



Longshore woman
for a day
The hand that rocks
the docks...

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25¢

The Hand That Rocks the Docks...

If it is necessary for men to assume new attitudes towards gender roles and for them to respond to changes incurred by women, it is necessary for women to do likewise. Such a philosophy brought me to the docks.

Encouraged by the men I live with, and the women, I applied to Hanson Seaways as a stevedore very early one morning in November. Filling out the forms was relatively hassle-free due, in large part I think, to the efforts of a few other women who had come immediately before me, a woman named Sally in particular. She told me what I would need to have and to say. The short dark man with the enchanting accent asked me if I had a hard-hat, boots, and did I think I could do the work? He did not ask me if I had safety gloves, the wearing of which is a union regulation, and which the company is supposed to provide.

I waited with the other men and woman for my name to be called. It took awhile. I was a little surprised that the men weren't staring at me, wondering what I was doing there. I felt friendliness or at least tolerance from most of them and open encouragement from several. The encouragement was mostly offered by people who felt culturally level with me, ie longhairs, and some of them looked very exotic.



The worst part of dock work, in my opinion, is the climb down into the hull of the ship. In the morning, climbing down was a bit unnerving--after lunch (and dope-smoking) it was terrifying. While making my first descent, the supervisors and up-top workers, who were mostly black and middle-aged razzed me, called me sweetheart, asked my name in the familiar hard hat manner. When it became clear to them that I did not enjoy this treatment--didn't answer to sweetheart, gave my name and asked theirs, we got along ok as far as I could tell. I didn't spit at them or laugh. What could they do but get back to work?

The men I worked with were surprised to see me work seriously, carry my weight (and over) take risks, and cooperate. By lunch I felt successful. Sally congratulated me; John, my roommate, bought me a beer.



As mentioned, the after luncheon climb down was disquieting. More disquieting prospects lay below--80 pound bales of twine. In the morning I had lifted 40 lb bales, which was strenuous at a moderate pace, although acceptable. 80 lb bales at a much faster clip proved to be too much. The day eventually ended, I walked out on my own two feet, I earned my money. But my body knew, I wouldn't be back the next day. You can't fool the body, my white-haired grandfather used to say.



Confidence is a large factor in successful physical exertion. John and I were discussing differences in physical attitudes encountered in high school where John said he first became physically strong. Heavy emphasis was placed on sports for men, on rigor and training and a gradual building up of muscle size, control and coordination. I had no such encouragement to build strength and competition (that great strength-builder) was reserved for the volleyball and basketball teams, which I ignored due to intellectual snobbery. My body development then, has been very different from my male contemporary and one exhausting day at the docks may not be the best way to build and maintain Big Muscles. (There is an informative article in January's Ms about women and the Olympics, discrimination in training methods, and why women have lagged in sports)

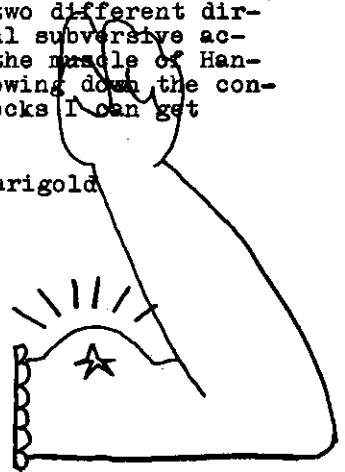
I weigh slightly over 100 pounds which means I was lifting 80% of my weight. I won't attempt a mean weight for the random male dockworker, but I think it is safe to assume that it is not 100 lbs. Other conversations with dockworkers have also led me to believe that very rarely, if ever, do men lift 80% of their weight. In fact, much dock work is lighter than 80 lbs and some is not lifting at all. Which is to say that for women who weigh even a little more than I do, the job may be just right.



I was fired from the docks, Sally was fired and it is probable that all the women were fired. I was given no reason (if I had, it could be disputed). The men I know who worked at the docks this season feel that the women were fired simply because we are women. At one point I heard that a lawyer was in touch with Sally.

Working at the docks is hard labor. The use of bodies made me think more about male oppression. However the compensations exist, as they exist for most exclusively male jobs. The pay is good, working in the open is good for those who like it, comradery is abundant. I found it far preferable to waitressing/typing, but my experience leads me to think in two different directions, one welfare, and the other the potential subversive activity of one-hundred pound women slowing down the muscle of Hanson seaways, slowing down TRANSPORTATION and slowing down the consumption of America! And since my day at the docks I can get every single jar open, including the honey pot.

Margaret Marigold



witches, *Midwives,* nurses ...

Witches, Midwives and Nurses:
A History of Women Healers by
Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre
English. Glass Mountain Pam-
phlets/PO Box 238/ Oyster Bay
NY 11771/\$.75

With an analysis of the suppression of medieval witches and the failure of the radical Popular Health Movement in the 1840's-1850's in this country, the authors have built a strong case for their contention that we have been robbed of our heritage and birthright as healers.

The witches of the Middle Ages come alive as successful practitioners of folk medicine. The reality of women successfully practicing healing arts ran counter to the male fantasies of women as weak, vessels of evil. If they had any power at all, women defined totally as sexual objects, must have gotten their power from the devil who is also the source of their sexuality. The bloody suppression of witches became a holy crusade against the devil.

In our own country, the battle between the mild, herbal remedies of the "irregular" doctors and the harsh bleeding practices of the "regular" (those who had been to the right schools) doctors was quite clearly a class struggle as well as a struggle by women to continue practicing medicine.

The irregular doctors were those who had learned their art from experience and from the generations of "wise women" before them. They were not allowed,

as women, into the few medical schools in the country and what they might have learned there would not have been superior to what they could learn by themselves

Looking for an advantage over the irregular doctors, the white, male "regular" doctors began demanding that their white brothers in the state legislatures outlaw the irregular practitioners. The reaction among women, poor and working class people was strong, political and nearly effective. However, the white brotherhood proved to have more staying-power in the "right" places.

The one profession that the legally secure, male doctors would allow was that of doctor's helpmate or nurse. The nurse can never be the independent practitioner that her sisters of past centuries were because she

Cont...



Doctor delivering
under a sheet, for
modesty's sake

Cont...

is forbidden by training to diagnose and prescribe. Her duties are to serve the doctor and to nurse the patient as the doctor directs.

This pamphlet offers a powerful analysis of the historical reasons for the present situation in health care. It also offers powerful conclusions about our need to regain the right to be healers, midwives and witches. Dorothy

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graphics for
This review
are reprinted
from:

Witches,
Midwives,
Nurses.



self-help

Self help health care is on trial in California. Carol Downer, co-director of the Feminist Women's Health Center in Los Angeles was arrested and charged with "practicing medicine without a license." Her lawyer argued that the legal definition of practicing medicine (diagnosing and treating a disease) was too vague and Carol was acquitted, however the state is appealing the case.

In Los Angeles, self help was started a few years ago by women who wanted to de-mystify medicine and take a look at their own cervixes. Using a speculum, mirror and flashlight, a woman can easily become familiar with her cervix, learn what looks normal, and detect early signs of infection and pregnancy. The legality of this practice has become questionable. Carol Downer's case is testing the laws. It is obvious that the medical-legal establishment is reluctant to lose any power by letting women gain control of their bodies. How many mothers have been arrested for using a spoon as a tongue depressor, examining their children's throats, diagnosing a sore throat, and treating with salt water gargle?

CLINIC

The Margaret Sanger Clinic has suffered a severe setback. Planned Parenthood--which provides the doctors and equipment to the clinic--has decided to halt the dispensing of all prescriptions. This means that Margaret Sanger will no longer be able to treat vaginal infections or venereal disease or do anything but dispense Birth Control. The reason given by PP is the Mt. Sinai Hospital policy against Residents writing prescriptions. Resident doctors staff Margaret Sanger.

It seems inconsistent to allow these residents to prescribe birth control pills (a heavy drug) yet not allow them to write prescriptions, especially since many women develop vaginal infections as a result of various birth control methods.

This rule makes Margaret Sanger just another branch of Planned Parenthood with the only technical difference being that the staff is unpaid. Needless to say the clinic staff is most unhappy with this turn of events and is looking for possible solutions such as alternate sources of funding and medical personnel.

Peggy Silvestrini

SISTER

SOUNDS

For the last couple of months a small group of women have been working on the idea for a radio show that would be specifically about the Women's Movement (I prefer Revolution). Some of us have been on WZMF-FM (98.3) Rap shows and approached them with the idea for an on-going show - opposed to a short series. This could last forever! They are very receptive to the idea and have said we can have one hour a week, 11 a.m. to noon on either a Monday, Wednesday or Friday. The format would generally follow the lines of a rap, with audience call-ins. The show would be produced by women and completely feminist in context. This would include a woman moderator if needed and her participation would depend on the content of the show. The approach we have been asked to take is one of somewhat gentle persuasion and I tend to agree with it. A woman with three kids, little or no opportunity to get out of the house and a mistrust of women in general is not going to respond to "Sisterhood is Powerful" until we can show her it is. The same goes for a single woman who has been shit on for the last 5, 10 or 15 years and believes it's her fault.

I feel very strongly that we are in the midst of a backlash and that it's getting stronger. I also believe that the only way women can (and will) survive is through the movement. If you don't believe me about the backlash, read "Purr - Baby - Purr" by the original Pussycats (on second thought, don't), or listen to some of your friends who are telling you to calm down and relax, you have equal rights. After several months,

I listened again to the tape recordings of the rap shows we did, and 50% of the call-ins were concerned with the lack of community that women feel and their loneliness.

If you feel that you would like to do a show (subject of your own choice), know someone who would, have suggestions, would like to tape feminist songs or poetry, please call me -- Sue Luecke, 562-4993, any night after 6 p.m.

BOYCOTT!

Most of you probably know that Cesar Chavez spoke at the UMW this month. If you didn't go to see him you may not know that he came to speak about the boycott against Guild brandy and wine, and naturally Wisconsin is important as it tops the list by drinking twelve hundred thousand cases of brandy a year.

About a month ago, 55 farm workers came here to aid in the boycott because the ranch that they work on has been bought by a conglomerate named Buttes Gas and Oil Co., which refuses to honor the contract they had with the former owner. These workers need your support and the Amazon hopes that you will do what you can by not buying the following kinds of brandy and wine.

Guild
Roma
St. Marks
Tavola
Vin Glogg
Ceremony
Tres Grand
winemaster

Old San Francisco
Creste blanca
Virginia Dare
Ocean Spray Rose
Jeanne D'Arc
Cook's Imperial
Parrott V. S.
Citation

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NOW

NOW's January meeting topic was "Women and Their Reproductive Systems," and included women's virus diseases, VD, menopause, and hysterectomy. These areas are obviously ones with a lot of unanswered questions for women, because we sat and talked and asked questions for 3 hours, and could have gone on longer. People shared their experiences, we exposed a few myths, and I think comforted ourselves about these problems simply by learning their nature and our physiological reactions. Having the facts does make disease and body changes easier to deal with. At the next meeting (Feb. 12) we'll continue with the same topic and cover birth control, vasectomy, and tubal ligation. We'll finish up with a third meeting on March 12, and talk about abortion and menstrual extraction.

Another NOW member and myself had a request this month to speak before a group of people about feminism and NOW. The request was unusual because it came from a 12-year old girl. We went to her house to speak with a group of 15 girls (and 2 boys) she'd gathered, and discovered that young people were hip to the discrimination practiced in their schools. They talked about the separation in sports, the two tracking systems used for boys and girls, the different behavior expected, in interests and actions, by the teachers. The amount of total power the teachers have over these people is awesome; and there is almost no recourse for students to take -- the parents rarely support them, and the school board laughs at them. Sue Luecke and I served more as sponges to mop up vented anger than as catalysts for action and change. But one girl, anyway, had passed hostility and was ready to act: she took the ACLU's number from me, determined to change a few laws.

Ellen

jewelry

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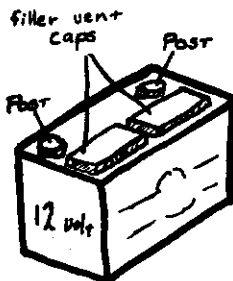
Self Defense Classes for Women start February 6 at the Milwaukee Academy of Karate, 616 N. 2nd Ave (272-8241). The classes are being taught on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 8:15-10 pm. by a feminist who has earned a brown belt in Karate. The cost of the course is \$20 for 12 weeks (24 classes). February 6 is a free lesson and demonstration.

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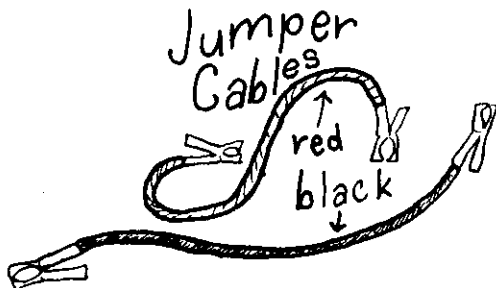
The Care and Feeding of your **BATTERY!**

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If you drive a car in Milwaukee you know what it's like to get up on a particularly cold morning to a dead battery. The immediate solution is to find someone whose car is running and jump the battery in her car with yours. Make sure that the voltage of the two batteries is the same. A 12 volt battery has 6 filler holes on top. A 6 volt battery has 3. Turn all the accessories off (heater, radio, wipers, etc.) so that you can hear the engine better and not be an extra drain on the battery.

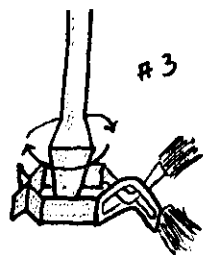
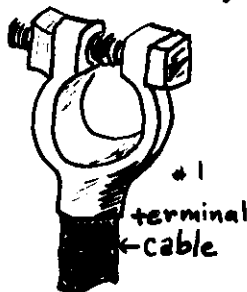


When connecting the two batteries with jumper cables do the positive posts first. These are marked "+" or "P". The negative posts are marked "-" or "N". Start the good car and keep it running at fast idle while you start your car. Once your car is running, your sister can remove the cables being careful not to touch the ends together (red to black) while the other ends are connected to a battery.



To avoid having this kind of trouble again there are a few simple things that you can do to keep your battery in good condition. The top should be free from water, dirt and corrosion. If there is a lot of corrosion on the battery a little water can act as a conductor between the two posts discharging the battery overnight.

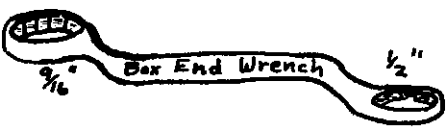
Bicarbonate of soda and water or ammonia will clean away the corrosion. Be careful not to get any of the solution down the filler vents. Once the corrosion is cleaned away, you can clean the cable terminals. In removing these from the posts it is very important not to pound on or twist the posts. Strong vibrations or twisting can damage the post's internal connections as well as the battery plates themselves. This is also why you should check to make sure that the battery is held firmly in place in the car.



One type of terminal can be removed by loosening the nut, and lifting it off the post. Another is a spring clamp and the ends must be squeezed together with a pliers. A third type is loosened with a screwdriver. Now you can clean the terminals and the posts with a wire brush or sandpaper. If the terminal cables are badly corroded they must be replaced because they won't be able to

carry the current necessary to start the engine. After replacing the cables smear a light coating of Vaseline on the post and the terminal to cut down on future corrosion.

It is important to check the electrolyte (water & sulphuric acid) level in the battery occasionally. Keep it full to the mark on the inside of the filler vent. Check each vent because each is for a separate cell with a separate water supply. Use distilled water. Even a small amount of impurities will cut down on the life of the battery. Be careful not to overfill because during the electricity-producing chemical reaction in the battery, the electrolyte expands and will overflow.



The chemical reaction in the battery is slowed in cold weather and this is the time when more current is required. The chance of your battery freezing and cracking is also greater if it is weak since there is less acid in the electrolyte reducing the anti-freeze capability.

The best precaution to take when you know it's going to be one of those really cold nights is to take your battery inside where it's warm (45°-65° is good). The best tool for loosening the nuts on the terminals and on the rod or clip holding the battery in place is a box end wrench.

Don't lay the wrench down on top of the battery to make sure that you don't accidentally connect the posts. Keep the battery level. If you spill any of the electrolyte wash with warm water immediately.

Dorothy



MEAD

Margaret Mead, who years ago advanced theories on her studies about the sex roles imposed by different cultures, theories that were laughed at by pompous male anthropologists, but are now beginning to be widely accepted, will be speaking at the UWM this month, on February 14, about Contemporary Trends. Mead's autobiography is currently available at The Book Bay on Downer Ave.

AMAZON MEETS:

- THURS., FEB. 8, 7:30 P.M.
Discussion of articles received for next issue.
- THURS., FEB. 15, 7:30 P.M.
Selection of final copy for next issue.
- THURS., FEB. 22, 7:00 P.M.
Lay-Out Meeting
- THURS. MARCH 1, 7:30 P.M.
Collate and discuss next issue.

All of the above meetings will be held at Women's Coalition, 2211 E Kenwood, Milwaukee WI 53211.

I have never been here before..

Never in my lifetime. the people are the same ones as a week ago. Yet they are different. I see Pat as I have never seen her before. I watch her eyes her mouth hear the intonation in her voice as she drives us to the conservatory in a borrowed car. I think in some way in some unexpected realm I am in love with her.

I walk past Annie's at 1:30 a.m. I see her in the kitchen. It must be fate, I think as I knock on her door. I lie with her and her hands move over my back. I remember the importance of women's hands and I am weak and I need Annie and I tell her I am fucked up and I wonder where Martha has gone and I have never before in my life been the person who is lying in bed with this woman. I hardly know this woman and my feelings are never intense and still I love lying with her and feeling close and being held. I say to Annie, "You can feel my indecision, can't you?" She nods and two people could not be more in touch still I have to leave. As if we are too close. As if I will be lost in sleep. As if this person who I have never been before will take over the next morning and my identity will have been lost to the need to be close to be loved to be with a woman.

Today, though I slept alone last night, my identity is still missing. I carry on as usual but I have never felt this way before. I am spacy but not angry not sad not depressed not cynical

not guilt-ridden. And it has something to do with what it means to love people. It has something to do with what it means to be a person. It has something to do with being alone and autonomous and needing people at the same time. It has something to do with touching people. It has something to do with raising my son to feel free enough to run into the pointsettias at the Mitchell Street Conservatory. It has something to do with wanting to be a pioneer and being made aware by others that I am one. It has something to do with not understanding my needs but watching them fulfill themselves.

Maybe though, it has nothing to do with any of these things. Maybe a Martha is dying and a new one being born. Maybe this is what it feels like to be alive. Maybe it is this feeling I have been avoiding all these years. The dying the letting go. The submitting to people to events to changes to whims to unrehearsed words. Today I am no one. From person to person event to event day to night I change. Though I'm encompassed within a body I am not an entity. I am like the sky: from a distance it seems I am blue but when you are near me I am no color. In fact I have no boundaries at all.

*Martha
Spencer*

Life in These United States

The other day, I was hitchhiking to a friend's house when I was picked up by a pimp. It wasn't apparent at first, but grew more so as we talked. The conversation went something like this:

pimp: "You work?"

me: "No, I'm looking for a job."

pimp: "Ohhh, you need money."

me: "Well, it helps, doesn't it?"

pimp: "You wanna work for me?"

Now I may have a suspicious mind, but I've been hitching for a long time and it seemed like a very natural thing to ask, "Are you a pimp?" He just looked at me and said, "Well, do you want to work for me? You might as well, all women are whores, anyway."

Unfortunately, I'm one of those people who always thinks of beautiful, cutting remarks to say when it's too late so all I did was yell "bullshit" as ferociously as I felt.

After a couple of minutes as if he hadn't even heard me, he said thoughtfully, "Except for my mother." And while I was still reeling from the impact of this, he said even more thoughtfully, "But she used to be one."

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get close to your body
and come, crawl into mine
(with me)

touch me with pastel brush strokes
warm rushes of pink

hold me in your vision
with starlight lips
and let me hold you
between my legs.

before you fall away,
teach me that love song
let me memorize every
fluctuation of your body
let me into you,

like that one time
i masturbated in the woods
last summer
and the trees and warm wind
came into me.

NEXT TIME: CREATIVE WOMEN'S ISSUE

We want poems, fiction, satire, graphics, journal excerpts and anything else you can think of for our Women Writers Issue.

Copy must be received by Amazon no later than February 21.

If you type, prepare your copy to fit 30-space pica columns, and if possible, type with carbon or fairly new fabric ribbon.

If you don't type, please don't let it bother you.

Love, Amazon Collective