A Simple Matter of Justice

... and you thought women were equal!

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

Above is the text of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment currently in the Senate. Its purpose is to insure women full and uniform constitutional protection in the United States.

Write your senators!
Demand passage of HJ 264

Senator Javits, Senator Goodell, Senate Office Building, Washington
New groups organize

The Southern Division of the Westchester Women’s Liberation Coalition is only about three months old. We have had several meetings and have had a tremendous response to our press releases. Most of our energies have gone into organizing meetings and spreading the word. Many organizations in the county have contacted us for speakers.

We began with a nucleus of women who had been involved in political organizations and who were inclined toward political activity in Women’s Lib. Consequently we decided to set up committees on abortion, child care, employment, women’s image in the media, etc. We have grown so rapidly that we have had to divide up into area groups: such as White Plains, Greenburgh, Scarsdale, New Rochelle and Yonkers.

As we have developed, however, it has become clear that our women are also very interested in talking to each other about their common problems. It is only by talking to each other that we gain insight into ourselves as women and begin to understand the concept of femininity and masculinity in our society. Once we gain understanding of the traditional roles we have filled then we can begin to change ourselves and those roles.

We welcome all women into our group for whatever reasons. We believe in the concept of “do your own thing.” For further information, write W.L., Box 64, Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583.

—JOYCE LEVIN
Hartsdale

Local Priorities?

Are there any specific Westchester issues for women liberationists? Here are a few suggestions, based on discussions with women inside the movement, and on the outside. If you can add to this list, or comment on any of these ideas, please write the Newsletter.

More women (or in many cases, the first women) on school boards, town boards, zoning boards, planning boards, etc.

Honest representation of women in all local newspapers.

Part time or tandem jobs, and flexible hours for working women.

Day care centers for women employees at large corporations which invest heavily in men’s employees’ recreational facilities.

Free, legal and safe abortions

An end to the degrading picture of women in the press, advertising and movies as mindless sex objects

No job discrimination

Free divorce without red tape

How it all began here

Women’s liberation in Westchester started in the village of Croton-on-Hudson in February, 1970. A group of four friends came together to discuss the new phenomena they had been reading about in above ground and underground newspapers. Women in the various radical movements had been opting out and developing their own organization for their own rights. Too often in the new left, civil-rights and political organizations women were asked to do the work of workers but not be policy makers. Women were to type and file and make coffee and make love but not have leadership positions. We discussed this development in our meeting and decided that the new movement for women’s rights and liberation had relevance for suburban women as well as “radical” women.

We called several subsequent meetings and at each meeting the number of women attending increased. We have come to the conclusion that the most effective number of people for a meeting is no larger than 15. If more than 15 come to a meeting it is a good idea to split into two groups, both of which will be affiliated with the larger overall organization Westchester Women’s Liberation Coalition.

Women who have come to meetings are interested in working on a variety of matters pertaining to their social, legal and economic rights. Certain themes have come up repeatedly, in a general sense, our aim is to destroy the double standard not only as men use it against us but as we use it against ourselves. We want to discourage women from constantly trying to live up to a false image of what they should be, an image derived from parents, friends, cultural mythology and the media. We would like to see women refrain from ignoring their own inclinations and abilities, refrain from squeezing themselves into roles others have set for them. We want it established once and for all that just as not all men are suited for the role of doctor or lawyer, so all women are not suited by interest or ability for the role of wife and mother, certainly not of wife and mother to the exclusion of any other current running within her. When society demeans women who aren’t mothers, it demeans motherhood as well. A mother becomes someone not doing a job for which she has talent but rather some mass-produced item doing the job a male society fashioned her for.

From discussions in our meetings, we have decided on the following aims for our organization: to become a source of information and an idea-exchange for suburban women, who are often cut off from both the advantages of rural life and the easy involvement and new ideas of city life. To work for legislation pertinent to women’s rights, specifically at this time for the repeal of all abortion laws on a nationwide basis; tax reform to allow women to deduct household help from their declared income; the equal rights amendment; anti-discrimination laws to ensure that women have a chance at those jobs which they find themselves suited for but which have been denied to them because of sexism (equivalent to and as insidious as racism).

We want to join with other groups in working to establish a standard of equal pay for equal work, state-supported day-care centers, and to participate together in actions (boycotts, picketing against those corporations, agencies and media which deliberately perpetuate an image of women which is false, degrading and self-serving).

In closing I would like to quote from the Croton Women’s Liberation Newsletter: “We say that the liberation of women to be ourselves will free our men as well to be what they need to be. That the death of the Consumer Princess will bring the death of the Technocrat Cavalier. That maybe when we no longer have to prove our femininity by feigning submissiveness, men won’t have to prove their masculinity by going to war. We submit that the task of saving the future calls for all the resources of our humanity, rather than for an artificial restraint in the name of femininity.” We have got to overcome the conditioned repressions within ourselves and fight the obstacles a male chauvinist society sets in our paths. Right On! Sisterhood is powerful!

—JOYCE LIPPMANN
Croton

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—JOYCE LIPPMANN
Croton
We need Lee Novick in Albany

Lee Novick, active supporter of the women's liberation movement, is the Democratic candidate for the State Assembly in Albany from the 11th District. Bedford, Cortlandt, Lewisboro, North Salem, Ossining, Peekskill, Somers and Yonkers. Mrs. Novick helped found Westchester SANE, headed the local McCarthy for President campaign, founded Ossining People for Peace, fought for low and fair housing, worked to place black teachers in Westchester public schools, served in the Urban League, NAACP, Civil Liberties Union, League of Women Voters, and worked as a social scientist on studies to improve health services for the disabled and the aged.

Another point of view

Is Women's Lib a pipe dream for middle aged, middle class matrons or is it the "girls' fighting auto" a group to be heeded with indulgence and a gruff wink? Indeed one of the bitterest complaints sometimes voiced of Woman's Lib groups is that just such a cavalier attitude is taken toward them. The last thing they claim to want is another tea party or garden club. This time the ladies mean business.

But can one take seriously discussions of certain ladies' sexual hangups or feeling put down by the opposite sex, or of their political domination or their life in society? If so, they are equipped with dislongleftrightarrow, 12-foothigh footers and all the labor-saving devices ex- cept possibly their low heads. Yes, there are serious problems to these individuals. However, does this type of problem have meaning for society in general? While this may be more important to society than the welfare of individuals, not all individual problems can be generalized as a social or political whole.

Women have many real issues to attack. And they can succeed if they recognize that there are two pillars of American society: the dollar and the Negro. Indeed one of the bitterest complaints sometimes voiced of Women's Lib groups is that just such a cavalier attitude is taken toward them. The last thing they claim to want is another tea party or garden club. This time the ladies mean business.

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Lest we forget:

51% of the American population is female.
29 million women work for pay. Half are over 40.
67% of all working women over 18 have finished high school versus only 60% of all working men over 18.
Of all married women (husband present) 37% are working.
About 10.6 million mothers with children under 18 work. 4.1 million have children under 6.
The 1968 median male salary was $7,664; the 1968 median female salary was $4,457, or, for every $1 a man makes, a woman makes .52. (All figures from the U.S. Dept. of Labor for full time workers.)