

North Jersey

# Editorials/Opinion

Tuesday, July 30, 1991

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Public rape of 3-year-old is no surprise

A 3-year-old girl is raped in full view of the public. The rape occurs approximately 25 feet from a main New York Street, during rush hour. Traffic slows, people stare, a few get out of their cars, go to the fence dividing the street from the lot — but only one man, Noel Sanchez, intervenes. With the help of a friend, he pursues, captures and detains the assailant until the police arrive.

Horrifying yes, surprising, no. This country does little to end

the epidemic of sexual abuse.

The courts don't care. The custodial parent, most often the mother, suspects her ex-spouse of abusing their child, and charges the father in court. Not only does she not get support, but she finds herself persecuted for brainwashing as well. Despite supportive evidence: medical reports, psychological reports, eyewitness testimony, etc., the protective parent will most often lose custody of her child to the abuser. Therapists

and social workers who support the protective parent and levy charges against the abuser with protective services are censured and their practices threatened. Lawyers are warned by judges that raising the issue of abuse in the courtroom will "make the judge mad."

The media don't care. While Gloria Steinem's keynote speech at the 1991 National Organization for Women national conference heavily addressed incest and the failings of the

court systems, the media reported only on the two or three sentences in which she spoke about Clarence Thomas.

We are involved in a war — a war against sexual abuse; a war that all peace loving people must fight. We must not only drive the evil of abuse from our borders, but we must completely eliminate it.

**Rachel A. Anolick  
Karen S. Spindel  
Passaic County Chapter  
N.J. NOW.**

 **Herald & News**

**North Jersey Newspapers Co.**

988 Main Ave., P.O. Box 539, Passaic, N.J. 07055

# LETTERS to the editor

## Party parity

In an attempt at community consciousness-raising, the members of the Passaic County chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) are asking parents to challenge their views about the well-accepted practice of limiting birthday parties to children of the same gender. Please consider whether this same type of arbitrary distinction would be acceptable to you if race, rather than sex, were used as the deciding factor.

Also, may we suggest that dividing young children on the basis of gender is no less arbitrary than dividing them on the basis of eye color, hair color, size or any other predetermined characteristic and that this practice, imposed by parents on their offspring, limits the natural and desirable growth of friendship between children of the opposite sex.

Please consider, instead, basing your child's guest list on the very real criterion of friendship. Trusting children to decide for themselves whom to invite increases their self-esteem. It also eliminates the hurt felt by close friends of the opposite sex when they are excluded from parties in favor of other children not nearly as close but of the same gender as the party child.

~~Partial~~ <sup>Parental</sup> attitudes that encourage respect and friendship among girls and boys will serve our children far better as they grow to adulthood than those that tend to drive a wedge between them.

**Karen Spindel  
Clifton.**

■ *Spindel is the coordinator for the Passaic County chapter of NOW.*

# Bush is not pro family

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1991 has been passed by both houses of Congress. This bill grants employees unpaid family and medical leave for the birth or adoption of a child, or the serious illness of a child, spouse or parent.

President Bush, supporter of strong family values, has threatened to veto this bill, which would make it easier for parents to raise children without fear of losing their jobs. He justifies this position by saying that the government has no place in family decisions (once your children are born). Without this legislation, however, employers, not families, are calling the shots. The Family Leave Act would take the employer out of family decisions, not put the government in.

Is Bush really the pro-family candidate?

I think not.

**Karen Spindel  
Clifton.**

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■ *The writer is membership coordinator for the Passaic County chapter of the National Organization for Women.*

**Remembering Jewish Grandmothers**

To The Editor:

I am disheartened and discouraged that the Jewish Federation of Greater Clifton-Passaic could ignore completely our Jewish female ancestry both in the voter registration ad on page 23 of the 9/23 issue of the JCN, as well as on fliers posted in the Y lobby.

Certainly no one knows better than "our grandmothers," who were jailed and force-fed, ever here in America, what a hard-earned right the right to vote was.

And until 1920, 72 short years ago, even here in America, our grandmothers definitely knew "what life can be like without the right to vote."

By referring only to grandfathers, rather than to grandparents, ancestors, etc. in your ad, you have once more ignored the female part of our Jewish heritage and the struggles of women in shaping our past, present and future.

Although women in America fought fiercely for the right to vote, you have sent the message to our daughters and sons that women's struggles really don't count.

While remembering our Jewish grandfathers, please let's remember our Jewish grandmothers as well.

**KAREN SPINDEL**  
Clifton/Passaic County NOW

**JEWISH  
community  
NEWS**

Published by the Jewish Federations of Greater Clifton-Passaic and North Jersey

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**CANDLE LIGHTING**

October 9  
6:19 PM

October 16  
6:08 PM

October 23  
5:57 PM

7-11-92 P 12

# The pro and con on Roe vs. Wade

✓ ✓ ✓  
DEAR EDITOR:

Imagine a state law requiring a minor daughter to obtain her parents' consent prior to having a child. Under this law, any young woman unable to obtain this consent would be required to abort. Extreme and unconstitutional, you say? Yet how is it different, in fact, than the Pennsylvania parental consent law upheld by the Reagan-Bush Supreme Court? In each case the parent is deciding the course of the daughter's pregnancy.

And, in fact, in many ways the ramifications of the Pennsylvania decision are more severe. For, in Pennsylvania, who has custodial and financial responsibility for the baby born to the daughter denied consent for the abortion she is seeking? I propose a new law for Pennsylvania: Any baby born to a minor daughter who has sought and been denied either parental or judicial consent becomes the financial responsibility of the parent or judge denying the request. The decision of who actually raises the baby would be left to the young birth mother.

Will parental consent laws be taken a step further? Once forced to have a child, will the under-age mother someday require parental permission to put that child up for adoption? If not, why not? The psychological consequences of giving away a living child are considered by many to be far greater than those of aborting a cell cluster. What would the court think about that?

Also, since every child has two parents, and since young women alone are bearing the brunt of the Supreme Court's decision, which will undoubtedly result in more children being born into poverty, how about a law requiring that the parents of every minor son be notified by a judge of their son's new financial obligations, at such time as their son becomes a father? How would the court decide that one?

Passaic County NOW reaffirms our belief that every woman, not her parents, nor the church nor the state, should control her own reproduction. We won't go back.

We will fight back . . . now, on election day, and always.

Karen Spindel,  
Passaic County NOW,  
Passaic

## About Letters

*The Star-Ledger attempts to offer representative viewpoints in the Readers' Forum. Because of limited space, only a small number of the many letters received can be used. Each letter must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Unsigned letters are not considered for publication and unused letters will not be returned.*

7/8-1992

## FOCUS



IABC Gold Quill  
Award Winner  
1989, 1990, 1992

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Got a story idea? Fax it to us on a single sheet at 908-766-1705.

## Can Qualifications Crack The Glass Ceiling?

In "Best-Qualified Should Fill Jobs" (Letters, April), Joan Howard is deluding herself. If she believes that high qualifications are only what it takes to get to the top of the corporate ladder, has she asked herself why white men are almost always the most highly qualified? Is it coincidence or maybe the innate superiority of the male intellect?

By closing our eyes to the "glass ceiling" of subtle and not so subtle discrimination that keeps women and minorities from achieving parity in the higher echelons of corporate America, we reinforce its strength. We must instead reflect on the reality that in a truly non-sexist, non-racist society, with truly equal educational and employment opportunities for all, the diverse work force in which

we take such pride, would be equally diverse at all levels of the corporation.

**Karen Spindel**  
Newark, N.J.

Joan Howard is a marvelous example of denial. No one advocates that women be promoted or hired over everyone else. The reason for drawing attention to the fact that 92 percent of executive jobs are filled by white males is to ensure that AT&T, which publicly states its commitment to equal opportunity, sees that all employees are given the opportunities to grow, to develop a broad base of business experiences and to acquire the skills necessary to become the "highest-qualified and best" candidates.

An article quoted in the same issue (Tips & Trends) states that women consistently outperform men in academics, yet they do not achieve the same levels in the labor market. Education surveys show that women are taking responsibility for getting a good education and preparing themselves to achieve in business.

I will continue to "push" upper management as long as women in management remain clustered at low levels.

**Kathleen Ahrens**  
Minneapolis

# Love, trust cannot be legislated

On an emotional level, parental notification legislation appeals to me.

But parental support and trust cannot be legislated, neither can the personal feelings between a daughter and her parents. Just as a parental notification law will not send one daughter into her mother's arms, neither does the lack of a notification law somehow lessen another daughter's de-

sire to confide in her parents about an unwanted pregnancy.

Some daughters will go to their parents. Others, no matter how supportive their parents may be, will not. They may be too shy, too embarrassed, or too afraid. In any case, these daughters, maybe yours or mine, would do the unthinkable rather than have us find out about their predicament. It is these children, as well as those

from dysfunctional homes, about whom we must worry.

Childbirth and illegal abortion are certainly more dangerous to our daughters than legal abortion. There are medical procedures that do not require parental notification. Motherhood also does not. We cannot make what might be the best option for our daughter's future health and happiness, the most difficult for her to

obtain.

Out of love and concern for our daughters, whom we hope will confide in us, but whom we fear may not, Passaic County National Organization for Women urges defeat of Assembly Bill 565.

**Karen S. Spindel**  
**Linda Mauro**  
**Clifton.**

■ *The writers are chapter co-ordinators with Passaic County NOW.*

## **The gay ban:**

### **Military needs to end discrimination**

The Passaic County Chapter of the National Organization for Women supports the president's efforts to lift the ban on lesbians, gays and bisexuals in the armed services.

This ban against homosexuals is nothing more than blatant discrimination. The fight against discrimination in the military has already been fought by blacks and women. Need it be fought again?

Many homosexuals have served and are serving their country with pride and honor. They deserve the same respect as their heterosexual counterparts.

Homosexuals are not the cause of the problems in the military; neither were blacks and women in the past. The problem in the military is with the deep-seated prejudices of those in control and of many of the straight men currently serving. It is the acting out of these prejudices, not homosexuals, that should be banned from the military.

Eliminate the persecution, not the persecuted.

Discrimination and prejudice in the military must be ended through education and severe punishment for gay-bashing. We can't let prejudice win out. The ban must be lifted now.

**Karen Spindel  
Clifton.**

■ *The writer is a Passaic County  
NOW representative.*

**Friday, April 23, 1993**

**The North Jersey Herald & News**

**OPINION**

Sunday, June 20, 1993



# The North Jersey Herald & News

988 Main Ave., P.O. Box 1019, Passaic, N.J. 07055

## First-name basis trivializes women

When Marge Semler was elected mayor of Passaic, and The North Jersey Herald & News referred to "Mayor Margie" in its banner headline, we were offended.

However, we thought that perhaps we were being oversensitive, that it might be alliteration rather than Ms. Semler's gender that prompted the use of her first name in the offending headline.

Now, however, the paper's coverage of the recent primary results confirmed our original suspicion. There was no alliteration in the headline proclaiming "It's Christie." And while the Republican nominee was referred to by first name, her male challengers were referred to as "Edwards" and "Wallwork" in the line that followed.

This tact of referring to women politicians by their first name is only one of the many typical ways in which women are subtly trivialized by the media. The Herald & News' readers as well as the women you write about deserve better.

**Karen Spindel  
Clifton.**

■ The writer is a member of the National Organization for Women of New Jersey, Passaic County NOW.

North Jersey  
Newspapers

*Christine Todd Whitman*

## LETTERS

### Domestic violence is not trivial

The June 19 letter to the editor from Robert Bonanno ("Letter on Toronto insulting to Lodi"), as well as the quote from Bernadette McCaskey in a June 21 article about the NOW rally against trivialization of violence ("Lodi mayor, NOW clash") indicate that supporters of Philip V. Toronto are missing the point. But, clearly, so is the mayor.

Both Bonanno and McCaskey have accused NOW of prejudging the case, when, in fact, it was the Toronto supporters with their standing ovation who attempted to do just that. NOW has taken no position regarding the mayor's guilt or innocence.

All we have asked is that the community, law enforcement agencies and courts take domestic violence charges seriously. The need for not trivializing domestic violence has never been more clear than it is now in view of the O.J. Simpson case. Bonanno and McCaskey just don't get it.

While we can appreciate the mayor's desire to separate his personal life from his political life, his condescending and sarcastic televised statement — "This has nothing to do with my official duties, nothing to do with Lodi and, quite frankly ladies, it has nothing to do with you" — is exactly the attitude that we are protesting.

The unfortunate and incorrect notion that domestic violence is only a "personal tragedy" is what is causing police and judges to back away from these cases, allowing women to die. Trivialization of domestic violence is everyone's business. Toronto, like his supporters, just doesn't get it.

Creating an awareness about the seriousness of domestic violence in the community and calling an end

The North Jersey Herald & News

## EDITORIAL

Sunday, July 3, 1994

to the trivialization of violent crime is a NOW priority. Maybe if they had read our press releases, or our flier at the rally, rather than tearing it up in a frenzied rage, Toronto fan club members would have understood that the purpose of our rally was not to accuse the mayor of wife-beating, but rather to protest the message sent by their applause.

When serious charges are not taken seriously by the community, an atmosphere is created in which domestic violence can flourish. Please show your support for strong domestic violence legislation and take a stand against trivialization of domestic violence in your communities,

by your police and in your courtrooms, before it is too late.

Women's lives depend on it.  
Karen Spindel  
Passaic.



## LETTERS

### Speak out on violence

Women everywhere, as well as countless Lodi residents who called the Passaic County Chapter of NOW (National Organization for Women) on Tuesday, May 17, were sickened upon learning of the standing ovation given alleged wife-beater Mayor Philip Toronto at the Lodi council meeting on Monday, May 16.

While Mayor Toronto is certainly due his day in court, his wife, Consuelo Toronto, must be heard as well.

Charges of violence against women must be taken seriously. It is a slap in the face to the women of Lodi, and all women, that a borough official facing charges of wife beating is turned into a folk hero and that a council meeting is used as the forum. The fact that this grossly inappropriate show of support was given coverage on WWOR News, Channel 9, makes this case all the more abhorrent.

Women's voices must be heard. We cannot and will not be silent in the face of this lack of regard for Consuelo Toronto and blatant show of contempt for all women. Concerned residents of Lodi, as well as others who are disturbed by reports of escalating violence against women, are therefore encouraged to join with NOW in a show of support for Consuelo Toronto.

We will rally outside of Lodi Borough Hall on Monday evening, June 20, at 7 p.m., prior to the council meeting, to draw attention to the fact that allegations of domestic violence must be taken seriously.

**Karen Spindel  
Clifton.**

■ The writer is a coordinator of the Passaic County chapter of the National Organization for Women.

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**KAREN SPINDEL**

Clifton, May 20

*The writer is coordinator for the Passaic County chapter of NOW.*

## Abuse charges a serious matter

Editor, The Record:

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## Haitians need help from U.S.

Editor, The Record:

In an Opinion-page article in The Record published May 12, Rep. Robert G. Torricelli, D-Englewood, opposes an economic embargo against the Haitian junta because it "will only add to the misery of the Haitian poor without forcing the generals to cede power."

This is the same Torricelli who wrote the Act of Congress enacted last year that makes a "complete economic embargo" of Cuba the official policy of the U.S. government and even pressures other countries to join the embargo. Did he worry then about "adding to the misery" of the Cuban poor?

He also opposes allowing Haitian refugees to seek asylum aboard U.S. ships or even in third countries. Indeed, Torricelli states, "All the recent changes in U.S. policy on Haiti are wrong." Does

Record  
May 1994

## EDITORIAL

## NUCLEAR POWERHOUSE

Letters to the Editor**Depriving Our Children**

I am the mother of a 9-year-old daughter who attends Clifton School 9. And I am disappointed and angered that my daughter's principal was instructed by Mr. Liess, Clifton superintendent of schools, to charge her with an unexcused absence for participating in Taking Our Daughters To Work Day on April 23. This decision was made in spite of a letter that was sent from Mr. Leo Klagholz, state commissioner of education, to all New Jersey chief school administrators.

This letter stated in part, "Gov. Whitman has signed a proclamation declaring Thursday, April 23, as New Jersey Take Our Daughters To Work Day. The New Jersey Department of Education encourages school districts to give participants credit for attendance and an opportunity to discuss what they have learned. The success of last years' day was due to the cooperative efforts of thousands of parents, schools, businesses, organizations and other concerned individuals who worked together to demonstrate the nation's interest in the girls' education and participation in the work force.

"Take Our Daughters To Work Day a national public education campaign with the purpose of drawing attention to girls' ideas, issues, concerns and aspirations."

Apparently "girls' ideas, issues, concerns and aspirations" are not a pri-

ority in the Clifton schools. While it is bad enough that our superintendent did nothing to encourage participation in this event; discouraging participation by penalizing students with unexcused absences was unconscionable.

The Clifton Board of Education members and many city taxpayers are forever complaining about unfunded state mandates, unfair funding allocations, charter schools, etc., that rob our children of the monies needed for educational improvements. It is therefore ironic and shameful that many of our daughters were penalized for, or prevented from, participating in a worthwhile educational experience funded and staffed entirely by local businesses, corporations, organizations, parents and other volunteers at no cost to the taxpayer and with no use of school dollars.

Once again, Clifton children were shortchanged of an educational op-

portunity that benefited children in other communities. This time, however, a lack of funding was clearly not the issue, but rather Mr. Liess' lack of initiative and vision on behalf of our students.

Karen Spindel  
Clifton

**Demand Action, Seniors!**

The window of opportunity continues to narrow as congressional legislators are balking at reauthorizing the Older Americans Act. Since Congress was in recess until April 20, there will be a foreshortened session due to fall elections, further worsening the situation.

Elderly voters should be made aware that vital programs, such as Meals on Wheels, shopping transportation services and pension counseling projects, to name but a few, rely on funding supplied by this act. Unless Congress moves at once, important services will be threatened.

Since 1980, there has been a 40 percent loss in ability to meet these needs due to a combination of inflation, an increasingly frail senior population and budgetary cuts. Those affected should contact the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources and the House Committee on Education and the Work Force immediately to demand action.

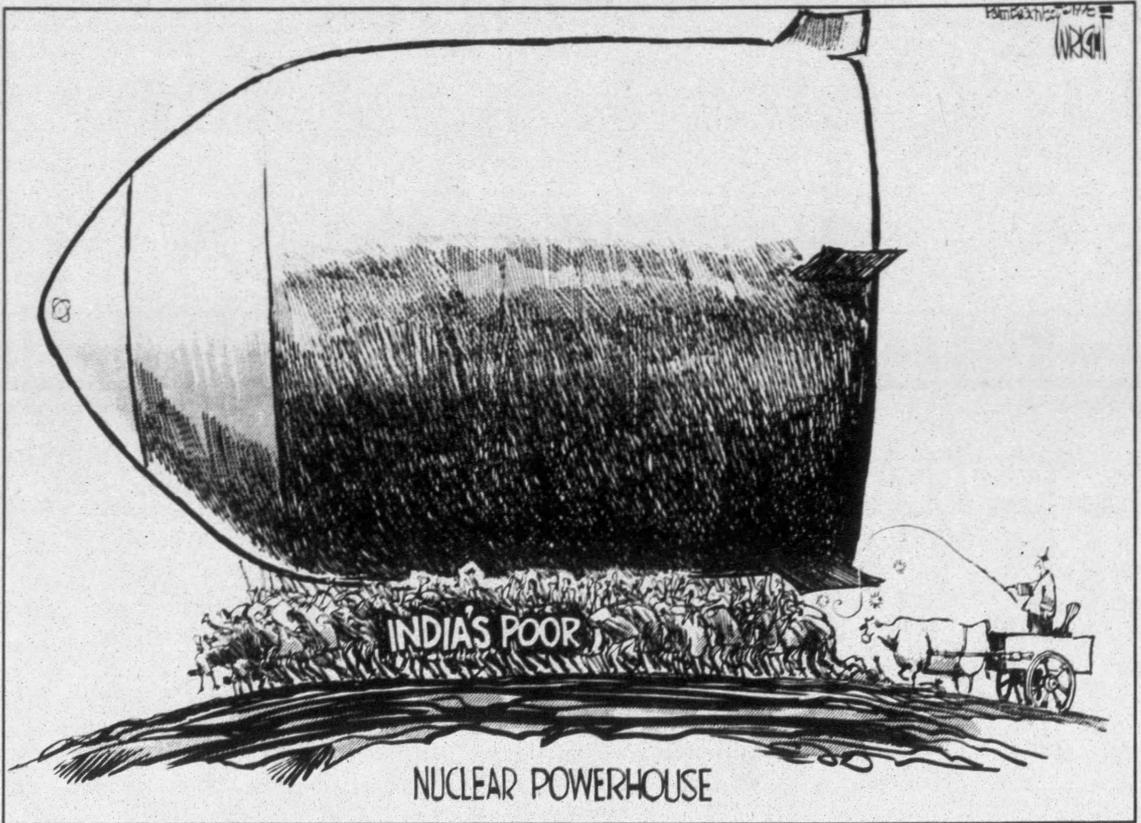
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Our e-mail address is njhn@aol.com

EDITORIAL



## Letters to the Editor

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