

An Insurgent Woman *cont. from page 20*

Carol, Lorraine and a number of mutinous sisters began widely promoting the newly developed apparatus and procedure. Because abortion was still illegal at the time, menstrual extraction was depicted as a way for women to gain control over their monthly menstrual flow. However, even with this subterfuge, the Menstrual Extraction Kit was so radical that National Organization For Women members barred Carol, Lorraine and their group space at one of their conferences, and the women had to conduct a demonstration from their hotel room.

Though Margaret Mead called menstrual extraction one of the most original ideas of the 20th Century...one that should have happened long ago.... many gynecologists criticized menstrual extraction saying it presented risks of infection, uterine perforation or the possibility of the uterus retaining products of conception; all common risks associated with abortion procedures. But feminists insisted that menstrual extraction was a technique that skilled and knowledgeable women could safely and painlessly administer to each other within a protective and nourishing community of sisters. They felt that no matter what the unjust patriarchal law demanded, menstrual extraction gave women the freedom to determine the course of their lives and health through this woman invented, woman owned and woman administered procedure.

What makes Lorraine Rothman and Carol Downer heroes and ultimately Founding Mothers

of the Women's Self-Help Movement, is that they didn't let opposition stop them. Together they carried on to do a national tour where they taught women Self-Help techniques, like Carol did that night in Venice. They showed women how to insert speculums into their vaginas and how to view their own cervixes, how to do self examinations and how to perform their own pregnancy tests.

In 1971 Lorraine Rothman and Carol Downer opened the first Feminist Women's Health Center in Los Angeles, where they continued their revolutionary and pioneering work in Women's Health. Soon another Feminist Women's Health Center would be opened in Santa Ana. These two facilities served as inspiration for the Women's Health Movement itself, as well as being an impetus and prototype for the opening of similar women-centered clinics across the nation. When abortion became legal in 1973 the Feminist Women's Health Centers would go on to offer a full range of women's health care services, including skilled, safe abortions.

Throughout her life, Lorraine Rothman worked for the liberation of women. She oversaw and directed the health centers that she co-founded, ever emphasizing participatory health care, based on education. Growing as a woman and as a human being, Lorraine continued to write and speak out about women's health concerns and issues. In 1999, together with Marcia Wexler, Lorraine wrote "Menopause Myths and Facts: What Every Woman should know about Hormone Replacement Therapy" where she criticized the in-

tensive marketing of hormone replacement therapy which treated menopause, a natural female process, as a disease.

Lorraine patented her device; the Del-Em Menstrual Extraction Kit in 1974. In an accompanying manual, through drawings and text, Lorraine gave detailed and explicit instructions on how to put a Del-Em Kit together. She must have fully understood in her lifetime what a radical and revolutionary tool she had constructed, an implement more potentially powerful to move the world than any of the Great White Father's killer nukes. She would have seen how today women's reproductive rights have been assaulted and harmed by seven years of the Bush woman-hating regime, and would have been comforted knowing that the Menstrual Extraction Kit may be a tool whose time has yet to come.

On September 25th, 2007 at the age of seventy five, Lorraine Rothman died at her home in Fullerton California, leaving behind a huge and important legacy for all women.

As a Founding Mother of women's liberation, Lorraine knew as long as the Patriarchy was entrenched and in power, women would be fighting for their reproductive freedoms, and the resistance must never stop.

And so it is in Lorraine's true spirit of defiance and rebellion that women today must carry on with the female revolution that thirty years ago, she helped to bring about.

I'm sure she'd agree that in this man's world, a woman's work is never done.

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Consumer Beware!
PUPPY MILLS

Everyday, pet stores around the country sell hundreds of puppies and

kittens to unsuspecting new owners. Most of these animals were born in "puppy mills"; breeding kennels that are notorious for their cramped, filthy conditions and for their constant breeding of unhealthy and often hard-to-socialize animals. Store owners may CLAIM that they purchase their animals from reputable sources, but a little research into their claims most often reveal animals that were born from caged mothers who exist only to breed.



Animals in puppy mills experience a bleak and sad life standing hour after hour on wire bottomed cages without the comfort of bedding or protection from the sun or cold. These animals rarely receive veterinary care for medical problems and often endure dehydration, raging earaches and abscessed feet. They may never walk on solid ground or know a comforting or kind touch. Often these animals suffer from madness and pace re-

lently in their isolation and at the end of their reproductive life, they are destroyed.

Please don't support this kind of cruelty. Tell store owners you don't support the sale of animals as merchandise, and educate your friends.

**For more information see:
helpinganimals.com
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