

LUBBOCK **NOW** TIMES

The Newsletter of the National Organization for Women

In Lubbock

December-January, 1981-1982

Women's Studies

Students at Texas Tech majoring in an Arts and Sciences discipline may elect to declare a minor in women's studies. The following courses will be available in the spring to satisfy that option and may also be taken as electives.

Economics 332-1, ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES, Professor Edna Gott, 10:30 TT.

English 4344, COMPARATIVE LITERATURE, Professor Ann Daghistan, 10:30 MWF.

Health Education 227, HEALTH ASPECTS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY, Professor: to be arranged, 11:30 MW.

History 3350, WOMEN IN EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION, Professor Jim Brink, 10:30 MWF.

Journalism 439, INDIVIDUAL STUDY IN JOURNALISM OR PUBLIC RELATIONS, to be arranged.

Mass Communications 411, SPECIAL PROBLEMS IN MASS COMMUNICATIONS, to be arranged.

Sociology 2331, SOCIOLOGY OF MARRIAGE, Professor Charlie Peek, 9:00 TT.

Sociology 3324, AMERICAN MINORITY PROBLEMS, Professor Marietta Morrissey, 1:30 TT.

History 5337, STUDIES OF WOMEN IN AMERICAN HISTORY, Professor Jacqueline S. Reinier.

Letters To NOW

October 28, 1981

Dear NOW Friends,

I was very glad to get the September NOW Times with Jeff Gamso's review and notes of successful fundraising--and sorry to learn that you are having hard times because people are so busy. It is good, nonetheless, that you have the honesty to discuss the problem in the newsletter. I hope that members who have stood on the sidelines will, reading of NOW's need, step forward to become more active.

It is important that NOW stay alive in West Texas. People turn to us to speak up for women's rights. I wish we could do more than speak, but even that is valuable.

I look forward to working with you all again next fall. Finding NOW when we came to Texas in 1978 helped me believe that there would be a way to live there as part of the community without giving up my ideals and interests. Haven't others felt that way, too? Bob and I will be returning to Lubbock in August, 1982, with our new daughter, Mary Ruth. I'll see you then.

Best wishes,
Alison P. Seidel

The January business meeting will be held Tuesday, Jan. 12, 1982, at 7:30 p.m. at 3406 88th.



The Flip Side: Christmas

By Lin Hughes

One of these years, I'd like to have a Norman Rockwell Christmas. You know the kind I mean, memorialized on all those Saturday Evening Post covers imprinted on us when we were children, the kind of Christmas Bing Crosby used to sing about.

Nearly everyone I know grew up on those images. Even if our own experience was vastly different, as if often was, we knew just what Christmas was supposed to be.

You can close your eyes and see it, can't you? First of all, there's snow. Even for those who've spent their entire lives in the Sunbelt and have no reason to equate that cold white stuff with Christmas, snow is still part of it. We don't know how to drive in it; it shuts us down, school and city. But, stubbornly as two-year-olds, we want our snow for Christmas.

What else? A tree, naturally, towering to the ceiling, glittering with lights and ornaments and

tinsel, sheltering mounds of wrapped and ribboned packages, each holding the perfect gift. Their exteriors speak of sensitive observation of a much-loved person's needs and wishes, weeks of secret preparation, anticipation of pleased surprise.

Of course, the presents are only symbols of the love and cherishing of family so much embodied in our ideal Christmas. There is family, at least three generations, if not more. Pink-cheeked grannies bake Christmas goodies. Women of the middle generation create a Christmas feast while their husbands, brothers and fathers sit before the fire, playing checkers or Monopoly. Children of random age and size play together like puppies, now eavesdropping on the men's conversation, now stealthily snitching a taste from the kitchen's wonders.

Then there's the dinner, the generations bowed in prayer around the over-burdened festive board, giving thanks for togetherness, warmth and shelter against the cold outside. The image is so

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The Flip Side

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clear: it reassures us of the continuity of life, the grace of God.

Sadly for us all, it is too often just an image, no more real than Santa Claus, and just as disillusioning.

Instead of that familiar, comforting world, we live in an atomistic and mobile society, where families fragment through careers which take some members far away, through divorces which splinter the loving circle, through stress and change which shred the ties of love and affection.

We marry later now, and sometimes not at all. We put off having children, and then have only one or two. We divorce and sometimes remarry, parenting other people's children and shifting our own about so that, no matter

where they are, they miss somebody.

We don't go home for Christmas because those homes were never happy, or our parents don't accept the choices we have made, the persons we have come to be.

Our Christmas trees are artificial, and it never snows.

We have internalized Norman Rockwell's reality, and so are not at peace with our own.

But we ought to give up on those images, for they are not appropriate in this age of nuclear families and nuclear threat. Maybe they never were. Rockwell painted during the Depression, World War II, Korea and the civil rights struggles. For many, if not most, Americans then, Christmas couldn't have looked the way it did on Post covers. In fact, Christmas probably never looked that way to very many of our forebearers.

Think of the pioneers in this area. They lived isolated and tenuous lives, at least in the beginning. They were far from home and family, with only distant neighbors and their own resources to rely on. They had to wrest a living from an inhospitable en-

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The Flip Side

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environment, with dust storms, drought and Indians. It was blazing hot in summer, and in winter the bitter wind made keeping warm a constant preoccupation.

But the pioneers made Christmas anyway. Maybe the Christmas meal was a meager spread in the midst of hard times. Maybe all they had was a bushy cedar, trimmed only with popcorn and berries. Maybe the wind came howling in through chinks in the one-room cabin. But they made their Christmas from what they had at hand, and so must we.

We are pioneers, too, living on the frontiers of mutating relationships between men and women, of changing expectations of what it means to be a spouse, a parent, a child. The rules lack consensus, and we build our fragile shelters on transient ground.

But that doesn't mean we can't create our own image of Christmas. We may be single, divorced, married,

parents, childless, step-parents, lovers or just friends, but together we can invent new Christmas traditions, new ceremonies that remind us of the continuity of past and present, of the underlying need we all have for love and affection.

We seek, after all, the feeling that we are accepted for ourselves, that we are loved and valued, that there is some niche where we belong. This is what Christmas means, and we can find this meaning in each other, if we will only give up on someone else's images and look for their essences wherever they may be found.

I'd still like to have, one day, a Norman Rockwell Christmas. But instead of that other vision, I'd paint a loving circle of friends and their children, surrounding an apartment-sized tree, in front of a jointly-created Christmas dinner.

And it wouldn't even have to snow.

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Screenings

Jeffrey M. Gamso

John Sayles is said to have made The Return of the Secaucus 7 on a budget of \$60,000. To put that in some perspective, the average American film today costs in the neighborhood of nine million dollars and Marlon Brando is reported to have received three million for his brief role in Superman.

These numbers contain a moral, for if Secaucus 7 is not the finest American film since Citizen Kane (a judgment that readers of reviews might be forgiven for finding surprising), and if it is not the most widely-seen movie of the decade, it is certainly among the more worthy films, and the more interestingly-conceived ones, of recent years.

The story concerns a group of friends who met at the end of the sixties. They shared social and political activity (went to demonstrations together, were arrested together, carried on affairs together, smoked dope together). Each year they have a

summer reunion. The one we watch is from 1978.

These are perfectly ordinary people. There are no leaders of the peace movement here, no movers and shakers of what we used to call the "counter-culture." The Secaucus 7 are just a group of friends, no more and no less. Their lives lack the dramatic impact and import of so much that we remember from the sixties. They make few hard choices, instead compromising with the system they used to fight.

In short, they are dull.

That's both the film's greatest virtue and its greatest weakness. For The Return of the Secaucus 7, although a happy reminder that there are reasonably content yet thoughtful people in this world, and an argument of

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Screenings

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some effectiveness that compromise need not mean defeat, lacks the intensity that its protagonists ought to have.

The seven are simply too congenial, too tolerant, too delighted in their own friendships either to ring true or to tell us much that we want to know about their lives or our own. The result is a lack of depth. We know who these people are, how they got together, why they became friends. But there is so much relentless niceness in this film that even the group's brooder seems incapable of any stronger response to life than vehemently chopping wood to work off his aggressions, though he carries around a hit of heroin. The point, I suppose, is that he might, at

any time, find the late seventies too pressure-filled an era, that he might come to recognize that his life is empty. Well, maybe. Maybe some of these people do have hidden reserves of rage, of angst, of passion.

Maybe J. T., the would-be singer and songwriter, will some day have to deal with the fact, rather than the possibility, of failure. Maybe Irene will find that the liberal Senator she works for will vote with Reagan on the budget. Maybe Mike and Kate will eventually decide whether to have children and have to live with the consequences of that decision. Maybe the other, too, will finally act.

Until then, the seven are good friends. That's a good thing to be. But it's not enough for the film.

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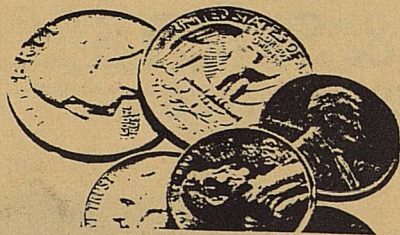
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