

Attitude is what's wrong with feminist movement



MARYANNE DAWICKI
STAFF COLUMNIST

Recently I attended a luncheon where at least 100 women were present. Of those 100, only one was a woman of color. This fact didn't go unnoticed, in fact it soon became the topic of discussion at my table.

The feminist movement has always been marked by the absence of women of color. While some see it as a problem of recruitment, others see it as a problem that cuts deeper to the heart of the movement itself.

Perhaps the main reason minority women do not join the women's movement is the fear of racism.

In their attempts to incorporate other women into the movement, white women often come off as patronizing and condescending.

When addressing issues of race, group leaders set themselves up as authorities and women of color are made objects; they are made to seem inferior. The non-white woman who stands up and criticizes the nature of the discussion is perceived as "angry" and incapable of having a rational discussion about race.

It may also be the case that the issues framed by the feminist movement are of no interest to non-white, non-upper class women. From its inception, the feminist movement confronted the issues facing women from a narrow perspective.

The book that started it all, Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique*, described the "plight" met by white, middle and upper class, college-educated women. Reading her book, one would be led to believe that the most pressing problem facing women was their need to get into workforce.

White, middle-class, college-

educated women wanted to get out of the house to become economically self-sufficient. They had this choice. They could go to work in a satisfying job, their educational level made this possible. If they were not satisfied with life in the workforce, they could always go back home where there was a man to support them.

The fact is, at the time Friedan was writing, a vast majority of women were working; however, they had very few choices. They were stuck in dead-end jobs where they were struggling just to get by. These women probably would have welcomed the chance to leave a less-than-satisfying job so they could stay at home with their kids.

The economic exploitation and the racism present in American society, now and then, aren't

expressed by the feminist movement because white middle and upper class women have much to gain. Non-white and poor white women working in low paying marginal jobs make it possible for other women to go to work alongside men where they make pretty good money.

"If the women's movement hopes to be more inclusive, it must confront economic and racial exploitation."

Understanding the nature of our economic system, we must acknowledge the fact that some of us benefit as others suffer. This may be a bitter pill for many white women to swallow

as we have benefitted from the exploitation of other women.

If the women's movement hopes to become more inclusive, it must confront economic and racial issues. We must admit that we benefit from economic and racial exploitation. The women's move-

ment must address and incorporate the needs of all groups, aware of the fact that the needs of some often contradict the needs of others.

Women from a variety of backgrounds must be sought so we may expand the movement. In addition, we can no longer be satisfied with the self-appointed leader who pretends to know what is good for all women.

Women who come from different backgrounds have different needs and they must be allowed to articulate those needs; we can no longer build a movement based on what we think others need.

Whether it is possible to have one all-encompassing women's movement that represents all women is unclear; however, what is clear is the fact that feminists must realize and acknowledge the entire female experience.

Maryanne Dawicki is a Rebel Yell columnist. Her column appears every Tuesday.

Letters To the Editor

Homosexuals defended

Dear Editor:

This letter is in response to Donovan Steltzner's article "Special privileges for alternative lifestyles?"

First, I would like to address the title of this article. I don't recall ever hearing homosexuals wanting "special privileges." This would entitle, say, wanting a tax break just because they are homosexual. All they want is a recourse to allow them to defend themselves when they have been discriminated against only because they are homosexual, just like every other citizen in the United States.

For example, if two gay men go to an apartment building to rent out an apartment and the manager perceives them to be gay without them informing him of this and refuses to rent to them, then they were discriminated against based solely on sexual orientation. He can't claim that he refused them on anything else, i.e. religion, race, etc. These men have no choice but to go somewhere else. This could also be the same situation if they were applying for a job, a house, a loan, anything.

"One can either recognize or logically deduce any or all of such characteristics by just seeing them and asking his or her name...A surname can flag nationality or heritage characteristics." This is not always the case. Especially in a country like the U.S. where there is a large diversity of nationalities. I'm from German descent, my name used to be Henkel, which is easy to tell that I'm German. But since I have married, it is Rogers. By looking at my name, Kristina Rogers, you cannot tell that I'm German. You cannot also know what religion I may practice in my own home. But these do not give people the right to discriminate against me because of the characteristics. So Title VII does not protect some characteristics that are not immediately visible or "what they do in private."

I don't want to be discriminated against just because I'm a woman, German, Catholic, or het-

erosexual, and I believe that homosexuals should have the right to fight against those who discriminate against them just because of their sexual orientation!

Kristina Rogers
Senior

Student Spotlight question questioned

Dear Editor:

The Student Spotlight question posed to students in the September 16, 1993, edition of the *Rebel Yell*, "Do you think that Student Government should recognize the Gay/Lesbian club as an organization?" could only have been more ignorant if the question would have been something like "should women be allowed to vote?" or "should black be considered first class citizens?"

When asked for a response to the Student Spotlight question, Organizations Board Director Ed Marshall said "the question was irrelevant, ignorant, and misleading." The question is irrelevant, ignorant, and misleading in that the organization is already recognized. Therefore, this is not even an issue. Marshall also stated that the organization has the potential "to be one of the most productive on this campus."

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Association meets all of the criteria needed to be a recognized CSUN organization. This is true of almost 100 recognized groups paying undergraduate students who choose to meet so that they may exchange ideas, information, and friendship. Each group is made up of people like you and I who share common goals, common interests, and common problems. Each recognized CSUN organization also gives back to the Las Vegas community by regularly performing acts of community service and charitable donations.



Overview of thoughts offers variety of views



DONOVAN STELTZNER
STAFF COLUMNIST

While I'm doing research for future articles, here's some tasty food for thought:

Political correctness is such a fraud, simply because it attempts to change people's attitudes by the use of euphemisms without getting down to the real reasons for intolerance and misunderstanding in our nation—the degeneration of morals, lack of respect for one another, and the widespread acceptance of the same.

How come the media, when asking for a woman's perspective on an issue, ask often leftist women, such as Patricia Ireland or Gloria Steinem, for opinions without also going to Beverly LaHaye or Mary Matalin, both of whom are leaders in organizations 10 times larger than those of their feminist counterparts?

AIDS is a dreadful disease for which we must race to find a cure.

But why do we consistently spend much more on the research of that disease than on such things as breast cancer research, which may afflict one out of 18 American citizens—almost 100 times more than AIDS?

Hey, you so-called civil rights leadership, wise up, will you? After 30 years of progress, there's hardly anything that I have heard in the way of positive news. If you haven't done anything lately that has helped myself or any other minority person, you need to be replaced.

Affirmative action implies a two-fold assumption: that whites are racists and exclusionists, and that minorities are inherently incapable of meeting the high standards that are set before them. Whites of good character and minorities of high achievement should stand up together and protest this.

On campus activism—"At UNLV," my philosophy teacher once noted, "we don't have the activism on campus that other major universities in America have, such as Stanford and UC Berkeley. You get assaulted on your way to every class, stoned with verbal abuse of every kind. Some people around here might call the lack of this, apathy. I call it peace."

Donovan Steltzner is a Rebel Yell columnist. His column appears every Thursday.

The *Rebel Yell* staff welcomes letters to the editor. Please submit all letters for Tuesday's edition by Friday at 3 p.m. and for Thursday's edition by Monday at 5 p.m. All letters must be signed.

You Can't Drink to Your Baby's Health!

Alcohol can have a bad influence. Especially on an unborn baby. The Arc, a national organization on mental retardation, warns that drinking alcohol during pregnancy may cause birth defects.

You wouldn't put alcohol in your baby's bottle. Why put it in your unborn baby? For more information on how you can help prevent mental retardation, call your local chapter of The Arc.

The
Arc

Formerly, Association for Retarded Citizens