

# FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES: CREATING REAL CHOICES

A CONFERENCE ON ISSUES FACING  
THE ABORTION RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE 90'S

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21  
17th Anniversary of *Roe vs. Wade*

## The History of and Political Strategies for the Women's Movement

- Patricia Ireland, Executive Vice President, NOW
- Angela Bowen, Chair, National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays

## Workshops:

- Reproductive Technology: Advances and Abuses
- Reproductive Choices and Workplace Concerns
- Poverty, Social Policy and Reproductive Rights
- International Policies: The Struggle for Autonomy and Reproductive Rights
- Reproductive Rights: Access for All

## Open Strategy Discussion: Where do we go from here?

11 a.m. registration - 5 p.m.  
Boston University, 705 Commonwealth Ave.  
\$5 donation (more if you can; less if you can't)

Pre-registration required  
for Childcare and ASL  
Call by January 16th

For more information or to volunteer call Boston NOW: (617) 782-1056 or 782-4059

Sponsored by Boston NOW and the Alliance Against Women's Oppression



# Pro-choice Activist Arrested!

On January 13, 1990, Mary A., a long-time member of Boston NOW's Pro-choice Alert phonetree, was arrested at the Gynecare clinic in Boston during a non-violent clinic defense effort. She was charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon--her foot.

*She needs your help*

## Donate to her defense fund

Ad Hoc Mary A. Defense Fund  
MIT Branch  
Post Office Box 294  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Mary's story was recounted in a column by Bella English of the Boston Globe (see other side). Mary, unfortunately, has to pay her own legal expenses. An ad hoc defense fund has been set up to aid her in this effort, donations of any size will be greatly appreciated.

# **IN THE STREETS AND IN THE SYSTEM: FIGHTING FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

**March 7, 1990  
Boston NOW Office  
971 Commonwealth Avenue**

## **7 PM: OPEN HOUSE:**

New and prospective members, come find out about chapter activities and how to get involved.

## **8 PM: THE FEMINIZATION OF POLITICS**

Discuss NOW's legislative strategy. Includes an overview of the electoral and legislative process. (For beginners and seasoned political junkies!)

# **FACILITATOR TRAINING FOR CLINIC DEFENSE**

**February 4, 3-5 PM**

We encourage people who plan to be at the health clinics to attend a training session and learn basic techniques in peacekeeping and security.  
Place to be announced.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL BOSTON NOW (617) 782-1056

## Menstrual Extraction

Menstrual extraction is an alternative abortion technique developed by the Los Angeles Self Help Clinic in 1971, prior to the legalization of abortion. The procedure is similar to a suction abortion, and is done within the first six weeks of pregnancy. This technique involves specialized, sterile equipment and a knowledgeable support group. All mechanical abortion methods carry a risk of injury and infection, and should be done in a sanitary location by trained persons. Because this technique is complicated, we will not describe it here. Menstrual extraction is a method to explore if you are interested in alternative abortion services. An herbalist or a women's health care worker in your area may be able to give you more information.

## REFERENCES

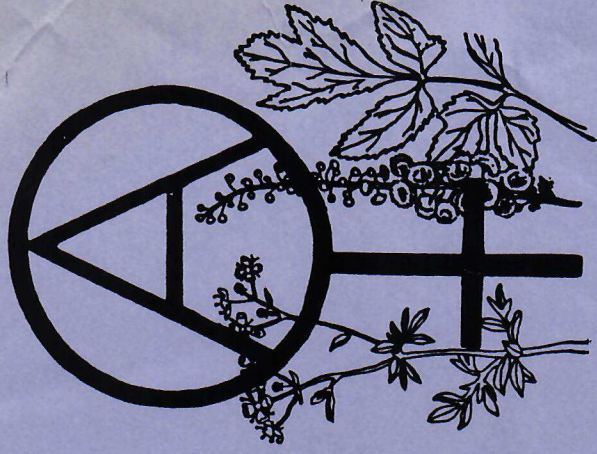
- Boston Women's Health Book Collective, **The New Our Bodies, Our Selves**, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, 1984. *General book on women's health care and self-awareness. NOTE: this book does not recommend herbal abortion methods.*
- Federation of Women's Health Centers, **How to Stay Out of the Gynecologist's Office**, Peace Press, 1981. *Good book on self-help techniques for women's reproductive health.*
- Potts, Billie, **Witches Heal**, DuRève, Ann Arbor, MI, 1988. *Book on a variety of herbal and spiritual self-health practices*
- Weed, Susan S., **An Herbal for the Childbearing Years**, Ash Tree Publishers, Woodstock, NY, 1986. *More advanced book on herbalism dealing with women's reproductive health.*

The authors of this pamphlet are a group of Boston area anarchist feminists dedicated to the idea of putting health care back into our own hands. Our members include a physician assistant, and we have consulted an herbalist and a variety of resources. This pamphlet is solely the work of the authors, and no organization or publication mentioned bears any responsibility for its contents.

Because of the difficulty of finding information on alternative abortion techniques, we cannot guarantee their effectiveness. We may be able to provide further information or contacts in your area. Please share with us your experience using these methods, as well as any other knowledge you may have.

P.O. Box 634, Cambridge, MA 02142

# REGAINING CONTROL Taking Health Care Into Our Own Hands



Today in America, our right to control our bodies is under attack. Religious groups and conservative politicians are eroding our freedom to make our own decisions about reproductive health. This spring the Supreme Court will hear several cases which could have grave implications for reproductive rights. Growing militant anti-abortion groups such as Operation Rescue are staging increasingly frequent attacks on women's clinics. Despite the fact that abortion is now legal, it is inaccessible to many women, especially those who are poor or young. Many women are unaware of or unable to take advantage of their reproductive options due to geographical isolation or a lack of knowledge due to a morally repressive atmosphere.

It is important that we begin to educate and organize to take control of our bodies. We can learn about alternative abortion techniques and establish services such as the Jane Collective, an underground network of abortion providers in Chicago in the early 1970s. There are many concerned health care workers who could be allies in such a program. We can establish support networks for teenagers who must leave their homes or deal with the court system to obtain abortions. We can educate ourselves about alternative means of contraception and abortion such as traditional herbal methods. Much of this knowledge is kept alive by women in Native

**Black Cohosh** (*Cimicifuga racemosa*, also known as black snakeroot, bugbane, rattlesnake, squawroot)

**Part of plant:** (a) root or (b) tincture (buy pre-made)

**Recipe:** (a) boil 1 oz. root in water, leave to stand for 10 minutes, dilute the resulting liquid with water: 1 teaspoon liquid to one cup of water.

**Dose:** (a) 1 cup, three times a day (b) 5 drops, 3 times a day.

**Duration:** 6 days maximum for root or tincture.

**Side effects:** drowsiness, increased urination, nausea, vomiting, headache.

**Blue Cohosh** (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*, also known as beechdrops, blue ginseng, squawroot)

**Part of plant:** root

**Recipe:** boil 1 oz. root in water, leave to stand for 10 minutes, dilute the resulting liquid with water: 1 teaspoon liquid to one cup of water.

**Dose:** 1 cup, three times a day

**Duration:** 6 days maximum

**Side effects:** drowsiness, increased urination, nausea, vomiting, headache.

#### Other Herbs

Many other herbs are reported to bring about abortion (for example, parsley, tansy, yarrow). We found less information about these herbs, and much of it is inconsistent. If you want to learn more about them, consult an herbalist who has had experience with herbal abortions.

**Rue** (*Ruta graveolens*)

**Part of plant:** (a) leaves (b) tincture (buy pre-made)

**Recipe:** (a) pour  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup boiling water over 1 teaspoon dried herb, let sit for 15 minutes

**Dose:** (a)  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup a day (b) 10 drops, 4 times a day

**Duration:** 4 days

**Side effects:** nausea, vomiting

#### For Excessive Bleeding

When using any abortion method, there is a risk of severe bleeding. Shepherd's Purse will reduce bleeding. Keep it on hand when using alternative abortion techniques.

**Shepherd's Purse** (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)

**Part of plant:** tincture (buy pre-made)

**Dose:** a few drops, applied under the tongue.

**Duration:** repeat at 15 minute intervals; if heavy bleeding (more than one pad in 15 minutes) persists for more than 30 mins, seek medical care.

#### Pregnancy Termination

If you are pregnant, you have several options. Many women choose to terminate their pregnancies. While the decision to have an abortion is not an easy one, it is important to be aware of all available options.

Most abortions performed today are surgical abortions using the suction or D&C method. Abortions are currently legally available, but are expensive, and women who are poor, underage, or outside of urban centers may have trouble obtaining them. Abortion laws vary from state to state.

Surgical abortions are safest when performed within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy (the first trimester). For information about obtaining an abortion, contact the National Women's Health Network (202-543-9222) or the National Abortion Federation (800-772-9100), or look in the yellow pages under 'Pregnancy Services'. If you are a teenager, some of the services in your area may be able to help if you need a court hearing to comply with parental consent laws.

#### ALTERNATIVE ABORTION METHODS

There are many alternatives to surgical abortion. These vary in safety and effectiveness. The following guidelines are applicable to all alternative methods. Whenever possible, consult with someone who is familiar with the technique you plan to use.

#### General Guidelines

- 1) The earlier these methods are used, the more effective they will be. It is best to use them between the first day you expect your period and the 10th day after it is due. Effectiveness will decrease significantly after this time.
- 2) Alternative methods are most useful for women with regular menstrual cycles. It is important to be familiar with your cycle as part of an overall program of reproductive health. You can determine your monthly cycle by charting it on a calendar over a period of time.
- 3) If these methods are not successful and you carry the pregnancy to term, or if you are breastfeeding, the effects on the fetus or infant are not known.
- 4) Start with a small dosage (to check for side effects) and move up to the full dosage in small increments if there are no adverse effects. Do not take more than the recommended dosage, or for longer than the recommended duration. This will not increase the effectiveness, but may greatly increase the risk of serious side effects.



## Abortion Funds

**T**he members of the National Network of Abortion Funds all provide direct financial aid in the form of loans and/or grants to low-income women and girls seeking to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Individual funds provide additional assistance for a variety of needs associated with unplanned pregnancy and abortion, including pregnancy testing, ultrasound, Norplant, child care, transportation and lodging, as well as information and referrals.

**F**unds serve women in limited geographic areas, and draw their funding from these communities as well. Budgets range from \$2000 to over \$120,000. In 1992, more than 6000 women were helped with a combined total of \$728,200.

### NNAF National Funding Sources\*

Haymarket People's Fund, Resist, Ms. Foundation for Women, Noyes Foundation, Threshold Foundation, Naomi & Nehemiah Cohen Foundation, and individuals.

\*does not include funders of individual member funds

## Network Members

Abortion Loan Fund *PP of Northwest Ohio*  
Abortion Rights Fund of Western Massachusetts  
Bozeman Choice Advocates *Montana*  
CR Medical Aid Fund *Cedar Rapids, Iowa*  
Chicago Abortion Fund  
CHOICE *Charleston, West Virginia*  
Coalition for Reproductive Choice - Access Fund  
*San Diego, California*  
Daisy Marquis Jones Justice Fund *PP of Rochester, NY*  
Delaware Pro-Choice Medical Fund  
Emergency Medical Assistance, Inc.  
*West Palm Beach, Florida*  
Fountain St. Church Choice Fund *Grand Rapids Michigan*  
The Freedom Fund *Denver, Colorado*  
Greater Philadelphia Women's Medical Fund  
J. Paschall Davis Fund *PP of Middle Tennessee*  
Jane Doe Fund *Lansing, Michigan*  
Jane Fund of Central Massachusetts  
Jim Wimberly Loan Fund *PP of Austin, Texas*  
Justice Fund *PP of Metropolitan Washington D.C.*  
National Reproductive Choice Fund *Washington, DC*  
The Options Fund *Eau Claire, Wisconsin*  
Pro-Choice Resources/ Hersey Abortion Assistance Fund  
*Minneapolis, Minnesota*  
Reproductive Rights Network of Santa Cruz County  
*PP of Santa Cruz, California*  
Rosie Jimenez Fund *Austin, Texas*  
Safe Abortions For Everyone *Brunswick, Maine*  
Vivian Campbell Fund *Pittsburg, Pennsylvania*  
W.O.M.E.N. *Tampa, Florida*  
Women Have Options *Granville, Ohio*  
Women's Emergency Network *Miami, Florida*  
Women's Health and Education Fund *Rhode Island*  
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Women's Reproductive Rights Assistance Project  
*National Congress of Jewish Women, Los Angeles*

# NATIONAL NETWORK

# OF

# ABORTION FUNDS

c/o ARFWM P.O.Box 732  
Hadley, Massachusetts 01035  
413/582-5645 Fax 413/549-0707

# Protracted Protests Costly

## Anti-abortion demonstrations wreak havoc on Brookline police

By Beth Fertig

When the costs of local anti-abortion demonstrations began adding up last year, the town fought back in court.

It used an anti-racketeering federal law to sue Operation Rescue activists in an attempt to reclaim roughly \$100,000 spent on police overtime. An additional \$49,000 has been spent on police overtime since the current fiscal year began last July.

But after a year and a half of "rescue" demonstrations outside the town's three abortion clinics, sometimes involving as many as 200 arrests, police say the real costs add up to a lot more than overtime.

Approximately 30 officers have been injured on duty at the Beacon Street demonstrations. One officer, Scott Seto, hasn't returned to work since the December 9 protest when, police say, he sustained a back injury.

"Every time a police officer is out injured, it costs the town for that day, plus the overtime of hiring someone," explains Chief of Police George Simard.

He says many of the injuries that occur at anti-abortion demonstrations are back-related. Demonstrators are trained to go limp when approached by police, who then most carry them away from clinic entrances.

Furthermore, a \$1,000 police barricade was broken in December and extra prisoner meals ordered for the arrested demonstrators have added up to about \$2,000. One captain suffered a chipped tooth, and other officers sustained cuts to their fingers and ripped their uniforms.

### Slim chances

"We've had guys' glasses broken," says Simard. "You can never figure out all the incidentals that go into these. Special handcuffs we have to buy, there's been so many people. ... They cost us."



**In addition to the soaring overtime costs that have resulted from local anti-abortion protests, police officers have been injured while on duty and equipment has been destroyed.**

PHOTO BY LINDA HAAS

With the closing of Operation Rescue's national office in New York late last month, the chances may be even slimmer that the town will be able to reclaim its money. Federal authorities seized the national group's accounts after it failed to pay thousands of dollars in fines for violating court injunctions.

"You think we'll ever get any money?" asks Simard. "I wouldn't stand waiting for it."

But it is unlikely that Operation Rescue will soften its tactics over concern for additional injuries.

"We have just as many injuries amongst Operation Rescue," says spokesman Robert Delery, who adds that his group is mulling over possible charges of police brutality. Two members were treated for injuries at the last demonstration.

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"We're not injuring [police]," he explains. "They don't have strong backs. They get tired of carrying us. It's their fault their backs aren't in shape."

In fact, he adds, "We complain because we think it's absolutely unnecessary for the Brookline police to pull in so many police for overtime duty. All they have to do is arrest us slowly."

#### New tactics

Of course, he adds, clinic openings would be delayed if police didn't react so quickly to his group's blockades.

Future costs to the town depend on the actions of protesters, who have given no sign that they intend to go away.

At the last major demonstration in January, anti-abortion protesters got even closer to their target by crowding into the entranceway of Planned Parenthood's Beacon Street office building.

This resulted in criminal trespass charges, a more serious violation than the civil offense of obstructing sidewalks, a tactic in previous demonstrations.

Simard says Operation Rescue members are getting more violent and have "gone over the limits of law."

But anti-abortion forces aren't the only ones becoming more vocal on Beacon Street. "We're having a problem with NOW people too," says Captain of Detectives Francis Hayes. Hayes is referring to the National Organization for Women.

Pro-choice demonstrators were arrested in January for blocking the sidewalks. "They're trying to block the other people," says Hayes. "They think they're doing us a big favor. Whether they are or not I don't know. Both sides are getting a little more militant than they were."

"It's the type of situation that could erupt into a physical confrontation and we'd do everything in our power to avoid," says Selectmen Chairman Jeffrey Allen.

"I would hope that there would be less violence. As they change their tactics, they increase the potential for criminal prosecution," he adds. "If they force their way into a clinic, ... it could lead to possible felonies, breaking and entering."

Allen and Chief Simard recently discussed how to prevent escalation of violence in a meeting with abortion clinic representatives and two pro-choice groups. The clinic people themselves are concerned with the new pro-choice tactics.

Allen also suspects anti-abortion groups will target him this spring as his campaign for re-election to the Board of Selectmen heats up.

"We hope and pray he will be defeated," says Operation Rescue's Delery but said the organization does not get involved in politics.

Operation Rescue won't reveal its strategies, but says it will hold more demonstrations in the future.

Detective Hayes predicts "small, more militant type of demonstrations" in coming months. "Having all these people come out is getting harder and harder for the Rescue people."

BROOKLINE TAB

1254 CHESTNUT ST.  
NEWTON, MA 02164





# National Organization for Women – Boston Chapter

971 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215

(617) 782-1056

## THE CURRENT STATUS OF ABORTION RIGHTS LEGISLATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

### MEDICAID FUNDING & WOMEN'S ACCESS:

Massachusetts is one of a few states that still fund Medicaid abortions. In 1981, the state Supreme Judicial Court determined that the abortion decision is encompassed within those privacy interests protected by the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights. *Moe v. Secretary of Administration and Finance* protects women's access to abortion under the State Constitution. The Court ruled that the state's restriction of Medicaid funding would place an impermissible burden on poor women who are guaranteed the right to abortion.

### ACCESS FOR PREGNANT TEENS:

A parental consent law requires that women under 18 must have permission from both parents before receiving an abortion. The law includes a judicial bypass, but only superior court judges can hear petitions. This law was enacted after the Supreme Court's 1979 landmark decision in *Bellotti v. Baird* that parental consent laws must have a judicial bypass. Three bills have been proposed this year to alter the law (see below).

### PENDING LEGISLATION:

Pending reproductive rights bills include measures that would:

- \* allow all trial court judges to hear petitions in parental consent cases;
- \* require women under 16 (not 18) to receive permission from both parents before having an abortion;
- \* require consent of one parent for minors receiving abortion;
- \* reinstate funding of abortions for state employees (H. 3942);
- \* provide victims' compensation funding for rape victims seeking abortion counseling and/or services (H. 920 and S. 810);
- \* prohibit clinic blockades (H. 5286, S. 150 and S. 203).

Four other bills would repeal old laws still on the books that forbid Medicaid funding for abortion and prohibit the sale and distribution of information on contraceptives and the dissemination of information on abortion (H. 5415, H. 3906, H. 3907 and H. 3904).

The seven anti-abortion bills under consideration include measures that would:

- \* establish a fetal development information program at the Department of Public Health (S. 481);
- \* require husbands to be notified when women seek abortion (S. 761);
- \* ban abortions for "sex selection" (S. 762);
- \* allow parents to testify against their daughters in judicial consent proceedings (H. 1571);
- \* criminalize the transport of minors seeking abortion outside Massachusetts (H. 1727);
- \* outlaw abortions after 20 weeks or viability, whichever comes first (H. 1736).

Anti-choice advocates are also pushing for a constitutional amendment (S. 853) that would make abortion illegal in Massachusetts should *Roe v. Wade* be overturned.

# Pro-choice advocates under fire; local clinics slam militant tactics

By Dan Greenfield  
Citizen Staff

Faced with a rising difficulty in handling the weekly Saturday morning abortion demonstrations, police and town officials are now trying to convince pro-choice advocates to take a less pugnacious approach to helping keep the town's three abortion clinics open.

Last week, Selectmen Chairman Jeffrey Allen, Police Chief George Simard and other police officials met with representatives from three abortion clinics in town and two pro-choice groups. According to Allen, the pro-choice advocates' new tactic of confronting anti-abortion demonstrators is making the situation more volatile. Until recently, both sides had remained separate.

"First, it makes Operation Rescue look more imposing," Allen said. "Second, it has made it more difficult for police to control."

However, pro-choice supporters maintain that they are not at fault.

"The issue here is that the pro-choice people are not the problem," stated Ellen Convisser, the Boston NOW head. "If the Operation Rescue people weren't [blockading the clinics], the pro-choice people



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN RICH

Pro-choice activists are being accused of questionable tactics by local officials and clinic operators.

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## Clinics ask pro-choice activists to pull back

### ● PRO-CHOICE,

continued from page 1

would not come out. . . . [Brookline's] problem is with Operation Rescue. They are blaming the victim here. That should not be happening."

Repro Director Glenda Barkin refuted the claim. "The pro-choice people should be heard, but should not make it more difficult to open up the clinics."

Convisser, however, holds fast that "Operation Rescue is the villain. Operation Rescue is the problem."

Allen explained that "pro-choice groups have in the past coordinated their demonstrations to make their point without making a hindrance" and urged the pro-choice supporters that "anything you could do to go back to the old method" would help.

### Long-standing problem

Police officials have been trying to deal with this problem since 1988, when Operation Rescue first tried to block potential abortion patients from entering the three clinics in town. These tactics brought out pro-choice supporters, including rallies with such politicians as Lt. Gov. Evelyn Murphy and Sen. Lois Pines.

What it also did was put more pressure on the police department. Many Saturdays, various selectmen would be in front of the clinics at 6 a.m. along with a large contingent of police officers. The overtime costs incurred by these demonstrations has cost the town over \$125,000. It prompted Allen to invoke the Racketeering and Influenced Corruption Organizations Act, or RICO, against Operation Rescue to get reimbursed for the costs. That suit is pending in court.

But in the meantime, the town continues to call in officers on Saturday mornings to keep the peace at the ever-increasing confrontational demonstrations, as well as keep open the clinics and divert the usual traffic jams that ensue in those neighborhoods. The most recent demonstration occurred on Jan. 13, when several people were arrested.

### Time best spent?

"It creates a problem for us," said Nicki Nichols Gamble, executive director of the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts. "The pro-choice people can cause problems for clinics and the police."

"Brookline is a very unusual city," Gamble continued. "We

have had excellent police protection and cooperation. . . . Clinics are not the place pro-choice people should be demonstrating, particularly if police are keeping the door open and from being blocked by anti-choice people."

Gamble said that pro-choice supporters would be using their time better demonstrating at the legislature and in towns that need better pro-choice support.

Allen denied allegations that the town was "leaning" on the pro-choice groups to back off in order to make the demonstrations more manageable or to save money for the town.

"Categorically not true. . . . We would never ask any organization to back off. . . . Cost was no factor in calling the meeting or part of any discussion that took place in the meeting."

## **Editorial**

### **Pro-choice activists forget about the 'women' in women's rights**

The pro-choice groups had the right idea when they came to Brookline last year—to provide necessary support for women exercising their constitutional right to a safe, legal abortion.

It appears now that their motives were not quite so mature.

In recent days, police and town officials, as well as clinic directors, have asked the pro-choice demonstrators to deescalate their activities in Brookline.

Local police, the argument goes, have done an excellent job keeping the clinics accessible. But the presence of increasingly militant pro-choice activists is making that job more difficult.

It appears however that NOW's Ellen Convisser is more concerned with the means than the end of this problem. If the anti-abortion demonstrators from Operation Rescue insist on making public nuisances of themselves, according to Convisser's logic, then the pro-choice demonstrators will be equally obnoxious.

The bottom line here is that the town of Brookline has taken every step necessary to ensure women's rights in Brookline—including the use of a racketeering statute against Operation Rescue.

Convisser and other pro-choice demonstrators should accede to the requests of the clinics and police and find another venue at which to score ideological points.

**Viewpoint**

# Have people become too accustomed to anti-abortion tactics?

By Ellen Convisser

An editorial in the Feb. 8 Brookline Citizen attacked the pro-choice community. Labeling women's rights activists "obnoxious" and calling us "public nuisances," the paper lashed out against those who are protecting women's access to abortion services.

The paper trivialized the work that—by its own admission—it considered vital and important a year and a half ago. What it once viewed as sensible and "necessary" it now calls "immature."

What happened over the course of the past year to change the view of this paper—and, ostensibly, the view of others, such as the police and the clinics? What happened to make these forces lean on the organized pro-choice community and its response to violence and terrorism at the clinics?

When Operation Rescue first attacked the clinics in this area, pro-choice (and even many anti-abortion) people were horrified.

They saw the blockades; they knew that these bullies were trying to force women into a position where we cannot exercise our right to abortion and other health services.

The community was justifiably outraged; feminists took action. The National Organization for Women (NOW), along with the other choice groups, organized a careful and thoughtful response. It set up a Pro-Choice Alert System so that pro-choice people throughout the area could know about the attacks on women's rights and could help us protect access to abortion. NOW trained literally hundreds of activists in security and escorting, so that the counter-demonstration at the clinics would be non-violent and that pro-choice activists could, as they do each Saturday and during the clinic attacks of Operation Rescue, help women get into the clinic without getting physically hurt or harassed.

The horror of the attacks moved many people. There was

support of the activists' work—by the clinics and by the police and by the community.

Over the past year, however, the sting of the assault has worn off. Maybe it no longer seems horrifying to hear men screaming threats at women who try to enter an abortion clinic; maybe it has become commonplace to see people blocking entrances to clinics and to know that it sometimes can take hours before the anti-choice people can be removed. Maybe people do not think we can get rid of the violence done by Operation Rescue. Maybe people are beginning to accept the serious "nuisance" they present.

Has this community, like others under siege, come to accept terror as a given? Have people, such as the editors of this paper, moved towards a

(over)  
→

# Patronizing editorial is offensive to all women

To the Editor:

My sense of deja vu at your recent editorial on abortion rights activists was amazing.

Twenty or more years ago, feminists were told that they were silly women who didn't know how good they really had it. Why complain when husbands, the church and politicians all knew what was in the best interests of their wives, the girls in the office and those crazy libbers? Just cross your legs and move to the back of the bus.

Now, the *Brookline Citizen* takes the same patronizing attitude to suggest that the feminist community is "not quite so mature" in its continued defense of access to local women's health clinics. What has changed is that women will no longer demurely accept the physical and verbal harassment directed at abortion rights activists and clients by Operation Rescue. We simply refuse to be made victims by anti-choice zealots, and we claim our right to a pro-choice space in front of the clinics.

Attacking Ellen Convisser and

the National Organization for Women for daring to say they will not go home, or across the street, during O.R.'s violent, illegal blockades smacks of the same old intolerance of uppity women and people of color. Just move to the back of the bus, ladies. The town of Brookline is in the driver's seat now.

Angela Beauchamp  
7 Carol Ave.

## Operation Rescue is the problem in Brookline

To the Editor:

As the largest Pro-Choice organization on a college campus in the North East with a dedicated number of clinic defense activists/escorts, we have witnessed too many Operation Rescue demonstrations to allow the article "Pro-Choice Activists Under Fire: Local Clinics Slam Militant Tactics" to be printed without an angry response.

The article cites Selectman Jeffrey Allen as alleging that "The Pro-Choice advocates' new tactic of confronting anti-abortion demonstrators is making the situation more volatile. Until recently, both sides had remained separate." Pro-Choice activists have been trained not

to initiate dialogue or confrontation with anti-choice factions. Escort volunteers do not have the time or desire to do anything but assist women who want an escort into the clinic doors.

There has been no change in this strategy. In fact, if any tactical change has occurred, it has been on behalf of the anti-choice forces. Cardinal Law has recently instructed anti-choice demonstrators to engage in dialogue with Pro-Choice activists in order to sway their opinion on the issue.

It is not the desire of Pro-Choice activists to hinder or disturb the clinics or the surrounding community. The demonstrations were initiated by Operation Rescue and their stated purpose to intimidate and harass clients as well as to close the clinics themselves.

We wholeheartedly believe that no one should be at the clinics other than the clients and their reproductive health care physicians. Women's health care, like any other health care appointment, should remain a private matter.

On the occasions of large-scale Operation Rescue "hits", where 200 to 300 Operation Rescue members attempt to physically block access to the clinic, Pro-Choice activists assist police in enabling entrance into the clinics. While police are occupied arresting Operation Rescue members, Pro-Choice forces are helping escorts and forging human walkways through the large crowds.

With Brookline town policy as it stands, the police are physically unable to handle the job of keeping these clinics open. The "hits" have been occurring more frequently with greater numbers of participants.

If citizens of Brookline are truly enraged by the disturbance and financial debt of the demonstration incurred at the clinics, they should urge their local politicians to attack the root of the problem: anti-choice demonstrators whose goal is to prevent women's access into reproductive health clinics. This would enable police to expedite the process of maintaining the peace while keeping the clinics open and functioning.

Brookline should look to the state of New York which has recently enacted such legislation.

Lisa Stein  
Brandeis Voice For Choice  
Brandeis University

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# Citizen

B · R · O · O · K · L · I · N · E

VOL. 116 NO. 7

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<b>CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING</b>	Roberta Pearson
<b>PRODUCTION MANAGER</b>	John W. Moss
<b>ASSISTANT MANAGER</b>	A. J. Jerrett
<b>ARTISTS</b>	Robert Banker • Marc Tetreault Susan Youens
<b>TYPOGRAPHERS</b>	Deborah Lehman Mike Aaronian

# Pro-choice advocates under fire; local clinics slam militant tactics

By Dan Greenfield  
Citizen Staff

Faced with a rising difficulty in handling the weekly Saturday morning abortion demonstrations, police and town officials are now trying to convince pro-choice advocates to take a less pugnacious approach to helping keep the town's three abortion clinics open.

Last week, Selectmen Chairman Jeffrey Allen, Police Chief George Simard and other police officials met with representatives from three abortion clinics in town and two pro-choice groups. According to Allen, the pro-choice advocates' new tactic of confronting anti-abortion demonstrators is making the situation more volatile. Until recently, both sides had remained separate.

"First, it makes Operation Rescue look more imposing," Allen said. "Second, it has made it more difficult for police to control."

However, pro-choice supporters maintain that they are not at fault.

"The issue here is that the pro-choice people are not the problem," stated Ellen Convisser, the Boston NOW head. "If the Operation Rescue people weren't [blockading the clinics], the pro-choice people



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN RICH

Pro-choice activists are being accused of questionable tactics by local officials and clinic operators.

● PRO-CHOICE, page 7

## Clinics ask pro-choice activists to pull back

### ● PRO-CHOICE,

continued from page 1

would not come out... [Brookline's] problem is with Operation Rescue. They are blaming the victim here. That should not be happening."

Repro Director Glenda Barkin refuted the claim. "The pro-choice people should be heard, but should not make it more difficult to open up the clinics."

Convisser, however, holds fast that "Operation Rescue is the villain. Operation Rescue is the problem."

Allen explained that "pro-choice groups have in the past coordinated their demonstrations to make their point without making a hindrance" and urged the pro-choice supporters that "anything you could do to go back to the old method" would help.

### Long-standing problem

Police officials have been trying to deal with this problem since 1988, when Operation Rescue first tried to block potential abortion patients from entering the three clinics in town. These tactics brought out pro-choice supporters, including rallies with such politicians as Lt. Gov. Evelyn Murphy and Sen. Lois Pines.

What it also did was put more pressure on the police department. Many Saturdays, various selectmen would be in front of the clinics at 6 a.m. along with a large contingent of police officers. The overtime costs incurred by these demonstrations has cost the town over \$125,000. It prompted Allen to invoke the Racketeering and Influenced Corruption Organizations Act, or RICO, against Operation Rescue to get reimbursed for the costs. That suit is pending in court.

But in the meantime, the town continues to call in officers on Saturday mornings to keep the peace at the ever-increasing confrontational demonstrations, as well as keep open the clinics and divert the usual traffic jams that ensue in those neighborhoods. The most recent demonstration occurred on Jan. 13, when several people were arrested.

### Time best spent?

"It creates a problem for us," said Nicki Nichols Gamble, executive director of the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts. "The pro-choice people can cause problems for clinics and the police."

"Brookline is a very unusual city," Gamble continued. "We

have had excellent police protection and cooperation... Clinics are not the place pro-choice people should be demonstrating, particularly if police are keeping the door open and from being blocked by anti-choice people."

Gamble said that pro-choice supporters would be using their time better demonstrating at the legislature and in towns that need better pro-choice support.

Allen denied allegations that the town was "leaning" on the pro-choice groups to back off in order to make the demonstrations more manageable or to save money for the town.

"Categorically not true... We would never ask any organization to back off... Cost was no factor in calling the meeting or part of any discussion that took place in the meeting."



## **Editorial**

### **Pro-choice activists forget about the 'women' in women's rights**

The pro-choice groups had the right idea when they came to Brookline last year—to provide necessary support for women exercising their constitutional right to a safe, legal abortion.

It appears now that their motives were not quite so mature.

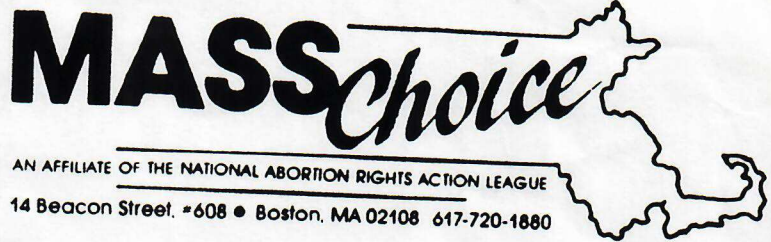
In recent days, police and town officials, as well as clinic directors, have asked the pro-choice demonstrators to deescalate their activities in Brookline.

Local police, the argument goes, have done an excellent job keeping the clinics accessible. But the presence of increasingly militant pro-choice activists is making that job more difficult.

It appears however that NOW's Ellen Convisser is more concerned with the means than the end of this problem. If the anti-abortion demonstrators from Operation Rescue insist on making public nuisances of themselves, according to Convisser's logic, then the pro-choice demonstrators will be equally obnoxious.

The bottom line here is that the town of Brookline has taken every step necessary to ensure women's rights in Brookline—including the use of a racketeering statute against Operation Rescue.

Convisser and other pro-choice demonstrators should accede to the requests of the clinics and police and find another venue at which to score ideological points.



**ABORTION RIGHTS LOBBY DAY**

**Thursday, February 15  
11AM - 5PM  
NURSES HALL, STATE HOUSE**

\*\*\*\*\*

**11 AM**

**SCREENING OF "ABORTION: FOR SURVIVAL"**

Following this powerful 30 minute videotape, Dr. Kenneth Edelin and Lt. Governor Evelyn Murphy will describe further the importance of reproductive rights and the fatal consequences of restricting women's access to abortion.

**12 PM**

**BRIEFING ON PRO-CHOICE LEGISLATION**

Leaders from Mass. Choice, Representative Susan Schur and Representative David Cohen will describe legislative efforts to secure abortion rights in Massachusetts.

**12:30 PM  
- 5 PM**

**CONSTITUENT VISITS**

Pro-choice activists will visit with their legislators to urge support for pro-choice legislation. Please make appointments with your legislators in advance.

\*\*\*\*\*

Marking the 160th birthday of woman's suffrage leader Susan B. Anthony, Mass. Choice, Massachusetts NOW and the Fund for the Feminist Majority will sponsor an Abortion Rights Lobby Day on February 15. The purpose of the Lobby Day is to urge the state legislature to pass several pro-choice bills: the Victims Compensation Amendment; three bills which repeal sections of Chapter 272, Crimes Against Chastity; legislation to protect women's access to clinics and the restoration of abortion coverage for state employees.

For more information on Lobby Day activities, contact Mass. Choice at (617) 720-1880.

Mark your calendars for these important dates:

**Mother and Daughter Speak Out  
Tuesday, June 13 at Noon  
State House Steps  
(Room B-11 in case of rain)**

**Kate Michelman**, Executive Director of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) will join area women and their families in sharing their own personal experiences with abortion. These women will speak to the fact that abortion is a difficult choice women make for compelling reasons.

We will hold a reception with Kate that evening. Please call Mass Choice for more information.



**Rally the Day After the Supreme Court Decision**  
**Noon**  
**State House Steps**  
**Boston**

**Noon**  
**Federal Building**  
**Springfield**

On **THE DAY AFTER** the Supreme Court issues its decision on the Webster case, we will rally in front of the State House at noon and in front of the Federal Building in Springfield at noon. This case poses the most serious threat to abortion rights in America in 16 years.

If it's good news -- if they reaffirm Roe v Wade -- we'll celebrate. If it's bad news, we'll say loudly and clearly that we will not go back to the days when women were forced to endure terror and pain in back alleys. If the Supreme Court gives states greater authority to regulate or prohibit abortion, we will launch our campaign to prevent our state legislature from passing any further restrictions on our right to choose in Massachusetts.

The rally is cosponsored by over 30 pro-choice organizations and pro-choice legislators.

**For more information or to volunteer, call Mass Choice at 617/720-1880.**

## BELLA ENGLISH

Days in court:  
trivial pursuit

**T**HE PHONE CALL CAME AROUND dawn, telling Mary and her husband where the antiabortion forces were assembling. The couple hopped in their car and drove to Gynecare, a reproductive health clinic on Tremont Street.

"It was a very physical demonstration," said Mary, a slender 27-year-old who looks about as threatening as Mother Teresa. "There was a lot of shoving. Police were everywhere."

Mary doesn't want her last name used because Operation Rescue, the antiabortion group, has been known to harass abortion-rights advocates at home. God knows, they harass the poor women going into the clinics, many of them just for a checkup, some - irony of ironies - to get contraceptives to prevent an unwanted pregnancy and, thus, an abortion.

At the rally on Jan. 13, Mary held a sign, "Defend Women's Rights," which she later put down to link arms in front of the police barricades.

All of a sudden, a man from Operation Rescue dove at her feet. "He was on his stomach, on the ground, trying to get through my legs," Mary recalled. She reacted instinctively. "I put my foot on his shoulder and pushed. I did not kick him. I was scared. If he had kept coming, I would have fallen down."

Someone said, "Grab her!" Two officers led Mary to a police wagon. Mary, who had never been arrested, began to cry and said, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry." A cop asked the alleged victim, Steve Darling of Lawrence, if he was OK. "Yeah," Mary heard him reply, "it didn't even hurt."

It is the strategy of Operation Rescue to provoke abortion-rights advocates. It is the strategy of abortion-rights advocates not to be provoked, which is why only three of them - including Mary - have ever been arrested at Operation Rescue rallies.

Mary was booked at the police station, where the officer told her: "You should've stayed home today and made breakfast for your husband." They took her picture. She was charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, her foot. She paid \$25 bail. The husband she should've made breakfast for left the rally to pick her up.

A few days later, she was arraigned in Boston Municipal Court, along with a trillion alleged shoplifters. Several Operation Rescue people were also arraigned on disorderly conduct and assault charges. Judge Theodore Bakas, stating that the court had more serious matters to deal with, offered dismissals. The Operation Rescue people refused. They want their day in court, at our expense.

Mary, being a sensible person, accepted the dismissal. Her attorney cited inadvertence and self-defense. She had to pay \$25 in court costs.

But that afternoon, the prosecutor, Jim Sweeney, took the case back before Bakas, claiming that Darling wanted a trial.

Mary's attorney, Wimberley Burton, is a former assistant district attorney in Essex County. "I have never seen a prosecutor bring a case like this back after it was dismissed," she said. But Sweeney works for Suffolk District Attorney Newman Flanagan, an avid foe of abortion.

Judge Bakas noted that if Darling was such a moral man, surely the prosecution could convince him that the moral thing to do would be not to clog the court system with such trivia. The Boston Municipal Court handles 1,000 criminal cases a month.

Mary goes on trial next week.

It's a familiar story to Susan Newsom, associate director of Planned Parenthood. Newsom, 45, was charged with assault and battery four months after a "rescue" outside a Brookline health clinic. The alleged victim saw Newsom on television as a spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood and then filed charges.

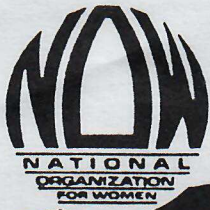
After a two-hour trial, Judge Lawrence Shubow found Newsom not guilty. He found no evidence of an assault and said the incident was "a minor blip on the screen of history." Like Bakas, he questioned why the matter came to court.

Newsom testified she had never laid eyes on her accuser, Marie Henden. Henden's witness, Diane Williams, recalled Newsom and other women demonstrating for abortion rights as "dyke-ish," with "short hair, crew cuts ... wearing jeans and jackets." Newsom, she said, had "an evil-looking face" and "wasn't being a lady."

Luckily, Newsom had a witness, too: the president of Planned Parenthood's board of directors, who was with her at the rally. The ordeal cost Planned Parenthood \$14,000 in attorney fees.

Mary, a sales rep who lives in Dorchester, is paying her own legal bill, on the installment plan. All because she tried to defend women's access to legal abortion, or perhaps a Pap smear.

Now, tell me, who's being assaulted and battered here?



# FREEDOM CARAVAN

for WOMEN'S LIVES

SUNDAY  
MAY 13,  
1990  
Boston

- Step off from the State House at 3:00 p.m.
- March along the Freedom Trail
- Rally at Faneuil Hall, Boston, at 3:45 p.m.

MOTHERHOOD  
BY  
CHOICE!

## Join us on MOTHER'S DAY for a March and Rally

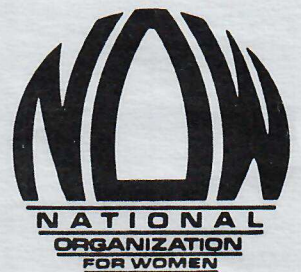
- Defend Women's Access to Abortion and Healthcare
- Fight for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights
- Demand Economic Justice for All

*Keynote Speaker:* Molly Yard, National NOW President  
Ellen Convisser, Boston NOW President, and other speakers

The NOW Freedom Caravan is making stops across the country in support of the struggle for Women's Rights in the 1990's. The Caravan will also stop in other cities and towns across Massachusetts that week. Contact the Boston NOW office for more information or to get involved: (617) 782-1056. (TDD#: 617-787-4393).

Join our Feminist delegation with *Molly Yard* at the WALK FOR HUNGER, May 6. Meet on the Boston Common, corner of Beacon and Charles Streets (by the statue of horses). We will begin at 9:00 a.m.

Boston NOW: 971 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215  
(617) 782-1056 TDD#: (617) 787-4393 Pro-Choice Hotline: (617) 782-4059





FOR ALL WOMEN WHO HAVE DIED FROM  
ILLEGAL ABORTIONS BECAUSE THEY HAD NO CHOICE.

## A CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

TO MARK THE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
SUPREME COURT'S WEBSTER DECISION

THURSDAY, JULY 5, 1990 - 8:00 PM

REMONT & BOYLSTON STREETS, BOSTON  
PROCEEDING TO THE MASS. STATE HOUSE

FOR MORE INFO, CALL (617) 782-1056





FOR ALL WOMEN WHO HAVE DIED FROM  
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PROCEEDING TO THE MASS. STATE HOUSE



## Defeat for Anti-abortionists! Shame of missing Labour MPs

"We have a cast-iron majority for 22 weeks, maybe even 20 weeks."

So claimed Ann Widdecombe many times in the weeks leading up to the historic debate on abortion time limits, even on the morning of the committee stage, which saw a resounding defeat for anti-abortionists' hopes. For years, they have claimed that if only the whole House was given the chance to debate and vote in Government time they would win. They believed that the only thing that lay in their way was the ability of pro-choice MPs to filibuster during private members' bills.

### Second failure

When they lost, they claimed "Foul!" and demanded a replay. They got it - at Report Stage, when another vote was taken to reduce the time limits for abortion on any grounds - including serious risk to the woman's health - to 24 weeks, except for handicap, when they wanted 28 weeks. Again they lost, leaving the situation as at committee stage. That means 24 weeks



for most abortions, but no time limit if the woman's life or health are seriously at risk or if a serious fetal abnormality has been detected.

However, a number of improvements we wanted were also lost. Most overwhelmingly, amendments to extend abortion rights to Northern Ireland and to set up a register of doctors with conscientious objection were defeated.

Much more importantly, votes to make abortion easier to get up to 12 weeks were lost. An amendment put by Jo Richardson to allow a woman to have an abortion if a doctor certified that the pregnancy had not exceeded 12 weeks was clearly defeated by 105 votes, but the "fall-back" position, in an amendment put by Tory MP Emma Nicholson, requiring only one doctor's signature, instead of two as at present (but still requiring that one of the existing 'grounds' was fulfilled) lost by only 28 votes.

### Missing Labour MPs

This is the first time that this issue has ever been put to the vote and even the fall-back position would have represented an important first step towards giving women the choice. We lost because too many of our supporters were not present. More MPs voted as the evening wore on, and if enough Labour MPs had been there on time to vote for what is now policy

things would have been quite different.

Unfortunately, whilst some MPs (Mildred Gordon, Pat Wall) could not be there because of serious illness and others (such as Audrey Wise) had taken steps to be paired with anti-abortionists, others obviously thought that the issue was just not important enough to bother about. Was it any coincidence that both England and Ireland were playing in the World Cup that evening?

However, despite this setback, we can congratulate ourselves on seeing off the anti-abortionists. Given the series of votes during the committee stages and third reading, they can no longer claim that the issue has not had proper time and that the voice of the House has not been heard. It has and clearly they have lost.

### The final vote

At the end of the day, they were able to muster only 65 hard-liners prepared to ignore both Government and opposition whips to vote against the Embryo Bill as a whole. The most serious defeat during the Bill was on the question of donor insemination, when the requirement to take the interests of any potential child into account was strengthened at Report stage to include the need for a father. However, it is thought that this should not stop the agencies who at present help single women and lesbians from wanting to have children.

## INSIDE

The new law:  
what it means

A full analysis of the  
changes

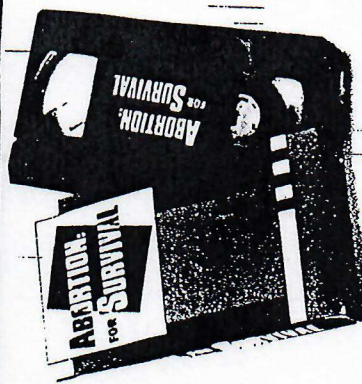
The list of shame: how  
Labour MPs voted

Donor insemination

What next for NAC



# Illegal Abortion Kills One Woman Every 3 Minutes Worldwide. Yet Abortion Foes Call Themselves "Pro-Life."



There is only one way to deal with an issue that has been as distorted as the right to abortion.

Facts.  
Scientific facts. Medical Facts. Legal facts.

*Abortion: For Survival* documents the need for abortion and its importance to women and public health worldwide. Produced by ministers in America as an answer to *The Silent Scream* and *The Eclipse of Reason*, this professionally produced 30-minute video is factual and powerful. It pulls no punches, with its scenes of actual abortions, and descriptions of life (and death) before legal abortion.

The National Abortion Campaign has sole rights of distribution in this country. Buy or hire it today.

Please send me *Abortion: For Survival*.  
Tapes (VHS) £15.00 \_\_\_\_\_  
Viewer guide .50 \_\_\_\_\_  
Postage/handling .50 \_\_\_\_\_  
Bulk rate: 5-10 £12.00 each  
                  over 10 £10.00 each  
SUs and NAC groups: £7.00 each  
Total enclosed: £

You can also hire for £5.00 plus postage, £3.00 for SUs and NAC groups. Contact us for details.

Name ..... Phone No .....  
Address .....  
..... Post code .....

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## NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN

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Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London WC2B 5AU  
01-405 4801

During the passage of the Human Fertilisation and Embryo Bill in Parliament, Kenneth Clarke indicated that he will agree to the licensing of the method. In addition, he accepted an amendment to the Abortion Act which allows him to designate places other than hospitals and licensed clinics for abortion. This means that GPs, Family Planning and Well Women clinics could be allowed to use RU486. Your letters and resolutions should support such a move.

#### What Else We Need

Once this method is introduced, it will show even more clearly the need for women to be able to make the abortion decision themselves, especially in the early months of pregnancy, rather than having to get two doctor's permission - a major cause of delay.

So we need a further change in the law, bringing us into line with most European countries, where women have the right to request abortion at least in the early months.

#### Campaign with NAC

The National Abortion Campaign is the leading pro-choice campaigning for abortion rights for women. The introduction of RU486 is only one of the issues we work around. We are also campaigning for improved contraception and against cuts in family planning provision, for better sex education and for women to be able to get their abortions on the NHS. Join us and campaign for choice.

## JOIN US NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN

I/We wish to affiliate \_\_\_\_\_

Name/organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Name of delegate (if appropriate) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed £ \_\_\_\_\_ affiliation fee and/or £ \_\_\_\_\_ donation

Please make cheques payable to the National Abortion Campaign, and send to:  
NAC, Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London WC2B 5AU

Affiliation rates: Youth membership (under 18), £1.50; Unwaged, £3.50; Low-waged, £6.00; Other waged, £9.00; Youth groups, £7.00; NAC/women's groups/trades councils/FE colleges, £12.00  
Trade unions/Labour Parties/SUs/other local groups, £18.00 National organisations with under 500 members, £40.00; over 500 members £50.00.

## THE ABORTION PILL THE FIGHT FOR RU486

RU486 (the 'abortion pill') has been tested extensively in Britain and other countries and is now used by over one-third of women having abortions in France. Yet it is still not available in this country. Now Rossel, the manufacturing company, has announced that it will apply for a product licence. But it could still take 18 months to two years before it becomes available for women in this country.

#### Anti-abortion pressure

In France, America and Britain anti-abortion campaigners have tried to prevent the introduction of this method. After it became available in France, the company tried to withdraw it following demonstrations by Catholic and far-right groups, but the Minister of Health, calling the drug "the moral property of women", prevented its withdrawal and over 30,000 women have now used the method there. In the States, anti-abortionists and religious fundamentalists have threatened to boycott all Rossel drugs and even French products if there are moves to introduce it there!

In Britain, anti-abortionists have written articles and leaflets claiming that the product is dangerous and harmful to women. Over recent years they have particularly campaigned against late abortions, whilst resolutely opposing all moves to make early abortions easier to obtain - including the introduction of RU486, which is for abortions up to 9 weeks. The truth is they are opposed to all abortions and care little about the very real dangers and harm that would result if women were forced to resort to illegal methods.

We do not claim that RU486 is a perfect and totally problem-free method of abortion, but it has advantages over current methods, particularly the fact that it can be used so early in pregnancy, and above all it increases choice for women.

#### What You Should Do

The Department of Health reports that most of the correspondence they have had giving an opinion on RU486 has been against it. So pro-choice supporters should write to the Department at Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS, urging its early introduction, stressing the long period of testing, and actual use in France. Both individuals and organisations should write.

Write to the Secretary of State for Health Kenneth Clarke at The House of Commons, Westminster, SW1A 0AA along similar lines.

Ask your MP for support and to raise this matter in Parliament.

Pass resolutions in trade unions and political groups calling for support in this campaign.

Write to your local Community Health Council asking them to discuss the issue and support the introduction of the method.

The attack under the embryo research bill is the most serious threat to women's access to legal abortion since the passing of the 1967 Act. STAC is fighting this and needs your help. Other amendments to the embryo bill are attacking the rights of all women to have equal access to donor insemination. STAC is supporting the Campaign for Access to Donor Insemination to oppose this attack.

#### **Events include:**

- **Thursday 8 March, International Women's Day. Rally** in Westminster Central Hall. Doors open 6.30pm, stalls and refreshments. Creche available. Speakers from 7pm, include Jo Richardson MP, Wendy Savage, Diane Abbott MP, Margaret Prosser TGWU, Christine McAnea NALGO, Campaign for Access to Donor Insemination, Progress, National Abortion Campaign, National Union of Students.
  - **Saturday 10 March**, outdoor rally in Brixton and a demonstration in north London, focusing on 'Rescue' attacks on abortion clinics in these areas.
  - Public meetings are being held throughout London in the week. Contact STAC for exact details of all these.
  - **Birmingham Tuesday 6 March. Public Meeting.** New Imperial Hotel, 7.30pm. **Saturday 10 March. Demonstration**, assemble 11am, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham. For more details contact 021 551 5212 or 021 708 0823.
  - **Manchester Saturday 10 March** Demonstration, assemble 11am, All Saints, Manchester. For more details contact 061 223 4470.
  - **Canterbury Saturday 10 March** Demonstration, assemble 2pm, Westgate Gardens, Canterbury.
  - **Bristol Saturday 10 March** Demonstration, assemble 11.30am, College Green, Bristol.
  - **Glasgow Thursday 8 March** Demonstration, assemble 6.30pm, Blytheswood Square, Glasgow. For more details contact 041 945 3943.
  - **Edinburgh** Actions are being organised by the Edinburgh Campaign for Choice. Contact Susan on 031 556 7318.
  - **Scotland** Other events, meetings etc. are being organised in Scotland by local government women's committees. Look out for details or contact 041 945 3943.
- New events are being organised all the time. If nothing is listed here for your area contact the group nearest you or STAC nationally for more information, or organise a meeting or action, invite a speaker, and let us know so that we can publicise it.

**STAC, c/o NAC, 4 Wild Court, London WC2, 01405 4801.**

# Stop the Amendment Campaign

# W e e k o f A c t i o n

**3 - 10 March**

**Anti-abortionists are on the march again**

**Defend women's right to choose!**

Action to oppose attacks by anti abortionists on women's access to legal abortion is being organised all over the country during the **STAC Week of Action, 3-10 March.**

Anti abortion MPs like Ann Widdecombe are trying to use the embryo research bill, which has nothing to do with abortion, to bring about a restriction in the abortion time limits. Outside parliament militant anti abortionists 'Rescue' are attacking abortion clinics and obstructing women and staff from entering them.

**Overleaf is a list of actions that you can support to defeat these attacks and defend women's rights to decide.**

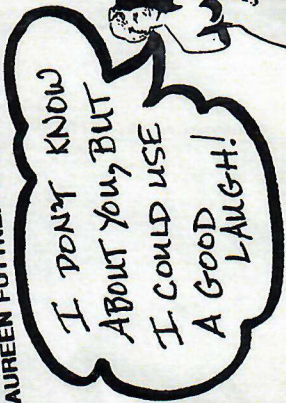
# FOR FRONT

## RO-CHOICE COMEDY

THURS., FRI., SAT.  
AUGUST 23 - 25 at 8pm  
THE BOSTON BAKED  
THEATRE  
255 ELM ST. DAVIS SQ.  
SOMERVILLE

TICKETS: \$10-\$12  
RESERVATIONS:  
(617) 628-9575

FEATURING:  
\*THE HISTORY OF ABORTION AND BIRTH CONTROL  
\*SPERM/EGG WRESTLING THROUGH THE AGES  
\*THE POPE, THROUGH THE AGES  
WITH: KATE NUGENT, K.D. HALPIN,  
MAUREEN FUTTNER & LISA CHANNER



'A ROUSING EVENING!' - The Village Voice

'WICKEDLY FUNNY' - The Valley Advocate

90

## ABOUT SLEEVELESS THEATRE

Sleeveless Theatre is a collective ensemble based in Northampton, MA, which seeks to enhance and educate the community through laughter. We want to go beyond reaching the intellectual sect; we'd like to appeal to the bawdiest elements of our society. But laughter's only the beginning. We hope to learn something, together, about the various injustices, inequities, and insensitivities in the world.

Sleeveless Theatre was formed in July, 1989 when we began creating "WOMB FOR RENT." Since then the company has taken off! In our year together, the ensemble has toured "WOMB" to packed houses throughout the Northeast, offered theatre classes, produced acclaimed San Francisco performer Terry Baum, as well as presenting Terianne Falcone's "TWO BROADS AND AN APPLE: THE STORIES OF PANDORA AND EVE." We are currently creating our next show "WAR: THE COMEDY" which will debut at the Northampton Center for the Arts on September 13-15 & 20-22.

### I WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO SLEEVELESS THEATRE!

By making a donation in one of the following amounts, you will be acknowledged as follows in all our programs for the 90/91 season (Please make checks payable to Sleeveless Theatre.).

_____ \$200	The Apple of Our Eye
_____ \$100	The Cream of Our Coffee
_____ \$50	The Fig of Our Newton
_____ \$25 or less	The Plum of Our Pudding
_____ over \$200	You may be any fruit you wish!

Your tax deductible donation of any amount is greatly appreciated. Please send to:

Sleeveless Theatre  
PO Box 2  
Northampton, MA 01061

# WOMB FOR RENT

Sleeveless Theatre



# WOMB FOR RENT

## A Pro-Choice Comedy

was **CONCEIVED** and **WRITTEN** by  
Lisa Channer, K.D. Halpin, Kate Nugent,  
Terianne Falcone, and Maureen Futtner

**PERFORMED** by  
Kate Nugent            K.D. Halpin  
Lisa Channer            Maureen Futtner

---

**STAGE MANAGER/SYNTHESIZER OPERATOR**  
Alexis Greenblatt

**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**  
Drew Flint

**HOUSE MANAGER**  
Eileen Channer

---

**WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR VERY SPECIAL  
THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE:**

Sarah Whitehead, Lisa Sette, Melody Serino,  
Tone Nunes, Laurie Myers, Stan Gill, Doug  
Feinburg, Rosemarie Falcone, Nancy Eric, Eileen  
Channer, Phil Adamo, and the Arts Community.

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## THE FRIENDS OF SLEEVELESS THEATRE

Without the generous support of our contributors, our tour of "WOMB FOR RENT" would not have been possible. From all of us in the company, thank you!

**THE APPLE OF OUR EYE**  
Thomas F. Futtner

**THE CREAM OF OUR COFFEE**  
Phil Adamo & Melody Serino  
Frank & Maria Falcone  
Joseph Futtner & Nancy Youngblut  
Margaret & Geoff Lobenstine

**THE FIG OF OUR NEWTON**  
Richard Courtney  
Rosemarie Falcone  
Mary Louise Halloran  
Leah Kunkel  
Martha Richards  
S. Rowe & P. Moore

**THE PLUM OF OUR PUDDING**  
Wendy Barnett  
Janet Bissell  
Bruce & Rita Bleiman  
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Elizabeth Carr Adams  
The Common Reader Bookshop  
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Lisa M. McCune-Leduc  
Kathleen Reese  
Thomas Riddell  
Valorie L. Scott  
Amy Stamm  
Valerie Voorheis

# WOMB FOR RENT

## A Pro-Choice Comedy

was **CONCEIVED** and **WRITTEN** by  
Lisa Channer, K.D. Halpin, Kate Nugent,  
Terianne Falcone, and Maureen Futtner

**PERFORMED** by  
Kate Nugent            K.D. Halpin  
Lisa Channer            Maureen Futtner

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**STAGE MANAGER/SYNTHESIZER OPERATOR**  
Alexis Greenblatt

**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**  
Drew Flint

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**HOUSE MANAGER**  
Eileen Channer

**WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR VERY SPECIAL**

**THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE:**

Sarah Whitehead, Lisa Sette, Melody Serino,  
Tone Nunes, Laurie Myers, Stan Gill, Doug  
Feinburg, Rosemarie Falcone, Nancy Eric, Eileen  
Channer, Phil Adamo, and the Arts Community.

### **ACT I: THE PAST & PRESENT**


1. The History of Abortion & Birth Control, Part I
2. A Word from Our Sponsor
3. Sperm/Egg Wrestling
4. An Evening with the Professor
5. History of Abortion & Birth Control, Part II
6. Webster

**THERE WILL BE ONE FIFTEEN MINUTE  
INTERMISSION.**

### **ACT II: THE FUTURE**

1. The Pro-Family Feud
2. Post-Webster Travel
3. The Tug-O'-Woman Contest
4. An Evening with the Professor
5. History of Abortion & Birth Control, Part III
6. Womb for Rent

The audience is invited and encouraged to write their comments about the show in our black Comment Book. The Book will be available for signing during intermission and after the show in the theatre lobby.

 **DO YOU NEED "WOMB FOR RENT" IN  
YOUR AREA OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT?**

**CONTACT:**

Sleeveless Theatre

PO Box 2

Northampton, MA 01061

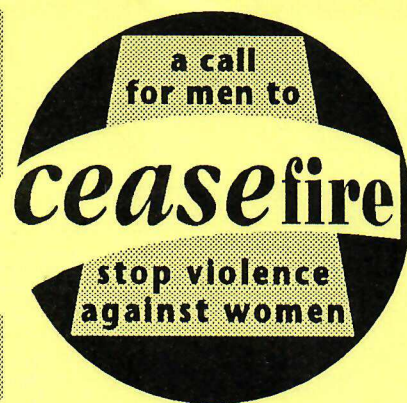
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More than one-third of all women are raped at some time in their lives.

Each year, 3-4 million women are battered in their homes.

Eighty-five percent of all women are harassed in the workplace or in school.

This means a lot of men are raping, battering, and harassing women.



## **ceasefire action week:**

**Monday October 15—Sunday October 21 1990**

This week of events is designed to call attention to the need for men to take responsibility for our sexism and the overwhelming level of violence against women in our society. The week kicks off an

ongoing effort by Boston-area anti-sexist men's groups to confront men to think about the ways in which our attitudes and actions condone and perpetuate this violence.

We encourage men to support the continuing work of women on these issues, to participate in the week's events, and to join in a *ceasefire* to stop violence against women.

### **Monday October 15**

12:00noon

#### **Procession of the Media Wall**

Carrying panels of the Wall through Boston, displaying articles from local newspapers detailing violence against women over the past year.

5:30pm

#### **The Media Wall: Documenting the Violence**

Assembling the panels of the Wall together on the Boston Common. Join us to honor the women whom it represents.

### **Tuesday October 16**

7:30pm

#### **Film and Discussion: Rethinking Rape**

A film about the connection of rape to other forms of abuse against women. Discussion follows. 200 Richards Hall; Northeastern University; 360 Huntington Ave.; Boston. *Free.*

8:00pm

#### **Men's Objectification of Women in Relationships**

Somerville Community Access Television presents a panel discussion on how men benefit from objectifying women in personal relationships. Repeats on Thursday night. Somerville Cable Channels 3 and 22.

### **Wednesday October 17**

7:45pm

#### **Building an Anti-sexist Men's Movement: Conflicts and Challenges**

Discussion of goals and politics of men working against sexism. College students welcome. Also planning protests against Andrew Dice Clay Oct. 24 and 25. Lamont 402; Harvard Yard; Harvard University; Cambridge. *Free.*

### **Thursday October 18**

7:30pm

#### **Interrupting Sexism: Men Confronting Men**

This workshop invites men to share their experience with confrontation and to find successful methods. Hastings Room; First Church in Cambridge, Congregational; 11 Garden St.; Cambridge. *Free.*

### **Friday October 19**

#### **Direct Action Day**

Ad agencies? Toy stores? Video stores? "Adult" bookshops? Political candidates? Andrew Dice Clay? We set aside this day for direct actions and protests. Specific protests, times, and locations to be announced.

### **Saturday October 20**

8:00pm

#### **Informational Leafletting at Football Games**

We go places where large numbers of men gather. Today, we will be leafletting college football crowds in the Boston area. Alumni Stadium at Boston College; other locations to be announced.

#### **Poetry Reading**

This fundraiser for the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center features poets Thylas Moss, Cyrus Cassells, and Deb Oestreicher. Wheelchair accessible; sign-language interpreted. Tickets \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door; available at Grolier Bookshop, New Words Bookstore, and Red Book Store. First Church in Cambridge, Congregational; 11 Garden St.; Cambridge.

#### **BrotherPeace**

Observing three minutes of silence honoring the survivors and commemorating the women, children, and men killed by perpetrators of male violence.

### **Sunday October 21**

3:00pm

#### **Continuing the *ceasefire***

Presentations from local pro-feminist men's groups Men to End Sexual Assault, Real Men, and Emerge. Discussion on organizing into the future. Community Church of Boston; 565 Boylston St.; Boston. *Free.*

*ceasefire* action week is co-sponsored by the local groups Men to End Sexual Assault, Real Men, and Emerge. Call (617) 693-1459 or (617) 232-7326 for more information, or write to MESA at P.O. Box 681, Cambridge, MA 02139.



# WHO IS DAVID SOUTER & WHY ARE YOUR RIGHTS IN DANGER?

President Bush has nominated David Souter to a lifetime seat on the U.S. Supreme Court, replacing Justice William Brennan. Bush is smiling because he thinks he's selected a man so unknown that nobody will be able to criticize Souter. But Bush, like President Reagan before him, has picked a candidate who will fulfill political promises to the ultra-right in this country who would like to get rid of our most cherished civil rights and civil liberties. Bush has been pretending that he doesn't know Souter's views on specific issues. Don't be fooled by Bush's lips this time. We want judges who will be wise, humane and just. Souter's life and his work show that he is none of these things, and we are angry that the President has chosen him for the Supreme Court.

If you care about:

- \* Ending Discrimination,
- \* A woman's right to decide whether and when to have a child,
- \* Keeping the Government out of your bedroom,
- \* The rights of working people,
- \* Freedom of Speech,
- \* The right to be free from police abuses,
- \* Equality of all people.

Then join us in a protest against the Souter nomination.



**TURN OUT FOR JUSTICE**  
Gather at Park Street Station  
Wednesday, September 12, 5:00 p.m.  
March to Downtown Crossing



**Look for 9 Justices in black robes & Reagan & Bush masks**

Sponsored by: MA Chapter, National Lawyers Guild; Reproductive Rights Network; Boston NOW  
For more info call: 782-1056 (NOW), 868-7842 (R2N2), 227-7335 (NLG)

## **MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN!**

Call Senator Edward Kennedy, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which will hold hearings on the Souter nomination, at (617) 585-3170.

Call Senator John Kerry at (617) 565-8519.

Write to the Boston Globe (135 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02107-2378), the Boston Herald (One Herald Square, Boston, MA 02106), and local papers.

Write to the Senate Judiciary Committee, Suite 224, Dirksen Senate Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.

**Act Soon - Senate Confirmation Hearings begin September 13th.**

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### Operation Rescue Morning

After reading aloud from the civil injunction against Operation Rescue, I turned the corner hurriedly, leaving the police to deal with the thirty or so men and women blockading Preterm's front door. The crowd of anti-choice protestors seemed dizzy with their effort, scavenging the sidewalk and T-stop for patients arriving for 7:00 am appointments.

If she had not fallen on her knees, perhaps I wouldn't have noticed her through all the commotion. It was the crowd at ground level that caught my eye. Her cries were loud, but interrupted and disjointed with gasps for air. She wouldn't, perhaps couldn't, let go of her husband's shins. She was surrounded by anti-choice protestors hurling insults, offering advice in high-pitched, desperate screeches. It seemed they were more interested in hearing themselves than being heard.

The slurs, threats and promises continued as her husband and a police officer pulled her from the ground. Kathy, a counselor/medical assistant, cut through the tight pack and stood behind the couple, arms outstretched, as if spotting for a gymnast. I moved ahead of them to help the other officers pry open the gate. Before blockading the front door, Operation Rescue had chained the gate and back door with kryptonite locks. Staff and patients were squeezing, one by one, through a small opening.

Her walk from the sidewalk to the gate was painfully slow. Although the angry crowd did not follow her onto private property, their cries grew louder and their promises turned to curses as they realized they were unable to stop her.

Their attention was short-lived, and they turned quickly to a car pulling into a metered spot along the street. A woman was sitting in the front seat, hiding her face in her hands and waiting for her boyfriend to come around and open her door. Shuffling for change at the meter, he watched his girlfriend as the protestors plastered the window of the passenger side. Joanne, a volunteer escort, pulled quarters from her pocket. She slipped two in the slot and cranked.

"Let's deal with this later," she said. "When you open the door, let's just keep walking. The gate around back is open and only a few yards away."

"Move away from the car," he said to the group. They ignored him. Breath, literature and photos smudged the glass. "Gimme a break. Let her out of the car." No one moved.

He reached through to the handle anyway and pulled on the weighted door. The woman in the front seat was showered with pamphlets and photos. She sat up and turned her legs to the curb.

*-continued on page four*



*Sheryl Schrepf, Executive Director, joined the Preterm staff in June.*

### Clinic News

- Sheryl Schrepf joined the Preterm staff as Executive Director on June 15, 1990. Sheryl brings sixteen years of experience in non-profit management with the YWCA and shelter programs for battered women. She has an MSW from the University of Nebraska.
- The "morning-after-pill" is available by appointment at Preterm. For more information, call our Health and Information Line at (617) 738-6210.
- The first violation of Massachusetts' criminal justice injunction against those organizations and persons who trespass on or blockade access to abortion clinics occurred at Preterm on August 10, 1990.
- "Preterm: Vision 2000," Preterm's first staff development day in several years, provided an opportunity for staff to share concerns and participate in long range program planning. Guest speakers, informal workshops, and small discussions focused on envisioning Preterm's mission for the coming decade.
- "Rescue Relief '90," the second annual gathering of Boston area abortion providers, will be held this month. Preterm staff initiated this event in 1989, after several months of anti-choice demonstrations and blockades at area clinics. This year's evening program includes a performance of portions of *Womb for Rent*, potluck dinner, and ample time for networking.

## Since the Little Brownstone House

Preterm opened as a Gynecological/Family Planning Clinic in May, 1972, in a little brownstone apartment house in Brookline, Massachusetts. It offered an innovative concept in feminist health care delivery - counseling with medical services. The staffing was small, no more than twelve, but its goal was expansive: Preterm was determined to educate women about reproduction and provide high quality medical care at low cost to patients. Even today, no woman is denied services due to inability to pay.

On January 22, 1973, the very same day that the Supreme Court legalized abortion in *Roe vs. Wade*, Preterm obtained a license and performed its first abortions in a free-standing clinic. In August, 1973, Preterm moved to the present facility. The major task in the early seventies was to make Preterm's existence known to the community and to promote public acceptance of women's right to safe and legal abortion services.

During those early years, we fought the battle of acceptance in the community, courts, and bureaucracies. Preterm made significant contributions in the field of reproductive health care through advances in research and the delivery of health care. As a leader in the field of reproductive health, Preterm continues to network with feminist and reproductive rights organizations, family planners, and health care providers locally, nationally, and internationally.

### Abortion Services

Preterm has grown considerably since its days in the little brownstone house. Today, with a staff of close to one hundred, Preterm is the largest licensed, non-profit clinic in New England, performing 10,000 abortions each year. Over 98% of the procedures are performed in the first trimester; however, second trimester services are also available. The abortion clinic provides medical screening, one-on-one individual counseling, a full staff of nurses, female and male doctors, and 24-hour on-call medical staff. Medical assistants are also trained counselors; this unique structure assures that patients in counseling will also receive the expertise of an individual who has intimate knowledge of the medical procedure, and patients in procedure receive the sensitivity and support of an experienced counselor. Patients who are uncertain of their decision or want to involve partners or family members in counseling may decide to see Preterm's pregnancy counselor, a staff person with over 13 years of experience. All Preterm services are private and confidential.

## The Gynecology Clinic

Preterm's Gynecology Clinic offers post-abortion check-ups, free pregnancy testing for walk-in clients, and a full range of gynecological services including a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) clinic for women and men. Health educators in the Gynecology Clinic offer birth control education and options, including the cervical cap and "morning-after-pill" which are not widely available elsewhere. An information and referral phone line, (617) 738-6210, is staffed Monday-Friday, 8 am - 8 pm (Saturdays, 8 am - 3 pm). Deaf patients have TTY access to Preterm's services by calling (617) 739-6639.

### Sterilization Services

Preterm also has sixteen years of experience in providing sterilization services for men and women. Highly regarded by referral agencies and the medical community, the tubal ligation and vasectomy clinics have seen over 6,000 women and 5,000 men since 1975. Unlike the traditional "closed" laparoscopy, tubal ligations at Preterm are done without sharp instruments on an outpatient basis. Preterm's innovative "no-scalpal" vasectomy, first developed in China and used there by over 20 million men, is also performed on an outpatient basis with local anesthesia. The failure rate for the sterilization clinic's tubal ligations and vasectomies is extremely low. The vasectomy clinic also provides vasectomy reversals on an outpatient basis with local anesthesia; the success rate of this procedure is high, with the return of viable sperm in every case and a 70% pregnancy rate.

### Outreach and Education

Community education on health and reproduction augments the clinical services. The outreach coordinator is a frequent guest at area high schools and colleges where she is invited to provide information about birth control, reproduction, abortion, and reproductive rights, and several area hospitals send physicians and nurses to Preterm for supplemental training. As a frequent focus of the local and national media, Preterm is also in a unique position to influence public opinion in this ongoing struggle to preserve women's reproductive freedom.

The history of Preterm is dynamic. We continue to challenge the limitations of reproductive health care, to hold fast to the principle of choice, and to keep our promise to all women - the promise of quality health care regardless of ability to pay.

## Supporting Every Woman

Andrea came to Preterm a year ago, a few days after Thanksgiving. A battered woman for more than five years, she was nervous that her husband would somehow find her. Andrea had intended to leave him in December, she had even put together a plan. It had taken more than a year, but little by little, she had saved enough money to escape to the west coast to start over. This unplanned pregnancy had changed everything. She took the money she had saved and decided to have an abortion. She knew a child would increase her dependency, but at the same time, an abortion would deplete her savings and make it impossible for her to leave. The obstacles seemed insurmountable and, yet, Andrea never considered asking for financial assistance. The counselor who met with Andrea before the procedure soon realized that Andrea was sacrificing her chance to escape her abuser in order to terminate the pregnancy. Preterm refunded Andrea's money and provided the abortion free of charge.

Michelle was afraid to tell her parents that she was pregnant. Still a minor at seventeen, she had obtained court consent in order to seek an abortion. With her boyfriend's help, she managed to scrape together a little more than half the cost of an abortion. Preterm provided the remainder of the fee, and arrangements were made for Michelle to repay the "loan" at a rate she was comfortable with, \$5 each month, to be returned to the Everywoman's Fund.

Janice was barely managing to support herself and her two children. Her part-time job in the evenings just covered the monthly expenses. The rent payment was overdue. She knew she could not afford another child, but she did not know how she could afford an abortion either. She also knew that the problem would not go away by itself. She took the rent money and made an appointment at Preterm. Feeling hopeless and desperate, Janice explained her situation to her counselor. Preterm provided the abortion free of charge.

Though the names have been changed, these three stories are true. They testify to the realities of reproductive freedom today. As federal funding is eliminated and Medicaid allocations limited, more and more women find themselves without real reproductive choices. Poor women, women of color, teenagers, single mothers, and disabled women are already suffering because of the current siege on abortion rights. Preterm is not satisfied with organizing only for the future; everyday we respond to the needs of women whose reproductive choices are severely restricted now. Our *Everywoman's Fund* enables Preterm to provide free health care to women who could otherwise not afford these services. Each year, almost \$400,000 is used for women like Michelle, Janice, and Andrea through Preterm's *Everywoman's Fund*. At Preterm, pro-choice is more than an ideology - it is a reality which we help create for all women.

In the face of daily harassment by anti-choice demonstrators, a conservative majority on the Supreme Court, Operation Rescue, and a barrage from the media, we are more determined than ever to strengthen our *Everywoman's Fund*.

**We need your help to expand this vital service. This year, Preterm will provide more than \$375,000 in free care, an amount that is raised through individuals and organizations. All of this income is spent on direct patient care, primarily abortion and gynecological services. Your tax-deductible donation to Preterm's *Everywoman's Fund* will help provide reproductive options for women. In doing so, your donation also challenges anti-choice efforts to control women's sexuality, reproduction, and lives.**

**PLEASE help us with this vital fundraising effort by giving a gift in any amount - to show that you support reproductive freedom for all women.  
Make your check payable to Preterm and mail it in the enclosed envelope.**

*On behalf of women everywhere, thank you !*

Preterm Health Services, 1842 Beacon Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146

## Operation Rescue (cont. from pg. 1)

"Leave me alone," she said quietly. "Just get away." Amy, one of the regular protestors at Preterm known for touching and jostling patients and staff, was closest to the car.

"Get away from me, just get away," said the woman. "Don't come near me."

Amy was slightly in front of her, trying to keep the pace slow. "We-can-give-you-anything-you-need-free-housing-medical-care-counseling . . ."

"I said leave me alone."

Amy began her slow and rehearsed chorus of misinformation.

"Just get away."

She brought Jesus and God into the picture.

"Just leave me alone," the woman repeated. Nearing the gate, she began to cry. Ignoring her tears, Amy kept the fear tactics coming.

Around the front, the arrests had begun. A strained, off-key rendition of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" began to swell up from the crowd as they watched their leaders and risk-takers being lifted from the entrance area. The heavier ones usually sit at the front of the blockade to wear out the officers. Kaylah, an administrative assistant, was taking notes for legal records and watching as the cops heaved in unison in an effort to avoid the inevitable. They'd be exhausted by the time they actually got to the door.

Inside, the community relations coordinator, Fran, sat with a woman who had walked from her car. The woman's hands were shaking too much to hold her tea.

"I told her to leave me alone. I kept telling her," she said. "How can she do that? Why don't you get rid of them?"

"We can't," began Fran.

I relieved Kaylah at the front door and stood quietly, peering through the glass and over the heads of the squatting blockaders to the crowd. The worst would be over soon, I knew, but I felt trapped and anxious. My anger was nudging at me to say something hateful, or at least sarcastic. I closed my eyes instead.

"Sleeping on the job?" It was the sister of a woman who had just made it through the back gate. My eyes opened, and we both imitated a casual laugh.

"Did you get in okay?" I asked.

"It was crazy. I mean, you all told us there would be a demonstration, but this is ridiculous." She motioned to the front stairs. "Do they do this all the time?"

"Well, this blocking the door stuff is about a year old. But there have been protestors here for more than fifteen years. Sometimes just a handful, sometimes hundreds."

"It can't be legal."

"Blocking the door isn't, and that's why they're getting arrested. It's not legal for them to touch patients



*A crowd of anti-choice protestors during a September demonstration.*



*Pro-choice supporters often counter-demonstrate.*

either . . ." She cut me off.

"But two of them touched my sister. They grabbed her arm; one tried to hold her hand."

"I don't know what to tell you. Technically, it's illegal. She could press charges, but they'd have a right to know their accuser. It puts your sister in a tough spot, and they know it."

She let out a short breath, rolled her eyes, and leaned against the wall. "Can't you people press charges?"

"We try to keep them from trespassing, and we work with community organizations to educate people about what's really happening to women coming in here."

"Can't you change your hours around? Maybe that would throw them off."

"Then how would our patients find us?" We laughed again, out of stress and nerves.

"You could move," she suggested.

"No," I smiled at the thought of it. "We're not going anywhere."

"Thanks," She crossed her arms in front of her chest and shifted her weight against the wall. "Thanks a lot."