

# Workshop explores non-violent protest

## Women's group offers insights to disobedience

By Thomas Henderson  
Of the Emerald

A group of people, mostly women, lie silently on the floor of a darkened room in the First Presbyterian Church, while a woman bearing an ironic resemblance to Joan Baez invites them to become one with the "web" of the universe.

This is not part of a religious ceremony, nor a class on stress reduction; it is a serious training session for political action.

Participants in the group are learning to be non-violent, a skill apparently more complex than merely resisting the impulse to communicate with one's neighbor by using a ball peen hammer.

On Saturday, Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament sponsored the all-day workshop on non-violence, exploring non-violence, civil disobedience and their legal ramifications through a series of a lectures, exercises and interpersonal encounters.

Pat Bryan, the voice of the meditation session, led the workshop along with Nancy Hale and Laura Stockford. According to Bryan, anti-nuclear groups are beginning to realize they have exhausted the channels of mainstream politics to achieve their ends and are starting to look toward non-violent civil disobedience.

"We choose non-violence because it works," she said. "Non-violence excludes flight and it excludes capitulation."

Unlike Bryan and Hale, who have been involved in non-violence for a number of years, Stockford said she has only become active in non-violent civil disobedience in the past few years, and is "scared shitless" by the prospect of arrest.

Apprehensions similar to Stockford's frequently surfaced in a role-playing exercise where participants acted out the parts of both protesters and police. Many of those playing protesters said the exercise gave them a greater sensitivity to the trauma of being arrested. Bryan, who played a police officer, said she began to empathize with the police's point of view, and felt some of the resentment police must experience when their authority is questioned.

Non-violent political action does not necessarily entail risking arrest, and the workshop outlined several means of participating in such actions short of direct civil disobedience. Among the means cited were acting as a liaison between protesters and the



Photo by Shu-Shing Chen

At the Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament's non-violence workshop Saturday, two "affinity groups" were formed to simulate the way specific protests are organized.

outside world, as well as serving as a legal witness.

There are also several kinds of non-violent protest, as explained in the workshop, of which civil disobedience is only one branch.

First, workshop leaders explained, there is "direct action," employing the more mainstream and legal means of protest, including pickets, vigils, boycotts and other economic sanctions, organizing, voting, letter writing, marching, singing, and non-violence training itself.

A more disruptive method of direct action is "shadowing" an adversary by constantly following him and thereby, as one workshop participant put it, "giving him the creeps." Another method of badgering an opponent discussed was "phone-jamming," or flooding a person with calls to prevent other calls from getting through.

Civil disobedience, it was explained, involves direct violation of laws seen as unjust or unimportant in light of greater social "crimes." Acts of civil disobedience may include blockades, occupations, tax resistance and "overland" activities.

Overland activities entail trespassing somewhere

via a back entrance to make some form of protest. (Sneaking into a military base and pouring blood on a computer was the example used in the workshop.) Occupations, usually in the form of sit-down strikes and blockades, are more common means of civil disobedience.

The legal ramifications of civil disobedience were discussed in the form of a game where participants were given cards with words like "arrest," "sentencing" and "walk or go limp" written on them. Players were then directed to place the card in the appropriate spot on a wall chart tracing the legal process.

Specific protests, workshop leaders said, are usually organized through "affinity groups." The groups consist of a relatively small number of people who rule by consensus. One person's negative vote will kill a proposal.

To demonstrate how these groups operate, the workshop divided participants into two affinity groups. The groups were given a practice problem and asked to come to a consensus. One group was asked to occupy an abortion clinic to protect it from an

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### CAREER WEEK JANUARY 22-25



TUES., JAN. 22 12:30- 2:00 EMU 101	INTERNSHIPS: WHERE, WHY, & HOW A Panel Discussion
TUES., JAN. 22/ WED., JAN. 23 12:30-1:30 EMU Forum	HOW NOT TO SCREW UP YOUR COLLEGE EDUCATION Academic & Career Planning Forum
WED., JAN. 23 12:30- 2:00 EMU 214	HOW TO GET THE JOB YOU REALLY WANT Job Search Strategies
THURS., JAN. 24 12:30-1:30 EMU 101	JOB OUTLOOK FOR THE 80's
THURS., JAN. 24 3:30-5:00 EMU 167	DRESS FOR SUCCESS: for MEN & WOMEN featuring Joyce Slusher, The Cloakroom

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