



OtherWise

A Feminist Newspaper at U of T

Volume 1, Number 2, November 29, 1984



Paula Fleck, former member of the U of T Coalition for Responsible Choice, passes the group's banner to Janet Mawhenny, present member of the CRC, at the Pro-Choice rally following Dr. Morgentaler's acquittal. See article, Choice Is a Feminist Issue, Page 10.

PENTHOUSE

by Jane Farrow

Charges of obscenity have been laid against various sellers and distributors of the December issue of *Penthouse*, which features a ten-page pictorial of Japanese women bound, restrained and hung by ropes. As a result of these charges (made under Customs and Criminal Code provisions), the issue is not allowed across our borders and has been removed from many stores across Canada. This in itself is encouraging; however, the extent of our victory will be tempered with numerous legalities and wordings of the charges and eventual court decisions. Unfortunately, it appears at this time that none of these charges will be levelled at the real culprit, Bob Guccione and *Penthouse Magazine*.

In any event, this development in the pornography issue in Canada is useful in two ways. It can help to dispel the commonly held misconception that violence against women exists in a vacuum, or, in other words, that

"soft core is harmless and hard core is bad". Secondly, prior to the charges being laid, a number of conscientious sellers (notably Shoppers Drug Mart and W.H. Smith) yielded to public concern and voluntarily pulled the December issue off their shelves. In other words, don't underestimate your clout as a consumer: tell your corner store what you think of that magazine rack! These types of victories are lasting and much more *sociologically* significant than any court decision.

SEXIST ENGINEERING "NEWSPAPERS" AND THE C.A.S.E. AGAINST THEM

by Jane Haddad

On April 4, 1984, the Coalition Against Sexist Entertainment (CASE) posterd Queen's University campus in protest of *The Golden Words* engineering newspaper. After exhausting all other avenues of legitimate protest -- letters, phone calls and direct confrontation with the office of *The Golden Words*, CASE was driven to take alternative action against this sexist rag. CASE argued that the paper was unacceptable on the grounds that its "humour" (which claims to be sexual satire), distorts reality by

objectifying, trivializing and degrading women and women's sexuality.

CASE took their complaint to the Dean of the Engineering Faculty. Much to their disappointment, but not to their surprise, Dean Bacon absolved himself of any responsibility in the matter. He rejected the request to ask the Senate to impose some ethical guidelines concerning the content of campus publications which would make the degradation and humiliation of all people, regardless of gender, unacceptable.

Frustrated by this course of

action, but inspired by the precedent set by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in convicting the *Red Eye* publication of the University of Saskatchewan's Engineering Society, CASE launched a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission against *The Golden Words*. The Coalition also set up a meeting with the engineers to discuss future editorial guidelines. Press releases were sent to major newspapers, outlining the debate, to try and apply some pressure from outside the university. This strategy was

extremely successful.

The real battle began on April 13, when Linda Hurst took up the cause of CASE and titled her column in the *Toronto Star*, "Vulgar Campus Newspapers are Hate Literature Against Women". Hurst's scathing article, in which she called *The Golden Words* an "amateur attempt at hate literature", started a flood of media attention. On April 16, a debate was held between CASE member Suzanne Williams and the incoming president of the Engineering Society, Sean Guest, on CBC's Ontario Morning. Host Alan

Millar just about choked when Ms. Williams read an excerpt from *The Golden Words* on the air at 7:20 a.m. (prime time). When Ms. Williams suggested that the "humour" used in *The Golden Words* always left women on the bottom and put men on the top, Sean Guest replied in a self-assured manner, that she should not bring sexual positions into the argument. Alan Millar then said sarcastically that "that wasn't what Suzanne was referring to". Guest's self-assurance went right out the window.

The first meeting with

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MORE OTHERWISE

HOME RUN!

Kate Lazier catches up with Alison Gordon and talks to her about her life on the baseball beat. - PAGE 8

THROUGH HER EYES

A women's film festival / Michelle Parkerson, a feminist film-maker. - PAGE 7,11

SUBURBAN DREAMS?

An article about battered women. - PAGE 5

SPENDER BENDER

Nancy Worsfold deconstructs Dale. PAGE 9

RE-MEMBERING

An ordinary Canadian woman. - PAGE 12

NETWORKING

* Coming events... - PAGE 11

Second Women's Housing Co-op Opening

by Kye Marshall

The Toronto Women's Housing Co-op was formed four years ago in response to a need for affordable and decent housing for women in this city. We

OISE Women's Projects

The Centre For Women's Studies in Education is a new centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 923-6641, which is devoted to the promotion and facilitation of interdisciplinary feminist research within the Institute. Currently, three projects are housed in the centre:

1) **Women's Educational Resource Centre:** WERC provides a wide range of resources for the researcher and teacher in women's studies. An excellent selection of books and periodicals, bibliographies, research papers, curriculum materials, photographs, tapes and clippings, in French and English, are among the centre's holdings. Hours: Tues, Wed and Fri. 9:15-4:30. Thurs, 10-8.

2) **Canadian Women's History Project:** CWHP is a project devoted to the development of materials in Canadian women's history including documentary studies, bibliographies and, ultimately, two textbooks. Hours: Mon to Thurs, 8-4.

3) **Resources for Feminist Research / Documentation sur la Recherche Feministe:** Formerly known as the Canadian Newsletter for Research on Women. RFR/DRF is a quarterly periodical of research and work in progress in Canadian and international feminist studies. Its regular features include articles, book reviews, review essays, periodicals and resource guide, abstracts and bibliographies. Hours: Mon to Thurs, 9-4.

sought for suitable property or buildings and finally found a site at Sackville / Shuter and Parliament where the construction is almost complete of twenty-eight 1,2, and 3 bedroom units. Considerable time and effort went into the design of these units especially with respect to acoustics and energy conservation.

We named our building *The Beguinage* in memory of the houses in the Middle Ages that were owned, managed and occupied by women. We have a similar concept for our own women's housing co-op: to create a women-identified space

for sole support women with or without children in an environment that is safe, supportive and controlled by its women members. Through funding from the CMHC we are able to do this. A woman can communally own her own apartment for a lifetime with no down payment.

If you are interested call 925-2475 ext. 330, or come to an information meeting Dec. 13 at 299 Queen St. W., Suite 400 at 7:30 p.m.

Kye Marshall is a member of the Toronto Women's Housing Co-operative.

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Scarborough Centre Fears Closure

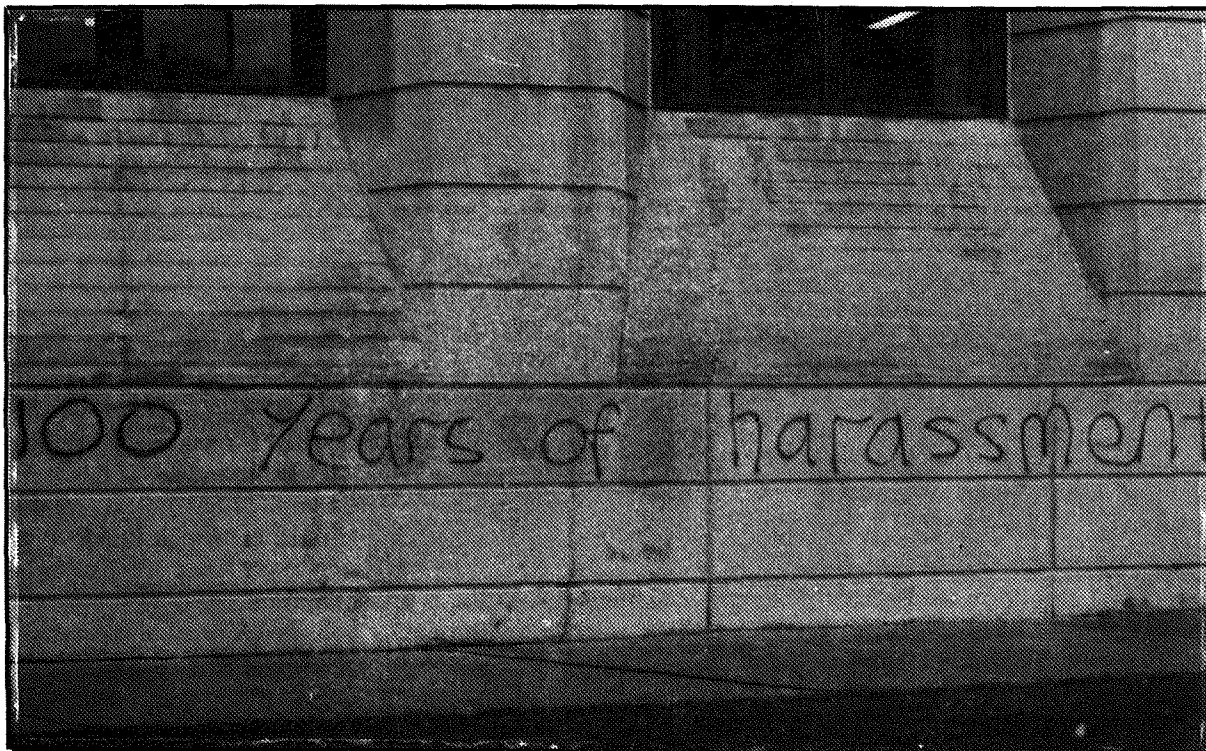
by Ingrid MacDonald

Beaurocratic red tape at the federal level of government and indifference at the municipal level are threatening the future of the Scarborough Women's Centre. September's election and the subsequent change of government has left the Centre in financial limbo. The Centre's staff depends upon Canada Works grants; however, they have run out of money, and will not see their next grant until February of 85. Interim support from the City of Scarborough is not forthcoming. Scarborough council does not consider the 16,000 women who have benefited from the Centre as "their area of responsibility", says Nina Willcocks spokeswoman for the Centre. Instead, political priorities in Scarborough are focussed upon suburban idealism, with 8.3 million dollars now allocated to improve Scarborough Square (city hall), with 4 million of that designated for a parking lot. "In Scar-

borough we have a car community," says Willcocks, "you drive past people in need."

The Women's Centre is trying to meet "a gap" in Scarborough's services by providing space and counselling for women at the Cedarbrook Community Centre. The Centre has four staff persons who co-ordinate workshops on surviving domestic violence, coping with parenting, pre-natal education, eating disorders, health, and assertiveness training. In addition the Centre handles crisis calls from women in distress.

Their survival campaign involves petitioning the business community for donations, and, as well, a semi-glamorous benefit (75 dollars a person gets you speakers, brunch and a tax receipt) at Scarborough's historic Guild Inn on Sunday, December 9th, 11:30 am. More information is available through the Centre: Call 431-1138.



The Women's Studies Student Union received a call recently from the U of T Police. *OtherWise* took the call and was asked, as responsible members of the university, to disclose the mysterious author of the Robarts graffiti. We didn't know, but we'd love to meet her!

CLASSIFIEDS

Wanted: a non-smoking feminist to share two upper stories of house in High Park with same. \$225 plus utilities. Call Beth at 245-4241 during the day.

Feminist Forums: The Women's Studies Student Union is sponsoring a series of informal seminars beginning in January, 1985. Women graduate students are invited to present and discuss their work in progress with other feminist scholars. Anyone interested in participating, or desiring further information call: Barb at 925-8098 or Phyl at 823-2791.

Feminism and Computers: Looking for women who use computers and who are interested in talking about the implications of technology beyond technophobia. Leave message at 534-0116.

Classified in OtherWise \$0.20 a word with \$2.00 minimum charge.

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CORRECTION:

The information on *the Immigrant Women's Centre* should have read as follows: This non-profit organization offers counselling about reproduction, birth control, abortion, nutrition and patients' rights in English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Chinese and Vietnamese. Our apologies to *the Immigrant Women's Centre* and the West Indian Community.

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STILL WAITING CWC at U of T

by Carla-Krystin Andrade

For two days, there was a Women's Centre at U of T. A newsletter from the Coalition for a Women's Centre at U of T announced: "In order to reaffirm our legitimate request for immediate establishment of a Women's Centre, the Coalition has decided to set up its own 'Centre'. Tuesday, November 6 and Wednesday, November 7, will mark the unofficial establishment of the Women's Centre at U of T, an event which will hopefully culminate in the Administration's offering of a permanent space. The event will take place on the lawn in front of the U of T Administration Building - Simcoe Hall, King's College Circle."

I didn't know what to expect. As I crossed King's College Circle nothing seemed out of the ordinary. The soccer players were engrossed in their game and people were hurrying across the field. Strings of colored balloons caught my eye and, as I came closer, I was able to read the words: "Women's Centre at U of T" painted on the fly of a small blue pup tent. Women's music

was playing on a tape recorder and a table was covered with buttons, raffle tickets, and petitions to President Connell. Around the table stood three members of the CWC at U of T, braving the cold to collect signatures, sell tickets and buttons and hand out leaflets explaining the significance of the tent. I had found the tent/ative Women's Centre.

I wasn't the only person who visited the Women's Centre. Many men and women stopped by to offer their support and find out more about the Women's Centre issue. While the CWC was pleased with the response to their posters and newsletters, they were surprised by the fact that some people had assumed there already was a Women's Centre at U of T. The CWC was formed in February of 1984 because U of T is the only major Ontario university without a Women's Centre. Eight months later they are still fighting to get recognition as a U of T group in order to request space. Getting this recognition is usually a simple process, but for the CWC it has been a complicated one. Men are welcome to participate in all activities outside of major decision-making and the formulation of policy for the Women's Centre. Yet the CWC has been



CWC protesters give a cheerful wave from their tent outside Simcoe Hall.

told that their "women only collective" policy discriminates against men. Would Gays and Lesbians at U of T require a heterosexual on their executive?

Despite this obstacle, the CWC continues its work. They are raffling a handmade quilt (Irish Chain Pattern) on December 4. Tickets for it can be

purchased at OPIRG for \$1. A benefit film festival, premiering two films, will be sponsored by OPIRG in the near future and the CWC hopes to have writers' evenings next year. In the mean time they are still collecting signatures for the petition to President Connell, they are asking people to call his office to voice their con-

cerns and they're holding regular planning meetings. Your participation is invited and more information is readily available: call 978-3032 or 531-5167.

Carla-krystin Andrade is a physiotherapist who has finally come to terms with the fact that she will never be "politically correct".



From the Toike Oike, September 20, 1984.

Senior Citizens Council sent a letter to the Dean of Women, Dr. Elspeth Baugh, stating that they would not consider Queen's for their conference in 1985 if steps were not taken to resolve the *Golden Words* controversy. The pressure mounted by CASE and the recent "antics" (including a mock rape) by Queen's engineers at football games has produced a climate in which *The Golden Words* publication is intolerable.

Of course CASE has argued all along that *The Golden Words* was unacceptable because it consistently portrayed women as objects of ridicule on the basis of their sexuality. That didn't seem to be enough in the eyes of the university authorities, since action to cease its publication came only after the reputation of Queen's was tarnished. Let me give you an example of what *The Golden Words* (January 18, 1984) published under the rhetoric of "humour":

YESTERDAY

Yesterday
All my troubles seemed so far away
She was always such an easy lay
Oh, I believe in yesterday.
Suddenly,
She's grown twice the size she used to be
Now she's suing for paternity
Why did I cum so suddenly
Why I could not tell she would swell
'Twas my mistake
Now she's got this runt in her cunt

She'll make me pay.
What a lay.
Now I need a place to hide away
So I headed off to San Jose
Oh I believe in yesterday.
I believe in yesterday....
The Brute Squad

I don't want to subject you to too much of this irresponsible filth, but I feel it is necessary to give you one more example of so-called "journalism" which is unacceptable because it is harmful to women. The next example is taken from the first (September, 1984) of *Toike Oike*, the engineering newspaper at this university.

It is announced on the radio that World War III begins tomorrow at noon: you would

(a) Go on a rampage and

rape every artsci female in sight. (Lady frosh can try to find a real artsci man to rape, but since this is such a remote possibility, it is not included here, so just fucking forget it, ok?)

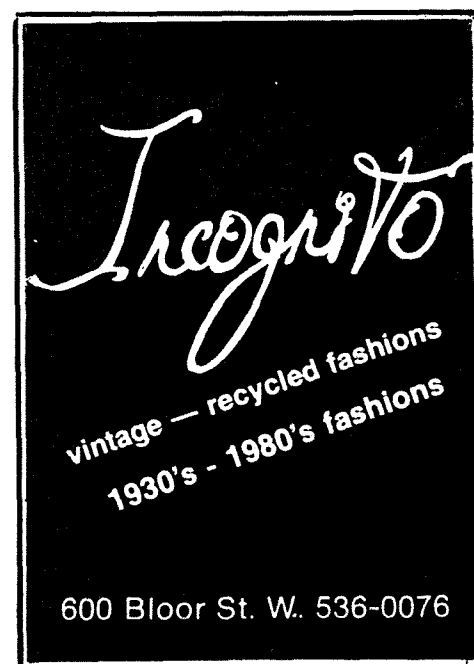
Rape is one theme among many that is offensive (to put it mildly) and which runs throughout this Issue of *Toike Oike*. Do we think this is humorous? NO, and we're not going to take it anymore. If you find this disturbing, COMPLAIN (write to: The Editor, *Toike Oike*, 10 King's College Road, Sanford Fleming Building, Room B670, Toronto, M5S 1A1). If this course of action does not work, we'll have to follow the examples set by the University of Saskatchewan and Queen's and DEMAND that *Toike Oike* cease exploiting women's sexuality as a vehicle of humour.

Engineering (Con't)

representatives from the engineers and CASE was held the day after Guest made his Freudian slip on national radio. It was agreed that CASE would meet with the staff of *The Golden Words* over the summer to work out mutually satisfying guidelines for the content of the paper as well as a mechanism for dealing with complaints. To this day nothing has been agreed upon. However, guidelines may

no longer be necessary because *The Golden Words* has ceased publication.

The protest by CASE stirred up a lot of anger and hostility toward the engineers in the Kingston community as well as from alumni. The media hype prompted some advertizers to withdraw their investment in *The Golden Words* and also began to have financial ramifications for Queen's University. The Ontario



—WISEWORDS

Never retract, never explain, never apologize -
get the thing done and let them howl"

Nellie McClung

The OtherSide



DAMSELS IN DISTRESS

The resurrection of Victoria College's escort service due to a recent assault on one of its undergraduates is yet another example of our society's "band-aid" solutions to the problem of violence against women.

In a society whose ideology advocates the subordination of women, it follows that the treatment of such problems is a reflection of the unequal power relationship between women and men. There is a tendency to view violence against women as an aberration rather than as an inevitable consequence of the way in which men and women relate to each other in our society. For this reason, proposed solutions to the problem generally fail where they begin; they spring from a sexist ideology and neglect to address the harsh realities of violence against women. The popular notion

that sexual harassment and assault only occur in particular places, at certain times, by "sick" men and to a specific "type" of woman are part of a broader mythological mechanism which impedes the development of effective solutions. It is only when the realities of violence against women replace the myths in the forefront of our consciousness that we will be able to effect change successfully.

The revival of the escort service at Victoria College does not challenge the comprehensive mechanisms of power and violence in our society. By definition, an escort service is problematic because it reinforces the stereotypic image of women as defenseless persons who require the protection of others. It casts women into the passive role of "escortee" and presupposes that women are inherently incapable of fending for themselves. By encouraging the dependency of women, the escort service, in all its glory, tacitly condones the victimization of women since this passive-active dynamic is at the very root of patriarchy itself.

The escort service reaffirms a societal double-standard which is ultimately detrimental to women. As women, we pay twofold for the violence which is perpetrated against us. We are the victims of both physical and emotional violence and it is our freedom of movement that is subsequently curtailed. Certainly the implementation of a service designed to escort the perpetrators (instead of the victims) would more appropriately suit our needs since it would safeguard us from harm and respect our right to freedom of mobility. Furthermore, this arrangement would challenge the tiresome notion which postulates that a woman out alone at night invites trouble. Though the escort service may superficially assist a handful of Victoria women for a brief period of time, it nonetheless reinforces a misogynist double-standard which can ultimately place the onus for violence on the victim.

OtherWise is committed to the development of solutions which do not comply with the pervasive imbalance of power in our society nor the ideologies and myths that stem from it. We encourage the exploration and application of solutions which celebrate and enhance our independent and collective strength as women.

An understanding of the societal mechanisms which operate in our disfavor and insist on identifying us as "powerless" human beings is an essential step in developing a woman-empowering identity. Participating in events such as Take Back the Night marches which visibly protest the sexism in our society, signing up for Wen Do self-defense courses which are designed by women for women and soliciting funds for woman-positive organizations are just a few of the ways that we can successfully sustain and develop alternate solutions to the problem of violence against women.

The escort service at Victoria College is not a valid solution to the problem of violence against women but a manifestation of it.

by the Collective

OTHERWISE

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

Carla-krystin Andrade - Writing Co-ordinating
Word Processing,
Margaret Best - Advertising
Carrie Brown - Correspondence, Distribution, Word Processing
Carolyn Cote - on leave until the January issue
Paula Fleck - Distribution, Layout,
Julianne Hodgins - on leave until the January issue
Luanne Karn - Typesetting, Finances, Word Processing, Layout
Kate Lazier - Typesetting, Photography, Word Processing
Ingrid MacDonald - Layout, Graphics, Word Processing
Mary-Louise Noble - Layout, Advertising, Word Processing
Maureen L. Phillips - Finances, Word Processing,
Writing Coordinating
Phyl Sereda - Finances
Tori Smith - Word Processing, Layout
Terry Teskey - Word Processing
Nancy Worsfold - Word Processing Coordinator

THIS ISSUE

Jennifer Arima
Kathy Baker
Jane Farrow
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Jane Haddad
Kye Marshall
Jennifer McIntyre
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Melanie Pesnoy
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Special Thanks to Robert Mills, Chris Leafloor
and the Varsity.

Address all correspondence to:

OtherWise, P.O. Box 857, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2Z2

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OtherWise is a University of Toronto feminist newspaper and is independently funded. Any donations will be most welcome. All articles published in *OtherWise* do not necessarily represent the views of the collective. Only those articles and editorials signed by the collective necessarily express the views of the collective.

Letters To The Collective

Please send letters to:

P.O. Box 857, Station P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2Z2

The collective retains the right to refuse to print letters that are sexist, classist, racist, or homophobic.

Dear *OtherWise*:

First of all, congratulations on your premiere issue - long overdue but well worth the wait.

Second, I want to respond to Nancy Worsfold's article "A Woman's Guide To The Movies." Writes Worsfold, "not all women make films which are feminist", to which I might counter, "not all men make films which are chauvinistic." I doubt Worsfold meant to imply the opposite, but surely she could've mentioned film-makers like John Sayles who consistently display an understanding of feminist issues. In particular, I think of Sayles' "lesbian film" *Lianna*, which was even criticized by the press for being too one-sided.

As for women film-makers, Worsfold writes negatively about Amy Heckerling (for doing the teen "sexploitation" film *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*) whilst not recognizing Martha Coolidge, director of the far superior *Valley Girl*. (Don't laugh, *Valley Girl*'s about the only non-sexist "teenage film" to come out in a long time.)

No harm done, of course, but I thought the topic deserved a second look.

Sincerely,
Bill Sweetman
Motion Picture Studies (1st year)

Dear Sisters,

We wish to congratulate the womyn of the *OtherWise* Collective on their first issue of U of T's new feminist newspaper. What a great way to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of women's admission to the University. We look forward to many future issues and wish you continued success.

Sincerely,
York University
Women's Centre Collective
P.S. Good Luck in your struggle for a University of Toronto Women's Centre.

Dear Collective,

Congratulations on your first issue. Any newspaper that prints "shit" on its front page is a welcome addition to this university community consisting of pabulum-producing presses.

I am concerned that if you don't print letters that are "sexist, classist, racist or homophobic", the only ones you *will* print will be self-congratulatory, haranguing or, worst of all, boring. While it may be true that women have been censored for a few centuries in politics and literature

continued on page 9

FRIENDS
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Canadian Women's Movement Archives

The Archives has grown out of, and is part of, the women's movement in Canada. It is ours. It belongs to all of us engaged in every struggle which gives us more autonomy in our lives.

It is an organized archival collection maintained through consultation with other archivists, and is accessible to all unless donations have specific conditions to be closed to the public. Send us your material (clippings, photos, documents, posters, buttons) and use the resources.

Sincerely,
Bill Sweetman
Motion Picture Studies (1st year)

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or by appointment
P.O. Box 928, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1P1
Tel. (416) 597-8865

Suburban Dreams?

A Look at Violence against Women

by Luanne Karn

I have recently begun working at a shelter for battered women in Scarborough. What follows are some of the stories of battered women. The names are all fictitious, but the stories are based on actual experiences which I have heard in the shelter.

"Peggy is a 65 year old woman who has lived in Scarborough since she was married 35 years ago. She has come to a shelter because she has been abused by her husband for more than thirty years. She has been kicked, punched, raped, lacerated with razor blades, urinated upon and humiliated by verbal abuse. Most of her friends think that her husband is a kind, quiet man and a good father. This is the first time she has left her partner.

MaryAnn moved to Canada two years ago to marry her husband. She has no family here and she speaks very little English. She has a one-year-old boy and is six months pregnant. Her husband has assaulted her a number of times; in the most recent incident he strangled her until she passed out. He left the apartment and returned a few hours later to beat her once again, shattering a bottle over her and leaving glass fragments in her back. The neighbours called the police, who took her to emergency and then called a shelter. She has been at the shelter now for a few months and is learning English very quickly.

Kim is 17 years old and moved to Toronto from Vancouver to live with her boyfriend six months ago. She left home because she had been raped and sexually abused by her stepfather. No one in her family believed her. After moving in with her partner, he became verbally abusive towards her; she decided to move home to Vancouver but he threatened to kill her if she ever left him. One evening, under the pretense of going to the store to buy cigarettes, she went to stay at a shelter. After one night at the shelter she called him; he apologized and said he would never do it again. She returned to him. A few days later, she returned to the shelter beaten and bruised."

I thought that I understood violence against women in our society. As a feminist, I had seen "Not a Love Story: A Film about Pornography". I was aware of the images both in pornography and advertising which depicted women as willing victims of violence. I knew all the statistics about rape, wife assault and child-abuse. I understood that women who are victims of this kind of violence are not alone and that the problems are not ones of individual women, but are the common experiences of all women in a society which condones such violence.

I understood the concept of violence against women but until I began working at a shelter for battered women, I did not understand the "violence" itself, that is, the reality of physical and emotional abuse.

Conservative figures estimate that one in ten women, from all classes and cultural backgrounds, are assaulted by their partners. Yet there are only 28 shelter spaces in Scarborough for women and their children. I use the example of Scarborough only because I work there and am familiar with these statistics. Wife-battering occurs as often in rural communities, small towns and urban centres. Many of these areas do not have even one shelter for women to go to. The lack of publicly funded space means that shelters for battered women receive many, many crisis calls from women who have been assaulted, but who cannot be accommodated. Frequently these women must return to abusive relationships because they cannot find shelter. Family, friends, medical workers and police are often unsupportive. They may not believe a woman, or they may think that "she deserved it" or that she should stay in an abusive relationship "for the sake of the children".

Attitudes such as these exist because people still believe the many myths about wife abuse. For example, when I told a family friend that I was working at a shelter, he responded "Well, you don't see many battered women walking down the street!" In fact every day you see women walking on the street who have been assaulted by their partners. Many people do not recognize this fact either because they are not aware of the problem or because they do not want to recognize it. Family doctors, emergency medical staff, police and social workers, who see women with black eyes and bruises, often do not ask any questions about physical assault. Even after it is known that a woman has been assaulted she may not be given any support or help, which leaves her to solve the problem alone or to live with it, as it is.

Some of the other myths about wife abuse are that only alcoholics, drug addicts or "crazy" men beat their wives. This is simply not true. Men of all back-

grounds and experiences beat their wives. Another myth is that women provoke their partners into assaulting them, especially women who return again and again to abusive relationships. Peggy was often assaulted by her partner without any apparent reason or warning. Therefore, she lived in constant fear of being alone with him, not knowing when the next assault would occur. Other women learn to anticipate when another assault may occur in order to survive or protect themselves. With this prevailing attitude that women are responsible for physical abuse, it is no wonder that many women feel that they are to blame, that if they only tried harder to please their partners then they would not be beaten.

Lack of community and interpersonal support, plus the fact that many women in abusive relationships do not have enough money to support themselves and their children, means that battered women often do not have the choice to leave. Women who do leave encounter many struggles along the way due to this same lack of choice.

Shelters for women are essential because they provide women with this support, with a safe place and with a choice or alternative. By their existence alone, shelters assert that women should have this choice. Wife battering, as well as many other forms of abuse including sexual harassment, rape and child-abuse, is condoned in our society. But shelters alone are not the answer to the issue of wife-assault. Short-term and long-term goals include legal reform, education and finally economic and social independence for women.

As the legal system is today, very few wife-batterers are charged or convicted. When a wife-batterer is convicted, he is often given a shorter sentence than men convicted of other assaults. This only serves to reinforce an attitude of social acceptance regarding wife-assault. On a practical level, it means that when women leave abusive relationships, their partners are free to go wherever they please. Peace bonds can be issued but they are often difficult to enforce. Verbal, emotional and physical harassment of women often continues, even at shelters. The re-

ARE YOU AN EAGER FEMINIST WITH NOTHING TO DO?

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Friday, November 30, 1984 Time: 2:00 p.m.

For Further Details, Call 531-5460.

sult is that security measures such as bars on windows, locks, alarms and even flood-lighting are necessary at shelters for battered women. Unfortunately, it is the women who are jailed, not their partners, for the abuse they have suffered. Once she does leave a shelter, there is no guarantee that the harassment and physical abuse will end.

We, as women, are all victims of violence in one way or another. By breaking down the silence about rape, wife assault, child abuse and other forms of violence, we can support each other rather than remaining sepa-

rate and alone with our abuse. Our power must come from seeing the strength of women who are struggling to escape abusive relationships and who have freed themselves. The hope is that this power and freedom can become the choice and right of all women.

For more information on wife assault call Education Wife Assault: 968-3422.

Luanne Karn is a relief worker at a shelter for women in Scarborough and is a student at U of T majoring in Women's Studies.

Ingrid MacDonald's

Dear Enigma Person,

Dear E-P.

The other day I was walking down the street. No big deal. I was going somewhere, so I was walking down to the streetcar stop. It's a cinch. Do it everyday. Anyways, I was walking and I saw this man sitting on a fence, just a little fence. He had his hat on and some stuff with him: he looked normal enough but believe it or not, the guy was crying. Great big heaves, in the middle of the day where anybody could see him. And so I walked past, and before I got five feet, I felt this unusual sensation, all wierd sorta, like something got into my blood. First I thought it was a dizzy spell, but it's hung around now for days. I am at a loss, and this bothers me as I am a graduate in clinical psyche. Please don't recommend reading Maslow or Laing, whose California idealism I detest.

Thanks,
P.P.

Dear Fence Sitter Seer,

Don't panic. There is no need to be alarmed. Calm down. Take yourself out to dinner. Go to the zoo and eat popcorn. Get used to it: what you are experiencing is just emotion.

Dear Enigma Person,

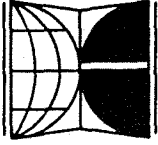
I know some people don't think of being a letter carrier as hard work but it is indeed hard work: at Christmas bags and bags of greeting cards show up at the station. When it's not Christmas, companies send out free samples, and I get to deliver 314 little cans of tomato soup, or 314 scratch-and-sniff perfumed envelopes or 314 plain wrapped boxes of maxi-pads.

Now I've got this one lady on my route. I gotta say I don't know who writes her, but she gets darn near to a hundred pieces of mail a day. Now a hundred pieces of mail comes to about twelve extra pounds of paper I've gotta carry, and well I just don't want to. Should I confront her? What if she has a dog and tells it to bite me in the ankle?

Sincerely,
Burdoned and Apprehensive

Dear B and A,

You have brought up a remarkable topic that we encounter often in feminism. A good rule of thumb that I keep is: before one enters into any sort of confrontation, one should discover if the opponent has a dog. I, myself, also like to know, what kind of dog it is. Sometimes one can not just come out and ask, so I have designed a clever system. Simply check the driveway of your opponent's house to see what kind of car they have. This will give useful clues regarding both the type of dog and the style of approach. For example: sportscar = doberman = forget about it; sedan = terriers = begin apologetically, when you put down your 100 piece bundle say, "I'm sorry, but..."; volkswagon = poodle = whistle jovially, then start with Santa-like Ho, Ho, Hoes; The absence of cars, and the presence of bikes, is always a good sign and usually means cats.



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Outcasts or Equals?

An Historical Look at Women in Medicine at U of T

by Anne Rochon Ford

The system of medical education in Ontario at the time of the University of Toronto Federation Act in 1887 was extremely complex. The Act made possible the creation of a Faculty of Medicine at the University, absorbing faculty and students from the Toronto School of Medicine. The Trinity Medical School was later absorbed in the Faculty of Medicine when Trinity federated with the University of Toronto.

When Emily Howard Stowe requested permission to attend lectures at the Toronto School of Medicine more than a decade earlier, her request was flatly denied. She was the first to attempt to challenge the all-male institution, and when refused, she applied to the New York Medical College for Women and was accepted. At the same time, another Toronto woman, Jennie Trout, had begun medical training at the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania. The two women returned to Toronto when their schooling was completed and attempted to apply for licensing from the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Both were refused on the grounds that a graduate from an American medical college must attend one session of lectures at an accredited Ontario medical school—a possibility from which, as women, they were explicitly excluded. After considerable persistence, the two women were eventually allowed to take their obligatory one session at the Toronto School of

Medicine, where it is recorded that they were treated with a good deal of hostility by both faculty and students. Their admission was seen as an exception and they were not registered on the regular students' roll. Trout received her licence to practice in 1875 and Stowe in 1880.

As with the question of women in higher education, that of the role of women in medicine was under serious review in Ontario in the 1880's. Medical journals of the day carried articles and editorials which questioned the appropriateness of women entering the profession, suggesting that their energies might better be spent bearing and nurturing children. Women's attempts to enter medicine in Ontario coincided with a period when the profession was trying to become more respectable, and it seems that many felt the presence of women would only hinder those efforts. It soon became evident to some women, in particular Emily Howard Stowe and Jennie Trout, that the only option left was to try to establish separate medical colleges for women, as had been done in the States.

After gaining the support of local citizens and a handful of medical professors, Stowe and Trout were successful in establishing two medical schools for women in Ontario. Stowe was involved in the creation of the Women's Medical College in Toronto in October of 1883, and Trout with the founding of the Women's Medical College in Kingston at the same time. The

colleges were affiliated with the University of Toronto and Queen's University respectively. The colleges themselves could not confer degrees, but women could receive their degrees from the university with which the college was affiliated.

Paving of the road to a women's medical college was greatly helped by the pioneering efforts of Emily Stowe's daughter, Augusta, who, as we have seen, had entered the Victoria Medical College in 1879 and had completed her degree by 1883. But women had a long way to go before genuine acceptance of the female presence in medical practice was achieved. In one of the earliest convocations at the University of Toronto to include women from the Women's Medical College (in 1890), an observer noted: "The occasion was embarrassing to the conferring authorities. The Halls of learning reeked with hostility and satire, so much so that (the five women graduating in medicine) were deprived of the honour and satisfaction of public formality. They were obliged to remain in an anteroom, and after the men students had received their degrees with "pomp and circumstance", some subordinate functionary appeared in their midst and handed around their precious documents as if they were so many commercial circulars.

The Women's Medical College at Kingston was forced to close its doors in 1893 due to financial difficulties and the Women's Medical College in To-



Augusta Stowe, the first woman to receive a medical degree in Canada, shown here in her graduation photo of 1883 (Victoria College).

ronto became the Ontario Medical College for Women. The latter operated a maternity department and dispensary which was the forerunner of the present-day Women's College Hospital. The Ontario Medical College for Women graduated a total of 109 women in its twenty-two years of existence. The Faculty of Medicine at the University opened its doors to women in 1906 and the Ontario Medical College for Women closed.

Women desiring an education in the Arts had to confront a general and vaguely formulated prejudice against the idea of higher education for women. But women pursuing an education in Medicine had an even tougher battle to fight. They had to confront the specific and strongly-held prejudice which the profession of Medicine had against women joining its ranks. The persistent and heroic efforts of a few women slowly worked to

change attitudes about women in Medicine, but even when women were finally allowed to study alongside their male colleagues at the University of Toronto after 1906, their path was still far from smooth. Until well into the twentieth century, women medical students were often denied residences and internships in hospitals across Canada, and some universities had female quotas in their Faculties. Marion Hilliard wrote of her experience in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto in the 1920's: "The pioneer work had been done by the time I went to medical school....Of course the girls had to sit in the front row and you could hardly say we were welcomed—but we certainly were not outcasts."

Perhaps not outcasts, but certainly not equals either.

The above was excerpted from Anne Ford's soon-to-be published booklet.

Culture Shock: A Feminist in Law School

by Kathy Baker

There are few female faces in the portraits of the staid justices lining the walls. A few women's faces peer out from the graduation classes in the 1950's and 1960's. During those years the men were identified by initials and surnames. The women had "Miss" in broadstroke prefacing the name. As though it was a sort of jurisprudential finishing school. Why else would the women be there, if not to study for an M.R.S. degree.

During the 1970's the grad. pictures start to metamorphose. Female faces appear and increase in number! My predecessors sported tasteful make-up and nicely coiffed hair. In appearance they may not have conformed to the stereotyped image of radical feminists, yet they were here. They were setting a precedent and regardless of their personal beliefs, that was a political statement. Today, forty percent of the first year class is female. Yes, "You've come a long way, Baby!"

So it seems. Yet, the incredible contradiction in that

statement is mirrored at the school. Somehow there always seems to be a preponderance of male voices answering questions (usually at great length) and volunteering to present arguments to the class. We're definitely in the choir, we're the sopranos among the baritones and tenors, but can we be heard?

We talk a lot about this issue. Would-be lawyers are big on personal responsibility, so we say to each other— "Maybe we're not aggressive enough," or, "It's our own fault, we don't volunteer." Yet when we do, we seem to make presentations in exclusively female groups. For example, when we signed up for Advocacy, a program where issues are argued in mock trial, the self chosen groups were often gender specific. Odd that we have so much to say about men and so little to say to them.

The problem here is that we're speaking a different language. It is, after all, Man's law and Man's law schools. Argument, forceful, dynamic, aggressive and persuasive, is the

focus. Competitive argument is a win or lose proposition; if my argument is superior, yours must be... well ... inferior. Of course, it's argued that the law schools emphasize what the practice of law demands. Not many trial lawyers smile cheerfully at their "learn'd friend" and concede that they've made a good point. Not Clayton Ruby. Not Eddie Greenspan. Not even Madam Justice Bertha Wilson.

We're definitely in the choir, we're the sopranos among baritones and tenors, but can we be heard?

Ironically, women have been spending the post-liberation years learning to talk with each other, learning to dialogue.

Dialogue is the very antithesis of competitive argument. The emphasis here is on consensus. Consensus is the goal in our women's groups and our activities are geared to co-operation. There is a striking difference between their style and ours and the University of

Toronto is not going to start emphasizing dialogue, mutual discussion and gentle co-operation.

If this is the case, how does a woman fit into law school? Women's groups offer one solution to this dilemma. What we have here is Culture Shock. That's what happens when there is a difference in norms and you're the minority, so you have to change.

And we do change. We become more aggressive, we talk more loudly when we fear interruption, we elucidate at great length and we try to demolish the other person's argument. Then we go home to our families and they say "You've changed". They don't understand why we want to combat instead of dialogue and neither do we. So we go to our Women and the Law meetings, in

the dingy little room at Falconer Hall (the one where the subway rolls by every three minutes and you overhear the "distinguished" speaker in the swanky solarium upstairs) and we support each other the best we can. And we continue learning to be more aggressive, more verbal, more male.

Oh, I can hear my colleagues protesting that it's not that grim. They're right, it's not. It's much more slight, insidious and apparently insignificant. We don't hardly notice it, except in those first few weeks before the socialisation really takes hold. We're learning to live with the contradictions, I asked three questions in class this week and offered to present an argument in criminal law. I'm learning to compartmentalize; argue at school, dialogue at home. I'm one of the feminists at law school.

Kathy Baker is a first year law student; a former Probation Officer with a side interest in anarchy. Most deeply held belief: "Amelia Earhardt is alive and well on a pleasant Greek island."

A festival of over 50 films from 16 countries, made by and about women. Featuring a special tribute to French actress/director Jeanne Moreau, Monday, November 26 through Friday, November 30 at 5:30 daily at The Premiere Dance Theatre. Ms. Moreau will also be there to present some of her films, along with other directors and lecturers from around the world. Discussions will be held. For more information, Call: 364-5665.

The Other Side

Are you my Other?

DAVE COVERLY 1984

Five Years in the Big Leagues - Alison Gordon Talks about Baseball

by Kate Lazier

The following is excerpted from an interview that took place on October 24. Alison Gordon is a sports writer for the *Toronto Star* and the author of the book *Foul Balls* published this month by McClelland and Stewart.

KL: Is your book about writing for *The Toronto Star*?

AG: No, it's about baseball. It mainly focusses on the people, the characters, some of the writers, some of the players, the coaches, the fans, and the ballparks. One chapter is the experience of being a woman sports writer, but that's not what the book's about really.

Part of the reason why I wanted to write this book was as a woman I had a different view of the sport than most people, I don't buy the myths, they don't mean anything to me.

KL: At the *Star*, did you cover the Jays in particular?

AG: Yes, the Jays. I don't know anything about any other sports, and I still don't. Baseball is part of me, I don't like football and hockey.

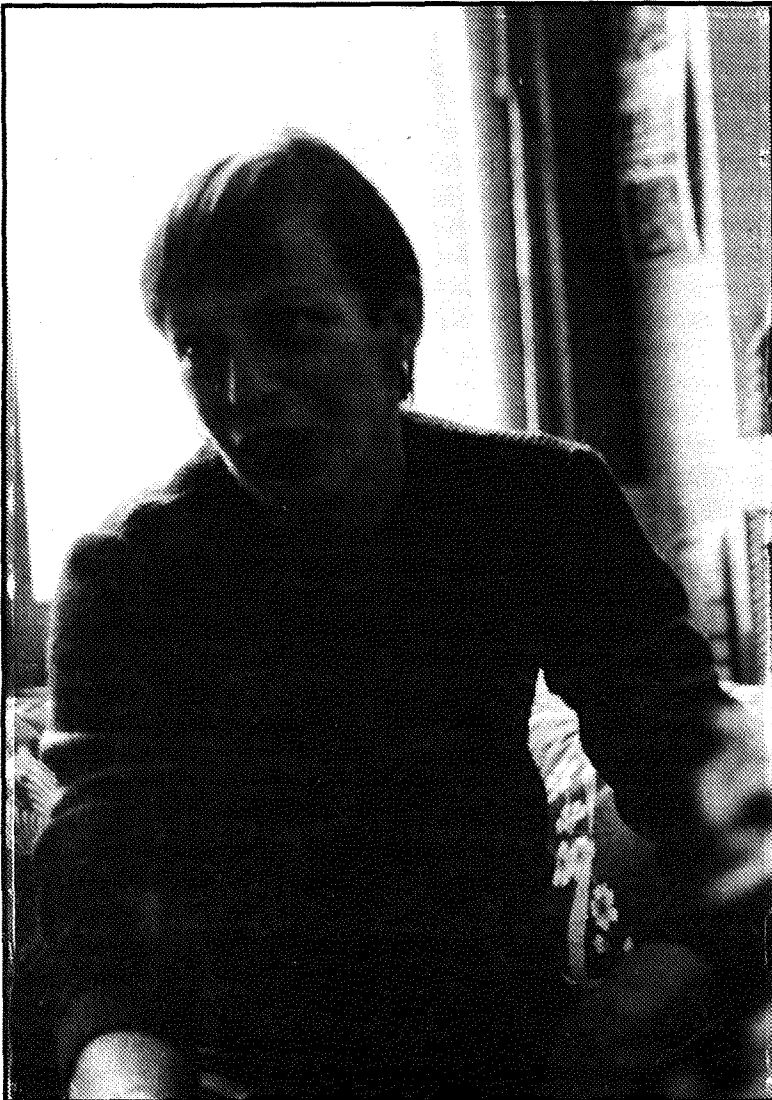
KL: What did that entail? Following the Jays around the globe or...

AG: Oh yeh around the globe to Cleveland! People would say to me "what a glamorous job, you get to travel". Well try sitting in a hotel room in Oakland for three days staring at the wall. And alot of cities are really pretty boring, though New York and Boston are nice. It was a funny way to travel because I had funny free time. I basically started at five by taking the team bus to the ballpark. Games were mainly night games. And so I'd be finishing work around twelve thirty in the morning. I had to be together at that point too because the most important point in my work day is the moment I begin to write the game story and that was at eleven thirty at night. There I'd be wide awake at the level of tension that most people are at five o'clock. So I'd stay up really late and get up late. My free time was between noon and five. A very odd time- I just read alot. The players watch the soaps. On the bus to the ballpark these supposedly grown men sit around talking about the latest plot twists in *General Hospital*.

On the bus to the ball park these supposedly grown men sit around talking about *General Hospital*

KL: What specifically did you encounter as a woman? I heard there was a controversy about women reporters going into the players' locker-rooms. Were you involved with that?

AG: It was in 1978, the year before I started the job, that a woman named Melisa Ludkey (her name has since changed) worked for *Sports Illustrated*. She tried to go into the clubhouse after the World Series games. They kept her out and so Time Inc., who publishes *Sports Illustrated* sued the Yankees saying that she was being discriminated against. There was a large kafufel and a big court case which she won and so the



locker-rooms were opened to women in the end of 1978. That had all happened before I started.

Some teams tried to get around it by interpreting "equal access" to say that they had to either let everyone in or keep everyone out. So one team for example, The Texas Rangers changed the rules when I happened on the scene so that men weren't allowed in the locker-rooms either. This was a very clever ploy on their part. They figured that what would happen is that they would get the men mad at me. It was the first road trip I took and I got there and found this was happening. I thought "oh my God, these Texas redneck writers" and in fact they were super. They came up to me and said "if you feel you have to get in the locker room we'll go with you after the game". We all went down together to the locker-room, they opened the door and said "you can't come in and we'll bring a player out". Then a writer with this great Texas accent

trying to gross me out etc.

I wasn't in it as a trail blazer I was in it because I love baseball and was fascinated by the thought of trying to cover it. I wanted it to really work. The first season I always wore skirts and dresses when I usually wear blue jeans. And it worked- because I behaved and dressed like a lady they tended to treat me like a lady. By the second or third season I began to be able to relax more and be a little more myself.

KL: Do you see that things have changed? Are there other women baseball reporters?

AG: Yes, not alot, but yes things are definately changing. I did it for five seasons and by the fourth season it was becoming common enough that no-one looked twice which I think is good. There aren't enough women doing it. But that's not because of baseball, it's got to do with the papers. The papers tend to hire women sports writers for the softer beats: tennis, figure skating, amateur sports. On a paper the major sports- the more important beats tend to go to men. But now almost every major

paper has a women in the sports section, at least one.

KL: What about in the other sections of the paper?

AG: In the life section of the *Star* there are lots of women and one man. In general there are alot of women reporters. At the *Star* it's at least half, or maybe more.

You get awfully sick of athletes. They're very self centered. Because all their lives they have been better than everyone else. They were probably the best kid on their little league team, the best kid on their high school team, the best kid to get on their college team, and so on. There were times I'd just get pissed off at some jerk pitcher who'd keep me waiting for a half an hour because he didn't feel like talking to the

press. Now here's a guy making ten times a year what I make, who is 15 years younger than I am and a lot less interesting; and I have to wait for him to get his stupid quotes! And they all say the same things all the time and so it's very hard to get beyond the predictable quotes: "I gave 110 percent" or "I didn't stay within myself". What does that mean? And occasionally I'd ask "what does that mean?" and they'd say "ah,ah,um...". That was the cliché for 1983. It was always not staying within themselves or staying within themselves depending on how they felt. And you just get tired of that after a while.

I found I missed women tremendously. Basically I was either on the road or working at nights with the team or I was with the male reporters in the press box. The only women I saw on the road were waitresses, bartenders or groupies. I would find that when I got home I would immediately call up my women friends. Not only that, but the men were not like the men I normally know. Men I know normally are very unjock, valuing brain over brawn. I felt like I was foreign correspondent.

I found that being a women was almost an advantage for me because the guys would let their guard down alot more than the for male reporters. There was a distrust of male reporters. People ask me about the

KL: What was your favourite assignment? or your favourite incident?

AG: The time of day I liked the best was at the ball park just before or during batting practice. It was a very private time and it was really fun to watch the players warming up. There's a nice kind of peace at that time of day- before the game, before showtime, before competition. When I think of happy times that's what I think of. And ofcourse there were games that were wonderful and moments that were wonderful.

I never felt part of that world but I was one of the people on the fringe of it and close enough to enjoy it. I liked spring training and always preferred the noncompetitive aspects better. The players I liked better tended to be rookies and guys that have been around for years and who are barely competent.

KL: What would you say was your worst experience?

AG: I think the worst would be the loneliness, the isolation. I think the worst times often center on being a woman. All writers are isolated from the team but I was a bit more just because I didn't really go out with the reporters either.

There was one time I was with another reporter and we were in Boston before a game. Everyone was ex-

Now here's a guy making ten times a year what I make, who is 15 years younger than I am and a lot less interesting, and I have to wait for him to get his stupid quotes!

whole question of male/ female in this situation but the biggest gulf I think was athlete/nonathlete. There were lines drawn between the guys in uniform and the guys not in uniform. Some of the players I think dispired some of the male reporters more than some of the female reporters because they'd know that the male reporters were very often failed jocks and hero worshippers- guys who really wished they could be baseball players. Whereas I'm not a failed jock. I was so completely different that I was almost acceptable. For example I would talk to a player in a slump, say- not hitting at the bat. Perhaps because they're used to talking to women, their mothers or girl friends or sisters or wives about problems, they would open up to me a bit more.

cited about the game because ABC Television and Howard Cosell were there. Normally when pitchers start a game they are awful- full of great seriousness and solitude. Not this pitcher, he was out there yacking away. He comes up to me and this other guy and says "I've been wondering, how do you decide what to write about? When do you decide what your story is going to be?" He was asking about the whole process. "So you decide through the game, then you come and talk to us and how do you get the story back to the paper?" And after the conversation was over he left and the other guy and I turned to each other and said "You know that's the first time a player has expressed an interest in what I do?"

Perhaps because they're used to talking to women. they would open up to me a bit more

If a male reporter came up and said "you haven't had a hit in five games", the player would say "no problem". To me they'd say "yeh, I'm having a problem". I'd ask "what are you doing about it?" They'd describe to me how they are driving their wives crazy by going home every night and standing with a bat, working on their swings. If a guy asked an athlete a question about a failure there is a kind of adversary situation in that. It wasn't as if men were getting all sorts of wonderful quotes from some big athlete and I wasn't getting anything.



Letters (Con't)

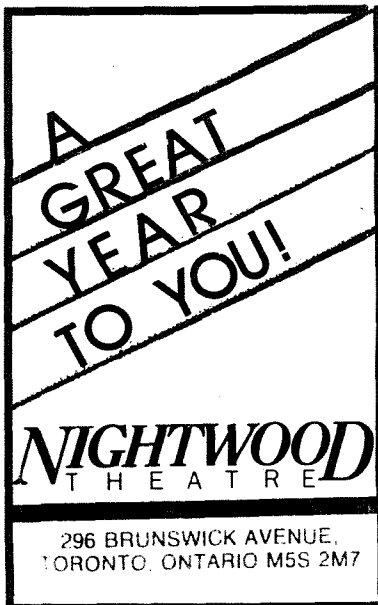
(and myriad other public outlets), I think it's a bad start for you to become selective oppressors right off like that. *OtherWise* ...I hope you have fun.

Ted Parkinson

Dear Editors,

I think *OtherWise* is terrific. It is truly a positive publication and an asset to the U. of T. Community. Keep up the good work and I, as a member of the SAC Executive and the SAC Women's Commission, will continue to help with the struggle to get a women's centre on this foot-dragging campus.

In Siblinghood,
Kevin Perkins



WOMEN'S ALBUM

by Tori Smith

Gee whiz, sis, girl groups! No, I'm not talking about the Lennon sisters, or even the Go-Go's for that matter but a new school of woman's bands represented on an album produced here in Toronto. That's right, a whole album: new music - no men.

The album - entitled "*G*" and no, it does not stand for anything in particular - features bands from Toronto, Montreal, Peterborough, Vancouver, Seattle, and Japan. If the offbeat mix of cities doesn't raise a few eyebrows, the varied and innovative sounds certainly will. The record is the project of Voicespondence, masterminded by Clive Robertson and Janet Martin. Its the latest attempt by Voicespondence to produce artists whose access to media is, shall we say, limited. Starting out in 1975 making audiocassettes, the company began putting out records in 1980 with a release by the Toronto band *The Government*. More recently they were responsible for getting *De Dub Poets* and the all women *Fifth Column* on to vinyl. Artist controlled and non-profit, the label has played an important role in the political and artistic communities of the city.

The new album was inspired by the *Womansbands* series held at the Rivoli last year. After taping a few of the gigs,

Robertson and Martin (who was then a member of *Fifth Column*) began to feel that not only should the trend in women only bands be documented but that they should be heard beyond Queen Street as well. To find out just how many women's bands were hiding in Canada they placed ads in various publications. Janet found however that much of what was sent her was from solo musicians playing a more folky sound than she was looking for. It was through contacts in the music world at large that they found enough bands playing the under ground or "garagey" sound they wanted. The Japanese bands, for example, were found through a little global networking; a friend of Janet's just happened to be involved in the production of a woman's album in Tokyo and involved in producing a women's record in Japan and offered her two new unused songs. Even now Voicespondence is waiting for two bands they just heard of to send in tapes. It is this "garagey" flavour which distinguishes the album, and is for Janet an important feature of women's music. She explains that because women playing in bands are a relatively new phenomenon, they can afford to take stylistic risks. Furthermore, both she and Harriet Harriet of *The Heretix* claim that most women's bands are formed

around the same time the members learn how to turn on an amplifier, so that they develop a musical vocabulary and a women's style at the same time. Perhaps another factor affecting women's style is that as they are overcoming their fear of technology they are less likely to become infatuated with it so they can keep gadgets in their place!



Janet Martin, producer of "*G*".

The resulting sound on this album demonstrates a huge range of possibility, from the experimental Seattle band's use of taped radio voices and chant-like lyrics, to the rock and roll sound of the *Word Of Mouth Band*.

As well as being musically innovative Janet feels it is important not to cater to the expectations of a specific audience. Although she is adamant that there be nothing anti-feminist on the record not all of the groups are political in their lyrics. Unfortunately, until translations arrive, what the Japanese bands are saying is anybody's guess. Content ranges from *Word Of Mouth*

Band's song about orgasm to *Noh Special Effects* abstract piece on technology and mom(?). More clearly political lyrics are found in *The Heretix*' cut about the victimization of women by the fashion industry. And while Janet herself does not feel women are obliged to preach from the stage, it is clear that she sees women getting together in groups to produce music, as political in itself. Janet hopes that the innovative styles on the album will attract a younger audience not usually tuned into women's music. Starting with a run of 500 copies the records will be distributed in centres throughout the world. Although the fate of the album in the Toronto market is uncertain, Janet says there is nothing as exciting as learning that a song is getting airplay half way around the world. If the first run is a success Clive and she hope to do a second pressing from which the profits would be given to the musicians.

No article about the arts would be complete without a mention of funding problems, and Voicespondence proves no exception to the rule. Not only has money shortage delayed the release of this album until January but sadly has forced them to sell their studio after they finish three final projects. While they will continue to use the label it means many artists will no longer have access to recording facilities. Lucky for us, that "*G*" will be spinning happily on our turntables by then.

Dale Spender and the Problem of Empirical Feminism by Nancy Worsfold

On Saturday, October the 27th Dale Spender gave a lecture to an enthusiastic audience of about two hundred feminists. She was warmly received-women laughed at her jokes and gave her a standing ovation. I laughed with the crowd but her talk left me feeling first empty then angry. I realized that I had sat through yet another session of watching a feminist preach to the converted; she had made her case cleverly, but the fact remains that the substance of what she said was, "women are oppressed." We knew that before we arrived.

Spender pointed out in her lecture that there are only two words to describe female sexuality, nymphomania and frigidity, whereas men can be potent and virile. This comment was left hanging, as was all of her research. She seemed to imply that this example was concrete proof that women have a bum deal. Surely, for this example to mean anything it has to be put into a theoretical context; that is, what does it mean to say that our language is sexist? She suggested that our language is sexist because it is controlled by men, by male grammarians and lexicographers. This is undeniably true, a man decreed centuries ago that women and men should correctly be referred to as "men and women," "husband and wife,"

and so on. The only exception which "proves the rule" is "bride and groom," a wedding being the only time when a woman is more important than a man. Both "mum and dad" and "father and mother" are reversible even though women are the chief nurturers of children.

But I digress; the sexism in language, as pervasive and compelling as it may be, is only significant in that language is significant. I would postulate that language is probably the most powerful police force in existence. I believe that the limits of language become the limits of our world. So it is the role of creators, artists, political theorists, nay, all speakers of language, to be constantly pushing back the limits of our language to make new ideas possible. Surely the way in which we immediately assume that any person referred to as a doctor is a mister is a point which needs to be investigated as much as any statistical survey of medical school entrance boards. One could say that things are changing: chairman in some circles is now chair or chairperson, but men are usually chairmen and women are chairpersons, so we remain invisible in language. Other new words, like "Walkman" conform to the same old patterns.

Spender seemed to be completely uninterested in the impli-

cations of sexist language. She gave her references and data as if the position of women in language was to be construed in much the same way as the position of women in the work force. The position of women in language is not even analogous to our "position" anywhere in the concrete world. Systems of signification are not "reality." Examining the interrelation of our "real world" and language can be very interesting. Most of the theoretical work about language has been written by men, and Spender claimed that she never buys books written by men, so perhaps this is why there exists a such a huge gap in her work.

Spender's work is empirical. This means that she approaches her work with the same method as many sociologists or psychologists; she has amassed data and organized it in which ever way she considers objective. This she proudly described, bragging to the audience that she, like most researchers, could prove any point which she wanted and just as easily disprove any of her previous work. If that is the case, if she trusts her research method that much, a question begs to be asked: Why bother? For instance, she has done research about conversations between men and women. Even when both parties involved believe that they have both spoken 50% of the time, in-

variably when a tape of the conversation is timed, the woman has never spoken more than 33% of the time. The only incident in her research when this "rule of one third" was violated was a conversation in which she herself had spoken 40% of the time. The man had stormed off in a huff claiming that she was impossibly rude. While these findings are interesting and she presented it all with great finesse, in the face of the woman who breaks all of the rules, Margaret Thatcher, she had nothing to say. Spender just joked about asking Thatcher to be quiet so as not to disturb Spender's own credibility. No discussion of women entering male discourse. Not even a discussion of male identification, the rejection of association with the underdog, with us, the underbitch.

Some things which Spender said sounded to me a bit too much like a kind of "conspiracy theory." In discussing her book *Women of Ideas*, she told us about a man and a woman who wrote about similar things in the 18th century. They have gone into history books as, respectively, a moralist and an etiquette writer. She seemed to imply that this was the conscious act of some man who had decided to devalue the poor woman's work. Is it not more likely that the concept of a woman philosopher is so remote to our culture that the

woman's writing really appeared trivial to male historians? Trivia, by the way, was once a word for the Goddess of women's wisdom.

The difference between intentionally and unintentionally denigrating women's work may seem small, but the implications are not. Take, for instance, the recent survey which showed that, surprise, surprise, at U of T men make more money than women and hold higher positions. Either one can say, suggesting a conspiracy, that the men at U of T are cruel chauvinists who don't want women to be well paid or to hold high positions. End of story. Or one can take the statistics and ask why secretaries generally make less than maintenance workers, why secretaries are always women and why women have to fight for decent maternity leave and yet nobody "lays a guilt trip" on working fathers. The questions multiply rapidly if one looks at the problem as a problem, not as some man's sin.

Spender seemed to imply a "conspiracy" most problematically when she complained that women's books are currently being printed on poor quality paper and that hardcover editions are rarely issued. This, she suggested, is an incidence of the way feminist thought is deleted from history. Come on, Dale!

continued on page 12

Choice is a Feminist Issue

by Rachel Pepper

The issue of personal choice is one which affects each man and woman of every nationality in all aspects of his or her life. To many of us living in a democratic society such as Canada, the ability to make our own decisions concerning our lives is one which we take for granted. It is only when these rights are denied or violated that we realize how possible it is for others to make choices for us that do not reflect our wishes or best interests.

For thousands of years in many world cultures, men have made decisions for women. This classified them as, in the words of Simone de Beauvoir, the "Second Sex". The role of woman as the powerless "other" developed over time not as a result of inadequacies in these women, but because of lack of say in their own lives.

This lack of power, to many of us, is especially disturbing when it concerns women's reproductive freedom. The "fall of man" in Genesis 3:16, in which women lose the choice to decide when and if to conceive, is the Biblical interpretation of the impregnation of women.

Historically, it has always been the women who have nurtured and raised children, from the matriarchal clans to the modern "nuclear" family. Patriarchal society has dictated the fact that women are obliged to bear and raise children and has prevented any changes. Therefore, women

between the child-bearing ages of twelve to fifty have been chained to their reproductive systems.

Crude methods of birth control have developed over the centuries into today's condoms and IUDs. However, these methods are neither safe, reliable nor acceptable. The development of safer birth control has been incredibly slow for many reasons. As Margaret Sanger, one of the pioneers in the establishment of birth control clinics wrote in 1920, men have not only refused to accept responsibility for birth control, they have sought to prevent woman from obtaining knowledge by which she could assume responsibility for herself.

Today, the issue of Choice is as controversial as ever. Despite some gains made in birth control, women's choices are limited by side effects caused by the Pill and the bloody trail of a wandering IUD. And women, more than ever, must accept the responsibility for an unwanted pregnancy.

This is why the establishment of free standing abortion clinics is of critical importance. Until we as women are free to make all decisions about our own lives, we will never be free. While we do have more say than in the past, these gains could disappear more easily than we would like to

believe. For example, the Reagan administration proposed a bill recently that would make access to birth control for teenagers only possible with the permission of their parents. How many of us, in our teens, could have openly approached our parents for permission to our own sexuality?

It is impossible to ignore the implications involved. Rightwing forces in the U.S. are being felt more and more. There has been increased bombing of abortion clinics nationwide, and the fire-bombing of Morgentaler's clinic by "Pro-lifers" is an example that hits very close to home.

With the re-election of the Reagan administration and the inevitable drift of thought up to Canada, it is important to see the history of our right to our sexuality as part of a larger whole. The right wing views of today are reminiscent of the early 1900's. Margaret Sanger predicted challenge from the conservative forces of society does not really seem to have changed all that much.

In her view, sexual morality for women was one-sided, negative, inhibitory, and repressive, fixed by agencies who wished only to enslave women and use them as an asset to Church, state, and men. In 1912, when Sanger and her colleagues opened a birth control clinic in Brooklyn, New York, there were laws stating that no one could give information to anyone to prevent conception. Sanger and her fellow workers were subsequently arrested.

There are striking similarities between the raid of this early clinic and that of the Morgentaler abortion clinic raid. There were women patients present during both (despite Morgentaler's plea to the police that there not be). Secondly, both Sanger and Morgentaler had to step outside of the law to change legislation clearly unfair to women.

As Morgentaler pointed out in the trial, the same politicians that drag their feet concerning abortion laws have wives and mistresses who need this service. However, these politicians have neither the concern nor courage to change the existing laws which affect all women needing abortions. This is not justice.

In any discussion of choice, one has to examine the validity of the claims made by the "Pro-lifers". While these groups rally to save the unborn, most have been, as society itself is, slow to take part in caring for the unwanted child once it is born, or support the mothers who must raise the children, often singlehandedly and in poverty.

While realizing that many Church affiliated groups are supportive of women's

Standard Mistake

by Margaret Best

Near the end of October, I attended a panel discussion (part of the *Forbidden Films Festival*) on community standards. Ministry and Censor Board officials (including Robert Elgie and Mary Brown) were invited to participate in the panel, but no one representing pro-censorship did attend. As a result, the panel consisted of a fairly homogenous representation of anti-censorship members of the community. Bill Barker, who moderated the discussion, is a member of the *Toronto Arts Group for Human Rights*. Members of the panel included Judith Doyle (artist, filmmaker and co-editor of *Impulse*), Anna Groneau (*Metropole*), and Wayne Clarkson (film organizer and organizer for *Festival of Festivals*).

The discussion managed to raise some important issues and examine the problems of the

quo (the community standard?) while censoring the expression of differing views of minorities, progressive artists and women. As for the Censor Board's ability to eliminate or at least control pornography, these efforts have been twisted to focus on, for example, the expression of gay sexuality.

The panel discussion covered much ground. Personally, I felt concentration should have been given to a more complete analysis of the topic, community standards, which I will therefore focus on. In common, the three panelists agreed that the existing community standards are not representative of society as made up of numerous, varying groups. When the Ontario Censor Board takes a poll to assess the community standard, what are the questions asked? to whom? (How many of your friends have been asked?) What are the values implicit in the questioning and

As women we must deconstruct the alien imagery surrounding us.

Ontario Censor Board. The backbone of the debate was the conflicting ideas of democratic rights and community standards. Although the Censor Board claims to "strike a balance" between the two, experience shows this is not so. Indeed, the Censor Board has been most effective in protecting the status

rights, and very supportive of anti-porn legislation, the issue of abortion is contained within a strong religious-morality based framework, and is therefore not allowed. However, until safe, reliable birth control is available, and accepted by both women and men equally, women must have access to safe, legal abortions. As the chant goes, "Not the church and not the state, women must control our fate". And while the acquittals of Doctors Scott, Smoling and Morgentaler are a victory for the Pro-Choice movement, the battle has only begun.

Finally, I would like to dispute the notion that the Pro-Choice movement is "pro-abortion". No woman ever wants to become pregnant against her will. In the same way, a decision to have an abortion is one which must be weighed carefully against every other factor in her life. However, the final decision must be hers. It is this element of choice that epitomizes the movement, thus the name "Pro-Choice". It is this element of choice that will continue to be fought for, until we as women are finally free of the dictating forces which persist in pronouncing how and for whom we should live.

assessing of these polls? As an institution of the conservative provincial government, we do not have to consider at length what lies behind the purpose and function of the Censor Board's community standard. The power the Censor Board's community standard has in justifying carrying out censorship provides it with a device which keeps differing political views, alternative lifestyles, alternative imagery, without the power of expression, and with the fear of removal of that expression.

Manipulation and conditioning should be considered in an analysis of community standards. An examination of these provides an understanding of the values and power at work to shape community standards. Women have consistently been the subjects of these manoeuvres. The images, "process of becoming", and authenticity of women have never been determined by women themselves. Although "public acceptance" permits the objectification of women, I find it hard to believe that women approve, and yet, we represent half of the community. (The objectification of women does not lend well to achieving self-determination as women and individuals). Therefore, it would appear that being part of the community has relatively little to do with influencing the community standard or being represented in it. What it does come down to unfortunately is whether or not a group has the power to effect and influence the status quo's notion of community

standard. Having come to this point, it is obvious that everyone in society does not have this ability or privilege. And women's influence is conspicuously absent in spite of the enormity of our efforts to have ourselves heard.

Furthermore, people's standards are influenced by what surrounds them. For example, there is the great danger in our society of increased tolerance to explicit violence (let alone implicit). As this tolerance increases, does the community standard change to include that tolerance? It is not enough to imagine having a community standard that (even if objectively) truly reflects public acceptance. The public must be made aware, through debate and discussion, that what seems to be acceptable presently, is not necessarily acceptable. We can not simply start with an x-ray of real community standards as they exist now. As women, we must deconstruct the alien imagery surrounding us and start again with the power to form our own woman-positive images.

In order for community standards to be valid, empowering women and other groups is essential. Freedom of Speech, freedom to express ourselves is not a freedom if it must be bought in a society where everyone does not have the same access to the power to buy that freedom.

Perhaps the panel on "community standards" could have focused more on the specific topic. I understand that as part of the *Forbidden Films Festival* the discussion would be drawn to the problem of the Censor Board; this is a real obstacle to progressive filmmakers. Working against a male-defined institution will not, however, change its opinions and values. The government must protect itself if it is to stay in power. Its flexibility corresponds to what threatens it least of all. Therefore, alternatively, as members of the community we must educate each other. The community is a community of various groups who should each have power to express themselves equally without infringing on other people's expression. The ignorance, bigotry and sexism of our society will not change through the instruments of a government with its own special interest to preserve.

There is not space in this article to deal with the complexity of topics which have been raised here, such as pornography, censorship and freedom of expression. Nor is there room to address the problem which some women feel in their gut: that it would seem that there are some things in our society which have no rightful existence anywhere but in an unjust, sexist society (is there room for freedom in this case?). The opportunity to examine these topics will hopefully arise in upcoming issues of *OtherWise*.

Michelle Parkerson: Filmmaker

by Nancy Worsfold

The house was packed and the audience clapped and sang along- the night was dynamic, full of joy and hope. I have never experienced such audience response to a film. The event was the screening of two films, *Gotta Make This Journey* and *But Then, She's Betty Carter* in the *Colour Positive Anti-Racism Film Festival*. *Gotta Make This Journey*, which is actually a video tape but was projected as large as a film, was the high point of the evening. The films were made by producer/director Michelle Parkerson of Washington D.C. Both films are about Black music; *Gotta Make This Journey* investigates the lives of the women in the singing group *Sweet Honey in the Rock*, and the second film is about the independent jazz singer Betty Carter.

Michelle Parkerson was invited to Toronto by DEC Films to

be a part of the *Colour Positive International Anti-Racist Film Festival* which took place in October. Her presence at the screening made the evening into an event; it was not just any old night out at the movies. *Sweet Honey in the Rock* is a Black women's a cappella singing group with political leanings which come out of the Black American civil rights movement and reach out to embrace feminist, ecological and third world issues. Betty Carter is an outspoken individualist whose confidence in her personal artistic vision has both kept her from large commercial success and kept her in business.

Parkerson is a profoundly political artist, but she suggested that she doesn't believe that she is doing anything radical or different in the way in which she makes films. She is interested in experimenting with form in her performance and published poetry, but

until now has been concerned with making accessible, watchable films. She feels that her political beliefs influence who she makes films about and how she chooses her crew. The political message of her films lies in the candid words of her subjects and the ease with which her films let people speak for themselves.

Gotta Make This Journey uses the ninth anniversary concert of *Sweet Honey and the Rock* to tie together the very varied stories of the women in the group. All of their music is profoundly influenced by Afro-American culture and by the church, where most of the women started singing in public. The women all have careers separate from the group, two have children as well. One member is a dancer, another a solo singer, another is a law student, and Ysaye Harris, a fourth singer, holds a list of graduated degrees which could boggle the mind of the most serious student. The fifth woman, Bernice Reagon, works at the Smithsonian and is researching Black history in the performing arts.

In the words of Ysaye Barnwell, something powerful happens when the five women join their voices together. The concert was a compelling performance of meticulously rehearsed music. Their songs included the chilling political message of "*Biko*", a song which refuses to let the audience forget the tragedy of Stephen Biko, a South African freedom fighter who was murdered. On the other hand they were equally at home singing the wonderfully amusing song, *Seven Day Kiss*.

Director Michelle Parkerson has a political vision which is very much in line with that of *Sweet Honey in the Rock*. She is interested in bringing a political message to her audience and believes that all people and all actions are potentially political. She told me that, "My politics are very holistic, I would say that it has to do with how I see myself as a human being or a living being on the planet, how I take care of my health, where I spend my money, and sometimes who I sleep with. So when it gets down to popular names for all these categories, I see myself as a Black person, a woman, a feminist, a lesbian feminist and an artist. I'm also a co-parent, so that broadens my view, I've learned a lot from two young sons and being a lesbian feminist."

The joy and excitement expressed in Parkerson's films is clearly rooted in her political commitments. She believes that although the world is fraught with oppressions by colour, race and class, change is coming. More empathetically, she asserted that change has "got to go down, and it's inevitable because the nature of this whole world is changing, and not to change is unnatural because the numbers of people who are sufferers of this oppression outnumber the few who perpetuate it. So it's got to go down and that is a very forwarding thought."

Michelle Parkerson's career changed when she moved from acting in live theatre to the more technical training she pursued at college. She felt that it was important for her as a woman and as a Black to take control of the

medium in which she works. She has worked for several years as a television engineer and apart from a student film, the two films shown are her only films to date.

But Then, She's Betty Carter was made for about \$20,000 (which is .0005% of what it cost to make *Star Wars*.) The film took her four years to make because of the difficulty she had with funding, but since its completion it has played in festivals and on Public Television in the U.S.

Gotta Make This Journey

was sponsored by a local Washington D.C. television station which both saved her the trouble of finance and restricted some of her choices. The crew on this film was an all-white all-male union crew who lacked her commitment to the idea. She told me that they tested her out and created a few unnecessary problems. On the day that they were to shoot a brief interview with activist Angela Davis, the story goes, the tensions were high and non-problem-problems appeared. Everyone was testing everyone. But by the time Davis arrived the equipment had miraculously started to work again. Eventually they learned to trust each other's judgement.

Michelle Parkerson is currently working on a documentary about the *Jewel Box Review*, a travelling female impersonation act from the thirties and forties. She is also writing a dramatic script. Although these future films may be difficult to see in Canada, the Women's Book Store may soon stock her poetry.



-N-E-T-W - O - R - K - I - N - G-

Thurs Nov 28 - Sat Dec 1
Benefit Evenings for Emily Stowe Shelter for Battered Women
Wed Nov 28 - L'etranger, Rude Awakenings, and Fifth Column
Thurs Nov 29 - Clichettes, Sheila Gostick, Maja Bannerman and Anna Gutmanis
Fri Nov 30 - Direktive 17, Chalk Circle, and Daphnee's Purple Closet
Sat Dec 1 - Word of Mouth Band, Rheostatics, and CeeDees
Tickets: \$4 at the door, \$10 passes for all four evenings will be sold at the Rivoli, the Toronto Women's Bookstore, DEC, The Record Peddler, and Records on Wheels.

Thursday November 29
"Politics, Power, and Women and Political Science and The Impact of Feminist Theory". A lecture by Caroline Andrew (Political Science Department, University of Ottawa).
Time: 4:00 p.m. Place: TBA For more info: 978-6385 or 978-5404.

Friday November 30
"Looking With Joyce Wieland's Eyes" with Kay Armatage, film-

maker and lecturer. Sponsored by Toronto Women's Colloquium.
Time: 3:00 p.m. Place: 12th Floor Board Room, OISE Building.

"Hands Off" An exhibition of sculpture and photography by Sandy Cooper and Pamela Gown.
Place: Sparkes Gallery, 1114 Queen St. W. Hours: Wed. 12:00 to 5:00 p.m., Thurs. 3:00 to 8:00, Fri. 12:00 to 5:00, and Sat. 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Bonnie Leclair, Folk and contemporary vocalist.
Time: 9:00 p.m. (also Saturday, December 1). Place: Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. Cost: \$3.00 cover. For more info: 967-1078.

"Women and Words: The Anthology / Les femmes et les mots: une anthologie". Meet the local authors and editors at the book launch sponsored by Ontario Branch Women and Words / Les Femmes et les Mots. Refreshments will be available.
Time: 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. Place: The Canadian Book Information Centre, 70 The Esplanade, 3rd Floor. Cost: FREE.

"Nancy Drew"
Time: Every Friday night through to December 14th at 11:00 p.m. Place: Theatre Passe Mureille. Cost: \$2.00.

Sunday December 2
"Poetry Night". Carol Leckner, poet, accompanied by Bill Menzo.
Time: 8:00 p.m. Place: Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. For more info: 967-1078.

Monday December 3
Lesbian Discussion Group.
Time: 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. (every Monday night) Place: Church St. Community Centre, 519 Church St.

"Movie Mondays". On the first Monday of each month, Gallery 940 screens films relevant to women. Women are welcome to show their own work. Bring the comforts of home.
Time: 8:30 p.m. Place: Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. E. Cost: \$00.99 For more info: 466-8840.

Tuesday December 4
"Breast Problems". This workshop will discuss breast examination, the other origins of lumps and questions you should ask your doctor.

Time: 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Place: Scarborough Women's Centre.
Cost: FREE. For more info: 431-1138.

Wednesday December 5
A series of recent portraits by Donna Marchand. Opening reception, 8:00 p.m. The work of this lesbian-feminist will be shown until December 15.
Time: Wed. 3:00 to 8:00 p.m. and Thurs. through Sat. 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. Place: Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. E. For more info: 466-8840.

Tuesday December 11
"Forum on the Pro-Choice Movement: New Directions, New Debates". Speakers: Theresa Dobko, Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics; Kathleen McDonnell, author of Not An Easy Choice; and Vicki Van Wagner, Toronto Midwives Collective.
Place: TBA. For more info: 598-0082

Thursday December 13
Information meeting for "The Beguineage", a new women's housing co-operative in downtown Toronto.
Place: 299 Queen St. W. Suite 400. For more info: 925-2475 ext.300.

Sunday December 16
Community Christmas Party for members and families of the Church Street Community Centre. New faces welcome.
Time: all afternoon. Place: 519 Church Street. For more info: 923-2778 (Children will receive a gift if you phone ahead.)

Monday December 17
Broadside's 5th Birthday Party. You can settle back with Kye Marshall and her jazz band. There will be lots of music to dance to. Also entertaining will be: Sheila Gostic, "Nancy Drew" (Ann Marie Macdonald and Bev Cooper), Jane Farrow ... and more!
Place: TBA Tickets: \$10.00 at Broadside and the Toronto Women's Bookstore. For more info: 598-3513

Friday December 21 and Saturday December 22
Moon Joyce. The lyrics of this musician from Yellowknife are disturbing, sometimes controversial and always memorable. Co-sponsored by Womynly Way.
Time: 8:00 p.m. Place: New Trojan Horse Cafe, 179 Danforth Ave. Tickets: at the door. For more info: 925-6568.

Dale Spender (Con't)

Women's books are not the only books being printed on poor paper, it's a problem of the publishing industry as a whole. Also, books are expensive, so a class analysis of who can buy books is called for. Women's books, especially the books printed by feminist presses, are aimed at an audience of women who earn the sixty cent dollar and can't afford hardcover books.

Throughout the lecture, Mary O'Brien, who was sitting at the front, interjected with references to the accomplishments of working class women, and the tradition of working class women pushing at the edges of oppression. Spender's idea of a feminist rewriting of history is finding "women of ideas" - great women of the upper classes whose books have been lost. One wants to ask, how a history of great women is any different from a history of great men. (I'm still trying to find a history book which will tell me when we started the ridiculous practice of ironing cloth to make it flat.) Spender's lack of interest in a theoretical base for her work means that she has addressed the content of history books but left the manner in which they are written as it always has been.

My diatribe against Spender's delightful talk has raised many questions but offered no answers. I have none, but I think that it is important for feminists to constantly question further and further. The problems of the world are not just on the surface, and they won't be solved by a six year-old. So when Dale Spender claims with glee that any of her work could be explained to a six year-old, you know something's going wrong.

Spender maintained, and no doubt accurately, that much current feminist writing is a repeat of what has been said in previous feminist movements. The writings of the suffragettes and the women before them have disappeared because historians have not seen fit to preserve them. She suggested, as if to give hope, that feminist movements come and go like seasons. Even if this wave of feminism dies another will come. She also suggested that the gains of a movement are lost in the interim. She mentions nothing about the recent changes in our whole "mode of production." New technology makes women's smaller size no longer an impediment and a veritable domestic revolution is being precipitated by the numbers of women entering the paid labour force. Simultaneous with and partly because of the current feminist movement huge changes have come to our society; we, as feminists, need to constantly question and analyse these changes. We can avoid the "winter" of feminist activity which Spender predicted if we question further than our sisters before us - and further than Dale Spender.

Nancy Worsola is a serious feminist who wants to know what love's got to do with it.

By Mary-Louise Noble

Traditional history is synonymous to "Men's History", in that it is the history of the activities of men ordered by male values. Within this context, women are seen as having played nothing more than marginal roles in contributing to human development. Responding to this negligence on the part of traditional male historians, Women's History has developed to assert that women have indeed been significant figures in the shaping of our history. Lest we forget that, although the lives of great women such as Elizabeth Bagshaw, Clara Brett Martin, Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy are important to the understanding of Canadian history, to concentrate on their experiences alone would be to exclude the experiences of a great many ordinary women. It is the collecting of the experiences of our grandmothers and our great aunts that will enable us to enrich our understanding of the past. To this end, I present the experiences of my grandmother, Anna May Ronan. My grandmother's life, in many ways, exemplifies the lives of her female contemporaries. She worked as a stenographer, stopped working when she married, had children, and returned to clerical employment after the death of her husband. Her story is the story of most women who lived their lives as daughters, wives and mothers. It is important that her story be told.

Anna May Ronan is my maternal grandmother and she is one of the women I most admire. She was born in 1896 on a farm in the Brudenell Township, a township located south of Pembroke and not far from the village of Killaloe. My grandmother is the eldest of eight children born to Simon and Lucy Jane Finnerty (nee Sullivan).

After eight years of grammar school in Brudenell's one-

room schoolhouse, Anne left for Pembroke's Convent of Mary Immaculate where she acquired the business and office skills of typing and shorthand. My grandmother was among the first women at the turn of the century to enter the male-dominated clerical occupations.

Anne's first job was with the Bell Telephone Company in Fort William, Ontario (now Thunder Bay), where she worked as a Junior Stenographer. She returned to the farm several years later but did not stay long in the rural setting. In fact, in 1916 my grandmother was among the many women who left rural backgrounds for the big cities in search of employment.

Toronto had been flooded with country girls desperate for work, so Anne was fortunate to find employment with the Provincial Amusements Tax Department, earning \$10.00 per week. At nineteen years of age, my grandmother remembers when Bay Street was only a dirt road, and when meals were just a dime. It excites me when I realize that the house in which she first lived stood on Harbord Street where Robarts Library stands today. I often like to walk past the house at 80 Charles Street West where my grandmother boarded with Miss O'Malley. My grandmother clearly remembers the first time women were allowed to vote with the passing of the 1917 Ontario Franchise Act and the 1919 Dominion By-Elections Act. As well, she remembers the famous Persons Case of 1929 when, for the first time, women were accorded the same status of personhood as men in the British North American Act.

My grandmother married Edward I. Ronan in 1919. The social norms of the day prevented middle class married women from working, and so Anne Ronan stopped working

in the paid labour force to take up her "appropriate" role as wife and mother. She followed her husband to Vancouver, Montreal, and back to Toronto as his job dictated.

My grandfather died of cancer in 1943, leaving my grandmother a widow at forty-seven. Unexpectedly, after being out of the paid labour force for twenty years, Anne found herself in the position of having to look for a job. The National Selective Service had been established to control the allocation of female labour for the war effort. Through the Toronto Selective Service my grandmother found employment with Canada Wire as a Junior Clerk, and earned \$75.00 per month. As a single mother of three, it was economic necessity and certainly not patriotism that persuaded Anne to enter the paid labour force.

It was in 1947 that my grandmother was subjected to one of the most blatant cases of economic exploitation. After her male supervisor was fired for incompetence, Canada Wire promised my grandmother a salary increase if she would take over his position. My grandmother took the supervisor's job but never received the promised increase in pay. In fact, she was later to learn that her salary was less than half of the salary given to the man that held the job before her.

Like thousands of other women, Anne was subjected to a double standard with regards to retirement. Canada Wire decided in May 1960 to retire women at sixty years of age and men at sixty-five. My grandmother was already sixty-four years old, and was consequently dismissed. Within days Anne began a stenographer's job in the Department

We invite readers to send us their stories of their grandmothers. We would like to make this a regular column and will print as many entries as possible. Please include a photo, preferably though not necessarily of your grandmother in her youth. Send entries to: P.O. Box 857, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2Z2



Anne Ronan and her daughter, Vancouver 1928.

of Public Works at Queen's Park. She retired from that job in 1966 at seventy years of age. I think my grandmother could not bear the thought of not working, for in 1969 she began a job as a live-in housekeeper at Our Lady of Perpetual Help rectory on St. Clair Ave. East, a job which lasted until 1975.

Today at eighty-eight my grandmother lives independently and self-sufficiently. She is politically aware of the issues around her, and although I doubt she would label herself a feminist, she supports the efforts to eradicate the many injustices against women.

Indeed, it is only after collecting the histories of many Canadian women that we realize how extraordinary their lives have been. Recording my grandmother's life offered insight into the legal inequalities and the economic insecurities that confronted women in their daily lives. I think that it would be a mistake not to include our grandmothers and our great aunts under the title of "Great Canadian Women".

TEDDY TALLER, THE REAL MAN

