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The Dickinson College

# Women's Resource Center Newsletter

Carlisle, Pa.

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The possibility is very real that the Equal Rights Amendment will not be ratified before the seven-year period of ratification expires on March 22, 1979. Only three more states are needed to approve the amendment, however it is unlikely that they will since many of the legislatures in the fifteen unratified states will not convene in 1978. Therefore legislation has been introduced in Congress which will extend the time period seven more years within which the remaining states will be able to ratify the ERA. According to the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, the proposed extension of time for ratification of the ERA would change only a procedural detail of the amendment process. "Congress's decision to set a seven-year limit for ratification of the ERA followed a practice that, although not required by the Constitution, has become customary since first introduced with the 18th Amendment. A limitation of the period for ratification was purposefully adopted by Congress in connection with the 18th Amendment so that a proposal which had lost its vitality would not be left "floating" around the states, unratified, and capable of being resurrected. However, the original choice of "seven" as the number of years as in which ratification of the 18th Amendment had to be completed, and the subsequent perpetuation of seven years as the customary period for ratification of other amendments, including the ERA, appears to have been arbitrary and not based on any considered judgement of the time period which the respective amendments might continue to have vitality." During the coming weeks, the Women's Resource Center will be organizing a mail campaign in support of extending the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. William Goodling, the representative from this district, does not favor extending the deadline. It becomes imperative that Mr. Goodling be informed of the extent to which his support of this legislation is desirable to his constituents. When you see the WRC booth in the lobby next week be sure to fill out a card telling Mr. Goodling, Mr. Carter, Mr. Schweiker, and Mr. Heinz where you stand on the issue.

# Outstanding Women in History): Elizabeth Blackwell



by Elizabeth Pincus

It is only appropriate for Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman recipient of a medical degree in America, to be an "Outstanding Woman in History" in one issue of the Newsletter. Her struggle to become a doctor made it easier for those women who followed her to the same and other professional careers.

Born on February 3, 1821, in Bristol, England, Elizabeth was one of nine children. At the age of 12, the entire family emigrated to New York City where her father became an abolitionist. Soon after a move to Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1838 however, Mr. Blackwell died. Leaving the family in a poor financial situation, the three oldest girls were compelled to support the family by operating a boarding school for women.

At the age of 21, Elizabeth Blackwell accepted her first teaching position, but local racial attitudes in the Kentucky town in which she was employed made her resign after only a year. Soon after, a friend of hers who had undergone gynecological treatment convinced Elizabeth to pursue a medical career. By 1846, Miss Blackwell's time was fully occupied, what with teaching and with her own medical studies.

However, attempts to enroll in medical schools of Philadelphia and New York City were unsuccessful. But Miss Blackwell did not resign in her pursuit, rather, she applied to some smaller, lesser known colleges and finally was accepted in 1847, to the Geneva, N.Y. Medical College. She gained national acclaim for this admission, and by the time she graduated in 1849, Dr. Blackwell's success story had spread to the other side of the Atlantic as well.

However, her desire to become a surgeon was unable to be fulfilled after she contracted purulent conjunctivitis, which left her partially blind. Nevertheless, Dr. Blackwell continued practicing in London before returning to New York in 1851. In New York she was unable to acquire a position as physician because of her sex, so she and her sister Emily, who had also become a doctor, established a private practice in a rented room. Their practice later became the New York Infirmary and College for Women operated by and for women. Meanwhile, Dr. Blackwell continued to fight for the admission of women to medical schools. During the Civil War she organized a unit of women nurses

for field service. In 1869, when the war was over, Dr. Blackwell returned to London where she set up a private practice and simultaneously became a professor of gynecology at the London School of Medicine for Women. From then until her death, Elizabeth continued these two occupations while finding time to write and publish her autobiography and several articles.

She died in Hastings, England, in 1910 having gained worldwide recognition for her medical success as well as for her drive towards equal opportunity for women.

*Mary Baker Eddy*  
*and the founding of the Christian Science Church*  
*by Betsy Ervin*

Mary Baker Eddy was the founder of the Christian Science religion. Among the works she wrote, one of the most famous is Science and Health. She was a very important woman in this country's religious history, but she has not received much recognition for her contribution as a woman to our society.

Mary Baker was born in 1821. As a child her health was poor and she had a sporadic education, but she received guidance from her eldest brother. She rebelled to some extent against her father's Calvinism because of a doctrinal issue. Mary could not believe that humankind was born to be ultimately damned. She based her beliefs more on the New Testament in which humankind is redeemed through Christ. In 1843 she married a man who died the following year. She became increasingly ill especially because of the enforced separation from her son. In 1853 she married again, but this was an unsuccessful marriage and she obtained a divorce in 1873. In 1866 Mary was very sick after being injured by a fall. A miracle occurred when she was restored to health while reading about one of Christ's healing in the Bible (Matthew 9:1-8). This was the beginning of Christian Science.

In 1877 Mary married Asa Gilbert Eddy who had become a practitioner of Christian Science healing. He helped her quite a bit in setting up the church. Besides writing quite a few books and articles, she also founded the Christian Science Monitor in 1908, two years before she died.

Mary Baker Eddy's faith in traditional medicine declined when she was sick. She came to believe that all disease was of mental origin rather than physical origin. Following her miracle in 1866, she spent three

(continued on back page)

## COMMENT -

The pejorative use of the word GAY abounds everywhere, particularly on the Dickinson campus. It is a metaphor for repressed feelings and means of expression (ways of dancing, dressing, or expressing love) that do not fit into prescribed sexual norms. The uncomfortability that causes the criticism stems from learning in childhood that certain ways of communicating feelings are not only wrong, but unnatural. This process, which takes place too early for us to realize, is constantly being reinforced by behavior and institutions around us. Those who do not conform to our reinforced notions of maleness and femaleness frighten us. By separating people into groups of "gay" and "acceptable" it is less threatening and allows us to hide from our uneasiness. Very often, the victims of this labeling, if not in tune with their own sexual identity, become full of self-doubt and guilt for expressing themselves as they do. People who do the labeling are reacting in fear of something that makes them very uncomfortable, something which builds up walls making it progressively difficult for these people to understand both their own needs and the needs of others. By reacting tensely, they lose touch with feelings of tenderness and love toward a member of the same sex. They deny their own desires for communicating feelings and end up losing part of their ability to show warmth and joy. "Gay" jokes abound at Dickinson because so many people are uptight about ways of self-expression which are unfamiliar to them. When these ways of acting and preference are classified out of fear, they create an unnecessarily huge gap between what is considered gay and what is supposedly straight expression.

(Continued on page 7)

## *Kate Millet Speaks at F & M. by Debbie Cohen*

Franklin and Marshall College's Spring Colloquium, "The Sexes": Social Values and the Workplace," explored the topic - "Humanistic Society: The Future or An Illusion?" in its Sunday afternoon session led by the Feminist author, Dr. Kate Millet. Dr. Millet began her lecture after a brief introduction by Dr. Angela M. Jeannett of F & M.

"It took me 40 years to discover the word worker was code for men," remarked Kate Millet upon beginning her discussion of "Women and Work." She began by exploring the notion that the Left-ist Movements will only consider women "when the worker gets everything," The Liberal view, demanding that women receive equal pay for equal work, is also inadequate in arriving at any one solution for woman's situation, in her opinion. Instead, she advocates understanding of the oppression of women. Patriarchy, which precedes the institution of capitalism, is of religious origins and takes place in the period before written

history. Thus, the information needed on social relationships is not available, said Millet. Today, as in patriarchal times, all uses of force are still in male hands. As the whole control of technology is not in female hands, "women are a backward people, like peasants," she remarked. She continued on to add that "We are an absolute outgroup and this(our lack of control over technology) is an index of our powerlessness."

She then turned the discussion to the idea of the family group as a model of social relationships as a whole. She spoke of this caste situation as seen in the male's dominance and prestige within the family unit. "Women in the workplace" followed as the next topic for thought; Dr. Millet spoke for the majority of the afternoon on the position of working women, whom she defined as "waitresses, factory-hands, and housewives." She gave a lengthy discussion of housework, emphasizing the belief that housework is not really "work" because no wage is given to such housewives. She also stressed the idea that women keep the capitalist society going as they are the ones who nourish the worker and provide him with the things he needs to endure another day at the factory(food, a bed to sleep in, clean clothes, etc.). Dr. Millet remarked that it is the women who "make life under capitalism bearable," and explained wherein the threat of "Women's Liberation" lies in a society where half of the social work is done by "secret servants who don't get paid." She discussed this threat as a direct threat to the capitalist system, and completed this portion of her lecture leaving her sentence obviously unfinished, "If the mass of women rose up...."

"We are the only human beings left because the man belongs to Aetna," she remarked beginning the third and final portion of her discussion. She expressed her belief that women provide all the truly humane values in society; they are the only ones who really listen to children, express compassion, etc. Compassion is seen as a second-place kind of trait, said Millet, giving way to such traits as aggression, drive, and ambition, typically associated with the male. Therefore, "women are the future of social change... the last chance for a humane society." The logical solution to woman's oppression? Dr. Millet advocates a Feminist Socialism which would liberate women and at the same time all oppressed groups, creating a humane society for all. She feels that wages must be paid for housework, as the first step in making the majority of women independent human beings. Feminism must not remain "the middle-class fad" that it undoubtedly is, here in America, but women must follow European Feminist groups and learn to think from a Marxist perspective as do educated European feminists. Feminism must

reach into the working class for any real action to come about, said Millet. Socialism must be adapted to our feminism; "Go and buy your own copy, read it yourself."

"Feminist Socialism is not utopian, it is attainable," exclaimed Millet in conclusion of her lecture. She continued to add that "Socialism without feminism is boring, it is imperfect." Quoting Herbert Marcuse Dr. Kate Millet, author of Sexual Politics, Flying, The Prostitution Papers, and others, summed it all up by saying, "The only Socialism is.....Feminist Socialism."

♀ *What Every Woman* Should Know *About Men* ♂  
Ellen by Palzer

While whipping through past MS. magazines, trying to get an idea for an article, I came across one written by Alan Alda (for those who don't know, he plays Hawkeye on the current T.V. series "M.A.S.H."). The title of the article is "What Every Woman Should Know About Men" and is found on pages 15-16 in the October 1975 issue. Basically he says that men are suffering from an 'overdose' of testosterone (or male hormone, which both men and women have, but of course men have more). He goes on to explain what some of the symptoms are, but what I found most humorous, was his questionnaire directed at men to see if they have the disease:

1. Do you have an intense need to win? When having sex do you take pride in always finishing before your partner? Do you always ask if this time was the "best" - and gnaw on the bedpost if you get an ambiguous answer?
2. Does violence play a big part in your life? Before you answer, count up how many hours you watched football, ice hockey, and children's cartoons this year on television. When someone crosses you, do you wish you could stuff his face full of your fist? Do you ever poke people in your fantasies or throw them to and fro?...
3. Are you thing oriented? Do you value the parts of a woman's body more than the woman herself? Are you turned on by things that even remind you of those parts? Have you ever fallen in love with a really great doorknob?
4. Do you ever have an intense need to reduce every difficult situation to charts and figures? If you were present at a riot, would you tend to count the crowd?

5. Do you tend to measure things that are really qualitative? Are you more impressed with how high a male ballet dancer can leap than with what he does while he is up there? Are you more concerned with how long you can spend in bed, and how many orgasms you can have, than you are with how you or your partner feels while you are there?
6. Are you a little too mechanically minded? Would you like to watch a sunset with a friend and feel at one with nature and each other, or would you rather take apart a clock?
7. Are you easily triggered into competition? When someone tries to pass you on the highway, do you speed up a little? Do you find yourself getting into contests of crushing beer cans - with the beer still in them?"

If a man answers 'yes' to three or more of the above questions...look-out. However, there is hope and you can help by not being sympathetic. Men interpret sympathy as an act of submission. Instead, you have to let him regain his senses by himself to become a normal person who enjoys life.

## *Fearing ... (continued)*

A more comfortable narrow line between gay and straight could exist if many would realize that stereotypical "gay" body movements, dress, and physical contact are perfectly natural for straight people. Much is to be gained from relaxing our constricting values of maleness and femaleness. Our fears desensitize us. Getting beyond our own misunderstanding opens us up to a comfortability with our own sexuality -- and that of others. A sexuality released from macho-male, feminine-female stereotypes leaves us freer to explore richer ways of expressing our feelings.

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## For your information . . .

Would you believe.....that in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary copyright 1975 that a girl is defined (among other things) as "a single or married woman of any age". Whereas a boy is defined (among other things) as a fellow or person (i.e. the boys at the office) and is "often sometimes taken to be offensive. Don't you think that it is rather offensive to be considered a girl at ANY age? Can you imagine someone calling your grandmother or your mother a 'girl'? Also a girl scout is defined as "a member of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America" -- that is all that is said. However, a boy scout is defined as "a member of the Boy Scouts of America" AND "one who performs a service for or gives assistance to others". Don't girl scouts also perform community work?

## Mary Baker Eddy, (continued)

years studying the Scriptures to better understand God's law underlying spiritual hearing. Mary embraced the activist faith of St. Paul over the detached idealism of Plato and Berkeley. To her the spirit alone was real and was the basis for the transformation of life. In her works she defines healing by Christian Science methods to be an integral part to Christian regeneration and it draws the person concerned closer to God.

Mary Baker Eddy founded the first Christian Science Church in 1879. She organized the entire structure of the church and also set up the first Christian Science Reading Room, the Christian Science Publishing Society, and Christian Science board of lectureship and education. She also set up in her church instead of sermons preached from the pulpit, lessons which are read by elected "readers". These lessons are read by the people the week before they are read in church and concern topics such as "God", "Man", and "Reality". and they are from the Bible and Science and Health. During her last two years, Mary worked to put her church on a basis that would not require her continual presence. She developed a very strong structural framework that is set out in her Church Manual. Because there is no clergy in this church the burden falls upon lay responsibility to witness the truth.

Mary Baker Eddy was an outstanding woman and she deserves our full recognition for the impact she and the Church of Christian Science have had on our society.