

WAC (WAC) is an alliance of women's organizations. As current legal and economic conditions. As current legal and economic conditions. As current legal and economic conditions.

TALK (TALK) is an alliance of women's organizations. As current legal and economic conditions. As current legal and economic conditions. As current legal and economic conditions.

WOMEN'S ACTION COALITION MISSION STATEMENT: The Women's Action Coalition (WAC) is an open alliance of women committed to Direct Action on issues affecting the rights of all women. We are witnesses to the current economic, cultural and political pressures that limit women's lives and to the hooifying effect of these limitations. As current legislation fail to reflect the experience of women, we support the immediate enactment of an ERA initiative. WAC insists on an end to homophobia, racism, religious prejudice and violence against women. We insist on every woman's right to quality health care, child care and reproductive freedom. We will exercise our full creative power to launch a visible and remarkable resistance. WAC is watching—WE WILL TAKE ACTION



WELCOME TO WAC TALK

With the Women's Action Coalition celebrating its first anniversary this month, there could hardly be a better time to introduce WAC TALK. This special pullout section will appear in future issues of NEW DIRECTIONS FOR WOMEN, bringing readers news of WAC in New York and across the country.

In January 1992, some 100 women gathered in New York City to form what would soon become the Women's Action Coalition. Responding quickly and creatively to numerous issues that affect women, WAC caught the attention of the national press almost immediately. Within six months, membership had grown to include more than 1,800 women, making WAC one of the largest women's organizations in the New York area. In the meantime, women began organizing independent chapters in cities all across the nation.

In each edition of WAC TALK, WAC will tell its own story via reports, commentaries, calendar items, news from sister WACS, and more. As a regular feature, this special supplement will offer WAC members and NDFW readers nationwide the opportunity to stay in touch and up-to-date with both this dynamic, influential new feminist organization and the nation's leading feminist newspaper.

Andrea Wolper

BIG TROUBLE IN GLEN RIDGE

The trial continues but justice does not

Chances are you've read or watched accounts of the Glen Ridge rape case. And you feel something. But face it, some people feel more than something...they are called activists.

Cathianne Linzalone and Chris Anne Moore are activists in the Women's Action Coalition (WAC) and their interest in the Glen Ridge case nears what can only be called obsession. Linzalone has attended the trial from the first day. Moore, equally vigilant, has marched for, and belonged to, every activist organization we can think of (and some we don't know about). They drive their families crazy, they drive their friends crazy, and sometimes they wonder if they themselves are going 'round the bend.

"I don't think I realized the enormity of the case, not really, until I got involved," Linzalone said. "But I've been outraged since I first heard about it, three or four years ago."

"Well, the question keeps popping up, doesn't it?" Moore remarks. "How can this happen? How can there be so much cruelty, so much inhumanity?"

So far, both Moore and Linzalone helped engineer three WAC actions protesting the handling of the Glen Ridge defense. Naturally, both women have experienced a range of reactions to their efforts. In fact, Linzalone has received death threats over the phone.

"One call really sticks out," says Linzalone with a wry smile. "This guy said he was going to blow my head off, then beat me up."

"I told him he'd better come up with a better plan," Linzalone jokes.

Ed.

CATHIANNE LINZALONE

One in three women will be a victim of sexual assault. The rape victim of case 4165-9-91 NJ is such a woman. The case, one of thousands, is the Glen Ridge Rape Case.

On March 1, 1989, the young woman, then 17, was invited to the basement of one of the defendant's homes in Glen Ridge, New Jersey. The accused, eight high school males, had each known her, had each tormented her at least once in her life. More than once, you can be fairly sure. With an I.Q. of an eight-year-old girl and the body of a woman, she was the fairest of game. In the past, they'd had sex with her, had tricked her into eating feces, had made obscene phone calls to her, had promised to 'tell on her' regarding sexual exchanges they'd had with her. She respected them, adored them, feared them. They promised her a date with her favorite man from their group; they promised her acceptance. So, she went to the basement.

The Glen Ridge rape should be characterized as a Sadistic Rape. In sadistic rape, the attacker or attackers (and most gang rapes fall into this category), derive their pleasure from degradation of the victim. Sadistic rape often involves implements, such as a broom stick, baseball bat, or a dirty stick — all alleged weapons in the Glen Ridge case.

It has taken three years to ready a kangaroo court for this case. Suitably, the case was introduced by a lifting of the rape shield law, upheld on appeal by Judge Burrell Ives Humphreys. The rape shield law states that the victim's sexual history shall not be admitted as relevant evidence unless it can either establish the identity of the parties involved or determine whether coercion was used.

"Confidentiality and privilege must give way when they conflict with the rights to a fair trial," Judge Humphreys decided, tipping the scales in the defendants' favor since, according to the good ole' judge, "all privileges are barriers to the truth."

In short, although the victim has not been charged with any crime, she must now defend her actions not only on the day



WAC, NOW and FURY demonstrate in Glen Ridge

LISA KAHANE

in question, she must also defend her entire life. Normally, under the New Jersey rape shield statute, the rape victim's sexual conduct prior to one year before the alleged incident is deemed inadmissible in court. The irony of lifting the statute is the blatant disregard of the defendants' sexual past. It was brought out in court that at least one of the accused had maintained some form of sexual contact with the victim since the sixth grade. It was mentioned yet never dealt with—except, that is, to cast aspersions on the victim's past and her adoptive mother's supposed ambivalence towards child-rearing. Couldn't the defendants' past

Esquillin was then castigated for answering their questions, accused of being money-hungry and insensitive. It didn't stop there. The victim's mother was reduced to tears by the defense's line of inquiry. Defense lawyer Thomas threw stones at the mother's pragmatism in supplying her ever-vulnerable daughter with birth control pills. He unrelentingly painted this as a callous and shamefully resigned approval of the victim's desperate sex-is-love promiscuity. Some of the spectators were moved to mumble or hiss at this outrage. Judge Cohen threatened to eject them from the courtroom if it happened again. All

They promised her a date with her favorite man from their group; they promised her acceptance. So, she went to the basement.

sexual behavior also be regarded then as one of Judge Humphrey's "barriers to the truth"? Doesn't their behavior bear equal scrutiny and judgment?

There are three basic defenses in rape cases: innocence through mistaken identity; spite; or the defense used in the Glen Ridge case — the woman not only initiated the assault, she enjoyed it. The Glen Ridge rape victim was described by the defense attorneys as a "Lolita"; a full-breasted, sexually aggressive woman. Thomas Ford, attorney for Christopher Archer, compared the defendants' situation to that of a three-year-old who steals a candy bar. "I'd like to give them all a slap but not convict them of a crime they are not guilty of," Ford said.

Plenty of slapping went on otherwise. Psychologist Dr. Susan Esquillin was accused of tailoring her report on the victim according to guidelines provided by the prosecution. Pressed by the court to reveal privileged doctor-patient information, Dr.

this seemed to fuel Ford, who upbraided the woman yet again. This time, it was because the mother wasn't following press accounts of the incident. "I can't be hurt by it, if I don't see it," she said. Ford didn't miss a beat, comparing the woman to an ostrich, burying her head in the sand regarding her daughter's behavior.

Attorney Alan Zegas' line of inquiry was equally hostile, his main, repeated thrust being that the mother let the daughter run wild. He also grilled her about the girl's intake of the prescription drug Ritalin, used to curb hyperactivity. Zegas wanted to know if the drug would be administered to the victim before she testified. The mother told Zegas it was none of his business. The judge instructed her otherwise. The mother said the victim would probably have to take Ritalin in order to handle testifying. She then emphasized that her daughter was not tak-

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WAC STATS

The facts about women

A 64-page book from the Women's Action Coalition (WAC), filled with pithy statistics on issues that effect women's lives. Chapters include: Abortion, AIDS, Art, Breast Cancer, Cosmetics, Diets & Eating Disorders, Government, Homelessness, Hysterectomy, Media, Menopause, Mothers, Prison, Rape, Sex Industry, Sexual Harassment, Violence, Work. *An invaluable resource.*

Copies are \$5.00 and may be purchased at any WAC meeting. To order by mail, add \$1.50 postage & handling for the first copy; \$.50 for each additional copy. NY, NJ, CT residents please include local sales tax. Checks should be made out to WAC and sent to BRAT, 115 Spring Street, NY NY 10012. Booksellers call (212) 219-9106 for wholesale information.



WAC demonstrates at the Glen Ridge rape trial.

A Problem With Judgment

KATE BOBBY

When does no mean "no", and why doesn't someone ask Judge R. Benjamin Cohen that question?

When defense attorneys for the Glen Ridge trial asked Judge Cohen if they could reveal the victim's sexual history to the jury, he said yes. Within reason.

For instance, the defense could publicly probe the victim's gynecological records. They could review the alleged victim's school, psychiatric, and medical records. The privileged communication between a doctor and patient could "yield to a defendant's right to a fair trial." Indeed, in a pre-trial hearing, Judge Burrell Ives Humphreys said that, in this case, any privileged information would serve as a "barrier to the truth."

"What I want to know is this..." said Michelle Munfat, an attorney who specializes in sexual harassment cases and serves as legal counsel to NOW NJ. "If Humphreys has lifted the [rape] shield law on a victim with the I.Q. of an eight year old, what kind of protection do I have?"

Luckily, Judge Cohen has his standards. He emphatically warned the defense that they were not to simply "forage" through the alleged victim's private life, sifting emphasis from the actual incident, from the question as to whether the act alone constituted rape.

Did I miss something? Did he say yes or no?

"They violated the rape shield law," said Peggy Sanday, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania and author

of the book *Fraternity Gang Rape* (NYU Press, 1990), "by allowing legal issues to shift law from the defendants' behavior."

It allows the whole notion of 'she asked for it' to creep insidiously into this. This, in turn, allows the judge to balance the facts with reasonable doubt. Does her past sexual history demonstrate a knowledge about sex that implies consent, that proves she wasn't coerced?"

It is hard to tell. This is mainly because the defense was too busy indicting itself, calling the victim a "Lolita" hence disregarding the rape shield law and the judge's restrictions.

Indeed, the judge did warn the defense attorneys that he was sick of them "arguing to the jury that this is some kind of loose woman who consented to sex acts in the past and therefore probably consented this time."

"I don't get it," said Munfat, adding, "The perspective is all screwed up here. Let's say, hypothetically, that she consented. These men aren't expected to exercise any judgment of their own? Her consent is all that matters? They couldn't make a choice here? Their consent isn't at all at issue?"

Munfat also protested the double standard regarding the court's stance on delving into the defendants' history.

"A young man who has enticed a mentally retarded woman to eat feces has a problem with judgment," Munfat insisted. "This behavior is not okay. What she said or did isn't at issue. There was not acceptable conduct."

"I'm really concerned," Munfat sighed. "If the law won't protect those most vulnerable, how can it protect anyone?" ▲

SAME OLD PLOY

"Tarnished" women can't be raped...

ANDREA DELLA MONICA

Patricia Bowman's sex drive was portrayed as perversity by defense attorneys in the William Kennedy Smith trial. The same legal strategy is also being used in New Jersey's Glen Ridge rape case, as four defendants stand accused of sexually assaulting a mildly retarded teenager.

In a rape case, bringing a woman's sexuality into play shifts the spotlight, and the heat, away from the alleged perpetrator and onto the victim.

Moreover, a rape shield law sometimes acts as the enemy because at the very worst the information being bottled up is evidence that a woman may have had sex and presumably must know the difference between consensual intercourse and an assault. Defense attorneys often use shield laws to insinuate that female rape victims have something to hide. For example, in full view of the jury, Thomas Ford, who represents Glen Ridge defendant Christopher Archer, said the shield law "kept" information from the defense.

By enforcing confidentiality without the consent of the victim, prosecutors also do women a disservice by furthering the belief that a woman's sexual past—no matter how ordinary or varied—diminishes her credibility if she pursues rape charges. Such tactics are reminiscent of the common law approach that required a woman to show evidence of her chastity before a rape claim would even be investigated. Once a formal inquiry was underway, historically, tort law allowed men to seek payment for sexual "trespass" against their wives. Single women who had a sex life were already tarnished, according to some legal thinkers.

"Courts have long been aware of the danger of prejudice based on sexual history but in a different way. They have never been willing to allow similar inquiries into a male defendant's sexual history, precisely because of the prejudice which may be occasioned in the mind of the jury," according to Susan Estrich in her book, *Real Rape*.

So soothing questioning and comforting pats on William Kennedy Smith's back used by lead defense counsel Roy Black were intended to convey that Smith was the real victim.

"I felt like I was getting picked up," Smith testified about his meeting with Bowman at Au Bar. The boyish inferiority theme climaxed when Smith testified he was not aroused. It was Bowman who placed his penis inside her, according to Smith.

Bowman was portrayed as a pick-up artist with a young child at home, dancing and partying in bars and willfully seducing to her heart's content. But it didn't stop there. When Smith said she referred to him as "Michael" during their encounter, there was no mistaking the direction the defense was taking. It was inferred that Bowman had a sex life, hence the prosecution lacked credibility.

Likewise, the Glen Ridge defense is portraying a rape victim's use of birth control pills as evidence against the victim: if she uses birth control pills, they say, she is sexually knowledgeable and therefore she welcomed the sexual contact with her alleged attackers.

The intense questioning of her mother on November 23 was similarly bent on depicting the victim as sexually active (a phrase replaced with the word "promiscuous" in a *New York Times* article the next day.)

Had she been flirtatious? Had she propositioned boys? The mother seemed trapped on the witness stand. A 16-year-old with a libido and contraceptives may have seemed "guilty" even to her own mother.

In the future, rape may need to be regarded as a "hate crime," to put it in the proper legal and societal context, according to Isabelle Katz Pinzler, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights Project. "Violence against women is a way of denigrating them," she said.

Helen Benedict, an assistant professor in the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University in New York, wrote in her book, *Virgin Or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes*, "that the issue of whether to name the sex crime victims is merely cosmetic—sex crimes victims will only be free of destigmatization when they can be taken seriously without having to hide behind the virgin narrative."

At the very least, until society stops apologizing for a woman's sexuality, rape victims will be the ones on trial. ▲

Andrea Della Monica is a New York-based freelance writer. As a former reporter for the North Jersey Herald & News she covered aspects of the Glen Ridge case and William Kennedy Smith trial, which she attended. As an advocate for the ACLU's national office, she writes and is quoted frequently on issues concerning women's reproductive freedom.

Rape Just Another Team Sport

KATE BOBBY

Almost all of the articles on the Glen Ridge rape case ask the same question: "How could it have happened here, in a town like this?"

"Men rape for each other. It's a bonding ritual," said Bernice Sandler, director of the Center For Women's Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. and senior editor of *About Women On Campus*, a newsletter published by the center. Sandler added that rape is all the more likely to occur in a society overrun with all-male groups.

Like football teams. It has escaped no one's attention that the defendants were football players. Even more than that, they were hero types and among the most popular men in their high school student body.

Consistently, the defendants are referred to as athletes and/or football players. They've been called clean-cut. At times, the colleges they attend have been referred to by name.

Most notably, however, is the repeated use of the word "boys" in referring to the defendants, all of whom are long past boyhood now. Especially now since, if they are convicted, they won't be doing a boy's time in prison, as the media constantly reminds us.

"It sticks in the jury's mind...that the defendants are 'nice' white boys," said Peggy Sanday, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania and author of the book, *Fraternity Gang Rape* (NYU Press, 1990).

"Men use females as a negative reference group," Sandler said. "Not respecting women is what makes many men relate with one another. It helps them to determine who they are. They are not 'sissies', i.e., they aren't like women." (see "Terror On Campus," *NDFW*, Sept/Oct 1992)

Both Sandler and Sanday maintain that gang rape is given the green light in our society and there is a prevailing belief that women "ask for it."

"There is a basic pattern to group sex where there is no regard given to the woman's consent," Sanday agreed. "It is a pattern in which sexuality becomes a team sport played in a sexual arena."

One thing is known for sure. On March 1, 1989, when the defendants led the alleged victim into the basement on Lorraine Street, they were wearing varsity jackets. ▲

Madison Wisconsin Gets WACed and Loves It!

MEIKA ANGELO ALBERICI

A hot August in 1992 saw the launching of MAD WAC, Madison, Wisconsin's affiliate of the Women's Action Coalition. I was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time, able to introduce WAC to the Midwestern city. And so another corner of the country, chock full of angry women, embraced WAC's "in your face, direct-action" precepts.

I remember feeling excitement matched by nerves, hope and anticipation. Fear of failure, joined with a passion for the concept of WAC. I brought my experience of the loosely-tuned, yet proven vehicle for venting everywoman's rage against a patriarchy determined to destroy her basic human rights.

My partner Berta Hernandez (a member of WAC-NY's legal team) and I left for Madison the day after WAC's extraordinary presence in the Gay Pride March. We were emotionally up and ready for MAD WAC.

Having been born and raised in Madison, I spent the first few weeks looking up old friends. Every conversation I had was brimming with the news of my involvement with WAC. Some had heard of WAC-NY, some had not. I described the meetings, actions, energy, empowerment, and sense of community WAC had given me. The excitement grew. I could see a WAC energy field beginning to stir in my Madison sisters. "Can you help us organize?" they asked. Given Madison's history of political activism during the 60s and 70s, I would have been disappointed if the local feminist activists had not embraced the concept.

I agreed to help Madison get WACed. The nuts and bolts of creating a WAC chapter was a matter of steps. I obtained the WAC-NY guidelines, set a date, found space to hold the organizational meeting, designed a provocative poster announcing the event, arranged radio announcements and interviews, made contact with other sister groups such as NOW, organized a group of "wheat pasters" to poster Madison to death, and of course, requested the latest WAC Action's Video to view for "in your face" inspiration.

The "Town Meeting to organize the Madison Chapter of the Women's Action Coalition" was set for Sunday, August 1, 2:30 p.m., at the Wilmar Neighborhood Community Center. By 2:00, the VCR was in place, chairs had been arranged, our work in getting the word out was done. Berta and I and a small group we called the Madison Pre-Organizational Team waited, wondering, exchanging nervous chatter in great anticipation. At 2:45, with Berta and me acting as the facilitators, I called the meeting to order, read WAC's opening statements, and applauded Madison for their turn-out—filling the room to capacity!

How fitting that MAD WAC's first spontaneous action followed hard on the heels of its first organizational meeting! A group of us heading out to dinner encountered an anti-choice demonstration in the neighborhood of one of the new WAC members. Outraged, she confronted the demonstrators who stated they were picketing the home of a doctor who performed abortions. They brandished their posters of fetuses. We roused neighbors to action. Within moments, dozens of women, men, and children were counter-picketing,

blocking the anti-choicers from the doctor's home, generally causing an uproar, and appealing to the police. Two hours later, we heard chants of "Don't come back!" as the anti-choicers fled the neighborhood.

Berta and I spent the dog days of August with MAD WAC fleshing out committees and procedures and Roberta's rules. Just before returning to New York, we took part in MAD WAC's first official action. They targeted the University of Wisconsin Bookstore, a bastion of homophobia, for firing a lesbian. The action was a huge success, complete with the drum corps' debut and a formidable turnout.

MAC WAC continues to be both involved and effective. Their presence at a City Council meeting this fall helped overturn Mayor Paul Soglin's decision to withdraw funding for the Women's Transit Authority. WTA has provided free, late-

night transportation for the women of Madison for nearly two decades. MAD WAC also launched a WAC attack mail campaign against Alderman Michael Shivers for blatantly sexist language during a lobbying speech. Shortly afterwards, he received an onslaught of "balls" with WAC written on them, and commentary about his offensive behavior. Currently, the new chapter of WAC is investigating the issue of military funding of prostitution abroad; compiling information and statistics on Breast Cancer to do an information campaign; and addressing the need to reach out to women by getting MAD WAC's presence known through articles, interviews, and leaflets. ▲

MAD WAC may be contacted thru Deidre Gruendler at: 2908 Stevens Street, Madison, Wisconsin, 53705, or (608) 233-1557.

Glen Ridge

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ing the drug at the time of her attack three years ago.

Throughout the trial, it has been the defense's tactic to distract the jury; revelling in absurd minutiae and theatrics, stopping at nothing in their attack of witnesses. The next sideshow in this theatre of the absurd is a further examination of the victim to determine her competency to testify on her own behalf. Nonetheless, they fail to bury the kernel of truth in all this: a woman was raped and we demand justice.

As this case goes on, women will continue to bear witness. We will not erase the egregious miscarriage of justice that is case 4165-9-91 NJ. In a recent *New York Times* article (11/30/92, New Jersey "Q & A"), Myra Terry, the new president of New Jersey's National Organization for Women (NOW), aptly sums up our hopes regarding

the outcome of the Glen Ridge case.

"We hope this trial will help more people understand the gravity of this issue and see that gang rape is a crime, not a sport. Treating women as playthings is not good for our daughters or our sons or our relationships." ▲

Cathianne Linzalone is an activist living in New Jersey.

WAC Affiliates have started around the country and overseas. We will be bringing you their news in upcoming issues.

WAC address:
PO Box 1862 Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10113

WAC Voice Mail
For information and upcoming actions
212-967-7711
extension WACM (9226)

W A C W E A R

... don't be seen without it!



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long sleeve shirts • hats • books
• buttons • stickers (more items
to come... keep your eyes peeled!)

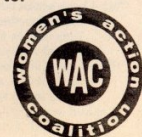
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LISA KAHANE

City-wide coalition speaks out

"Where Are the Women of Color?" WAC Committee Struggles with Diversity

JANET GOLDNER

At a Times Square rally in November, WAC joined with 19 other organizations of the Citywide Coalition to End Police Brutality. WAC provided the blueprinted signs, a handful of legal observers, two speakers and the media contact. With some forty WAC members attending and the ever-lively drum corp, WAC was a major presence.

After an hour of impassioned speeches in both Spanish and English, we marched down Seventh Avenue. The 200 participants carrying signs and chanting attracted the attention of pedestrians, shoppers, messengers and motorists.

The police lined the curb and, not surprisingly, outnumbered the marchers. Undercover cops wearing shiny black shoes with walkie talkies hanging from

their pockets mingled in the ranks of the marchers. Rallying again at Washington Square Park, a WAC woman testified that her police officer husband had brutalized her, adding that this kind of domestic violence is common yet unreported.

COMMITTEE BORN OUT OF FRUSTRATION

WAC's involvement in the rally—and its decision to work with the Citywide Coalition—came about because of WAC's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (CODAI). And CODAI was born of the frustration felt by some, when week after week we saw almost no women of color at WAC meetings. As a result, CODAI gave high priority to changing the WAC status quo.

Many felt that our effectiveness, in fact, our future survival as WAC depends on

struggling with, becoming conscious of, and taking responsibility for our blind spots. Whether it be racism, sexism, lesbophobia, anti-semitism, ageism, ableism, classism, or some I've left out, we can become conscious of our prejudices and learn not to act on them.

I've learned that well-meaning people stay separated partly out of fear. We are afraid we won't know how to act with women who are different, and we are afraid of being offended. It takes a willingness to make mistakes, to be called on them and to call other women on their misguided assumptions. And to do this in a spirit of forgiveness. It takes a real curiosity and the desire to be educated about the lives, hopes and opinions of women from different cultures and with different experiences.

In May, 15 CODAI members and an outside facilitator spent a day defining needs, expressing anger and setting goals. Since racism was a major concern and we wanted to address a range of isms, we decided to change our name from Multicultural Caucus to Committee on Diversity and Inclusion.

Some of CODAI's actions have been internal WAC actions. For several months, WORD OF THE WEEK brought a short succinct message, WAC-style, to each meeting. The words "privilege," "racism," and "lesbian" took on new meaning and asked the question "who me?" For "respect" we played 90 seconds of Aretha Franklin. We held up signs which said "age-ist, racist, heterosexist, anti-semitic, ethnocentric, euro-centrist, chauvinist, homophobic, able-ist, classist" on one side and WHO ME? on the back.

CIVILIAN COMPLAINT REVIEW BOARD

CODAI decided to get involved in the Civilian Complaint Review Board because of the importance of the issues and to make sure that women had a voice in the structuring of the board. As for WAC, involvement can serve as a way to reach into communities unrepresented in WAC. If we are serious about inclusion, WAC must go be-

yond the narrow confines of downtown Manhattan and form relationships around broad issues of mutual concern.

"For women who live with the fear of police abuse for themselves and their families, and their friends, reproductive rights will not be a priority," says Janet Henry, an artist and founding member of CODAI. "Basic survival issues must be addressed before people can go on to less immediate issues."

In my opinion all issues are feminist issues. We must take action to insure that women's points of view are brought to bear in the formation of all issues and solutions. And WAC needs to be careful to avoid the mistakes of past feminist movements in remaining a white women's movement.

Many groups in the Citywide Coalition have been organizing for nearly 30 years around the issue of police brutality. It seemed presumptuous for WAC, a new kid on the block, not to listen this time round. We needed to "hold back," and not take over the action. By participating fully in this action WAC enhanced its standing with the activist community.

"Although the action itself was not particularly successful, WAC showed extraordinary leadership in the way it used its creative powers," said Patricia Jones, a poet active in WAC and a member of CODAI. "Many progressive organizations still fear art and the progressive community is often ill-prepared to take advantage of the services of the creative communities."

Although the city has agreed on a form of Civilian Review Board, it's far from acceptable since it stipulates that three of the 13 members will be nominated by the police chief. The Citywide Coalition is continuing the important work of ending police brutality. WAC has decided to join the education committee where plans are being made to go into the neighborhoods and schools to educate and hold speak outs. In this way WAC will be able to expand its geographic and political effectiveness. ▲

Janet Goldner is white, feminist, Jewish, middle class, able bodied, educated, divorced, a red diaper baby, an activist and a sculptor.

"Some of us are women of color and we are concerned about how police officers abuse African Americans, Latinas, Asian Americans, and Native Americans.
Some of us are lesbians and we are all concerned about how police officers abuse lesbians and gays.
Some of us are community activists and we are all concerned about how police officers abuse people who speak out.
Some of us are mothers and we are concerned about how police officers abuse our young women and men.
Some of us are sex workers and we are all concerned about how police officers abuse sex workers.
Some of us are Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Christians and Atheists and we are all concerned about how police officers abuse people based on their beliefs."

Excerpt from WAC testimony given by Simone Monosabian before the Public Safety Committee of the NY City Council, October 15, 1992.

Artists and Homeless Collaborative

PHYLLIS KRIEGLER

The WAC branch of Artists & Homeless Collaborative is out to mend tattered lives. An installation slated for the walls of the Henry Street Settlement on NYC's Lower East Side is tangible proof that art can break down isolation. Called an "art work with texts"—resumes set in a grid—the piece tenders shape and meaning to the lives of shelter women. The art allows the audience to "read" the lives of women considered unproductive

"I've begged."

"Yes, I have eaten out of garbage cans.
I've had coffee thrown in my face.
They tell me to get a job.
They don't know your problem.
If you stand in a food place looking pitiful enough, someone will buy you a sandwich.
I've had people buy me a meal and bring it back to me, throw it in the garbage and tell me to get it."

or lost. In the process, conventional wisdom and prejudice about the homeless may go by the boards.

"We wanted an art show that gave something to the women, not just a visual experience for the audience," said artist Hope Sandrow, who founded the Collaborative two years ago. She sees this project as an offering, a demonstration that homeless women have been productive and may be productive again. In practical terms, showing their resumes may even gain them jobs. And seeing their work histories writ large provides a sense of accomplishment. "They're impressed with themselves," said Sandrow.

Sandrow joined WAC in its salad days. "I was feeling isolated and WAC was life-giving," she said. When Sandrow asked WAC to work in coalition with her project, she found a small but loyal band eager to share their talent with women on the margins. As for the shelter women, Sandrow said, "They are us and we are them. The differences are a matter of education and luck." And making visual investigations together, sharing friendship and dreams can blur differences.

"Being an artist is a luxury and mak-

"I can survive on the street."

"I know what church will give me
a hot meal.
I know where to go to keep
warm and dry.
I know where to get clothes.
I know a place to get cleaned up at.

But, I know I can't live on the
street because
MEN RAPE ME."

ing political art and taking on hot topics isn't enough. There's a moral obligation to work with your community."

Five years ago, she set out to bring art to homeless women and children in New York City shelters. Armed with paint and paper and an energetic idealism, she went into a shelter in New York City's Chinatown. Using art to build bridges between us and them, Sandrow said, helped heal her own wounds.

Sandrow's fervor comes as much from her gut as from the goodness of her heart. Born into a middle class, Jewish family in the Midwest, Sandrow just turned 40. She talks frankly about the rape and sexual abuse she suffered as a young woman. Two years ago

when her work was destroyed in an accident she fled, distraught, to the shelter. Despite the dirt and overcrowding where "it wasn't safe to walk the halls," Sandrow recalls feeling safe there. In that unlikely haven she "understood how powerlessness felt."

Sandrow also claims that working with shelter residents has renewed her. "Creating collaboratively, giving them the resources, teaching them what I know has helped to heal me."

And what about the women in the shelter, most of whom Sandrow believes have suffered some sexual abuse or rape? She proudly details the fruits of their work. Even more than stunning visual representations, their work—the self-portraits and wall installation; assemblages of faces; the "Armory Venus," a group-effort representation of a goddess capable of granting wishes and fertility to believers—is giving them a louder voice. "How can we find solutions if we don't know what they need. We're giving them a vocabulary both verbal and visual." ▲

The art show will open on February 26, 6-8 pm, and remain through April 4 at the Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand Street, NYC (212) 598-0400. For information about the Artist's Homeless Collaboration call call Hope Sandrow (212) 215-4177.