

Volume XCV Number 17 November 20, 1989

# BARNARD BULLETIN



## Women Mobilize to Save Their Lives

*See Photo Essay, pages 12-13*

◆  
Articles on Third World  
Women Donated to Center  
for Research on Women

◆  
Students Protest Cardinal  
O'Connors' Support of  
Operation Rescue

◆  
SGA and Administration  
Institute Measures To  
Improve Campus Security

# NOTES FROM SGA

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In light of recent incidents, security has become the hot issue on campus. Numerous efforts on the part of various administrators and students hopefully will yield positive and safe results. These efforts include a meeting among President Futter, other administrators and the New York City Police Commissioner, as well as a meeting of SEAS Chair Christine Albertelli, Barnard SGA President Leora Joseph, CC Council Chair Jeff Rake, CU Senior Vice President Mullinix and Barnard Vice President Ginsburg to discuss student concerns. Here is a summarized up to date list of the things discussed at these meetings.

**LIGHTING:** Two "lighting" walks will be conducted by CU and BC administrators and students. These 1AM walking tours of campus will determine which areas of campus are dark and need added lighting. We can hope to see the addition of new lamp posts within the next two weeks. In addition, cameras and yellow security phones will be added.

**PUBLICITY:** Publicity in the form of flyers notifying students about recent neighborhood and campus crimes will be used more effectively. **PAY ATTENTION TO THE RED ALERT BOARDS LOCATED ON CAMPUS.** In addition, results of arrests for these crimes will also be better publicized. It is important for us to remember that arrests are made for these crimes and that we are not living in a "vacuum" of repeated criminal incidents.

**POLICE:** As a direct result of President Futter and others administrators' meeting with the NYPD Police Commissioner, we should be seeing increased foot patrol by police officers between the hours of 8AM and midnight. Between midnight

and 8AM the police sector car will be paying closer attention to the campus area. In addition, they are investigating the possibility of having additional foot patrol in the campus area during the weekends. CU Vice President Mullinix and BC Vice President Ginsburg assured us that there is a firm commitment on part of the police department.

**SECURITY:** Students requested the addition of more security booths and security officers. Each additional booth costs approximately \$150,000, but this request is still high on the list of student demands. What also has been proposed is a student security service. The students would be trained by the the police auxiliary and is strongly recommended by the 26th precinct. The service would be different than the Escort system because it's job would be primarily one of patrolling the campus. There are inherent risks in this proposal and its feasibility would be determined by student response. Interested Barnard students should contact Barnard SGA President Leora Joseph for more information.

**FORUM:** On November 28 at 7:30PM in the John Jay lounge there will be a forum on student concerns about security. This forum was organized by CC Senior Class President Paulette Light and BC Vice President for Student Government Lisa Rotmil. At the forum students will present their concerns to administrators and members of the New York City Police department. **ALL ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND.** In addition, it has been suggested that a series of workshops and forums be held to teach us how to better protect ourselves from harassment and assault.

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# FROM THE EDITOR

## BARNARD BULLETIN

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The Barnard Bulletin is published on Mondays throughout the academic year. Letters to the editor are due in our office by 5pm the Wednesday preceding publication. Opinions expressed in the Bulletin are those of the authors, and not necessarily of Barnard College.

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Stay tuned for the December 4 issue, a joint venture by the old and the new.

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Correction: An article on the Rover in the November 13 issue of Bulletin lacked a byline. The authors were Edie Terrell and Tamara Cohen. Bulletin regrets the error.

*Heterosexism*  
continued from page 10

what you are then saying about your sexuality.

Beyond the worry of uncomfortable situations, sometimes naming ourselves is not a safe choice to make. The incidence of violence against gays and lesbians (and those perceived to be gay or lesbian) has increased dramatically in the past few years. So which is worse: remaining silent and invisible and hopefully "passing" as heterosexual, or "coming out" to a potentially homophobic, emotionally and physically abusive world?

While this is an undeniable conflict, often it is our own fear of getting hurt — emotionally or physically — that inhibits us from speaking out, thereby perpetuating the narrowness of our sexual choices. Although some of our fears are grounded in reality, we cannot allow them to paralyze us. We must judge when it is safe to call people on their heterosexist omissions, and when we must put our personal safety above raising the consciousness of others not ready or willing to change. In the end, we must speak out against homophobia and heterosexism as much as we can, or these forces will keep us silenced, and hatred will continue to spread to the next generation. ♦

*Diana Miller is a Barnard College senior.*

*Homophobia*  
continued from page 11

the aid of our internalized homophobia in the attempt to divide us. When a group of women work together, they pose a threat; yet often they are stopped dead in their tracks by being accused of being lesbians. Not only does lesbian baiting imply that the presence of lesbians within an organization discredits its work, but it plays upon our internalized homophobia in the hope that our fear and shame of being labelled lesbians will silence us. How sad that one word carries such destructive power when wielded by those in our society whom it threatens, while for others, it signifies loving, caring relationships between women as equals.

Within the women's community of Barnard, we must address and combat homophobia in ourselves and in our sisters, for the threat is not only to lesbians

and bisexual women, but to all of us who, as women, care for other women. On our campus, homophobia presents itself in many ways. Our public relations efforts, brochures and other admissions information stress our identity as a single-sex college within a larger coeducational university. Nothing at Barnard promotes the lasting friendships among women that act as sources of comfort and support during our undergraduate years and beyond as enthusiastically as these brochures promote our ties to a larger coeducational institution. Why can we not claim our heritage as an educational institution for women, rather than expending all of our energy justifying ourselves by focusing on our coeducational atmosphere?

Institutionalized homophobia renders Barnard's identity as a women's college

fraught with hypocrisy, at great cost to our integrity. Rather than falling prey to its "divide and conquer" tactics, we need to focus our efforts on recognizing and combatting homophobia in our midst. u  
*Eliza Randall is a Barnard College junior.*

# Sometimes you are what you don't eat.



## Think fast November 16.

Don't eat a thing on the Thursday before Thanksgiving. Then join the six million Americans who, since 1973, have mailed us the money they saved to support our life-saving projects. You'll not only learn what it's like to go hungry. You'll know how good it feels to help those who are. Please write "Fast for a World Harvest," 115 Broadway, Dept. 4000, Boston, MA 02116. Or call for more information (617) 482-1211.

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## Barnard Students Rally Outside St. Patrick's

New York City residents, including a number of Barnard College students, protested Cardinal O'Connor's recent statement in support of the efforts of Operation Rescue, by rallying across the street from St. Patrick's Cathedral, one of the largest congregations under Cardinal O'Connor's jurisdiction.

The 30-40 protesters stood on 51 St. and 5 Ave. on Sunday, November 12 and sang protest songs as they waited for Sunday Mass to end. As the worshippers exited the cathedral, the protesters shouted chants such as "Not the church, not the state, women must decide their fate," "Get your rosaries off our ovaries," and "Cardinal O'Connor off our bodies."

No More Nice Girls, a feminist group whose goal is to secure abortion rights for all women, organized the rally, which was one of many rallies across the country held in conjunction with the Mobilization for Women's Lives in Washington D.C.

There was one counter demonstrator and a number of disapproving comments, but many exiting worshippers also showed support for the rally. Some gave the thumbs-up sign and one man donated eight cups of coffee to the rally.

No More Nice Girls was founded ten years ago in support of abortion rights. According to the protestors, No More Nice Girl members carried signs in-

tended to convey the connection between a woman's right to a safe, legal abortion and freedom for women — especially in terms of sexuality. One sign read "Sex is Fun."

Members of No More Nice Girls carried pink signs with black writing and dressed completely in black with their shirts stuffed in front to give the image of being pregnant. They also draped their bodies with chains. The unified dress and posters created an aesthetically cohesive rally, making more forceful statement, according to participants in the rally. Other rally participants were asked to dress in black. ♦

— Mirja Pitkin

## Mass Turnout for Barnard's French Revolution Conference

Over 300 alumnae and current members of the Barnard College community pre-registered to hear their peers and professors speak at "The French Revolution: Background and Impact" conference held at Barnard last Friday and Saturday, November 17-18.

French Department Chair Serge Gavronsky, who helped organized the conference, said the number of people who attended was "amazing, much more than we ever expected. [The conference] generated unsuspected interest."

The conference, held in conjunction with Barnard's Centennial, gave students a chance to hear their professors lecture on subjects "they thought their professors knew nothing about," said Gavronsky.

"As Barnard hits its 100th anniversary, we remember the major event in history that happened 200 years ago," said Gavronsky. "It lends a kind of historical sobriety to be recalling the past" on these two landmark occasions, Gavronsky remarked.

According to Gavronsky, the conference's purpose was to rethink "what preceded the Revolution" and what happened during the French Revolution, as well as to review "observations as to its impact once it ended."

The conference consisted primarily of lectures providing background information on the French Revolution, tracing the Revolution's effect on the arts, sciences and literature, and examining the resulting ideological changes' impact on society.

One film shown, *1789*, highlighted the significance of the French Revolution's impact on modern day thought. In addition, on November 18, nine students performed Gavronsky's play, *The Life and Death of the Monster Queen* — a new interpretation "of Queen as woman rather than as foreigner or sex object," said Gavronsky. ♦

— Renana Meyers

## Alum. Donates Collection to Center for Research on Women

— by Jennet Chin

Founding member of the Women's International Resource Exchange (WIRE) and Barnard College alumna Bobbye Ortiz has donated her collection of articles, documenting the experiences of women in the Third World, to Barnard's Center for Research on Women.

Ortiz, who attended Barnard in 1936, said that she donated her collection to the Center for Research on Women

because she has "great respect for the work of the center." Her donation consists of articles she reproduced from Third World journals collected by WIRE, articles she collected on her own, and articles sent to her by other women.

According to Ortiz, many of the articles document women's movements in countries such as El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile, Honduras and Guatemala. There are also some articles on the experiences of women in South Africa, said Ortiz. The topics of the articles range from "women trying to survive in places like Chile under a dictatorship" to battered women to women in countries amidst a civil war.

"We have a collection of articles on church women in Latin America. We have articles on women in work places [documenting] the problems of working under conditions that don't take into account their specific problems as women, such as lack of daycare or lack of pregnancy leave," Ortiz said.

Ortiz and a number of other women founded WIRE in 1979 because "not many women [in the United States] knew what the situation of women was in Third World nations — the

problems they face, as well as what they were doing to confront them. They assumed that the women's movement existed only in the U.S. and European countries. We felt there were certain

links between the U.S. and Third World countries."

From 1974-1979, before the birth of WIRE, many of its founders, including Ortiz, belonged to an organization called Action for Women in Chile from 1974-1979. According to Ortiz, during that time women made up 24% of the people arrested in Chile.

"They were tortured, including sexual torture and rape. If

you were a woman in the United States, it became your responsibility to concern yourself and express solidarity," said Ortiz.

When Action for Women in Chile folded in 1979, Ortiz and other members of the group formed WIRE.

"We felt just working around women in Chile was not sufficient. So we included all Third



Courtesy of Grace Goldin

*The topics of the articles range from "women trying to survive in places like Chile under a dictatorship" to battered women in Latin America.*

World countries," she said.

The Center for Research on Women held a reception in honor of Ortiz last Thursday, November 16.

# SGA and Administration Rush To Improve Campus Security

— by Sara B. Ivry

Student Government Association (SGA) President Leora Joseph (BC '90) announced at the November 17 Rep Council meeting that both SGA and the administration are taking measures to ensure better security at Barnard.

According to Joseph, Barnard College President Ellen Futter and members of the New York Police Department (NYPD) have met to discuss security issues.

Joseph herself met with Columbia College President Jeff Rake (CC '90), Senior Vice President of Columbia University Joseph Mullinix, and Vice President for Finance and Administration Sigmund Ginsburg on November 14 to discuss ways to improve campus security.

Administrators and security officials, said Joseph, will be conducting "lighting walks" at Barnard and Columbia to determine what areas of the campus are poorly lit so that more fixtures can be installed. Other measures being taken include installing more security cameras and more yellow emergency phones.

An additional security measure, recommended by the 26th Police Precinct, is a student patrol system that would monitor the campus by foot. The precinct also said they will assign more foot patrol to the area outside the university between the hours of 8AM and midnight and a squad car will be on call between midnight and 8AM.

In addition, SGA Vice President of

Student Government Lisa Rotmil (BC '90) announced that Columbia College Senior Class President Paulette Light (CC '90) has organized a panel, "Demand a Safe Campus," to be held on November 28 in John Jay lounge. According to Joseph, students have drafted a list of demands regarding campus security that they will present at the panel.



BULLETIN/Kate Zimmerman

## SGA Executive Board

The demands include more immediate campus publicity of security incidents, better lighting, and more yellow emergency phones around campus.

Present at the panel will be university administrators as well as crime prevention officers and a representative from the NYPD, all of whom will answer students' questions and discuss what actions students should take in case of emergencies. Joseph also said that there will be educational forums regarding crime prevention.

## Alterations in Tri-Partite Committee Bylaws

Rep Council approved the implementation of new bylaws for tri-partite

committees at Barnard. According to Rotmil, the bylaws, drawn up by SGA Vice President of Student Activities Jennifer Cowan (BC '90), needed revision because a number of unofficial changes needed to be made official. The bylaws have not been revised since 1974, she added.

"What went on in 1974 has very little to do with what goes on in 1989," said Rotmil.

Primary revisions included striking several tripartite committees which were no longer functional and officially instituting 14 committees that were formed sometime after 1974. Fourteen standing committees, including Honor Board and the Committee on Instruction, were recognized by the adoption of these bylaws.

The purpose of the new bylaws, according to a paragraph included in the revised document, is to "further cooperation and mutual understanding among students, faculty, and administrators of Barnard College," and to "promote student participation in the governance of the College."

The newly instituted bylaws contain rules outlining the composition and objective of each committee.

## Project Help

Representative-at-Large Lisa Gersten (BC '90), a member of Project Help and the representative in charge of exploring the possibility of on-site childcare at

*continued on page 14*

## No Matter How Diverse We All Have A Right to Choose

— by Michelle Auerbach

*I hoped to see a diverse and passionate crowd making connections among all of the issues for which feminists should be fighting.*

When my alarm went off at 3:45AM this Sunday and I actually got out of bed, I realized the strength of my political beliefs. I understood the need for people to organize and go to Washington D.C. en masse; the Supreme Court, President Bush, the country, and the world need to see that hundreds of thousands of Americans believe that women should have control over their bodies — from abortion to sterilization abuse to lesbian and gay parenting. But putting my beliefs into action by joining the rally involved both overcoming a need for sleep and weighing certain reservations. My decision to go became a test of the strength of my convictions.

In addition to losing sleep, I was wary of the impact a well-supported rally would have on the National Organization of Women (NOW), which has a history of racist, classist, and homophobic attitudes. NOW sponsored the event so the voices of middle-class whites would automatically be heard, but I feared that I wouldn't hear the voices of the women most threatened by the restrictions on our reproductive rights. Yet, feeling the urgency of fighting for women's freedom and hoping that after years of reflection this organization could foster an inclusive atmosphere despite its history, I decided to take the NOW bus to mobilize for women's lives.

Though I was determined to make the best of the situation, the atmosphere on the NOW bus validated some of my fears. Out of fifty people there were only two women of color and one of them came with me. Hoping to find a more diverse group of people, my friend and I left the group to experience the demonstration.

At the site of the demonstration/rally I wandered around watching the people, something was wrong. The homogeneity that made me apprehensive on the bus existed here, too. Though I did see one Latina woman with a bullhorn discussing the effects of abortion legislation on women of color, the crowd was comprised predominantly of middle class and upper-middle class whites. While I am hopeful that many women of color did attend the march, it felt racially homogeneous to me. I wondered how this demonstration met the threat all women face — although often in different forms — as others try to claim control of our bodies.

My sense of the exclusive character of the march stemmed

also from the apparent absence of gay men and lesbian women as a group. It seemed that participants weren't making connections between curtailing the rights of lesbians and gay men and restricting women's reproductive freedom. When I finally saw a lesbian couple walking by, a group of teenage girls near me started to giggle after reading their t-shirts, which pictured two women kissing below the words "Read My Lips." The teenagers proceeded to grimace, to make horrible vomiting noises, and to yell, "Oh, Gross!" Feeling extremely uncomfortable as I looked down at my silence=death button, I clung to my friend's hand as we walked away.

Finally, I left the rally halfway through and went to DuPont Circle in search of Lambda Rising, a famous D.C. gay and lesbian bookstore. I experienced tremendous relief as the African-American woman behind the counter smiled at my silence=death button. It was here that I found a place to explore the issues that interested me — reproductive rights, AIDS, sterilization abuse, and lesbian and gay parenting. These issues are connected in my mind, but they were slighted at the rally.

I went down the street with my books to find something to eat and to reflect upon all of the conflicting feelings I was having concerning this day in Washington. Having noticed that I was reading a book about AIDS, the waiter in the cafe I found embarked on a discussion with me about problems in our government, medical care in America, and our social service system. We discussed how all the groups affected by the racist, classist, homophobic, misogynist, bigoted, or simply callous legislation and atmosphere in this country should work together more often.

I realized then what got me up when my suite-mates were just going to sleep. It was the hope that I would see a diverse and passionate crowd making connections among all of the issues for which feminists should be fighting. I didn't leave Washington with the best feelings about the rally. I did, however, gain an enhanced understanding of the importance of fighting for reproductive freedom and for all the other freedoms that women, lesbians, gay men, people of color and poor people are denied in this supposedly free country. ◆

Michelle Auerbach is a Barnard College senior.



# Feminist Tradition Isn't Written in Stone

— by Tamara Cohen

As I left the Mayflower Hotel in Washington D.C. on Sunday morning — the last day of the “Feminist Futures Conference” — not much was clear. I went to the conference with great expectations. Along with other concerned women in their twenties, I intended to draw up a game-plan for reforming America, so that my daughter could live in a feminist society free of sexism, racism, anti-semitism and homophobia. Instead, with no definite game-plan in sight after two days, I felt exhausted and frustrated. Yet, at the same time the conference invigorated and empowered me.

The sight of the subway filling up with people carrying banners and wearing pins, raising their voices for choice, filled me with a sense of unity. But the angry voices of women at the final session of the conference filled me with questions about the nature of the movement, the motivation of the people with whom I was standing, and the uncertainty of our power to produce change.

The conference challenged me to broaden my perception of family, examine the reasons behind my goals for the future and confront the reality of institutionalized racism, sexism and homophobia. But more than anything else it demonstrated to me that my definitions of “choice” and of feminism differ from other women's as much as my experiences as a woman do. Nonetheless, standing in front of the TV cameras of America, each personal voice would be lost and all would be heard together — a picture of unity that is both the source of every stereotype that exists about “the

feminist” and the source of our power.

The “Feminist Futures Conference,” “by and about women in their twenties” attempted to achieve something that has long been absent in the feminist move-



ment — diversity. For the first time on a national level, the participants and the speakers resembled the population of young women in the United States. The organizers of the conference made a conscious attempt to create a space for all women — women of color and white women (all colors and all whites), poor women and wealthy women, urban, suburban and rural women, lesbian, bisexual and straight women, women of every religion and every ethnicity, abled women, disabled women and differently abled women. The fact that we were all present made the conference all the more difficult, but ultimately all the more important.

As part of a group that sees its goals as

the eradication of sexism, racism and homophobia, newcomers to the feminist movement might imagine that within our walls, all live in peace and total acceptance, celebrating diversity. The anger expressed at the conference — by Jewish women who felt that their presence and their agenda were ignored, by African-American women who felt tired of the ingrained institutionalized racism still present at the conference, and by lesbians who felt silenced by the videotaping of the forums — pushed us forward in the effort to create the community newcomers expect to find. For the first time we had the chance to yell at each other and it hurt, but it had to happen.

In the discussions about the expansion of the term choice, the need to bring feminism to the work place, and the political concerns facing feminists in the next decade, older and younger generation feminists hoped to address common issues and share their experiences. In the process, the older feminists hoped to “hand over the torch” of feminist leadership to the younger generation.

Almost ironically, these older women who dealt with their parents two decades ago by running away from them and by overturning everything that their mothers held as sacred, now want to share their stories, their insights, their experiences with us before peacefully placing the movement in our care. These very women who know so well the meaning of healthy rebellion and the need for change seemed to need a reminder to listen as well as advise, failing to understand that a movement such as feminism couldn't simply be “handed over.”

*continued on page 14*

Homophobia and Heterosexism: Working Separately and Together to Control Our Sexuality

— by Diana Miller

— by Eliza Randall

Detecting homophobia does not take much skill: hearing the words "fag" and "dyke" in a derogatory manner usually is enough to give most people a good idea of the hatred involved, even without knowing the term "homophobia." Heterosexism, however, is not only a less common term, but it is also less easily identifiable.

While homophobia is the blatant expression of anger or hatred towards gay, lesbian or bisexual people, heterosexism is the denial of homosexual existence by assuming and acting as if everybody were heterosexual. Both homophobia and heterosexism can be silencing and repressive for gays, lesbians and bisexuals. And though we cannot rank their detrimental effects, these forms of oppression need to be examined separately since they are expressed in different ways and may call for different means of confrontation.

While homophobic actions and words express a negative feeling towards gays, heterosexism renders them invisible altogether. Heterosexism works to isolate you before you fully come to terms with your sexuality, making you feel alone in your homosexual desires and thereby discouraging you from exploring these feelings. For people who already have become more comfortable with their sexuality, heterosexist assumptions are simply infuriating. Almost nothing feels worse than having somebody think you are someone who you are not, subjecting your self-definition to their confining terms.

Consider these two examples of blatant heterosexism: a French teacher tells her Barnard students to write about their "dream man" and an acting teacher tells her class to bring their "friends and boyfriends" to a play! Questionnaires that

ask if you are either married or single also illustrate heterosexism: whether pertaining to a same-sex couple or to a heterosexual couple, this question is not inclusive of relationships that are not socially and legally recognized. The question of our "marital status" not only assumes that marriage is an option for us (same-sex couples cannot get married in the U.S.), but also assumes that these categories accurately describe the forms of all people's relationships.

Yet people are not usually aware of the heterosexism inherent in these situ-

◆  
*Heterosexism works to isolate you before you fully come to terms with your sexuality, making you feel alone in your homosexual desires and thereby discouraging you from exploring these feelings.*  
◆

ations. Those who identify heterosexism usually are people who experience it in their daily lives, as an attack against their own identities and against their freedom to define their own sexuality. Gay, lesbian and bisexual people, as well as others who have questioned their sexuality and have developed a sense of empathy

and political awareness of the importance of this freedom of self-definition are to a great extent alone in their knowledge of heterosexism. Only a small self-selected group in society recognize the oppression of heterosexism, making it difficult, although all the more necessary, to appeal to a larger segment of society to confront their own heterosexism.

Heterosexism then is not only the oppression of invisibility, but the issue of heterosexism itself is invisible. Most people are not familiar with the word itself, nor with what it means — a most obvious sign of its invisibility. Because heterosexism goes unnoticed by a large part of society, confronting it as a compelling social issue presents a difficult challenge — we need to name heterosexism in order to destroy it. As overwhelming as this may seem, it is auspicious that the very process of pointing out heterosexism simultaneously fights it by making the invisible visible. By naming this oppression whenever we experience it, we diffuse the power that heterosexism holds over our identities.

Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. When my grandmother and her friends ask me if I have met any nice boys at Columbia, I get a little perturbed, but I do not say, "Grammie, did it ever occur to you that I might be checking out the girls?" (although at times I find saying this hard to resist). Battling heterosexism often involves putting yourself on the line. Many of the situations in which heterosexism becomes evident involve personal questions about romantic interests and relationships. To question someone's omission or denial of homosexual existence in these situations immediately puts the focus on you and

*continued on page 4*

Homophobia, on the most basic level, demeans intimate relationships among people of the same sex. It commonly takes the form of derogatory comments and/or physical violence against gays, lesbians and bisexuals. The negative stigma attached to homosexuality that perpetuates these acts also inhibits any form of intimacy or commitment among people of the same sex, as the threat of being "accused" of being gay is often too great. For women, homophobia tries to confine our emotional and sexual commitments only to men, limiting the energy we invest in other women and the political and social power we can have in uniting as women.

Homophobia strikes deep into women's relationships. In keeping with society's sexism, which dehumanizes women as only sexual objects, lesbian relationships are thought of in purely sexual terms. According to one standard definition, lesbianism is women's sexual desire for and/or erotic activity with other women, and generally, when people speak of lesbianism, they refer only to a woman's sexual preference. By defining lesbian relationships only in sexual terms, homophobia denies women the integrity of meaningful and fulfilling emotional connections with other women.

In reality, lesbianism signifies much beyond this limited realm of physical desire. It is not merely who we go to bed with that determines whether we are straight or gay. One can be gay and celibate, just as one can be straight and celibate. It is for this reason that many lesbians prefer the term "affectional preference" rather than the usual "sexual preference," for it is far more inclusive of the many ways in which women relate to one another.

Moreover, grouping us by our "sexual preference" locks women into narrow categories, limiting our ability to define all aspects of our identities by and for ourselves. Society assumes we are heterosexual, until we choose to be lesbian. Heterosexuality is never a choice? By categorizing us as either gay or straight and by restricting our understanding of these terms to our sexual behavior, homophobia denies the bonding among women that is so basic to most women's

mon ground is perceived as so dangerous that lesbianism must be reduced to nothing more than a genital act?

In addition to society's official definition of lesbians as women who have sex with other women, society holds another underlying and value-laden definition — a lesbian is a woman who doesn't follow the rules. She is woman-identified, she doesn't rely upon men, economically or sexually, and she is assumed therefore — however illogically — to be "against men."

That women-identified women exist, independent of men and outside of conventional gender roles, is scary to many who cling to traditional societal structures. According to our sexist society, a real woman is emotional, irrational, spiritually and morally "pure," biologically determined, incapable, dependent, physically weak, and most of all welcoming of the greater wisdom and power held by men. But many women today do not fulfill this stereotype — we exercise our independence, fight for our rights, live our lives as we define them, demand equal pay, say "no" to violence, assert ourselves, bond with and love the company of our sisters, and assume our rights to our bodies. In doing so, we resist male dominance and control. Homophobia is a tool used by those who have vested interest in the maintenance of this control.

But the force is not merely an external one. As members of this society, we all have internalized homophobia on some level. Thus, we are compelled to fight homophobia that pressures us both from outside and from inside. Homophobia plays upon this conflict, crippling our efforts to work together as women.

Lesbian baiting, for example, exists  
*continued on page 4*

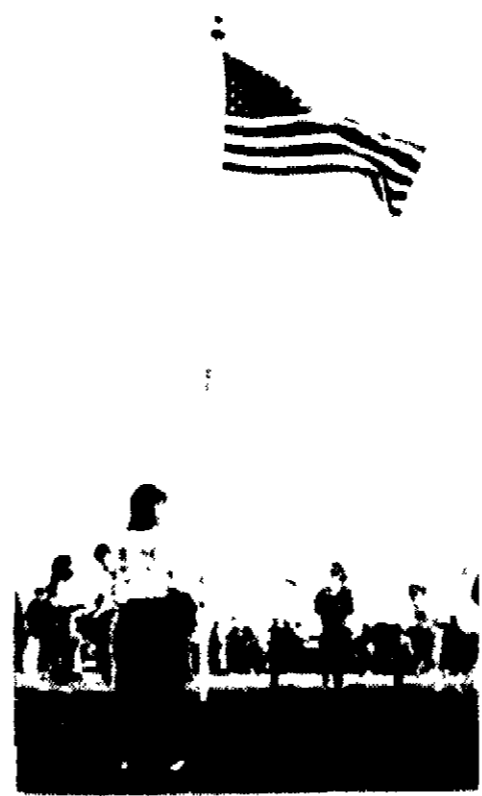
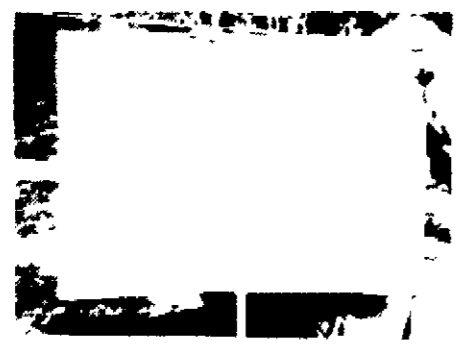
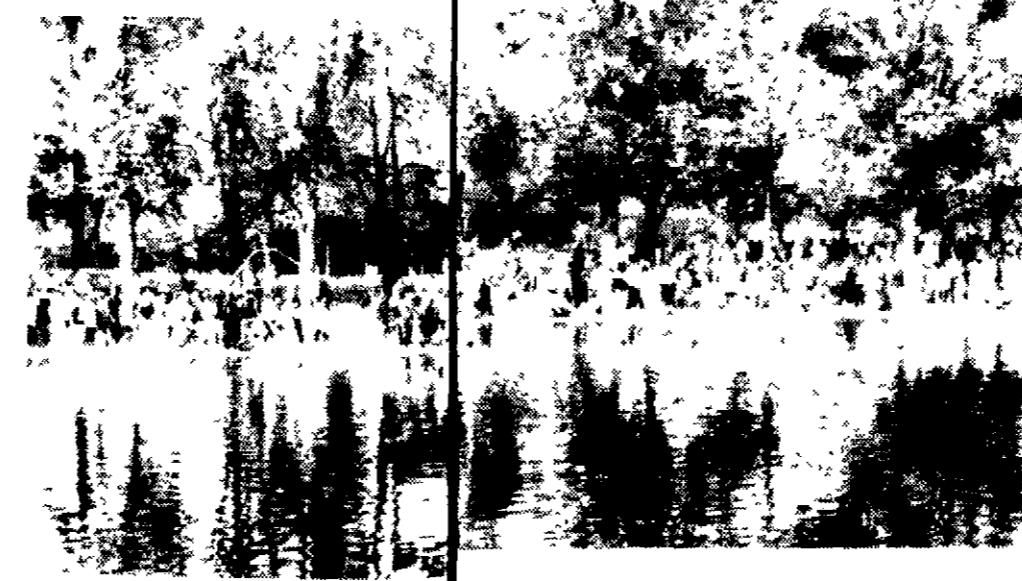
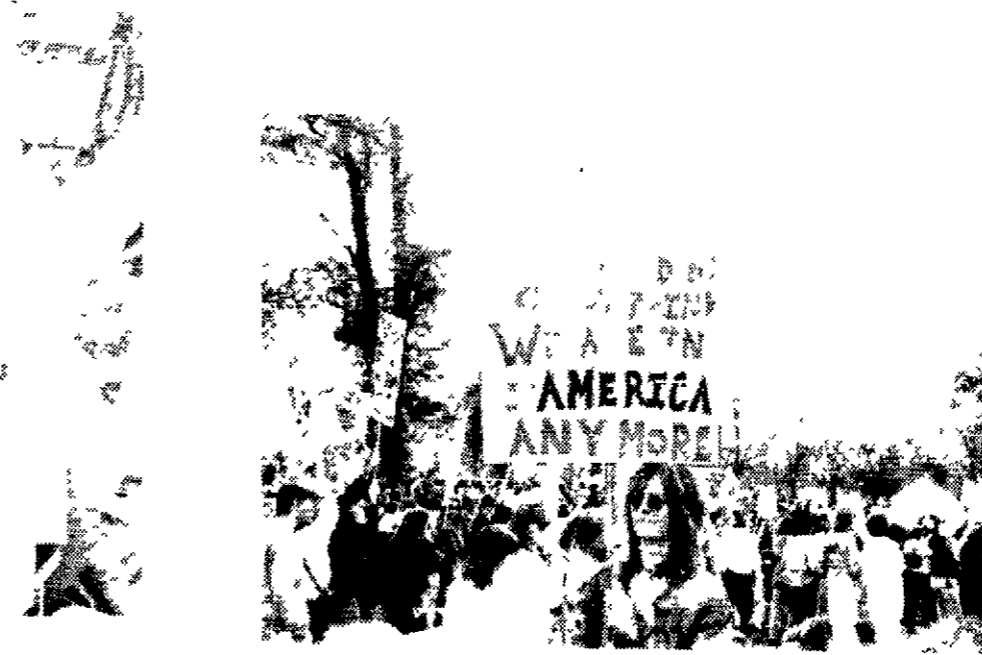
◆  
*For women, homophobia tries to confine our emotional and sexual commitments only to men, limiting the energy we invest in other women and the political and social power we can have in uniting as women.*  
◆

lives, regardless of our "sexual preferences."

Yet the non-sexual aspects of lesbian existence are rarely acknowledged in an open or positive way. Could it be that the potential for women finding com-

# PHOTO ESSAY

— by Kate Zimmerman



Special thanks to Micki Fagan, Kate Gallagher, Hilary Krosney, Michelle Widlitz and Cindy Yoon.

## Rep Council

continued from page 7

Barnard, announced that the Union Theological Seminary (UTS) has invited Barnard to participate in a daycare program it currently establishing.

UTS would offer a limited number of spaces to children of Barnard affiliates in return for a yet undetermined sum of money paid by Barnard to UTS to help establish this program, said Gersten. However, she added that the joint venture would serve only as an interim solution to Barnard's lack of daycare.

Currently neither Barnard College nor Columbia University offer any kind of daycare program. Teachers College (TC) is the only school within the University that offers any such program, Gersten said.

The main problem in establishing a daycare program, said Gersten, is finding space and resources. She said that local programs, like the one run by Bank Street College, cost parents \$8,000 a year.

"The only solution is if the university pools its resources and makes an honest effort to bring daycare to the university," she said.

## Future Feminists

continued from page 9

ather, it must mature and be altered by the younger generation to fit our redefinitions of feminism and our goals.

While the problems addressed in the issue seminars (topics ranged from the changing definitions of family, to changing the canon, to dealing with the mommy track and the social history of feminism in America) and the skills taught (coalition building, grassroots organization, campus organizing..) were valuable, the majority of the conference was devoted to their agenda not ours. Too much time was spent listening to things we've heard before and not enough time was allocated to discussion of the real issues that divide and unite us. For many of the participants, the conference only really began at the final session when the floor was opened to us.

Thus, the conference ended just as it was really beginning. While some felt frustrated that no tangible product had emerged from the conference (no game plan for my daughter's world) most felt that we weren't ready to take that step and the realization of that fact was enough. To the reporters and talk show hosts who wanted ten words of commentary on "Is Feminism Dead?" we may have been difficult to deal with, but that was the point. Our message to the press would have to be that as women we refused to be averaged into a neat number. Let the world look at us and see something complex. We cannot tell you what the "number one problem in America is today." We are not a tabloid to be enjoyed and thrown away. We will

## Other Business

Representative-at-Large Diana Miller (BC '90), a member of the National Clearinghouse on Harassment Committee, announced that the clearinghouse has sent questionnaires to newspaper editors, student council presidents and women's centers at 100 colleges.

The questionnaire includes questions on incidents of harassment on their campuses, administrative policies to combat such incidents, and student networks instituted in response to incidents. According to Miller, Columbia College Council Chair Jeff Rake (CC '90), who organized the clearinghouse, will compile the responses and redistribute them to the colleges.

In addition, Rotmil said that Student Services Liaison Sara Bucholtz (BC '91) and Columbia College Liaison Leah Leeder (BC '91) will be abroad next semester leaving seats they were elected to last semester vacant.. SGA will fill these positions by appointment. ♦

not be categorized as and devalued in to a single issue.

So we didn't end with a nice ceremony, a salutary, an empty-worded speech followed by polite applause. We finished the day leaving lots of messy loose ends and unexplored discussions. But as each of us ripped out a scrap of paper from our notebooks to jot down our names and addresses for the new young feminist network we hope to create, I wondered if maybe feeling empowered to take action ourselves is what a women's conference is all about. If I did not leave the conference with a game plan I did leave with the strength and direction that one who has such dreams needs to persevere. ♦

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## Extending Freedom of Choice to the Arts

—by Liz Bingham and Tamara Cohen

A neatly wrapped package of this past week's events might bear the label "Freedom of Choice". East Germans, for the first time since the beginning of the Cold War, are rediscovering the choice of where and how they want to live. In mayoral and gubernatorial races throughout the United States, the American public is finally taking a strong stand on another fundamental freedom of choice: the right of a woman to govern her own body. Yet, this spirit of hope is absent from the arts world, in which, it seems, choices are narrowing rapidly.

During the summer of 1989, unwittingly and seemingly without warning, the art world found itself making headlines for days on end. The National Endowment of the Arts and many of the artists it supports were suddenly stringently under attack. The cancellation of an exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs scheduled to be shown at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., sparked reactions from every corner of society. But even the recent withdrawal of funding for a show dealing with art and AIDS, "Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing" at the Arts Space in New York seems to have been tacitly accepted by the silence of society. The American public has been slow to react to its rude awakening to the changing realities of arts funding in the country. Religious fundamentalists and conservative politicians have always raised their voices against art they term "blasphemous" and "perverted". The difference is that now they are asserting their power to convert opinion into law.

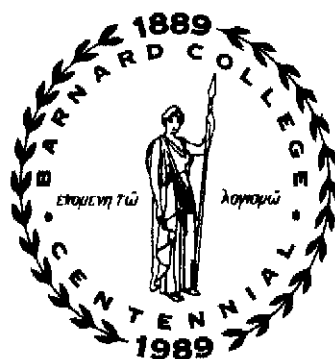
The right-wing tirade came to its fruition with the introduction of the Helms' Bill. It sought to bar federal art funds from being used to "promote, disseminate or produce obscene or indecent

materials" - defined by the Senator as "including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, heroeraticism, the exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sexual acts; or material which denegrates the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or non-religion." The right wingers attempted to define the issue, not as one of artistic or creative freedom, but according to Senator D'Amato, as a "question of whether American taxpayers should be forced to support...trash". D'Amato's melodramatic destruction on the Senate floor of a catalogue which included a reproduction of Andres Serrano's photograph "Piss Christ" and Representative Dick Armey's denunciations of "morally reprehensible trash" are only two examples of the lack of respect which individual creative expression was dealt with behind Congress' walls. Patrick Buchanan, in his *Washington Times* column lashed out against the "tiny clique, out of touch with America's traditional values, (who) has wormed its way into control of the arts beaureacracy", demanding that, "... As with our rivers and lakes, we need to clean up our culture."

The responses of the arts community to this conservative barrage, varied in nuance and strategy but were strongly united against this attempted censorship - the strongest possible threat to a group of people whose lives and work stems from their freedom to choose any images they want to represent and help them convey their personal expression. This "tiny clique" heard the shrill voice of the right-wing not as an isolated random outburst of moral yahoo-ism in the effort to dictate the means and object of "acceptable" art, but part of a systematic political program of censorship. Whether in support of or against the specific NEA

grants in question, no American artist would ever support the prospect of the NEA's destruction. (The agency which is often the deciding factor in an artist's or art organization's survival is the sole supporter of many art schools, theatre and dance companies, as well as rural folk artists and craftsmen). The end of the NEA, which has already suffered great financial losses in the Reagan years, or the adoption of the Helms' restrictions would lead directly to the repression of art that has no other means of economic patronage. Forced to conform to the personal taste of certain influential wealthy white men, the artist, whose life is the embodiment of the very notion of individual creative expression, would be robbed of his soul.

One of the most effective responses to Helms et al. was a recent exhibition at the Wessel O'Connor gallery in New York, entitled "To Probe and To Push: Artists of Provocation". Rather than yelling back and reverting to the same rhetoric as their enemies, the decision made by presenting such an exhibition is to let the art speak in its own defense. Each of the ten artists represented in the exhibition, ranging from Andy Warhol to Cindy Sherman, Mike Bidlo and Felix Gonzales-Torres, is an artist who has had to learn how to function and continue to create under the current threatening atmosphere. And each has chosen to use his/her work to address the specific questions of the changing definitions of art and obscenity and the freedom to use provocative imagery. Each of the ten works is intentionally socially relevant, and thus implicitly political. As such they constitute a resounding rebuttal to the would-be censors. ♦



THE CENTENNIAL CHAIR LECTURE SERIES  
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Self, Time and Object in  
American Art:  
Copley, Lane and Homer

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Wednesday, November 29, 1989  
4:00 p.m.

The James Room, 4th Floor, Barnard Hall  
Barnard College  
Broadway and 117th Street

Champagne reception to follow.  
Admission is free and everyone is welcome.

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