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Ames women join to serve feminist cause

by DARLENE KEECH
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Feminism is defined by Webster as "the theory that women should have political, economic, and social rights equal to those of men," a belief to which members of Women's Coalition (WC) ascribe.

The 'Coalition' evolved about five years ago by a group of Ames women who felt there was something lacking in society. "They felt frustration, so they got together to try to alleviate these frustrations," according to D. Haugen, S & H 4.

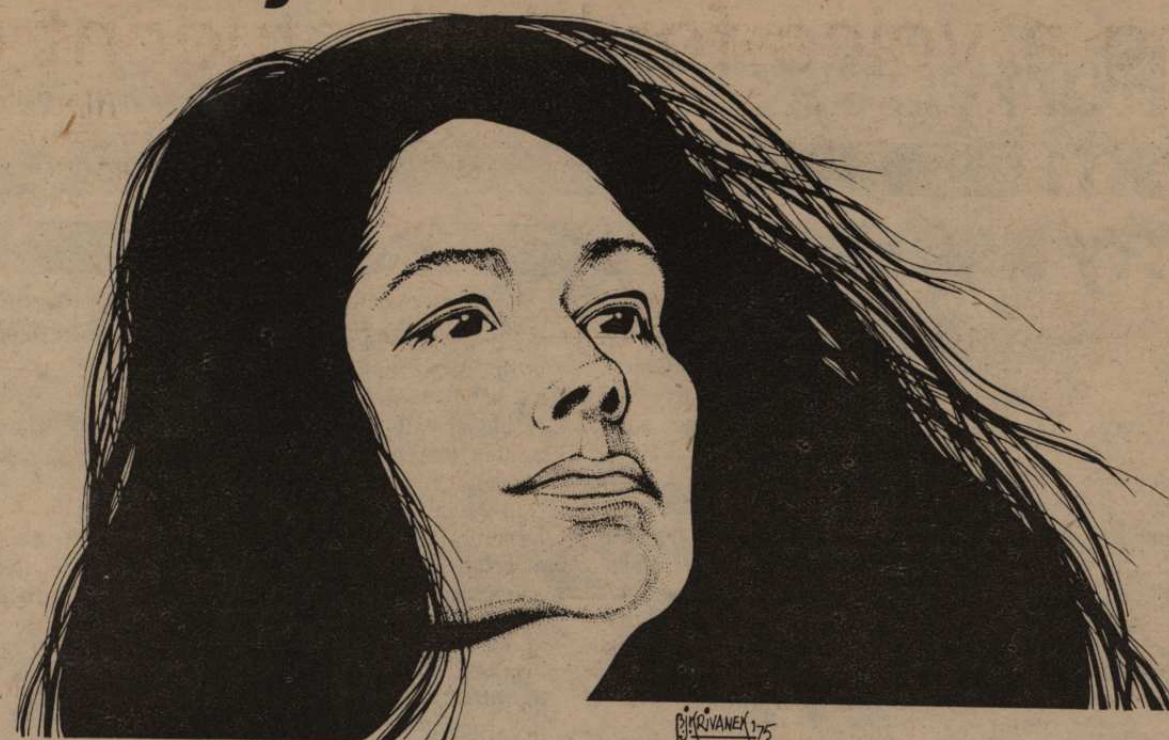
MAINLY, they felt that health care for women, in the sense of knowledge in the gynecological area, was lacking. "Women weren't being told what was going on in their own body—they felt frustrated because it didn't give them control over their own body," Haugen said. Citing doctors and educators as sources of this problem, she added that "women have not been given a fair shake—education about sex leaves so many questions".

Furthermore, Haugen said, the women felt a need for a place where people could come to learn about themselves—"where they wouldn't get the brush-off."

Presently, WC consists of the core Coalition, the Rape Crisis Center and the self help clinic for women, and all operate on funds from the Government of the Student Body.

Both ISU and Ames women work for the WC in either a full-time or part-time capacity.

The Coalition core is a chance "for women to get together and discuss problems," Haugen said.



"We have rap sessions on 'what I am, who am I,' and why we resent certain things."

"If you don't know about something (such as sex) it is easier to talk to someone who won't give a lecture (even if the questions seem petty). Women are more understanding because they go through the same thing."

AN OFF-SHOOT of this idea was the formation of the Rape Crisis Center, (RCC), a branch of the Coalition. The RCC is operated through Open Line, where a woman can make a telephone call for help if she has been raped. "All you need is a person to listen to," Haugen said. The RCC volunteer will tell the women what to do and act as a support for women who have been raped, she added.

"Women who are raped often need counseling—legally as well as psychologically, for instance how not to hate other men once you've been raped," Haugen said.

Another branch of the Coalition now offers health services for women in administering pregnancy tests and birth control counseling, at the Self Help Clinic at 129 Sheldon Ave.

Haugen said the group hopes to eventually establish a full time women's clinic, which would offer such services as abortions and menstrual extractions, and be staffed by a medical doctor.

PATTY Parsons, member of the Self Help Clinic, had said earlier the idea for a self help clinic originated last spring, and developed because of "bad ex-

periences" with male doctors, particularly gynecologists.

Haugen said she would like to see a doctor brought in who could sympathize with not only women students but women of all ages.

Another facet of the WC is a small library resource center in the WC office, 68 Memorial Union. The purpose of the library, Haugen said, is "to open up people to history and theory of the women's movement." The library

contain books about women as well as current magazines.

Assessing the success of WC thus far, Haugen said, "The goals we've set are just beginning to form. It will take a lot of support and cooperation from the community and college—the goals have to be kept up and circulating."

Haugen said she has not received personal criticism or heard criticism about WC. "As a

person I haven't heard anything; I hear a lot of positive things from women (about WC). Most men are indifferent towards it, however she mentioned one guy who gave her a strange look when she mentioned she was in WC.

AS A TRANSFER student, Haugen said the school she previously attended was very traditionally-oriented—"women had (dormitory) hours, men did not."

If a woman broke the rules, she wasn't allowed out of her room from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. for a week. This wasn't enforced when men broke the rules. It wasn't an ideal situation for girls, Haugen added.

Although Haugen said she didn't find the same situation when she came to Iowa State, she felt there was discrimination in male attitudes in her classroom experiences.

She said she felt the need for a "support" group holding feminist attitudes and then joined WC as an office worker.

"I'm very definitely a women's libber-feminist," Haugen said. "I am a feminist and I resent it when people laugh at it."

Expressing what she feels is the "comon bond" between members of WC, Haugen said "We've been screwed too often by too many men."