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The Dickinson College

# Women's Resource Center Newsletter

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## Outstanding Women in History: Susan B. Anthony by Elizabeth Pincus

"A Washington and a Lincoln have come in our great century, and between their birthdays was born a Susan B. Anthony, whose grand life has been given to a noble cause; once the target for cruel and bitter shafts of ridicule; now deemed the noblest among women."

- quote from a speech presented by Dr. H. W. Thomas of Chicago in 1896 in a Sunday sermon entitled "Progressive Greatness."

OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN HISTORY by Elizabeth M. Pincus

SUSAN B. ANTHONY

Elizabeth Cady Stanton said the following of Susan Brownwell Anthony;

"In ancient Greece she would have been a Stoic; in the era of the Reformation, a Calvinist; in King Charles's time a Puritan; but in the 19th century, by the very laws of her being she is a reformer."

The above quote is a very fitting way to begin an article on our featured woman in this issue of the Newsletter because it was by being the way she was that Susan B. Anthony achieved success for herself, for other women of her era, and for women of the 20th century. Her determination, even to the point of stubbornness on occasion, made Susan B. Anthony become recognized as an outstanding woman.

Born on February 15th, 1820 in Adams, Massachusetts, Susan learned how to work for her living at an early age as a result of the fact that she was one of seven children. In 1845, her family moved to Rochester, N.Y., where her father worked with Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Wendell Phillips to abolish slavery, and he introduced the family to this worthy cause. In addition, the family attended its first woman's rights convention in 1848.

However, Susan did not become interested in either campaign until 1851, when two things spurred her on. One was the constant hostility she received from men opposed to her temperance efforts, and the other was her acquaintance with Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Her genuine concern for blacks in their state of slavery accompanied Susan's interest in women's rights and she continued to fight for their emancipation until the end of the Civil War. But Susan B. Anthony's campaign for women's rights continued from 1851 until her death in 1906. Her first visible revolt against the male-dominated society in which she lived was Susan's decision to remove corsets from her dress in favor of the looser "bloomer" costume. She attended her first woman's rights convention in 1852, and in 1860 Susan won her first major legislative victory - "New York State Married Woman's Property and Guardianship Law."

By 1861 Susan B. Anthony was recognized as a leader of the American woman's movement. This came as a result of her earlier campaigns as well as of her role in organizing the Women's National League in 1861, which mobilized petitions to force passage of the 13th Amendment for the abolition of slavery. In 1865, Susan began to petition for passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments to gain the franchise for women and black males. In cooperation with Elizabeth C. Stanton, she organized the National Woman's Suffrage Association and helped create the Association's New York weekly The Revolution in 1868, which lasted until 1870.

The 1872 presidential election marked a climax in Ms. Anthony's career. In that election, she and fifteen other Rochester women became the first women to vote in a national election. However, their success did not last long; they were arrested, and, despite the fact that she carried the case to the Supreme Court with a powerful argument entitled "Is it a crime for a U.S. citizen to vote?", Ms. Anthony lost the case and was unable to appeal. For the last thirty years of her life, Susan B. Anthony continued working for the federal suffrage movement, going to such places as: Congress, political conventions, labor meetings, and lyceums. Also during those years, Ms. Anthony wrote and published several books, two of those being: five volumes of The History of Woman Suffrage, and an autobiography entitled The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony. Her dedication to the movement never faltered. One month before her death in 1906, Ms. Anthony attended her last suffrage convention, at which time she closed her speech with the statement that "Failure is impossible." This was almost her motto, in that she felt that



the success she made of her life was due to "one great element in it." That element was something Susan B. Anthony described in her autobiography:

"...constancy of purpose--not allowing myself to be switched off the main road or tempted into bypaths of other movements. It always has been clear to me that woman suffrage is the one great principle underlying all reforms. With the ballot in her hand woman becomes a vital force - declaring her will for herself, instead of praying and beseeching men to declare it for her... The women over all the country are waking up to the fact that truly to possess themselves, to have their opinions respected, they must have this right of suffrage."

## *ERA - How Will It Effect Me?*

*Ellen Palzer*

The Equal Rights Amendment was proposed in Congress on March 22, 1972 and as of March 22, 1979 must have three more states ratify it in order to become a law. During the first few years, those backing the bill did not feel there would be much resistance against it. But in the last year or so, many conservative groups have spoken out with such strength that some states have rescinded their vote for the bill and others have voted it down. Such anti-ERA groups as The Right to Life, John Birch, Operation Wake-Up, and WUNDER (Women United To Defend Existing Rights) have come out with statements saying that the bill will cause women to lose their femininity, force them to use unisex toilets, cause a rise in the divorce rate and abortions, legalize homosexual relationships, and work against their rights to alimony, child support, and child custody. To those against the bill, it is commonly referred to as the "Common Toilet Law" or "Gay Rights Bill."

The wording of the bill, as stated in an article is:

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

In other words, it will be unconstitutional for laws, in which men and women are treated differently, to remain. Some specifics are:

1. States which have laws that limit working hours and type of work based on sex will be unconstitutional.
2. Discriminatory practices, dealing with child custody, jury selection, age of majority, establishment of legal domicile and prison sentences, will be stopped.

(continued on bottom of page 8)

Comment:

## "Susan B. Anthony Day, 1978 Why Celebrate?" by Debbie Cohen



The early feminist movement, 1848-1920, was a struggle by women for legal and economic equality as well as a struggle for education. Yet a major split within this feminist movement was evident by 1869, due to Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony's determination to speak out on labor and controversial social issues. "The Revolution" Susan B. Anthony's weekly newspaper, discussed such "scandalous" issues as divorce, prostitution, and the role of the church in the subjugation of women." (From Miriam Schneir's Feminism) Anthony's basic conclusion was that "women needed political power and that the ballot was the means to that power."

An essential question raised on Susan B. Anthony Day ought to be, of course, why celebrate in the first place? A more fundamental question, however, is poised by Kathie Sarachild in her "Women and the Elections," (From The Second Wave, Vol. 2, No. 2) as she ponders what, in fact, attainment of the vote has truly done for woman's advancement. Sarachild believes that "at worst, the vote has been used to create an illusion, the illusion that we were 'liberated' because we had won it, the illusion that we had power because of it." In the same regard, Susan B. Anthony herself said it over 100 years ago... "Woman Wants Bread, Not the Ballot!!"

Susan B. Anthony Day, February 15, 1978, remains a symbol of the struggle for female liberation. We ought to remember this early feminist not only for the courageous rebel that she undoubtedly was, but also to assess and compare the Women's Movement of the 70's with historical forms of woman's struggle.

The liberal theory of feminism as seen in the light of the early feminists certainly does begin to define the issue of women's liberation in the following ways: First, the early feminists recognized at least the need for some change; consciousness being the first step towards any kind of change. Secondly, these women wished to be a part of the liberal tradition alongside of men. These ideas reflect the liberal tradition of which Susan B. Anthony was a part; what is latent within her argument is the question between the personal and the political.

Susan B. Anthony's statement was a basic one of the legal subordination of women; the demands of the early feminists were for women



to become part of the existing social and political order. Yet the American feminists understood more about power than their demands allow us to think they did. Though they knew sex roles were binding them, they thought the vote would solve everything. The assessment of the liberal feminist theory on Susan B. Anthony Day is necessary for understanding later historical traditions....Emma Goldman's anarchist tradition, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's economic tradition, and the Radical and Socialist traditions which follow. A theoretical framework for an understanding of woman's oppression has been developed in this early period of American history. We, as women, must first hail Susan B. Anthony Day, in order that we continue the political struggle for true freedom for women everywhere.

## *Women's Resource Center: Why Participate??*

*Gail Borjeson*

The Women's Resource Center is a tool through which any and all of the women of Dickinson College can reach our own personal goals. Naturally these goals are relative to the individual and will differ from one individual to the next. Perhaps you feel the center is a place to come and learn about ourselves as women, and to share in each other's experiences. Perhaps you have a more tangible goal. Do you realize that the WRC is a means through which we can obtain speakers (on subjects such as health, job opportunities, credit, etc.), workshops or classes which can aid you in your future encounters? Eventually we will all have to deal with the problems of "the real world". How will you handle sexual harrassment on the job? How will you get your first credit card and what factors will influence your credit rating? Could you change the tire which may blow out on a deserted roadway one night? The time to learn these skills and to become aware of yourself and your own potentials is now. Use the Women's Resource Center to your own advantage and we all will, in turn, benefit from your knowledge.

### *WRC Newsletter*

*Susan Sautner..... Editor*

*Staff*

*Debbie Cohen*

*Gail Borjeson*

*Elizabeth Picus*

*Ellen Palzer*

# The Males Role in Female Liberation



by Andy Herman

The male has as large a role to play in "female liberation" as the female. While it's up to the woman to initiate the movement and get things rolling, it's up to men to support any advances that women may make, and to continue to support these advances in years to come. This is quite true on a number of levels. The drive for passage of the E.R.A. amendment is one example - women are going to have to convince a large number of men that the amendment is in their best interests, since it is men who control the legislatures where the amendment must be put to a vote. Similarly, men presently control the overwhelming majority of key posts in our economic institutions. Only men can begin to hire women because of their skills and regardless of their sex.

On a different level, the task of men in aiding and abetting female liberation is even more important. This is the household level, where the woman has traditionally been confined to such tasks as cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing. If the female half of a marriage is to have the same opportunity to find meaningful and rewarding employment, the male partner is going to have to cope with taking over part of the household chore responsibility. Planning and cooking meals will have to be a cooperative venture, since a woman with a truly significant job won't be able to come home early to prepare dinner. Chores such as doing the wash, cleaning the home, or cleaning the dishes will no longer be the female's sole responsibility, since she will be working the same 40 hour week that her husband is. And the immense responsibility of raising young children will no longer be the wife's singular duty. Obviously, if female liberation is going to truly work, men will have to accommodate the above-mentioned changes, altering their concepts of the role of each partner in a marriage. It surely won't be easy for men who were brought up in a family where the wife performed all of the household chores to gracefully submit to sharing in the household responsibility. The mental block created by tradition will be hard to overcome. Perhaps the educational system can open the path towards change, tearing down previous attitudes and replacing them with more "liberated" life-style concepts. High schools and Colleges could start right now by offering home economics for men and perhaps a whole new way of life will open up where men and women are equal partners in reality as well as in spirit.



The Zatae Longsdorff (the first woman student to attend our noble institution) Conference in Women's Studies will be held at Dickinson College on Saturday, March 4, 1978. Topics to be discussed at the day-long event which is sponsored by the Central Pennsylvania Consortium and Dickinson College include: Victorian Women, Women and Society in Pre-Modern Europe, Is There a Feminine Psychology?, and The Woman Writer in the 20th Century. Ms. Catherine Stimpson, editor of "Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society" will give the luncheon address.

### *Bias Toward Boys? Susan Seistner*

Ever wonder why the boys' clubs always seemed to have better facilities and more equipment than your group or organization? Look at the facts:

- Girls' organizations receive only one dollar out of every four dollars that corporate foundations donate to youth agencies.
- Foundation grants to girls' organizations in 1976 were approximately one third the amount of grants to boys' organizations.
- Almost twice the amount of United Way money in 1976 went to boys' organizations. (NYT Dec. 42, 1977)

Why so? Edith B. Phelps, Executive Director of Girls Clubs of America, Inc. believes that our culture is biased toward men and boys when it comes to financial support of organizations. "We need women corporate managers and executives and stockholders to pressure American industry to give as many pro bono dollars to girls' organizations--agencies serving girls can no longer operate efficiently with a stove, a sewing machine and a loving heart," she said, pointing to her group's efforts informing young women about VD, pre-natal care, drugs, and alcoholism.

That there is a cultural bias is an understatement. Most corporate managers and executives are men and always have been. As long as this fact remains true, girls' organizations will continue to be short-changed, unless of course, corporate leaders can be convinced of the equal importance of supporting girls' groups. What about the women who are breaking into new positions in the business hierarchy? The Washington representative for girls' clubs says this: "It seems that as they move up the corporate ladder, there is almost no sense on the part of a woman to reach back and provide assistance to young girls." What is needed adds Mrs. Phelps, is a network of women to act as a counterpart to the interest that men have traditionally shown in philanthropic organizations serving boys.



That will at least have to be the answer until cultural tendencies become more natural in that the desire to see all youth become the future of a society prevails.

## *For your information . . .*

Ever wonder why the world is in the state it is? The first and only French Minister of Women's Affairs, Francoise Giroud considers politicians to be inept, wordy, and powerless. One morning, she says, during the course of a cabinet meeting, she passed a note to Mme. Saunier-Seite, the State secretary of universities. "Did you, Dear Alice," the note read, "imagine cabinet meetings could be so boring?" Mme. Saunier-Seite wrote back: "Yes, Dear Francoise, because I've always observed the inexplicable childishness of men." (Parade, January 15, 1978)..... Around 1057

Lady Godiva was the wife of a harsh and powerful man, the Earl of Mercia. She watched him impose oppressive taxes on the town of Coventry. In sympathy to the townspeople, one night she mounted a horse and rode naked through the town. Her protest so impressed her husband that he cancelled the taxes and became one of the greatest benefactors of the town . . . .

from the Women's Almanac.....

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E.R.A. -How Will It Effect Me? (continued from page 3)

Many feel that if one supports the bill, they are obviously a 'Women's Libber.' This is not actually correct. The bill will help men and women. Two examples are: 1) Widowers will get the same Social Security benefits as widows; 2) It will become easier for men to receive alimony from former wives, while obligations for child support would be based on financial abilities to contribute rather than sex. Even though the bill only needs the ratification of three more states, it has a long way to go due to the sudden, strong, and sometimes false accusations made by those who fear that they have more to lose than gain but its enactment. There is the possibility of an extension of the 1979 deadline but much work must be done to bring it about. It is true we(women) might become more vulnerable to the outside world, however if we are to be respected as individuals, we must first become responsible for ourselves.