



Ventura County Commission for Women

Spring 1985

VCCW Issues

Surveying the women of Ventura County



The Commission for Women asked the women of Ventura County to talk about themselves in a series of public hearings held earlier this spring.

Testimony from women throughout Ventura County was accepted in Simi Valley, at the Government Center in Ventura, at Santa Paula City Hall and at Oxnard City Hall. All hearings were open to the public.

In its first three years of existence as an advisory body to county supervisors on issues concerning women, the Commission For Women focused its energies on child care, National Women's History Week, analysis of legislation affecting women, publication of a newsletter, and an annual banquet honoring local women and their accomplishments.

"As these tasks proceeded, the Commission questioned and discussed what projects to recommend to the Board of Supervisors as priority issues impacting significant numbers of women in the county," explained Dorothy Engel of Thousand Oaks, co-chair for the Commission.

"Our discussions resulted in a conviction that the most effective way to discover such priorities was to conduct a study or survey in which we receive information about themselves directly from the women of the county," she said.

The essential problem, the Commission discovered, is lack of information about the women of Ventura County. "There is a temptation to simply list 'issues' which commissioners may be personally interested in or concerned about, and develop

(Continued Page 3)

CALENDAR

J • U • N • E / J • U • L • Y

June

**Sat.
15**

Commission for Women, 9 a.m., Public Social Services Agency Training Facility, 77 N. California St., Ventura.

**Tues.
18**

The Friends of the Commission, 7:30 p.m., PSSA District Office, 2220 Ventura Blvd., Camarillo.

**Tues.
18**

16th National Convention, National Association of Commissions for Women, Hilton Hotel, Pasadena. Runs from Monday through Friday. For more information, call Martha Baskerville at (805) 652-6411.

**Wed.
19**

Welcoming Tea, National Association of Commissions for Women, for NACW delegates and invited guests, 3 to 5 p.m., Pacifica Asia Museum.

**Mon.
24**

Women's Equity Coalition, 7:30 p.m., Santa Barbara Savings and Loan, 425 Arneill Road, Camarillo.

July

**Mon.
1**

Salute To Women Deadline for nominations. Forms are available from the Commission office. Call (805) 652-6411.

**Sat.
6-7**

Soroptimist International of the Conejo. Luncheon to preview film entitled "Battered Wives". Proceeds go to Interface Domestic Violence Program. For more information call the Commission office at (805) 652-6411.

**Tues.
16**

The Friends of the Commission, 7:30 p.m., PSSA District Office, 2220 Ventura Blvd., Camarillo.

**Sat.
20**

Commission for Women, 9 a.m., Public Social Services Agency Training Facility, 77 N. California St., Ventura.

**Mon.
22**

Women's Equity Coalition, 7:30 p.m., Santa Barbara Savings and Loan, 425 Arneill Road, Camarillo.



Details

The Ventura County Re-Entry Center helped over 250 students register in school this past semester, according to Dr. Priscilla Partiridge de Garcia, program coordinator.

The Re-Entry Center, which got its start three years ago, evolved from the Women's Center at Ventura College. "The focus of the Women's Center was re-entry to college for women who had missed the opportunity of higher education for a number of domestic and social reasons," explained Dr. de Garcia, whose list of credentials qualifies her as an expert in academic, family and marriage counseling.

The Women's Center was renamed the Re-Entry Center and now caters to both men and women who, for various reasons, were unable to attend college after high school graduation.

"The two main goals of the program are getting the student back in school and keeping him or her there," Dr. de Garcia said.

For additional information about the Ventura College Re-Entry Center, call (805) 642-3211 or 656-7016, Ext. 286.

If you would like to have your non-profit organization's meetings or events listed in the *Calendar*, please send the information to the Commission for Women office, 3161 Loma Vista Road, Ventura, CA 93003. The newsletter is published bimonthly.

For additional information on any of these programs, contact the Commission for Women office at (805) 652-6411.



Women's History Week

The Commission, in conjunction with women's organizations throughout the country, drafted a proclamation for various cities and school districts within Ventura declaring March 3 - 9 Women's History Week in Ventura County.

The Commission helped to publicize the week and encouraged other groups, schools, museums and libraries to develop relevant materials during the month of March.

On the career path — from Miss to Ms.

The Ventura County Professional Women's Network (VCPWN) is sponsoring an ambitious mentor project.

In fact, the project was so special, it earned an article by Rose Robinson in the February 1985 issue of the nationwide *Ms.* magazine.

The network, a county organization with over 300 professional members, helps teenage women learn about their potential vocations through a mentor project.

The network's program is designed to promote personal and professional growth by matching VCPWN members with students who are interested in exploring career options.

The big incentive this past year for

junior and senior young women who wanted to experience the professional world firsthand was the \$3,000 scholarship that was divided among those participants whose project won first prize in a year-end competition, according to Diane Koranda, one of VCPWN's founders and a past president.

The network contacted 23 high schools in the county, and received participants from eight of those schools.

The program began with 25 students divided into five teams, each choosing a project by consensus. For example, one group interested in journalistic careers decided to publish a magazine.

Another team designed a needed

community teen center. One team member, Gina Granados, was shy in the beginning when she had to go to the adult recreation center and county offices for information on obtaining permits, planning a budget and assessing space requirements. She ended up using her family's computer to work out floor plans, determine operating costs and to prepare final reports.

Although Granados' team won the scholarship money, the Network surprised all the other participants with a \$50 savings bond.

But the real benefit, *Ms.* magazine notes was, "was the hands-on experience these young women gained through the guidance of mentors."

Needs assessment survey provides focus

(From Page 1)

projects to deal with some or all of these." Engel said. "We want to resist this temptation, however, and gain direct knowledge of the needs and strengths of our female population."

By undertaking a needs assessment of the women of the county, the Commission hopes to:

- Determine who the women of Ventura County are;
- Learn what are the issues which confront them daily;
- Determine which of these issues seem most oppressive, insurmountable or difficult to resolve;
- Find out what services are already available through public and private agencies and groups to deal with these issues;
- Find out what services are unavailable or inadequate to the felt needs of the community;
- And set the priorities for the Commission for Women and the Commission on Human Concerns to work on for the remainder of the decade.

"The objective of such a countywide undertaking is to provide the Commission for Women, the Commission for Human Concerns, and the Board of Supervisors with clear, concise information which is community-wide, illustrating the needs and concerns of all women. This data is presently not available and is necessary in order to plan effectively," said Alicia Ramirez-Brewer of Fillmore, the other co-chair.

She noted that the Commission for Women hopes to use the needs assessment for better overall planning, based on information which the group currently does not have.

With this information, the Commission can project at least a five-year plan of specific programs based on the data collected.

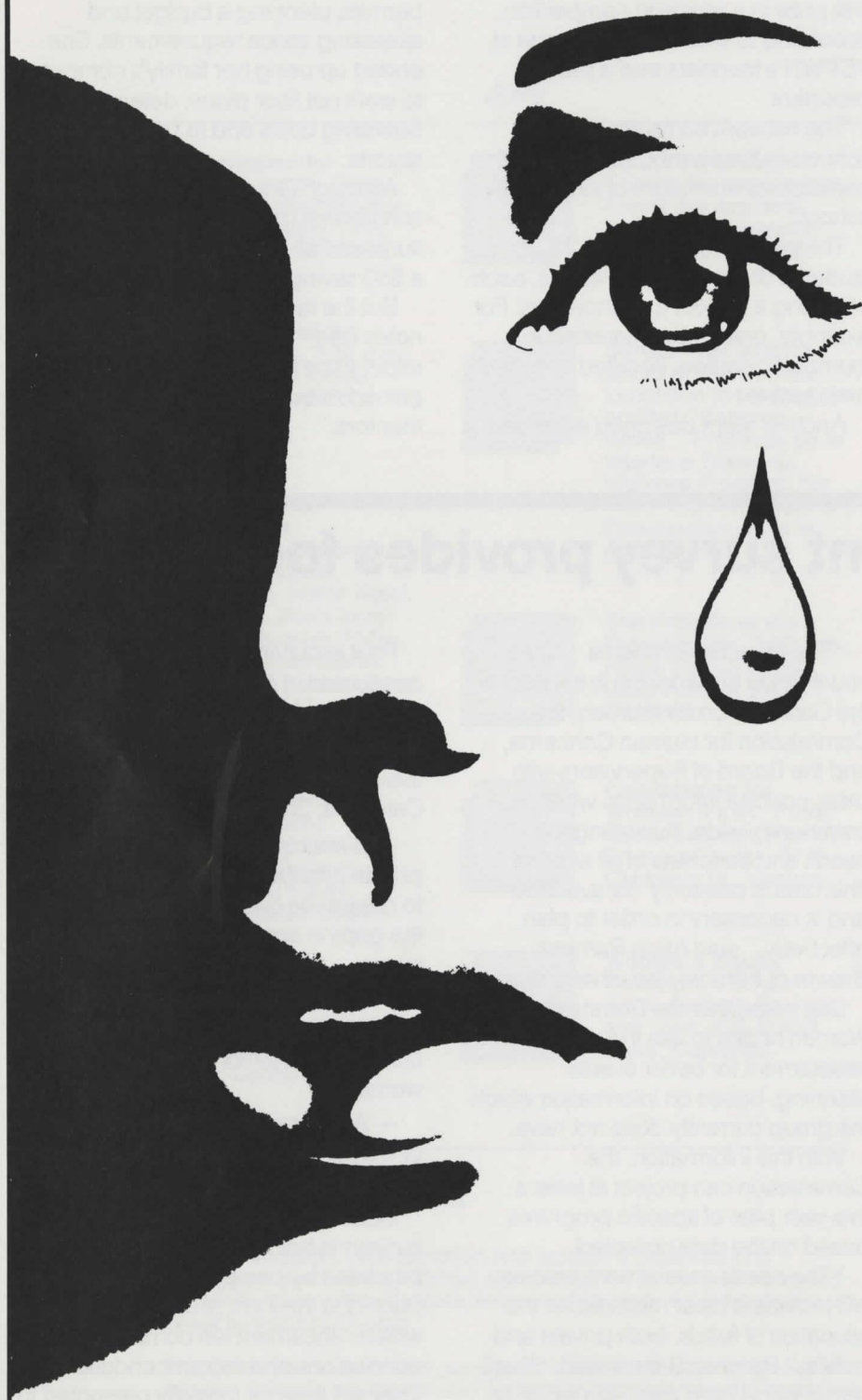
"The needs assessment process will provide a clear rationale for the allocation of funds, both private and public," Ramirez-Brewer said. "It will also provide hard data with which to support expenditures and refute allegations of waste and irrelevance."

Four simultaneous studies were conducted in April. These included:

- Obtaining relevant 1980 census data on women in Ventura County, available through the University of California, Davis;
- A mail questionnaire to public and private providers of services to women to determine both what is provided and the gaps in services of which they are aware;
- A series of public hearings at several locations around the county to collect oral testimony directly from women;
- And a random telephone survey of women with a predetermined set of questions.

Data collected through these surveys is being analyzed and tabulated by computer with the results printed in the form of a report. This written document will contain findings, conclusions and recommendations. They will then be formally presented to the county Board of Supervisors in June.

A crying shame: d



The phones have been ringing more than ever at women's shelters across the nation since actress Farrah Fawcett appeared in the TV movie, "The Burning Bed."

Many women in Ventura County, and elsewhere across the nation, identified with the plight of the battered woman in that movie.

"In January alone of this year, 23 women were housed by us. Many came after having seen 'The Burning Bed' on TV," said Val Michaelis, former executive director of the Coalition Against Household Violence (CAHV).

Last year, CAHV housed 91 women and 120 children in their shelter in Ventura.

The problem of battering is shocking — and real. For example:

- Fifty percent (50%) of all marriages in the country will have at least one incidence of domestic violence.

- Ten to twenty-five percent (10-25%) of marriages have ongoing violence. Battering happens at all socio-economic levels. The higher socio-economic levels may have even more because it is not as generally reported.

- Twenty percent (20%) of all women seen in hospital emergency rooms are battered. According to the U.S. Attorney General, battering is the single major cause of injury to women, exceeding rapes, muggings and even auto accidents.

- One-third of female homicide victims are killed by their husbands.

- Sixty to eighty percent (60-80%) of young men who are in jail for murder are there for murdering their mother's abuser.

- Twenty-three percent (23%) of

Domestic violence

police officers killed in the line of duty are on domestic violence calls.

The Coalition Against Household Violence was founded in 1976. Initially the service consisted of a 24-hour hotline but was expanded in 1982 when a shelter was opened in Ventura. The shelter is a six bedroom, two-story house. Three bedrooms are used for clients; three are used by the staff and managers. Eleven women and their children can be accommodated for a total of 17 individuals.

CAHV still operates a 24-hour crisis hotline and has a drop-in counseling center located in the old Mounds School in Ventura. Individual, family and group counseling is offered. One of the important counseling groups is play therapy for children.

Not all batterers are male. There is a group of women batterers, the CAHV reports, who make up five percent of all batterers. The CAHV supports a number of planned counseling groups such as Batterers Anonymous for Men, a support group for women who have left a battering situation, assertiveness training and stress reduction.

The current staff includes executive director Elaine Herzog, two shelter managers and a half-time secretary. A volunteer coordinator was recently added, and there are plans to add another counselor.

"Women stay in a battering situation for many reasons," Michaelis said. "They fear their husbands or lovers can get to them no matter where they go. They hope things will get better. They are often financially dependent with no money and no job skills. They believe the success of the marriage is up to them; things would be fine if they could only find the key, the right way to

behave or the way to change him. They're also afraid of losing their children to a more powerful husband if they divorce."

CAHV counselors tell clients right away that the battering is not their fault. It has nothing to do with who they are. They just happen to be there.

Women who stay in a battering situation may have been abused as a child or seen their mother abused, and have a sense that "this is what people who love you do to you." Most men who are batterers were abused as children. A cycle of child abuse/spouse abuse exists and must be broken.

Many women do not seek help because they are embarrassed and think they are the only ones with the problem, according to Michaelis.

Batterers are controllers who often control every aspect of their wives' existence. It is difficult for women who do leave a battering situation to begin to handle things for themselves, such as finding a place to live, handling a checking account, planning and shopping for meals."

CAHV needs volunteers to help with these things, to give support to women who move out on their own.

The Coalition has learned that after an arrest, the number of violent incidents drop.

If your organization is interested in learning more about this problem, contact the Coalition Against Household Violence to request that Herzog share information with your group. "Just hearing about the extent of the problem may encourage someone who is being battered to seek help," Michaelis said.

Help end the pain

The Rape and Sexual Abuse Center of Ventura County is seeking women who are interested in working with the Child Assault Prevention Program (CAPP) and as Volunteer Crisis Workers in the Hispanic community.

The complete CAPP program includes two adult workshops to educate parents, teachers and community members about child sexual assault and prepares them to respond effectively to a child in crisis. A complete description of the children's workshop is given so that adults involved (parents and teachers) are aware of what is presented in the classroom.

The children's workshop includes a one-hour workshop focusing on the children's problem-solving ability to help them identify and diffuse potentially dangerous situations. The emphasis of the workshop is the child's right to be safe, strong and free.

Women who have time to share between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, even a half day a week, are sought as a CAPP volunteer. If you are able to volunteer or know of someone who might be willing to volunteer, contact the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center at (805) 987-0428.

Bilingual persons interested in being trained as a Volunteer Crisis Worker are also needed.

Employer-assisted child care encouraged

Employer-assisted child care reaps high dividends. The benefits to both employer and employee are evidenced by increased attendance and production, reduced turnover and increased profit.

Following a year-long study, the Ventura County Commission for Women, working closely with the Private Industry Council, found that:

- Approximately 500 companies across the nation are actively involved in child care assistance; about one-fifth of these have on-site child care centers.

- Simi Valley Adventist Hospital is the first employer in Ventura County to establish a child care center.

- Zale Corp. determined that its on-site child care center has reaped numerous benefits including easier recruitment, greater retention and improved morale of the parental work force.

- Intermedics Inc., Texas, recorded a 23 percent decrease in employee turnover after establishing an on-site center.

- Polaroid Corp., Mass., instituted a sliding-scale voucher plan to assist employees with the cost of child care.

- Stride Rite Children's Center, Boston, cited as a model throughout the nation, started its center with \$25,000.

- Pacific Mutual Insurance, Newport Beach, initiated a vendor system that gives a 20 percent discount to employees.

"Statistics verify the growing number of working families in America. Child

care is now a concern in the workplace as well as the home," said Dorothy Engel, co-chairperson of the Commission.

In 1990, it is projected that 77 percent of all women with children under six years of age will be working.

In 1982, 58 percent of working women had school-age children; 55 had a child under six. In 1981, 93 percent of all families were *not* the monogamous, male bread winner, multi-child, nuclear family.

Also in this same year, statistics showed that one out of five unemployed women was unemployed because she was unable to make satisfactory child care arrangements.

Locally, the Commission cites many examples of how employers are assisting their employees with child care.

- Great Pacific Iron Works/Patagonia, Ventura, provides an on-site center which stresses a quality program for infants, preschoolers and after-school children.

- The Family Connection, San Fernando, a consortium which includes First Interstate Bankcard and Simi Valley Adventist Hospital, subsidizes costs of an off-site center for employees. A state grant will subsidize child care for low-income parents who work the late shift.

- Horace Mann Infant Toddler Preschool Center, Burbank, is a consortium of two public and five

private companies who participate in proportion to their contribution.

- Warner Center, San Fernando Valley, scheduled to open in September 1985, is a consortium of eight firms whose labor force is 70 percent female and who want a recruitment advantage.

- Raytheon Corp., Newbury Park, is examining child care options for its employees.

- The County of Ventura will staff a child care resource and referral desk for its employees.

"There are many ways an employer can assist with child care," Mrs. Engel said.

"For example, they could offer information and referral, providing information on existing child care in the community. Or, employers can establish a network of day care homes in the community and provide encouragement and training for potential child care services."

The employer can guarantee space for its employees' children in an existing program by assisting with the cost. An employer can sponsor a facility at or near the employee's place of work and assist with the costs.

"Employer assisted child care is the next step in effective management," Engel said.

If you would like more information, please contact the Ventura County Commission for Women at (805) 652-6411.

VCCW launches child-care campaign

The Ventura County Commission for Women is launching a second-stage campaign to interest area employers in assisting employees with child care and to inform them of the options available to them.

After an initial informational mailing to employers, commissioners and other volunteers will follow up with interviews and presentations to employers throughout the county.

The campaign will include:

- A mailing to a selected list of employers with a brochure and cover letter requesting an interview with a top manager;

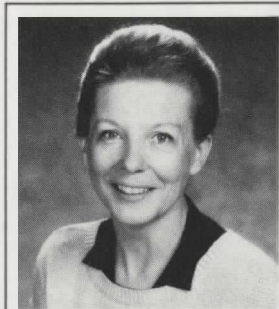
- A training session for presentation teams of two to fill requests for interviews;

- A kit of presentation materials with overhead transparencies for teams to use in interviews;

- An intensive June/July time schedule for presentations.

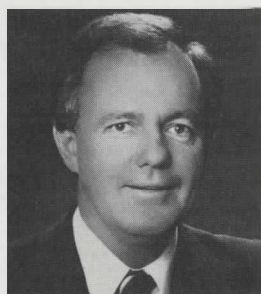
Ventura County Board of Supervisors

(Appointees to the commission follow the supervisors' names)



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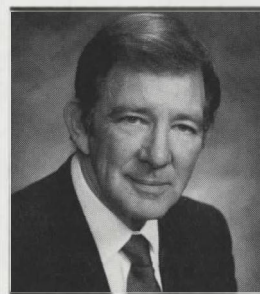
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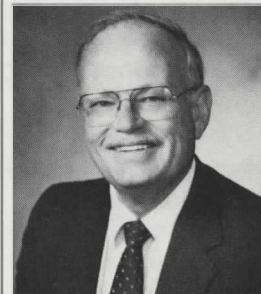
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Rape and sexual abuse center offers help for victims

The Rape and Sexual Abuse Center of Ventura County provides a positive learning experience about topics that thrive on secrecy and misinformation.

"The general public is becoming aware of the frequency of sexual abuse or assault and they want information that is accurate and empowering," said Janice Harper, executive director of the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center of Ventura County.

"Our goal is to end sexual victimization that is perpetuated by ignorance, silence and denial."

The Rape and Sexual Abuse Center provides crisis intervention counseling, follow-up, accompaniment and support services to victims of sexual assault, their family and friends.

The Center also provides sexual assault awareness and prevention education to all age groups. "The goal of the Center's programs is to prevent victimization of children and adults through education," Harper said.

Programs focus in four areas: child assault prevention; adolescent sexual

assault prevention; sexual assault survivor sessions; and rape awareness and prevention programs.

In its children's workshops, the Center emphasizes the child's right to be safe, strong and free. One-hour workshops are given to children at schools and in groups focusing on their problem-solving ability to identify and diffuse potentially dangerous situations.

The sentences in Strategies for Free Children are powerful and direct:

"Our failure to protect children from sexual assault begins with our lack of information about how, when and why it happens. Only by understanding child sexual assault can we hope to develop realistic prevention strategies."

Adult workshops are also conducted to educate parents, teachers and other community members about child sexual assault and to prepare them to respond effectively to a child in crisis.

Ideally, the Center prefers to spend four or five class sessions working with adolescent students with lecture, role

play and guided group discussion.

The Center conducts a series of one-and-a-half hour sessions for sexually abused or assaulted victims. These groups are co-facilitated by a licensed therapist and a representative from the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center.

And, the Center offers a one-hour program designed for adults. Topics covered include myths and realities of sexual assault; stranger and acquaintance rape; the victim personality; prevention and diversionary tactics.

This program, called the Rape Awareness and Prevention Program, is designed for employee groups and social, civic and church organizations. "The emphasis of the program is placed on reducing the incidence of sexual assault through awareness and assertiveness training," Harper said.

For additional information or to serve as a volunteer, contact the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center of Ventura County, 484 Mobil Ave., Suite 38, Camarillo or call (805) 987-0428.

Nominees sought

Nominations are now open for the Ventura County Commission for Women's fourth annual "Salute to Women" awards presentations.

This year the Commission will recognize up to 14 women, each of whom has made an outstanding contribution to improving the quality of life in Ventura County.

The woman selected in each category will be honored at a banquet on October 30.

Deadline for submission of names to be considered for this year's awards is July 1. Send completed applications to: Ventura County Commission for Women, 3161 Loma Vista Road, Ventura, CA 93003.

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Commission for Women**

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