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Two feminists climb into a rental car, drive 13,000 miles, and walk into a bar. They also walked into communes, bookstores, a round barn built by an all-women's farming collective, a cooperative devoted to non-sexist children's literature, an IHOP, and several dozen impromptu house parties. By the end of it, they had a book, the *New Woman's Survival Catalog*, which doubled as a sprawling, energetic, joyful map of the feminist movement of the early 1970s.

"This was liberation from the patriarchy," Kirsten Grimstad said on a recent afternoon, smiling fondly. "We were heading out, just shot out of a rocket and crossing the country."

Grimstad is, with Susan Rennie, the co-author of the *Survival Catalog*, first published in 1973 and reprinted for the first time this fall by Primary Information, an art book publisher. Today, the book offers a lively window into the pre-Internet era of political organizing, and a look at the priorities of the early second-wave feminist movement. The large, flat red book feels like a cross between an encyclopedia and a compendium of zines. It has information about feminist health collectives, credit unions, arts organizations, union organizing, woman-made clothing, and legal advocacy groups to help women obtain affordable divorces. It features flyers and photos from the organizations listed, a hand-drawn, sometimes psychedelic glimpse into a heady time for art and activism. A Women's Sexuality Conference, held in June of 1973, is featured. So is a newly-formed playgroup for children in Silverlake, Los Angeles, centered on "deemphasizing sexism and racism." There is a cheerily sketched flyer on "Self-Defense for Hitchhiking," produced by the zine *Ain't I a Woman*. ("When you get into the car, light up a cigarette," it advises. "It is a useful weapon. If you get into trouble, put your cigarette out in his face.")

The book required thousands of miles of travel, and its effects on the authors lasted for decades. On a recent afternoon, Grimstad and Rennie were sitting at Rennie's sunwashed home in Los Angeles, seated snugly on a couch side by side, remembering the epic, summer-long road trip that shaped both of their lives for the next 45 years.



Making the Book

This book was conceived, researched, written, photographed, designed, typeset, pasted-up by six women in a little over five months.

April—Kirsten and Susan do preliminary research.

May 13—Kirsten and Susan begin a 12,000 mile trip around the country to report on projects and groups first-hand. Fanette and Ruth join, continue research and get in touch with women Kirsten and Susan will not be able to visit.

July 13—Kirsten and Susan return, and sorting of the material begins.



In the early 1970s, Grimstad and Rennie were both active in the burgeoning second-wave feminist movement in New York; Grimstad was 29 and Rennie 34. Both women had firm footholds in the genteel upper middle class. Grimstad was married, working on her doctoral dissertation and as the assistant vice president for academic affairs at Columbia University, while Rennie was divorced—"footloose and fancy-free," she said, laughing—and teaching in Columbia's German department.

It was not the most comfortable fit for politically active feminists. "We were both academics," Grimstad said, "teaching in an essentially patriarchal institution."

That all began to change when Grimstad was asked to put together a bibliography for the Barnard College's Women's Center. The Women's Center was at that point a fledgling project, and the bibliography was meant to be a survey of scholarly work being conducted in the U.S. around women's studies, then a new discipline.

Grimstad had other ideas. "I incorporated activist organizations and projects"—instead of just scholarly texts—"which was a subversive thing to do in an academic bibliography," she said. "But it seemed in the spirit of the times, in the spirit of the feminist movement. Theory without action was meaningless."

The Women's Center was supportive, she said: "There was no opposition to my doing it this way, in a way that embodied a feminist principle of theory and practice, the synthesis between theory and practice."

In the process, she began to find a startling array of feminist projects across the United States. "What was exciting was not just what people were talking about in consciousness-raising groups or studying through academic studies, but how these things were being lived out on the ground by women all across the country," she said. She wrote the groups down, filed them away on notecards, and began to dream of something bigger.

Rennie met Grimstad at the Women's Center around this time, and they quickly concluded together that her research needed to become a book, a thorough survey of the women's movement as it existed on the ground across the U.S. They made contact with an editor at Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, a subsidiary at the time of Putnam, and, lying, assured her they could mock up five pages of a sample book over a long weekend.

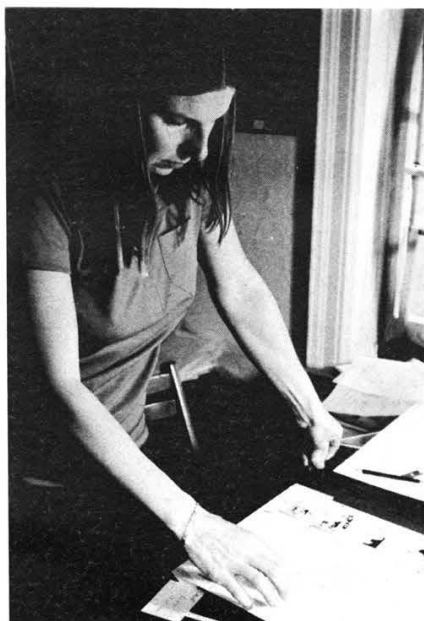
"We hadn't a clue how to translate the information we were getting into graphic form," Rennie said, laughing. "But I had a friend who was a graphic designer, also a feminist." With her help, they cut and pasted and snipped together a five-page mockup. Just as quickly, they'd agreed to a lightning-fast deadline, promising to put together a book surveying feminist activist projects across the country in just seven months. They conceived of it as a feminist answer to the Whole Earth Catalog, the hippie touchstone which published several times between 1968 and 1972.



August 1—Book production begins: Fanette, Ruth, Kirsten, Susan write copy, lay out pages. Mark typesets on an IBM composer, Kirsten and Susan photograph and print graphics.

September 15—With some copy-writing and layouts remaining, paste-up begins. (This would have been impossible without Peggy and Leslie, two "pros" who bailed us out at a critical moment.)

October 3—Camera-ready mechanical delivered to printer at 9:00 a.m.



To do that, Grimstad said, they knew immediately they would have to hit the road. "It never occurred to us that we wouldn't go and do this road trip. That was an essential part of it and we were thrilled. And they were going to pay us!"

Together, Rennie and Grimstad began calling projects and collectives Grimstad had found while compiling the bibliography, asking to come visit them, making a rough outline of where to go. They rented a car—a "greenish" Plymouth Duster, as they remember it—and found someone to care for Grimstad's dog, then hit the highway. "We flew off on the road," Grimstad said. "It was the feminist Jack Kerouac experience and we were ready for it. It was wild." (As for her marriage and her dissertation, she said, "I left it all behind and didn't look back." She and her husband eventually amicably divorced.)

Their days quickly began to take shape.

"It was very rare that we were in a place that didn't have a specific group of women that we were going to talk to," Rennie said. "We'd come into town, and then a lot of these groups were actually communes or collectives, so we'd stay with them, or someone would offer us a spare room." They attracted a bit of attention even on the road, she added: "We had a bumper sticker saying, 'Women pick up women.' There was a hitchhiker culture at that time. When we were on the road, truckers would see this and honk and blast their horns and we never knew if they were saying 'Fuck you' or if it was good. We got a lot of attention from the truckers."

The groups they visited were excited to welcome them, Grimstad added. "All these women we were seeking out were so hospitable. It was all spontaneous. It was all spur of the moment. So we would land someplace like Atlanta. We were following a trail that had been suggested to us by Rita Mae Brown," the author who'd just published *Rubyfruit Jungle* that year. Brown suggested that the women check out the Rubyfruit Jungle Collective, a lesbian cooperative in Atlanta.

"We went there and they immediately took us in, served us food, poured wine," Grimstad remembered. "We talked through the night. I don't know where we slept that night. It was somewhere in the collective. We were often crashing. We couldn't stop talking. Everyone wanted to know what we were finding out. We wanted to know what was going on. These encounters always wound up as big parties."

"We'd be staying with one group and they'd call all their friends," Rennie agreed. "It was one big potluck after another, and lots and lots of booze. All the women were breaking free and expressing themselves. I can't even remember how many mornings we woke up with hangovers and had to hit the road." They both laughed.

Feminist Women's Health Centers

UPPER FOR DOWNER

Carol Downer, co-director of the FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER, was acquitted of charges of "practicing medicine without a license." She was arrested after having helped a friend diagnose a yeast infection and insert yoghurt as treatment. The law defines practicing medicine as diagnosing and treating a disease. Downer's defense attorney, Diane Wayne, said the statute was so vague that she "wouldn't be able to discuss a cold with a friend or offer her a Kleenex for it" and "half the mothers in the county could be charged with diagnosing that their children had the measles.

Though the FEMINIST HEALTH COLLECTIVE had consulted a lawyer when they began their program of self-help health care, the law was so vague that it took a test case to find out whether this type of health care is legal. Carol Downer believes that this case has set a precedent so that the self-help clinics may continue their work.

from OFF OUR BACKS, December 1972

The FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER in Los Angeles is the mother of them all. It grew out of the original Los Angeles self-help group (described in intro.), developed into a women's health center, offering a variety of services, and has itself spawned numerous self-help groups as well as two other FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTERS in Santa Ana and Oakland. Within the next year, they even anticipate opening up a women's hospital!

Each Center offers on-going free self-help courses through which women can learn self-examination, use of the speculum and in general find out about their bodies. They also provide free pregnancy screening and counseling. At their gynecology clinic, which started as of August, 1973, a woman who has a gynecological need can opt for one of two plans. According to the first and more traditional plan, she makes an appointment and is examined by a woman gynecologist and women paramedics who also show her how to do self-examination. According to the second plan, she is scheduled to come in to the clinic along with several other women who have the same need. Each woman is then able not only to get her problem treated, but also to observe the very treatment itself on other women. The fees for those services are administered on a sliding scale. In addition, each clinic maintains a 24-hour hotline to deal with emergencies.

For those women who need to have an abortion and are looking for a friendly and sympathetic place to have it done, each center has its very own abortion clinic, the Women's Choice Clinics, which are licensed by the state of California. The Los Angeles abortion clinic, located about 2 blocks away from the health center, is a very comfortable and cheerful place that opened last March. Here a woman can get an abortion up to the 12th week. The abortion is non-traumatic, done under local anesthetic with a flexible plastic cannula. The abortion costs \$135 and takes about 1½ hours. Each woman is accompanied through the entire procedure by a sympathetic woman counselor, and although the abortion itself is performed by a male physician, the women paramedics handle all the rest. The Women's Choice Clinic in Oakland has even managed to get a woman doctor who performs vacuum aspirator abortions up to the first 9 weeks of pregnancy.

The fees charge at the abortion clinics help to support the services of the health centers and pay the salaries of the staff members. The Los Angeles center has 15 full-time staffers, who, in addition to their counseling and paramedical work, also have speaking engagements and even cross-country tours to help women in other parts of the country start their own clinics. Recently the staff has produced three videotapes, including one on self-examination and one on menopause, which are available for purchase for \$30.00. Although it is often argued that these services should be free, thereby requiring all volunteer labor, the FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTERS believe that women should be paid a living wage for their work, so that they can survive materially while devoting their energies to the movement.

The women of the FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER believe that to maintain an efficient and effective feminist clinic, the staff needs structure. Carol Downer, one of the founders of the self-help movement, and active member of the FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER, has explained that "structure" in the organization of the Center does not mean rigidity or authoritarianism: "We have simple structures such as sign-in sheets and bulletin boards and in-out-baskets, and we have sophisticated structures, such as forms, training sessions, personnel files, and thick policy. As feminists, we are careful to have an OPEN structure, maximal participation in policy making activities, and we have a profound commitment to struggle to achieve not only the ideals of equalitarianism, but we are also determined to make the structure work for us, not us for the structure." (SISTER, July 1973: \$3.00 for twelve issues from 218 South Venice Boulevard, Venice, California 90291.)

In order to train women to staff women's health facilities, each center runs a 7-week summer session. Each session is limited to 6 women and costs \$150.00. They provide practical training and experience in telephone counseling, working in a women's medical clinic, hospital counseling, conducting educational workshops on health care and self-help clinics, and overall business experience.

In discussing the politics of women's health care, the centers state that "as both the consumers of our health care (as women) and the providers of that care, we are in a far more realistic position to determine relevant health care for women. In this way the FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER departs from all other existing traditional medical services which keep women in a dependent position by the health authority, usually male, pontificating on what is good for women. The FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTERS have broken through the mystique which maintains such an absurd situation and is successful in making real changes in the imbalance of power. In addition, the educational Self-Help Clinics are demystifying the long kept 'secrets' by sharing of information and experience."

A self-help gynecological slide show is available from:

FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTERS
746 South Crenshaw
Los Angeles, California 90005
(213) 936-7219
429 South Sycamore Street
Santa Ana, California 92701
(714) 547-0327
444 - 48th Street
Oakland, California 94706
(415) 653-2130



reprinted from the cover of SISTER, July 1973

Everywhere they went, they found women working to build new and better structures, new ways to live. They both fell particularly in love with A Woman's Place, a bookstore in Oakland run by a group of people living together in a collective house.

"These women were seriously against housework," Rennie said, laughing. "The house was quite a scene. The morning after we got up to go down to the kitchen and have breakfast and I said Kirsten, 'Let's go to IHOP. I don't think I can eat here.' They were putting all their energy into the things they were doing. Very successfully, too."

"It was a choice they were making, Grimstad added. "They were very creative and responsible."

At A Woman's Place, Rennie and Grimstad were drawn to a publication called *Country Women*, which had advice on goat tethering, gardening, and a long story about women working together to make an octagonal barn.

"Everything about this magazine was so amazing," Rennie said. "They identified themselves as country women who wanted to get away from this hippie counterculture, where the women were into granny dresses and baking bread." The Country Women, Rennie added, found that offensive, that the "back to the land" movement relegated women to the same, restrictive gender roles as the broader '60s culture. Rennie asked a worker at A Woman's Place how to contact the country women; she came up with a P.O. Box in Albion, in coastal northern California. Rennie and Grimstad resolved to drive there and find the goat farm with the octagonal barn.

When they arrived, they found a "beautiful old farmstead," Rennie recalled, populated by women in jeans and high rubber boots. "They were marvelously welcoming," she added. "They showed us around the goat farm. It was a serious enterprise. They had 50 goats." The women quickly called the other farmers who were women in the area, who treated them to a huge potluck and a comfortable night in a lightly bat-infested attic. Afterwards, they drove to the Center For Women's Spirituality in Wolf Creek, Oregon.

"That was another extraordinary experience," Rennie said. "People were dancing around the fires naked and invoking the Goddess."

Everywhere they went, Rennie said, "we saw women wanting to empower themselves. There was this new consciousness."

"That's what I found so inspiring, the willingness and the readiness to challenge every single sacred cow, whether it's that of the solitary artist or for-profit capitalism, the primacy of the male," Grimstad added, as she reminisced about a Chicago artists' collective making astonishing—and totally anonymous—poster art. "Because we were all challenging the

values of the patriarchy, every other sacred value was open to question. You see these women actively experimenting with alternative models and alternatives to capitalist patriarchal hierarchical systems."

P

EATING ARTICHOKEs

Words: Willyce Kim
Photographs: Willyce Kim
Wendy Cadden
Single copies:\$1.00
Bulk orders:\$1.60

The next woman
that I love
should know
that when we meet
the earth will not
move,
and when we touch
no thunder shall
crack the sky,
and when we lie
aye to eye
oceans will not part,
nor winged horses
tumble
to carry us high,
but, when we love
I promise you love
how we will love
to love
each other's loves...



The Women's Press Collective

THE COMMON WOMAN

Portraits of seven women
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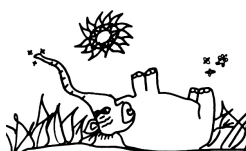
"...She's made of grease
and metal, with a hard head
that makes the men around her
seem frail
The common woman is as common
as a nail!"

Words: Judy Grahn
Drawings: Wendy Cadden

ELEPHANT POEM COLORING BOOK

Words: Judy Grahn
Drawings: Helle, Janet, Susann
and Gail

Single copies:\$1.85
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Elephant turned upsidedown
by a fly...
We must be wise
to the elephant's lies...

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"...I, woman, I
can no longer claim
a mother of flesh
a father of marrow
I, Woman must be
the child of myself."

EDWARD THE DYKE AND OTHER POEMS

Words: Judy Grahn
Drawings: Sunny Weber
Brenda Crider
Gail Hodgins
Wendy Cadden

Single copies:\$1.25
Bulk orders:\$1.90



for all my sisters
and for any brothers
who might come along
and for fuckin' who knew
this goddamn life too well.

"In 1970, a group of women started THE WOMEN'S PRESS COLLECTIVE. We are feminists with widely different life-experiences. For three years we have been learning to run a print shop, as well as to collect materials to publish. We are beginning to build a broader distribution network for feminist books, with prices most women can afford. Although we still barely meet our expenses, we are working towards supporting some of our group through the press.

We think of the press as a resource of the women's movement. It has two functions for us. It is a school where we can learn skills and new ways to work together. It is also a tool for spreading new visions of ourselves and analyses that are useful to us. Though financial backing must be found for each individual project, we welcome manuscripts and all forms of feedback."

THE WOMEN'S PRESS COLLECTIVE designs, prints, publishes (and in certain instances, members even write) some of the best poetry in the women's movement—and their books are spectacularly beautiful.

EDWARD THE DYKE

EDWARD THE DYKE is a book of poems by Judy Grahn and drawings by Wendy Cadden, Brenda Crider, and Gail Hodgins. It is a beautiful book designed and printed by the women themselves.

"Judy Grahn's poems are a delight to read. She is one of the few lesbian poets to celebrate the strength and survival capacity of women. No self-pity or whining here. The language is direct and simple; you don't have to go to the dictionary to figure out the images. You can tell that a lot of time and work has gone into turning her ideas, experiences, and emotions into powerful and beautiful verse."

Coletta Reid in THE FURIES, January 1972

PRESS COLLECTIVE PUBLICATIONS

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CHILD OF MYSELF	\$1.00
THE COMMON WOMAN	\$.25
THE ELEPHANT POEM COLORING BOOK	\$.85
WOMAN TO WOMAN	\$1.50
LESBIAN SPEAKOUT II	(forthcoming)

The Collective cannot afford to sell to bookstores on consignment. Payment should be mailed within 30 days of receipt of books.

Available from:

THE WOMEN'S PRESS COLLECTIVE
5251 Broadway
Oakland, California 94610

Poetry and drawings from the Women's Press Collective, one of the many creative collectives featured in the book. Images courtesy of Rennie/Grimstad/Primary Information.

In retrospect, it can look like a more innocent—and, in some ways, more oblivious—time. Rennie and Grimstad are both white; according to them, while many of the organizations they visited were racially and ethnically diverse, resources specifically by and for women of color weren't always easy to find. "Depending on which part of the country we were in—in the Northwest we weren't encountering that much diversity," Grimstad said. "There was more in the South, the major urban areas." (That's not to say feminist organizations founded by women of color didn't exist; the National Black Feminist Organization, for instance, was founded in 1973, part of a strong wave of activism led by Black women dating back to the Civil Rights era.)

Nor were trans women highly visible, they both agree, though Grimstad views today's trans activism as part of the same lineage. "For me it had to do with claiming our right to define ourselves as we wanted to and not be defined by our husbands our fathers our brothers, the society, by gender roles, gender expectations," she said. "Our absolute right to define ourselves. That's what we were after. I see the trans movement as being an extension of that. People have the right to define what their gender is. It's connected."

The book's production was as speedy as Grimstad and Rennie's research, as they told *Aiga Eye on Design* in 2018:

The whole production happened in two months in an apartment on Riverside Drive and 106th Street. The bathroom was turned into a darkroom. We rented a machine from IBM that was called a Composer, and a woman named Mark St. Giles typeset the magazine. The two of us, along with Fanette Pollack and Ruth Bayard Smith, did all of the writing and editing. I did a lot of the printing of the photographs; we made screenprints in the bathroom. We typeset it, we made these screenprints, and we pasted it all up on boards. What we put together for the publisher was camera-ready copy. At the end we took it all in a big box to the publishers in a taxi. Then we went to the Russian Tea Room and fell asleep at dinner, we were so exhausted.

The book didn't earn the same breathless accord as the *Whole Earth Catalog* upon its publication. But it was still recognized as a thorough and important survey of feminist activism, even earning a snitty writeup from the *New York Times*, accusing it of "an attitude of self-righteous indignation"—what kind of indignation would be acceptable goes unsaid — and "an overindulgence in paranoia," which, ditto.

Meanwhile, the experience of the road trip permanently altered both women (though Grimstad eventually finished her thesis on Thomas Mann). The two of them moved to Los Angeles to make *Chrysalis*, a women's art magazine that they put together with the help of the feminist artist Judy Chicago and other people working out of The Woman's Building, a

radical arts community that existed in a spacious building near downtown Los Angeles until 1991. *Chrysalis* published between 1977 and 1980; after that, both Rennie and Grimstad devoted their lives to feminist organizing and non-traditional teaching in one form or another, right up until the present day.

"It was such a shock, someone sending us an email and wanting to republish the catalogue," Grimstad said, of the reprint. In the meantime, they'd been watching a new wave of activism with appreciation.

"The ecological movement and the crucial aspect of climate change," Rennie said, "there's a consciousness that reminds me and evokes some of the feelings and experiences we had back in those days.

"It has to do with the oppressive hierarchies being challenged in so many ways," Grimstad agreed. "The climate activism is so related to that, to try to break the grip of these corporations on things that are not only defining our lives now but the future generations. I see all these causes as linked and energized. But it's all a sense of empowerment. The fact that women are feeling empowered today is just great."

They see social media as a particularly incredible tool. "We could only dream of that," Grimstad said. "Our book was a tool to connect and have people see we were part of a common universe. And now it's so entirely different to connect with people globally around values that are important. There's a dark side, of course, but that's a price we always pay."

But Rennie and Grimstad aren't overly modest about what they made. They knew, even at the time, how crucial it would be. "I said to her at one point, 'We're actually compiling an important historical record,'" Rennie said. "This is going to be something people go back to. And that's what's happening."