in 1937, when she received an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from Dickinson:

"Let me just say that personally I simply wanted an education and that desire and to enter Dickinson were one and inseparable. Dickinson College is a family tradition with us. My father; my uncle 52 years ago; my brother in '78; and I came next. The fact of being a girl was one which I could scarcely be blamed for; neither of course could the Trustees, so we just had to compromise. All I wanted was a square deal, I never asked for nor wanted nor got any special favors or courtesies because I was a girl."

The above quote simply sums up Ms. Longsdorff's experience as a student at Dickinson. The three years Zatae spent at this College were remarkably quiet considering her unique status. Reflecting upon her status as the only female in a class of thirty-three, Dr. Straw said in 1937:

"I used to feel abashed, myself, when being the only woman in my class, I was sometimes too much of a temptation to the boys and they offered me little delicate attentions in the line of, well, once a can full of good live business-like bumble bees, and another time a nice active snake of fair size was liberated under my seat, and other little things like that. But the object was generally missed, for they didn't realize the toughening effect of my country upbringing in the constant comradeship of two bold, bad, well, perfectly normal, big brothers and ergo -- should I blush to confess it -- I really enjoyed it as much as the boys."

Evidence shows that the "toughening effect" of her country upbringing played a part in her later success in dealing with the male-dominated world. As the Citation of her Doctor of Science degree stated, Zatae's life was a "fine example of Dickinson ideals in terms of personality." Not only was she brave enough to compete against her fellow students to win the gold medal in the Pierson Oratorical Contest in her junior year at Dickinson, but after her graduation in 1887, Ms. Longsdorff went on to receive her A.M. and M.D. from the Women's Medical College in 1890. With these two additional degrees to her credit, Zatae continued her active participation in society: as a physician on an Indian Reservation in Idaho, and the first woman president of the American Medical Society; as a sponsor of many welfare and civic movements in New Hampshire where she settled with her husband and children; and as a member of the New Hampshire legislature in 1924. In conclusion then, it is possible to say that Zatae Longsdorff (Straw), first female student at this College, set an excellent example of an outstanding woman in history whom we should all attempt to follow!

Expressions...

WHAT YOU DON'T SEE

The marble statue is nearly complete?
Yet what of these pieces here by your feet.
I'll adjust the lights so you can see
All you've chipped away is a valuable part of me
Were you doing to sweep these away?

You should have put down your chisel long ago.

Martha Bartels '80

DECLARATION

For years I charted my independence
in miles traveled away from you.
You were New York and I a car
fleeing in every artery.

That I made you the center, there is no question.
No question I could rule on
without your opposition. No adventure unless
it wasn't yours. Today I think of Concord grapes,
those little pyramids, depending;
its leap up the beach. One man's
violent need become a woman's service job.
But I don't work for you.
I'm crazy now.

Miriam Goodman

from: Our Bodies, Ourselves

2nd edition

The Boston Women's Health
Book Collective

For Your Information . . .

A sexuality workshop will be conducted at the Counseling Center on Tuesday, October 18th, at 6:30 p.m. also at the Counseling Center pamphlets and lots of good info concerning abortion and birth control methods. Congratulations to Ellen Palzer and Gail Borjeson for their promotion to night managers of The Hermitage. Did you know that. Alexis de Tocqueville wrote of America in the mid-1880's - "If I were asked to what the singular and growing strength of Americans ought to be attributed, I should reply: to the superiority of their women." Cultural Affairs will be sponsoring the Kathryn Posin Dance Company. appearing at Dickinson on Wednesday, October 12, at 8:00 p.m. that performance is in ATS. tickets are free to students. Trivial but True!!! Bonnie Hanmore, a five-foot-three inch secretary, became West German's first female soccer referee. Just before her first game, she said, I'm not a feminist. You won't see me burning my bra. How could I run without it??" don't forget! the Women's Resource Center holds their meetings on Mondays at 5:00 p.m. come listen, come learn. come join us. next time you empty that packet of sugar into your coffee. check out those faces on the packet. it could be Susan B. Anthony you're having breakfast with. or Emma Goldman. Writers! We want women to speak out on anything you'd like. meetings are Tuesday nights at 5 p.m. at Biddle lounge.

From The Washington Post, October 2, 1977

In tennis, that well-known male chauvinist, Bobby Riggs, was again defeated by a woman. This time the victor was fourteen year old Tracy Austin. Austin, who is being hailed as the next Chris Evert, beat, or, as the saying goes, whipped the pants off Riggs 8-1 in an exhibition match on Saturday, October 1. It was just about four years ago when Riggs was defeated by Billie Jean King.

In every issue of the Women's Resource Center Newsletter we will be presenting and answering questions which we feel are pertinent to the women of the Dickinson community. We hope to have women submit questions concerning specific problems, uncertainties, or curiosities. Please send your questions to Box 1423 or Box 867.

PENNSYLVANIA LEADS NATION IN IMPLEMENTING E.R.A.
(from Womenews, July-August, 1977)

In May 1971, the citizens of Pennsylvania voted by an almost two to one margin to add an Equal Rights Amendment to the state Constitution. Although a number of legislative, judicial, and administrative changes occurred under the state E.R.A., no comprehensive effort to implement the amendment fully was undertaken until June of 1975 when the Commission for Women tackled the problem. The commission's implementation program has been one of the most ambitious in the country - basically being carried out on two fronts: an administrative review with the various cabinet level agencies in the state government, and a statutory

review of all existing commonwealth laws dating back to 1705.

The administrative review was conducted, at the request of the Commission and the Governor, within each state agency by legal divisions or executive personnel, and was geared to determining whether existing rules, regulations or operating procedures discriminated in any way against women.

The statutory review has been conducted directly by the Commission staff, with the assistance of law professors, law students, the legislative chief of the Department of Justice, attorneys from various state agencies, and since November, a special Committee of the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

At present, the E.R.A. implementation package has been reduced to 200 potential pieces of legislation in eight categories - benefit and pensions, boards and commissions, criminal justice, civil law, domicile, employment, juvenile, and support. These have been under scrutiny by the Bar Association Equal Rights Committee for several months.

