

The Third Wave: Rhode Island's Feminist Newspaper

Interview with Jodi Glass and Ruth Horton

Overview

The Third Wave: A Voice for RI's Feminist Women (1990-1997), was a feminist publication based in Rhode Island. It was produced under the auspices of Feminist Resources Unlimited (FRU), a nonprofit organization established in 1978 by Jodi L. Glass to foster feminist networking and activism. Originally started as a handwritten newsletter, the newspaper, was created to inform, encourage, support, and empower women in Rhode Island. In this interview, Jodi recalls the mission, evolution, distribution, and legacy of this important publication.

Summary

Origin and Mission

The Third Wave, served as a vital platform for feminist dialogue, news, and resources across the state. Created entirely by volunteers, it provided a space for voices from various feminist organizations and individuals, offering insight into issues ranging from domestic violence prevention to civil rights legislation and actions, to LGBTQ+ advocacy. It is notable that most of the volunteers who produced *The Third Wave* were lesbians, reflecting the overlapping feminist and LGBTQ+ communities in Rhode Island.

Evolution

The publication evolved from FRU's mission to connect feminist groups in Rhode Island. Glass, a native New Yorker, was surprised by the lack of networking that she found upon arriving in Rhode Island. She saw an opportunity to leverage the nimbleness and proximity of a small state and committed herself to community connections and engagement.

Initially a monthly gathering of representatives of organizations, businesses, and groups sharing space in what was called the "FRU House," community members gathered to share information about their organization's activities and initiatives. "We loved talking to each other and sharing what they had to say. We talked about the hard work we did for our organizations such as Planned Parenthood or The RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence," Glass recalls of the

publication's formative days. "We really wanted to share their information, and didn't have a way of doing that outside of our own circles."

Face-to-face meetings eventually moved to a handwritten, and later, typewritten letter called *Feminist Resources Unlimited Meeting* copied by mimeograph for sharing with members. Glass spent countless hours on the floor of her home, cutting and pasting each element to fashion it into a newsletter. With the emergence of computer technology and desktop publishing, Mary Ann Rossoni, a graphic artist, and Maria Caporizzo, a writer and editor, offered their ideas and expertise to transform the newsletter into a professionally produced monthly publication. "Maria and Mary Ann, who knew newspapers, really knew how to do this. They were the greatest support team," Glass acknowledged.

Content and Distribution

The Third Wave earned a reputation for providing timely and relevant content directed toward its feminist audience, including contributions from leaders of some of Rhode Island's largest social service organizations, updates on national and local legislation, alongside other articles, event calendars, and resources of interest to feminist and LGBTQ+ communities.

The Third Wave maintained a circulation of 10,000 throughout its seven-year run, supported entirely by advertising revenue. At the first of each month, a volunteer distribution team descended upon the front porch of Glass' home on the East Side of Providence to collect stacks of papers to deliver across the state to business owners and community organizations who were proud to offer free copies to the public.

Impact and Legacy

Despite its success, volunteer fatigue and production demands led to its reduction to a seasonal schedule in the mid-1990s before ceasing in 1997. *The Third Wave* remains a landmark in Rhode Island history as a voice for feminist appetite and intellect.

Audio Quotes from Interview

🔊 — indicates audio clip available

🔊 Early beginnings (2:06)

Q: can you talk a little bit about what the impetus was?

A: The Third Wave didn't directly come out of FRU House; it came out of Feminist Resources Unlimited. I'm from New York, and I really couldn't believe how people [in Rhode Island] weren't networking because the state is so small and it's so easy to talk with each other. So I pulled together a network of people that created the umbrella group FRU. And I said, "why don't we get all the FRU House groups together once a month and say one thing that's going on with your group." And that's what we did. And then it went from that to everybody being very busy, so we developed a handwritten newsletter. So, [Q: so the third wave started out as a handwritten newspaper?] *The Third Wave* started out as literally meeting in a room, and it wasn't called *The Third Wave* at the time. It was just called Feminist Resources Unlimited Meeting. And then it went to mimeo format (you know, the purple) that we sent around. And then we went to typewriter and got some really talented graphic artists (Mary Ann Rossoni and Maria Caporizzo) - people, you know, who were talented. I didn't know anything about computers or graphic art. I was cutting and pasting everything – literally on the floor in my house. And they (Rossoni and Caporizzo) knew how to move things, how to do things. And when they said, "we can create a newspaper," I said, "OK!" Let's make a newspaper.



🔊 Distribution (1:07)

Q: So, structurally, you had an editorial committee, advertising/marketing, distribution, etc.?

A: Yes, a lot of committees of one, maybe of two. Nobody was paid – all volunteers. The way the newspaper was distributed was - I had a great big porch on my house on the East Side of Providence. We would line the papers up - and we had like, 10,000 and label them, and people would pick them up from all over the state and they had a certain territory. And you had a whole team of people, yeah, yeah, it's amazing. So they were scattered across the state, yeah, and they knew the places that were amenable. Exactly.



◀ Lesbian involvement (:42)

MY. it definitely felt like you were really appealing to all feminists, yes, JG. yeah, definitely, we didn't call it a lesbian paper. It wasn't. It was Third Wave of voice for Rhode Island's feminist women, right? I think that's what it was called. Yeah. It was feminism that we were talking about, but we included a lot of lesbian stuff,...

So yeah, and a lot of lesbians that worked, you know, volunteered on it, which was amazing. So I think most everyone was a Lesbian. I think so Wow, yeah, yeah.

◀ What was learned... (1:30)

MY: Anything surprising that you learned over the course of setting it up? Was it bigger than you ever expected? I'm curious about what sticks out most in your mind about the experience.



JG: I think what I learned is how much people loved talking to each other and they really love sharing what they had to say. you know, I work. I do all this work. It's hard work. It's, I don't get paid much and this is what we're doing at Planned Parenthood or The Coalition Against Domestic Violence. And they really wanted to share their information, and they didn't have a way of doing that outside of their circle. The other thing I learned, that is not a positive thing, is that once a lot of money comes into a group, the group changes from grassroots group to a much different kind of group. And that's not the kind of group I like to work with. You know, it's a double-edged sword because you can't really work without the money.

Related Items in Wanderground Collection

- Issues of newspaper*
- Enlarged images of an article
- FRU Women's Yellow pages*

**Located in files for Rhode Island organizations and files of Mary Ann Rossoni*

Details

- Interview with: Jodi L. Glass and Ruth Horton
- Topic(s): Third Wave newspaper, feminist activism, Feminist Resources Unlimited (FRU), collaborations among feminist organizations, volunteer support, creation of feminist newspapers
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