

# Northern Woman Journal

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50¢ Issue 4



Playground triumph: women and friends. See page 3.

# EDITORIAL

Second wind...Often it is more revitalizing and strength giving than the first. Because the Northern Woman Journal is approaching its fifth anniversary, we are trying for our second wind.

That is, we will be looking for greater input from the women of the region, will try to look better and hopefully, be more widely read.

The sixties and seventies have seen great changes in the lives of women. We are accomplishing things that need to be talked about among ourselves...both for recognition's sake and for reflection. In a region as isolated as Northwestern Ontario, we feel the need for a paper

that provides women of the area with a space to share their accomplishments is a strong one.

This issue and the next one will mark the start of an attempt to get more women involved in the paper...both reading and writing. We are urging people who wish to write articles, provide photographs, literary material...write a column on music or literature...to step forward. Any contribution will be greatly appreciated.

We are also requesting that people who are behind in their subscriptions to earnestly consider renewing their subscriptions.

Also a part of the second wind, fourth.

are the new staff people around Women's Place. Anne Donaldson has been hired as Office Co-ordinator. The title, however, does the job little justice because it involves everything from opening mail and reception to crisis counselling and referral. Monica McNabb has taken on the task of creating a comprehensive library for women complete with a file of articles and periodicals. Betty Harema is the Credit Union's new Treasurer and Brenda Cryderman is the Co-ordinator of the Woman's Decade Council. Each will work at making things serve women more effectively.

Second wind...Let us hope this is a sign of a third and a

## GERT'S GOSPEL

A woman's place is where she wants to be. Sounds so simple. Who could quarrel with so much logic. A man's place ditto. What's the problem? The problem is the silly notion that for a man to be where he wants to be, it has seemed necessary for a woman to be where he wants her to be.

Marriage has increased his insecurity. I think, deep down every woman has recognized the price of peace has been not to think too deeply about how she feels about putting the lid on her own potential so the marriage partner can extend his own limits. We have to ask the question, has this nonsense role we've played brought satisfaction for either partner?

That women are sick and tired of it all is borne out in the statement of Sidney Katz, a marriage counsellor with impeccable credentials, when he states, "It is women who are opting out of tyranny with security. They won't take the bullshit anymore."

In almost every marriage, compromise without balance has the stink of death; nothing grows in that sterile soil but frustration. I would like to believe that men in general were moving toward a new understanding of their own insecurities. But they guard the crumbling barricades of mythical male superiority till their wives flee the nest, and their children hit the streets.

If this lays total responsibility for marriage break-up on the male, that is not my intention. I'm wise enough to know if the shoe were on the other foot, if history and theology

had provided the base for female privilege, the men in our lives would be struggling for survival even as we are today.

Letting go is not something that either sex does gracefully until the self is fully persuaded that true self-esteem demands it. The right to shape and mould others to suit our convenience is not contained in the marriage bargain.

The move to marriage contracts is a hopeful sign; the inclusion of birth control as joint responsibility is overdue; the role of parenting equally shared a necessity; the space and support to extend the limits of every skill and potential, regardless of sex, takes more clear thinking than fever produces. Two people can climb the same mountain for different reasons. Nobody thinks one has to stay on the ground and prepare the lunch.

The need to be indispensable demands the creation of a cripple. Our men do it to us, and we do it to our children. Thank God, we're beginning to recognize it. The division of property and liquid assets, whether the mating is permanent or terminated, is the sign of recognized maturity and mutual responsibility, and should be the base of any marriage contract.

As I look around and see what was once beautiful, not worth the trouble to save, I am not caught up in the rights and wrongs of it all. I see the terrible energy it takes to walk away from even limited security, the soul searching and the guilt tripping, but I see something more--a determination to survive and build from their own resources in a

way that reaffirms them as a complete person. A woman's place is where she wants to be this is the first faltering step to that realization.

I know a great many women happy with the status quo, and I have no criticism to make about their lives. They are obviously in the place they want to be. They say things like, "I like to know I can just so far and then he puts his foot down." "He's so good he lets me have my way."

My own dear spouse, may he stand the trip, constantly reminds me how fortunate I am to have a man who lets me do the things that make me happy even though he sees no merit whatever in my interests. There would be no point in reminding him I also allow him to do and say and think things that are completely outside frame of reference. Nor do I care to remind him that permission is neither sought nor wanted. He is totally protected by my own sense of integrity and affection, and as such, I shall continue to be what I am in the places where I want to be. That he obviously wants the place I want to be his companion is a double bonus for both of us.

A very learned gentleman sees marriage as total destruction said, "The day you take the vows, the nibbling starts. The fact is, one person has himself now responsible for the destiny of two and assumes a trust has to be established. fostering of diversity is a business, but the marriage pulls it off has compensations permanence. Only the free are truly bound."

# Play paradise

If you take a walk past St. James School on North Court Street before classes or during recess, you will notice a great hive of children climbing, tumbling and sliding in and out of what appears to be a heap of logs strewn at random around the schoolyard. What you are actually looking at is a very ingenious new design in playgrounds, constructed for creative play...it's effectiveness speaks for itself.

Carrie Marshal is the woman at North Cumberland Neighbourhood Improvement Office largely responsible for initiating the project and guiding it to a finish. Well, phase one of a whole scheme, at least.

A group of parents and teachers worked together with Hough, Stansbury Association Limited Consultants to come up with the playground constructed with pressure treated logs and lumber.

The play area, which puts many things into a small area of space, includes an amphitheatre, slide, tunnels, play house and areas where the children can play quietly on their own. As phase one, the playground is especially for primary level children. There are also swings and a paint board and puppet show area are soon to come.

"St. James is a community school, and the playground is for the neighbourhood. Something like this is an asset to a school in the community during a time of declining enrolment," explained Carrie.



The playground was constructed this summer partially by volunteers and partially by paid people.

"We acted as the contractors at the NIP office. It was a lot to take

on, but as our own contractor, it enabled us to employ carpenters during the strike."

Next summer, a creative play area will get underway for intermediate level children.

## COMMUNITY BULLETIN:

The Anglican Church Women will hold a Rummage sale of children's clothing at St. Paul's Church, 808 Ridgeway, October 21 from 2 to 4 pm.

Got an event coming up that you would like publicized? Send it to Northern Woman's Centre 316 Ray Street.

## LETTERS

Dear Women:

I am a recent newcomer to Thunder Bay and was delighted to be informed by Mary Fedorchuk of the existence of a dynamic and impactful group of women in Northern Ontario. The women's movement is no longer on the front pages of local newspapers because it has become an integral part of Canadian life today. Your newspaper, credit union, crisis centre, women's programmes at the College plus numerous other activities attest to this phenomenon.

Your past and present performance is particularly impressive in view of the demographic features of North-western Ontario. It consists predominantly of small, one-industry towns, created by men for men with little historical regard for women's facilities - day-care, shopping, etc. The area is also isolated from larger centres where new concepts tend to have easier acceptance. The view of one-industry towns is effectively outlined in the recent issue of Saturday Night.

The traditionalism and stereotypes prevalent in North-western Ontario are being rapidly dissipated by all of your efforts. I firmly believe that women are capable of achieving whatever they want. I have a full-time career and a husband and definitely would like children

someday. Due to the efforts of individuals like yourselves, all of my objectives will be available to me. Thank you for paving the way for women to have freedom of choice - be it homemaker or worker outside the home. I enclose my subscription fee with pleasure.

Sincerely,  
Deborah H. Kraft

The following letter was received in response to a letter sent by Julie Fels to Dennis R. Timbrell, Minister of Health, that appeared in the last issue.

Dear Ms. Fels:

Thank you for your letter of June 23, relating to payments made by the Plan for therapeutic abortions.

I would like first to assure you that payments for medically necessary services are made according to rules and guidelines without intent of discrimination.

Legislation in Ontario requires that all insured services provided by physicians be medically necessary. In the specific example noted in your letter, services must be approved by a therapeutic abortion committee in a hospital to determine medical necessity and payment by the Plan. The same rules for this procedure are applied for those insured services provided to Ontario residents outside the province. I believe the matter was clarified in the letter you

attached, which was received from our Thunder Bay Office. It noted that for therapeutic abortions performed outside Canada, OHIP accepts as sufficient evidence of medical necessity either of the following: a) certification of a Therapeutic Abortion Committee in Canada or, b) certification by at least two qualified physicians (which may include any referring Ontario physician but which may not include the physician performing the abortion) who have reviewed the patient's medical history and recommend termination of the pregnancy because continuation would, or would likely to, endanger the patient's life or health. This policy is not applied with discrimination or selectivity and the Plan does not knowingly process such claims without the necessary approvals.

With reference to your question concerning the general guide referred to in your letter, it is to provide general information only. "Referring physician's name - if applicable," applies when one physician is providing a consultative service for a patient referred by another physician. This is required to determine the appropriate fee to be paid.

Dennis R. Timbrell,  
Minister of Health.

# Life Begins at 40 conference helps women plan

Life begins at 40...an intriguing statement with multiple implications. Around Thunder Bay these days, though, Life Begins at 40 means a conference for women at Confederation College, October 20 and 21.

The purpose of the conference sponsored by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the NWO International Woman's Decade Council and Confederation College Woman's Programs, is to discuss with women the changes related to finances and overall well-being later in life. Although designed especially for women in middle age, conference organizer Marg Graham says that the ideas and issues to be discussed at the sessions could aid younger women in planning for the future.

Kay Hegge of Community and Social Services was responsible for putting forth the idea last spring. Recent studies, such as the one conducted by Kaye Delude of the National Action Committee, indicate that a significant number of women face serious financial crisis beyond the age of 40. Most often, the new circumstances occur after the death of a spouse, or because women fail to investigate such things as pension plans or rights of inheritance. At the time of the last census, two thirds of the women widowed, divorced, and single women over age 65 were below the poverty line.

"Four out of five Canadian women are predeceased by their husbands. That indicates that women are the ones who need the financial advice, and and other kinds of advice to assist them in the great changes that occur after age 40," says Marg Graham.

The conference has been organized around workshop sessions dealing with three basic categories. Finances will cover pensions, credit, wills,



estates and funeral planning. Preparing for Life Alone takes into account women rejoining the work force and general re-integration into the community, dealing with the problem of the empty nest syndrome and facing widowhood alone. Health workshops will cover nutrition, use of drugs and alcohol, the aging process, menopause and stress.

Keynote speaker will be Mae Sutton, a widow who has been a strong lobbyist for changes in the present pen-

sion laws that greatly affected her life.

An opening dinner Friday evening will be held and requires one week's paid pre-registration. Afterwards there will be a fashion show presented by the Indian Friendship Centre's Soto Images. Films based on the theme of aging will be shown.

For more information or to register call Confederation College Women's Programs at 577-5751.

## Cullen's UIC cuts will slam women

The proposed cutbacks in Unemployment Insurance benefits represent one of the most vicious attacks on working women in recent history.

Changes to the Unemployment

Insurance programme were announced on September 1, 1978 by Employment and Immigration Minister Bud Cullen. The primary purpose behind the proposed changes is to deny UI benefits to those who cannot find long-term employment. Women, "the last hired and the first fired" will be hurt more than any other group in Canadian society by these changes.

The proposed cutbacks appear to be the culmination of a campaign to force women back into the home, thereby leaving the impression that unemployment is really not so serious after all. In 1977, the Liberal government released a "Compre-

hensive Review of the Unemployment Insurance Program" which made incredible and unsubstantiated statements about women workers. The Review stated that women misuse the UI programme through nonavailability and refusal to work and that secondary earners generated unexpected increases in UI benefit expenditures.

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women warned that such sweeping generalizations about women claimants, which were not supported by any data, should not be used for policy purposes. However, the Liberal government has done exactly that: it has developed policy blaming women

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# Findlay appointment

The Honourable Marc Lalonde, Minister responsible for the Status of Women, today announced the appointment of Suzanne Findlay of Ottawa as Vice-President of the federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Sue Findlay has become well-known to women across Canada as Director of the Women's Programme, Secretary of State, where she was responsible for administering some \$500,000 annually in grants to women's organizations and for the field work of regional staff who provided the programme's external liaison with women at the community level. The Women's Programme also mounted extensive International Women's Year activities, with a budget of 2.5 million under her direction. Ms. Findlay's close contact with women's groups will remain a major part of her new role with the Council.

Along with her years of professional work to further the advancement of women's rights, Sue Findlay has a long history of association with the women's movement, having been a member of such groups as the Ottawa-Hull Rape Crisis Centre, the Women's Resource

Group, the Ottawa Citizens' Committee for Children, and the Ottawa Family Planning Association.

Sue Findlay, who takes up her new duties October 16, 1978, is filling the vacancy created by the mid-August resignation of Monica Townson, who has since joined the Economic Council of Canada's Centre for

## New Library in works

WELCOME. The Women's Centre Resource Library is open for lending. Materials include a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books; looseleaf information contained in a vertical file covering over one hundred subjects; one record; an information kit; many feminist magazines and periodicals; an audio cassette on battered women and some non-sexist children's books. VOLUNTEERS would be appreciated to do clippings as well as other essential work for the Centre.

WATCH for regular postings at your library for films, speakers and discussion to be held at the Women's Centre as part of our new program or phone the Resource Library for information at 345-5841 and ask for Monika.

the Study of Inflation and Productivity as Senior Economic Adviser. Ms. Townson made a significant contribution to the work of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, particularly in direct its research in such areas as Women in the Public Service, Sexual Assault, and Native Women.



Monika McNabb, the new librarian at Woman's Place is in the process of putting together a collection of books, magazines, and clippings of interest to women. Come in, browse and borrow.

### Women in business

## A local market for local crafts

Handmade House is a new venture for Thunder Bay. The three partners who own the store, Mary Smith, Ruth Cook, and Gloria Meredith, felt it was important that there be a store in Thunder Bay that specialized in quality local crafts. And we also felt it important that there be a business in town that would provide an opportunity for the many talented local people to develop and extend their creative abilities.

So, after many months of talking, scrounging for money (personal loans and re-mortgaged houses), and choruses of male comments about the chickiness of women, we finally took a deep breath and jumped in. And here we are with our very own store - much to our great surprise. Actually, once we got started it didn't seem all that difficult. Of course, we wouldn't like to suggest that those traditional male occupations that men would have us believe are too difficult for women - well, we wouldn't like to think it all a myth, would we? But the thought has crossed our minds. Of course, we've only been in business two months, not long enough to know if we're going to make it yet; but whatever happens it's been very

educational so far, good for our confidence and fun - it's also exciting to be involved with so many talented people.

One of the things we've become aware of is that those crafts which are considered "women's work" are less valued. We've also found that women really undervalue their time. We're hoping to change some of this.

When we started there seemed to be two large unknowns that we couldn't research before we started - would there be enough crafts to stock our store and would people buy them. We still don't know the answer. We have quite a few suppliers - most of them women - but we need more. We are interested in all kinds of crafts but especially original designs and ideas. We'd like to expand into the area of original design clothing - we have some but would like more.

It's still too early to tell if we'll have enough customers but so far people have been pretty positive. They compliment us on our stock and sometimes buy things.

The next phase of our project is to open a tea room. That won't be for a month or so though. We thought we'd try to get the hang of this

first - learn to count change and stuff like that - before we tackled the next step.

We're located at 420 Victoria Ave., three doors down from May St., going towards Simpson - right across from Drugworld. If you're interested in crafts, either buying or selling, we like to see you.

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# Using the vote effectively...ask questions!

Women should look after women in the electoral process, says the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

"Within the year we will be facing a federal election. It is probable that the country will still be grappling with economic and unemployment problems. It is a fact that during hard times, problems facing women are even harsher," said a statement issued by the Council.

In order to deal with a part of the problem the federal Advisory Council has prepared a "Shocking Pink Paper" for use by those wishing to be sure that candidates for election are aware of the problems facing women--and, says the Council--the solutions.

The Shocking Pink Paper provides a list of questions with which to confront the candidates based on the issues affecting women.

"People are saying...we wouldn't be having a problem with unemployment if so many women weren't trying to get into the labour force," says the paper which answers with the Facts; that the majority of married women in the labour force have to work to bring their family income above poverty level, and, that 45% of working women are single, divorced, widowed or separated, so

they are working to support themselves and their dependants

The paper, put out earlier this year, proposes questions about the governments plans for women's pensions and security for homemakers. It deals with the problem of poverty among older women and the infringement upon Human Rights particularly afflicting Indian women.

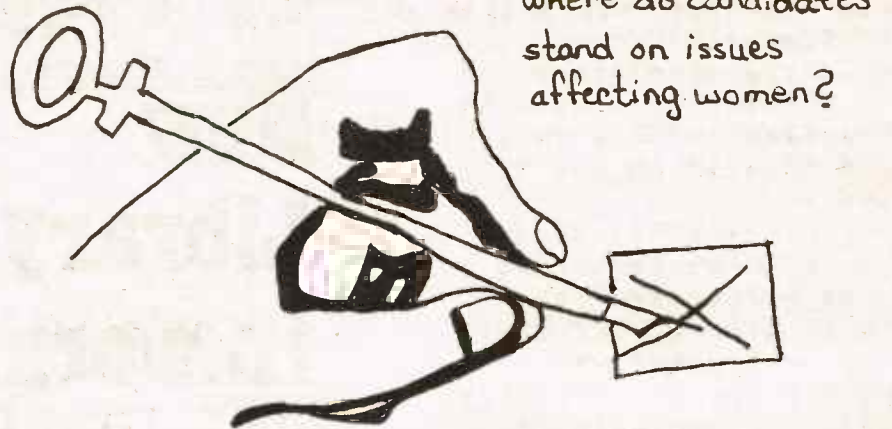
For instance, women can ask the question: "What do you intend to do to correct these four situations that discriminate against Indian Women in spite of the new Human Rights legislation: -Indian women who marry a non Indian man lose their status...not so for an Indian man. -Indian women who have married

non-Indian men have been evicted from their homes and the reserve -the Indian act is specifically excluded from the new Human Right Legislation.

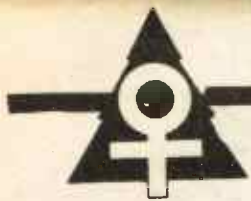
-Though the Indian act is now be revised, Indian women who have lost their status have no say.

Rape is also a concern that the Pink Paper deals with. The questions deal with amending the criminal code so that more than 10% of rape cases come to trial, which is the present statistic.

For a copy of the Shocking Pink Paper write the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Box 1541, Station B Ottawa, K1P 5R5.



*Northern Women's Credit Union*



## Need for contributions

by Laurie Hill

The Northern Woman's Credit Union continues to grow and mature.

An enthusiastic group met at the Woman's Centre for the second annual meeting, Sunday September 11. The major focus of the day's discussion was a membership drive. This will be done by way of media exposure, speaking to local women's groups and having an information booth at the Life Begins at 40 conference at Confederation College this month. Ofcourse we shall continue to influence our friends, acquaintances and co-

workers to convince them of the good in joining a woman's credit union.

Thursday, September 28, a special meeting of the Board of Directors was called so that the local Credit Union League representative, Jim Zebruk, could present his report to them. After going through the Credit Union's books, he reported that all was in order. A note of thanks and recognition go to Betty Harkema, Treasurer for her excellent book keeping and to Eleanor Eryser, Secretary for her detailed minutes.

One thing that was strongly recommended to the Board by Mr. Zebruk was that the general membership be more actively encouraged to build up deposits. We have been granting loans regularly and in this way have been meeting the needs of local women for credit. However, unless the members of our Credit Union make regular share deposits, the credit union may soon be running into difficulties in meeting these loan requests. So again, we emphasize the

need for deposits. Even \$5.00 a month will soon add up.

Two weekend conferences at Confederation College in October will be seeing participation by our credit union executive. There will be a credit union workshop October 13 and 14 focusing on credit granting, bankruptcy and the new family law reform act and its application to the Credit Union. It will be attended by the treasurer and at least one member of the credit committee.

Also, the Life Begins At 40 Conference October 20 and 21 will have Credit Union coverage for potential members.

UPCOMING MEETING FOR THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP, Thursday, October 19, 1978, 8 pm Woman's Place, 31 Bay Street.

Please make an effort to attend. Your vote will help determine Credit Union matters.

MEET FELLOW MEMBERS JOIN IN THE CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL CREDIT UNION DAY.

### Got a minute?

THE HERSTORY COMMITTEE NEEDS NEEDS VOLUNTEERS TO TRANSCRIBE FROM CASSETTE TAPES, FASCINATING INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN PIONEERS OF NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO. IF YOU CAN HELP, PLEASE PHONE GEORGINA GARRETT AT 344-9087 or LYNNE THORNBURG AT 577-5759, EXT. 197.

# Women in NW Ontario need more say

by  
The NWO International Women's  
Decade Co-ordinating Council.

The following are excerpts from the brief presented to the Hartt Commission on the Northern Environment in Nakina, Nov. 29/77, by Julie Fels and Leona Lang, two members of the council.

Families in resource-based communities are there to live as well as to work. Therefore, women must be involved in the planning of the socio-economic development of their communities. To date, corporations have not exercised corporate responsibility in responding to the human needs of the community.

The quality of life is directly dependent upon the economy of the area in which we live, hence the economic development of the north affects the lives of us all. As women represent 51% of the population, they have not only the right but the obligation to be represented in all aspects of the economic and social development of the north. Looking at development from a woman's perspective is essential, for it is the women who live in these communities who are most affected by the developmental decisions which are made by men. Women have traditionally shouldered the human element of development in the community and, as such, are the experts on the quality of life. The product of this development forms the social fabric of these communities. Both sexes are equally affected, so none of us should deny that both sexes should have equal input into the decision-making process affecting their lives. If the terms of reference of socio-economic studies are entirely dependent on highly technical, non-experiential male concepts, then we can only conclude that the outcome of these studies will not be relevant to the women of the communities north of the 50th parallel, and the status quo will only be perpetuated. We believe that women from the north should sit on this commission to ensure that women's experience will be recognized. We believe that the present structure of the commission exemplifies how women are relegated to supportive and peripheral roles outside the decision-making process. Economic expansion will not result in the socio-economic betterment of women who are considered marginal and unimportant in the process unless a conscious decision to change the position of women is built right into the terms of reference. In summary, we would make several requests:

1. We ask your commission to seek out women to provide input from their experiences of living in the north. You must go beyond the formal hearing

format and you must go to the women of the small communities. Fear, isolation, lack of financial resources, transportation, lack of child care, are all factors that make living in the north a very difficult place for women to grow and participate as citizens of Ontario.

2. We ask that you consider a grass roots community development model and provide funds to enable women to organize around their needs in single industry towns. Their experiences should be considered a unique expertise for the commission.

3. We request that childcare be provided at all commission hearings to enable women to participate in, as well as observe, the proceedings.

4. We ask that the planning and development schemes not make the basic assumption that women exist only as dependents of men, but that women be seen as persons responsible for their own economic future. Until this happens the development plans of industry and government will continue to deliver programs that re-inforce women's role in these communities as marginal and dependent. Rather, community development plans should and must integrate women fully into the economic and social power structure of the community.

5. In conclusion, we ask you, Mr. Justice Hartt, to make this commission a notable one; one which will be known for recognizing women's voices in economic development, an area in which they have been historically excluded.

Leona Lang



## Two million likely affected

The following article appeared in the October 5 edition of the Chronicle Journal in an obscure corner of the obituary page.

WASHINGTON (AP) An estimated six million mothers in the United States and their offsprings may face risks of cancer or other abnormalities from exposure to synthetic estrogen DES during pregnancy, Health Secretary Joseph Califano said today. Califano asked the 400,000 US physicians to search their medical records and notify the estimated two million women who were once routinely given DES to prevent miscarriages, "chiefly between 1945 and 1955 but in a number of cases, as recently as 1970."

Northern Woman Journal page

# THE WAITRESS

by Brenda Cryderman

"What I resent is that we have to hustle to get minimum wage," stated Anne, a local cocktail waitress, "a right that is guaranteed to other workers."

Anne is a waitress in a well established hotel in Thunder Bay. She is paid \$2.50 per hour--35 cents below the minimum wage of \$2.85.

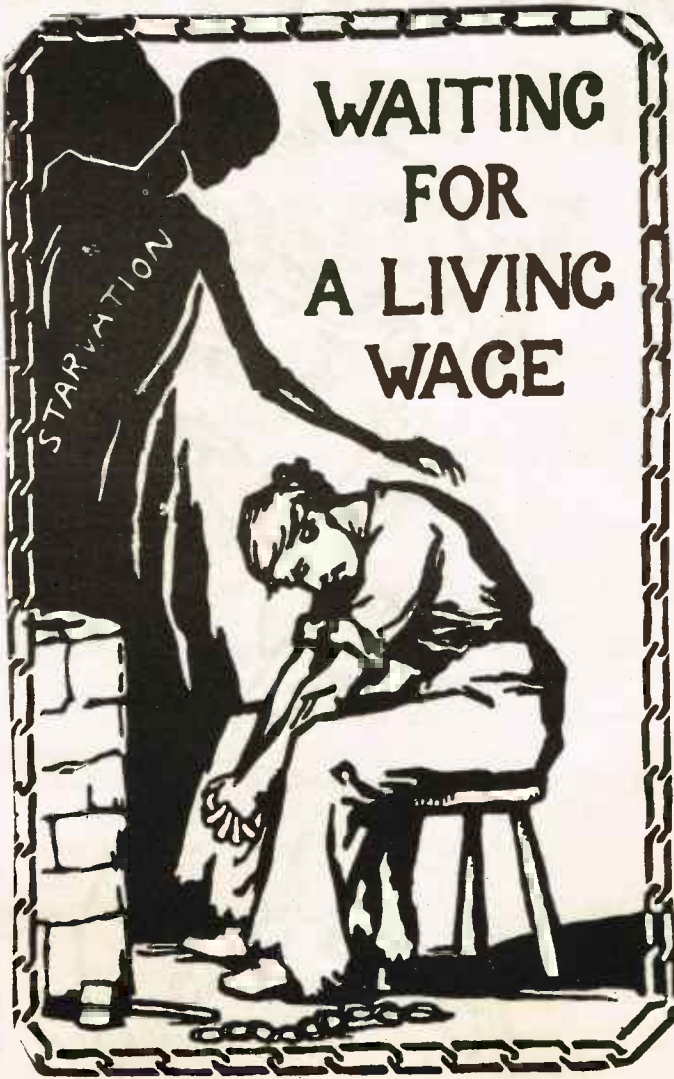
"The guy at Manpower said this was legal as I do get tips. Some days I make \$4.00 in tips, and on other days \$10.00. It really doesn't amount to that much."

The Ontario government rationalizes this form of cheap labour because, they say, only waitresses that are serving liquor get this wage and they make tips. Also, it is supposed to help boost our tourist industry.

**In theory a customer should tip 15% of the bill. No matter how good the service, you're lucky to get 10.**

"The other waitresses I talked to agree that it is a rip-off. But most of them feel that there is nothing we can do about it. We need our jobs and we certainly can't afford to get fired. I don't think they would have any trouble replacing us," says Anne.

"Tips kind of turn waitresses against each other as everyone is trying to get the best tipping customer and



and if you get along really well with the hostess, she will put them in your section. So some waitresses make more than others for providing the same service and that certainly isn't fair."

"I don't think most people are

aware that we get paid such lousy wages. But I also don't believe that it is up to the customer to make sure that we get minimum wage. I know the company that I work for isn't a charitable organization. They are certainly making a profit. I would mention their name, but I can't afford to lose my job.

Unlike most waitresses, I am fortunate. I only have myself to support and I live at home for next to nothing. Some girls try to keep their own place on these wages and others are single parents who could certainly make money on welfare," Anne concluded.

Eighty percent of all waitresses are women. This is just another example of how women have to sell their services at a reduced value. There are very few labour unions for this occupation. Really, they have to prostitute themselves to the customer, smiling when he is rude, agreeing when he is wrong. "Remember: the customer is always right."

THE WAITRESS

Brenda Cryderman

*Underpaid and overworked, always smiling at some jerk, Walking, standing, never sitting, hurry, "service must be quick." These people are important, they have better things to do than wait.*

*Life can't always be this bad, someone's always getting mad. I don't make the soup or set the table, all I do is serve and clean. Understaffed and underpaid, all we want is MINIMUM WAGE.*

## A Matter of Choice

The CBC has produced a new film on rape. Starring Roberta Maxwell, *A Matter of Choice*, was shown on CBC-TV's For the Record on Sunday, January 29. The film explores rape and its emotional aftermath. It is an attempt to show the effects of assault on the victim, the terror, the rage and the despair. The legal process, the cross-examination of the victim, the necessary evidence are all looked at. Altogether, it is a very powerful film.

The film was followed by a two-hour panel discussion and phone-in program.

For more information contact:  
Maureen O'Donnell  
TV Network Promotion  
CBC Toronto  
Tel. (416) 925-3311 Ext. 4461

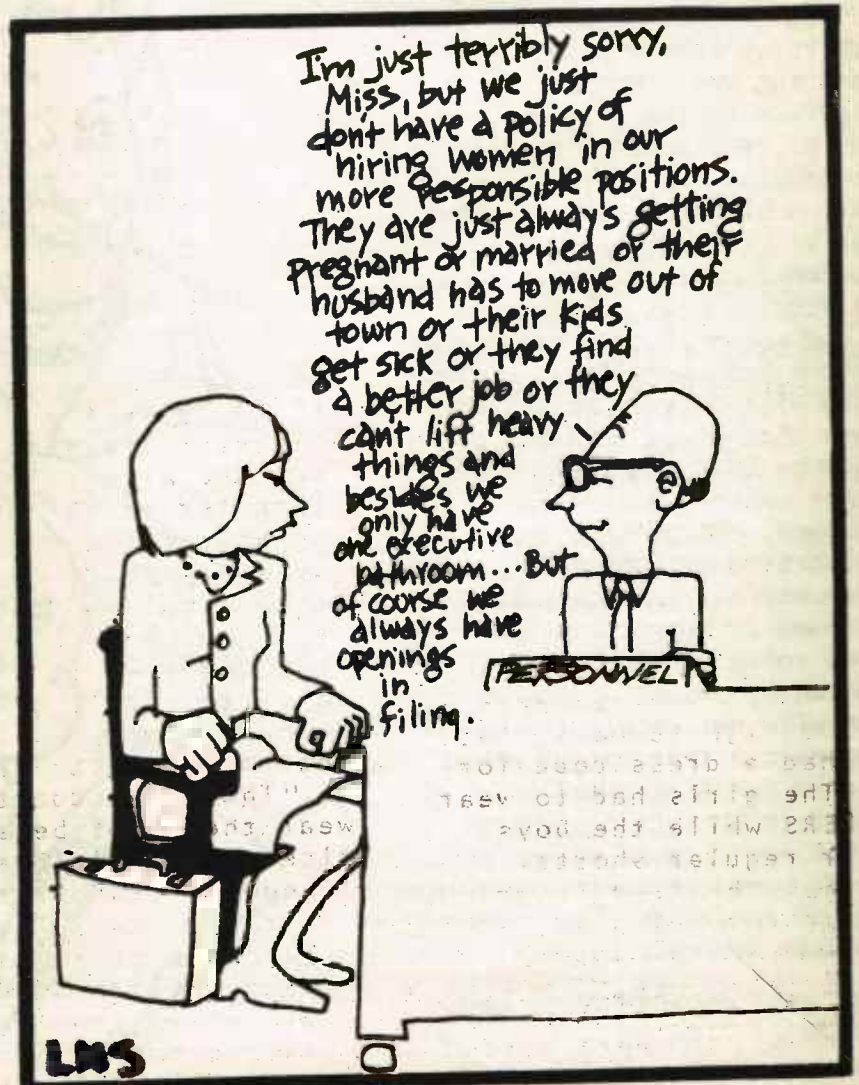
## Elderly Women

The Canadian Council on Social Development has completed a technical study, by Ottawa economist Kevin Collins, on women and pensions. (Release date February 1978) The report examines the conditions for women in private and public pension plan systems.

Mr. Collins reports that elderly women, living on pensions, are the poorest people. In effect they live below any realistic poverty line. Women are penalized by current pension systems, according to the study, by longer life expectancy, higher turnover rate in the labour force, low wages, poor jobs and interrupted employment records.

The Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan are called to task for their regressive benefits in the report: "the lowest income groups pay a higher proportion of their income in contributions than higher income groups. Because women generally have relatively low incomes, this is particularly disadvantageous for them." To obtain a copy of the report please direct your requests to:

"Women and Pensions"  
Canadian Council on Social Development  
55 Parkdale Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1Y 1E5





# Bloomers for girlies

## But shorts for boys?!

by Sandra Steinhouse

It all began one peaceful fall day. Little did I know that the next words I would read would add drama, suspense and laughter to my life.

My daughter and son go to the same high school and on this particular day they each walked into the house with a notice from school--Regulation Wear for Physical Education. It sounds routine, right? It is routine but that doesn't mean it isn't bizarre.

Before I had time to look at the school notice, my daughter started insisting that we go to the store shopping. "I've been told that we have to have our GYM BLOOMERS by tomorrow for phy. ed," she moaned. GYM BLOOMERS!! "What in the world are gym bloomers?" I asked. (I'm not originally from Ontario) GYM BLOOMERS, for those uninformed like me, are special shorts created just for girls. (Oh how lovely, a product just for us!) GYM BLOOMERS are baggy shorts with elastic around the leg.

I became very aware that my son was not making the same chant, "I need GYM BLOOMERS by tomorrow". He had not mentioned his need for this strange costume. Something went "click" in my head. I read the Regulation notice. Girls are required to wear GYM BLOOMERS (that cost \$6.50) while boys are required to wear shorts. Ludicrous. I charge the schools with sex discrimination and promoting consumerism.

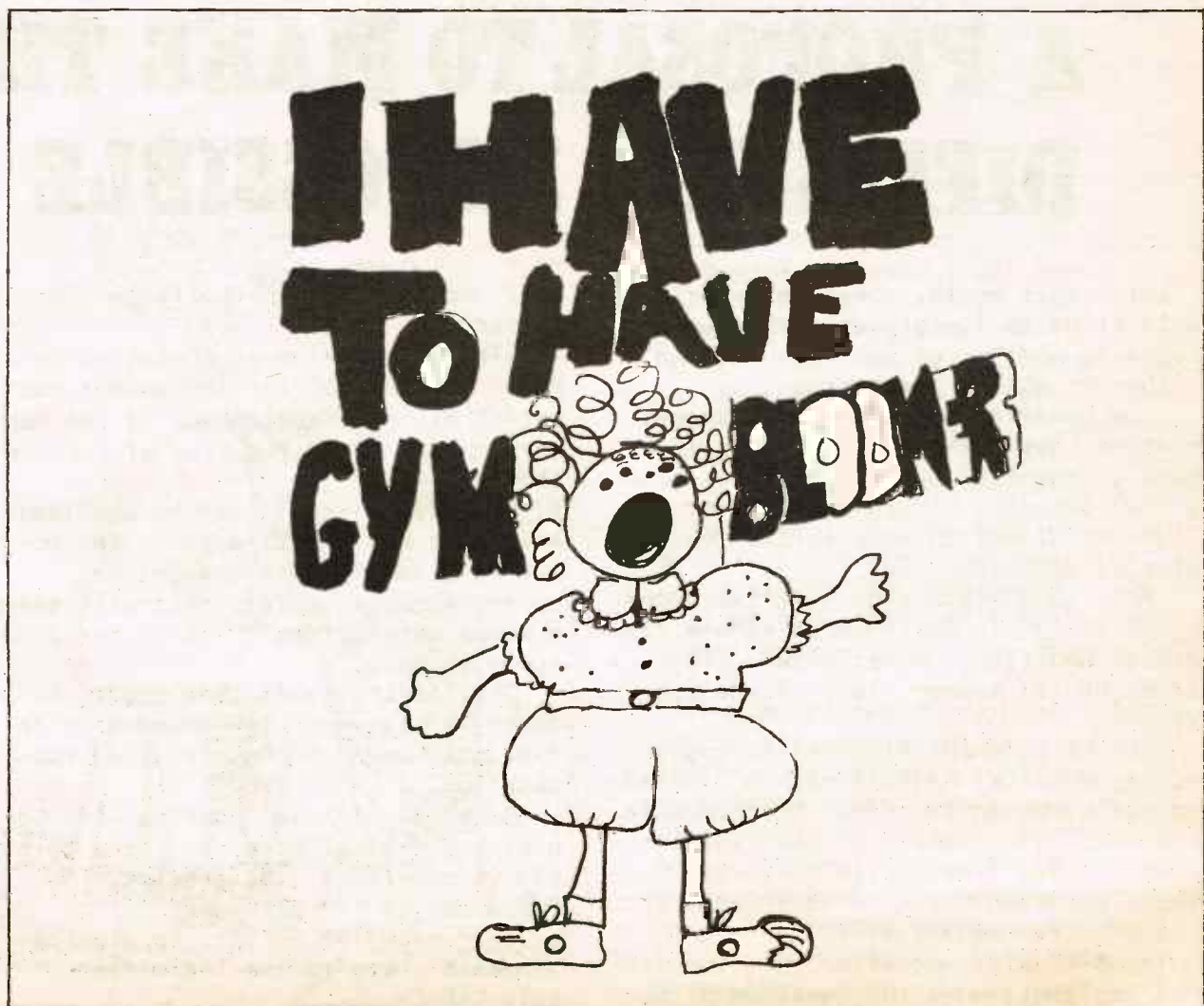
Promoting Consumerism: If you have daughters you must pay \$6.50 for GYM BLOOMERS that I don't think they will ever "be caught dead in" out in the streets during the summer. The shorts that most girls have can't be used while the boys can wear the ones they have used all summer. Why should parents be monetarily penalized for having girls?

Sex Discrimination: Girls must wear GYM BLOOMERS but not boys. I phoned the school board, 4 high schools and spoke to principals, vice-principals and gym teachers.

All the high schools that I phoned had a dress code for phy. ed. The girls had to wear GYM BLOOMERS while the boys could wear regular shorts.

Now comes the fun. I asked, "Why do girls have to wear baggy bloomers that have elastic around the leg?" The following are the answers I received:

1. "It's traditional, they've



been wearing them since I was in school." (Did anyone ever question why they wore them 20 years ago?)

2. "It's in the girls' best interest for health and safety." Health and safety? Is it a health interest with constricting elastic around your legs? Is baggy in the interest of safety?)

Is it healthy to wear constricting elastic around the legs??

If it is in the girls' best interest for health and safety, why aren't the schools interested in the health and safety of the boys? Surely they have more outward parts to protect in that area?

3. "You don't think it's sexist, surely? It can't be; our gym teacher is a woman." (He was shocked when I mentioned that a woman can be sexist.)

"The girls don't have to wear them just because the notice says so." (Every school I know insists that their students follow rules. I believe that they have been so well trained to be obedient to authority, that if they are given a notice of regulations, they will follow them because they are afraid not to.)

Each person I spoke to started to chuckle when I mentioned sex discrimination. The chuckle stopped when I replied that I didn't find it humorous at all. However, I did have the impression that they thought I was complaining about nonsense.

Since no one has been able to give me any reason WHY girls have to wear GYM BLOOMERS and the boys are able to wear regular shorts, I am left with my assumptions. GIRLS HAVE TO WEAR ELASTIC AROUND THEIR LEGS BECAUSE OF THE SEXUAL HANG-UPS OF THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE THE POLICY. Are they afraid that boys will throw themselves on the floors and look up the girls' shorts? How come they don't worry about the girls taking peeks and pokes?

### Not consulted

Britain's 1976 abortion law, the most liberal in Europe, was amended on Feb. 21, 1978 by Parliament. The new amendment will restrict the availability of abortions by shortening the permissible time period to 20 weeks, requiring the approval of five National Health doctors (instead of the previous two), and introducing a "conscience clause" allowing a physician to withhold approval.

The amendment was introduced by a conservative Member of Parliament, who cited a recent poll which said 87% of Britain's gynecologists favor tighter limitations of the availability of abortions. Women, of course, were not consulted.

# BILL 139:

## A PROPOSAL TO MAKE THE DIFFICULT, IMPOSSIBLE

Later this month, women in Ontario could stand to lose even a remote choice in whether or not they wish to go through with a pregnancy.

The Canadian Association to Repeal Abortion Laws (CARAL) is urging all women to speak up on Bill 139 sponsored by John Sweeney, Liberal member for Kitchener-Wilmot to come before the Legislature on October 26.

"Make no mistake about it," says CARAL, "Bill 139 is designed to reduce access to abortion, no matter what its title, or its sponsor says to the contrary."

The Bill is entitled "An Act respecting Hospital Administrative Procedures relating to Abortions Performed in Ontario." The members of the Legislature will vote freely with no formal Caucus position being taken because it is a private members bill.

The Bill will not alter existing federal legislation on the question of abortion. What it does though, is propose additional records being made and monitored and if successful, will double the amount of administrative work required of the physician. What it amounts to is red tape which will make the process of getting an abortion more cumbersome than other medical attention.

Says CARAL, "If that is Mr. Sweeney's intention, then it should be clearly stated and be the principle which is debated."

CARAL feels that the extra administrative burden, its cost to the system and burden to the doctor, will discourage doctors from dealing with abortion cases. If they do not entirely refuse, then they will certainly avoid them.

Involved in the extra paper work is a very comprehensive information statement to the patient which must be signed and forwarded to the therapeutic abortion committee before the approval process even begins. The doctor "must make an assessment of the potential for the unborn child to remain alive outside the womb," and report this assessment to the committee and the patient. If the doctor feels that there is any such potential, he must arrange to have a second doctor in attendance.

If the abortion is approved and performed, the doctor, "must prepare and forward to the TAC a detailed report concerning the circumstances, medical procedures used and the result of the abortion performed by the physician.

"One of the unsavoury aspects of the Bill," say CARAL members, "is the fact that it allows for employees of the Ministry of Health to act as inspectors and they shall "inspect each medical record compiled for an abortion performed since the previous inspection and may inspect any other medical record compiled for an abortion for the purposes of this

act." So much for the patients right to privacy!"

The information statement to be prepared for the TAC for the doctor must entail a) the development of the "unborn child" as of the time of the operation

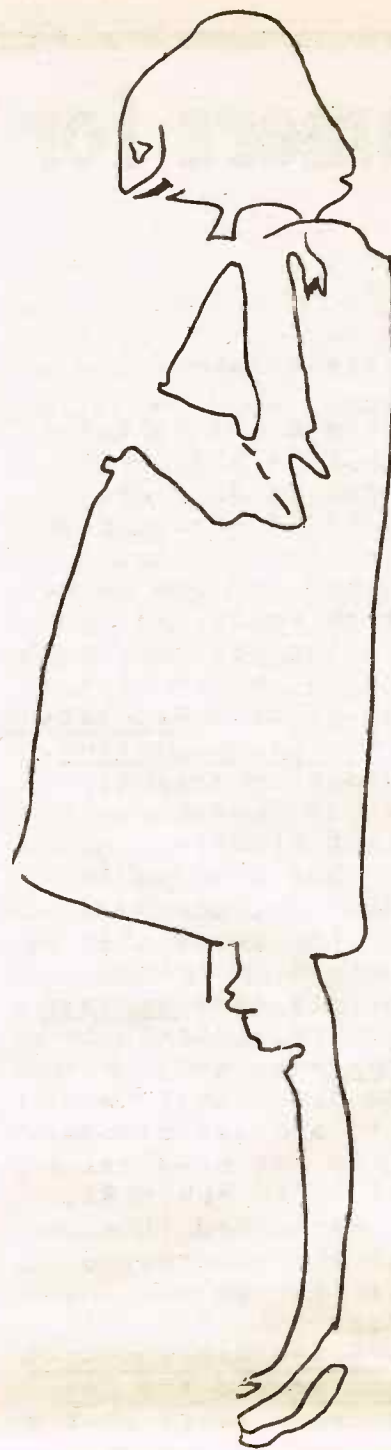
b) any risk of emotional or physical harm that may be suffered by the woman as a result of the abortion.

c) any agencies, etc., that will assist a woman who decides to carry her pregnancy to term.

The CARAL organization feels that the doctor's statement is intended to intimidate women who have decided upon abortion.

"Just as clearly, doctors will be giving a medical opinion in the guise of "information", there being, for instance, no medical consensus on whether abortion results in physical or mental harm to the individual," said CARAL.

Letters of opinion should be addressed to the Hon. Dennis Timbrell, Minister of Health and to Micheal Cassidy, leader of the NDP Party and Stuart Smith leader of the Liberal Party.



### CARAL'S Analysis

A neat little section on 'consent' builds up the pressure on a woman seeking an abortion. It says, "No consent given by a patient is valid and binding unless the patient has been provided with the physicians assessment and the information statement more than 24 hours before the consent is given." In other words, red tape becomes more important than a woman's decision to have an abortion.

Many of the ideas incorporated in Bill 139 are similar to those found in an OHIO Bill. It stopped short of a provision which would require the showing of the fetus to the patient after the abortion. Even Ohio balked at that one, and removed it. It does indicate, however, the lengths to which the anti-abortion people will go.

Abortion under certain conditions is legal in Canada. To attempt to prevent it through this kind of obstruction is not supportable. And to wrap one's anti-abortion views in this kind of administrative straight-

jacket is dishonest. There is a notion abroad that women who seek abortions, do so with gay abandon. This is a cruel and inhuman attitude to women in trouble for whatever reason, deserved or otherwise. Most women suffer untold misery and trauma over this desperate decision. To add to this misery is a particularly exquisite kind of torture.

All women should refuse to accept this kind of approach to a problem which is primarily a woman's problem. In terms of the health care system, abortion should be viewed in the same way as other medical procedures. No more, no less. The moral question is one for the individual to handle without any interference from the state,

What to do about Bill 139?

We should object to this bill in principle without getting bogged down on discussing the details. WRITE TO YOUR ELECTED MEMBER, THE PREMIER, AND MR. SWEENEY. The anti-abortionists are already writing in.

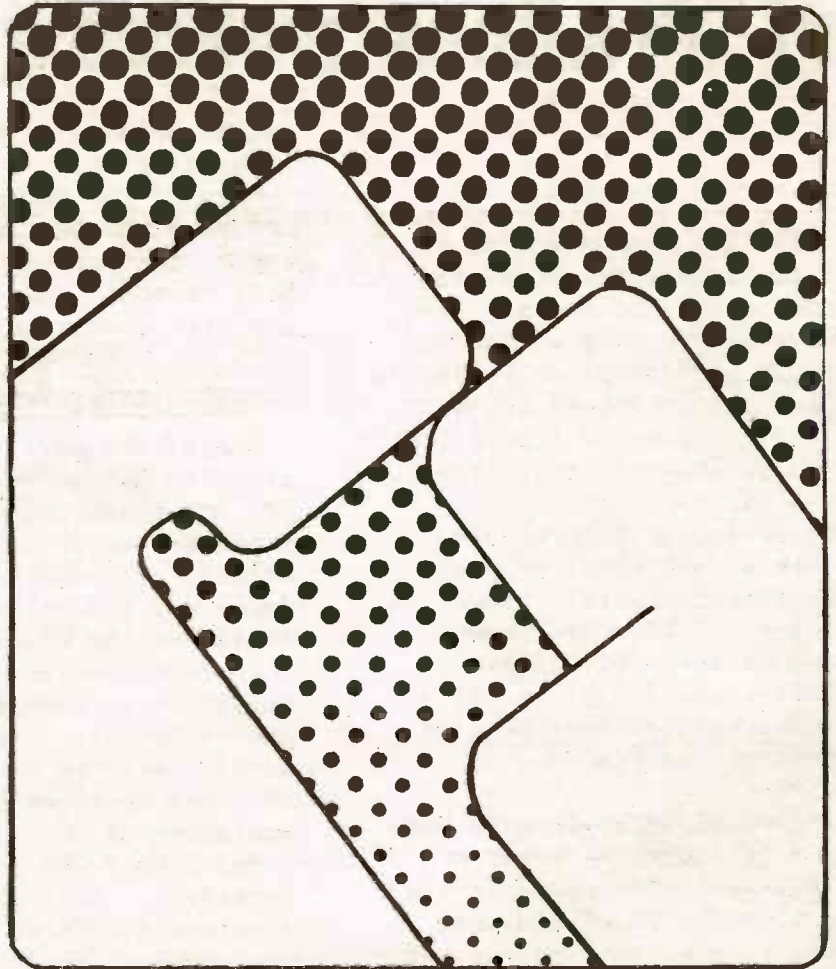
by Sharon Olsen

It has long been a traditional belief that "to love someone is to trust them." Trust them to do what? To never hurt the one who loves them? To always be kind, thoughtful, considerate and in good humour? To never lie or cheat or fix a traffic ticket? If such a saint exists, I would just as soon not meet him. Not only would I find his company boring in a short while but I am sure I would feel quite inferior in his presence.

When I trust someone, I believe that they will not deliberately set out to harm me, or those close to me, in any way. The key word is deliberate or premeditated, if you're into legal jargon. I doubt that there is or ever has been, a single human being who has not done or said something without thinking--whether it be unkind words said in anger, or an act of infidelity in a weak moment, or a lie told to avoid a scene. I don't condone any of these actions as a way of life, but I do believe that the reasons behind the deeds are more important than the deeds themselves.

The people I trust will not purposely perform any of these actions with the explicit intention of hurting me. If any such incidents do occur, it is for one of two reasons. Either it is done in a thoughtless moment (which is only human) or, it is carefully thought out beforehand and the doer honestly concludes, with my best interests at heart, that performing the act is likely to be the lesser of the two evils. In other words, I would probably, suffer more pain if the act is not performed. For example, if a friend of mine has to make a

# T R U S T



decision between telling me a truth or a lie, and has decided in her own good judgement that a lie would be less painful to me than the truth, then I would expect her to tell me a lie... It's not that I would prefer to be shielded from the truth, rather, I would expect and trust my friend to follow her own good judgement.

Essentially then, trusting someone is believing in their ability to exercise good judgement when dealing with matters that are likely to affect your mental, emotional and physical welfare. Their decisions may not necessarily be the same as

yours would be in many situations. The point is that they care enough, in most instances, to take the time to consider your feelings.

Alternatively, the individual who wishes to become more trustworthy would do well to practice considering the effects of his actions on others as much as possible.

Understanding seems to be a major part of this whole process of mutual trust - understanding the reasons behind your own behavior and attempting to understand the reason behind the behavior of others.

## NO HALF FARM FOR HUBBY

Ottawa (CP)-A man who signed over his half of a family farm to his wife so it could not be seized in a lawsuit cannot reclaim the property now that he and his wife are separated, the Supreme Court of Canada, ruled Tuesday. The court rejected an appeal by Gordon Bingeman of Waterloo, Ont., for the return from his estranged wife, Evelyn, of his share of a 64 acre farm which the couple had jointly owned. The judgement said Bingeman signed over the property to his wife in Dec./67, and left her 13 months later without contributing alimony or maintenance, Bingeman initially considered signing over the farm because he wanted to quit his job as an O.P.P. constable and go into business. He did not want potential creditors to

to sue for his interest in the farm.

The judgement said Bingeman did not go into business, but transferred the property, apparently for another reason. A neighbour threatened to sue on the ground that Bingeman was having an affair with his wife.

### Films and Art

"Not a Pretty Picture" is a fictional documentary on rape designed for high school students. It is the work of Martha Coolidge and is released by Dabara Films. It reveals misconceptions about rape and delves into the social, psychological and physical make-up of both girls and boys in their teenage years. It has been endorsed by the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre and won the Blue Ribbon Award at the American Film Festival in New York in 1976. Available for rental or long-term lease. For cost inquiries, write:

Dabara Films  
367 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5W 2A4

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 DECEMBER 15, 1978  
**Christmas Fling!**  
 featuring **Blue Streak & Southpaw**  
 AT THE ELK'S LODGE (CORNER OF SYNDICATE AND MILES STREET)  
 Tickets: \$3.00 in advance  
 \$3.50 at the door  
 It's a benefit for WOMAN'S PLACE  
 so anyone wishing to help out call 345-5841 or 345-7802  
 \*\*\*\*\*

# Fort Frances women graduate in psych

Debra Pilon

## WOMEN AND PSYCHOLOGY COURSE - 1

FORT FRANCES--Ten women ranging in age from 24 to 55 recently completed a night school credit course entitled Women and Psychology. The course was offered through Confederation College's continuing education program and was the first credit course of that title to be offered by the college in the Thunder Bay area.

Instructor Gayle Quirie presented the class with a comprehensive package of stimulating material through 15 weeks of winter. Films were shown each week and an anthology of pieces by psychologists and feminists entitled Female Psychology: The Emerging Self was required reading for the course.

Some of the women in the course had been out of an educational setting for 10 to 20 years. One had recently completed university level courses, another woman in the night course was simultaneously enrolled as a day student in the Fort Frances High School. She was obtaining the high school diploma that marriage and children had postponed.

Eight of the women were either married or had once been married. Relationships with men were discussed often and it seemed important to do so because marriage, for many women,

is the primary personal relationship in a lifetime.

Part of the learning experience centred, however, on an acceptance of other women as valuable and intelligent persons. We grew to understand and like each other.

## WOMEN AND PSYCHOLOGY COURSE - 2

One of the catalysts to this understanding was an exercise entitled "My Mother--Myself". Each woman explored her relationship with her mother, recorded her perceptions on paper and presented the findings orally to the class.

In exploring our roots we exposed ourselves to each other, through gentle honesty. In portraying where we had been, we emerged with a view of where we might be going, through awareness of our similarities.

Joy also found a way into our get-togethers. It's easy to laugh and joke among friends and once the initial shyness vanished, we were indeed friends.

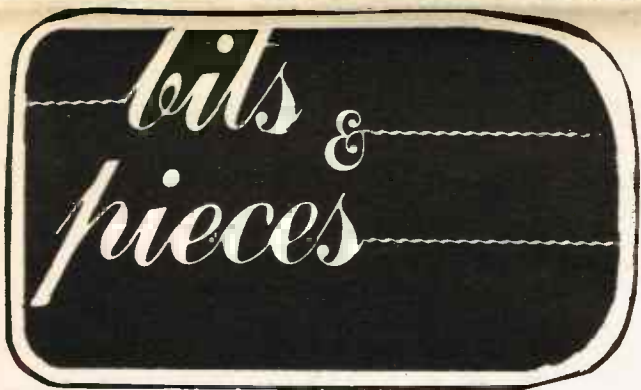
Lest this sound too ideal, it must be noted that the personal interaction between participants was not always harmonious. On occasion, personalities clashed, though never violently and always with the arbitrator (Mrs. Quirie) ready to calm the opponents by injecting her own view into the discussion.

Topics discussed included: biological perspectives, psychological sex differences, oppression on the self, female sexuality, psychotherapy and women and of course--keeping in mind that on most days men are not the enemy--we explored the concept of human liberation.

Attendance throughout the course was excellent. Providence often scheduled snowstorms on Wednesdays (the day before our class) so that roads were marginally passable by Thursday evening. Out-of-town students were able to attend from October to February without mishap and those who lived in town consistently braved frigid temperatures to attend.

Women and Psychology was a valuable experience for the women who participated and was also "Interesting and Challenging" (really!) for Gayle--the lady teacher who introduced us to the idea that men (poor dears) may unknowingly suffer from testosterone poisoning. Remember that next time you observe one behaving in a typically "masculine" manner...

Those who participated in the course were (in alphabetical order): Judy Beer, Myra Guimond, Gladys McPherson, Ria McPherson, Janice Pattison, Debra Pilon, Margaret Rahr, Shirley Seckinger, Betty Sedgwick and Ruth Spritt.



## SEXIST ADS

Some 100 mostly female protesters picketed the San Francisco Chronicle Examiner last week to denounce the daily newspaper's sexist advertising practices.

The protest, initiated by Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media, charged that the paper carries a full page of advertisements for pornographic films, "most of which centre on themes of violence and women in submissive positions." The group called for a less offensive policy and asked supporters to join a letter-writing and telephone campaign to demand a change in the paper's practice.

Off Our Backs--April 1978

The country is yours, ladies; politics is simply a public affair. Yours, and mine and everyone's. The government has enfranchised you, but it cannot emancipate you; that is done by your own processes of thought.

Nellie McClung  
1917.

Northern Woman Journal page 12

## PATRIARCHAL ATTITUDES: WHAT ARE THE REAL SINS?

"We no longer can tolerate confessing sins we have not committed," said Nelle Morton, a theologian participating in a World Council of Churches conference on Sexism, "sins defined by male experience... We can now begin to confess to sins we have committed. *The suppression of our own anger; not recognizing it as a way of fighting through to a place where love can express itself; the lack of confidence and boldness, the lack of pride, the unquestioned obedience and the falseness of our humility.*" (from Spare Rib No. 27)

Whether you're the religious type or you've been pressured by society to be "virtuous", as Ms. Morton points out, the sins have been defined by men - so the "virtues" have also been decided by men. Men want women to be pure, obedient, humble and infinitely sweet- never angry, skeptical or bold. If we are angry and show it, we are "sinners". Is a man a sinner if he expresses anger?

## ABORTION AND THE CHURCHES

America's churches have always been strongly anti-abortion, right? Wrong, says Professor James C. Mohr, in his forthcoming book, *Abortion in America: The Origins and Evolution of National Policy.*

Far from being anti-abortion historically, says Mohr, the Protestant churches were relaxed and neutral on the subject during the 1800s. Abortionists openly advertised their trade, even in religious publications. "The vast majority of the Protestant clergy in the United States... chose to let their flocks decide for themselves as individual the morality or immorality of abortion, rather than move aggressively to define it as sin." Not surprisingly, during the 1800s an estimate one out of five pregnancies ended in abortion--and married, white, middle class Protestants accounted for most of these abortions.

Yet by the 1900s abortions were anathema: "Virtually every jurisdiction had laws upon its books that proscribed the practice sharply and declared most abortions to be criminal offenses."

What caused the turnabout? Was it that the churches had at last swung into action against abortion? Not at all, says Mohr. It wasn't the churches that became anti-abortion, it was the doctors, who saw the cause as one they could exploit in their efforts to professionalize their practice. The clergy, meanwhile, remained aloof.

"Virtually every petition on the subject placed before a state legislature in the nineteenth century came either from a medical organization or from an individual physician," Mohr writes. He adds that the medicals were bitter when the Protestant clergy failed to join the fray. The book (priced at \$12.50) will be published by Oxford University Press this month.

# Notes before for after the Revolution

by Janis Kelly  
OFF OUR BACKS 1977

## Tolerance

From time to time a wave of anxiety travels through the women's movement: "Where are we going? What is our destination? Will this tactic get us There?"

## The Single Right Way

These questions proceed from the premise that there is a single, unified destination, an ideal social structure. If that were true, then the reasonable thing would be to identify that place, figure out what would take us from here to there, encourage those activities, and eliminate everything else as a waste of energy. This is the method used by those concerned with developing a "correct" set of analyses and goals.

The flip-side of "correct" thinking is that non-correct thinking must be weeded out. Thus we come to the many discussions over whether this or that occurrence (feminist businesses, socialist feminism, witch-craft) is a "danger to the movement." We trap ourselves into dualistic thinking, forever dividing up instead of synthesizing, forever trying to keep each other on the right path.

## Strength and Diversity

The creation of a free society does not, however, require that we all take the same path. In fact, it requires something very different. One of the ironies of nature is that strength comes from diversity, not from sameness. Communities composed of a great variety of species are much healthier and stronger than those with only a few. Likewise, I think our strength as a movement is in our variety and resilience rather than in the traditional measures of political power. The change that we are working is not based on collecting a superior force and overpowering the opposition (although some of us use this method for some things). Rather, we are breaking out of patriarchy from many sides at once, working on different problems with different tactics.

This process can be seen as either chaotic and inefficient or varied and flexible. I think it is the latter.

And for the record I'd like to say that I do not think that Lammas women's store is an anti-revolutionary cog in the capitalist system, or that Marxist-feminists are a tool of the Male Left, or that the Susan B. Anthony Coven #1 is a bourgeois escapist threat to the Revolution. Or that Gloria Steinem is desecrating the women's movement by packaging bits of feminist ideology for mass consumption. And I wish that all of us (especially me) who so readily lapse into self-righteous condemnation would examine what we're really saying, rid ourselves of the fantasy that we hold a franchise on Truth, and get more serious about what it means to be free.

## Non-coercion

Both personally and politically, a commitment to freedom means rejection of coercion as a tool in human relations. Giving up the option of force (physical or psychological) means that one has to accept the impossibility of control-



ling others (no matter how "wrong" they are) and learn to live with basic differences.

This control thing is tricky. I'm easily aware of when other people try to do it to me, but when I do it, it doesn't always feel like control. It often feels like I'm just trying to protect them, or improve them, or teach them something for their own good. The tip-off is always the feeling that I am in possession of some bit of knowledge, analysis, or feeling which is so superior that it must be right for them as well as for me, and gives me the moral right to try and impose it on them.

Accepting non-coercion on the personal level eventually leads to rejecting the ideal of "acceptable" force on the mass level. At that point, the whole structure of the State comes crashing down. Any State. Government is at bottom nothing unique except for being an agency of legitimized coercion. The only real power of government (even a "born again" government, or a socialist one) is that it is permitted to force me to do things I don't want to do.

All right. So we knock the props out from under "government". How will things get done? Who will build the roads, care for the elderly, feed the poor? WE WILL. We will come together in voluntary association, just like we do now, to take care of the business of living. The main difference is that without the State on our backs and in our pockets (what do you suppose is the combined income tax paid by all the people associated with the women's movement?) we will be able to do things better.

Even hampered by a State, we are finding ways of doing that. Government-AMA control of medical care has led to the present disaster, so some of us are running our own clinics, and others are exploring alternate forms of healing. The patriarchal system for owning and controlling women via the family is breaking down, so some of us are working on aid and shelter for battered and/or

homeless women. The police system leaves us subject to physical attack, so some of us are arming ourselves, studying the martial arts, and learning how to make our space more secure. The present system devastates the earth, but some of us are setting up trusts, getting our own land, learning how to work with it.

## Out of Bounds

The kind of free-wheeling creativity we now have can continue only in a culture which accepts that there is no single Truth, no single Right Way; that errors are inevitable, a sign of life rather than of stupidity or malevolence; and that no idea is beyond question, so sacred or "obvious" that it can't be challenged.

This kind of acceptance does not mean that I have to support every woman who does something and labels it "feminist." I can argue against it. I can put forth an alternative. I can say she's completely off the wall and a menace. I can try to change her mind. But I don't want to censor her ideas or force her to stop whatever she's doing.

Basically, that's how the current feminist movement works, usually in spite of rather than because of our "political" positions. The thing that has protected us is the fact that few of us ever acquire enough power to prevent others from doing what they want to do. So somewhere people are always breaking out in new forms, trying new things.

That variety is our strength, not our weakness, and I want to see more of it. I want to open up my own mind to more possibilities. I don't want the boundaries of "feminism" more firmed up and tidy. I want them blown away. I want to do my own work without having to worry about being the last word on anything.

## Movement

I want to work my little ass off on this newspaper because I love it and think it's valuable. And I want Z Budapest to go on being a genetic witch, and Joanne Parrent to go on thinking up and trying new ways of dealing with money, and the Marxists to go on concentrating on fighting capitalist imperialism. And I want the country women to go on working with and for the land, and Dyke to go on developing dyke separatism, and the women's studies programs to go on studying women. And I want the women in the organized religions to go on raising hell, and Ti-Grace Atkinson to do more and more of her crystalline thinking, and Charlotte Bunch to continue moving around like a corpuscle carrying ideas to all different limbs of the movement.

And I want to remember that what we have is not THE MOVEMENT, but the movement: us moving ourselves out of a death-worshipping, person-hating patriarchy and into new places which we create as we go along. Some of those new places please me. Some horrify me. But I'm not at all sure that even the most horrifying might not be producing something important. I say, "The more, the better!"

Northern Woman Journal page 13

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# FEMINIST CONNECTIONS A NEW LOOK AT MOTHERHOOD

by Helen Levine

This column has had a hard time getting born.

There's a reason. It's because I've been thinking about the institutions of motherhood. Not only about being a mother, but how political and cultural roles and responsibilities are imposed upon women as mothers. "Heavy," as they say.

Since struggles with parenthood crop up at the center of many women's lives — and thus in feminist counselling — the question deserves a very careful exploration.

I've decided to use this column to try to help build a feminist framework within which to place our experiences as mothers.

Historically, there has been a powerful mythology as well as ideology of motherhood entrenched in a variety of institutions — the family, the school, the work force, the church, the helping professions, etc., which have prescribed ways of being a good or a bad mother.

Some of the propaganda goes this way. "Anatomy is destiny" (Freud). It therefore follows that: being a mother is the greatest possible fulfillment for a woman; maternal instincts are the driving force in women's lives; women can only find an identity in marriage and motherhood; motherhood is a biological imperative; women are inevitably and appropriately those primarily and centrally responsible for child-rearing.

Bluntly, "Who said so?" Simply, "mainly men!" It was, in fact, those "awe-inspiring" social scientists, the experts and professionals that Betty Friedan warned women about years ago in *The Feminine Mystique*:

The following are only two contemporary examples of that large anti-woman vanguard.

Bruno Bettelheim (analyst, writer): "We must start with the realization that as much as women want to be good scientists or engineers, they want first and foremost to be womanly companions of men and to be mothers."

Joseph Rheingold (psychiatrist, Harvard): "When women grow up without dread of their biological functions and without subversion by feminist doctrine, and therefore enter upon motherhood

with a sense of fulfillment and altruistic sentiment, we shall attain the goal of a good life."

Another subtle form of propaganda is the beloved fairy tales we heard in childhood. In *Women Hating*, Andrea Dworkin says, "Fairy tales are the primary information of the culture... Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, Rapunzel — all are characterized by passivity, beauty, innocence and victimization. ...They never think, act, initiate, confront, resist, challenge, feel, care or question.... We see that powerful women are bad and that good women are inert."

It's my contention that much of our adolescent pain and adult guilt and conflict on being inadequate (meaning imperfect) women and mothers is rooted in such stereotypes.

Thanks, not to fairy tales and experts, but to the writings and sharings of the current women's movement, there has emerged a determination on the part of many women to confront and to demystify the presumptuous, male-defined myths of motherhood.

Women themselves have begun to examine the real issues — women-defined this time — in this complex area of female experience.

For me, the publication of Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born* marked a turning point in women's consciousness of motherhood as institution.

For a long time after the present women's movement arose in the 1960's, many of us wanted to talk or write about anything but motherhood. The role had so defined our lives, for good or ill, so limited our horizons, that we needed to focus on the missing parts of our existence. Many of us moved headlong into investigating our own herstory, our potential, our needs, our own oppression in private and public spheres of life. We asked why men took for granted having marriage, children, occupation, and interests and why women were supposed to make the one ultimate choice. We asked why only men were brought up to care for the "self" while women were taught to deny the self and to live through and for others.

With Adrienne Rich's book, we may have come full circle: back to looking again at being mothers but in a totally new way.

As feminist counsellor, I would recommend that women read *Of Woman Born* because it offers new dimensions, new ways of thinking about and seeing most aspects of motherhood.

The question of kids and mothers comes up over and over again in feminist counselling. Am I a good mother? Have I damaged my kids? Why can't I always be loving and rational? How come I feel so eternally responsible, so guilty? Should I want, do I want, custody of my children? Is it OK, is it normal to decide not to have children? Am I a good mother even if I can't stand my kids sometimes? Is it fair to want my own life, too?

Given the ideology and mythology of motherhood, the answers to these questions we all ask ourselves are anything but simple. The area is full of land-mines for women, fraught with taboos and mystiques.

I've decided to comment briefly on a handful of issues and happenings, just to get at the tip of the iceberg, and to follow through with some of these themes in future columns.

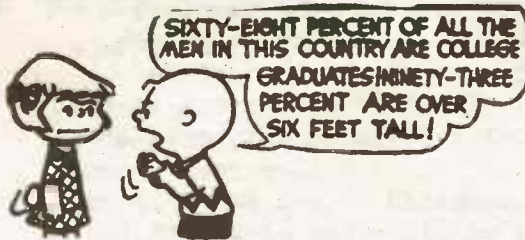
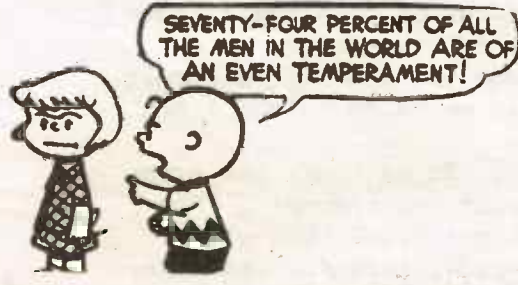
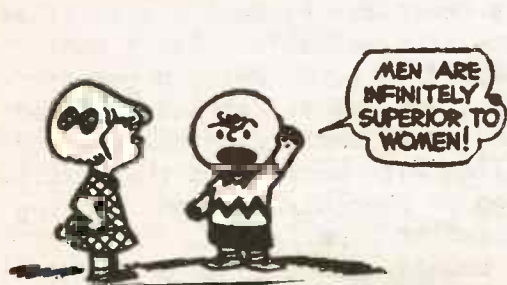
1. I'm convinced that we have to begin looking at our own mother's lives in a feminist framework, how their values, personalities, roles, and behaviour were shaped by questions of power and powerlessness in the family and in society at large, their lack of real control over their single success or failure in life. If you've been lucky enough to see J.A. Martin, *Photographe*, you will recall a beautiful film with a remarkable portrayal of motherhood and womanhood.
2. Illegitimacy — one of patriarchy's most cruel inventions: isn't it time to assert that motherhood, along with contraception and abortion, is essentially a question of control over our own bodies, our own beings? and to assert that motherhood is ours to decide how, why and if, within or outside our marriage?
3. Full-time motherhood: is this a time-honoured means of keeping women in their place as second-class, service

persons in the family, and as a reserve army of labour to be pulled in and pushed out of the work force when convenient? Watch for outpourings about the joys and necessity of mothers at home, damage to children wrought by "working" mothers and daycare, as the economic crisis worsens.

4. International Year of the Child: this can be a very important year if the emphasis is on daycare services, a decent income and decent housing for women and families, and greatly increased child-care responsibility that must be carried by fathers and the community. If it lands on mothers again, by way of responsibility, heaven help us all!
5. "In Her Place": this once-a-month cable TV program, in May, dealt with the topic of "A Baby, Maybe." A very worthwhile discussion, including the point that having or not having kids is not necessarily the most important decision of a woman's life. I'm buying the video of this program, if any group wants to borrow it.
6. A course on "Mothers and Daughters" that I have been facilitating through the Women's Programme at Algonquin College: it has been a remarkable experience for most of us, coming to grips, together, with a complex area in our lives.

It seems inevitable that until and unless we begin to appreciate what all women have been/are up against in relation to motherhood, we will have a hard time understanding or liking ourselves. When we comprehend that mothers, past and present, were and are held uniquely and unjustly responsible for the least controllable and most impossible of tasks — human relationships in this society — we will no longer blame mothers for our struggles and so in the process collaborate with misogynists (woman-haters).

We need to use the politics of feminism to understand the personal lives of women.



## THUNDER CLAP:

To Pat Meredith, Chartered Accountant for sharing her valuable time and experience to set up a book keeping system for Northern Women's Centre and Journal.



## THUNDER BOLT

To John Sweeney, Liberal member for Kitchener Wilmot for sponsoring Bill 139 this month in the Ontario Legislature to tighten controls on therapeutic abortion. See page 10 for article.

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my lover said,  
"night talk!"  
i don't know it.  
do you understand?

he said that  
i must.  
he don't be liking women much  
me thinks.

Mickey Pedersen

#### THE TRUTH

The child was told  
to emulate her elders  
to not question their motives  
to follow blindly.

- But I must know the answers  
must ask a thousand whys  
must look the problem over  
must satisfy my mind.

Her father said  
"this is the Truth  
all else is lies,  
I tell you so."

- But I must know the reasons  
must examine all the facts  
and reach my own conclusions  
must weigh, and think, then act.

They said "you are rebellious  
and but a female child,  
sit down, keep quiet, listen,  
be passive, meek, and mild.

- But I must speak out boldly  
and stand up for my rights  
I can't ignore my feelings  
so I'll just have to fight.

- Ghislaine Yergeau

Summertime..Haiku

This bed is lumpy  
Not the mattress  
Me!

Violet Winegarden

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO APPROACH PERFECTION

1. I should accept your constructive criticism with a view to improving my quality of thought, heightening our sexual pleasure and if I'm lucky, ultimately, changing karma.
2. Under your concerned guidance I may grow to be an unblemished rose: "something" inside you whispers the transformation is indeed within my limited potential.
3. Although your promptings and helpful hints drive directly to my core-soul, making me ashamed of flaws regularly hidden from prying eyes (even the inward eye), I must not sink into dire brooding on my incompetence and imbecility. Why let my ego get in the way of perfection? Rise instead to new heights of self-awareness!

These games are called honesty and discovery but I notice billows of rebellious anger escaping from me, soiling your pure intentions.

With time on my side, I take an inventory. Lately, I've felt like a brown apple core, destined for the garbage bin. Now, I reconstruct the apple, with luscious flesh and crunchy peel.

Gratefully, I welcome back the self-satisfied, life-enthralled person I once was and I say Thank You

Before standing face-to-plastic with a perfected image of myself (Woman No.2367) (tailored to meet your needs) I had no knowledge of such inane and imperfect existence.

Debra Pilon

woman  
loving  
woman  
is  
a matter  
of caring  
for  
yourself

Mickey Pedersen

I would like to tell you  
that it's fall,  
but your mind doesn't think in  
seasons.  
Our conversation trails  
like the patterned leaves on  
the ground.  
You mumble something that you  
won't repeat,  
accusing me of not listening.  
I accuse you of laziness  
a kind of bookish distaste  
for physical labour  
and go outside  
leaving you with questions.  
I rake dry leaves  
organizing them in piles.  
The lawn is naked  
an empty flower bed exposed.  
A sudden wind crackles through  
the twigs  
and they heave and groan  
protests  
raw and vulnerable.  
I go in  
satisfied.  
I've raked the garden  
but the house and its contents  
still pose as a question mark.

Rosalyn Taylor Perrett

#### OREGON COAST MEMORIES

Shadowed rock knice stretches  
Slice curelean seas  
lone Manzanita  
etched against cloud dreams  
only illimitable vapours  
elsewhere offshore  
foam fingers shyly weave  
salt lace upon the sand  
while mirrored waters softsigh  
in the breeze pause.

Violet Winegarden

## Please Contribute

WE WOULD APPRECIATE POETRY, SHORT STORIES, DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY WOMEN OF ALL AGES TO APPEAR ON THIS PAGE. BRING THEM IN OR MAIL THEM TO 316 BAY STREET. INCLUDE A RETURN ADDRESS AND WE WILL GLADLY RETURN THE MATERIAL SAFELY TO YOU AFTER USE.

# PORN: What we CAN do

In the August issue of Northern Woman Journal we began an interview with Judith Reisman on the Sexploitation of women. This is part 2.

There are many things I feel women must do. First, we must recognize our leadership role and our own personal expertise in the matter of what is offensive/pornographic. Certainly the research conducted until now overwhelmingly confirms the rejection women feel toward commercial sexually explicit materials, despite the pressures to conform by loved ones and society. Even research which finds sexual arousal in females toward pornographic material also finds rejection of the same material by the females responding. Interestingly, most researchers (female and male) tend to explain this contradiction in typically sexist language, e.g., women are out of step due to "cultural conditioning". This is hardly the case. I contend this rejection is simply a still functioning "well-oiled" survival instinct--the instinctual recognition of the danger/hate inherent in these ideas and images, however well they are designed and sugarcoated.

So, yes, I suggest anger toward this female hate propaganda is a healthy sign for women in contemporary society. Women must understand and accept that in order to feel comfortable challenging (often) husbands, friends, colleagues and other women. We must understand that it is not we who are out of step. Indeed it is the world which is out of step, as it has been so regularly before.

Second: It becomes vitally important to speak out clearly regarding rejection of sexual fascism in your private spheres, with those close to you at home, at work, and in organization. We should practice there as it were, to get our voice, our courage.

Third: Although single voices do carry weight, group action is the best, the speediest way to be effective. NOW has effectively established a boycott of national significance on ERA. This kind of action must be imposed upon all aspects of sexual fascism.

Fourth: A coalition of all women needs to be established, regardless of race, color, creed or political persuasion. No discriminatory "radicals only" concept will do. The idea of divide and conquer is ever still effective. Women have been divided; we must reunite into kinship links throughout the nation on this one basic issue. In 1850 Emma Goldman commented that although suffrage might be nice, it wouldn't really change much "so long as women are defined by their sex they will never be men's equal." I agree. A coalition is central to our survival...all women who refuse to accept the contemporary sexualized definition of women must agree to work together on this issue. Disagreements on other issues can be dealt with when fewer

of us are being murdered, beaten, tortured and raped. There will be that many more votes to count.

Fifth: Pressure must be put on NOW and other women's organizations and magazines to advertise a national boycott of any media materials and supporting products which we believe in any way shape or form demean women. I find it very curious that literally nothing has come out of any liberated women's magazines which squarely treats the Playboy fascist ethic for what it is--a threat to our very lives...as humane beings, ERA notwithstanding. Our opportunities are enormous for communication and education on this issue due to the numbers of women's periodicals and their reach. With this in mind, all women magazines should be encouraged to sanction and publicize such national boycott action or risk the loss of female readership.

Sixth: Legal action must be taken wherever possible. Actions need to be determined on a national organizational scale, perhaps under the WAVPM flag as a national organization. So much, legally, needs to be done. Judges must be recalled. Again, little word from Ms., Working Women or any women's media on this kind of action. Simpson in Wisconsin should be only an example. Judge Harry Lang (who sentenced a major NY child pornographer to 53 consecutive weekends in jail) and many others ad nauseum. There must be speedy and strong action taken to recall all judges who perpetuate the exploitation and humiliation of females.

Now we get to a rather touchy and controversial point...our problem is not just "men" in power.

All oppressors worth their salt have employed members of the exploited class to do their dirtiest work. We are finding this to be reality regarding many women in many fields today. The April cover of Playboy 1976 which featured the clearest accent on incest and pedophilia was photographed by a woman. Women are being offered excellent opportunities throughout the mass media to serve as collaborators, producing vile sexist propaganda.

This is not a pretty time. If my assessment is correct, this is also a time of war. We are dealing with a fragile hold upon humaneness. Let us also remember that we are up against a powerful media industry which perpetrates and encourages pornography. We must demand a legal system which protects women from this exploitation and violence.

To protest Industrial Telephone System's advertising campaign which featured a bikini-clad woman on a Bay Bridge billboard promoting telephone equipment, a coalition of women's organizations got together to demand a change in the corporation's advertising policy.

There are always those who need to dehumanize others and who will exploit the weakest group at hand. Since contemporary culture prohibits exploitation and denigration on the

basis of race, creed, color or religion, it would appear that the only "group" at hand is sexual--the female sex specifically. We have to take very seriously the treatment we and our children are receiving in the mass media. I believe current trends in media are destroying the effectiveness of female humane sexuality and the male/female relationship. The organized women's movement has remained curiously silent on the subject of pornography. It is time we stop serving the oppressive voice of the worst of the male culture and make our own definitions of what being a woman, and what being humane, means to us.

The caption on the Industrial Telephone billboard read, "The businessman's alternative to Ma Bell." The coalition says this implied the woman's body was available rather than the telephone. A series of letters demanding the immediate removal of the billboard was sent by the coalition to ITS, but only after angry citizens defaced the billboard with the message "Exploiting women will stop" did the corporation remove it.

The Coalition, which calls itself Coalition against Sexist Advertising (CASA) demonstrated in front of the main office of ITS on February 7th. The group of women and men carried placards which said "Keep Our Bodies Off Your Billboards" and chanted "ITS: It's Truly Sexist" and "Let Your Products Sell Your Phones, Don't Use Women's Skin and Bones." They demanded a public apology and a permanent change in company policy for Industrial Telephone System's advertising campaigns.

Shana Penn, a spokesperson for the group said "We received a statement from the corporation which evaded the issue. The company stated, "Our intention was to generate the image of a young, aggressive communications company with new alternatives to business communications problems..." The woman in the billboard was definitely young, but cannot be described as aggressive since she lies vulnerably and passively behind the phone and is half naked. Also, their statement that their 'company employs as many women as men' totally misses the fact that this type of advertising perpetuates the use of women's bodies and sexual inferences as lures to sell products."

"Perhaps ITS should hire a competent woman to develop a more innovative and non-sexist ad campaign. There are plenty of us around!"

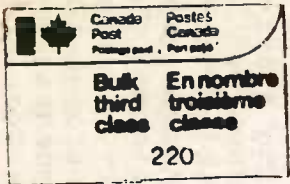
The Coalition Against Sexist Advertising plans to attack other examples of sexism and violence in advertising.

--WAVPM April 1978

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\*What's it like to be a waitress in Thunder Bay. Brenda Cryderman talks to a woman earning less than the minimum wage. page 8

\*Why do girls wear what the boys don't wear for the same activites. page 9

\*Women over forty, and under-- attention See page 4.

\*What can women do about porn? page 16.

\*Abortion is again the topic of discussion in the Ontario Legislature. We stand to lose. page 10.

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