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KNOW NEWS  
Vol. 6, No. 7  
October - November 1975

### DEALING WITH OUR CHRISTMAS CONFLICTS

Christmas, Hanukkah, Winter Solstice - what ever the name, most of us celebrate a major holiday around this time of year. Little has been said about the feminist role at holiday time. Lately, there have been some tongue in cheek articles about female Santa's in department stores. There have been a few attempts to give Mrs. Santa Clause a more prestigious role in the holiday festivities.

Little, however, has been written about the true role of women during this traditional holiday season. I think there is valid reason for the silence. Christmas, and I will address myself to Christmas as it is the holiday I most directly relate to, illustrates a period of serious conflict to most feminists.

As feminists, most of us have undergone extensive changes in our lifestyles. Many of these changes have been difficult, many have taken lengthy periods of soul searching. But, returning to school, or sharing the housework are not in the same league with even envisioning a non-sexist Christmas, let alone beginning the process to actually celebrate one!


The traditions of Christmas have developed from the traditions of other celebrations from other centuries. The traditions of Christmas are basically centered around one set of themes; celebration and joy, loving and giving, sharing and coming together. These are lofty and benevolent ideals and would be ideals we could all endorse if it weren't for the fact that while the entire world celebrates, it is left, in the most traditional and most sexist way, to 53% of the population to provide the celebration.

In the most liberated of nuclear families we find women responsible for the shopping, the decorating, the cooking, greeting card writing, and for the most part, we find them unwilling or unable to do much about it.

The conflict is clear. In an era when feminists are redefining religion, voicing protest against our consumer oriented society and refusing to support the customs which are built upon the oppression of any one group, Christmas should be loudly protested and easily dismissed. But it isn't and it won't be. Most of us are unable to face explaining to a small child that Christmas is sexist and therefore will not be celebrated anymore. Or, imagine the same explanation to the grandparents of that child. Few of us have the courage to carry through our convictions when it comes to Christmas. We do what we can - fewer gifts, more frozen pies, artificial trees but even in those small changes we feel sadness because we too, grew up in a culture which taught us to believe in the magic of Christmas. It wasn't until we were grown that we discovered that the magic was in reality a mother, sitting in the back of the kitchen, with a very tarnished wand.



A Holiday\* tradition at KNOW is our annual feminist gift catalog. It grows each year which is an exciting expression of the growth of the movement. Supporting these feminist entrepreneurs is a very satisfactory way to begin to deal with holiday conflicts. Support your sisters... support yourselves. And, Happy Holidays from KNOW!




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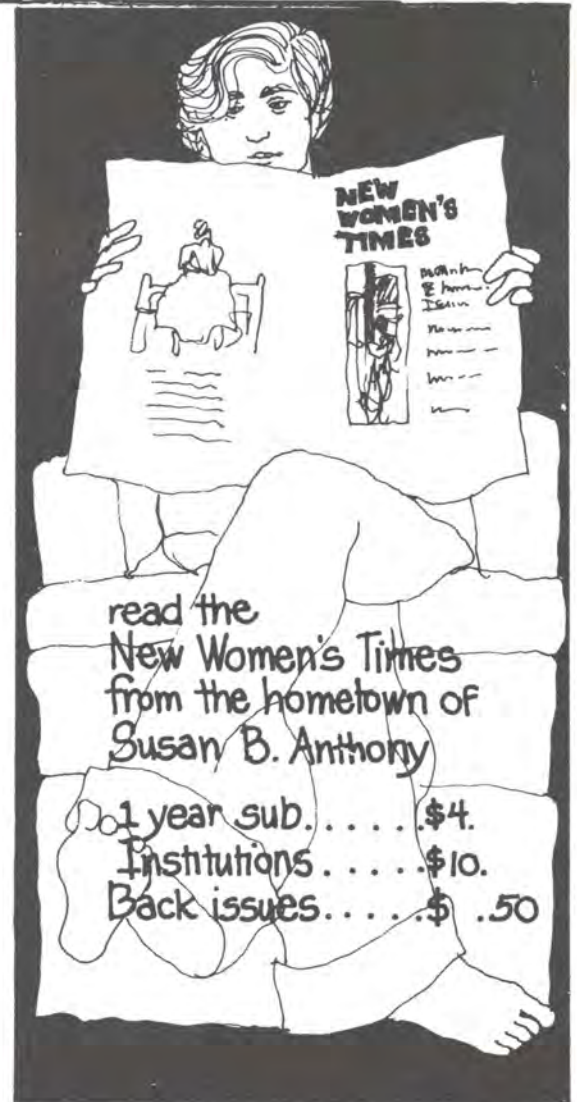
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