



Lauren Weil

## IN OUR OWN WRITE

### washington area women's center

## NOVEMBER '77

# U of M's WOMEN'S CENTER fighting institutional sexism

After a summer and fall semester without funds, the women who staff the U. of Md. Women's Center are awaiting a decision from the Student Government Association (SGA) as to whether they will be funded for the Spring '78 semester.

Despite obvious attempts by the student government to squelch the Women's Center, the Center lives on. Since its beginnings in 1970-71, the Center has been alternately funded and denied funding. It seems it must continually fight to prove itself to student government as a fundable and needed student organization.

During the Spring of '77 the Center was funded by the SGA with a budget of approximately \$3,000. During that semester the Center sponsored a number of projects/events as a service to the campus and community. Among them were: Women's Week, which included forums on the ERA, Abortion Rights, Lesbianism, a Willie Tyson concert and films and poetry readings; a Telephone Referral Service; a Women's Library; protests against a campus wet t-shirt contest; and several forums on women's issues.

Despite these accomplishments (or, should I say, because of them) the Center was not funded by the SGA in the Summer of 1977. When informed of the SGA decision, thirty women went to ask the SGA treasurer why. The treasurer said funding was dropped because the women's center was discriminating against men by not allowing them membership. The women said they would open membership to men if necessary. They were informed that they could

petition for funding at a special budget hearing.

Originally planned for August, the hearing did not materialize until October. In the meantime, the Women's Center's phone was removed from their office, rendering their referral service and communications defunct. At the budget hearing, none of the financial committee members had read the proposed budget beforehand, and were thus poorly prepared to consider it. The committee demanded that the women prioritize their already scant \$3,000 budget request for possible cuts. On Tuesday, October 18th (after this issue goes to print) the male-dominated student legislature will vote on the approval or disapproval of the Women's Center's budget.

So far, no women's group on the U. of Md. campus has been funded for the fall semester. A women's crisis hotline had been formed, but they were without office space or phones. The Women's Center offered to share their very small office space with the hotline. When the hotline moved in they waited two and a half months for the SGA to install a phone, and when it was finally put in, Louis Luna (SGA president) stipulated that under no circumstances was the Women's Center staff to use that phone. The campus has also recently dissolved the librarian position at the library's Women's Information Center.

Despite the budget hassles, the Women's Center has begun investigating the athletics department as to alleged non-compliance with

(cont'd on back page)

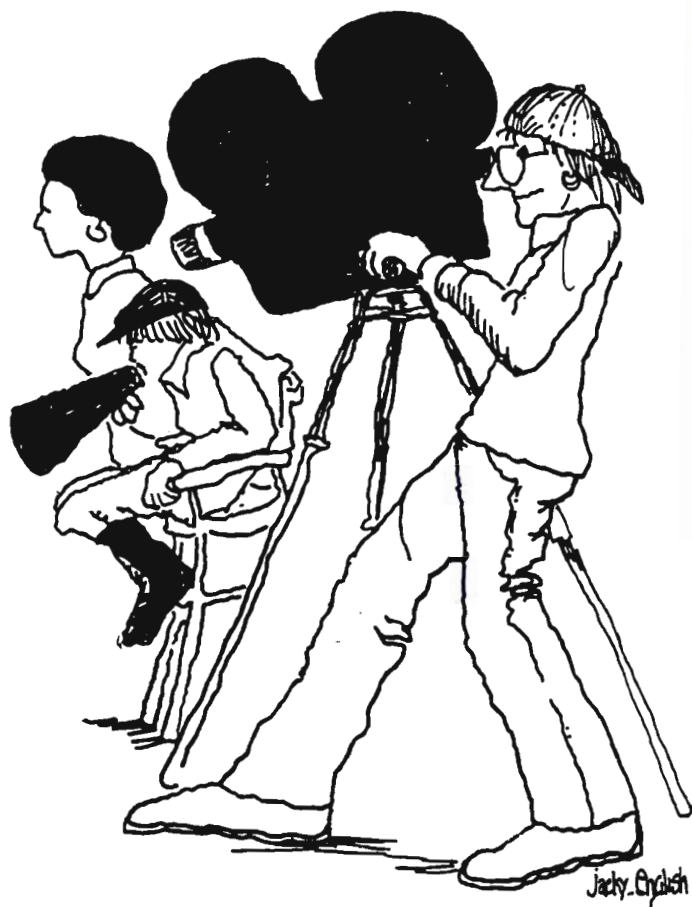
# ARIELIGHTS

Ariel, a spirit of light and air, a character in Shakespeare's "Tempest"--is the name four women have chosen for their lighting design collective. Lighting design is often described as "painting with light;" but they feel it's more than that--that the subtle use of light can change the air, can create feelings and moods, and give a certain atmosphere to settings and performers.

Terry Updegrave, Betsy Toth, Robin Cocking, and Pam Horner joined together 1½ years ago to formally incorporate Arielights as a non-profit organization, although they worked together informally for about 2-3 years before this. Many of their first jobs were for women's events; working for little or no pay, they provided lighting for the first concerts 3 or 4 years ago--Meg Christian, Cris Williamson, Willie Tyson, Casse Culver--in Back Alley Theater, St. Marks Church, and Marvin Theater. Feeling the need and importance of women's events, they fulfill an important function that is mutually supportive. They ask for 12½% of the gross income, which puts their fee on a sliding scale. Usually spending 12-14 hours at one concert gig, they consider \$25 apiece for 2-3 women to be average pay (\$2 or less an hour). They have a contract with the Folger Shakespeare Library, which pays \$25-\$50 for a one-person gig. Their newest contract is with the Folger Theater Group for whom they provide the lighting for each production. They are presently hiring a good number of outside women for this.

Besides their work at Folger, Arielights has designed and installed lighting systems at the Company, Inc., and designed the lighting system for the overseas training division of the U.S. Information Agency. They emphasize hiring and training women; they hired 4 inexperienced women for their present crew at Folger. Betsy has taught five or six workshops in lighting mechanics and lighting design in the last several years, as part of the WAFT (Washington Area Feminist Theater) educational program. About 30 women have attended their workshops--some are now working at Folger or in other theaters; many are working as volunteers. Arielights is hoping to have similar workshops in the future.

All four women in the group studied theatrical lighting in high school or college, and Terry is presently taking an electronics course to help her in repairing their equipment. All of them have worked in the theater for several years, doing different kinds of technical work, and some acting. They met each other while working with WAFT, and are all employed in professional theater now. The group generally works collectively, being aware of each other's knowledge. They are paid the same for their work in the group. They own their stock of lighting



equipment for concerts; a certain amount of each concert fee is put into an equipment fund. Future plans and visions include getting a van for the equipment, expanding into a theatrical lighting supply house to rent out equipment to other groups, being entirely self-supportive for several women, and being able to go on road tours. Obstacles they face are the usuals--time (theatrical work is very demanding) and money. Of course, Arielights' future depends to a great degree on the future of women's concerts and similar events in this area. The group can be reached by calling the Folger Theater office at 547-3230 and leaving a message for Betsy.

--sue lorentz

## IMPRESSIONS OF RAPE SPEAK OUT

A woman lies numbed on the floor of her own home. She screams in anguish; she struggles sobbing to her feet and begins to go through the preliminary stages of putting herself together: alone. She remembers the easy advice repeated over and over: "Call the police." Automatically she dials the number, but when the critical moment arrives, the time to say it and identify herself, she slams the receiver down.

She calls a best friend, a sister, and, having obtained a promise to come by, she takes stock. She recognizes for the first time the physical as well as the psychological damage. She regards the outward evidence, blood and semen, with disgust, as if her body has betrayed her. Climax: she takes her first action, to "clean up", to wash away the evidence from her own eyes and greatly diminish the already slim chance that her violator will ever be caught or convicted.

This was "The Aftermath," a powerful short play created and performed by Mardi Rigdon of the Washington Area Feminist Theater, and it opened "Rape Speak Out," a day of workshops sponsored on September 24 by the Washington Area Women's Center and Womanspace of George Washington University. The fourth floor of G.W.'s Marvin Center was alive with discussions, films and demonstrations presented by various area groups concerned with rape and attended by about 100 women and several men.

"The Aftermath" brought the reality of rape home to the women present on the deepest emotional level. Those who had never been sexually assaulted participated to some extent in the experience of those who had, in the paralysis, the horror, the shame, and the anger. Comfortable intellectual detachment was impossible. I attended several workshops and listened to women talking in the hallways, and the immediate possibility of rape infused the words of every speaker.

That possibility made the martial arts demonstration and the workshop on "Street Techniques of Self Defense" the best-attended sessions of the day. The teachers and students of different levels who demonstrated the art of Ja Shin Do (see photo at right) impressed those present with their grace, strength, and mental and physical confidence.



"smashing myths" bck

below: "Mental Survival" workshop



bck

Two detectives from the Metropolitan Police Department's sex crimes unit presented slide shows on preventive measures to take at home and on the street. Sitting in on this workshop, I realized again how important it is that we see rape and sexual abuse in their political context, lest the burden continue to be laid on the woman to protect herself, rather than on the society to ensure her safety. Participants in this discussion freely pointed out the drawbacks of the official approach, and the officers seemed willing to learn what they could do about the woman's perceptions and experiences of sexual assault.

Less impressive was the intrusion of television cameras into several afternoon workshops. While the conference organizers were pleased by the media attention, all present were disconcerted by light meters shoved into their faces and heavy equipment in the middle of a discussion group, blocking views and inhibiting interaction. It was suggested that the (all-male) crew paid an inordinate amount of attention to male participants, but part of the problem was surely that its late arrival caused it to miss the most visually exciting presentations of the day, the self-defense workshop and the WAFT play.

This matter of media must be considered whenever the feminist community sponsors events like the Rape Speak Out. We need coverage in order to reach those beyond the Washington area women's community, but we must depend on the sensitivity and goodwill of male-controlled outlets and predominately male crews. Within these inherent limits, Rape Speak Out received well-deserved favorable treatment on the evening news: spot interviews with attending women emphasized the issues raised and the success of the day in bringing women together to learn and teach the most effective ways to deal with rape and the threat of rape.

-- Susanna Sturgis

# AT THE CENTER

## Lesbian History Seminar

Have you ever wondered what your life as a woman-loving woman might have been like if you had been born in 1790, or 1840, or even 1890? Are you tired of only reading about the Gertrude Steins of our history, who were born with the advantages of wealth and/or talent? Do you ever wonder how you could discover something about the more typical lesbians in history: the women shopkeepers, farmers, missionaries, teachers, factory workers, etc.? In an attempt to begin answering these questions, WAWC is offering a six-week seminar in Lesbian History, which will also show you how to continue historical research on your own (or as a group) after the class is finished.

Beginning Thursday, November 10th, the class will run through December 15, Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 PM. Since the class size will be limited to 20 members, you must pre-register (first come, first served) at the Women's Center before the class begins. This limitation will allow all of us a chance to participate and discuss each week's topic. Please, do not sign up if you don't think you will have time or the inclination to keep up with the readings for the class (average weekly reading time: one hour, sometimes two). A charge of \$3.00 will be collected to cover the cost of reproducing a bibliography and several xeroxed articles.

The class will focus on the history of single women in America, female relationships in the 19th century, ways in which our history has been hidden from us, and of course, specific unpublished diaries, letters, and manuscripts of previously unknown lesbians. The seminar will be led by Judith Schwarz, a historian and writer doing research at the Library of Congress in Lesbian history. The class is based (loosely) upon a similar one she led at San Jose State University's Women's Center, San Jose, California.

The two textbooks used in the class are Jonathan Katz's *Gay American History* and *Lesbian Lives*, edited by Gene Damon and Collette Reid. Both books are available at Lammas. The Women's Center will also have a copy of each book in their library on reserve. Neither book is exactly right for this class, but unless (until) we write another, they are as close to perfect as we can get.

## Q's Nite Out

Carol Anne Douglas read some poems from her new book, *Loving Women is Dangerous*, at the October 1st Literary Women's Nite Out. Carol Anne's poems included the title poem from the book as well as others about lovers, friends, politics, job hunting, lesbianism and feminism. Her introductory comments to the poems added to her reading. Wendy Stevens became the first repeat performer, but this time reading a short story. Her style, as well as the theme of the story—sharing an evening meal with a young neighbor girl, and all the feelings and flashbacks to her youth, invoked a lot of similar responses in the audience. There was a new version of scrabble among the crowd, allowing the use of proper names of women!

The next Women's Nite Out will be held November 19, 8:30 PM, at the Women's Center. Sara Cohen, a Washington dancer and teacher whose choreography centers on women's issues, will perform a duet with Shelly Fineman about women friendship, and a solo called "Going About My Business." Robin Halprin, accompanied by Ginny Klein, will do her interpretation of folk and women's music.

The charge at the door is \$1.00 for members and \$1.50 for non-members. For further information call 347-5078.



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## Sports

If you are interested in playing volleyball, basketball, or badminton, call the Center and leave your name and number.

## Art on the Wall

During the month of November, the Washington Area Women's Center is sponsoring a two-woman exhibit of sculpture, drawings and paintings by Renee Weitzner-Wolfe and Sudie Rakusin. It promises to be a most exciting show.

Renee says, "The purpose of my art is to interpret my experiences, thoughts and feelings. My sculptural style is eclectic in nature, using realistic images as well as abstract forms and fantasy. As an artist, I want to project warmth and vitality in my sculpture. The process by which I try to achieve these ends, similar to papier-mache, uses resin-coated fabric stretched over a chicken-wire armature covered with cellulose clay. The piece is then painted and varnished."

About her paintings and drawings, Sudie explains, "All that I experience, explore and ponder gets sifted through my art. I appreciate the symbology and iconography of the Renaissance-Northern and Italian—and am working at creating my own symbols and deities. I paint women because they are more beautiful to me than any other living form. I paint other things, too, but women are glorified and reign in my hierarchy."

Exhibit hours are 2pm-9pm, Mon., Tues., and Thurs. and 5pm-9pm Wednesdays. This is one show you won't want to miss!

**ATTENTION WOMEN ARTISTS!!!** If you're a sculptor, leather designer, photographer, painter, potter, putzer or any other crafts/artswoman, and you're interested in displaying your work at the Center, please call us and leave your name and phone # - shows for 1978 are being scheduled now. We have space for just about anything you do.



## Rap Group

Topics for November in our weekly Monday night RAP GROUP are:

- 7 - Feminist: To Be Or Not To Be
- 14 - Women Working
- 21 - Friends
- 28 - The Lesbian Community in Washington

Meetings are open to all women and begin in the Center lounge at 8:00 PM.

## Women Working in Groups

The purpose of this workshop is to offer women working in groups an opportunity to reflect on their experiences in an effort to better understand how these groups function.

Over and over again within the women's movement women have elected to organize work and study groups in collective rather than hierarchical fashion. Is this simply a rejection of a traditional "male model" or do women choose collective life out of a deeper experience that has to do with women's own uniqueness. How do issues of authority, difference, division of labor and decision-making get handled in a "leaderless" group vs. a group with a designated person in authority? What are the advantages and disadvantages of collective vs. hierarchical organization? These are some of the questions which will be covered in this workshop.

The workshop will run over three consecutive Wednesday evenings: Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and Dec. 14 at 7:30-9:30 PM. Fee for the workshop is \$10 per person. Enrollment is unlimited.



## Library

**WANTED:** Donations of books, money, newspaper and magazine subscriptions for the Women's Center library. All donations are tax exempt (our tax exempt number is 8030-13393-06). Send your contribution to:

The Washington Area Women's Center  
Summer School Basement, 17th & M Sts. NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
For suggestions call the Center library at 347-5078.

## Two Year Celebration

Many members of the community turned out on October 16th to join the Center's staff and volunteers in celebrating two years in the same location. With newly painted walls, and rearranged library and meeting spaces, the Center has taken on a new look, and the crowd helped initiate the renovations. Munchies, including a special WAWC cake and champagne, along with good conversation, soft lights and a mellow time by all made a cool Sunday afternoon in DC a pleasant one.

# s m t w t f s

## November

Women's Center Open House, All Women, once a month, D.C., 347-5078.  
Lilli's Open House, Lesbian, every Wednesday, Arlington, 671-3762.  
Women's Center Rap Group, All Women, every Monday 8pm, D.C., 347-5078.

Art on Wall Features Renée Weitzner-Walke + Sudie Rakusin sculpture + oils		1.	2. Women Working in Groups 7:30-9:30 How To Start Your Own Business - Getting Credit 7:30-9:00	Los Angeles 3. Feminist Health Political Education Tour	4. Meg Christian + Teresa Trull Ontario Theater 4th Annual Lesbian Writers Conference	5. "In the best interest of children" 8pm. Wilson Center Adelphi Center "Creating Our Selves" Los Angeles & Hospital Tour.
6. Contabria sponsors sign language 4-6pm.	7. WAWC- 8pm. rap group Feminist: To Be or Not To Be. Consumer Hospital Tour	8.	9. Women Working in Groups 7:30-9:30	10. Emerging & in Management Workshop Lesbian Herstory Seminar- WAWC 7:30-9:30	11. _____ Party for Quest Woman's Story 7:00 P.M.	12. Berkeley & Collective Wilson Center. 8pm
13. Karen Silkwood Memorial Day 544-8200	14. WAWC- 8pm. rap group "Women Working" 8pm.	15. New Volunteers Meeting 7:30	16. Women Working in Groups 7:30-9:30	17. _____ Lesbian Herstory Seminar- WAWC 7:30-9:30	18. Nat. Iwuy Conf. 332-6497 Women's Story 7:00 P.M.	19. & Nite Out women's Music Iwuy Continues
20. Iwuy Continues	21. WAWC- 8pm. rap group "Friends" Iwuy Continues	22.	23. Women Working in Groups 7:30-9:30	24.	25. _____ Woman's Story 7:00 P.M.	26.
27.	28. WAWC- 8pm. rap group "Lesbian Community in Washington."	29.	30. Women Working in Groups 7:30-9:30 How to Start Your Own Business Bid On Contracts 7:30-9:30			

# Announcements !

## meetings and workshops

NATIONAL IWY CONFERENCE will be held Nov. 18-21 in Houston, Texas. For further details call Lexi Freeman at 332-6497 (home) or 293-1347 (work).

### LOS ANGELES FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER calendar of events:

- Nov. 3 - Political Education Tour designed to do power structure research. Bus will leave P St. Station (across from the Washington-Hilton) at noon and travel to govt. agencies. Local women are invited. Call Lainie at 483-0333.
- Nov. 5 - Presentation on Consumer Inspection of Hospitals. Time and place to be announced.
- Nov. 7 - Tour/inspection of area hospitals. Call Suzy Townsend at 265-0865.

THE WOMEN'S CENTER AND REFERRAL SERVICE of Adelphi, Maryland is sponsoring an all day workshop for women titled "Creating Our Selves" on Saturday, Nov. 5th. Workshop topics will include: Assertiveness Training, Self-esteem, Problems of Aging, Women in Marital Stress, Coping with Depression and Anger, and Creative Movement. Cost: \$6.50 (includes continental breakfast, lunch and musical entertainment at noon. For more info call YES-5265.

"The Emerging Woman in Management" workshop/course will be given Nov. 10(4:00pm-9:00pm), Nov. 11(8:30am-4:30pm), and Nov. 12(8:30am-4:30pm) at the Ramada Inn at Tyson's Corner. For more details call facilitators Aileen Lipton (948-8454) and Sally Turner (272-7967).

"How to Start Your Own Business" free seminars will be held at SNB-Women's Headquarters, 6921 Arlington Road, Bethesda, Md. from 7:30 to 9:00 pm. Topics: Nov. 2-How to Obtain Credit/ A Banker's Viewpoint, Nov. 30-How to Bid on Govt. Contracts. No registration necessary.

QUEST: A FEMINIST QUARTERLY will hold a "Race, Class and Culture" discussion seminar on Tuesday, Nov. 29, 8 PM, at the Public Resource Center, 1747 Conn. Ave. NW on the 3rd floor. The subject for this seminar will focus on the inter-relationships of political development and culture, with particular emphasis on the issues of class and race. Authors Bev Fisher and Cynthia Washington will be present to facilitate the discussion. We hold these seminars to give feminists in the D.C. area community an opportunity to exchange their views about subjects raised in Quest articles. We hope to see you there!

THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH NETWORK, an activist organization concerned with women's health issues, will have an open meeting Wednesday, Nov. 9th at 7:30 PM at All Soul's Church, 16th & Harvard Sts. NW. Agenda will include the Network's participation in a lawsuit against the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Assn.; the development of the Network's Women's Health Clearinghouse in D.C.; and Network action in coalition with other women's and health groups. Members and non-members welcome. For more information, call Judy Lipshutz at 362-6383 or Anne Kasper at 656-4963.

P STREET PAPERWORKS, 1734 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D. C. 20008, is offering workshops: monthly photosilkscreen classes, workspace for experienced silkscreeners, weekly life-drawing from model. A large front room is available for meetings, lectures, poetry readings, film showings, etc. For more info call 797-9264 (10-5pm)

THE 4TH ANNUAL LESBIAN WRITERS CONFERENCE will be held Nov. 11-13 in Chicago. Speakers include Alma Routsing (pseud. Isabel Miller) who wrote Patience and Sarah, Barbara Grier, Valerie Taylor and others. For details contact Womanpress, Box 59330, Chicago, IL 60645.

EARTH UNION Women's Theater will offer a second workshop performance sometime in Nov. They are also beginning work on a new piece- a musical, and are looking for an Administrative Asst., a Tour/Booking Manager and a Stage Manager. Call 667-3785, keep trying. New workshops will be forming in Nov.: The Acting Process, Improvisation, Scene Study, Characterisation and Mask-Making.

DC AREA FEMINIST ALLIANCE will meet Nov. 15 at the Women's Center. For more details call 332-6497 or 293-1347.

## N.O.W.

ERA RALLY: November 5th in Alexandria. Contact Carol Pudliner-Sweeney at 379-2869.

### Capitol Hill NOW:

- 2 Nov.- IWY Feminist slate, vital for those going to Houston. Call Mary Jo 554-9452.
- 6 Nov.- ERA film (regular chapter meeting). Call 548-8075 (eves.), ask for Kim.
- 4 Dec.- Chapter meeting: Crime. Call Julie at 547-6133 (eves.).

## U of Md - continued

Title IX prohibitions of sex discrimination. As in most colleges, the women's sports programs received much lower funds than the men's sports programs. An open forum on this issue is planned by the Center before the semester is over.

Projects planned for the Spring '78 semester (if funding comes through) are: forums on Violence Against Women and Self-Protection; Speakers on Abortion Rights, the ERA, Battered Women (Del Martin) Women in Music, Women and Mental Health (Phyllis Chesler), Women in Prison; Women's concerts with Teresa Trull and Mary Watkins; and films on abortion, women's health, release from prison and street harassment.

If you wish to lend support to the U. of Md. Women's Center or wish information about upcoming events and services, call Frances Patton at 270-9159.

(See the next issue of IN OUR OWN WRITE for an update of the U. of Md. Women's Center funding)

**IN OUR OWN WRITE** is the monthly newsletter of the Washington Area Women's Center. Contributions for the next issue are due by Nov. 15. Please send them to NEWSLETTER, Washington Area Women's Center, Summer School, 17th and M Sts., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. This newsletter is brought to you by: Susanna Sturgis, Chris Lundberg, Sue Lorentz, Toni White, Wendy Chick, Anne Runyan, Bentley Kennedy, Beth Karbe (photos), Lois Bull, and Tina Lumson (printer). The Women's Center does not necessarily support opinions expressed in articles, announcements, or inserts.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS, under contract with the Dept. of Transportation, is actively seeking out, locating, and registering women-owned firms for contract opportunities with the nation's railroads. For further info contact Juanita Weaver or Carol Raykowski at 338-4321.

## announcements cont'd

### social events

CANTOBRIA presents A Fall Wommin's Cultural Series:

Nov. 3 - Community Workshop

Nov. 4 - Meg Christian and Teresa Trull concert, 8pm, Ontario Theater, 1700 Columbia Road., NW.

Nov. 5 - A film "In the Best Interests of the Children" and Concert Lucha, 8pm, at the Wilson Center, 15th and Irving St., N. W.

Nov. 12 - Berkley Women's Music Collective, 8pm, at the Wilson Center.

Dec. 3 - Hysteria, 8pm, First Congregational Church, 945 G St., NW

Free childcare and signing for the deaf. Concert tickets at Lamm's and the Women's Center. One concert-\$5, two concerts-\$9, three concerts-\$12. Film tickets-\$2.50-at Lamm's and Bread & Roses. For childcare reservations, work exchange, or to sponsor tickets for wommin who cannot afford them call 667-2026.

RENT PARTY! Talk, dance and drink--a women's disco will be held Saturday, Nov. 12 from 9 PM on into the night, at 1753 Kilbourne Pl. NW. \$2.00 donation. Free munchies, cash bar with beer, wine and liquor. Quest needs to help defray the costs of rent increase this month. We hope you will come and bring your women friends for a Saturday night alternative to the bars in a safe, women-only environment!

### misc.

KAREN SILKWOOD MEMORIAL DAY will be on Nov. 13. Call Kitty Tucker at 544-8200 for more info.

SOPHIE'S PARLOR broadcasts on FM 89.3 a music show every Tues. 3-7pm and a public affairs show entitled "A Woman's Story" every Fri. evening at 7pm. The Feminist Radio Network handles the public affairs show the last Fri. of every month.

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