

Northern Woman Journal

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75¢



TRUDY DON

JOANIE VANCE



LEAH COHEN

HELEN LAFONTAINE



WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE
SEE CENTRE SPREAD

EDITORIAL

by GERT BEADLE

NEWS ITEM: ROME ITALY, EASTER SUNDAY

The Pope pleads for the world's hungry, an indication that he is aware that seventeen million children perish each year from starvation and related diseases.

Seventeen Million! Think of it. Not in Canada, you say... "Well perhaps a few natives"... "A minor detail, really, in the face of what is truly important to US. You see in Canada, we don't much care what happens to the fruit, but we'll fight to death for the seed.

Copulation is a religious rite in the west; the seed sacred from conception. Man's right to sow it is undisputed. We may yet prove to be the last bastion of defence for lust, but in order to perpetuate the myth of holiness, we have penalized and trivialized and diminished women into nothing more than passive receptacles for man's sexual appetites.

Seventeen million children! Too bad they didn't have an organization to defend them. It could have called itself, CHILDREN WHO HAVE A RIGHT TO LIVE, but one could not expect them to be as effective or powerful as our own RIGHT TO LIFE, for obviously God could not support both and we already know whose side he is on, don't we??

At the time of the potatoe famine in Ireland, a man named Malthus (now recognized as a progressive thinker because he struck the first warning bell of population explosion) actively lobbied against measures to relieve the suffering in that unhappy country. He felt that the famine was a divine intervention to check

the threat against himself and others of his ilk whom he regarded as being of some vital importance to civilization. There is a survival of the fittest attitude built into the Western mentality that is very hard to disguise. With this attitude comes a complete lack of sympathy for the women who bear and bury their young outside the perimeters of our narrow Christian influence in the world. In spite of the mutual reluctance to become parents, in spite of the evidence that many of us are not born with the nurturing spirit that every child needs and wants, choice is a luxury that the conservative Right denies to the children who perish or to the women who question the wisdom of bearing them. The arrogance of unenlightened morality must be challenged, for the choices are too narrow. What does society intend to do with the fine passions of future generations? If heterosexuality allows us no control over our own reproduction, then we surely must be prepared for Lesbian and homosexual choices to be made as an alternative lifestyle. We might very well say, as Malthus did, "It's God's way of regulating the population in a nation hooked on sperm."

In my own simple-minded way, I don't see the redeeming virtue of making an issue out of unwanted pregnancies in a world where seventeen million children are turned back to the soil and more than we care to mention are abused physically and sexually in our country. If we really are interested in laying guilt trips on each other, there are plenty of reasons, other than a rational decision to end a pregnancy early and safely.

Where do you stand?

We were quite surprised after the publication of the previous issue, vol. 5, No. 2 to hear a few comments about the nature of the cover of the Journal. Several people felt that it was extremely bad taste to use a nude woman as the cover illustration. Some even went so far as to speculate that the woman was stimulating herself sexually, although the painting gave no indication that this was so.

We were bewildered. First of all because the cover was chosen to represent an art show held at Women's Place last month. The painting happened to photograph very well, and as a work of art, was one of the finest the show had to offer. Frankly, there was not a thought given to the fact that the painting portrayed a nude... and a woman at that!

We like to suppose that our readers are forward thinking people trying to make sense of the oppression and discrimination of which women are the victims. This oppression operates on a physical level, as well as a socio-economic and psychological level.

Objectively speaking the cover is in good taste. The objection would not likely have arisen if the magazine had been any other magazine. It is because we are an openly feminist publication that a few among us might feel a little self-conscious of what we are doing and its public acceptance.

After a bit of discussion on the matter, we have concluded that the cover was a perfectly acceptable one and that as an art piece expressing a woman artist's conception of the female body, the painting was one of the finer examples.

No apologies.

GERT'S GOSPEL

THE DYNAMICS OF CABIN FEVER

If you were lucky enough to escape that dreaded scourge of the North this past winter, the Gods were kind to you. I speak of cabin fever, a woman's disease and a kind of madness known only to those of us who know about isolation and the seductive voice of Poe's Raven inviting us to the depression that accompanies unrelenting cold and ceaseless snow. Our moods respond to the barometer, leaking energy and good feelings. We are full of unresolved anger with no one to punish but frail politicians and an unrepentant God.

It is astounding the number of things that we can think of to depress us when we really get into the subject. Once upon a time it was considered a victory of the will to talk ourselves out of a depression. "Count your blessings", we sang through clenched teeth, "Half the world is starving and you have a leg of lamb in the oven, your spouse loves and needs you--you were

simply imagining that he planned to smash your hand in the door-- that funny look in his eye means nothing.

Now we know that depression is a normal and passing phenomenon that requires the ability to walk a piece down the road of its choosing and at the first fork in that road, choose another direction. What we have not understood is the futile struggle to master what patience will resolve, in the end, leaving you intact.

I approach this monster with tongue in cheek. I know him well. You cannot completely master depression but you can take on his whole bag of tricks. This nameless dread must be named and never singly. Pile it on. When I walk with depression I wallow in misery non-stop. I feel the country breaking up. I lock my doors at night. The word "Conservative" gives me hives, the faces of politicians leer and sneer, bigotry drips out of talk shows, born again shills harass me, sleep evades me. At some point in this high drama, I usually discover that I am enjoying

myself. So many things and places to express my anger. I am such a pitiful creature that it's a pleasure to sympathize with me. No one loves me. I couldn't bear it if they did. I am not yet ready to be loved or liked or even borne.

One of things that retards returning spirits is the pressure to become lovable once more, and soon. The danger is that we will pretend to be lovable when in truth we haven't an ounce of charity in us.

Let's face it sisters, when you are depressed your cup is emptied of true generosity and you need a refill. But, contrary to what we presume, no one can fill it for us. The barometer rises. The sap runs. The sun shines. The snow melts and if we are as receptive to the light vibes as we were to the dark, we have once again come full circle as one who intends to find some redeeming aspect to all our experiences. I consider depression a time when we should take advantage of a situation that demands nothing more from us than we be miserable.



FROM the RESOURCE LIBRARY THUNDER CLAP

by Monika McNabb

Full of insights, dedicated to awareness, self-mastery and growth showered with humour, the New Woman is for you. In this issue - try "Foods you can eat and not eat to heal your nerves
Are you happy with yourself?
Under the Blanket
Wife Beating : why does he beat her? what can she do?"
Recommended Reading:
My Mother, My Self by Nancy Friday

Women on Women from the Gerstein Lecture Series featuring Margaret Atwood, Laura Sabia, Linda Nochlin, and Patricia Graham
Taking What's Ours, : everywoman's guide to welfare and student aid
Women and Credit by Betty Glenister

The resource library is always growing. Take advantage of it!

Quote : No one can make you feel inferior without your consent - Eleanor Roosevelt

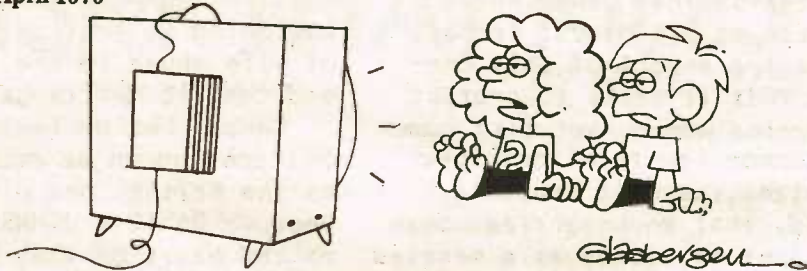
to the Women Against Violence organizers, who spent many months of meetings, letter writing and telephone calls to make the conference a success.



THUNDER BOLT

to the Royal Bank, the wealthiest bank in Canada that did not find the Women Against Violence Conference significant enough to provide complimentary folders to the delegates:

New Woman, March-April 1979



"This is the first time I've stayed up to watch 'Wonder Woman.' Until now, I'd always assumed it was a show about a divorced woman who raised two kids while running a household and advancing herself in the business world."



Northern Women's

Credit Union

meet the.....

The NDP were full of tempting promises, the Liberals were preaching their old sermon about public expectations versus restraint and the Conservatives were politely unaware of any existing PC policy that would encompass the questions pertaining to women's issues at an all candidates meeting held May 8 at Confederation College.

A series of questions dealing with women's input into economic development in the north, the future of women's centres across Canada and the various members stands on such things as abortion and amending the existing legislation pertaining to rape.

Although it was the pessimistic Liberals who were elected into office in the ridings affecting Thunder Bay. It is the no-policy PC's who will affect our existences as women.



THE PANEL OF CANDIDATES.

The Northern Women's Credit Union would like to thank all of the people who responded to the last newsletter's appeal for funds. We are happy to announce that we are fast approaching the \$100,000. mark in the area of assets.

The Board of Directors and all committees plan to meet for a policy workshop, June 2 at Women's Centre. Beginning at 9:30 am, the workshop will carry on for the entire day in an attempt to formulate policy and procedure for the Northern Women's Credit Union.

CORRECTION:

In the last issue of the Journal we carried an article on the subject of PROCHOICE. That article contained an address for people interested in obtaining a membership to CARAL. The correct address for information and donations is:
CARAL,
Box 935, Satation Q
Toronto, Ont.
M4T 2P1

WAGING WAR WITH FOOD PRICES

W.A.R.P. is attempting to organize an area-wide supermarket boycott. The idea is to get enough people to stop buying the eight items on the bi-weekly list in order to upset the inventories of local supermarkets. It is hoped that the retailers will then have no choice but to lower prices.

The local group was formed in April with the initiation of Bev Jenkin. Members are learning to be more aware consumers and share information about stores and products. The boycott lists are received from the original group in Bramalea, Ont. The boycott items for May were:

- ketchup
- meat over \$1.75/lb.
- bread over 50¢/loaf
- sugar-coated cereal
- all no-name products
- aerosol cans

all imported produce
soft drinks

Some people questioned the boycott of no-name products. It was felt that no-name products, which were introduced as lower-priced substitutes, are now priced almost as high as regular brand-name products.. People were particularly concerned with the marketing technique used (i.e. putting all no-name products together where the shopper cannot make an easy comparison). Consumers have been conned by this marketing gimmick into believing they're getting a good deal. This is not always the case.

The food industry is extremely complex. In some cases a large supermarket chain owns the warehouse, the processor and the trans-

portation service and also controls the producer. Consumers understandably feel powerless as individuals.

But consumers, as a whole, have an incredible amount of power. W.A.R.P. members feel that with strong support the boycott can be extremely effective. In southern Ontario W.A.R.P. boycotts have been going on since February with some interesting and positive results.

The next meeting of W.A.R.P. will be held on Tuesday, June 5 at 7:30 p.m. at Ogden Community School. At this meeting members will look over the list sent from Bramalea and make any changes they feel are necessary to make the list more applicable to N.W. Ontario. All interested persons are invited to attend. For further information call Miriam at 345-7802.

Feiffer

I GO TO A BAR. I TALK. EVERYBODY LISTENS. I FEEL SMART.



UNTIL SOME FATHEAD DISAGREES WITH ME.



AND I CAN'T COME UP WITH AN ANSWER FOR HIM.



AND I FEEL DUMB.



I COME HOME. YOU SAY "HI!" I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF YOUR VOICE.



I PUT MY FIST IN YOUR MOUTH.



AND I'M ALL BETTER.



DON'T LEAVE ME EARLY!



remedy. The woman's boyfriend or husband will inevitably find out that she has gone to the police to complain and more often than not, she will be under pressure to withdraw the charges and "keep the peace" within her own home. It takes strength and determination to see a prosecution all the way through, and battered women seldom receive any support along the way.

Again, there is nothing necessarily in a peace bond to order a man to stay away from his wife or his girlfriend--it is only after she is hurt again, perhaps more severely, that the peace bond is of any value. The police can then arrest the man and put him in jail or fine him. One positive aspect of this remedy is its availability to anyone--whether married or not. A second advantage is that no lawyer is required. A woman can go to the police station and ask to lay an information before a justice of the peace. The prosecution is then taken over by the Crown Counsel, and the woman's role becomes that of a witness for the Crown.

THE COMMON ASSAULT CHARGE:

A woman can charge her husband or boyfriend with common assault or assault causing bodily harm. Police are hesitant to lay such charges themselves, and a woman may have to go down to the police station if she decides to proceed with the charge. This remedy suffers from the same problems as a peace bond. A considerable amount of time may elapse before the case even come to trial, and if a conviction results, he may only be fined, unless he has a record of similar crimes. A jail term is going to put the man out of work, and if it will mean Welfare for the wife and children, there is not much chance of lengthy imprisonment.

If a serious assault has been committed and the man is arrested, it is possible that one of the terms of his release on bail will be that he will refrain from contacting or molesting the woman. This must be requested, however; it won't be granted as a matter of course.

A restraining order is a very different legal remedy, and has many

advantages over a peace bond or a charge or assault. It is a type of "injunction" the court may grant and, as with other injunctions, it must accompany another main action such as a divorce. In Britain, such an injunction can be granted on its own, as we saw in the Davis case.

THE RESTRAINING ORDER:

Restraining order can be obtained much more quickly than a peace bond; in an emergency situation a lawyer can

launch and action and apply for a temporary order within a day or two. The usual restraining order will prohibit a husband from entering the house and harrassing his wife. Should he breach the conditions set out in the order, he may be held in contempt of court and can be jailed.

Although restraining orders are probably the strongest protection a battered woman can obtain, they're not the final answer. The woman must

a main action such as divorce or civil assault before she can apply for an order. It has never been granted automatically, and judges are often reluctant to turn a man out of a house that he owns himself or with his wife.

In Alberta, Part 2 of the new MATRIMONIAL PROPERTY ACT makes provisions for a "matrimonial home possession order". Upon application, the Court has the power to evict one spouse from that matrimonial home, and to restrain the person from entering or "attending at or near" the home for a certain period of time. It is hard to state with certainty when the courts will grant these orders, since the act just came into force in January of this year, and few applications have been made under it. There is some hope that the Act will be of some help to battered women, at least those living in Alberta.

Canada's laws offer piecemeal protection to women in desperate need of it. Existing remedies, for the most part, do not correspond to the needs of battered women. Legislative neglect presently smacks of the attitude "if we don't do anything about it maybe it will go away."

The British House of Commons and

courts came to the realization that instead of going away that incidence of domestic violence is escalating

at a frightening rate. American statistics estimate that 60% of all marriages involve at least one incident of wife abuse. British legislation and case law show a concern about the plight of battered women that our government and courts have not yet recognized.

The U.S. Senate voted last summer to authorize a \$150 million for a five year program to curb wife-beating and other domestic abuse.

Here in Canada we need a serious re-examination of existing legal remedies that focuses on their effectiveness and accessibility. We need continued and generous government support of shelters for battered women and we need community support for women who start saying no to physical abuse.

The women who need help most, however, are in no position to make their concerns known; their own personal tragedy demands all that they have. They cannot raise their voices to their husbands, much less to their legislators. Our laws should meet, rather than dismiss, the needs of people in such situations. The law should not treat marital violence any differently than it does any other crime in the community. Until we overcome the myth that battered women are willing victims and that violent husbands are merely exercising their rightful matrimonial prerogative, we will be condoning terrorism within the home. The need will remain hushed and the victims will remain gagged.

BATTERED WOMEN: HOW TO USE THE LAW is a pamphlet by several law students in conjunction with Edmonton's "Women In Need" House. Designed to help battered women understand about legal remedies available, it is available free of charge from Student Legal Services of Edmonton, Law Centre, University of Alberta (ph. 432-2226) and from Calgary Legal Guidance, 100A-315-10 Ave. S.E., Calgary (ph. 265-5545).

LITERARY

morning has already broken
the harsh, cruel wind slapping the gnarled bodies
huddled in the store alcoves

contorted bodies, which rise only to wretch blood
regurgitating onto tattered clothing

a man, skin leathered & coarse, stands, shakily
wiping a mucussed stream from his nostrils,
and bends his head down

down

between his legs

remaining still
eternally silent
until the wind whips his frail body
and he cringes

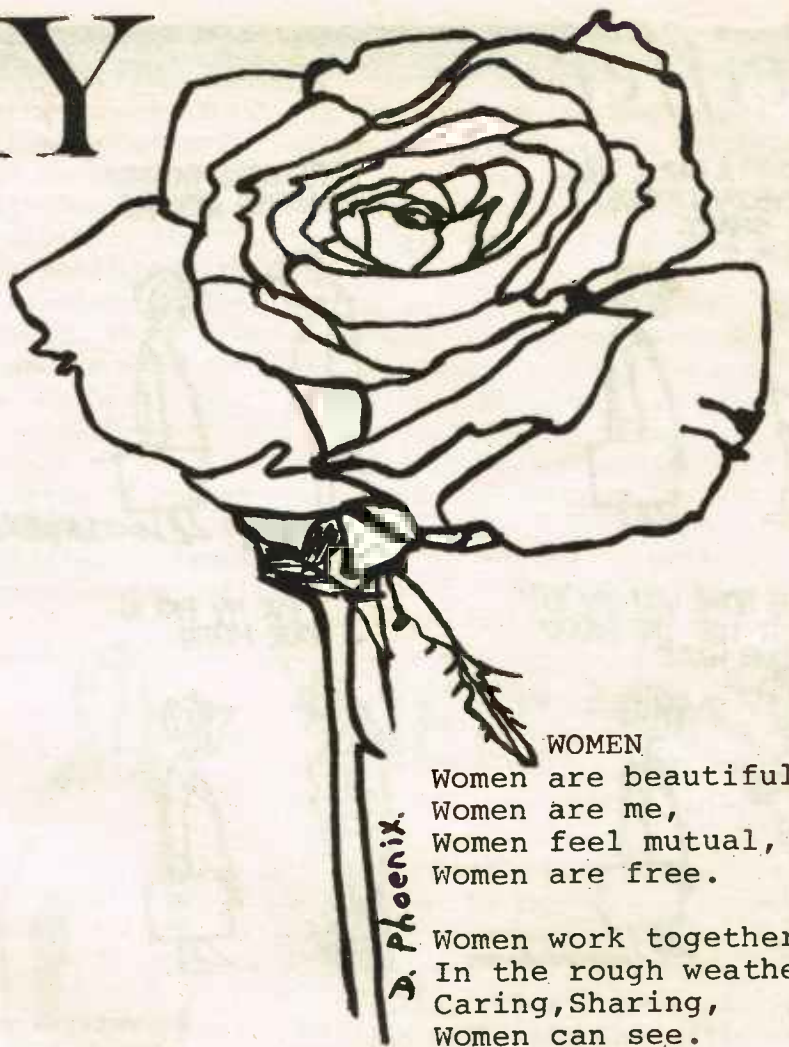
moans & smashed bottles, cries of despair....

...and in the distance, the gleaming towers of capitalism
engage in social intercourse
counting, devising, scheming, buying....laughing

laughing....

as the day closes, the falling night crashing
what little warmth the city sun, begrudgingly releases,
shelters are sought, but rarely found,
as they return to their haunts
& continue with their lives as victims.

CAROL AULD



WOMEN

Women are beautiful,
Women are me,
Women feel mutual,
Women are free.

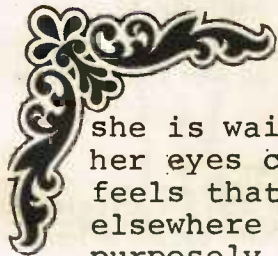
Women work together,
In the rough weather,
Caring, Sharing,
Women can see.

By Tanya Shaw
Age 10
Ogden Community School

ROCKS

We mend our silent antagonisms
silently
like still rocks
when the waterfall pushes over
them.
They hold themselves back
and listen with detachment,
without raging
or finding themselves
weak from trying.
We are working to perfect
the tough fibre of rocks
holding our thoughts against
each other
we are discovering
most rocks are fallible.

Rosalyn Taylor Perrett



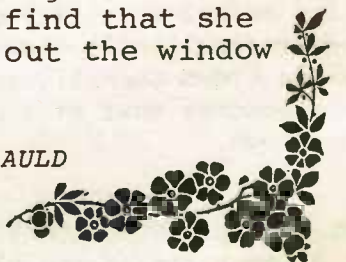
she is waiting. sometimes, as she lies on the divan with
her eyes closed, letting the sun lick her eyelids, she
feels that she is not of this planet, that she was born
elsewhere in the whole of the universe & was placed here
purposely by some domineering & authoritarian force.

she is physically weary & tense, and even when the most
immediate physical agonies have temporarily vanished, she
is left with a numbed, aching mind. she is drugged, groggy,
filled with an interminable exhaustion that even keeping
her eyelids propped open is an accomplishment.

though her mind is often churning with ideas she cannot
bring herself to the strain of writing with the small,
portable underwood on the desk. she reaches, hungrily,
for a fountain pen, and hastily scrawls a few passages
a day before her mind again wanders, and she gazes out the
window for several moments. often she will find that she
has spent the entire morning with her eyes out the window
writing lain aside, pen still in hand.

she continues to wait.

CAROL AULD



If you set your mind to mending
what was broken in the past
and you have some expectations
that the glue will hold at last,
there is more than wishful dreaming
in the skill of pottery
for the odds are all against you
in a human lottery.
Only if the wish is mutual
and the pieces seem to fit
can you come together gently
just to try the strength of it.
But have no expectations
that the mend will be secure,
or the reasons for the joining
have the patience to endure.
For the more we know of loving
The less we lean to trust
when the heart has once been broken
the blood congeals like rust.

GERT BEADLE.



the fireplace embers
had no prayers to last the winter,
the coals disappeared in October.
the room sat silent,
abandoned,
suspended.
a corner rocker,
unswaying,
attracting dust
like rust on an old Ford wagon,
fingered the carpet for warmth,
frost-bit.

Viola Goderre



she took the leap
from the back porch step,
scraped her knees,
tore her palms,
left her flesh on the concrete's face.

VIOLA GODERRE

WORDS THAT MAKE WOMEN... DISAPPEAR

HE
HIS
MANKIND
HIM



ARTICLE BY ALMA GRAHAM, reprinted from
REDBOOK MAGAZINE, March 1977.

The Ontario Status of Women Council thinks language is important. Sex stereotyping is deeply engrained in our day-to-day language. And while there are those who scoff and make poor jokes about "personhole covers", the OSWC views the misuse of language as a major obstacle in the attainment of total equality for women. If, as children grow older, they hear only of policemen then they learn to think of police officers in male terms. Society assigns roles to its members through language--we are what people say we are.

All of us must develop a greater awareness of the implications of sexist language in all forms of communication.

LANGUAGE

What is sexist language? It's language that excludes women or gives unequal treatment to women and men. It's language that tells a woman that she is two things. She is a man and she is not a man. If a woman is swept off a ship into the water, the cry is "man overboard." If she is killed by a hit and run driver, the charge is "manslaughter". But if she encounters visible or invisible signs that say "Man wanted" or "Men Only" (under the Ontario Human Rights Act, visible signs give her the legal right to complain)- she knows that the exclusion does not apply to plants or animals or inanimate objects but to female human beings.

While watching a film in nursery school on primitive people, a three-year-old girl was told that "man invented tools" and "man discovered fire". Later she asked her mother, "Mommy, weren't there any women in those days?"

A very good question, and one that prompted her mother to do some thinking about just how unfair to women the English language is. After all, if all human beings are constantly referred to as "men", then a woman is

automatically denied equal status.

And in employment practices, only in recent years has an effort been made to eliminate sexist labels from job titles. Newspapers now have changed their job listings from the segregated "help Wanted--Male" and "Help Wanted--Female" to a single, non-segregated list.

Yet gender-free job titles can make a difference. When the Los Angeles City Council approved a plan to abolish the titles of "policeman" and "policewoman" replacing them with the classification, police officer women on the force became eligible for promotions to ranks for which they had been ineligible in the past.

As the little girl in the nursery school noticed, "man" is one of the most overworked nouns in the English language. It is used to mean a person, worker, member, agent, candidate, representative, voter, even astronaut. Consider the legislator. He is a man of the people. To prove that he is the best man for the job, he takes his case to the man in the street. He is champion of the working man. He speaks up for the little man. He remembers the forgotten man. And she believes in the principle "One man, one vote."

If we agree to stop overworking the word "man", what other words are we going to use in its place? The cardinal rule is simple: Be inclusive. When referring to the human species, we can say people, human beings or men and women. For "mankind" we can substitute humankind, humanity or the human race. "Primitive man" can be changed to primitive people; "pre-historic men" can become pre-historic human beings; "man's conquest of space" can be the human conquest of space.

Where job titles are concerned, the major rule is: Be specific. Name the occupation by the work performed, not by the gender of the worker. "Mailmen", "firemen", and "cameramen" are mail carriers, fire fighters and camera operators. A "workman" is a worker, a "newsman" is a reporter, a "foreman" is a supervisor and a "watchman" is a guard.

Whether a male or female does the job shouldn't affect the title. Instead of using the terms "steward" and "stewardess", we should use the inclusive term flight attendant; and instead of saying "maid" or "janitor", we can specify whether we want a house or office cleaner or a building superintendent or custodian.

But the pronoun is the real problem. How do we avoid referring to the unknown singular subject as "he"? Our language needs a common pronoun but none of the various ones suggested has yet shown signs of gaining acceptance. The likeliest candidate is already in the language, at least on the level of informal speech. This is the quasi-singular "they", as in "Everybody will wear what they want to wear." Often you can reword a sentence to avoid a singular pronoun altogether. Thus,

instead of saying, "If the student practices this exercise, he can learn it", you can say, "If students practice this exercise, they can learn it." Finally, once we have included both females and males in our language, we should remember to treat them equally. Instead of saying, "Henry Harris is an up-and-coming lawyer and his wife is a striking brunette", we can say, "The Harrises are an attractive couple. Henry is a handsome blonde and Ann is striking brunette." Or "The Harrises are highly respected in their fields. Ann is an accomplished musician; and Henry is an up-and-coming lawyer".

Equal treatment should also be accorded to women of achievement. Consider a headline that appeared a few years ago, "Writer's Wife Becomes Mayor". This "wife" had been the first woman ever elected to the local City Council but even when she became mayor she remained a "writer's wife".

In 1976, The NEW YORK TIMES updated its manual of style and usage cautioning writers that "in referring to women we should avoid words or phrases that seem to imply that the Times speaks with a purely masculine voice". But despite this resolve, a front page story that same year, reporting on a study of retirement income, cited statistics on a "married retiree and his wife"- without any indication that some married retirees might have husbands.

Wives, Ladies, Girls. A man's property. Someone fragile and polite. An innocent. Not only has a woman been defined as something less than a lady and something more than a girl; she has been called, fickle and foolish, silly and superficial and, above all, weak. In our language the qualities of adult strength, courage, will, wisdom, and self-reliance have been given exclusively to the male. Thus it is no wonder that until recently the word "woman" was avoided as though it were something bad to be and that "girl" is like calling a black man "boy"--it makes the adult unimportant and immature.

Now increasing numbers of women are showing a new pride in their adulthood. They do not like to be called "honey" or "dear" by male grocers or bank tellers who hardly know them. They do not like to be called an "old maid" if they are single or a "housewife" if they are not. They are not "girls", "gals", "wives", "ladies" or the "fair sex". They are women--and beginning to be happy about the fact.

STEREOTYPING

Outcries against sexist language are often dismissed as the petty raving of paranoid feminists. And it's not surprising. Half the population, i.e. the male half, feels perfectly comfortable with the English language and its popular pronouns. After all, the

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women feel excluded by the English language, for as hard as we try, it is very, very difficult to conceptualize ourselves as "he". Even if this is not an irritation of which we are conscious, consider what the years of hearing "he" has done to alter our psyches.

The words themselves are not the real issue. It is the social mentality that they imply that is so frustrating to those who are battling against the limiting effects of sex role stereotyping.

Probably the most offensive example of discrimination-by-exclusion is contained in the United Nations declaration of the International Year of the Child. The pronouns "he", "his" and "him" are used approximately 26 times throughout the document which addresses itself to children and their rights. Now when one considers the lofty aims and objectives of IYC in the area of human rights, one would think that the time could have been taken to draft a declaration that refers to children in the plural, that is, both the girl child and the boy child. Language happens to be an extremely important factor influencing the way we come to see ourselves and our place in the scheme of things.

As hard as we may try to shield our children from role-oriented

IT HELPS TO RAISE AWARENESS IF WE OPENLY OBJECT TO PEOPLE WHO SAY "HE"

socialization, the educational system is still ridden with it. Even though there are dedicated groups working against sex-role stereotyping, the problem persists. Often the main contingent of these groups are teachers who can't be too radically opposed to the system which employs them.

And even when the schools have been purged of all material and attitudes that stereotype the individual, there is still war to be waged against the media which continues to promote the worst aspects of the human personality in the name of entertainment.

In its least harmful form, sexist language reflects a mere failure to think about the language and the way that we have been taught to speak it. At its worst, the language bears testimony to a tension between the sexes. It demonstrates that women are inferior, dirty, promiscuous creatures who embody all that is ignoble, that they have no visible or significant place in our culture, and that they are doomed to remain invisible. Certainly this is no small matter.

as is in their favour.

But the language is hardly sacred, (as is demonstrated each day in the way most people use it), so why not let women state their case?

In its least offensive form, the English language can be annoying to women. Consider the business woman. Each day she opens mail addressed to her yet starting with the words "Dear Sir". Consider the working woman who happens to be married. Regardless of the prestige of her position, most legal documents will presumptuously refer to her as "his wife". For example, the contract, deed or whatever might read: "This is to state that Joe Smith, Electrician and Mary Mack-Smith his wife...." and so on. The fact is that broadly circulated literature uses the pronoun "he" when referring to people. Now as acceptable as this may be in the grammar text books, I think that it is safe to say that most

Women gainst Violence

Last October several women got together and began discussing the basis of a conference to bring women together to discuss something of vital importance to them. It was determined that violence against and abuse of women is probably the most

barbaric and insidious thing in our society because the victims are invisible and helpless. Seven months later on the weekend of May 18, 19 and 20 at Confederation College the conference finally happened giving those who attended a new awareness, a sense of sadness tinged with a small hope that as women continue to struggle for a better status in all respects, blights like violence against women will begin to disappear. The following is an approximation of what the weekend conference was about:

The Women Against Violence Conference at Confederation College May 18, 19 and 20 attracted approximately 75 women from Thunder Bay and the region. The four keynote speakers, Helen Lafontaine, a media expert from Toronto, Joanie Vance,

National Assistor of Rape Crisis Centres from Montreal, Trudy Don, Interval House Worker from Toronto and Leah Cohen Co-author of a book on the subject of sexual harrasment on the job, gave informative talks on their various areas of expertise.

The conference got underway Friday evening with a keynote speech by Helen Lafontaine on the various forms of violence, particularly subtle violence towards women in Canadian Society.

As a media expert for a Women's Consulting firm, Helen argued that the solution to the more obscene forms of violence towards women, i.e. pornographic magazines and films, is more restrictive legislation. She said that much of the pornography today violates women's basic human rights and would not be tolerated by an ethnic or racial group if it were aimed specifically at them. It is violence because it is insulting and perpetuates a stereotype that will continue to prevent women from achieving their full potential as human beings.

Advertising, explained Helen, re-



flects blantant discrimination against and prejudices towards women, particularly in business publications which promote office equipment on the basis of women's sexual endowments and basic incompetence.

Furthermore, she stated, the existing rape laws which result in very few actual convictions point to a kind of a condoning attitude in society towards acts of violence directed at women. The lack of effective legal provisions for battered women seeking protection also points to a kind of approval of violence towards women in society.

In a slide presentation, Ms. Lafontaine illustrated the more subtle, but nevertheless effective forms of advertising which exploits the image of women, confining them to menial and trivial roles. Enter the Ring-Around-The Collar-Syndrome.

She also showed advertising that more openly advocates violent

abuse of women. The trend is especially apparent in contemporary album covers--i.e. women bound and gagged and chained.

The all-pervasive media must be reckoned with. It must be acknowledged, she said, as the power it is, and the affect it has upon us. The media is currently so powerful that we can never be sure that our every day actions are self-motivated or the result of subtle messages from the media.

"By adolescence the average child has witnessed 13,000 deaths on television without really learning what death really is and means. I find that very frightening," said Ms. Lafontaine.

A general solution to the problem of violence against women, particularly in the media, are individual protests directed at advertisers, record companies etc. She said that the protest of a Toronto Women's Group against the performance of a rock band called the BATTERED WIVES resulted in a loss of revenue to the performers.

JOANIE VANCE

Joanie Vance, Montreal based National Assistor of Rape Crisis Centres in Canada spoke of the misconceptions that surround the problem of rape. She urged women to realize that rape can happen to any woman.

"I used to think that rape couldn't happen to me," she said. "It is easy to believe that it can only happen to certain kinds of women and that the rapist is a kind of monster who lives in an alley way, rather than just an average man that one might pass on the street."

She described the rapist as falling into one of three categories. The psychopathic rapist, she said, makes up such a small percentage that it is hardly an issue. The "John Wayne" type of rapist, she said, is usually a man who cannot relate well to women and places them in categories, i.e. "good women" and "bad women!". The good women are usually people directly involved in his life, like his mother, sisters, wife and daughters. The bad women are the other women he meets in public and social situations.

"He would probably justify raping a woman he sees in a bar by saying that she deserved it. He really doesn't see what he does as wrong, but merely as giving these women what they deserve," she explained.

The third type of rapist is the most common. He is the person with whom you might go out on a date.

"This man's problem is that he has to prove his masculinity," said Ms. Vance. "He is reinforcing a role that he is taught by socialization that he should live up to. He often does not believe that a woman who says no, means no because he thinks he is expected to try something and that a refusal is really just a postponement of consent."

"Also this type of man may feel that if he spends money on a woman that she is indebted to him for sexual favours."

She concluded by saying that it is important for women to realize these forms of socialization work and to make sure that when she says "no" that she is clearly understood to mean no and not "maybe".

TRUDY DON

As a result of her experience as a staff worker at Toronto's Interval House for battered women, Trudy Don has developed a very down to earth approach to the problem of abuse between spouses.

She said that she first became involved with battered women several years ago when she and several other women decided to open some kind of refuge shelter to deal with a problem that they felt must certainly exist.

"We struck upon a genuine need. We hadn't really realized what a strong need there was until the home was opened. It had suddenly come out into the open because there was an outlet."

Currently the home, which is designed to accomodate 25 people, harbours anywhere from 28 to 30- people each night. And there is even a greater demand for space.

"Often times I am forced to make a decision between a woman who is a victim of emotional abuse and has been contemplating leaving and a woman whose very life is threatened if she stays in her home one more night. The choice is clear."

The women sheltered at interval house are given sanctuary.

"If their husbands come looking for them and they don't want to see them, they don't have to. We will deal with him. A worker will accompany a woman back to her home to collect the belongings she has left behind."

Emphasis is placed upon allowing the woman in crisis to make her own decisions.

"If a woman decides to return to what may be a potentially dangerous situation then we must respect her decision."

Ms. Don feel that many battered and abused women tolerate their circumstances because their alternatives are so bleak.

"To go from your own home to a dingy apartment and welfare is more than some women can face particularly when they consider the impact of the transition upon the children." She says because it is so difficult for women to gain economic independence, they often stay at interval house as long as several months before they get on their feet.

Ms. Don feels that the impulse towards violence originates in childhood when the child is taught to deal with anger through violence either by example of a father who abuses the mother or by a parent who abuses the child.

"We are not taught how to be parents and we are not taught how to fight fair. For many people, the only way to deal with their own anger and frustration is to strike out physically."

She stresses that we must respect the rights of all individuals and truly realize that no person has the right to exercise violence against another person.

Until our own violent impulses are confronted on an individual level the problem will persist. In the meantime, we must work towards a better socio-economic status for women which will reduce their dependency and confinement in a destructive situation.



LEAH COHEN

Leah Cohen, Co-author of SECRET OPPRESSIONS: SEXUAL HARRASSMENT ON THE JOB, outlined a history of case studies of women in various social classes and occupations who have experienced sexual harassment and coercion.

She began by describing a case that occurred at the turn of the century in Toronto in which a household domestic shot her employer in self defence and was acquitted on the basis of a medical examination which verified her "purity".

She talked about office workers both married and single, harassed by their employers to the extent that they either quit because of their discomfort or were fired for failing to come across. Waitresses, women in academia and professional occupations who have had their personal success jeopardized because of sexual politics are quite a few in number.

She emphasized that few women are exempt from the possibility of sexual harassment. A REDBOOK readership survey conducted several years ago indicated that out of 8000 respondents, 82% had experienced some form of harassment.

Sexual harassment is often very difficult to prosecute because so few women are willing to withstand the humiliation of bringing the case to trial, and the chance of permanently damaging their employment record.

Ms. Cohen did make several suggestions on how to avoid sexual harassment but qualified them by saying that they don't always succeed. 1) Attempt to dress in an unmistakably business-like manner. Avoid dress and make-up that might be considered "provocative. Although this may not succeed in deterring the harasser, it often adds to a woman's credibility should she decide to prosecute.

2) Avoid after hours social situations in which alcohol is consumed. A male co-worker might lose his inhibitions and make advances which could permanently damage working relations.

3) Do not ask for special favours from male co-workers and in turn, do not do special favours for male co-workers which could later be used

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fat and women



My friend Joan is a compulsive eater. She diets relentlessly, joins peer support groups to lose weight, has an expensive membership at a fitness spa, and has even had injections to assist in speedy weight loss.

Joan is not what most people would call fat, but because her objective is to be extremely thin, she sees herself as a fat person. She likens her problem to that of an alcoholic. Things will be going along smoothly, she will be succeeding with her diet and then something happens. In a fit of despair she will sit alone in her apartment and gorge herself on peanut butter, eaten from the jar with a spoon. She becomes ill. She regards her actions as a statement of self hate. And although she hates her impulse to over eat and agonizes with guilt after one of her "binges"

there is a kind of triumph mixed with the despair in her voice when she says that she couldn't possibly become involved with a man in her current "fat" condition for the thought of anyone touching her gross 120 lb. body mortifies her.

Joan is not an unusual example of the way many women feel about their bodies. Eating and fat have become a symptom of a larger emotional frustration, and are even a way of avoiding the confrontation with that frustration and disagreement of what is expected of them as women.

Weightwatchers, Tops, Self help groups to lose weight. Although both men and women have trouble combating the problem of being over-weight, it is not unreasonable to say that weight loss and dieting are more often the

preoccupation and even obsession of women. Magazines for women are never at a loss for something to print when it comes to the subject of dieting or the improvement of our bodies. Each month the covers of the most established women's magazines boast some new miracle diet or a new angle on the business of weight loss.

What does it all mean?? What are the social and ultimately political implications of the fat obsession in North America.

The following collection of articles reprinted from the Washington based feminist tabloid OFF OUR BACKS explore a number of perspectives on the fat and thin obsessions and what they mean in terms of the way we feel about ourselves and our position in society.

IS IT A FEMINIST ISSUE?

REPRINTED from OFF OUR BACKS, vol. 4, number 4, April 1979, Washington, D.C.

OVEREATING

The consequences of eating--overeating, undereating, compulsive dieting and intense awareness of thinness--affect women differently than men.

Women are less accepting of their bodies, view their bodies more as ornaments, see food as a reward, are more conscious of food and handle other peoples' food more often.

I recently watched a table of men and women eat dinner and then desert. The men all had sumptuous ice cream sundaes; the women nothing. I also recently listened in on a conversation between two thin women about their eating. One woman said she did all the right things during the day--no butter, one-half a bagel, rarely a potatoe, no fried foods--but at night she went crazy and ate all night. At a clinic for eating disorders a woman who worked there said that obese men would come in and ask her and other women for a date while the fat women would walk with their heads hanging down low.

Eating problems for women today have some parallels to the problem of hysterical fainting and illness among upperclass Victorian women. Both bring attention to women, reinforce the idea of being out of control, undisciplined, passive, eliminate or reduce sexual contact, and give women a strange control over other people.

As one of the reviews says, eating for women is as much a consequence of our oppression as women as heroin addiction is of racism in the ghetto. Women who want help with compulsive eating or dieting should be able to get it. They should not have to wait for the oppression of women to end, but what is missing is an understanding of its root causes.

Some groups like Overeater's Anonymous, composed almost entirely of women, at least don't say that women are weak, gluttonous undesirables.

They take the guilty burden off the women and say that overeaters are powerless in the face of the obsession. A higher power--God, the group, or anything else--is needed to help control the obsession. The focus is the obsession, not thin looks. But they have no analysis of why women eat and the idea of telling women that they are powerless reinforces too much the idea of feminine passivity and ignores the enormously strong

battle women put themselves through to extinguish their pain with food. The group has helped many feel that they are not alone with the problem that few non-compulsive people understand, but what is needed are feminist food-support groups for women whose eating bothers them. Even those who try to control eating need to examine their feelings about fatness and eating as do all women.

by t.d.

A local view

by Miriam Ketonen

Fat is a Feminist Issue offers some interesting techniques to deal with compulsive eating. Other books on weight loss tend to make the fat person feel that she is not normal and does not react normally to food, so that for her entire life she must be continuously policing herself around food. This book, however, takes the approach that the compulsive eater must learn to view herself as a normal person so that she can learn to eat like a normal person.

There is an emphasis on demystifying the fantasies associated with fat and thin, as well as the practical aspect of learning new ways to approach food and hunger.

The new angle

REVIEWS of the book FAT IS A FEMINIST ISSUE by Susie Orbach. Paddington Press, 8.95 hardback.

In 1970, Susie Orbach and some 40 other women jammed into a room at the Alternate U. in New York City to explore their own patterns of compulsive eating and their self-images using the techniques of women's consciousness raising groups.

After gaining an insight into her own problem with compulsive eating, Orbach then went on to train as a therapist and to run groups on self-image and compulsive eating. This book is based on her own experiences and those of the women she worked with.

On the practical level, the compulsive eater must learn about her eating patterns, learn how to distinguish between mouth hunger and stomach hunger and finally attempt to eat only out of stomach hunger as much as possible. It is important to recognize your body's signals about when to eat, what to eat and how much to eat. Once you have learned to accept your own body, you can trust yourself to make these important decisions about eating.

Any women interested in forming a group to discuss the issue and trying some of these techniques, please call Miriam at 345-7802.

This book is available in paperback at local bookstores.

As a person who has struggled with this problem myself, I found her insights helpful and liberating. I came across ideas that struck like lightning into some aspects of my own seemingly inexplicable behavior around food.

So what's a feminist issue about fat? Orbach states, "the fact that over-eating is overwhelmingly a woman's problem suggests that it has something to do with the experience of being female in our society." Compulsive eating is defined by her, and the woman she worked with as a group of behaviors that includes: eating when you are not physically hungry; feeling out of control around food, submerged by either dieting or

CONT'D

TAKE OFF UNWANTED WEIGHT TODAY!
EATING IS OKAY!
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THE LAST CHANCE DIET Revolutionary new medical approach to weight loss.

eating

New hassle-free way to lose weight

gorging; spending a good deal of time worrying about food or fatness; scouring the latest diet for vital information; feeling awful about yourself as someone who is out of control; and, feeling awful about your body.

All of these are terrible feelings to have. Compulsive eating is a very, very painful activity. Presumably we all want to be thin. Or, as she asks, do we? What is there about the social position of women that leads them to respond to it by getting fat?

This book shows in example after example, what indeed there is in our western patriarchal society that can produce this response. One of the most prevalent themes that runs through the book is that many fat women equate being thin with being sexual. Their experience has often been that they must deny their own sexuality in order to be seen as a person. To expose their sexuality means that others will deny their personhood." So fat covers them, removes them from the sexual marketplace.

Repeatedly Orbach emphasizes the way in which patriarchal society denies women access to knowledge of and pleasure in their own bodies. Our bodies are used to market every thing. But at the same time, only certain types of bodies (and the style changes) are seen as most desirable. We are taught implicitly and explicitly that how we appear is critical for success in society as a woman. We are, in fact, products to be marketed on the basis of appearance. In this society, when that product is fat, it is unacceptable. Our bodies have been colonized in a political and economic sense by male capitalist society. So it is no wonder that we sometimes find them to be unruly and in a constant and confused state of rebellion.

So getting fat as a method of opting out of the whole sexual scene is not so crazy and destructive a response as one might at first think. Orbach is not at all advocating staying fat, but rather understanding what is in it for women so we can choose consciously and not compulsively how we wish to be.

Such a reponse (getting fat to avoid sexuality) is not that different from the reponse of 25 top level management women studied in *The Managerial Woman*, By Margaret Hennig, except that they acted perhaps less unconsciously. During the first ten years of their managerial careers all 25 acted, dressed, and behaved in ways which "avoided having to come

to grips with themselves as women." These women felt that they would not be taken seriously by co-workers if they allowed themselves to be seen as women. To rise in the male system they paid by sacrificing a part of themselves.

What Orbach's book focuses on besides her feminist perspective in understanding patterns of compulsive eating is *not dieting, but rather breaking the addictive relationship that compulsive eaters have to food*. She sees in a short chapter on anorexia nervosa, or self-starvation, that this is like the flip-side of compulsive eating...compulsive non-eating. The same intense preoccupations with body size and food dominates the thoughts and acts of the woman. Like compulsive eating anorexia nervosa is almost exclusively a disorder of women. The compulsively thin woman also denies her own sexuality. Feeling powerless, she attempts to take control over one aspect of her life --her intake of food and body size. Her menses stop and her body returns to a pre-puberty parody of thinness.

Orbach asks, "...what are the basic assumptions in our society that women with eating disorders are challenging?...If this is a psychological state that affects women, what is an appropriate social response? Must not treatment include recognition of the social factors that lead women to compulsive eating and anorexia nervosa?" She then goes on to the heart of the feminist analysis of the problem:

"...modern western societies place definite expectations and prohibitions upon women's activities. Women are expected to be petite, demure, giving, passive, receptive in the home and above all, attractive. Women are discouraged from being active, assertive, competitive, large and above all, unattractive. To be unattractive is not to be a woman. In the case of compulsive eating, some women's strategy for dealing with these straightjacketed stereotypes is to become large, to have bulk in the world; to become large to compensate for always giving out; to become large to avoid packaged sexuality. For the compulsive eater, food carries enormous symbolic meanings that reflect the problem that women face in dealing with an oppressive social role."

Tied to this analysis is another parallel theme that recurs frequently throughout this book as well as in other recent ones by women: the relationship

between mothers and daughters. "A tragic reprecussion of women's inferior social position is that in the transmitting of culture from one generation to the next, the mother has the dreadful job of preparing her own daughter to accept a life that is built upon second class citizenship. It is in the learning of gender identity--that is, what it means to be a girl and then a woman in this world--that we find our place in society," a role that is fraught for women with ambivalence. Orbach states that many compulsive eaters and self-starvers report feeling their mothers expressed enormous ambivalence about the daughter's existence. Hardly surprising since their own political and economic roles have been so restricted.

The mother-daughter relationship is one of the most unexamined areas in psychoanalytic writing. Lots has been said about sons and mothers. The reason for this lies, to my mind, in the patriarchal therapy itself. You don't analyze the roots of oppression if you are the oppressor. Rather you further obscure that oppression in order to maintain and consolidate your own power. Most medicine has operated oppressively against both women's minds and their bodies...

Nancy Friday's book *My Mother/Myself* and others are beginning to take steps that only the women's movement could set the climate for taking, towards examining this primal relationship. *Fat is a Feminist Issue* has much to say in this area. From a position of sympathetic sisterhood we need to understand what those forces are which have been oppressing our mothers. "As long as a patriarchal culture demands that women bring up their daughters to accept an inferior social position, the mother's job will be fraught with tension and confusion which are often made manifest in the way mothers and daughter interact over the subject of food."

It is destructive, addictive, painful relationship to the food that many women have that this book explores. Not so we can be magically thin, but so that we can reclaim power over our lives and find real pleasure in feeding our bodies. Ideas and guidelines for individuals and group self-help work are included. It's a fine book exploring an area of considerable concern to women. It is also an area that I hope other feminist writers will explore further. Our energies must move from

being tied to responding self-destructively to the pressures of male-capitalist patriarchy to creating ourselves, our worlds. But while we are obsessed with food and our body image it's hard to have energy free for this task.

MANIFESTO

1. We believe that fat people are fully entitled to human respect and recognition.
2. We are angry at the mistreatment by commercial and sexist interests. These have exploited our bodies as objects of ridicule, thereby creating an immensely profitable market selling the false promise of avoidance of, or relief from that ridicule.

CONT'D

3. We see our struggle as allied with the struggles of other oppressed groups, against classism, racism, sexism, ageism, capitalism, imperialism, and the like,
 4. We demand equal rights for fat people in all aspects of life, as promised in (our country's Bill of Human Rights)... We demand equal access to goods and services in the public domain, and an end to discrimination against us in areas of employment, education, public facilities and health services.
 5. We single out as our special enemies the so called "reducing" industries. These include diet clubs, reducing salons, fat farms, diet doctors, diet books, diet foods and food supplements, sur-

gical procedures, appetite suppressants, drugs and gadgetry such as wraps and "reducing machines". We demand that they take full responsibility for their false claims, acknowledge that their products are harmful to public health and publish long-term studies proving any statistical efficacy of their product. We make this demand knowing that over 99% of all weight loss programs, when evaluated over a 5 year period fail utterly and also knowing the extreme, proven harmfulness of repeated large changes in weight.
 6 We repudiate the mystified "science" which falsely claims that we are unfit.

It has both caused and upheld discrimination against us, in collusion with the financial interests of insurance companies, the fashion and garment industries, the food and drug establishments.

7. We refuse to be subjected to the interests of our enemies. We fully intend to reclaim power over our bodies and lives. We commit ourselves to pursue these goals together.
FAT PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, UNITE!
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE!

For more information write Fat Underground, P.O. Box 5621, Santa Monica California, CA 90405

ANOREXIA

Anorexia effects one out of every two hundred high school and college women. Although about 10 percent of these women used to die from the disease, the mortality rate is decreasing due to the earlier detection. The purpose behind the anorexic's self-imposed starvation is not the painful suicide that sometimes occurs, but is a truly desperate attempt at finding a self-respecting identity by exerting some control over a larger situation (their life) in which they feel no basic sense of power. The ideal of thinness in this culture evokes not only acceptance, it also symbolizes one of the only ways that women can attain power. The link between social stature and thinness is both real and imagined. Its real because fat people are discriminated against; its imaginary because the thin, delicate image of femininity only increases a persons sense of ineffectuality. Ironically, anorexia is full of contradictions and just as destructive as the feminine stereotype.

Traditional (mostly male) psychoanalytic theory has tended to stress the fear of "oral impregnation" and suggested that the anorexic woman, who, in refusing to accept her feminine role, rejects her own body and sexuality. But truly, anorexics are women who understand all too clearly what their role should be.

Seven years ago, I was diagnosed as having anorexia nervosa. Looking at my 79 pound body one didn't have to be too perceptive to gather that something was wrong. My weight loss began long before it was labelled. At first it was gradual, soon though I was frantic with not eating at the same time thinking of food constantly--the food that I would not let myself put in my mouth. I stopped menstruating, I took laxitives, I forced myself to vomit by sticking my finger down my throat if I ate a bit more than I allotted myself. I weighed myself daily and would not allow myself to eat that day if I weighed one ounce over what I had weighed the day before. I never allowed myself any rest. I woke up at five in the morning to exercise and ran laps around the block after meals. I became so thin that it hurt to lie down. I lost all interest in being sexual and remained celibate for the 14 months that I was at my thinnest.

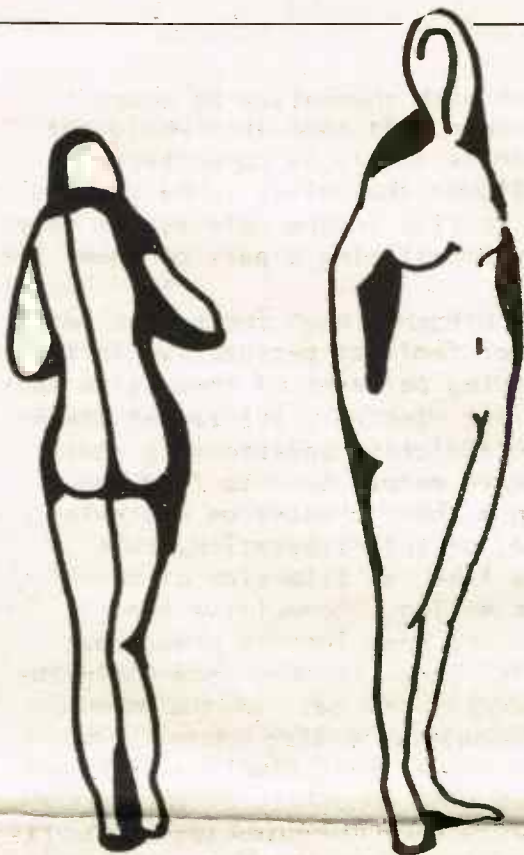
Anorexia is a condition which like compulsive eating is a direct relation to the expectations places on women in this society concerning our identity

and role. Anorexia Nervosa causes us to examine the way in which women are able to gain some sense of self-respect in their lives. Women are disproportionately concerned with pleasing others; we rely heavily upon others to validate our sense of self-worth and frequently devote our lives to fulfilling the feminine role rather than viewing ourselves as individual persons.

The triggers which lead a woman to become addicted to not eating in much the same way a compulsive eater is addicted to food, are not fully known. Frequently, anorexia comes at a time when a woman's internal desires and needs clash with the external expectations of family and culture. Society's unattainable and superficial standards for women's appearance and behavior create a pressure cooker effect in young women. Developing breasts and hips is horrifying to most young women who have been taught that being a boy is equivalent to being effective. The rigid control of eating habits is a desperate attempt to gain self-control of one's body and be self-directed.

Although undocumented, most young women experience some sort of crisis at the realization that the development of a female figure puts an end to most possibilities. Some women run away from home, others react by going for all the trapping of femininity, therefore trying to prove that they can still be effective at something (even if it is at only being a woman).

At the same time that anorexia is seen as a struggle for independence, it is also a plea to remain dependant. For an adult woman, independence only means trading in one form of dependence for another and frequently the retreat into an androgynous, child-like state is far



NERVOSA

more satisfying than the mind-boggling messages handed women on the subject of being "one's own person." There is a parallel to anorexia nervosa in the way that some women turn to marriage. Many believe that marriage is a way of gaining independence from their family as well as social integration when in fact it usually provides another dependency.

All of this is very painful to write. I have never put most of this down on paper before, it is embarrassing, and ugly and more than I would like to admit, self-hating. When confronted by the gynecologist whom I gone to concerned by non-existent menses, about my self-imposed starvation, I, like most anorexics, denied everything. When he accused me of trying to kill myself, I got angry because I knew that wasn't it at all. My weight had been dropping for two years, my first two years of college. Although I had always known that I wanted to be a writer, I was in college studying pre-med hoping that this achievement might finally prove me worthy of some recognition from my father, I wanted more than anything in the world to have my father's praise and therefore his caring; but I also wanted my own life and all the possibilities that lay ahead. It was too confusing. I had spent most of my growing years trying hard to please an all too unpleasable man.

I also knew all the things that I did not want from adult womanhood and I knew very little about what the repercussions of rejecting them were. The only sense of power I had ever felt in my life up until that point, had been the power of my sexuality.

cont'd



From the Addiction Research Foundation's Women and Alcohol

The power of denying or rewarding men with my body. I knew the falseness of this power and wanted no part of it anymore. As my body grew more child-like, I withdrew in a world filled with food. I would run my fingers over my naked body feeling for the familiar bones which meant I was safe from the world that I felt I wanted no part of. I had positively no idea of how thin I was--my hair stopped growing and became brittle, I was constipated and burped constantly during my waking hours from the anxious paces I put myself through. Once, while waiting in a line

in a drug store, the tightness in my body caused my throat to close in on my and as my face turned blue, the Pharmacist ran to my aid. Yet I could confide my situation to no one.

While women in the women's movement can find confirmation in the impossibility of women's role by talking to one another, anorexics struggle in increasing isolation.

I was lucky to have been referred to a woman therapist who after hearing my story affirmed that I was reacting to a very real predicament. She helped me deal with the discrepancies I felt

between who I felt I had to be as a woman and who I wanted to be. I gathered the strength to go home and visit my father (who I hadn't seen in a year and a half) to tell him that I was not going to be a doctor.

None of this is clear-cut or simple. The anorexics isolation and individual sense of craziness are as bad as the physiological effects themselves. Yet I know that anorexia is, like many other female manifestations, a desperate reaction to the predicament of womanhood.

wendy stevens

THE \$350. REGISTRATION FEE SYNDROME

ELITISM THAT KILLS OUR UNITY

Women have always had someone else usually men--doing their talking for them what they want and need. The only difference today is that other women who may be no more qualified are doing it.

During the National Action Committee on The Status of Women annual meeting and conference in Ottawa in March, a number of women--mostly from low income groups--were excluded because they had not pre-registered. But bureaucratic rules are not the only things that keep many women out of organizations like NAC.

In fact many of the strategies and tactics adopted by women's groups from rape crisis centres to status of women councils are exclusive. The National Action Committee has opted for establishment politics, playing the game with traditional lobbying tactics.

What equipment do you need to play the game? First and foremost you can't be intimidated by power figures--police, politicians, bureaucrats, even teachers. Secondly, you have to speak the same, learned language. And you need a knowledge of the protocol used in legislative circles.

We believe that these skills are most readily available to women who have had the privilege of higher education--not just university, but finishing high school--to women who have the time to meet with the authorities and the money to dress in the latest, sophisticated fashions. (Spare time, by the way, most often comes with salaried jobs where you have some individual responsibility. To get that kind of job, a post-secondary education is likely necessary.)

Electing a strategy that demands these skills often results in the exclusion, by their own choice or not, of those women who have always been forgotten--poor women, immigrants, Indians, and blue collar workers.

We cannot expect women who have lived as the ultimate victims of capitalist and patriarchal power to be comfortable meeting with the very people who wield that power. We cannot expect women who have not had the opportunity to complete secondary or post-secondary education to be prepared for grandiose phrases and bureaucratic jargon. And most important, we must not expect women who have learned that to survive you take what you can get when you can get it, to check that it's all right with everyone else first.

If we decide we want to play the game, we have to make sure we help all women learn those skills because they know what they want and have definite ideas about how to get it. But, what seems to be happening in organizations like NAC is that privi-

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leged women are taking it upon themselves to speak for those women who are feeling more than anyone else the burden of our current economic crisis. "Don't worry, we'll make sure your concerns are heard," they say, and in workshops decide just what it is poor women, immigrant women, Indian women want.

We have seen women leave NAC conferences filled with bitterness because they felt the things they wanted to discuss were blocked and shunted aside by "parliamentarians" using rules of order they did not understand. We have heard women talk about how "stupid" they felt because they could not follow discussions which they had initiated. Perhaps the worst thing is talking to women who wanted badly to attend a conference but could not afford the registration fee.

We do not have a solution to offer to this problem right now, but here are some suggestions for discussions: women's organizations should consider a wide range of strategies from lobbying to radical, direct action; an examination of how our common concerns up when it comes to class and race differences; are we prepared to support each other even though we differ in our choices of tactics? Even if all women did have the skills necessary for establishment politics, would that route lead to the solutions we seek? Or, is that a strategy chosen by women who have vested interest in the status quo; who do not want to change the system but expand it so that it incorporates them?

This is the first time in two and a half years that UPSTREAM has been truly critical of any aspect of the women's movement. We have felt the need in the past to criticize but have held back for fear of our criticism being used against the movement or causing rifts within the movement itself. With the NAC conference, we felt the problems were too serious to ignore. We cannot expect to put forth a united front when the actions of some women are causing resentment in other women.

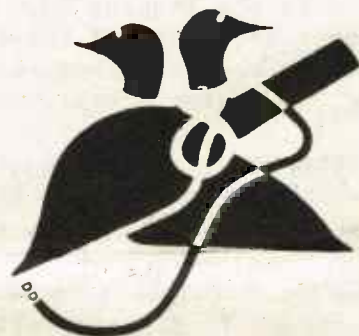
We believe it is imperative that an open discussion on the direction of the women's movement in Canada begin. Please share your reactions and ideas with us.

"We felt that understanding what happened in the movement necessitated

a critical examination of ideas, actions and their consequences for women. Some would see in this the danger of factionalism or betraying unity in the movement. We looked at our own experiences and saw that unity did not exist."

--Feminist Revolution
by Redstockings

Let us try, in Canada, to make history without repeating its mistakes



WOMEN'S CENTRE AT THE FESTIVAL

We Need Workers:

The Summer Solstice Festival coming up June 22, 23 and 24 will be a first for Thunder Bay in the area of large scale festivals. Women's Centre plans to participate by setting up a food booth. Grace and June Cryderman have been commissioned to make some 500 dozen perogies and cabbage rolls which we will sell at the Solstice Festival on Saturday and Sunday. But...we need workers!

Experts in the food vending business inform us that the booth will require five workers simultaneously to prepare food, and serve the customers.

Women Centre could stand to make over a thousand dollars to go to its survival fund if the expected crowds attend the festival. What we are asking is that if you can spare any time either before, during or after the festival to assist with setting up, operation of the booth and cleaning up, we would very much like to hear from you. Also if you have a truck that could be used at some time during the weekend or prior to the festival to transport things to the site, we would very much appreciate it if you would come forward.

Just a few hours of your time towards this venture is equivalent to a big fat financial donation to Women's Centre. Please give us a call....at 345-5841. Ask for Elaine.

CONFERENCE cont'd

to obligate the person, or be interpreted as a sign of interest in the person.

4) If you suspect that a situation is developing in which you may be sexually confronted, try to make friends with the family of the man. One woman discovered that asking the man about his wife and children when he started making sexual advances, successfully curtailed the situation from going any further.

The problem of sexual harassment exists because women are seldom in positions of power, because they need their jobs and because they are often afraid, humiliated, or overwhelmed with a feeling of powerlessness when they become victims of sexual harassment.

RESOLUTIONS

Also a part of the conference were a number of workshops in the areas of rape, battered women, and subtle violence.

The resolution that came out of the conference are as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT personnel trained in family dispute counselling be attached to the Thunder Bay Police Department and that all appropriate authorities be approached concerning the implementation of this program.

BE IT RESOLVED that a 24 hour crisis line be established for battered women in Thunder Bay and be it further resolved that pressure be brought to bear on the 3 levels of government for permanent funding for all support services for all battered women.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the law be clarified and if necessary, changed so that police officers will have the authority and responsibility to lay assault charges against the abusive spouse thereby eliminating the need for the abused spouse to establish charges.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT using the national, provincial and local resources of Rape Crisis Centres, programs for dealing effectively with inter-familial or extra-familial sexual abuse of children be developed and implemented in hospitals, social services, child welfare services, and police and legal institutions; and that the emphasis be placed on the rights and health needs of the child rather than on the preservation of the nuclear family unit.

BE IT RESOLVED that we urge the Attorney General of Ontario to introduce legislation specifically designed to give the peace officer the authority to remove the violent spouse from the home in a potentially harmful situation.

That the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre be a place for help, information and education on sexual harassment on the job by a) working with the Rape and Sexual Assault Centre in the consciousness raising of law enforcement officials to realize that this crime is as serious as rape, extortion and b) by giving support to the victim and acting as a place where grievances can be brought confidentially and if necessary work



with cases on behalf of the woman by acting as liaison between the Human Rights Commission, employers, the law, unions, affirmative action programs and c) by making available resource people to speak on this subject in schools, libraries and encouraging Confederation College Assertiveness Training Program to incorporate ways of handling these assaults for working women.

That the new government of Canada be urged to introduce a bill addressing itself to rape and sexual assault changes, immediately after election. Further: we recommend that the government be urged to incorporate some aspects of the Law Reform Commission Report 10, as well as, recommendations from Women's Groups/Organizations as well as, Rape Crisis Centres.

That a component of rape and its origins be included in the sex education or family studies curriculum for students beginning in grade 7 and that resource persons from Rape Crisis Centres and/or Women's Centres be utilized in developing and implementing this component, and c) that the services of Rape Crisis and/or Women's Centre Resource people be made available to train teachers on teacher development days for a fee.

That the persons convicted of sexual assault receive compulsory and humane (non-physical) rehabilitation, with direct involvement of Rape Crisis or Women's Centres expertise.

BE IT RESOLVED that when there is evidence of sexual contact against any persons under 14 years of age that someone be appointed to give evidence and be the representative in court on behalf of the child, in lieu of having the child appear in court.

We resolve that Rape and Sexual Assault Crimes be incorporated under part 6 as a sub-section of the criminal code entitled "Offences against the person and reputation." Further that the common assault premise "no one willingly can consent to be harmed or violated" should be consistent with offenses of a sexual nature and/or that consent be codified.

Be it resolved that the conduct and sexual history of the complainant under the "Evidence Act" cannot go to the issue of credibility.

NOTE: These resolutions as they appear here are in their roughest form. Each resolution will go back to the appropriate committee for rewording and clarification before it becomes official.



SILENT SUCCESS

We are all familiar with the untold hardships of women--our friends, our relatives, women around us, trying to make their way in a society that still does not provide equal opportunity for women in many areas. The following is a story about a woman who faced even greater hardship because she is handicapped. Deaf through a infant illness, her mother, who wishes to remain anonymous tells her daughter's story of growing up both deaf and female.

Lynn is deaf--well almost. She has 15% hearing in one ear and none in the other. She does not have enough hearing to listen to another person speak. What she hears well are vibrations. Other than that she relies upon lipreading or the written word.

She became "deaf" when she was 3 months old. She had a virus infection in the back of her head. Her temperature shot up to 105 degrees and stayed there for five days. There was an epidemic of flu in the hospital so we kept her home. When the illness subsided, she was limp and unable to cry. She just whimpered. Up until she was 6 months old, she could not hold her head up, or sit up. She had very bad balance and was not able to walk without falling until she was 18 months old. At the time we did not know that she was deaf, only that she had been sick and we spoiled her badly.

Because she was unable to hear, she seemed to insist upon having someone that she knew in her sight at all times. Finally when she was 2 1/2 years old and still not talking, I made an appointment with a doctor who informed me that she was almost stone deaf.

She had her tonsils and adenoids removed in hopes of improving her hearing. It cleared the passages, but didn't make much difference in terms of understanding or learning.

Because she was handicapped, her father and I pampered her and did everything for her. In doing so, we added to the handicap, others that she did not need. We made her dependant upon us, instead of teaching her to rely upon herself; protected her instead of letting her stand up for herself and fight her own battles. Her hearing was impaired and we proceeded to impair her emotionally as well.

She grew up and when it came time to go to school, we sent her to kindergarten at a regular public school. The teacher was kind and after 3 days I was able to leave her at school on her own. She learned to be separated from me and to trust another person. She also learned three new words, "Wait a minute." She was always wanting attention from the teacher but the teacher had other children to deal with so that the words "Wait a minute" were repeated all year long until she learned to lipread and repeat verbally something that sounded like "Wait a minute".

She was 6 years old by now and could now articulate words like "mommy", "daddy", "baby", "drink", etc., probably about 15-20 words in all.

She went to speech therapy at

this time until doctors, educators, and a minister finally convinced us that we were hurting her by keeping her home in Thunder Bay and not allowing her to attend the Ontario School for the Deaf.

This school was almost 1,000 miles away in Bellville and it would require that she live there from September through until Christmas (when she would return for the holidays) and then from Christmas until the summer vacation. My husband, because he loved her so much and could not be sure of how strangers would treat her, did not want to let her go. But her overcame his reluctance and arrangements were made for her to attend school in Bellville. She started school in January of 1958 when the new junior school was opened. Anxious to see her again, we wrote the principal asking if Lynn could come home for the Easter holiday. The reply was "yes" that she could be accompanied by a teacher as far as Sudbury but that she would have to meet there. In Bellville they had little idea of how far it was from Sudbury to Thunder Bay.

With the financial help of the parents of other children attending the school, I made two return trips to Sudbury by train and

brought 6 deaf children to spend the Easter holiday with their families.

The day Lynn arrived home, it was clear that the dull-eyed expressionless, doll-faced child we had sent away had returned to us reborn. A whole new life had been opened up to her and she now had a beautiful smile and sparkling eyes. She had finally found others like herself and was not sitting isolated in a room full of people moving their mouths at one another.

She began to learn sign language and could "talk" to her friends, in a different way. Although the school at that time taught lip-reading, oral and written language, the children taught each other sign language.

As time went on, Lynn began to express reluctance when it came time to return to school, but we were adamant that her education was important. At home she was treated as a guest and we continued to spoil her, which caused some resentment among her other brothers and sisters.

When she was 19 years old, Lynn graduated from school with a certificate of merit. She came home and a whole new type of education began.

She had to find a job. At the Tee Kay factory she passed a frustrating part of one year. She was not an experienced worker and was pressured by a quota to be met. She was finally let go.

This was hard for her. Because we had treated her with special attention, she expected this same treatment from others and was angry and depressed when they didn't. She was unemployed for a while and very lonely. There weren't many other deaf people her age.

She finally got another position in the laundry section of a dry cleaning business. She was a good

worker and was maturing some, but because it was a business and demanded speed from the workers; she was let go.

Again with "Nothing to do!", she began seeking out friends. Because she was deaf and very vulnerable, she was easily spotted as an easy mark. She was spending all of her money and getting into trouble. She wouldn't listen to us. We were just spoiled sports trying to prevent her from having a "good time" Ofcourse having a good time involved things that were harmful to her personal development.

She finally got a job at a home for the aged where she is still employed after six years. We were warned that people might try to abuse her by giving her all the dirty work in addition to her own work. We were instructed that if she complained at home, we were to report it. Three weeks passed and she began complaining of overwork. She was upset but I thought that perhaps it was just her. When I called her boss, she was wonderful about it and said that she was aware of the situation and that she planned to deal with it by giving her a written schedule to follow. She was not responsible to carry out orders given by co-workers. This woman was extremely understanding of Lynn's situation and called the employees in one by one to insist that they respect Lynn's handicap and give her a chance to learn her job. She is now happy in her employment.

In 1975 she married. He learned sign language and "talked" to her. They seemed to love each other very much. But not long after, he decided to quit his job while she supported them both and sometimes his friends and paid for their entertainment. She was so afraid of losing him that she closed her eyes to what was wrong and to try and please him went along with it. Her health and work suffered.

She became pregnant and was overjoyed because she was realizing her dream of having a loving family--a husband who loved her, a home--and a baby that they would love together.

She had a miscarriage in her 5th month. We tried to calm her down the best we could but her husband's resentment towards us was increasing and we tried not to interfere.

It was then that her marriage began falling apart. She tried harder to please her husband and keep him and eventually she got pregnant again. But the novelty of married life had all but worn off for her husband, who was tired of having a deaf wife who couldn't talk to him or hear him. She coaxed him to stay but he was out most of the time. She miscarried again. He came to the hospital to announce a separation and I took Lynn home for a rest.

She convinced him one last time to return but it didn't last long and soon we got a call from a neighbour saying that Lynn was in the hospital in a very disturbed state. After a rest period and a time on medication she decided to go it on her own.

For a time it was OK, but as a lonely person who wanted love and attention, she was an easy mark for unscrupulous people.

She met someone very much like her husband who abused her while she paid

cont'd next page



by Helen Levine

FEMINIST CONNECTIONS: COUNSELLING FOR CHANGE

"Footbinding was a political institution which reflected and perpetuated the inferiority of women; footbinding cemented women to a certain sphere, with a certain function—women were sexual objects and breeders."

(from *Woman Hating*, by Andrea Dworkin)

Have you been watching shoe styles for women lately? Have you tried to find a pair of plain, well built, reasonable priced shoes? Or have you decided that high heels look and feel great, despite the "opposition?" Are you in fact wearing them?

Maybe its old age, but I consider shoes to be a kind of political barometer for women. Meaning that when shoes become more and more skimpy and pointy, and as heels become higher and narrower, they're sending a message regarding how we are supposed to live and think and act—or how not to think and not act, to be more precise.

The other part of the barometer is whether women at any particular time are going to cave in to fashion blackmail, or consciously fight back: by boycotting the product; by deciding that fashion can be fun, but not when it's ruinous to feet and backs; by blasting the manufacturers.

Shoes, I think, are one grim form of social control over women. And they have a history, foot binding being the most obvious example. Foot binding kept women "in their place" in pre-liberation China, properly restricted, subdued and contained. Women hobbled painfully all their lives, in the name of delicacy, sensuality, helplessness, in the name of pleasing men.

The politics of women's footwear: back to binding

Western women think of Chinese foot-binding as a form of mediaeval torture. It was, but we in turn tend not to recognize the mediaeval torture in our midst, in the form of shoes for women that deny us comfort, freedom, and health, shoes that keep us from having our two feet planted firmly on the ground, from being in charge of our bodies and the space we stand on.

This whole question of footwear hit me last fall when I was looking for a pair of plain rubber boots. For rainy days. The kind of boots that have been around for eons of time. My search took me into several local shoe stores, only to discover that such practical items were not available. The stores were overflowing with expensive, stylized, and uncomfortable looking winter boots, and frail, highheeled, dressy shoes. It took a trip to a basement shoe department in Toronto to locate my current boots. They weren't exactly a great buy. The only pair that fit had steel toes, Orange Steel Toes! I bought those ridiculous boots in desperation and am now quite attached to them. They symbolize my demand for comfort and

convenience, my refusal to be bound.

Think of what shoes are like for men. Though fashion influences male footwear to some extent, by and large men's shoes are made to be sturdy, comfortable, and planted firmly on the ground. Like trousers, men's shoes provide the maximum in freedom, convenience, and practicality. It's no accident. If men are to control the world, make the decisions, run industry, government, the professions—and women—they certainly need their feet well shod.

Consider, for example, which sex owns and controls shoe manufacturing, which sex shapes and defines women's tastes and "needs" in footwear.

Shoes of course are only one blatant example of how women's lives are controlled by profits and men. In a way, it is simply another illustration of how women are held in contempt. Who else to put on frail stilts, but people who are primarily decorative objects to be seen and used? Women are taught to collude in such definitions of fashion and beauty, but let's make sure we keep the blame where it really belongs.

In the hazardous structure of the nuclear family, women are destined, among other things, for the role of consumers. We keep domestic markets viable for business by maintaining the "home and children beautiful, and the body beautiful." (It's all a cruel hoax—most women live close to or below the poverty line, and/or are dependent on a man's income.) Trained to doubt our own value and our own good judgement many of us try desperately to conform to male-defined standards of beauty and consumption. Including shoes.

Shoes seem to epitomize a particularly vicious form of consumerism foisted on women. Add makeup, advertising, fashion, pills (birth control, tranquilizers, etc.), and the connection between billion-dollar industries and women's oppression becomes remarkably clear.

Just in case I come across as a total killjoy, let me add that I think dressing up, and making up, and looking special can sometimes be fun and feel good, for women and men. But not in our daily lives and not at the expense of our comfort, freedom, and in the long term, health.

Don't kid yourself. The shoes you buy or wear are political!

"Pain is an essential part of the grooming process, and that is not accidental. Plucking the eyebrows, shaving under the arms, wearing a girdle, learning to walk in high-heeled shoes, having one's nose fixed, straightening or curling one's hair—these things hurt. The pain, of course, teaches an important lesson: no price is too great, no process too repulsive, no operation too painful for the woman who would be beautiful."

(Andrea Dworkin again)

continued from page 15

his way. He moved in with her. He began selling all of her furniture including a television set that we had helped her get a few months before at a very good price. She loved TV and spent many evenings after a hard days work watching the pictures even though she couldn't hear the words.

While we were away on our first vacation together in 30 years, this man sold everything that he could. The landlord became suspicious, especially because the people hanging around the place and the damage, such as broken windows, being done. He contacted the police who discovered drugs on the premises. Because Lynn was the one paying rent, she was arrested too, and spent a night in jail. She appeared in court many times subsequently and paid \$1,500. in legal fees to a defence lawyer who eventually helped her clear her name of any charges.

She returned to our home and has since come a long way, improving all the time. We have established some house rules for her to follow which she now willingly accepts. We wanted to help her only when she was ready to help herself and asked for our assistance.

We encouraged her to get in touch with other deaf people and to re-establish friendships with those who had other interests than going to bars.

I became more involved in doing things with her, going swimming or to visit friends.

People around her have noticed the change now that she has become more confident and aware of her personal worth. Her work has improved. She is well-groomed, happy and confident looking. She is teaching an evening class in sign language who respect and admire her very much. She has found her place.

Once again she has sparkling eyes and a beautiful smiling face. She is able to work at being a happy healthy person. She wants to share her good feeling with others. She is aware that there will still be down periods in her life, but has come to trust those who really care for her to help her through.

She is 27 now. She looks to the future with hope and confidence. She would like someday to find someone with whom to share her life, but in the meantime is content, happy, busy, working, helping people and just living.

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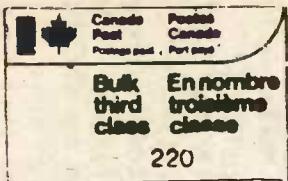
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INSIDE:

WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE:
a 3 day conference in Thunder Bay that resulted in thinking about some of the options available to victims of abuse.

See centre spread

IS FAT A FEMINIST ISSUE? Several writers analyze the politics of fatness and thinness and the way it relates to the feminine psyche. page 10

WORDS THAT MAKE WOMEN DISAPPEAR
The conspiracy of the English language to ignore women page 7

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