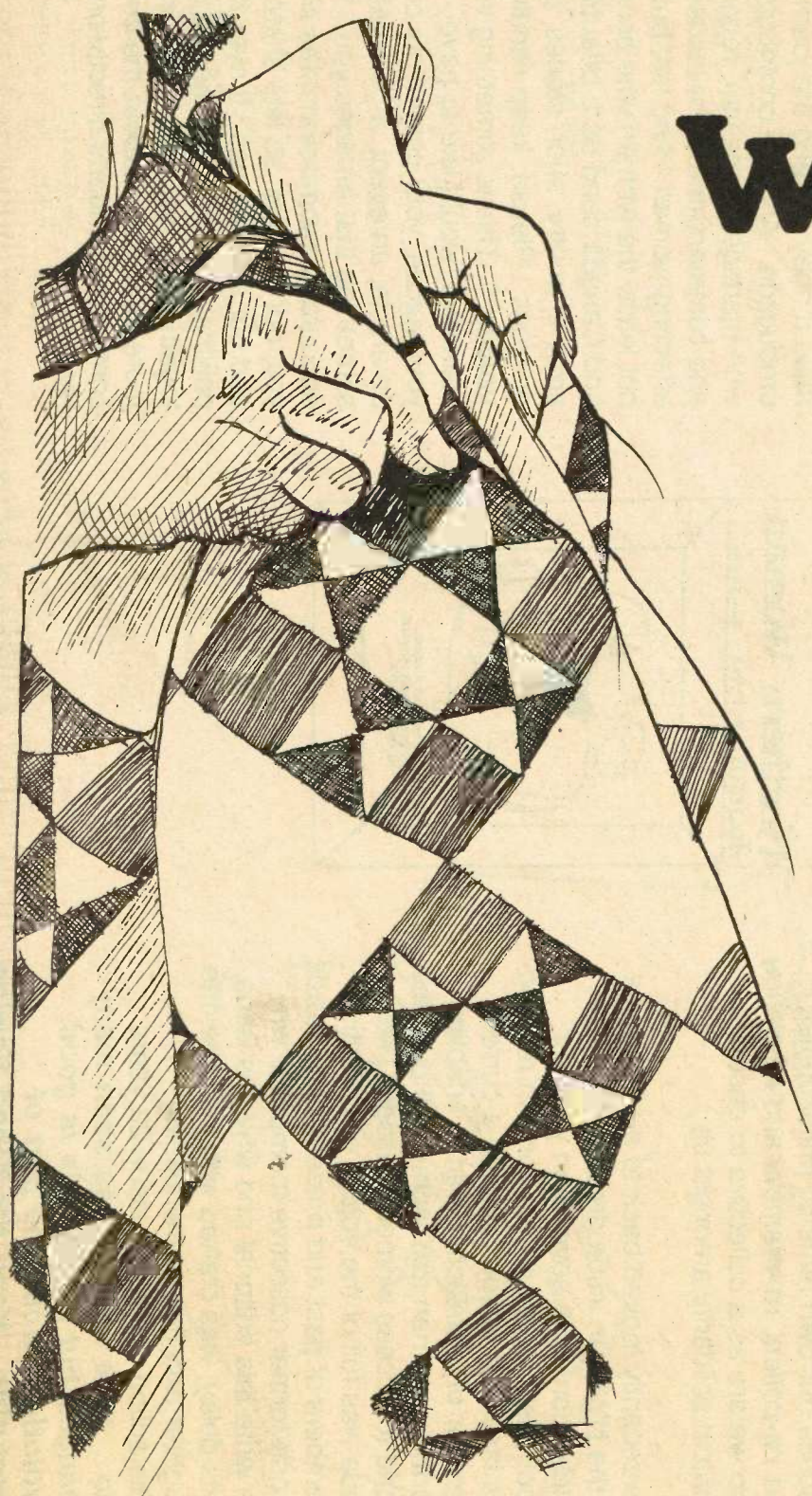


# Northern

\$2.00



# Woman

# Journal

November 1995

Volume 16 Number 3

Thunder Bay, Ontario

# Editorial

In the collaboration of this issue, we the collective, decided it was time to sit, to think, to analyse and to talk. The core of our conversation was the Northern Woman Journal (NWJ), our readers, our contributors, and our philosophies on feminism and women. There have been several changes concerning the collective in the past year and now with a new collective group we felt it was essential to discuss our own feminist philosophies and *re-collect, re-member* and *re-define* who we are as a collective to ensure a spiritual solidarity amongst us.

We recently looked back to a 1990 issue of the NWJ--an issue devoted to the celebration of its seventeen years of laboriously sweet production. In reading this issue we felt proud to be a current member of a collective that is enabling Northern women and women all over the world to access women's issues. The issue was full of the voices of collective members of past and present. The words of one former collective member is why we write this editorial and why this issue, in its delay, was crafted with the care, the laughter and the overwhelming satisfaction of the first issue 22 years ago... ***"The journal has seen many changes but I think this is good. Evolution should be part of revolution. Keep the blood flowing and stay alive."***



Now, in October 1995, the journal continues to evolve and the blood of the collective is still flowing. In our own analysis of ourselves as a collective we concluded that all women contributing words, art work, time and energy deserve to be recognized for their contribution. Hence we acknowledge the ambitious women who fund-raise: organizing women's dances and coffeehouses to raise money to keep the journal in literal production. And the contributing writers, who manage to analyse, report, review and commentate on the issues directly affecting women. And last but definitely not least, the women who across seas and Canada send us a beautiful eclectic array of poetry, short stories, graphics and opinions. Please, keep sending us ***"your voices."*** This is something we as a collective, would like to have-- a space for your voices, your comments on an issue, an article, an event, a celebration or something that enrages you. We encourage submissions, the NWJ is for you, our readers, so let's share our stories, and our experiences. If ever there was a political climate for women to come together it is now. If you are interested in more information about the collective, contact a member/s directly or write to the NWJ.



## Editorial Policy

The Northern Woman Journal is a vehicle to encourage a feminist awareness of the situation of women in our society. The journal strives to be a communication link between women in Northwestern Ontario, thus in addition to featuring articles of global and national concern, it will also seek articles of particular relevance to Northwestern Ontario women.

The Journal, portraying women in a positive light, and portraying events from a woman's perspective, serves as an alternative to traditional media.

The Journal's goal is to publish as much original material as possible. Current information/review etc. will be preferred, although feminist classics may be printed.

The journal must establish a solid political base, and contributors will be encouraged to develop a strong feminist analysis in their writing.

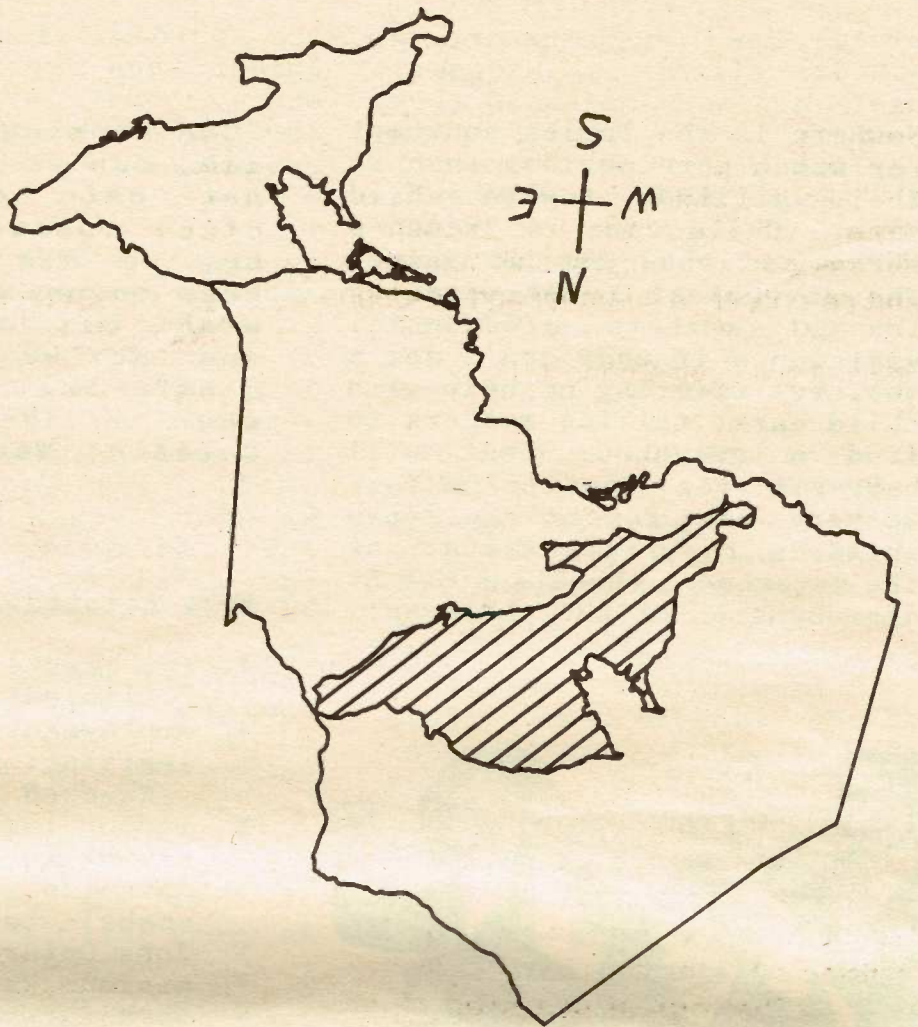
The Journal Collective may choose for publication articles that reflect views that are not the position of the Collective. However, as feminists, we will not publish material that is offensive and opposed to basic premises of the Women's movement.

The material selected for inclusion in the Journal will be chosen by the consensus of the Collective. Where solicited contributors are not accepted for publication the Collective will make personal contact with the author to explain the reasons for non-acceptance. In the case of non-solicited contributions, efforts will be made to communicate with the author, and where appropriate, encouragement given to assist the contributor to continue her writing.

# The New Ontario

"But men's long-standing war against women is now, in reaction to women's movements across the world, taking on a new ferocity, new urgency, and new veneers" Marilyn French, *The War Against Women*.

Ontario has become a very ugly, scary place to live. Since taking power in June the Conservative government has engaged in a relentless attack on the vulnerable in our society. Fuelled by ideological fervour, services programs and jobs are being eliminated or reduced, without concern for the consequences of these actions. It is not coincidental that women are the target of many of the Tory cuts.



## Violence Against Women

- \* education programs to prevent violence against women- Eliminated
- \* staffing for second stage housing- Eliminated
- \* counselling and support services for second stage housing- Eliminated
- \* counselling services for immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence- Eliminated
- \* operating funds for battered women's shelters- Reduced
- \* counselling services for battered women- Threatened
- \* child care programs associated with shelters - Threatened

## Income Security/Housing

- \* social assistance - Reduced 21.6%
- \* social assistance for disabled people- Threatened
- \* non-profit housing- Frozen

## Child Care

- \* start up operating grants for new child care centres- Eliminated
- \* child care centres in new schools- Eliminated
- \* early years project- Cancelled
- \* child care subsidies re Jobs Ontario- Offloaded to municipalities
- \* funding for resource centres- Reduced
- \* fee subsidies- Frozen
- \* pay equity adjustment- Capped
- \* wage enhancement grants- Threatened
- \* funding to Child Care Resource & Research Centre- Reduced 34%



"The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world." Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Seneca Falls, 1848



Beasdale (in K. De - 8)

# The New Ontario

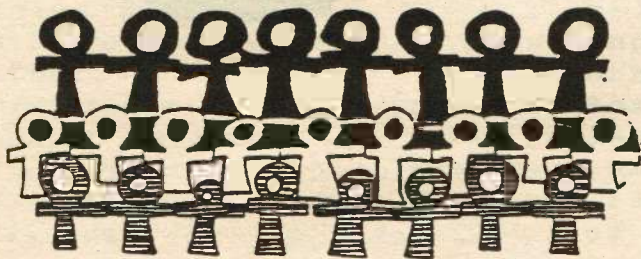
continued

Nowhere is the Tories contempt for women more obvious than in their attitude toward child care. Child care is "women's work" and thus has no value. The government is threatening to cut mothers off social assistance if they don't get a job, yet offering no help with child care, telling mothers to find a neighbour that will baby-sit for free. Yet if mothers are forced to leave children in unsafe situations the government threatens C.A.S. apprehension of the children!



## Health and Community Services

- \* funding for new birthing centres- Eliminated
- \* long term care- Abandoned
- \* funds for culturally specific social services- Eliminated
- \* community social service planning funds- Eliminated
- \* neighbourhood support services funds- Eliminated
- \* operating budgets of social and community service organizations- Reduced
- \* funds for maternity homes for young pregnant women- Reduced



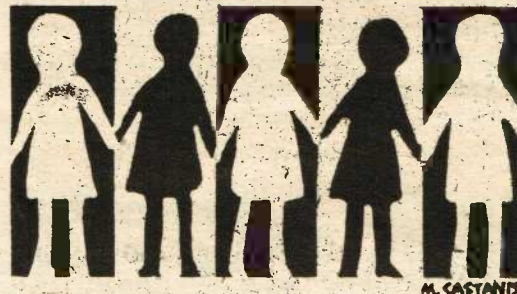
"Can we sing back, this we ask, can we sing back, and not only sing, but in clear voices? Will this be, we ask, and will we keep on answering, keep on with our whole bodies? And do we know why we sing? Yes. Will we know why? Yes." Susan Gribbin, *Woman and Nature*

## Work Related Issues

- \* (at least) 13000 jobs- Eliminated
- \* employment equity legislation- to be Revoked
- \* labour legislation making it easier to unionize (and outlawing scabs)- to be Revoked
- \* Jobs Ontario- Eliminated
- \* minimum wage- Frozen
- \* work fare- to be introduced

It appears that the goal of much of this action is to depress wages. For example, work fare will not reduce government spending, rather it will be an enormously expensive program. It will, however, depress wages and encourage antagonism amongst workers, and despair for many. Similarly the cancelling of training programs for social assistance recipients to help them reenter the labour force will keep them trapped in low wage, exploitative jobs.

The provincial government has also announced reduction in transfer payments to municipalities. More job losses will result - the first to go will be part-time jobs, which are disproportionately held by women. As municipal councils struggle with their budget we fear there will be even more cuts to people-oriented services - social, cultural and recreational programs. Introduction of user fees (e.g. for outdoor swimming pools) will deny poor children the opportunity for healthy recreation. In this context "trickle-down" means only pain and hardship.



With a majority government the Conservatives will forge ahead

with their ideological agenda and continue to blame the victims. The misogyny, racism and classism underlying the Tories actions must be exposed. We must continue to inform ourselves and others. In every possible way we must challenge the Conservatives actions. Across the province people are organizing in protest. In Thunder Bay the Coalition Against Poverty is the lead organization, and deserves our support.

"We women are visible and valuable to each other and we must.. proclaim that visibility and that worth. Our anger must be creatively directed to change. We must remember that true freedom is a world without fear. And if there is still confusion about who will achieve that, then we must each of us walk to a clear pool of water. Look at the water. It has value. Now look into the water. The woman we see there counts for something. She can help to change the world." Marilyn Waring  
*It's Women Counted*



# Economic Status Quo--or Can We Find a New Way?

by Rosalind Lockyer

Employment is shrinking, consumer spending and confidence are down, new housing starts plummet, and poverty is increasing. Some describe our problems as a transition, others a recession or just a decline. What ever we call it, we have a problem. What are the solutions to these economic problems.

First, let us look to the simplistic solution of the past-President of the United States, George Bush, as he encouraged the American people just to run out in mass to their nearby friendly department store and buy "\$28 worth of socks". Boy, wasn't that a grassroots solution. Be sympathetic, however, it is difficult for someone who's worth an estimated \$4 million to come to grips with everyday problems no matter how hard he tries to look "like an ordinary guy".

Further north in Canada our leader of that day, Brian Mulroney, decided to improve the Canadian plight by engineering a recession to save us from inflation. He said he would save us from ourselves by attacking the terrible deficit and bring in the G.S.T. These not-so-simplistic solutions caused us major problems, and Mr. Mulroney hoped we would forget before the next election - surprise - we didn't forget.

Further north in Canada our leader of that day, Brain Mulroney, decided to improve the Canadian plight by engineering a recession to save us from inflation. He said he would save us from ourselves by attacking the terrible deficit and bring in the G.S.T. These not-so-simplistic solutions caused us major problems, and Mr. Mulroney hoped we would forget before the next election - surprise - we didn't forget.

Our saviour-elect is now Mr. Jean Chretien who waved the holy book of promises, "Jobs, jobs, jobs, and no more G.S.T." Are we any better off today? Maybe we would have been if Mr. Chretien had done as he promised and concentrated on job creation instead of cutting transfer payments to the provinces. As it stands now:

- more and more jobs are lost each day
- poverty is increasing at an alarming rate
- it is harder to get UIC and the welfare coffers strain because of expanding rolls.

## Solution?

We elect Mike Harris, we get more promises of jobs and another amazing solution. Cut, cut, cut - cut people off welfare, especially single moms, and "workfare/train-fare". Is this government going to support the training programs now in place? Create more? Encourage people towards self-employment? They promised they would, but where is that support?

Our program, the Women's Community Loan Fund, formally funded by Jobs Ontario (program cut), which presently supports 28 women in business or planning to start a business, is waiting for that continued support.

Well, we have talked of the solutions to our economic woes, which were "or-castrated" by cuts, cuts and more cuts by the master minds of our North American economic and political system. Some people have called George Bush's "Christmas buying splurge" simplistic and callous. They would have to call our Canadian solutions short-sighted and cruel. Obvious to the jobless and those working in community grassroots organizations, the extent of poverty and economic hardship today bespeak our economic decline. The demise of a responsible attitude toward society as a whole and to the social safety-net, which gave Canada the reputation as the best country in which to live, is even more disturbing.

The Harris government's welfare cutting plans are targeted directly at women and children. Is it a surprise, then, that after years of political promises and marvellous "economic solutions", we still have fewer jobs. Bill Gates is happy that these government "gurus" replace people in the workforce with computers, but he is symbolic of a very small minority. Gates represents the people who are happy with today's economic disaster.

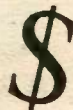
So what economic alternatives do women have. Should we throw up our arms and say "Don't worry, be happy". Can we afford to wait for more earth-shattering government solutions? I think not.

## A Plan of Attack

1. We can work together, plan, set goals, define our values, and trust our own thoughts on what direction is right for us and our communities.
2. We can reject government plans that will not solve our problems and will lead to disaster for all but a chosen few.
3. We must emphatically say **NO** to naive and sexist political plans that will cause job annihilation instead of job creation and make the lives of disadvantaged women and children ever more desperate.
4. When we as caring women define our values, we can make a statement as consumers. We can make a statement on the type of society and community we wish to encourage by what we buy and where we spend our money.
5. We must be willing to experiment and draw on our skills and experience and then seek knowledge of the past experience of women in all parts of the world. We need to find economic solutions that consider more than the "bottom line" and consider all important issues in our lives.

Our Piece of the Pie: A Newsletter about Women and the Economy is produced by the Women's Community Loan Fund. Any submissions (articles, poetry, graphics or cartoons) for upcoming editions are welcome.

The Women's  
Community Loan Fund  
184 Camelot Street  
Thunder Bay ON P7A 4A9  
(807) 345-7802



---

---

# Poetry



## I. Snapshot: Eldest Daughter

the child in a woman's body  
long legs climbing the slide  
the dress bunched-up then flies  
down the slide  
the descent from childhood  
delayed by delight  
child-woman me-you you-me  
blended into one blur  
generational double exposure  
a positive picture framed  
in perfect playtime pleasure  
the future sliding  
negative of a film  
about to be developed

I finger her photograph  
over and over  
bending its corners  
looking at me

## II. Cameo: Middle Daughter

bent head full  
one more poem to write  
the deep thoughtfulness  
chiselled in words of black ivory  
the innocence inscribed  
the wisdom of her inexperience  
always already the onyx profile  
engraved in the shadow of her light  
reflecting the in-between  
where she gives everything away in her features  
but stays out-of-focus

I enter her poem  
& caress the gem of her face

## III. Pencil Sketch: Youngest Daughter

tossed raphaelite curls circle  
the watercolor of flesh  
drawn upon the pillow case  
pencilled in by my lead-sharp  
pointed eyes  
traces of baby  
in the lines and folds  
I use to finish the sketch  
quickly I form  
the brow, lashes, cherub cheeks  
as they transform  
in the breath of her sigh

I cherish each changing pencil stroke  
etched by timeless motherhood  
forever my baby

## Sunroom

Sunroom overflowing with verdant green

hurts my eyes

I stare blankly out the window

Blankly, winter's contrast stares back

and remember how you would fall

down beside me

with my hand I can trace

the curve of your shoulders

the line of your thigh

I drown . . .

Reaching out to touch

your outline on the ruffled sheet

a cold impression

for a warm hand

Outside of sunroom's window

northern breath chills my marrow

Looking in on sunroom's green

hurts my eyes

by Rebecca A. Banks



by  
Renee Norman

# Harris Hatchet Falls on Legal Aid

by Sandey Smith

One of the first announced cuts that the Harris government issued was to the Ontario Legal Aid Plan. It would certainly seem that Mike Harris may have won over a majority of voters in Ontario with his Common Sense Revolution, but more than likely lawyers who handle legal aid cases were not among them. A lot of them would probably like to start a revolution of their own, except the odds of winning against the popular (in some circles) premier would be less than promising.

Harris has announced that his goal is to bring legal aid funding down to 1989 levels by chopping \$130 million from the province's share. Many lawyers say that this plan will spell the end of the legal aid system as they know it, given that the contribution from the Ontario government was \$45 million in 1989-90.

The Ontario Legal Aid Plan was established in 1967 with the fundamental principle being to facilitate equality of access to justice to those who are unable to finance legal services from their own resources. In 1994 over half a million people were assisted by the Plan. The Legal Aid Committee of the Law Society of Upper Canada administers the delivery of legal aid services. There are approximately 17,000 lawyers practicing in Ontario, and in 1994, 6,900 billed the Legal Aid Plan. Legal Aid lawyers are paid approximately a range of between \$63-\$79 per hour, compared with a range of \$250-\$450 per hour from privately paying clients for comparable services.

It is widely agreed that without the Legal Aid Plan the justice system we now have would not function. Unrepresented individuals without expertise in legal procedures, etc. would cause significant delays and frustrate the overall legal system. In the area of criminal law, we are living in an era when enforcement measures have been increased, and without adequate legal defence for accused persons, more charges will end up being thrown out of court.

Approximately one-third of the budget is spent on family law cases. A family lawyer and member of the legal aid committee practicing in Southern Ontario has told her clients



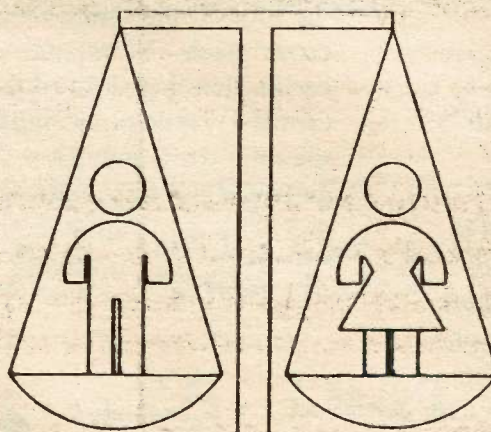
that any reduction in the amount of money paid would mean that her law firm would not be able to serve legal aid clients. She and her law practice are not alone. The same thing is happening in our local legal community. She has practiced for 17 years assisting legal aid clients, many of whom are women.

A number of changes in services provided through Legal Aid has resulted, in addition to the elimination of some services. One of the changes is that of mandatory mediation in some areas of family law. Concern has been voiced because past experience reflects that women do not get adequate support payments, and the additional pressure on them to settle means that future amounts of support will be likewise inadequate.

Following is a list of cuts/changes:

- \* eliminating certificates for divorce
- \* eliminating certificates for wrongful dismissal cases
- \* amending the financial eligibility guidelines (cut by 21.6%)
- \* charging a \$25 fee to applicants who are not receiving family benefits or welfare
- \* and a number of changes directly affecting lawyers in terms of billing.

There will be an immediate impact on women in view of the changes in financial eligibility - fewer will qualify for legal aid assistance.



# Don't Harris Me!

by Joyce Michalchuk (Thunder Bay)

Thousands gathered outside at Queen's Park Sept. 27 to loudly protest proposed cutbacks to social programs, as the new provincial Progressive Conservative government prepared to deliver its Throne Speech inside.

Among them were dozens of organizations dedicated to upholding the rights and interests of women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities, and the disabled, among others.

I was among them that Wednesday afternoon. As the sun beat hotly down on the several thousand of us gathered there, the sentiments expressed began to simultaneously heat up the crowd, beyond the mid-20 Celsius weather, as the afternoon progressed.

Rather than regurgitate a mainstream media account of the day's protest (you can read, or have read or heard about it by now in the newspapers or on TV), I'd like to provide a different perspective--a bird's eye view of what felt like the renewal of a real spirit of social activism.

First, some additional facts, as described in the signs present and leaflets distributed on the front lawn of Queen's Park:

The Throne Speech Demonstration was a united effort involving dozens of Toronto and provincial organizations, meant to show disapproval of the distasteful (some say hateful) policies of the Harris government.

The messages displayed on placards present, and conveyed through the P. A., were as direct as anything coming out of the Tory caucus recently:

**"Stop Harrismment of the Poor!"**

**"Common Sense? Nonsense! Stop the Cuts!"**

**"Mulroney Clones the Harris Team"**

**"Kids and Families First!"**

**"We Want Harris Out!"**

**"When You Elect a Pit Bull, Expect to Get Bitten Yourself!"**

Wandering around the lawn taking it all in, one could view a wide array of supporters. They ranged from office and other workers out strolling and talking during their lunch hours, to trendy, young, leather-clad teens brandishing signs and shouting slogans, to Aboriginal groups waving flags.

"Ordinary" people representing labour and education circled quietly with various placards. An older woman and a young male student shook macaroni-and-cheese boxes, while men and women in wheelchairs moved in and out of the crowd.

And everywhere were women--alone, with others, and with banners--representing such organizations as Interval Place for Aboriginal Women and Their Children, Toronto Women's Housing Cooperative, Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

## Placard: "Mike Harris Math Class: It Doesn't Add Up, but it Sure is Divisive"

Some of the most powerful moments occurred near the steps when the Oriental women drummers called Washabi Daiko began an impassioned performance, stirring the crowd with the beating of their massive drums.

The Throne Speech was being given inside beginning at 2 p.m., and it was later learned these drums and chants from the crowd were very audible to those inside. (Perhaps this helped to lead to the atmosphere inside described in one paper as "tense" rather than "joyous" and "festive", the apparently usual mood afforded the installation of a new government).

Demonstrators and performers stood out in sharp contrast to the dozen or so white-helmeted riot police, who sat astride brown horses with plastic shields protecting their eyes. The sight of them, at my first contact with the scene at 1:30 when I arrived, was quite riveting. With about six standing quietly on each side of the steps to Queen's Park, it made one wonder whether such a sight was meant to provoke peace, or further protest.

It certainly let you know who was "in charge", in no uncertain terms.

There were a number of barricades set up at the foot of the stairs, meant to hold the crowd back. Newspaper pictures taken earlier that day showed that they held the crowd to some point, initially. However, by the time we'd arrived, several hundred had swarmed the steps, removed the barriers, and were demanding to be let in.

Speakers on the P. A. were leading the crowd in a circular march around the front of the building, trying to maintain the peace, and asking people to, "Get off the stairs, we don't need more people hurt!" (These speakers later applauded and congratulated the crowd for a successful event and a substantial turnout.) Other individuals, without amplification, demanded to be let in the building, shouting, "We have to get inside, we can't do anything here!"

One young woman, injecting a bit of humour in the sometimes tense atmosphere, jokingly shouted, "Harris--we need to get in the house to use the washroom!", to general laughter.

I moved beside a large crowd of several dozen who had gathered around the Aboriginal groups, and a young Aboriginal man who had been pepper-sprayed at some point. He and others were attempting to pour water into his eyes, to flush out the burning substance.

Nearby, a young woman was nursing a sharp wound to her forehead. Much of the discussion in the crowd centred around the "undercover police" who reportedly were numerous, and perpetrated the assaults. Various media personnel were attempting to obtain photographic and television pictures.

## Placard: "Yes, Virginia, there is a hell--Queen's Park!"

For most of the afternoon, however, it must be said that the majority of the crowd milled on the grounds, showing support for the demonstration in characteristically Canadian, low-key fashion. They walked around continuously near the steps, around the pile of foam mattresses and sleeping bags and tents (many had come in from across Ontario, camped overnight, and begun demonstrating at 9:00 a.m.), and circled the lawn.







This quiet picture was somewhat split, though, with those on the steps exhibiting more of an angry, menacing tone as the afternoon went on.

At about 2:00 p.m. (coinciding with the scheduled start of the Throne Speech), an Aboriginal drum group played a song from the American Indian Movement, dedicated to the memory of the Aboriginal youth recently killed at Ipperwash. There was much clapping, dancing, and support from the crowd for the song. One man shouted, "Harris is a murderer!"

Things then began to take a turn at around 2:20, when someone burned a placard with a picture of Harris, to much applause. Many burning placards then became visible on the steps in the moments which followed. Sticks and pop cans began to be hurled at the doors to building, and at the helmeted riot police, who had moved in earlier to guard the doors against entry.

At 2:45, the police and horses moved in. The crowd on the steps was then boxed in by two lines of police. For a few tense moments, I thought that the crowd might storm the doors for real. Discussion in front centred around the fact that if the crowd hadn't dispersed somewhat by that point, and more people had been on the stairs, they would have broken through the police line.

This didn't occur, and things began to disperse and settle down. I left at 3:00 p.m., and walked toward downtown Toronto, carrying remnants of the protest. I felt rejuvenated, and fortunate that I was able to take part in a demonstration with other people who were willing to "do something", rather than simply talk about their displeasure at what was unfolding in Ontario.

Although I happened to be in Toronto at the time for work, I had managed to finish up early that day. Through an ideal

combination of circumstances, I was able to attend with one of the organizations I had been working with. On arrival in the city on Tuesday, I learned of the demonstration from a friend who had also planned to attend, and was thus there partly through fate, and partly through desire.

Walking back to my hotel, and on reaching the corner of College and University in front of Queen's Park (an easy corner to remember if you ever want to know how to get there!) I felt strange, like I'd just left a slightly unreal atmosphere for another slightly unreal atmosphere.

Proceeding into the steel and glass, corporate towers to downtown Toronto, I was soon reminded that it was business as usual in the corporate capital of Ontario. Two days later, meeting with some clients who were going to be affected by welfare cutbacks, I was disgusted and angered by my recall of the rhetoric of the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Were he to be in some of these shoes, I thought, as I sat in that bare kitchen, in that delapidated house, listening to this single parent talk of his physical problems, illiteracy, and his rambunctious three-year-old who hung around his neck, who he said most needs "someone who can just read to him".

Shame. Shame, on behalf of that woman and her children who will be wait-listed, and forced to stay in an abusive home longer than before. Shame on behalf of that woman in a wheelchair at Queen's Park on Wednesday, and that woman wearing sunglasses, with a black eye, being guided across that downtown street by her mother. Shame, on behalf of those kids perpetually seeking handouts on Yonge Street.

Does Mike Harris care about their stories, or merely about his future glories, I wondered? To paraphrase one sign, I for one don't want that microwave, if it means my next door neighbour has to suffer! To hell with a tiny tax break...it's not worth it, I thought.

There is a very real, angry, and disaffected constituency out there, piercing the apathy and complacency. It is every bit as angry as those who supposedly elected this government to make "changes". In many cases, the anger is just simmering below the surface. I have no doubt it will rise as the months go on, the winter sets in, and the horror stories accumulate.

I only hope they're heard, and women's voices are heard.

Many of those well-dressed men and women I passed on College no doubt gave Mike Harris and his Tory Caucus what he believes to be a "serious mandate" to continue cutting back services and programs to the women, the poor, and those least likely to defend themselves.

Most of those of us in attendance at the demonstration do not agree with his policies, nor do we condone his methodology. I hope others will let him hear from them, too, in the upcoming months. Call or fax him, if you can, at the number provided on this page.

I have no doubt that, as women and as the heads of most single-parent families, we will all feel his axe soon, if we haven't already. I can only hope that it transforms itself into a double-edged sword with one wicked kick-back.

One final thought: It felt good to know that the spirit of civil disapproval (and disobedience) is still alive and kicking. It kicked ass on the 27th, in Toronto.

*This Man needs to Hear From You !*

**Mike Harris**

**ph: 325 1941**

**fx: 325 3745**

# Karen Fraser: Quilting Our Economy

by Laurel Benson

Karen Fraser's discussion on women and the economy, hosted by the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's issues, was an informative insight into the evolution of the global economy and the subsequent employment challenges and opportunities faced by women. The discussion was humorous, entertaining, and most surprisingly, optimistic.

Ms. Fraser equated the current trend in the job market to the old fashioned quilting bees. Quilting bees used to be formed several times a year by a group of women who would work collaboratively on a quilt. Once the quilt was complete, the women would return to their everyday routines. Each woman would be a part of several different quilting bees each year and work with many different women. The women involved in the quilting bee would do the tasks that they were best at. They would be seated strategically around the quilt next to the women with whom they would have the best conversation. Most importantly, there was no hierarchy of positions as the women worked collectively. The quilting bee was a true collaborative effort of the women involved.

Ms. Fraser then contrasted this form of teamwork with the conventional hierarchy form of management which she referred to as the "ladder". The ladder image implies that workers would start at the bottom rung of the ladder and work their way to the top and then end in retirement. Changes in the framework of the economy have rendered this way of building a career obsolete.

Ms. Fraser felt that the people who will succeed in the new economy will have

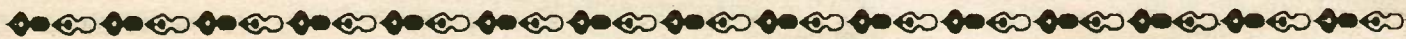
the following characteristics:  
*flexibility,*  
*tolerance of failure,*  
*good communication skills,*  
*strong and flexible values,*  
*good time management skills,*  
*adaptability to change,*  
*be well-informed and a good net-worker.*

She referred to this latest era in the economy as the "do-it-yourself economy" meaning that there is an increased responsibility on the individual worker to control the direction of her career. The days of working with the same company and moving up the corporate ladder are behind us. Many of our jobs will be

similar to a quilting bee in that several individuals will join together to complete a particular project. Once completed, each individual will move on to their next "quilting bee". She said that we will see the beginning of an evolution and the end of an era quoting the Chinese proverb "may you live in interesting times." While this is certainly the case, it is both a blessing and a curse.

She concluded that the key to success for women amid all of this evolution is to remain optimistic and view the current changes in the economy and the job market as future opportunities and not let them appear as threats.

**Note:** At the time of this presentation, on September 15, 1995, the future of the Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issue was uncertain. The Progressive Conservative government may abolish this advisory group in its attempts to reduce government expenditures.



## Northwestern Ontario Regional Child Care Committee Forum

Saturday, November 4th, Victoria Inn, Thunder Bay

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

- prepare to protect child care services in your community
- learn new advocacy skills
- build partnerships to promote child care
- share your ideas and experience

**For More Information Call  
345-8803**

# Literacy and Women: The Unwritten Text

by Debb Hurlock

...my mother  
can write the unspoken mysteries of humankind  
the suffering of love  
the passion of hate

my mother reads the unwritten passages of life  
reading with soul  
knowing the ways, just by knowing  
and proudly believing her beliefs...

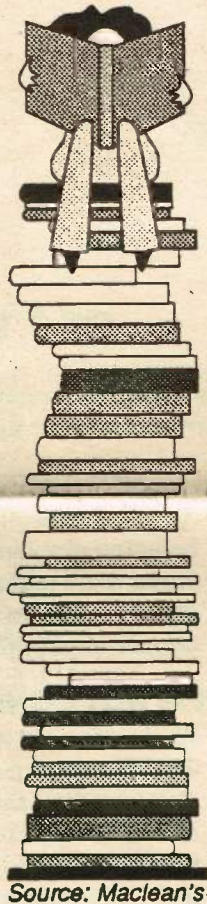
The women's movement has several functions and purposes yet the lining of it all is the necessity for women to have a voice, to share their stories, their experiences and their words. Literacy is a fundamental part of this. The written word becomes a tool to reach and empower women all over the world, it becomes a medium for sharing experiences across continents. The written language provides women with the opportunity to create and understand other women's experiences. It also provides them with a progressive mind so that they will not accept patriarchal definitions; the written word helps to mold a mind that is not passive. Literacy encourages women "to talk, to tell stories, to sing, to listen and remember, to argue, to pierce an opponent's argument, to use metaphor and imagery and inspired exaggeration in speech" (Rich 13).

Though all this sounds very good, I realize it is much harder to implement. After spending two years working with women in literacy and adult education I recognized the wealth of information stored within these women, like a spring of rushing water, their inability to write had damned their expression. But these women *were literate*. They were readers and writers of life, stunning in their descriptions and interpretations of life

experiences which is poetry within itself. This led me to question the definition of literacy, and what as a western culture we value--it is the level of education it is the degree, the diploma, the anachronistic letters behind our names, often the list gets so long we forget who we are and why we chose higher education in the first place.



p  
n  
i  
a



Source: Maclean's

e  
o

r

n

g

m

s

What moved me most about the several women I have met was their keen intuition, their intuitive ability to read people, to read emotions and to read the energy passed between other women. These women have a sharpened intuition where I have dulled mine by the incessant sharpening of the mind, the rational and academic side. I realized we are all womanly, we are whole, we are all one flesh, the same thoughts that race in my mind is the same red blood that pulses through my veins and I have learned this through the women I met. I have learned to trust equally my physically intuitive side and my rationale. It is this confident reliance upon intuition and instinct that enabled these women to survive and understand the world.

As a society, it seems an appropriate time to question how we define literacy. Is it strictly word related or education related? Could it not also encompass all

women who have intuitively raised children, husbands and friends. Women who have taught others through their love, their strengths, their sacrifices and their silences. These are perhaps, what speak loudest to us women who recognize our own voice and pursue and share it through all our moments in life. By expanding the definition of literacy to encompass the unwritten text, the work of women that has traditionally gone unnoticed, underpaid and under appreciated would now be recognized as equally important as an education.

An article by Kishwar Ahmed Shirali titled "Ganga Devi: A Question of Literacy and Development" brilliantly addresses this same issue. Shirali presents a case study of an

illiterate, but wise and knowledgeable Himalayan woman, who ably managed family and village affairs; farms; herbal healing; spinning and stitching. She could read the weather, the land, the trees, the crops, birds, animals and people. She is one of the millions of women who produce 50% of the world's food. She is also one of the 280 million illiterate women in India...She knows all the rites and rituals for every feast of the moon, every sacrifice, every offering for the pacification of the dead and the deified and the dues to the hierarchy of elders.

continued next page

# Literacy

continued from pg 11

I agree that the denial of reading, writing and education to women are factors that for too long, perpetuated the subservient state of women to their husbands, fathers and men in general. But now women are gaining the power to choose an education, to return to school or to write their own thoughts. But what seems equally important is challenging the existing definition of literacy, redefining it to encompass the unwritten text that so often is shared between women, placing equal importance for the woman's ability to read and write not only language but also her ability to read the weather, the land and the unspoken mysteries of humankind.

As a literacy advocate I still maintain a strong belief in the necessity of literacy. Literacy skills are essential components in the survival and growth of women. They are tools that foster women's independence, honing a conscious and creative mind that debates as well as creates. I believe in a literacy that helps women interpret and define their own life and their own role as women in this world, as well as enabling them to record their experiences, sharing their struggles and their triumphs with women all over the world. But perhaps we could also use our energy to recognize the unwritten language between women, the stunning and intelligent intuition of an illiterate mother or aunt. Perhaps we could share our literacy and illiteracy, teaching one another the written and unwritten text of life. Here we could find a level of literacy that transcends the written word.

## Works Cited

Adrienne Rich, *On Lies, Secrets and Silence* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979).

Kishwar Ahmed Shirarila, "Ganga Devi" in *Canadian Woman Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3&4 (Toronto: Inanna, 1988).



## SUPERIOR WOMEN'S COFFEEHOUSE

Saturday, November 25

at 8:00 pm

at the Unitarian House  
129 S. Algoma Street

\$3.00 at door



## rBGH Go Away or I Won't Drink My Milk Today



Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) is a genetically engineered hormone which essentially causes cows to remain in the high production phase of early lactation for much longer than is natural.

### rBGH IS NOT USER FRIENDLY

- Among the 40-plus side effects on cows are recurrent udder infections, birth defects, breeding problems, lameness, internal bleeding, and premature death.
- Farmers are told these are simply "management problems", easily solved with increased use of antibiotics and other medications.
- Canada already has a surplus of milk. Smaller farmers would be forced out of business.

### rBGH IS NOT CONSUMER FRIENDLY

- We do not need more hormones, antibiotics, or medications in our food supply.
- There have been no long term health studies. Monsanto assures us rBGH is safe, but they also assured us that PCBs were safe.
- An eightfold increase in the level of the insulin-like hormone IGF-1 has been identified in rBGH milk. IGF-1 has been clearly linked to the production of cancer cells.
- If rBGH is approved, Canadians will not be able to choose to purchase rBGH-free milk

### THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT IS NOT USER FRIENDLY

- rBGH is opposed by a coalition of 60 advocacy groups, including the Council of Canadians, the National Farmer's Union, and the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy.
- At least 500,000 Canadians have expressed their opposition.
- Parliamentary Committees on agriculture and on health have recommended a moratorium and further studies.
- rBGH is banned in Australia and New Zealand, and faces a 5 year moratorium in the E.U.

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Make copies of this sheet and pass it on to friends, family, and community groups. Share your concerns with anyone who will listen. (With 50% participation, 10 copies per person, and a turn-around time of 3 days, an initial printing of 5,000 can reach 3,000,000 Canadians in 12 days.)
- To show your commitment, please participate in a 1 week boycott of domestic dairy products between November 17-23, 1995. (No stock-piling!)
- Contact your MP and inform her/him of your concerns and your intentions.
- Fill out the Pledge and mail it to: M. Jean Chretien,  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa K1A 0A6 (no stamp necessary)

or phone him at (613) 992-4211

Sponsored by U.D.D.A.R. (United Defence Directive Against RBGH)  
P.O. Box 63, Lyndhurst ON, K0E 1N0 Fax: (613) 928-2859

Dear Mr. Chretien,

I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge to drastically reduce my consumption of domestic dairy products unless the Government of Canada commits itself to a ban on the use of rBGH by November 17, 1995.

Yours truly,



\_\_\_\_\_



# BOOK REVIEWS

Canadian Women's Issues Volume 1: Strong Voices, edited by Ruth Roach Pierson, Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Paula Bourne, Philinda Masters, James Lorimer Publishers, 1993

Canadian Women's Issues Volume 11: Bold Visions, edited Ruth Roach Pierson, Marjorie Griffin Cohen, James Lorimer Publishers, 1995

Reviewed by Margaret Phillips

There is truly a feast of wonderful new Canadian books, including several that will particularly appeal to NWJ readers for their inclusion of Thunder Bay/Northwestern Ontario content. AGAINST THE CURRENT: Canadian Women Talk About Fifty Years of Life on the Job, by Judith Finlayson, is composed of "personal accounts by Canadian women of their fifty-year voyage through the world of paid work", and contains the stories of six NWO women. A DIVERSITY OF WOMEN: Ontario 1945-1980, edited by Joy Parr, explores the diversity of women's lives. One article by Nancy Adamson, Feminists, Libbers, Lefties and Radicals: The Emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement, traces the development of the women's movement in several Ontario communities, with a major focus on Thunder Bay/NWO, and includes excerpts from interviews with a number of NWO feminists. Hopefully we can fully review both these important books in future NWJ issues. In this article I will focus on the two volume Canadian Women's Issues, which I consider an outstanding contribution to the history and analysis of the past 25 years of feminist activism, and an understanding of the challenges facing the Canadian women's movement in 1995.

My interest was immediately piqued when I picked up Canadian Women's Issues Volume 1: Strong Voices, but my excitement became palpable when on its early pages I find "the NORTHERN WOMAN indicates..." and a quick scan of footnotes and index determines many references to and excerpts from the NORTHERN WOMAN JOURNAL. How many (fatigued) NWJ collective meetings have queried "Does anybody really read the damn Journal? Well, now we have the answer. If no one else does at least feminist historians and

researchers are reading the Journal, and past and current NWJ collective members are sustained with the knowledge that our efforts have been worthwhile.

I must acknowledge that on reading Canadian Women's Issues and A Diversity of Women, I experienced a shock when I recognized that I am part of the "history" of the feminist movement in NWO and Canada. My feminism doesn't feel historical, it feels fresh, as well as life-sustaining. But reading these books has made me realize that there is a breadth of difference in the experiences of young feminists, and those of us who first took to the streets in Take Back the Night marches or pro-choice rallies.

As young 1995 feminists were scarcely toddlers when we first forayed into feminism, they, of course, did not experience:

- \* the excitement of the Abortion Caravan, and our admiration for the women who chained themselves to seats in the Parliamentary Gallery, to demand the decriminalization of abortion.
- \* the euphoria of the 1973 Northern Women's Conference.
- \* our outrage, as successive courts denied Irene Murdock a share in the family farm upon marriage breakdown, despite her 25 years of farming with her husband, as well as sole responsibility for domestic tasks.
- \* our anger and sadness, when a 5-4 Supreme court judgment ruled against Jeanette Corbiere Lavall, who was deprived of her status as a registered Indian when she married a man that was not Registered Indian. (Bill C 31, which eliminated sex discrimination from the Indian Act was not passed until 1985.)
- \* our pride when thousands of Canadian women mobilized to ensure an equality clause that provided for equality under the law and equal benefits of the law in the repatriated Canadian constitution.

Recording the herstory of the past 25 years so that young people in 1995 and future generations may understand what

we experienced and vividly remember is vitally important and Canadian Women's Issues provides a superb documentation. Initially planned as one book, the quantity and quality of the material required two volumes, which should be on the bookshelves of every Canadian high school, college, university and public library.

I like the way the books are organized. Each volume is divided into themes which begin with an overview and analysis by the editor, and followed by pertinent documents from a variety of Canadian sources (feminist newspapers and newsletters, official reports, interviews, case studies, recorded histories, women's groups pamphlets and position papers, and articles from both alternative and traditional media.) The documents chosen encompass an amazing breadth of women's organizations - grass roots organizations in communities large and small, from Newfoundland to the Yukon. The documents' authors occasionally are well-known feminist spokeswomen, but more often are grass-roots women known only in their own communities. It is from this wide-ranging documentation that we understand the strength and determination of Canadian women in our struggle for equality. The voices we hear in Canadian Women's Issues are not just those of academic feminists, they are the gutsy voices of hundreds of women activists. The editors' skills are demonstrated in the fine way they bring these voices together.

In Volume 1: Strong Voices, the first theme is the Canadian Women's Movement, which traces the rebirth of feminist activism; the significance of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, the "early emphasis on the shared experiences of women and the common nature of women's oppression"; the importance of consciousness raising (CR); the discussions of "feminist process" and the energy expended to ensure non-hierarchical organizations. The move from CR to direct action - organizing women's centres and resource centres. The focus on issues: the universality of issues of violence and of child care; specific issues influenced by race, class, geography - agricultural

continued next page

concerns of farm women, cultural survival for Native women, racist government policy towards immigrant women domestic workers. The documents for this theme include three NWJ excerpts: Noreen (Lavoie) Dunbar's 1974 article "What's In a Name?"; a 1975 report of Thunder Bay Anishnabequek outlining their grass-roots organizing and basic service approach; and a Mother on Budgets report on "Freedom Week" and "Sanity House".

With the theme The Politics of the Body we are reminded "On a wide range of fronts women have struggled to assert or regain control over our bodies, seeking to wrest control away from the state, the medical establishment, institutionalized religion, pharmaceutical companies, advertisers, pornographers, institutionized censorship, the violence of men. "Stories from the 1970 Abortion Caravan participants; the jailing of Henry Morgentaler for performing abortions, despite jury acquittals; the bombing of the Morgentaler Clinic; the formation of C.A.R.A.L., remind us of the centrality of the issue of reproductive rights. Disabled women's demands for reproductive rights, a contraception "horror story", the Depo Provera struggle are documented, as is the more recent debate about New Reproductive Technologies. The discussion of Sexualities evolves from the early "politicization of heterosexuality"; "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" (Anne Koedt); to celebrating "the forging of positive lesbian identities", while acknowledging tensions between heterosexual and lesbian feminists. Politics of the Body also covers violence against women, pornography, prostitution and women's health, with a range of documents on these issues.

The late 1960s, early 1970s brought an awareness of the oppression of women, of patriarchal privilege and the pervasiveness of sexism. But Pierson points out that, by focusing on the general disempowerment of women, the (white, middle-class) women's movement was slow to acknowledge the social differences of race, class, ethnicity, age, sexual preference and physical and mental ability. The chapter The Politics of Difference discusses the efforts and demands for an "inclusive" Canadian feminist movement. Resistance to some of these demands is analyzed, and the positive steps being taken, particularly by NAC, are recorded. The titles of the documents are telling: Lesbian Witch Hunt, Feminism and

Disability, Income Makes All the Difference, We Appear Silent to People Who Are Deaf To What We Say, The Question of Cultural Appropriation, Making a Commitment to Inclusion.

In Volume II: Bold Visions, the focus is on "many of the progressive ideas of feminism that are currently being undermined by conservative politics". The editors state "Feminism has always been unpopular with the ruling elites in society and has invariably encountered resistance for its progressive ideas. But it has managed to change the way our society operates and the way in which people think about women. In the new reactionary climate, feminism's message is more unpopular than ever. We hope that by showing the ways in which women, so far, have confronted and overcome hostility to the objectives of feminism, new groups of activists will be strengthened in their determination to insist that our society can be better than it is."

The Politics of the Domestic Sphere looks at "the problem that has no name", the doctrine of separate spheres, analyzing housework, Wages for Housework, child care, domestic labour, immigration and racism, and contests "the notion that there is a single monolithic definition of the 'family'". The supporting documents include those wonderful classics "Why I Want a Wife" and "The Politics of Housework", but also more sobering accounts of the vulnerability of immigrant domestic workers, and the struggles of lesbian families for recognition and concerning child custody. (The NWJ article excerpted here is Arja Lane's "Lesbian Mothers in Motion".)

Education has been "at the heart of the women's movement" Feminists have struggled to break barriers restricting equal access for girls and women to particular educational institutions; and at the same time have attempted to reform the content of education and how that content is delivered. These struggles have demonstrated the need for major structural changes in the education system... a system that has proved "extremely reluctant to feminist challenge". The chapter of Education and Training traces feminist work to eradicate sex-role stereotyping in course material, to expose the sexism of language, and to address the invisibility of women in history. The need for a history, a sociology, an anthropology, a psychology that "started from women's experience" has produced an

outpouring of writing, and helped initiate the field of women's studies. Despite protracted opposition, women's studies have flourished. However, "the developing field of women's studies often concerned itself with gender in such a way as to obscure the inextricable intermeshing of gender with race, ethnicity, class, bodily ability, and sexual orientation". Thus, lesbians, Native women, and women of colour are insisting that women's studies include their voices.

For those of us living in Ontario where the "trickle-down" economic theory, reliance on the market, and obsession with creating a "comfortable" environment for unregulated capitalism hold sway, the chapters on Paid Work and Economic Policy provide a distressing relevance. The inequalities women face in the paid labour force "justified as essential for the well-being and efficiency of the economy" have led to much feminist action during the past 25 years including: pay equity, employment equity, workplace health issues, and trade union activism. For Ontario women the small gains made in recent years will be reversed with the Conservative revoking of employment equity and labour legislation, while women who have benefitted from pay equity in the early 1990s find themselves jobless as organizations 'downsize' and governments ruthlessly eliminate jobs.

"The negative effects of economic policy on women were not simply an oversight... they were an inherent feature of the system...". Defining economic policy as a women's issue has expanded the political sophistication of the women's movement, most notably with NAC's leadership in informing and mobilizing women on the free trade issue. Women's predictions about the impact of the Free Trade Agreement have proven correct, with a devastating loss of jobs, downgrading of wages and working conditions, and the dismantling of social programs. As we struggle to maintain social justice in 1995, a reading of the chapter Feminism's Effect on Economic Policy will strengthen our analysis.

Other themes discussed are Social Policy and Social Services; Women, Law and the Justice System; Women, Culture and Communications (Volume 1) and Global Dimensions of Canadian Feminism (Volume 11). These themes are equally as interesting and instructive and deserve our attention.

I am very impressed by Canadian Women's Issues Volumes 1 and 11 and highly recommend them.

# Are you working with survivors of sexual abuse?

Are you having trouble finding affordable, easy-to-read resources to assist your clients?

Hope in Healing offers a down-to-earth, practical approach to healing from childhood sexual abuse.

## HOPE IN HEALING

an inspiring, supportive, informative 50 page booklet is now available. Written by survivors of sexual abuse, in easy-to-read and reassuring style, it's self-healing techniques are a vital companion in the healing journey.



## HOPE IN HEALING includes:

- learning to believe yourself
- how to get support
- how to survive the crisis
- ways to remember
- letting memories surface
- coping with flashbacks
- coping with intense feelings
- learning to set limits
- how to find resources

# Hope in Healing

is optimistic.  
easy-to-read      powerfully written  
informative,      supportive,      empowering  
and hopeful.

Written in gender-neutral language, the book offers valuable insights about being a survivor.

I particularly liked the section dealing with feelings, which stresses that fear, grief and anger aren't bad, they just feel bad, and suggests helpful strategies for coping.

Another section deals with memories, and dealing with the common phenomenon of blocked memories and recovering them.

Another section on "Working with the whole self" deals with sexuality, offering tips on how to make contact with that dimension of personality.

The clear discussion of limit setting will be helpful to other survivors, as will their ideas on working with the mind, the body, sexuality and spirituality.

Written in clear, simple language that is readily accessible, it describes the steps for a survivor to becoming a complete person by acknowledging and integrating experiences and emotions, and reclaiming life, "with all its possibilities and potential."

The booklet is articulate and sensitive, synthesizing the conventional wisdom of professionals and experts with compassion and understanding drawn from personal experience. However, the authors completely bypass focusing on themselves and their stories.

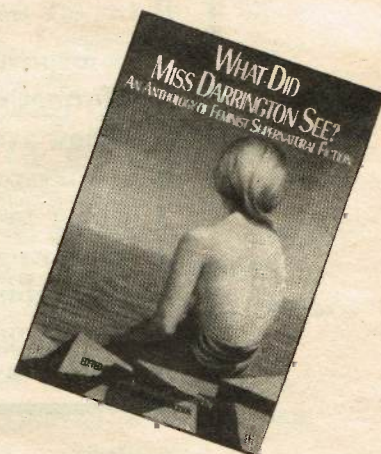
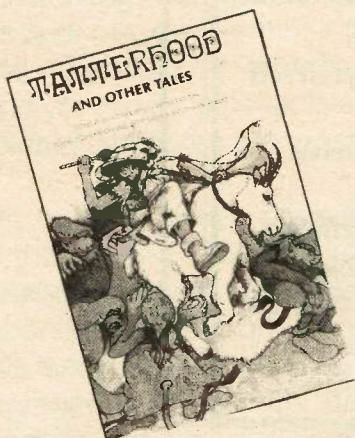
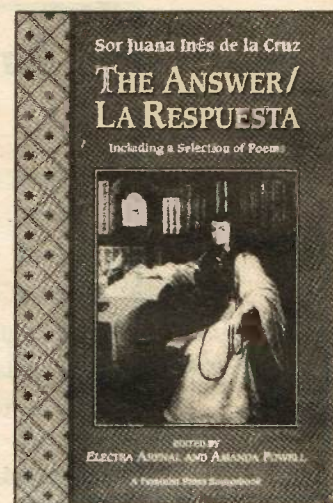
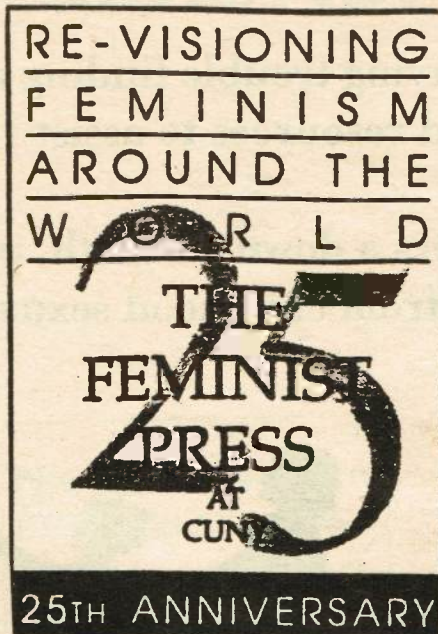
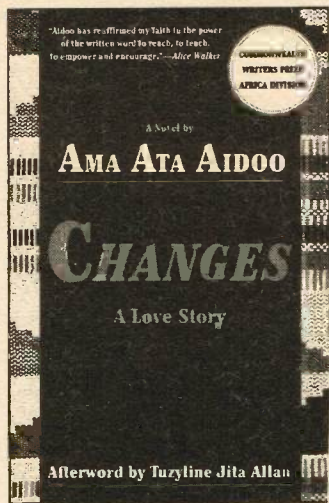


The book contains a brief bibliographic section of books the authors liked, including autobiographies, psychology, and titles focused on incest, sexual abuse and ritual abuse.



It confronts a painful reality, but it urges other survivors to make wise use of all the existing resources in overcoming their experiences.





# THE FEMINIST PRESS AT CUNY

Celebrates 25 years of feminist publishing



*"...if we are not to lose the gains we've made over the past 30 years, we must continue to remember our history and to recall how hard it was to begin to change the maleness of literature only a quarter of a century ago....These books are essential, if our daughters and their daughters are to continue to live in a society that values and esteems women writers."*

—Florence Howe, Publisher and Director of The Feminist Press at CUNY, in an article published in Feminist Bookstore News, March 1994.



❖ The Feminist Press was founded in 1970 by Florence Howe with the support of a small group of feminists.

❖ The Feminist Press has been committed to discovering the "hidden history" of women—a submerged cultural story that needed to be reborn.

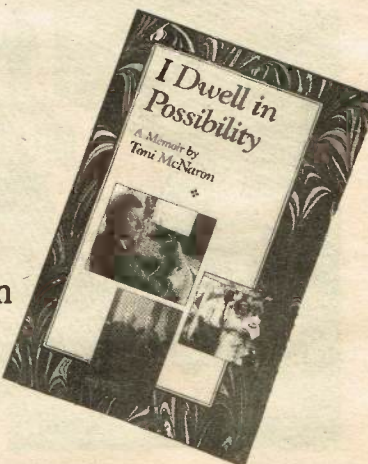
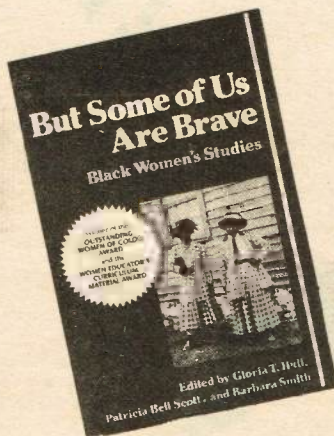
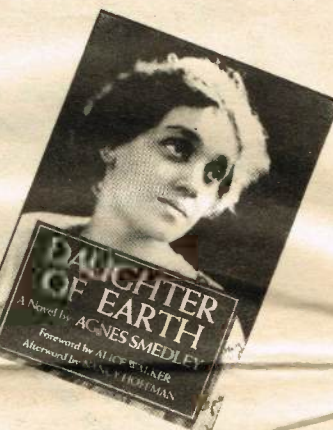
❖ Long before other publishers started doing it, The Feminist Press has published books by and about women writers and other important women in history.

❖ The Feminist Press has been at the forefront of publishing the "lost" fiction of important women writers such as: Rebecca Harding Davis, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Agnes Smedley, Kate Chopin, Zora Neale Hurston and Dorothy West.

❖ In addition, The Feminist Press continues to publish the neglected fiction by living authors such as Paule Marshall, Meridel LeSueur, and Sarah E. Wright.

❖ Unlike other feminist women's presses committed to publishing first novels or "new" fiction, poetry or drama, The Feminist Press makes it their mission to publish "classic" works of fiction by women thus helping these writings to remain in print forever.

❖ The Feminist Press also strives to publish works suitable for academic use, thus having women's works of merit available for inclusion into college curriculums, especially in the fields of literature, social science and history.



To help celebrate their 25th anniversary the Northern Woman's Bookstore is offering a 10% discount on all FEMINIST PRESS titles from Oct. 24 to Nov. 11





Second Class Mail Registration No. 5697

MAIL TO:

[Empty rectangular box for recipient address]

RETURN TO:

THE NORTHERN WOMAN JOURNAL  
P.O. BOX 144  
THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO  
P7C 4V5

Return Postage Guaranteed

IS THERE AN ASTERISK ON YOUR LABEL??  
PLEASE RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

Canadian Publications Mail Product  
Sales Agreement no. 0589276

**Don't forget to renew your  
SUBSCRIPTION**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

**Collectively produced**

Individual \$10.00  
Institutional \$20.00

NORTHERN WOMAN JOURNAL  
PO Box 144  
Thunder Bay Ontario  
P7C 4V5

*JANE SAUNDERS  
Debbi  
Nurlock*

*MARGARET JOHNSTON  
Chris Snyder  
Sandy Skith*

\*\*\*\*\*

