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# Northern Woman Journal

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THUNDER BAY, Ont.



**THE STRENGTH OF WOMEN**



# Editorial

This isn't an editorial. It is simply an apology for our tardiness - we realize that this issue of the NORTHERN WOMAN is long overdue. Journal energy has been low - however, we are encouraged by the new contributors that are emerging, and by the volunteer help we've received for the production phase of this issue. We're also hoping that the Feminist Periodicals Conference which Anna McColl will be attending later this month will provide the inspiration to re-energize the Journal.

We must, however, discuss with you, our readers, the problematic financial situation the Journal - along with other women's groups - is facing. To be precise, with the publication of this issue the Journal's financial resources will be totally depleted. Our revenue - sub-

scriptions and sales - is never enough to cover our operating expenses. The surplus we've happily had for the past five years resulted from the profits of Rising and the initial printing of Salt and Yeast which author Gert Beadle donated to the Journal. Each publication we've dipped into this reserve - and now it is gone. It is urgent that we find new revenue.

The following article by Women's Centre explains their situation - their financial shortfall - and the need for all of us to become involved with and supportive of Women's Centre's fund-raising efforts. It should be noted that the Journal's financial dilemma could exacerbate Women's Centre's money problems. Let me explain. The rent for our new collective home is shared by Women's Centre, the Bookstore, the Journal

and individual Womanspace women. If the Journal can't improve our financial situation, we will be unable to pay our rent, placing even more burden on Women's Centre and other Womanspace partners.

The Journal could become financially secure if each subscriber brought in five new subscribers. Is that an impossible task? We anxiously await your response.

*We are happy to inform you of the recent publication of THE RESISTING SPIRIT, new poems by Gert Beadle. Available at the Northern Woman's Bookstore*

*Credit*

*Cover photo by B. Lindsay*

## WOMEN'S CENTRE NEWS

Well, it's been a while since our last Newsletter so we thought we'd take part in this issue of the Journal to let you know what's happening.

To start with, I'm sure most of you are aware what's been going on with regards to \$\$\$ from City Council. We were cut back close to \$5000.00 from last year's allocation. Needless to say it hurts. If you are interested in seeing the letters that all the great women out there have sent to the local papers in support of us and support of a woman's right to choose, we have copies in the office.

What this set back calls for on our end, is a need to do some fundraising and some serious profile raising. Is there anyone out there that would like to sit on such a committee or maybe has some great money-making ideas? We don't want to start being part of the 'boogie' crowd, we don't feel like making money getting people drunk and disorderly. We need help, if you can't make a financial donation, your time and energy is just as valuable to us.

On the positive side, we are having Pot Luck meals every first Wednesday of the month, and so far they have been successful and lots of fun. Also, every Wednesday starting at 7:30 p.m. has been set aside for discussion group nights. The topics are usually chosen at the Pot Luck, if you'd like more info just call the Centre.

We are in the process of forming a support group for Women who are separated or divorced, the group will meet once in a while and according to need. If you are interested call the Centre and leave your name.

It has come to our attention at the Centre that school age children are sniffing PAM to get high. Please stop buying this product and urge your area storekeepers not to sell it to kids. There have been a few deaths in Canada since 1978 and the company has refused to change the product. The ingredient that causes the trouble is Freon-11, a coolant that is in most aerosol products and inhaling this product causes lung damage and eventually lung collapse. PAM had test marketed a water based product as early as 1979, but felt that it wouldn't sell.

SIDE EFFECTS was a sell-out and a hit in Thunder Bay!! All the Women that worked on it sure did a great job of ticket sales and talking it up. A big thank you to Pat M., Heather W., Margaret P. and the people at Kam Theatre. We have planned a follow up meeting to continue work on this issue in Thunder Bay. By the time you read this, it will have happened. We have a few \$\$ for start up of this committee (earned from the play!) If you want to get involved, give the Centre a call or get in touch with Pat at Decade.



We've been doing some speaking engagements and getting involved with other local groups. We took part in the Women and Disabilities Conference at the Ramada at the beginning of the month and not only had a good time but had our eyes opened quite a bit. The key note speaker was a woman writer named Gwenyth Ferguson Matthews who put out a book called "Voices from the Shadows". She was an incredibly powerful speaker and set the pace for that whole weekend. The Bookstore has a copy or two left and it is well worth taking a look.

Please stop in and have a visit. We are looking for new ideas on how to use our space and it's always so nice to see people!!



# Better Strident than Silent

by the Working Group  
on Sexual Violence

## A FEMINIST MANIFESTO

reprinted from *Broadside* Vol. 6 No. 7

At some time during the past ten years, the word "liberation" disappeared from the Women's Liberation Movement. Our analysis was softened so as to reach the ears of those who govern even before we said it out loud to each other. Our demands became polite requests, and our reality became a negotiable position.

As the strategy of lobbying governments for legislative reforms became the movement's primary (if not its only) strategy, the task of articulating the requests has been increasingly undertaken by women situated close to the seat of government and women who speak the language of power. These liberal lobbyists seek the small reforms which enable the state to maintain an appearance of addressing the subordination of women.

The primacy of these women lobbyists is not a new problem. As one feminist collective noted in 1975,

"... they talk about women's oppression as a legal question, as if getting some legislation passed will solve our situation. For them it is always a social (societal) question or a legal question. Never is it a question of power, real power - economic (who owns), military (whose physical strength) and political (who rules). It is never a question of what it means to take that power and distribute it among us all."

(From 'The Liberal Takeover of Women's Liberation', Feminist Revolution; Redstockings, New York, 1975)

Today as pressure increases from the right and from a declining economy, a perception has developed that it is necessary for feminists to be "reasonable" and to accept the legal/legislative framework of the state. These pressures are from the small but powerful sector of society which would send women back to the hearth and home, to the promised bliss of unquestioning obedience to "nature", man, god and the state. In comparison with the threat from these forces, the state can be seen as a friendly and benevolent patriarch whose allegiance we must maintain, whose wrath we dare not incur lest he decide to pay greater heed to our "R.E.A.L." opposition and their brothers on the right.

It is in times like these that the call to unity, the invocation of sisterhood, is most often heard. Criticism from "within the ranks" is silenced. Centralization of power is defined as "practical" and "necessary". The basis of agreement becomes the lowest common denominator. Our collective voice is heard, from behind a polite but slightly nervous smile, to utter statements devoid of content or commitment, words without emotion, and demands without conviction.

Just as our perspective has frequently been lost in our approach

to the state, so has the left frequently co-opted the feminist voice. However sympathetic many of us are to some of the issues raised by the left, it is undeniably true that ending the subordination of women is not a primary focus - regardless of how well they have learned the rhetoric of feminism. To paraphrase one feminist writer, while liberals abandon us to the state, the left abandons us to batterers and rapists. (From 'Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence' by Catharine A. MacKinnon, Signs, Summer 1983). A truly feminist voice accepts neither, and is wary of false alliances with the left as it is of co-optation by the state.

The process of analysing women's oppression and acting to end it is the work of the many feminists working at what is sometimes fondly, sometimes condescendingly, (and all too rarely respectfully) called the grassroots level. This is the work of the transition houses, rape crisis centres, women's centres, and the many other women's services which gather together the wide range of experience of Canadian women.

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**Words such as rape, pornography, battery, incest, racism, poverty, homophobia and abortion are not polite words in the vocabulary of those who have power.**

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Talking together, breaking the silence, is a conspiracy to effect fundamental change. Articulating our experience is a radical act - words such as rape, pornography, battery, incest, racism, poverty, homophobia, and abortion are not polite words in the vocabulary of those who have power. Translating these words (e.g. sexual assault, obscenity, family violence) may sound more polite, but it will only disguise the problem and serve to temporarily obscure the ugly reality of patriarchy, a reality which feminists have worked so hard to uncover.

The struggle to uncover this reality, and to have it heard, has been a long and painful one for countless feminists. We have succeeded in challenging myths about the lives of women. We have collected and displayed a huge quantity of evidence of the injustices perpetrated against women. We cannot afford to have our reality distorted and made more palatable by those of our gender to whom the government and media choose to listen.

We ought not to be surprised that those who govern choose to listen. They have an interest in tinkering with bits of the state machine to try to show that, while it is not perfect, it is responsive to our needs. We must recognize, however, that they choose to listen only to some of us: to those who will speak in softened

voices, to those who will dress as befits the occasion, to those who will be "reasonable" and "realistic" and never demand "the impossible".

It is those women who are chosen, and who we have permitted, to consult, to present briefs, to talk to the media, and to negotiate our experience. They are often not given the time and money, and sometimes they lack the inclination, to undertake the slow and cumbersome process of involving the very women they are asked to represent.

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**Because lobbyists have often conceded so much for the few gains, the umbrella of protection with which we are left is stripped of all but its frame.**

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The timetables of the government and the media are superimposed upon the process by which women talk together, analyze and decide our strategy. When the others' timetables win out, as they so often do, it is our own democratic process and women's needs which become lost.

These timetabling pressures are most keenly felt by those women in proximity to power. This superimposed sense of urgency has created a resistance in them to accepting the slow but essential process of untangling the web of women's oppression.

It is the victims of rape, battering, incest, poverty, homophobia, racism, etc., who must live with the compromises made in our name. The terror in our lives is minimized and marginalized. Because lobbyists have often conceded so much for the few gains, the umbrella of protection with which we are left is stripped of all but its frame.

Yet to challenge the bargain basement sale of our experience is to be called strident, idealistic, divisive, man-hating, and, worst of all, "unreasonable". These are labels which are designed to silence women.

Yet we know from the history of our own movement that polite deference to power is not an avenue for change. We know that the compromises made in our name are not strides forward, but merely directions to be content with running in place. We know that silence is not heard.

Our talking to each other is the strength of our movement and the breadth of our conspiracy. Our differences create the friction which moves us forward. The call to unity, the demands to compromise, to be "realistic", to defer to the government chosen "experts" as our representatives, to develop "efficient" organizations, to be acceptable to the media, are all ways to hush the chorus of voices that is feminism.

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We suffer enormous harm from accepting and adopting policies formulated by "experts" in order to meet the timetable of a government department, parliamentary committee or organization's constitution. We must learn not to respond on initial impulse, fearing that if we refuse to meet the media or government's timetable, we will forever be silenced.

None of this means, of course, that we can afford to ignore the state in an attempt to create a utopian feminist community. It is tempting to isolate ourselves and pretend that it is possible to build a world on feminist principles without ever directly confronting the power invested in the state. It may be less overwhelming to turn the focus of work inward, convincing ourselves in the process that the power structure as presently constituted is simply too male, too hierarchical, to be actively struggled against. But to do so is to abandon those women whose lives are directly and daily affected by the power of the state, and who simply are in no position to ignore it.

However, when we do take on the state, it is essential that our demands for change be grounded in an analysis of power. We must cease to scurry after crumbs we are offered in the name of real change. While we work toward those short term goals that will make the lives of some women easier (and indeed may be literally life saving in some cases), we must not lose sight of the revolutionary change that will ultimately eliminate our oppression. We must choose our issues and our strategies carefully. Whatever work we do with institutions of the state must not be done at the expense of our organizing work with women, or we will lose not

only our capacity to resist co-optation, but also the impetus and base for independent action. We must take the initiative, and not be constantly locked into the timetable and agenda of the state.

We are calling for a reclaiming of a feminist voice. It is not the voice of one woman, but of many women doing many kinds of work. It is a voice which does not hesitate to express the breadth of women's experience, the depth of women's subordination, the height of women's creativity, and the power of women's rage. It is the voice not of one organization, but of the work of many women and many women's groups. It is not a voice situated only in Central Canada, at the door of the government, but in many communities across the country. It is a voice which must be reclaimed if we are to succeed in our struggle to end women's oppression.

To reclaim our feminist voice means recognizing that feminism and feminist work is the basis on which the Women's Liberation Movement has been built, the grounding that has made the movement relevant, dynamic and effective. This is no time for revisionism, no time to deny our roots or compromise our strength.

Reclaiming our feminist voice means defining and describing women's issues, not from a theoretical or legislative perspective but from the perspective of women. It means speaking out as feminists, taking every opportunity to put women first and to tell the truth about women's experience - in the media, in our own communities, in meetings and conferences and workshops. In feminist publications, in public and in private. It means we must analyze and debate the issues and resist attempts to short-circuit that process.

Reclaiming our feminist voice means continuing to build our analysis of the state and political theories - based on our own experience - to inform our strategies and actions. It means saying no to demands for simplistic solutions to the complexities of women's subordination. It means demanding what women need, not what the state or our potential allies will accept.

Reclaiming our feminist voice means continuing to work for and with women and it means respecting the expertise we have gained through that work in women's centres, rape crisis centres, transition houses, and countless other feminist organizations. It means setting our own priorities, strategies, and timetables for participating in legislative reform efforts.

As feminists in the 80s we must - as we did in the 60s and 70s - name our experience, define our issues ourselves, and we must dare to express our commitment and our rage. As feminists we must and we will regain the initiative from the forces that would limit and control us.

*(The purpose of this critique, published concurrently in a number of Canadian feminist periodicals, is to encourage debate and discussion of strategies and issues. Anyone with questions and comments should write the Working Group on Sexual Violence, c/o 301 - 2515 Burrard St., Vancouver, B.C., V6J 3J6. Members of the Working Group are Kate Andrew, Jan Barnsley, Megan Ellis, Debra Lewis and Frances Wasserlein.)*

## L U Women's Centre

by IRIS JOHNSON & JANIS AYLWARD

In February of 1985, Lakehead University once again had a Women's Centre on campus. We decided to run the centre within a cooperative structure although some hierarchy was necessary in order to comply with guidelines established by L.U.'s Student Union. Laura Joy was elected president, Jacky Roddy, treasurer, and Irene Matt became secretary.

Recently, the L.U. Women's Centre received a grant from the Women's Program of Secretary of State. This grant is being used to do a needs assessment of women on campus and women who attend classes within communities outside of Thunder Bay. The purpose of the needs assessment is to determine what type of services the Women's Centre can offer to meet the needs of women at L.U. and in surrounding areas.

So far, 500 questionnaires have been distributed within L.U. and approximately 280 have been returned. These questionnaires were given to Winter session students, faculty and staff.

Off campus, we intend to survey approximately 200 students. We feel this is important because L.U. is a regional university and we would like to provide services to the region. These services could range from bil-

leting out for workshops or special events to providing an informal liaison for bureaucratic red tape problems.

From our survey we will be developing a resource manual to help those who may not be familiar with Thunder Bay. University can be rather isolating at times and we would like to establish links with the rest of the community. Our manual will also contain the information necessary to implement the services that our results indicate are needed. We will also try to develop a budget and possible sources of funding for those events that require more than just volunteer energy.

One of our long term goals is to provide a supportive environment for women who may wish to attend University but need emotional support or practical support in such areas as child care. A child care centre on campus is probably not feasible in the near future but support could be given by establishing an exchange network between women.

If you would like to participate in the L.U. Women's Centre or offer suggestions we would appreciate your input. You can write to L.U. Women's Centre, Oliver Rd., Lakehead University, Thunder Bay.

## ANTI-POVERTY PROJECT

The Lakehead Social Planning Council with assistance from Employment and Immigration Canada has begun a six month project to implement strategies to combat the effects of poverty in Thunder Bay.

Bev Cadene, project manager, states that poverty can be defined as insufficient access to certain goods, services, and conditions of life which are available to everyone else and have come to be accepted as basic to a decent, minimum standard of living. Signs of poverty in Thunder Bay include a large growth in welfare rolls, an overflowing emergency shelter and increased usage of various free food centres.

On the basis of the research already done by the L.S.P.C., strategies being considered include a survival handbook, co-ordinating a group around the issue of housing and supporting existing poverty-related services such as the Emergency Shelter on Simpson Street.

Participation by those affected by poverty will be a key component of each strategy. Anyone interested in being involved in this project or wanting further information should call Bev or Diana at 345-3631.



# GREENHAM DIARY

by JOSIE WALLENIUS

Much has been written about Greenham and many women have been there. This is a simple record of the days I spent there, what new things I learnt about myself and other women. During this time there was a definite policy on the part of the police and the military to "go softly". There were too many women there who were going to go back all over the world to talk about it. As one woman said to me "they will start again when you go back".

Systematic persecution and abuse. Confiscation of shelter, fire and food are the usual rewards of those women who have decided to make permanent witness at the camp.

The ten days action in September was planned to coincide with the largest NATO exercise since 1945 on the West German border, Exercise Lionheart, practice for W.W. 111.

I had read that a Greenham woman's advice to other women was never to do an action until it comes from the spirit, then it will be alright.

Well I felt like it all right. By several quirks of fate I live in Canada with a husband, and the rest of my family live in England, so I'd wanted to go for as long as the camp had been there.

I felt I first had to meet Ann Pettit, mother of two, the instigator of the whole thing. She lives on an old farm in Wales. A really special woman who won't admit to being so. She also was working in the group who made Wales a Nuclear War Free Zone and went to the U.S.S.R. to meet people from the Group to Establish Trust. Living as many others do with the minimum of personal possessions because of her commitment, she is still searching for answers.

We talked and talked. I confided some of my fears about Greenham and she said to try and get to Orange gate.

## Saturday, September 5

My brother, with kindness and interest takes me to Ashford to get a seat on a coach that is taking women for the day. I have a lot of help from my family. My daughter lent me her tent etc., my sister-in-law gave me farm produce to share, my little nephew appeared with his camping tin foil, as he didn't want me to be cold.

I watched women piling on the bus, leaving husbands holding children in night clothes. I had two rucksacks, they said bring food and water for ten days. As well as being apprehensive about not being able to stay warm or make friends, I was beginning to wonder if I could even stagger off the bus. The only other woman going for more than a day sat beside me. She is a nurse and a quaker, called Dana, and we are both thankful to be together.

The bus drops us off at Orange gate and other women help to carry our stuff to find a site. I felt the need to make a home straight away.

The ground is stony and the tents fall down. When up they flap around in the wind. I feel totally inadequate and am aware other women are watching, but am too shy to ask for help. They

are sitting around fires, with odd clothes and haircuts. Feel like my first day at school.

We walk round the perimeter. There are concrete posts with thick green wire. Then several rolls of barbed wire and a razor wire I have never seen before. Beyond that more barbed wire. Police and military patrolling. Lots of coloured webs, hand woven pictures, written messages on the wire. Some quite beautiful. Lots of patched gaps too. The perimeter is nine miles - rocky and muddy in places. See the missile silos. Feel strange when I get back and my kneecaps are aching from walking in wellingtons.

Of the thousands of women there I bump into Ann Pettit. I wasn't expecting her till next weekend. She says she will bring her dinner to cook at our fire, but on seeing our one jet primus she took her wild mushrooms and dried lentils and us back to her fire. She is in a big tent with other women, and we are drawn into their circle, sitting over hot coals and eating homemade soup.

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ADVICE TO OTHER WOMEN WAS NEVER TO  
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At dusk we start to move and join hundreds of other women silently at Orange gate. We sit in complete silence for a long time. It feels very peaceful. The police stand watching on the other side. A woman starts to hum. Other women take it up in different chords. The air seems to vibrate. It is very beautiful, and very eerie. The police start to move restlessly and we start to sing. The words are easy to pick up though I have never heard them before. Suddenly we are all standing, though nobody has given an order, and move to the fence. We start to pull backwards and forwards on the wires, rocking it, you can feel the concrete posts coming loose in the good earth. Police are on the radio for help and more come. They come out of the gate and separate us from the wire by throwing us to the ground. As they clear women from one spot others go to another gap and start to rock again. The police look confused and disturbed, they don't know how to react because we are not being violent. Only to the wires. I don't mind being shoved to the ground. Its the first time for a long time I have felt whole and unfragmented.

We sit on the ground again and start to sing. Some women are crying. A song starts to the strain of 'The Viennese Waltz'

De da de de dum  
Snip snip, snip snip  
De da de de dum  
Shake shake, shake shake

And then everybody is dancing, whirling round and round, holding each other, dancing and singing and laughing. How long is it since I have been happy like this.

Later I wrap myself in tin foil, and turn on the hard ground. I realize my tent leaks.

## Sunday

Thousands of women come down again from all over England. It is strange how women who can only come for the day feel guilty. Received message I was a grandmother. Hope Carol understands I'm doing more for the baby by being here.

Walking along the wires we talk to a policeman who says he doesn't understand why we don't all break into the base together. He says that the British police and military are there to protect us from American military who would shoot us as terrorists. Is this Reagan's war against terrorism? I begin to think about organization, and fret that we aren't breaking into the base together as a massive exercise. After all shouldn't we be having more meeting?

I talk to other women. Some agree and others just laugh, and I get frustrated. We meet a woman who has been at Greenham for two years, with spells in prison. She wears a short sleeve shirt, jeans and sneakers. We wear long johns, heavy coats and boots.

We have dinner again with women from Quaker tent, who are there to hold Despair and Empowerment workshops. Put my name down to attend. There are already many names down.

Dinner is vegetable stew, stewed blackberries from the common, tea and smoke. Sit around fire on bits of wood and talk. There is Mary, about 30, given up job as a librarian to run workshops around the country. Joan, about 50, given up job as head of social work department. Polly, early 20's, studying drama at London University. Karen, blond and elegant, another university graduate. Then there is Blues.

Blues, child of our society... Homeless, jobless, intelligent, loving. Glasgow accent, leather jacket.

We thought if she stayed with us we could teach her the principals of non-violent disobedience. I talked to Mary about my frustration to do with the apparent lack of organization. She says she used to feel like that, and pointed out the camp had been there for two years, and the women survived precisely because it was not organized. When you are evicted five times in a night, and reduced to sleeping in a bag, just to stay there requires all the strength you have.



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Monday, 5:30 A.M.

Woman pokes her head in tent and says "Blockade". Pull trousers and coat on and go to Orange gate. Sit down with other women in front of gate. We sit close and keep warm. The blockade keeps people from getting to work at our gate. Needless to say they are diverted to another gate where police are there in numbers dragging women away to the Newbury police station. This week it is Indigo gate which is being kept opened and harassed. Their firewood is gone and the police have doused their fires.

At Orange gate we have some satisfaction in seeing a lot of traffic diverted. I watch with interest the looks on the drivers faces. The women's faces, most of whom are Americans, are quite expressionless. We sit for three hours. Talking to a woman from Mother Jones magazine who said that fifty Spanish women had been turned back at Gatwick when the authorities had found out they were going to Greenham, and she herself was only allowed in because she phoned a Greenham lawyer. She told me her interpretation of the gates as she had spent some time at each.

- Orange gate -- cooked well, loving
- Blue gate -- jolly, happy
- Indigo gate -- forgotten, windswept  
intense, close relationship with guards
- Green gate -- intensely women only,  
children, spiritual, imaginative
- Red gate -- calm
- Yellow gate -- rough, on the front line

At 9:00 a.m. we go back and build a fire and have breakfast. Bread, cheese, tea and coffee.

Learn how to use water. After supper the cooking utensils are filled with water and heated up to clean them. The water is then used to fill the hot water bottles of weak souls like me. In the morning that water is still lukewarm and you can wash in it. Washing up is a favorite job as you get to wash your hands.

Greenham supporters from the nearby town bring firewood. It needs chopping and sawing. We walk round the fences to Yellow gate. These women are always under pressure. Strange women who don't know the base usually go there first. If a woman is a society reject, she is never turned away, no matter how much support she needs. I am suddenly aware how ruthless and sick the outside world is.

That night we are at the fence and I see a babies jacket that a woman has left on it. The wires guard missiles, but there is nothing to guard the people. Very few people



know that when there is a nuclear alert, American families are bussed in their nightclothes, to concrete bunkers, leaving British police, military. Peace women and local residents to their fate.

I feel things for a moment and feel so terrible. I have to pull the blanket over my imagination again.

Tuesday

Blockade the gate again in the morning. We hear that more women have been arrested at Indigo. We walk round to see them with firewood in our rucksacks. There are less women there but they seem cheerful and confident.

We go on round the perimeter and speak to women at Yellow gate. It was very strange. We saw a bus load of American children being taken into school, next to the missiles, their missiles, in another country. We smiled, after all they are only children, but some of them made rude gestures back, and their faces were white. Boy children, soon to become men. Some of their fathers, one day when they were being bussed in, pulled down their trousers baring their buttocks to the window. I think when I heard about that I felt without hope.

*THE WIRES GUARD MISSILES, BUT THERE IS NOTHING TO GUARD THE PEOPLE*

That night we sat around the fire. Talking, laughing and drinking tea. We were told the story of another Welsh woman. (Oh these Welsh people) She was a quiet woman who worked for a small employer who was sympathetic and let her withhold her income tax. The usual thing happened, after an exchange of letters over a period of a few years she was threatened with prison. So she took a bucket of pigs blood and dropped into it money she owed in small change. She took it to the revenue building, entered it and poured it over the steps. She said she didn't understand why people were shocked at that when they were so indifferent to the dying of the human race.

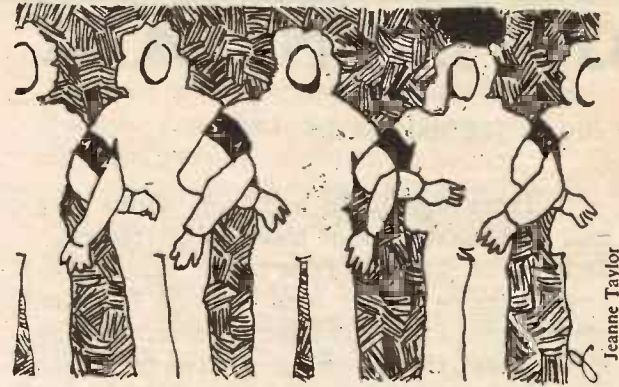
We shared stories of loves and relationships. We held each other in merriment at the way we take stupid things so seriously.

Wednesday

A friend of a friend of Polly's knew somebody in Newbury who would give us a bath. Feeling slightly guilty we set off to hitch a ride. It was a lovely day and after a few miles we were given a ride in a car by a young man in a business suit. He was friendly and enquiring and wished us luck.

We had a bath, our clothes washed and much hospitality, but I was struck with how impatient I was to go back, to people who had made the important things the priorities in their lives. I wished that more people understood that once the change is made, everything seems to make more sense.

That night after supper we talk about the New Age, the Atlantis age, the second coming of Eve and the sixth sense. We hear that 15 years ago an underground lake flooded and the base had to close. So we go to the wires



Jeanne Taylor

and call out to lakes, rivers and Oceans that we love and are dying already to help us. We don't see any tidal waves but it is obvious the police are having to think about it too. I understand that the reconciliation between the military and the police on one side representing one force and the women on the other representing another power, is vital, not only at Greenham but everywhere.

I realize I feel threatened by new women approaching and who are going to stay at our site. Will there still be enough space for me, I think to myself, and will we have enough food to go around. I had been welcomed so warmly when I had been alone, and didn't know how selfish I was.

Thursday

Today is the day of the "Stop the City" protest in London. A day when Peace people do C.D. at the stock exchange and other centres of power. We thought we should support them at Greenham by blocking the main roads to London.

As usual women are not aware of any real plans. I walk the miles to the main road with a lawyer who talks about the crisis of conscience she has about not being arrested. I say she does more for women in court by retaining a clear record herself, but she does not feel reassured.

We straggle to Yellow gate and women tell us to go back and blockade near the roundabout. Gathered there we are confused, not many of us have done an action before. Heavy traffic is roaring past and we say we should put up our banners and just lie on the grass island. One woman says we don't have the right to stop people from getting to work on time. A Greenham veteran walks up. "What rights do you mean", she says. "That's a Cruise up there." And points to the direction of the silos. A gap seems to appear in the traffic and we all move in accord and sit across the road with our arms linked. We are happy and feel sure of what we are doing. Traffic starts going over the grass island so we spread out and stop that too. Traffic is stopped. Everything is quiet. The police come on motor bikes and horses and drag us off the road. They hold us to the ground with their knees.

Traffic starts up and I see Iso-bell, a Swiss woman, standing on the side of the road. She walks calmly in front of a big truck and lays her body down. It stops inches from her body. I love her.

We start to walk along the side of the road, followed by the mounted police who effectively block the road with their horses which is quite gratifying to us.

Cont'd. Next Page



GREENHAM DIARY continued

We sit around the fire at night and decide that we are there to enter the base after all, and plan it for the next day at 2:00 p.m. Mary, Polly, Karen and myself. Blues desperately wants to come with us, but we persuade her to be a lookout. She wears a leather jacket and she is Blues, and we know instinctively that we will be better treated when arrested without her. This is the beginning of the biggest lesson I had to learn at Greenham.

Friday

In the morning we sit and make rainbow coloured paper flowers. We know already where to go in. We pack bread, cheese and water. We agree we do not know how the wires were cut. We go in the tent to think about why we are doing it. We begin to walk round the perimeter and stop to wait till patrolling police have passed. Blues is happily picking blackberries along the fence. We go through leaving gloves caught up in the barbed wire. We sit on the grass and break bread and hold hands. I ask Mary why she thinks we feel so calm and she says because there are four of us and I feel she is right. The flowers are planted round the Oak tree and balloons are hung from the branches and on we go. We walk over a small hill and start walking towards the centre of the base. After some time we see the airstrip. We link arms and walk right down the centre of it. We feel very happy. A motor bike approaches ridden by airforce personnel. He says "How did you get this far/" We say we walked, and his face breaks into a huge grin. "Cracking" he says "Oh cracking". He rides off rather slowly and we are approached by U.S. jeep and soldiers, and they don't speak but ring for police. When we were taken away I wondered if it had happened that a plane had come down the runway at the time we were walking on it, and the three young women with me had gone on walking, would I have had the courage to have run off.

We are searched and questioned and finally released. They drop us a long way from our gate and as we are walking back Polly is hit by an apple from a passing youth in a car.

In the night it rains and we sit and go over it all. Blues disappears and though we call after her we know she is going on the base. Later a woman comes to our tent and says Blues is lying outside the wires. She is beaten and is semi-conscious. We carry her in and bathe her head but she keeps on muttering "I did go in, didn't I". "I did go in." We are very quiet and don't seem to be able to respond. We know we should have let her come with us, and we know why we didn't let her, but still felt it was her own fault. She can't settle, till Joan, who is sitting silently washing her feet begins to sing a Greenham song. "For she's a jolly brave woman....", and Blues drops asleep. There is one law for one class and another for the other, and very few people like Joan in the world.

Saturday

The Despair and Empowerment workshop is about to start. I sit outside with an American woman and decide we feel too happy to participate. Then we change our minds.

I REALIZE THAT WHEN I GO HOME THE HARDEST THING I WILL HAVE TO DO IS TO MIX WITH THOSE WHO REFUSE TO SEE

We start with meditation and breathing, and then are told to feel the suffering of the human race. Most of what happened in that three hours is too personal to relate.

One woman described her 14 year old daughter coming to her and asking what she should do when it happened. Her mother was not able to answer her for a few days. When she did she told her to just find the nearest person she could and to put her arm around them .... I think of Mr. Reagan and his campaign against terror. A woman from Yellow gate says she heard of a three month old girl being raped by her father. I realize that when I go home the hardest thing I will have to do is to mix with those who refuse to see.

We say we feel powerlessness because of authority, governments, logic. Friendships, sharing, creatively, and doing what you're good at makes us feel powerful. So somebody has the definition wrong.

When I questioned what right I had to disturb other women whose lives were often bad enough, she says it has to be done. We can empower others by sharing grief. We made commitments to each other for life.

At midnight we go to the wires. About ten of us. A young woman starts climbing and using the bolt cutter. We are rocking the posts. Lots of police arrive with dogs. The search light is very bright. A policeman tries to drag her through the hole,

she is crying with fear of the dogs, who are really straining their leashes. I ask that they arrest her outside the wires, and as he turns to me she runs off crying out "Women don't leave me". A policeman runs after her and throws her to the ground. She goes into an asthma attack. Instantly the scene changes. Helpless person on the ground, policemen hovering over her as though she is a child, which she nearly is, gentle, wanting to be good to her. They carry her carefully to an ambulance.

A policeman says, shaking his head, "I bet her brothers and father are fighting us at the pits". They were. The British police are not trained to do what they are being forced to do now. I think we are all crazy.



Sunday

Thousands of women come down again. There is a big action at Orange gate. We walk round with our friends, always arm in arm. Everybody is either a sister or a mother or a daughter. We have to go. Better to leave Blues at an action than alone at the fire. We take her stuff to another group. She is going to stay because she says its better than the outside world.

A woman gives me a lift to London. I get on the underground with another Greenham woman. People stare at us. She and I smile and embrace as we part.

I see my family. My daughter-in-law gives me the baby to hold and says "I'm glad you were at Greenham".

Some people say what have the Greenham women done. This question is actually asked. Well, they are living human lives in a non-human world. They are living a religion

of life, not death. Concern about them has prompted Casper Weinburger and Michael Heseltine to discuss the continued presence of the women around the base. The Pentagon feel that when the British people have become used to the missiles on their soil they might become less emotional about them. Less emotional.

Before I finally left Ann Pettit in Wales, she gave me a dogeared book on Chief Seathl's testament to the white man. She would like me to use it.

"We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of the land is the same to him as the next. For he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it he moves on. He leaves his fathers graves behind, and he does not care. He kidnaps the earth from his children. He does not care. His fathers graves and his children's birthright are forgotten. He treats his mother the earth, and his brother the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only desert."

Women, please share your grief.





# Poetry

## IN TRANSITION

She had accepted for many years  
that her stupidity was without question,  
that she was in fact a burden and a bore  
her beauty gone, her morals decadent  
She knew it was her fault he drank  
and broke her tooth and ear drum  
because he spent the family allowance  
and she cried.

She was persuaded she would starve  
without the crumbs he threw her  
and the kids he had no time for  
and the house that rotted around her  
She was surprised to find that none of the above  
was really true, that in the bosom of  
the christian society, she was in fact  
a social rip off, her worth in christian  
dollars, the price of a bus ticket.

Gert Beadle



## A faded wish?

There was a time  
when I thought  
it was useless to  
to believe in  
in good  
anymore,  
because  
the white knight  
might win out  
but look what the white knight  
stands for these days ....

Then,  
the real rescue begins  
as the white knight fades  
into a rainbow of women  
on a trail to justice  
for the good of the people  
in the days to come .....

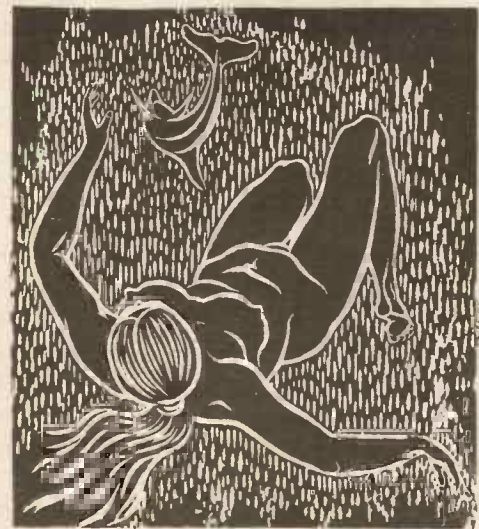
Arja



## THE FEMINIST PROCESS

Is Eternal, all we who sip  
through the straw of change  
sense the tension in our journey.  
That we can be everything and nothing  
simultaneously, creating  
small peaceful islands in the  
flame of human desire,  
measuring distance by recognition  
truth earned and learned  
by painful insight  
into the hearts wisdom.  
We are the charred evidence  
of human continuity  
in a sexist society.  
That process claims us all  
we are the common grit of resistance  
that moves it forward  
by the breadth of a hair.  
Our spirit has escaped the bondage  
making it's own music  
writing it's own score for common chorus.  
From silence to silence Woman's voice  
is rising in her own defence  
against all traditional odds  
We are breaking the sound barrier.

Gert Beadle





# INTERVIEW

by LIZ MARTIN

Thunder Bay's Kam Theatre assembled an exciting and unique production team for their recent play, *ALONE*. Based on a true story, the play is a poetic exploration of one woman's awakening to her own courage and abilities. And for their production of Patricia Ludwick's play, Kam Theatre asked Svetlana Zylina of Toronto to direct, and commissioned Thunder Bay's Kim Erickson to write an original score. The play ran from February 21 to March 3rd, and received very favorable reviews. This interview took place before the show's opening.

Patricia Ludwick trained as an actor in London, England, and has been performing across Canada for the past fifteen years (including two appearances at Magnus Theatre). In recent years, her major interest has been the development of new scripts, as actor, dramaturge and workshop participant, especially in association with The New Play Centre in Vancouver where she was Artist-in-Residence in 1983. *ALONE* is her first play and was produced as part of a festival of new works in the spring of 1983. Since then she has written two short plays, *A LETTER TO MY GOD-DAUGHTER*, and *TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC*, which was produced in a programme of works by women writers at The New Play Centre in November, 1984.

Svetlana Zylina has directed productions for Theatre Passe Muraille, The Great Canadian Theatre Company in Ottawa, The Ensemble Studio Theatre in New York City, Theatre There in Edmonton and at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. She has worked with The New Play Centre in Vancouver, Theatre Network in Edmonton and the Mulgrave Road Co-op Theatre in Nova Scotia. She was a staff member of the Langara Theatre Department of the Vancouver Community College, Dramaturge at the Pauline McGibbon Cultural Centre and Director of the New Play Development Series in the DuMaurier Theatre. Since moving to Toronto, she has participated as both performer and director in *RHUBARB* at the Theatre Centre, *Brave New Works* produced by Factory Theatre Lab, *Equity Showcase Theatre* and *Scheme of Things*. She is currently Artistic Director of The Ritz Cafe Theatre.

Kim Erickson is a professional songwriter, musician and composer who is well-known to Thunder Bay audiences for her appearances at the Summer Solstice Festival, *Doodles* and the Summer in the Parks program. She studied music at Carleton University in Ottawa and went on to do graduate work in electronic music in Holland. She has done extensive recording with people like Ian Tamblyn, Sneezy Waters, Rodney Brown and Lois Garrity; and has also worked with the Penguin Theatre Company and Le Groupe de la Place Royale in Ottawa. In 1982 she developed the music theatre piece *MARCH*, which was performed at the National Exhibition Centre/Centre for Indian Art and at Lakehead University.

Despite gains in status for women in theatre over the last ten or fifteen years - which to a great extent is a reflection of women's increased roles and opportunities in our society in general - men still dominate Canadian theatre, in terms of who

chooses and directs the plays, who writes them and what roles are available to Canadian performers. So, it definitely is a rare and welcome occasion when a play with a strong female character is written, directed and scored by women. Kam Theatre should be lauded for having involved three very talented and interesting women in this production, and for having given Thunder Bay audiences a chance to see their work. I also want to thank Kim, Patsy and Svetlana for taking time from their very busy pre-production schedule, to sit and talk with me.



*In a recent report on 'Women in Canadian Theatre' for the Status of Women in Canada, the figures show that women are greatly under represented as artistic directors, playwrights and directors. In all three categories they make up 10% or less of the people who are working in Canadian theatre - and the majority of these women are with youth theatres or collectives like Kam Theatre. I'm interested in knowing how you managed to become part of this 'minority'?*

SVETLANA: I had always wanted to be involved in theatre, but thought - for some stupid reason - that my only option was to become an actor. It never occurred to me that I could become THE DIRECTOR, because at that time I didn't have any role models. But after my initial training at the Manitoba Theatre Centre school, and various workshops and lots and lots of amateur and semi-professional productions, and after going to Toronto to make a stab at being a professional actor, I found that I wasn't completely gratified - 'spiritually' - about being a performer. There was a graduate program at UBC that actually specialized in directing and I decided to go there. In order to qualify for the theatre department, I had to do a make-up year where I did nothing but theatre courses - the acting courses and all the peripheral courses involved with the theatre department - and out of that came a realization that most of the people I really enjoyed working with were women. Which isn't because I don't naturally get along with men, but we happened to have a very talented crop of women in the department at that time. Yet they never got a chance to really express themselves

because most of the plays we were doing were the standard regional theatre repertoire number of the time - the one Shakespeare, the one Restoration play and so on. So you did *Tartuffe* and

you did *Hamlet*, and there really wasn't much scope for the women.

PATSY: That same statistic holds true there, too - that is, only 10% of all the roles are female roles.

SVETLANA: Right. But we had these eight women and my first directing project in the first year of the program was a play called *RITEs* by Maureen Duffy from England. It's a re-working of the *BACHAE* using only women, and set in a women's washroom. I got all these women together to do the play, and in terms of timing, we were lucky. It coincided with a lot of flow of grant money from OFY and from LIP and LEAP and a lot of interest in women because the feminist movement was really burgeoning in Vancouver at that time. So, out of that play the Women's Theatre Co-operative was born. We began to be invited to women's conventions and seminar type situations to perform. And we began to actively search out material written by women for our all female company.

PATSY: And there wasn't much of it around at that time.

SVETLANA: Yeah - it was really difficult to find material by local women - which forced us into a really good situation, in that we had to create our own material. It also led us to actively seek out women writers and encourage them to write about women. Like the first play by Margaret Hollingsworth that I did was called *BUSHED*, and it was about two men in the laundromat. What I found most interesting in terms of staging possibilities was that while the main focus of the action was on these two men, in the background were all these women doing laundry. Actually the play was set in Thunder Bay.

PATSY: Margaret lived here for years.

SVETLANA: Yeah - this is where the play was born. But at that time I remember, (and thanks to the encouragement we've received in the last decade, she has changed tremendously) - but, at that time she wasn't writing about women because she didn't find them as interesting as characters as she did men. We both chuckle over the fact now that it was a lot our conditioning. For the same reason that I started out in acting, she was writing about men because she didn't have any active role models of playwrights who were successful at writing about women.

KIM: It sounds a lot like music. I was just thinking that it's very similar in that it's okay if you're the backup vocalist or play piano or flute or something like that; but as soon as I started writing, I suddenly had less support for the work I was doing. It was withdrawn - I was on my own!

PATSY: You were telling me about specializing in electronic music at the post-graduate level - and it's like, even I think of women singer/songwriters as singing plaintive lovesongs. Not that I don't like them - I do - but you don't immediately leap to thinking electronic music in relationship to women.

SVETLANA: But then who is one of our better electronic musical composers? It's Ann Southam who's writing incredible scores for dance. But, I know what you mean about the encouragement.

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NORTHERN WOMAN page 9



INTERVIEW continued

One of the first things my department head told me when he was forced to acknowledge that I had to be accepted into the department because I'd done this qualifying year and gotten straight firsts - he said women do not make good directors. The only woman director he'd ever known was Joan Littlewood and she was an "exception" - read in brackets, bull dyke! (laughter) I'm serious - he actively discouraged me from persuing that course of action. But basically I had the last laugh. Only four people were accepted that year - and of course the other three were men. But one man flunked out that Christmas, another dropped out in February because he couldn't stand the pace and the third one flunked out at the end of the first year. So, I ended up going into my second year by myself. And up to that point, as far as I know, I had been the only woman who had actually gone through the directing program. They tended to shunt us into the dramatic criticism portion, or into set design. At that time, women technicians were absolutely unheard of . . .

PATSY: Except for stage managers - which is that housekeeping role - the mother or babysitter. The best stage managers I've worked with have very often been women. But almost all of them, at some point, got tired of babysitting. So they go into administration or leave the theatre altogether. There isn't enough satisfaction in that role.

*Has that awakening of feminist/nationalist consciousness in the late sixties and early seventies benefited women in theatre?*

SVETLANA: Absolutely.

PATSY: Oh yeah - it's much different now than it was before.

SVETLANA: It was that double push. The feminist consciousness in Canada reached a real flowering at the same time as our sense of nationalism and indigenous theatre. All the women I know, who are working in theatre, jumped on the bandwagon when they had an opportunity to create material and work with new material; when none of the parameters had really been defined to exclude women from active roles. Out of that time, so many really good women playwrights have been born, and so many really good projects were initiated that included women. Some of it has worked as a reverse sexism - a kind of tokenism. For example, in this situation - as glad as I am to be here and I really wanted to do this play - still, the main reason I was invited was that Kam being 'politically correct' had a play about a woman, written by a woman and they wanted a woman director.

*Is there much work for a free-lance, female director?*

SVETLANA: Very little. I work two, maybe three times a year in situations like this and the rest of the time I create my own work. I look at my contemporaries, the people I went to school with - like Richard Ouzounian, who was my classmate ..

*And who has recently become producer at Toronto's Centrestage Productions ... Where he is now - three or four years younger than me - and where I am now, are poles apart. The doors to regional theatre are still very closed to women.*



PATSY: That has a double edge, you know. I describe myself as having worked my way down in Canadian theatre. I started just before that burgeoning - when there were only the regional theatres where you could get paid at all. The little theatres, the small rebellious, Canadian nationalist or women's theatres hadn't started. So, my only chances of work were in the big theatres. And I got to the biggest one - Stratford - and found that the bigger it was, the less it worked the way I felt the collective art of theatre functioned best. So, we are shut out - not only women, but men who are interested in projects that are not probably going to make vast amounts of money because they are pushing the edges of things. But, if all of the people like you and Cynthia Grant and Katherine Shaw and other women directors that I've worked with, had ended up having to cope with that awful, bureaucratic WEIGHTED THING of the regional theatres, we would have lost a lot of that wonderful creative energy that is still here in these small places.

*What's going to happen to these small theatres in this age of government cutbacks and the popularity of home videos and movie channels?*

PATSY: Well, the little ones are on such a small life-line. There have been many demises across the country in the last 3-5 years and the reason they folded was quite simply that the bank cut their line of credit. It wasn't in fact that they had a huge debt load, but the bank foreclosed on the small one where it wouldn't - or it could be persuaded not to foreclose on the huge debt that Stratford now owes.

SVETLANA: That's happening with a lot of businesses - not just in theatre. But there's a more insidious danger in the burgeoning of the video and TV/film market in that we're losing our best writers to television and film. One of the best Canadian woman playwrights that I've worked with has literally given up writing plays. She will not write them anymore because

there is no gratification in terms of a return - monetary or spiritual. She's writing film scripts and making tons of money, and if she wants creative and spiritual fulfillment, she writes a novel - which she now has enough clout to get published. But, this incredible theatrical voice is lost to us because we can't offer her anything to sustain her. I don't know about you, but as I approach 40, I'm beginning to wonder if I can maintain my sanity existing on this poverty level. It's not that I'm a materialist or a capitalist, but I do crave those material comforts that just sustain you from day to day. Never mind the luxuries!

PATSY: We're also starting to face

that statistic of how many women in Canada at the age of 60 are living under the poverty level. That's where we've been working - under the poverty level - but with the energy of youth, and the courage really, of believing it will all be worthwhile.

SVETLANA: Yeah - it's like I keep extending my five year plans. And when you're 25, you can still go, well I've got until I'm 30. But, the pressure of it - especially for a woman ... Because another part of being committed to the work I'm doing is that it doesn't very easily align itself with the more traditional roles that a woman takes. I haven't veered off into marriage and children. So, I don't even have that central core of a home life to sustain me. We're out there in the cold water, and I've been treading it for a REALLY long time. And the longer the time goes, the less I'm thinking in terms of the 'big break' happening tomorrow or whenever.

KIM: I have a hard time visualizing what the big break IS -? If we're talking about what we're going to break into, is it things like Stratford-type theatre, or cross-Canada tours of bars for musicians? I'm not sure if those are worthwhile things - and so, I'm left with the dilemma of going where is the work for me?

SVETLANA: Exactly. But the point is that my priorities have changed - and a sustenance living with recognition from my peers would be just fine. I'm not thinking Broadway hits anymore! But I am thinking national recognition from my peers - at least among the people I've worked with. An unquestioning acknowledgement of my abilities and status as a director and enough money that I can live comfortably - just that level of survival...

PATSY: I think that everybody has the need for respect, a feeling of self-worth. We all need to feel that people recognize that we are giving 'worth' with our work - whether we're running a corner store or writing a play or whatever. And for me it is my actual peers, the kind of people who are interested in the same kinds of theatre I am - new Canadian plays and those slightly off-the-wall things that are not Broadway-bound - that's my support group and that's where I get my recognition.

SVETLANA: As a director, I'm more isolated. It's much harder to find that kind of recognition and support. I'm sure Kim and I are more akin in this in terms of the isolation of being a composer or a director. Unless they make a big deal of your name in

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doing the work, it largely goes unrecognized. If I direct a really fabulous show and my name isn't on the poster, the actors get all the credit. The individual little group of actors that I've worked with, love me and support me - but then they go on to the next project and their job is to love and support the next director.

*Even Kim can work alone on her piano, but as a director you can't work without a script and actors.*

SVETLANA: Right.

PATSY: I just meant that the knowledge inside my head that there are people all over the country now, that I may not have seen or worked with for five years - in whatever capacity any of us were working - is enough for me to feel that I can keep on going with what I'm doing.

SVETLANA: That's great. All I'm saying is that right now I feel a strong lack of that. And the search for work gets more and more frustrating. I don't want it to sound like I'm crying the blues. I want it recognized that these are legitimate concerns amongst all of us. And I do think it's wonderful to have this particular project coming together, with this incredible flow of energy.

*Maybe we could talk about the play now. It's based on the true story of Martha Martin, who was stranded through one winter - pregnant and alone-- on an island off the north pacific coast. I'm interested in knowing what appealed to each of you in this story - and why you, Patsy, wanted to turn it into a play?*

PATSY: I originally read just an excerpt from the diary of Martha Martin. It was the end of her diary, and what I found was a woman who was very much at peace with herself and the world she was in. And I wanted to know how she got that way! So, I tracked down the complete diary and read the whole story from the beginning and realized that it had all the classic stages of the mythological journey of the hero - which is the same throughout history and all primitive cultures. And it seemed

to me the perfect framework to tell a story that was of interest to all of us; because we all want to find that state of balance and that harmony with what's around us. I wanted to examine the personal, internal experience of a person trying to adapt to changes in their environment - the interior world as a parallel to the exterior one. That's why I chose to fragment her personality into the three actors playing one person, because then you could examine the mental changes, the inner emotional changes and not simply keep it on the exterior level. Also, I was interested in that polarity of masculine and feminine in each of us. It was very much a part of what I was trying to understand about the character.

SVETLANA: What I really like about it is that it encompasses several layers which makes it interesting for me as a director. First, it's a story about a woman, set in a very interesting situation - which I liked. Secondly, there were the three aspects of her character portrayed by three different actors, which allows a lot more scope and room for dramatizing that story in an interesting fashion. And thirdly, the whole notion of contact improvisation, which I'd seen but never actually worked with, fascinated me in terms of communicating changes to an audience in a non-verbal way. So, it isn't just another 'saga of survival in the wilderness'. It's a moving, flowing living thing. *And contact improvisation is - ?*

SVETLANA: It's a form of movement relying on centres of gravity and the body's fulcrum points to generate interaction between people. It's more than dance or mime - it's each actor finding their own centre of gravity, and then responding to that in each other.

PATSY: It's playing with each other. *And how does the musical element fit into all of this?*

KIM: I was approached by Kam last spring with the script of ALONE and asked if I could conceive of any music to go with it. So, I read it a few times and wrote down some initial impressions; re-read it and wrote down some more impressions; and eventually a lot of the same impressions started congealing into themes. Musical ideas began recurring throughout. Patsy and I started writing letters and she explained some of the structure of the play and the themes in the writing for her. We realized that we were both trying to re-find women's modes, lost fragments of women's expression - the 'collective unconscious', if you will. Patsy was exploring this in terms of myth and story, and I was doing the same with music. So, I was able to translate those themes into musical ideas - and the score got written!

PATSY: And it's still getting adjusted.

KIM: Yeah - it's still 'adjusting'. *Now that you're all here working together, are there changes being made in the score?*

KIM: Not too many - it's mostly honing down and pulling in.

PATSY: There are some places where you can expand the time length, because as these particular three actors with Svetlana find their way of expressing the physical life of the play, the timing will change. So, different parts of what Kim's got can expand and some will be cut back.

SVETLANA: One of the best elements for me in terms of having the music is the fact that we will be having a percussionist on stage who follows the action. Because it is contact improvisation, we can't set it precisely. I'm not dealing with conventional blocking so there's a mutual communication happening between Damon (*Dowbak - who is doing percussion*) and the actors. They can help each other out and create a much fuller mood. The actors are free to explore the inner momentum of the creation of sounds, as opposed to actually worrying about finding ways in a set that has minimal props, of creating sounds that have to take you into another awareness or create a particular kind of mood or whatever.

*And you're pleased with this new element that has been added to your play?*

PATSY: Oh - absolutely! It's wonderful - a whole new level of creativity has been added on to all these other ones.

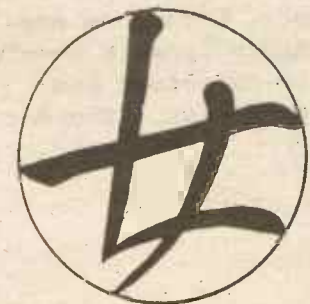
SVETLANA: I'd just like to repeat that it's wonderful having this particular project coming together, and I feel quite positive that with the exception of a very few men that I've worked with in theatre, only women are capable of generating such positive feeling out of sometimes what is so little. A lot of that is in this play.

#### GODDESS IMAGERY

Sasha McInnes is collecting slides of the art and altars of contemporary women who are working in Goddess-related and other enabling/empowering imagery for possible inclusion in an upcoming Studio D, National Film Board film on the roots of religion. Please send no more than twenty slides, including descriptions, media, motivation and anything else you want to say about your work. Sasha is interested in all media, including women's traditional arts. Send to Sasha McInnes, 237A Dundas Street, London, Ontario N6A 1H1, phone (519) 438-5307, 672-2832.



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935-2371.



# Solstice

Summer Solstice '85 will bring together several dynamite women performers from across Canada on June 22 and 23 in Current River Park - admission is free.

Clearing by Noon is a Halifax based group of four, Sandy Greenberg, Rose Vaughan, Catriona Talbot, and Marsha Rake. They love to sing their own songs plus whatever inspires them from contemporary songwriters such as Connie Kaldor and Holly Near and traditional folk music. Their music has been dubbed "survival music": they sing "Come on Little Sister" and "Keep A-boin" to cheer their audiences and each other on with humour and bridled optimism. They also sing for survival in the global sense: ballads and marches and lullabies for peace. They sing about bringing-up children, about being unemployed, about starting all over again, about finding new love. Two of the group, Sandy and Rose also present an engaging show for children called "Rosie & Sora".

Edmonton's Bev Ross brings high tech to a folk orientation, accompanying herself on an electronic keyboard computer. She has the gift of being able to drive home a point with humour and unpretentious urbanity. Whether addressing sports, the Eighties or modern relationships, Bev understands the value of the well-tempered scalpal.

It has been said that music is a bridge that links the soul of each person to a vision of hope for the future. Jan Stoody constructs that

bridge for her audience through songs that she has researched and carefully selected, or written, that tell stories and express the everyday experiences of people throughout the world who are working towards a new vision for humankind.

From the uranium mines in Northern Saskatchewan, despair in Chile, to the loving sentiments of an Indian lullaby, her songs link us together as one.

Jan has been singing throughout Saskatchewan for six years, first with a band, then as a duo, and now solo. Originally from Ontario, she has been living on the prairie for eight years. Friends in Thunder Bay will know Jan from her part-time residing at a farm in Kaministiquia.

Originally from St. Louis where she sought out and learned from many of the regions fine old time fiddlers, Gail Heil is a member of Minneapolis' June Apple Musician's Co-op. She also plays banjo, dulcimer autoharp and guitar. Teaming up with Bob Bovee, who plays a variety of instruments, they perform old time Country music, a raw rough-edged honest kind of music that begs involvement of some-kind. It's a dance music: a music that makes you want to tap your feet or laugh or do something other than just sit back.

Maggie McKaig is part of "Lost in the Colonies", a four member group from Calgary. Her fine guitar playing, original songs and strong voice will be much appreciated by festival goers. Other members of the group are Luke Wilson on banjo, Bill Eaglesham on fretless bass and Ray McAndrew adding inspired percussion.

Raegena Bueno, newly arrived in Northwestern Ontario from Brazil, will be reading short stories and essays from her perspective as a visible minority immigrant.

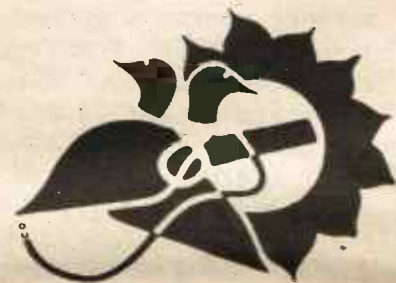
Madeline Moonis, along with partner George Cook, tells Indian legends of this area.

Wellknown to Thunder Bay audiences, Kim Erickson and Jennifer Garrett will bring their unique creative sound to the Festival. They will be performing separately, together and with other members of Groundwater - Damon Dowbak and William Roberts.

The Children's Village will have a performance area with music, a puppet show, juggling and instrument making workshops for the active participation of the kids.

For the convenience of parents of young tots, there will be a large tent, especially for changing and feeding.

With the cooperation and commitment of over 150 volunteers, this year's Summer Solstice Festival is sure to be a wonderful celebration of the beginning of a long awaited summer.



## SCRIPTS WANTED

The search continues at Kam Theatre for exciting new Canadian scripts. With an entire season devoted to Canadian work there's never too much of a good thing. New scripts, old scripts awaiting production and ideas for new work are all welcome!

Welcoming scripts of all kinds, Kam is particularly known for their interest in plays with a political and social emphasis. In previous seasons Kam Theatre has been allocated funds through the Ontario Arts Council Playwrights Assistance Fund to assist with the development of new scripts. A Playwright's - in - Residence program is also an integral part of the season.

Writers with ideas and new writers wanting development assistance may be eligible for funding. To apply, a script synopsis or rough scene by scene breakdown should be submitted to Kam Theatre along with a letter of introduction. Playwrights interested in the residence program should indicate their availability.

Kam Theatre would like to thank all the playwrights who have previously submitted scripts. Keep them coming! All scripts and proposals should be submitted to: Co-Director, Kam Theatre, 215 N. Franklin St., Thunder Bay, P7C 4J1

## WOMEN AND PENSIONS

The Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council declared April 2, 1985, as Contingency Day, a day for couples to sit down together to look at and discuss their assets, to plan for retirement years and make provisions for their spouse and dependants.

Contingency Day was sponsored by the Pensions Committee of Decade Council which evolved from a NWO Women and Pensions Conference in 1982.

To facilitate the sharing of resources and information, the Pensions Committee came under the Decade Council umbrella in spring 1984. The Committee to date has prepared position papers and presentations aimed at public awareness and pension reform.

Both the Committee and Council as a whole have long been aware of case histories of women who have been left alone in situations of inadequate insurance and/or pension support. Confusion regarding the pension issue, along with a reluctance to examine circumstances which could involve the loss of a partner or occupation, have made it difficult for many individuals or couples to make a realistic assessment of their long term financial positions.

In 1984 the National Council of Welfare estimated the low income level of single persons living in a city the size of Thunder Bay to be \$9403. Statistics Canada states that the average income for women over 65 is \$8441. Families and persons living alone whose income is in the bottom 10% of the income ladder devote 60% of their income to food, clothing and shelter.

The latest figures on life expectancy is 79.5 for women and 71.9 for men. As long as women marry men who are three years or more older than they are, and whose life expectancy is 7.6 years less than theirs, they should not be surprised to find themselves alone for a good number of years at the end of their lives.

Contingency Day focused on a media campaign and a city wide mail of a pamphlet that asked five major questions:

- "Do you and your spouse have wills?"
- "If your spouse dies could you cope and survive tomorrow?"
- "What income will you have next week? Next month?"
- What are your expenses?
- Do you know where to apply for financial help?"

Contingency Day provided an opportunity for spouses to become informed and to prepare for the possibility of life alone before or after retirement.

It is hoped that Contingency Day will become an annual event and will expand to involve more resource persons to develop a booklet to address pension and insurance questions, to focus on the needs of single people, and to increase it's coverage to include the region.

If you are interested in contributing to the work of this committee or you would like to know more about pensions please contact Dawn St. Amand at the Decade Council 345-3606.



# Obscene Use of Power

by Fiona Karlstedt



As some of you may already know, I have worked with the Women's Centre for the last two years. This fall I returned to school and this may be the last time I will have the opportunity of addressing the issue of pornography in a public forum for some time. And I want to leave you with a strong plea.

When I was considering how I would begin today, I came across an editorial which appeared in the May 26, 1984 issue of the Dryden Observer. I will refer to parts of it here because I think it shows all too clearly the stage the debate is at for many people. The editorial read:

"Not everyone likes to talk about pornography, much less air personal views in a public discussion, especially while a copy of Playboy or Penthouse is sitting on the coffee table at home. Whether to ban pornography from store shelves is a difficult question, simply because for every ten people asked about a given group of magazines... there may well be at least eight different views on which ones... are pornographic. What is one man's coffee table fare is another man's garbage. But if you look at Playboy's or Penthouse's circulation figures, you have to admit these two publications must be OK - both are ahead of Time and Newsweek in sales. No doubt there is some questionable material, visual and written, even in these magazines, but both have remained passable in today's fickle society... The same cannot be said for the skin magazines that are just that - more picture content than anything else - bought by people who don't care about the articles. Pornography doesn't have a firm definition, but it comes in degrees or classifications - OK, bad and ugly - classifications created by the public. The bad and ugly are easily spotted by their degradation of people, particularly women and children. The majority of society is against this level of pornography and the majority does not buy these magazines." (emphasis mine)

The gist of the editorial seemed to be that eight out of ten people can't agree on a definition of pornography

The gist of the editorial seemed to be that since eight out of ten people can't agree on a definition of pornography it would be a useless exercise to attempt to formulate one. And further that since a majority of society is against a certain level of pornography, things will just somehow take care of themselves.

The editorial completely ignored the central issue of male/female power relations which we see reflected and accentuated in pornography; and the fact that the sexual objectification of women in pornography is integrally linked to the limitations of women's legal, economic, political and social rights in our society. The editorial could aptly be termed a non-event in journalism.

It is high time we moved past the "picture content" and onto the politics of pornography. Without an understanding of the power relations reflected in it, no analysis of pornography will get very far.

In the words of American feminist Andrea Dworkin, "The word 'pornography' does not have any other meaning than... the graphic depiction of the lowest whores. Whores exist to serve men sexually. Whores exist only within a framework of male sexual domination. Outside that framework, the notion of whores would be absurd and the usage of women as whores would be impossible. The word 'whore' is incomprehensible unless one is immersed in the (vocabulary) of male domination. Men have created the group, the type, the trade, the commodity, the insult, the industry, the reality of women as whore..."

By limiting women to definition as sexual, as whores for the sexual use and abuse of men, pornography objectifies us, degrades us, minimizes us, and finally in snuff pornography destroys us.

Nothing is created or exists in isolation and pornography is no exception. The acceptance of a continuum from sex-role stereotyping in advertising to "soft" and "hard" core pornography is essential to the analysis.

By way of example, I wonder how many here happened to read an Ann Landers column published several months ago. I am referring to the one containing the letter from the mother who tried to breast-feed her baby in a restaurant and was told in no uncertain terms that such conduct was "unacceptable". In her response, Landers referred to a survey of restaurant owners and operators which revealed a consensus amongst those polled that breastfeeding in public was considered to be "offensive". While reading it, something clicked. We live in a society that deems breastfeeding (and I would ask you to read instead, "the giving of life", "an expression of tender love", "nurturing") in public to be offensive, while down the street customers are having their meals served to them by topless waitresses.

We have become so conditioned to seeing women's bodies portrayed only in a sexual context in both advertising and in "coffee table" soft porn magazines that many of us find it difficult, if not impossible, to see women's bodies in the larger human context. It is these innocuous, seeming-

ly antiseptic images of women as sexual beings in our daily media which lay the foundation for the further objectification and brutalization of women in pornography.

It's obvious that one of the major problems faced in attempting to examine the subject of pornography is arriving at a definition. Some use it to refer to material which is sexually explicit; others would restrict it to material which involves violence and sex. "Pornography" is not a word known to our criminal law. The Criminal Code uses the term "obscenity". Law dictionaries have defined "obscenity" as "conduct tending to corrupt the public morals by its indecency and lewdness" and further refers to a "shameful or morbid interest in nudity (and) sex". The law's concern with pornography is thus entirely defined in terms of the offensiveness of public sexuality, and not with the dehumanizing impact it has on women.

Up to this point, the response of our society to sexually explicit material has been to exclude what is deemed to be beyond the "community's standard of tolerance". The implicit rationale of this response is that pornography may be forbidden because it is offensive, because it offends a standard of taste.

In order for a work to be considered "obscene" in Canada under the present law, there must be undue exploitation of sex or of sex and any one or more of the following - crime, horror, cruelty and violence. Whether there is "undue" exploitation is determined by reference to "community standards". It is the judge who must determine what that standard of tolerance is. In October 1983 Judge Stephen Borins determined for the first time what Canadians will tolerate in pornographic videotapes. In releasing his ruling, the judge noted the irony of Parliament requiring judges, who are supposed to remain aloof from the community, to also have "their fingers on the pornographic pulse of the nation". According to Susan Cole, "The business of community standards makes it seem that the pornographer's crime is having the bad manners to have chosen the wrong audience, and that if he only could find an audience that would tolerate his battery of women, then he will be a good citizen of our society".



continued on page 14



Legal definitions do little to further our understanding of pornography, however. Thelma McCormack has examined it on the basis of three characteristics: "First, it deals with sexual taboos: that is, kinds of sexual activities which we (in our society) regard as morally wrong, socially undesirable, improper, 'unnatural'. These sexual taboos differ from one culture to another and from one period in history to another, but in all human societies there are rules about sexual activity, and in all human societies there is a kind of underground which mocks these rules. Second, pornography deals with these sexual taboos as if they were common, everyday practice. Pornography does not pass judgment, positive or negative, on the kinds of activity depicted in the story, film, pictures. (And) it is the combination of these two characteristics - the sexual taboo and the attitude toward it - that accounts for our shock. The third characteristic is that the characters in pornography do not have any real relationship. They neither love nor hate; they do not think; and they have no regrets about what they do. They simply act, and they engage in sexual activities with any partner(s) who come along. What we see in pornography then, is the sex act devoid of any social context, stripped of all meaning except (physical) gratification. That is why characters in pornography never seem real; they lack any mind or heart; they lack any dimension except a genital one ...

Pornography has been with us for as long as recorded history, yet we still do not understand it very well. Social scientists who have studied it - and who have also studied the people who buy it - have offered three major theories. The first emphasizes sexual repression or sexual deprivation. People who have a lot of sexual hangups, who feel guilty about sex fantasies or guilty about engaging in sex, or people who have been cut off from any kind of normal sexual activity for a prolonged period of time are, according to this theory, attracted to pornography. They enjoy it as a substitute for real sexual behaviour. Another theory links pornography to the institution of marriage... Marriage, according to this theory, is an important institution for the survival of society, but it is restrictive, especially for men. Through pornography, men can find an indirect experience of sexual activity without endangering the institution of marriage. Pornography, in this theory, is a substitute for prostitution, which is regarded as a necessary evil. A third theory holds

that sexual activity, like any other social activity, is learned behaviour. (For the uninstructed pornography may act as a sex manual.) Pornography, according to this theory, is often an aid to increased sexual enjoyment and, as well, provides partners with fantasies that add further to their mutual pleasure. In this theory, pornography is a stimulant as well as a source of information. All of these theories look upon pornography as harmless and even as having a positive function for the individual as well as for society."

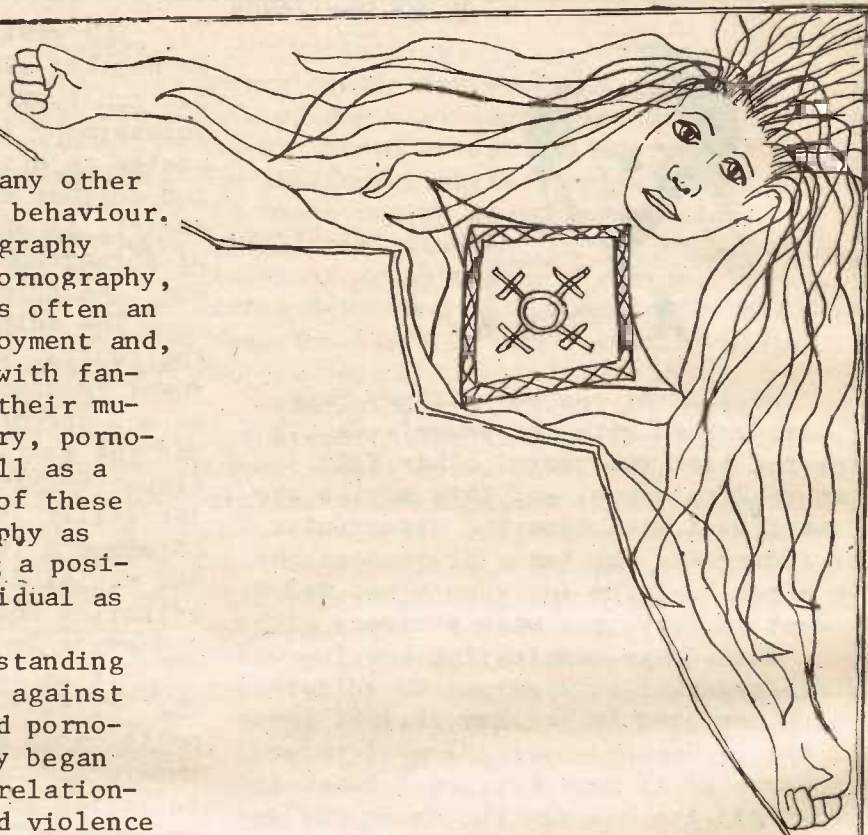
In developing an understanding of the violence perpetrated against women, feminists have viewed pornography more critically. They began asking whether there was a relationship between pornography and violence against women, between child pornography and incest, between pornography and rape.



Fiona Karlstedt speaking at International Women's Day Celebration.  
Photo by JOAN BARTL

Harm is seen to flow from pornography in two ways. First that there is a direct causal link between violent pornography and violence against women in the real world - the belief that such material can and does trigger aggression. Second, pornography has a more generalized effect. It contributes to myths about sexuality and about women which ultimately make violence and degradation more acceptable. It tells us that women like it and want it. Without clinical studies that prove absolutely a connection between the massive distribution of the pornographic image and the incidence of violence against women, we find ourselves up against a liberal scientific mentality that demands strict proof of cause and effect.

Some potential sources of proof are available however. It may take the form of police or press reports that a sex offender was a large consumer of pornography or reports from victims themselves who believe their assault was influenced by pornography. There is also statistical evidence which attempts to demonstrate a correlation between the prevalence of pornography and the rate of incidence of violent crime. Experimental evidence, accounts of experiments which attempt to measure the reactions of individuals to the stimulus of pornographic material, particularly aggressive or violent pornography, is also available.



Because it is difficult to find absolute proof of the harmful effects of pornography, "we are told that the pornographic image is harmless and that it is never translated back to women and children in the real world. This idea that the pornographic image has no impact goes against one of the most critical assumptions of the ad man".

However you define pornography, what we do know is that it is more available and certainly more explicit than in the past. "And most of us pretend that it just isn't there. Every newstand is jammed with it. In the back of almost every variety store entire shelves are devoted to

it. Partly because it's the worst of our culture, and partly because we can't believe that the fear and loathing of women can be so strong, we try to shut it out. Essentially, we tend to exclude the pornographic image from among those that really matter because the image is perceived to be a fringe phenomenon, part of the underside of our culture. But the profit figures associated with the pornography industry suggest that this is big business and not a series of fly-by-night operations designed to cater to the transient and the furtive." (Susan Cole) Although the scope of their use of the term is not spelled out, police estimates have placed the annual market in pornography in this country at \$300 million.

Two trends in today's pornography are particularly disturbing. One reflects the amount of violence now part of the mainstream of this material. Women are regularly shown in bondage, in rape scenes, in dog collars; and in much videotape actual scenes of brutality are now commonplace. The other trend is the use or implicit use of children. Incest themes are commonplace and written in such a way that suggests children have the "right" to enjoy sex with adults, thereby setting the stage for the actual sexual abuse of children.

continued on next page



## Pornography continued

There is no question that pornography is a divisive issue in our society. There is disagreement as to whether and in what way pornography causes harm. We believe that the harmful effects are obvious. At the other end of the pole are those who argue that pornography should only be suppressed when there is concrete proof that it is the direct cause of wrongdoing and that even our present obscenity laws should be repealed. "We are asked to believe that the pornographer is an artist whose vision can brook no restraint." (Cole)

However inviting I do not see censorship as the answer. Censorship is to pornography what prohibition was to alcohol. No matter how noble your motives, you can't legislate morality in a vacuum. But you can regulate it. When the Women's Centre conducted a survey to determine the availability of printed pornography in Thunder Bay as part of our presentation to the Fraser Commission we visited a corner store located across from an elementary school.

Playboy and other similar magazines were displayed immediately to the right of the entrance. It was the first thing a young child saw when he or she entered the store. It is an insidious form of conditioning.

"Pornography is an industry and as such deserves no more special treatment than any other. There is no convincing argument why the pornography industry deserves a hands-off policy.

The fact is there does not exist a single social policy that does not, to some extent, curtail individual freedom. The basic tenet of our society is compromise, that we cede our rights in order to live in this world together. (The recognition that one in four women in this country can expect to be raped at some time in her life underlines the fear that women feel daily in their lives) Yet, instead of asking the pornographer to cede his right to exploit and propagandize - (if it sells it must be OK) - we grant to cold-blooded entrepreneurs the right to ply their (grim) trade even if in doing so we place our children in danger and deny ourselves the right to walk the streets from fear of violence.

Pornography is not about sexuality or freedom of expression. Pornography is not simply a collection of pictures or a videotape we find "offensive". Pornography is about the obscene use of power - the physical or psychic violence done to one human being by another. It is a form of hate literature depicting the pleasure of the powerful in the humiliation and dehumanization of the powerless.

We are being asked to make political decisions about pornography, and they must be informed decisions. Without an analysis of the politics of pornography as a form of social control, whatever decisions are made by policy makers will be meaningless.

We must teach people to be knowledgeable consumers: complicate their lives. Force them to think about the issue! Bring the people in pornography alive! Make them human! Make the connections!

paper presented at Dryden forum

## FAMILY DISPUTE UNIT

The Thunder Bay Physical and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre is presently conducting a feasibility study into establishing a Family Dispute Unit to deal with family violence in Thunder Bay. Since the inclusion of services to battered women in 1982, the Centre has been aware that while there are services available to women and children who leave violent homes and seek shelter in transition homes or crisis housing, services are lacking for those individuals who choose to remain at home. In a recent presentation to the Ontario Women's Directorate Conference on Family Violence, Dr. Peter Jaffe of the London Dispute Unit noted that 85% of the women they have aided have not been in a shelter and would not go to a shelter.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the need for a specialized unit that would aid those individuals and complement existing social service agencies in the com-

munity and the police force. Commonly referred to as Family Dispute Units, Family Consultant Teams or Mobile Family Crisis Teams, this type of service has been established in other communities across Canada such as London and Calgary.

There are various models of Family Dispute Units but they are primarily composed of crisis teams of social workers and police officers who respond to domestic disputes on a twenty-four hour, seven days a week basis. The crisis workers assess the problems in the family, provide appropriate crisis intervention and alternative methods of problem solving, as well as making referrals in the crucial time for resolution of conflict/crisis -- during or shortly after the conflict. Other family dispute units, although relatively new, have cut recidivism by 50%. Immediate intervention at the time of dispute and continued follow-up would benefit those fam-

ilies and discourage further violence as a means of "resolving" conflicts.

Funded by a Canada Works Grant, the Centre has hired three full-time researchers to conduct the study. They are presently examining the experience of other family dispute units and will be conducting interviews with local police officers, social service agencies, women's groups and community organizations which deal with family violence to get their input into developing a model to suit the unique needs of Thunder Bay.

Any individual or organization interested in obtaining further information should contact the Thunder Bay Physical and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre at 345-1871.

article submitted by the Thunder Bay Physical and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre.

## BOOKS

New titles recently acquired by the Northern Woman's Bookstore include:

Labour Pains, by Pat Armstrong, Women's Press, \$9.95

... explores the effects of the economic crisis on women's and men's work, both in the labour force and in the household.. Armstrong explains why women's employment will deteriorate both absolutely and in relation to men"

Perspectives on Women in the 1980s edited by Joan Turner and Lois Emery, University of Manitoba Press, \$8.95

"This collection of articles focuses on strategies and directions for the women's movement that will enable all women to benefit from changing attitudes in the 1980s". Includes an article "Native Women and the State" by Thunder Bay's Marlene Pierre-Aggamaway.

The New Our Bodies, Ourselves by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, Simon & Schuster, \$19.95 .. a new revised, updated and expanded version of this essential resource book.

The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment by Barbara Ehrenreich, Doubleday, \$9.95.

Voices From The Shadows - Women with Disabilities Speak Out by Gwyneth Ferguson Matthews, Women's Press, \$8.95.

Baker's Dozen Stories by Women Women's Press, \$7.95

The Day is Dark & Three Travellers by Marie Claire Blais, Penguin, \$6.95

Myths To Lie By by Dorothy Bryant, Ata Press

Redney: A Life of Sara Jeannette Duncan by Marian Fowler, Penguin, \$7.95.

As well, the Bookstore now has a supply of all of Marge Piercy's fiction.



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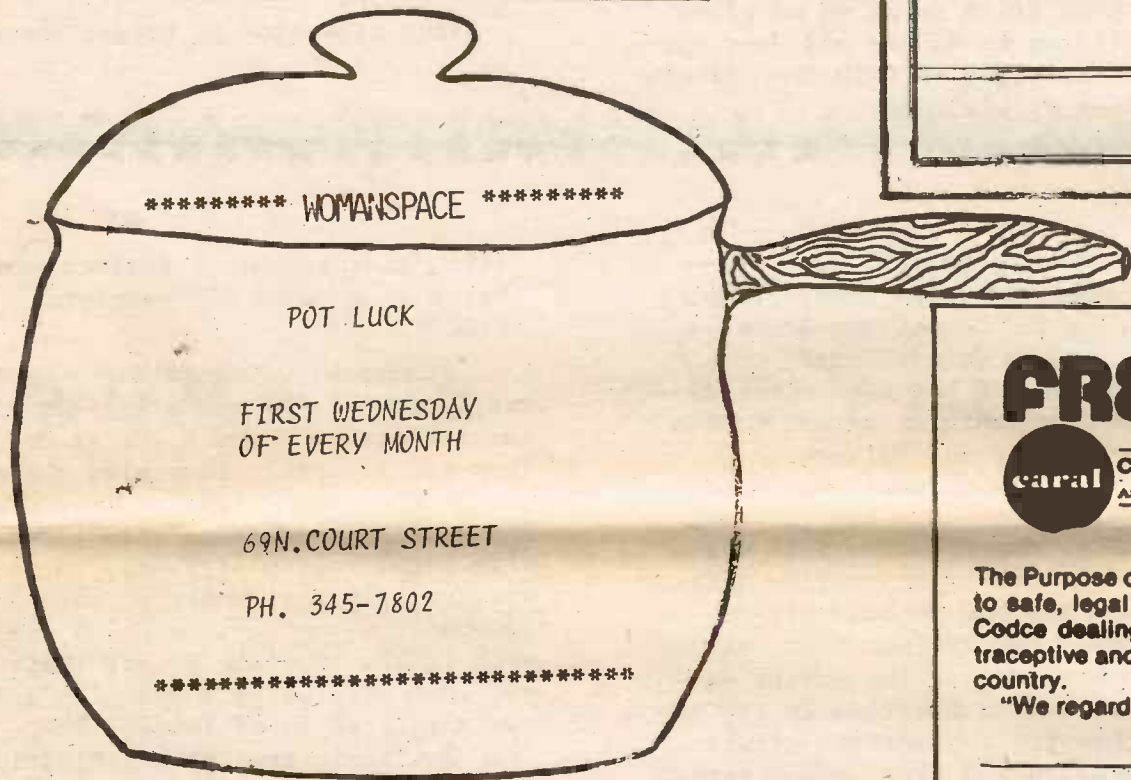
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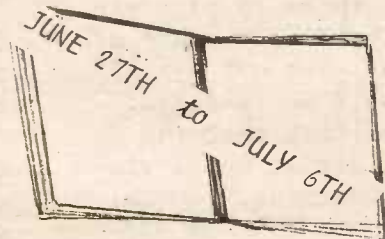


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