

Sexism haunts women environmentalists

By CATHERINE SIEGNER
Of the Emerald

Sexism and domination of our society by men often hamper women's environmental work, members of a panel discussion on feminism and the environmentalist movement agreed Saturday.

Moderated by Mable Armstrong of the Oregon Women's Political Caucus, the panel participants included Marla Gillham, co-coordinator of Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides; Janet Gillaspie, floor secretary for state Rep. Nancie Fadeley, D-Eugene, and Julia Follansbee, self-employed archaeologist and consultant.

Gillham, who said she had been involved in the pesticide issue for 2½ years, told the panel: "I studied pre-med in college, but I didn't want to be a Ph.D. or bastardize my knowledge working for a federal agency."

She has a particular interest in alternative vegetation management but doesn't want to be called an environmentalist.

"It has a lot of negative connotations. Just call me a political activist."

Gillaspie, who has worked with the state Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation, the University Survival Center and the Oregon Environmental Council, said

she "takes care of the environmental side" of Rep. Fadeley's life.

"My talents are as a political pinch-hitter. You just have to educate yourself on the issues as they come up."

Follansbee, who is president of Cultural Resource Management, Inc. of Eugene, said she works on federally-funded projects and on projects planned for federal lands before they get underway "to make sure the site's archaeological and historical value is preserved."

As the only woman archaeologist/consultant in Oregon, she has such clients as the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Her projects include power line construction, sewer work, offshore oil drilling projects and nuclear power plant sites.

"My clients aren't sexist because they know I have power over them," Follansbee said. "Only my competitors are sexist."

Armstrong asked the panel members if the environmental activism of the 1960s changed the role women play within that movement, or if "women have continued making the coffee and running the mimeograph machine?"

Gillham said in the 1970s, women are more likely to refuse decision-making positions

because "they're not willing to give up other parts of their lives" as men do who are working on environmental issues.

"There are frequent pressure situations with a few overworked, underpaid people doing all the work. Men are better at repressing other sides of their lives."

She said women often get left behind because of this pressure. "Some of the men I work with have helped women to accept this pressure, but in these situations, they take over. If you're not fast enough you don't make it."

Gillaspie said the groups she deals with daily are often sexist. "The Oregon Environmental Council has a male director and we fight a lot about how things should be handled."

In her political work, Gillaspie said people "continually pinch you on the ass or on the cheek," but said she doesn't hesitate to combat this attitude and isn't worried about losing her job if she resists it. "My boss is a feminist. I can compete with the best of them, but when you start standing up to them, you become callous and it's really a strain."

Follansbee said most

decisions in the field of archaeology have been made by men. "The other night, I went to a party for the first woman Ph.D. in the University's archaeology department," she said.

She suggested women create an "institute where women get grants to dig out their own history" because most history is "male-dominated. In the pre-history of Indians, there is no emphasis on women's roles. You would think

there were no women at all."

Follansbee said women have a lot of environmental work to do "in fields we don't know anything about. We have the innate knowledge."

Gillham agreed. "We only have five or 10 years. I mean, one-third of the ocean is dead. I look out there and see a red light flashing, but we have to think about the process, too. Lots of ideas have to be changed if we're going to come out of this."

Provost says minorities aid women's movement

By SALLY HODGKINSON
Of the Emerald

Minority women don't just fit into the women's movement, they make it whole, according to Stanford University assistant provost Cecilia Burciaga.

Minority women are "cross-cultural switch hitters," Burciaga said Saturday, the final day of the ASUO Women's Symposium.

"We're a very complex group and not at all one that can be stereotyped." The women's movement was jeopardized because of the gulf between minority and majority white feminists until the National Convention of Women at Houston last year, Burciaga said.

Although the media featured the convention's endorsement of the Equal Rights Amendment, Burciaga said the convention was legitimized by minority women. The high point of the conference, for Burciaga, came when the delegates to the conference began voting on a minority women resolution.

"Minority women looked at the resolution and said to the rest, 'we're not happy with the resolution. We'll create our own.'" Spontaneous celebration by the delegates (except for nine Klu Klux Klan members) erupted, making the new resolution an important event, Burciaga noted.

But "me-firstism" keeps the women's movement from catching public enthusiasm, she said. "Social causes move with glacier-like speed in this selfish period of time."

Such selfishness is reflected in the Bakke decision, the passage of Proposition 13 and Pres. Carter's firing of Bella Abzug

from the National Advisory Council on Women, Burciaga said.

"Only in a time like this could the president say, by firing Bella, 'If you're appointed by me, don't criticize me — or else.'"

Burciaga resigned her appointment on the council when she heard of Abzug's firing.

The Bakke "reverse discrimination" decision will make equal opportunity for women and minorities tougher, according to Burciaga. And she added that affirmative action procedures aren't doing much for minority women at present.

"The all-white, male structure is being replaced by an all-white female structure. They sound exactly like the men they replace."

Minority women face a "two-headed monster" (sexism and racism) when they are job hunting, she added. "Sexism and racism is one and the same. Scratch a racist and he'll be sexist, too."

Because white women talk only about defeating sexism, minority women feel used and see too many majority women becoming "equal opportunity opportunists," Burciaga said.

"But while we may be the minority now, we're going to be the mainstream majority tomorrow."

To narrow the gulf between the majority and the minority, women must stop stereotyping each other and work toward mutual understanding, Burciaga said.

"We have to focus in on what we have in common and minimize the differences. I don't think we're talking to each other honestly."

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