

LAST CALL

Dear Members:

The newsletter you are holding is going digital. Yes, the time has come, and perhaps passed, as costs pirouette and soar. These last two issues—Sep/Oct and Nov/Dec—have been bimonthly, as you may have observed. But it was not for lack of something to say!

Starting January 2006, we will return to our monthly schedule, with this difference: our newsletter will be sent free to all members who give us their e-mail addresses. Those who don't have access to a computer or prefer to have a printed copy mailed to them should please send us a \$15 check.

Here's the skinny:

Send your e-mail address to aswann@arhp.org, or mail your \$15 check to Montgomery County NOW, P.O. Box 2301, Rockville MD, 20847-2301.

And Thank You!

An Empty Place at the Table

BY JOSIE WELLS

On October 5, 2005, several members of Montgomery County NOW attended an event at the Kentlands Mansion called "An Empty Place at the Table." This project was originally created by the Women's Resource Center, Inc., of Scranton, Pennsylvania, to recognize the individuality of each victim of domestic violence and to establish a public way for their families to mourn their loss. Members of Montgomery County's domestic violence community have re-created this project and sponsored this event to highlight Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The centerpiece of the event was a dinner table set for victims murdered in Montgomery County. The families donated the place settings, and each setting represented the uniqueness of the individual victims and was a reflection of their lives.

Survivors of domestic violence spoke about their experience and the private roads they took toward recovery.

Mary Elizabeth, one of the survivors, spoke of lessons learned. She reached out to county officials and domestic violence

advocates, giving us an inside perspective on, not only the horrors, but the challenges faced in the days, months, and years following the abuse. She called on all of us to recognize and address some of the enormous economic and legal challenges facing the victims:



© Women's Resource Center, Inc. of Lackawanna County

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We Must Say "No"

Speakers Reject Extreme-Right Sex Ed Curriculum

BY FRAN PORTER

At the community forum at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School on September 25, former Board of Education member David S. Fishback spoke about the recent court settlement to which the Board had agreed. That settlement, in a case brought by two religious right organizations, threw out the proposed new sex education curriculum for Montgomery County schools. He said the attack continues, with the two groups objecting to teaching homosexuality as a choice. This leaves some homosexual children and teens open to dangerous feelings of shame, as well as to ostracism and harassment. Rejecting the idea, Fishback said, "This is not Kansas. In Montgomery County we value all our children."

"A person's sexual attraction cannot be changed at all. There is no data to suggest that," said Dr. Paul A. Wertsch, chair of the American Medical Association's committee on gay and lesbian issues.

Wertsch and Fishback were among the health educators who spoke at the forum sponsored by TeachtheFacts.org, a parent group established to support the education curriculum proposed last year by the county Board of Education. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit were Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum (CRC) and the Virginia-based Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays. Both sides are seeking representation on the new advisory committee that will work with the school system to create a new curriculum.

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MC NOW President's Letter BY JEANNETTE FELDNER

Dear MCNOW Members:

OUR CHAPTER IS HUGE. That's a good thing when you consider that our numbers represent power when fighting for an issue or endorsing candidates for public office. We reach a large number of people in the county when we send out notices of actions, meetings, opinions. However, being a member of such a huge chapter can feel impersonal and intimidating.

During my tenure as MCNOW President, I hope to meet more of you. I'd like to see this large chapter feel like a small town of like-minded people who enjoy getting together. We will provide many opportunities to meet each other, and I hope everyone will pick something to attend this year. For instance:

- **BOARD MEETINGS** are always open to all members. Come and participate in the discussions and decision-making. We may meet at a restaurant for dinner or have a potluck at a member's house. We may have a political forum or meet for a movie and discussion. These are great ways to meet your fellow members and exchange ideas and concerns.
- **ACTIONS** happen. Sometimes they are planned, like our participation in the Anti-War March in September. Sometimes they are spontaneous—you might hear about a protest via our listserv. If you can, please show up and help a cause you feel passionately about while meeting other members who feel the same.
- **TASK FORCES AND COMMITTEES** provide more opportunities to give to your chapter and community, with in-depth focus on issues to develop action plans. Working with like-minded members to make a positive change!

In this newsletter you'll find reports of areas of interest to our chapter. And opportunities to meet and get to know your fellow MCNOW members. I look forward to meeting you this year.

Jeannette Feldner

President

Meet the Veep

Part One: Executive Vice President

Why, we asked Carole Schor, MC NOW's new executive vice president, is she a feminist? For her, feminist awareness arose from personal experiences in education and employment. Carole wrote us:

"Could it be because after getting straight A's in college I was rejected by 16 graduate schools, having been told it was because 'men are better suited to be psychologists'? Could it be because in my first job my boss took me to a meeting and announced, 'I brought something to look at, who brought something to eat?' Could it be because every time I applied for an executive position in an all male group of executives I was asked what I will do to 'fit in,' and asked to assure them that I'm not 'one of those libbers'? But, Carole continued, her awareness extends beyond school and work:

"Could it be because the last time I took my 9-year-old granddaughter to a movie, it was preceded by a commercial for fishing, where the little boy says, 'Take me fishing so we can make some memories,' and the little girl says, 'Take me fishing because I will be married sooner than you think'? Or could it be because of my continuing resentment at how men are allowed by our society to age gracefully while women are steered toward botox and facelifts?"

For Carole, being a feminist is both a professional and personal passion. With a career in human resources, she is in "the unique position of both experiencing the glass ceiling and counseling other women as to how to deal with it." (In the Fortune 50, the largest of the Fortune 500, only two companies have female Chief Human Resource Officers.) Professionally, Carole works as an advocate for work/life balance. Personally, she is proudest of raising her daughters to be financially independent and to be equal partners in their relationships.

As MC NOW's Executive Vice President, Carole Schor plans to offer chapter programs of interest to members and others. In this respect, she welcomes suggestions of topics and speakers that readers would like to see featured.



Violence as Entertainment

BY MARY BAILEY

Let us assume, for the length of this article, that we all agree that the sadistic and sexual violence offered as entertainment today is horrific. Let us further recognize that we feel helpless to do anything about it in face of the First Amendment.

But are we helpless? I suggest you find a copy of "Mayhem" by Sissela Bok (1998). This esteemed philosopher and ethicist addresses one of the serious cultural problems of our time, one she defines in the subtitle as "Violence as Public Entertainment." Although Bok does not specifically mention violence against women in the entertainment media, she doesn't need to, for the argument is on the mark.

The book covers the four negative effects scientists have correlated with viewing violent entertainment: increased aggression, fear, desensitization, and appetite.

Most riveting is Bok's discussion of the psychological aspects frequently involved. Admittedly, today's violent entertainment does not reach the depths once plumbed in public hangings or ancient Roman games, but its vicious scenes still evoke in audiences a similar deep and visceral thrill. We cannot dismiss such depictions as just make-believe, she says, because the imagination knows no barrier between the real and the not real.

It is a disturbing truth that people can be thrilled by watching mayhem. But it must also be noted that the thrill comes at the expense of pity. How does one arrive at such pitilessness? You would think that human empathy would recoil at the sight of others being mutilated, tortured and killed. And so it does, in small children and people who have not been exposed to violence or who resist watching violent shows.

Bok offers explanations. For some people, violent entertainment provides excitement and a sense of power from watching the infliction of pain. There is no place for the empathy to be experienced when viewing war news on TV or reading an Agatha Christie murder mystery. Instead, death is treated humorously ("Pulp Fiction") and pain with deadly earnestness ("A Nightmare on Elm Street," "Scream").

For other viewers, seeing the power and terror and excitement is a way to toughen themselves, to learn to "take" the violence they see without flinching.

But there are still others with a more troublesome agenda. These are the viewers who want to watch torture and murder

1. ***Insist that the nation fully recognize the problem of violent entertainment***
2. ***Debate the issue before the public, taking into account all the evidence and counter-evidence***
3. ***Choose the most viable solution***
4. ***Implement the solution decided upon***

Each of these four steps must be complete and deliberate in order to forestall another premature, uncritical closure.

without emotion so as to experience a more refined "aestheticism." They have learned to deaden feelings of pity or grief in order to stimulate certain sensory and intellectual appetites. They seek a "heightened appreciation for the artistry, creativity, and ingenuity" with which works of violent entertainment "convey the beauty and poetry of killing and mutilation."

Disturbing as these insights are, it is difficult for us to get a handle on the problem of violent entertainment. For one thing, it is argued that absolute proof of harm is lacking. Furthermore, attempts to prove harm are beside the point, since reining in violent shows is censorship and runs counter to the First Amendment. Finally, it is said that the time for debate has past because the issue has been rendered moot by the uncontrollable nature of modern technology.

But, says Bok, the above arguments set too high a threshold for the criticism of entertainment violence. Demanding that critics pinpoint exactly how such programming affects people is unrealistic. How can we ever delve into the past and trace the specific shows that contributed to a particular person's aggressive behavior? We don't demand such absolutism from efforts to curtail smoking, although tobacco companies would love it if we did.

As for censorship, Bok writes that framing the issue "as solely about censorship is not only inaccurate but damaging to the very values the First Amendment seeks to protect." It also makes it easier to dismiss protections established by liberal democracies such as Canada, Norway, and Sweden just because "they don't have the First Amendment."

Furthermore, it is not too late for debate. Such an attitude prematurely closes creative new responses to violence as public entertainment.

Fundamentalists and First Amendment absolutists are similar, Bok says, in that one group thinks ridding the culture of media violence overrides any constitutional claims, while the other sees "no sacrifice too great" in defense of the First Amendment. "In both cases," she writes, "advocates hold their views as established articles of faith, whether religious or political, and as established beyond question in determinative texts such as the Bible and the U.S. Constitution."

Refusal to debate the issue in a serious, scientific and ethical way has resulted in a turning away from the issue and even paralysis on the part of the general public, Bok notes. Holding aloof is especially prevalent in the press.

The press uses the First Amendment as a way to avoid criticism of any kind of media, including violence as entertainment. We must keep in mind that the media are giant conglomerates now. (Even the Washington Post owns six TV stations and a cable system covering 19 states.) Therefore, from the highest ranks on down, there is a tendency on the part of the press to cover the effects of media violence in a cursory, superficial way,

(continued on page 4)

How it Was NOVEMBER (1850 – 1899)

- 1 National Woman's Health Association of America is chartered in Philadelphia, 1890.
- 2 Elizabeth Cady Stanton tries to vote in general elections in New Jersey, but an inspector puts his hand over the ballot box and says, "Oh no, madam. Only men are allowed to vote." So Elizabeth puts the ballot in his hand, 1881.
- 7 Marie Sklodowska Curie, discoverer of radioactivity and the first person to win two Nobel prizes, in physics and chemistry, born, 1867.
- 15 Territory of Washington votes to give women the vote and Abigail Scott Duniway telegraphs the news to her paper in Portland, which announces the news to the world, 1883.
- 17 Sojourner Truth teaches freed slave women at a Freedman's Village how to make the most of their new liberty, 1864.
- 19 Arrested for voting in an election by the U.S. Deputy Marshall, Susan B. Anthony boards a bus and tells the driver, "I am traveling at the expense of the government. This gentleman is escorting me to jail. Ask him for my fare," 1872.
- 27 Democrat William Bright introduces the suffrage bill in Wyoming, reminding his fellow legislators that if they vote suffrage to women it would show the world that Democrats are more liberal than Republicans, 1869.
- 30 Anna Ella Carroll, unrewarded military genius, presents her map and written plans, which were to lead to the Union victory, to Lincoln's Secretary of War, 1861.

No Justice in These Halls

BY FRAN PORTER

On Tuesday, September 27, in the marble halls of the Prince George's County Circuit Court-house, a 12-year-old boy wept as he said to the sheriff's deputy, "I won't go with him. I'll run away if you make me go home with him."

Judge Herman Dawson had ordered, again, that the child be returned to the father who had abused him and his mother.

The deputy was kind, but he said, "It is my duty; I have to take you to your father. You'll have to go."

"I won't go," said the boy, sobbing more loudly.

It was 30 minutes before a counselor could calm the boy. She gave him her phone number and told him to call her any time he was afraid. The deputy assured him that help would come if he called 911. His mother's lawyer, after speaking with the father, who was waiting down the hall, told him the father had promised not to punish him for refusing to return. After tearful good byes to his mother, the boy was led away.

I've seen this kind of thing on television, but I couldn't believe it really happens here.

The boy's mother was again refused a protective order by Judge Dawson, who exhibited a hostile and sexist attitude toward her and her (female) attorney. He refused to hear the child's testimony; would not allow either the mother or her attorney to speak about the safety of the child; and would not allow a statement from a licensed, clinical social worker to be introduced as evidence.

After the hearing, the mother, distraught, but controlled, told the six of us who were there to support her, that Judge Dawson behaved much better than in the past hearing when he yelled and screamed at her. She felt our presence helped in this regard.

JOIN OUR COURT WATCH

MC NOW, Southern PG County NOW, and MD NOW have joined forces to document the actions of certain judges. Give some time whenever you can to do this important work. Contact Bobbie Walton at 240-777-7983 or bwalton@crosslink.net; Duchy Trachtenberg at duchy@comcast.net; or Fran Porter at francesporter@earthlink.net.

Violence (*cont from page 3*)

and to avoid reporting revenues gained from airing violent programs and ads.

The press sometimes distorts the meaning of the First Amendment, for instance, when the president of the Network Television Association objected to a national "Turn Off the TV Day" in 1992, calling the boycott "an infringement of the networks' First Amendment Rights." Of course, that isn't true, but many people believe it or live in an atmosphere that assumes it is the truth. By calling protests against media violence a form of censorship, Bok says the NTA president (and others like him) "inhibits debate and thus invades the very principle for which [the First Amendment] stands."

Many of us feel helpless to pierce the media's armor against criticism. After all, they control the nation's discourse on social issues. So we tell ourselves that we have to live with it. That has been the media's greatest victory: discouraging us from trying to open a national conversation in a meaningful way. And we know whereof we speak. Have we not written letters, held marches, witnessed congressional hearings? Nothing seems to work. Instead, we face a two-headed monster: either to continue

living with the media's race to the bottom, or witness the faulty reasoning of the extreme right calling it to a halt.

Bok's solution isn't an easy one, but it may be the only way out of the dilemma. She believes we must *insist that the nation fully recognize the problem* of violent entertainment. We must *debate* the issue before the public, taking into account all the evidence and counter-evidence. Then an informed citizenry must *choose* the most viable solution, and *implement* the solution decided upon. Each of these four steps, she cautions, must be complete and deliberate in order to forestall another premature, uncritical closure.

Next time, Bok says, discussion must not be cut off. A civic dialogue such as the one she envisions will raise people's awareness of the problem of violence as public entertainment. From there, fresh answers should come. Bok closes with a quotation from Mohandas Gandhi: "We are constantly astonished at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamed of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of nonviolence."

The above is a commentary and the views expressed are those of the author.

Update on EC Over-the-Counter

On August 26th, then FDA Commissioner, Lester Crawford, issued yet another delay on the over-the-counter (OTC) application for the emergency contraceptive product, Plan B®. Crawford stated that while the science supports OTC access for women over 17, the dual labeling presents problems with enforceability. The main issue is regulatory barriers in having a product available both OTC and as prescription-only, including keeping young women under the age of 16 from obtaining Plan B. The FDA opened a 60-day public comment period in which interested parties may weigh in on the perceived barriers. They gave no timeline for a decision on the application. Many proponents of OTC access to EC were extremely disappointed by another delay and attribute it to politics trumping science.

This delay prompted Susan Wood, PhD, to resign her post as Assistant Commissioner

for Women's Health at the FDA. In a letter to colleagues, Wood states: "I can no longer serve as staff when scientific and clinical evidence, fully evaluated and recommended for approval by the professional staff here, has been overruled. The recent decision announced by the Commissioner about emergency contraception, which continues to limit women's access to a product that would reduce unintended pregnancies and reduce abortions, is contrary to my core commitment to improving and advancing women's health."

In addition, on September 23rd, Lester Crawford resigned his position as FDA Commissioner. Crawford was just confirmed in July amid controversy about the continuous delays of the OTC application of Plan B. Reasons for Crawford's resignation are still unclear.

Empty Place (cont from page 1)

No one cleans the blood and debris from the crime scene, so she was in the unenviable position of having to clean up her own blood after she was released from the hospital. In addition, she pointed out that while help may be available under other county, state, and federal programs for indigent victims, little is available for the survivor who still has economic means. For example, her husband attacked her in her car. The car became evidence in the trial, so she was forced to buy a new car—an expense that challenged her after the loss of her spouse's income, attorney's fees, and medical expenses.

Most profound are the small details that are so frequently overlooked. After the trial,

she received a certified letter stating that her car, the one used as evidence, had been towed to a county impound lot and she was being charged storage fees.

A number of Montgomery County officials attended this event. Unfortunately, the courts were not represented. We should all encourage members of the prosecutor's office, police department, hospital emergency staff, and fire department to attend next year's event. For all those who advocate for the victims of domestic violation and have never personally experienced it, "An Empty Place at the Table" represents a window of opportunity. For victims' families, it represents healing.

Say "No" (cont from page 1)

Most parents support comprehensive sex education in schools. In Montgomery County, parents must give permission, and the great majority does choose to have their children attend sex ed classes in 8th and 10th grades. Nationally, 75 percent of parents want both abstinence and contraception taught. However, there are no dedicated federal funds for comprehensive sex ed, while over \$1 billion goes to abstinence-only programs.

Organizers of the forum showed a seven-minute video that was intended to be part of the curriculum. A young woman asks several teenagers what the best ways are to protect themselves against sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. They respond that refraining from sex or using condoms are best. The young woman discusses choosing condoms and how to use them. She demonstrates by putting one on a cucumber.

How it Was DECEMBER (1850 – 1899)

- 10 Karl Marx writes to a friend, "Social progress can be measured exactly by the social position of the fair sex, the ugly ones included," 1868.
- 14 Minister Antoinette Brown writes her husband-to-be, Samuel Blackwell, about her wishes for their life after marriage: "Only leave me free, as free as you are and as everyone ought to be and it is giving up nothing," 1855.
- 17 Cynthia Parker, who had been captured and adopted by Comanche Indians, is recaptured by her relatives, a band of Texas rangers, 1860. But Ms. Parker, who had married an Indian chieftain, found the reunion unpleasant and constantly tried to escape to rejoin her Indian family.
- 18 Gerrit Smith, wealthy landowner, whose daughter Elizabeth first wore the bloomer dress, writes to Elizabeth Cady Stanton: "So long as [woman] remains in her clothes-prison, she will be dependent and poor," 1853.
- 28 Defending her choice of "The Revolution" as the name for their suffrage journal, Elizabeth Cady Stanton writes to Susan B. Anthony, "A journal called the "Rosebud" might answer for those who with kid gloves and perfumes to lay immortal wreaths on the monuments which in sweat and tears of others have hewn and built; but for us...there is no name like the "Revolution," 1869.

(Selections from the *Liberated Woman's Appointment Calendar, 1972-74*)

Indomitable Molly Yard

NOW members across the country are saddened by the death of Molly Yard, who served as national president from 1987 to 1991. Yard died on September 20, in Pittsburgh, after a life of leadership in the women's and civil rights movements.

Yard was heavily involved in civil rights until 1974, when she joined NOW and later became NOW's national political leader in the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment. In 1987 she was elected NOW president, and under her leadership NOW organized the 1989 March for Women's Lives, at that time the largest march ever held in Washington, D.C., and helped defeat the Supreme Court nomination of Robert Bork. Yard was also instrumental in passing the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988, which reinstated Title IX, the equal educational opportunity law.

In 1991, Yard suffered a stroke and stepped down from NOW leadership. She later recovered and worked with the Feminist Majority on behalf of Title IX. Yard last appeared at the 2000 Feminist Expo reunion for supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment. "Molly worked long and hard for our cause, may she rest in peace," said NOW President Kim Gandy. "Just as she was one of the long-awaited reinforcements for Alice Paul [who gained women the right to vote], so now must we be the reinforcements for Molly Yard."



Elsewhere in the World

ABRIDGED FROM WWW.WOMENSENEWS.ORG

September 25, 2005

Czech Exhibit Shows Ads That Degrade Women

The exhibit, "In Our Faces: Visual Assault on the Streets of Prague," opened in Prague's city hall this month. It includes about 50 large-scale photographs of sexually explicit billboards and magazine covers that pervade the city. One billboard shows a woman's bare behind with several cuts in it, which reads, "'Everyone likes a good spanking.'" The photographs portray not only the ads themselves, but they show passers-by, roller skaters, and children eyeing naked bodies and suggestive captions. The exhibit follows a conference about the links between sexually explicit ads and domestic violence, human trafficking, and the overall lowering of the status of women in society. Branislava Vargova of the domestic-violence support group, ROSA, said men compare their partners to the ideal portrayed on billboards. "We had a case where a man would exhaust his wife by forcing her for hours to assume the positions of the women featured in all the ads," she said. "In another instance, a man beat his wife because he said she did not act as sexy as the women he was now seeing on billboards." Western European pornographic magazines and ads began cropping up in Prague only weeks after the demise of Communism in 1989. At that time, everything from the West seemed to convey freedom, democracy, and tolerance, so social protest did not follow. Women's rights activists say the exhibit provides a chance to talk about a subject that receives little critical attention.

September 26, 2005

Burmese Women Expose Rapes by Military Regime

Women who fled Burma have banded together to expose the military regime's systematic violence against women, including the use of rape as a tool of counter-insurgency. Last week, the Peter Gruber Foundation awarded two groups—Women's League of Burma and Shan Women's Action Network—\$200,000 and the 2005 International Women's Rights Prize. The league is an umbrella organization that gives small groups a larger voice. The Shan network and the Shan Human Rights Foundation jointly

released "License to Rape" in 2002, detailing the incidents of rape since 1996 as part of the military's crackdown on ethnic dissidents. The report found that 25 percent of the rapes resulted in death and 61 percent were gang rapes, with women in some cases detained and repeatedly raped for up to four months. Eighty-three percent of the rapes were committed by officers, and the women who dared speak up were fined, detained, tortured, or even killed. The U.S. State Department sent investigators to Thailand to interview the women. Its fact sheet echoed the women's group's conclusions. The UN also sent an investigator who made a similar initial report and afterwards was denied access to Burma. While in Washington to receive the award, the women met with the city's Burmese community and pushed male activists not to marginalize women's role in the political movement, "so that women's perspectives and women's protection will be put into the policy."

October 21, 2005

Constitutions Give Slow Birth to Female Blocs

Observers say a constitution-based quota of female candidates in countries such as Argentina and Iraq doesn't mean women's issues will take center stage once elections have passed. The practice of forcing parties to include female candidates can lead to male politicians naming wives, sisters and proteges, regardless of their political experience. Argentina sets a quota of 30 percent female representation in congress, but its first generation of elected women has not adequately addressed women's issues. Iraq reserves 25 percent of its parliamentary seats for women, yet political progress for women is overshadowed by issues of basic needs and security. Said one woman, "I'll wear clothes from top to bottom and paint myself black if you give me electricity." Some of the women in Iraq's interim parliament and constitution drafting committee are tokens and not involved in discussion or debate. Said one of two female drafters with a legal background, "We should be very reasonable." Iraqi women have had few opportunities to participate in the political process. "They need practice."

— MB



Maryland laws that went into effect over the summer: The Hate Crimes Penalties Act expands to include crimes based on a victim's sexual orientation. The Murder and Manslaughter of a Viable Fetus Act allows for prosecution if a fetus could survive outside the womb, with exceptions for lawful medical acts. The Sex

Offender Registration Photographs Act requires annual photos of specified sex-offender registrants.

Politico-religious complex. Five years ago, Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Virginia, was founded to train conservative Christian youth at the request of parents seeking a school that regulates dating and congress members wanting a source of interns and staffers. Patrick Henry students sign a statement of faith defining hell as a place where "all who die outside of Christ shall be confined in conscious torment for eternity." The school admits females, over "the objection of some parents," because founder Michael Farris said "[a]ll women, moms included, benefit from a great education." In 2004, the school excused students from class to campaign for George Bush. Majors in its strategic intelligence course can graduate with a security clearance. Of the college's 61 graduates to date, 19 now work in Congress, federal agencies, and the White House. (New Yorker, 7-27-05)

But will it? For the sake of children's health, the American Psychological Association urges the video-game industry to cut back on violence. Video games and interactive media allow perpetrators to go unpunished 73 percent of the time, research shows, and overexposure to violence without consequences "teaches youth that violence

is an effective means of resolving conflict. Whereas, seeing pain and suffering as a consequence can inhibit aggressive behavior." (Wash Post 8-18-05 and 8-22-05)

The Christian right is going through a moral breakdown, according to Ronald J. Sider's "The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience." Studies show a "widespread, blatant disobedience of clear biblical moral demands on the part of people who allegedly are evangelical, born-again Christians." Conservative Protestants are more likely to divorce than the national average; conservative Christian men are more likely than non-Christians to view pornography; evangelical teens are "only a little less" sexually promiscuous than non-evangelical teens; conservative Christians pledging abstinence are as likely as non-pledgers to get sexually transmitted diseases, and wives in traditional marriages are three times more likely to be beaten than those in egalitarian marriages. (UU [Unitarian Universalist] World, Fall 2005)

"Season of Die, Women, Die!" At a TV press tour in Beverly Hills this summer, TV critics questioned programming executives on the fall season's increase in violence against women. When asked about WB's "Supernatural," in which a mother is impaled to a nursery ceiling and then bursts into flames, executive producer Eric Kripke said that "there's kind of this mythic, you know, purity" to it. The CBS team, when asked about "Criminal Minds," which depicts a woman in a cage, her mouth and eyes duct-taped before being raped and murdered, noted that the show's crimes are just based on real ones. When Fox programming chief Peter Ligouri was asked about "Killer Instinct," where a man puts spiders under a woman's door so that they can bite and paralyze her before he rapes and kills her, he replied that "the intent there is

actually to create creative, fun crimes." (Wash Post 9-18-05)

What's good for show biz is good for America. That's been Hollywood's mantra for decades. But the lucrative export of our popular culture is giving the world a wrong picture of America, says Martha Bayles of Boston College and author of an upcoming book on cultural diplomacy. She cites a 2003 congressional report that "Arabs and Muslims are...bombed with American sitcoms, violent films, and other entertainment, much of which distorts the perception of viewers." A 2003 Louisiana State University study of teens in 12 countries concluded that the "depiction of Americans in media content as violent, of American women as sexually immoral and of many Americans engaging in criminal acts has brought many of these 1,313 youthful subjects to hold generally negative attitudes" toward Americans. Censoring is not the solution, says Bayles, because it is not technically possible or politically feasible. Instead, the U.S. "must affirm the crucial importance of free speech in a world that has serious doubts about it, and the best way to do this is to show that freedom is self-correcting." (Wash Post 8-28-05)



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SEP05MCNOW

MC NOW Calendar of Events

Board Meetings will take place on the first or second Monday of each month. All members welcome.
Chapter meetings and action activities are held regularly.

November 2005

- 5 8 pm. NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland's Evening of Chocolate. Glenview Mansion, Rockville Civic Center Park, Rockville. 301-565-4154.
- 7 7 pm. MC NOW Board Meeting, La Madeleine Restaurant, Rockville Pike, Rockville. All MC NOW members invited!

December 2006

December board/chapter meeting time and place TBA. Please contact Jeannette Feldner at lj.feldner@verizon.net or 301-254-8194 if you'd like notification. Will be announced via email, so please contact aswann@arhp.org to get on our email list!

January 2006

- 29 12:30 to 5:45 pm. Montgomery County Commission for Women's 26th Annual Women's Legislative Briefing. National 4-H Conference Center, 7100 Connecticut Ave., Chevy Chase. Info: Tracy Stuger, 240-777-8331 or www.montgomerycounty.md.gov.cfw.

Submissions to Newsletter Welcome.

From NOW On reserves the right to edit submissions for brevity. Ads accepted for nominal fees.

Call 301-236-0069

Email Mary Bailey at braveneworld@starpower.net

Write P.O. Box 2301
Rockville, MD
20847-2301

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE
FOR JANUARY ISSUE:
December 15, 2005**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

A Holiday Gift

By Josie Wells

Every year, my family and friends ask me for a list of items I want for the holidays, and each year this becomes harder and harder. The items I don't buy for myself or want almost always exceed the price they may want to pay.

With this in mind, last year, rather than giving a list of inexpensive items to my family and friends, I asked them to make a contribution in my name to an organization they knew I supported. Several made contributions to chapters of NOW, and some to Planned Parenthood or ProchoiceAmerica (formerly NARAL) or a domestic violence organization. Each of the organizations sent me a card acknowledging my contribution. They were the nicest presents I received.

This year, I encourage members to ask your friends and family to give you a real gift of love this holiday season, and make a donation in your name to our local chapter for the holidays. With so many women's issues and rights threatened, protecting our rights is the most precious gift someone can give us.

So regardless of what holiday you celebrate, ask your family and friends to give you the gift of love and make a donation in your name.

To make a donation to MC NOW, mail your gift to Montgomery County NOW, P.O. Box 2301, Rockville, MD 20847-2301.

And thank you!

