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a women's alternative

# Pandora

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# Media need training in perspective

Linda Christiansen-Ruffman

What I saw at Nairobi were women organizing, networking and sharing strategies in an effort to change both their local situation and the world. "Think globally and act locally" was one of the most frequently articulated slogans. Women of colour were the majority. Activists were the majority. Feminists were the majority.

It was engrossing listening to the diverse life stories and exhilarating to hear the diverse and often successful efforts of women organizing throughout the globe. Echoing from all corners of the world was a core feminist vision of a transformed world based on feminist principles of equality development and peace. A global women's movement was asserting itself from between the agreements and disagreements, from the celebrated diversity, from the sense of urgency at achieving our visions and from listening and talking with one another about similar — and unique — experiences.

As a feminist with a commitment to a global feminist movement, I was relieved by what I saw at the Forum. But if I hadn't been there, the media reports would not have reassured me.

The press is not accustomed to reporting multi-faceted events where a number of things are happening from a number of perspectives. Important events are "events of state." The only people's experiences which count are famous, powerful people — at the top of the hierarchy — or the depersonalized "man" on the streets.

So at the End of Decade Forum in Nairobi, the press tended to highlight what it has come to define as newsworthy. For example, what the male *Globe and Mail* reporter covered were the words of the wives and daughters of

powerful men and the expected verbal bullets between warring state regimes. And in this way the traditional press has begun to construct the world's impression of what happened in Nairobi.

Images such as Maureen Regan, divisions between north and south, problems between Iran and Iraq, Palestine and Israel

dominate. Both the official delegates and the press sometimes forgot, even rhetorically, to mention women. Should we be surprised when many in the world think Nairobi as irrelevant?

Being without a feminist framework, the traditional press could not acknowledge the

patriarchal forms and games which dominated the official conference. They could not recognize the articulation of a feminist analysis and vision. They could not identify the emerging feminist political debate at the Forum about appropriate strategies.

How important it now seems for all of us to create and ar-

ticulate a feminist perspective on events and to create and share what we consider to be important news — feminist news of liberation, of oppression, of hope and visions and of strategies for achieving our visions. As feminists we must all work to reconstruct Nairobi in our image and in our interests.

## Black women redefine peace movement focus on politics of poverty, power

Karen Hudson

When we hear the term the **Peace Movement** what do we think? Arms race, cruise missiles and star wars. Recently, during my trip to the UN End of Decade Conference in Kenya, I attended a workshop on Black Women and the Peace Movement. In the past, I always thought that everyone was involved in the same movement. As I participated, I was introduced to a new language and to new ideas about what the peace movement means to black women.

Black women are redefining the peace movement. They were (and are) looking at the basic day to day issues and stating that the only way to solve arms race problems is not to attack it directly (which is the current tactic) but, instead, to achieve a reorientation and reevaluation of world society — the way it perceives itself.

The arms race is a natural development from world politics. It should not be treated in isolation as some unusual phenomenon that has occurred outside of the typical way society functions. The arms race is a result of the new imperialism that exists today. The current social and economic status

of the world's populations, which sees a minority (white) taking a major share of the earth's resources, is the result of the historical development of the political and economic imperialism of the past.

Black women are preoccupied about wider issues which are inseparable from peace such as racism, education, immigration and many others. Before peace can be attained, a reorientation of society must occur. While the nuclear threat seems to loom over the human species — as compared to the other issues — it must be realized that only when these "smaller issues" are resolved will the worldly arms race disappear. Thus, sex, race, and class are peace issues too.

Black issues raise survival issues for the whole black community, the black movement and the peace movement. As long as black women's contribution is overlooked and hidden, peace will never be achieved. The peace movement is about changing what is happening in society today — and the status of black women in Nova Scotia, in South Africa and in the United States is very pertinent to this essential process. We must realize

that even though we are women, and are fighting for our rights, the women's movement is both black and white, women, men and children.

Black women are fighting for the survival of themselves because they are the poorest and have the least power. While black women's fight depends on their own ammunition and their own support, isolating ourselves is not going to help. We need the help of others who have more power than us.

As Wilmette Brown stated: "We need mutual respect for our priorities, and recognition that although our areas of work in the movement are different, they are nevertheless mutually indispensable."

Black women are already part of the peace movement. They have built up a store of resources for their struggle, resources which have already been used to deal with problems both past and present. The right to abort is part of the peace movement and black welfare mothers fighting for their rights is part of the peace movement.

This brings up another issue about black women and the peace movement. The issue of providing

financial assistance for women instead of spending the money on military, is a strategy for peace that may begin with the needs of black women, but it includes the needs of all women, all people. This means that one of the major drives of the peace movement should be directed at trying to help women in the Third World.

The only way to win the fight for peace is to ensure that both black and white women are involved in the peace movement — pulling together, not against each other. There must be dialogue between black and white women and a common focus on how to organize together for a common societal progress.

## Helping teenagers avoid sexual assault

Mary Petty

The authors combine their sex education and rape crisis experience to offer advice to parents of teenagers. As new information about the nature and incidence of sexual assault has emerged, we realize that discussion of these issues is a vital component of sexuality education for young people.

**No Is Not Enough** is a book for parents of many persuasions. By no means do the authors purvey a strong feminist analysis, yet, the discussion of sex role expectations and sexual myths provide a very respectable standard for any parent.

The whole issue of kids made vulnerable by other kinds of family stresses and abuse such as alcoholism and battering is approached in realistic and helpful terms. I recommend the book for parents who are struggling with the task of imparting sexuality information to children and teens. I also recommend it for those educators who attempt to deal with sexuality.

**No Is Not Enough: Helping Teenagers Avoid Sexual Assault** by Caren Adams, Jennifer Fay, Jan Lorren-Martin

# Lend a Hand



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We need your support. We are committed to publishing four issues of **Pandora** over the next 12 months. If there's enough support from the women's community, we will publish more often next year — perhaps every month.

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Judy Savoy shows her son Conor the tricks of the trade in front of CBC First Edition's weather map. Conor probably doesn't remember, but he's already spent quite a bit of time in front of that map! (photo by Valerie Mansour)

## Pregnant every night on the evening news

Susan MacPhee

Until recently, and even now to some extent, Western society has held a curiously ambiguous attitude toward the physical signs of human reproduction: On the one hand, a woman's role in marriage was to provide her husband with a tidy brood of of sons and daughters (preferably the former).

On the other, any physical indication that she was fulfilling her marriage contract, such as a suspicious swelling in the nether regions of her abdomen, were to be hidden by copious quantities of flowing garments. When her "condition" progressed to such a size as could not be disguised, she could no longer appear in public with dignity.

But times are changing. The announcement of Princess Dianna's first pregnancy before her son's birth seems to indicate that pregnancy and birth are at last gaining a legitimate place in our society. Having a child is no longer regarded as an offensive illness.

Here in Nova Scotia, we have our own stormer of the bastions: Judy Savoy. For just over two years, Savoy has been the weather reporter on First Edition, CBC TV's evening news program. Savoy has worked in radio and TV around the country, picking up a few firsts on the way: First woman DJ on a private station, and first woman on the on-air news team in London, Ontario.

Last year, Savoy added another first: she became the program's first pregnant weather reporter, and stayed on air until three days before her son, Conor, was born. The reason she left three days before the birth? "Oh, I felt good, but Tuesday night during the show I started to feel out of breath." Little wonder, as Conor had been due to arrive the week before.

Savoy's pregnancy became quite a hit with her TV audience. Halfway into her first month she experienced hyperemesis gravidarum, or above normal morning sickness, which eventually caused her to be ill every 15 minutes. She became dehydrated from loss of fluids and was hospitalized. She lost 10 pounds during those first three months, but gained a knowledge of her popularity with the audience.

Cards and letters poured in, from viewers worried about her absence from the show. "They thought I was sick, as we didn't tell them right away that I was pregnant. You don't do that in case you have a miscarriage or something else goes wrong."

### We have to see more pregnant women on TV

In spite of this, her employers never suggested that she should leave the show. Says Savoy, "it wasn't a problem although it was something I thought about. When I was in hospital I thought, well, what are they going to do?"

But to Brian (Kienapple, Executive Producer) it was not an issue. All I got from him was "take care of yourself. And how long I wanted to stay on did not become an issue either." Nor did it with her audience when they found out.

One interest expressed was when the baby would arrive. "I heard that more people were watching to see when I had him and about some pools on the date." People were also interested in whether it would be a girl or a boy. "There were letters and phone calls from people guessing what it would be, and a grade eight class from Yarmouth had a pool and thought it would be a girl. They even suggested five names."

Sending out individual thank-you notes was a daunting prospect and Savoy must have been tempted to say a general thank-you during the TV show. But she and the CBC thought that viewers may then feel obliged to send gifts. So she wrote all the thank-you notes herself.

"If you count the letters that went to the Grace Maternity Hospital in Halifax, to our home and to the CBC, there were well over 150. And so many gifts. People sent silver dollars, five dollar bills to save for him, visited me in hospital and one woman gave Conor a hand-made clown."

Savoy never heard a negative word from her audience about her decision to stay on the air. However, there were some indirect comments. "Jim Nunn (host of First Edition) received a couple of letters stating that it was not proper. They asked 'what's she doing on television like that?' But that was all."

Because of the experience, Savoy now feels closer to her audience "I guess I was really overwhelmed. It made me cry, it was a very humbling experience. It doesn't inflate my ego, but makes me feel that I'm not worthy of that kind of caring. When I was sick I heard from so many people who don't know me. And I feel a real loyalty to them. But then, I always feel loyal to my audience."

In all, was the publicity disruptive? Or would she do it all over again? "Oh yeah", she says. "It wasn't a negative experience at all. After all, it's not as though it's a disease. We have to see more pregnant women on TV. And there shouldn't be any big deal about it. All in all, it was a very positive experience and the only thing that would make me say that I wouldn't do it again is the performer's instinct — you never do the same act twice."

Story

## Hay

by Alex Keir

Nose clogged, itch, scratch, itch. Gloved finger stubborn, probing, useless. Tikatikatikatika. Bales tossed from sunbaked wagon to hay conveyor are shunted into the shadows of the mow.

Legs apart, precarious on stacked bales, a faulty step means balance lost, pitched forward, scramble up ready to heave yet another bale to the woman who will wedge it in tight to the one beside. No laughing now, a long day leaves little energy for talking.

The woman on the tractor looks cool, just sitting, a light breeze lifts black hair from her face, loose wisps wrap tangled around her ear protectors. Hayseed flies as she passes. We wave.

Later, on the tractor, I watch the cutter bar slice through stalks of timothy and clover, swath after swath falling behind. The breeze that seemed so cool from the ground is heated and heavy with diesel fuel and though "just sitting", eyes dart: ahead to set the tractor on a straight course; scan deep grass for rocks that hit the cutting blade with an angry PING; glance at the three point hitch and power take off — connections good. Behind the eyes, sun's dull ache, checking, rechecking . . . mowing hay.

Afternoon. Sarah yanked, wrenched and twisted controls on the other tractor. The conditioner, hauled behind, squeezes hay, removing moisture to speed drying.

Jane follows with the baler, clunk clunk ker chunk ing clunk clunk ker chunk ing, pray for that steady sound. Much down time spent loosening, aligning, tightening, adjusting. Please make it through this field. And the next.

Near forty bales on the ground when the tractor with the wagon arrives on the field with the rest of the crew: long pants, barebreasted, some with gloves. Seven women laughing, relaxed, strong.

Into first gear, ease out the clutch, slip into motion. Flexing biceps propel bales from the ground. Carmen on the wagon, jean cuffs tucked into socks to prevent chaff from clawing her bare legs, carefully stacks the bales for the trip to the barn. Layer upon layer until our taut, aching fingers loosen at the call from the top of the load: "ONE MORE BALE".

Shoulders tense, twitch with the weight of numb arms, toughened palms (this morning, changing a diaper, padded palms insensitive to softnessmeant caresses with the back of my hand). Slivers find a way under your skin, pus up a little and work their way out. Hayseed, itching, scratching, itching. Sweat beads gather on forearms, rivulets through dust leave pale skin. Sweat soaked hair plastered to neck.

Seven women, quiet. Walk down the hill behind the barn, kick off runners. Socks roll off past dirty heels. Slip into the river.

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# Pandora

**Pandora** is published four times a year by Pandora Publishing Assoc., a non-profit organization of women in Nova Scotia. Our editorial policy is straightforward: We want to provide women with an alternative to the mainstream media.

**Pandora** has no single voice. There is no collective opinion, no editorial position. Each article reflects the views of the woman, or women, who wrote it.

Submissions are welcome. Pandora Publishing Assoc. does, however, reserve the right to edit — usually on the basis of length. Submission does not guarantee publication. Discussion of submitted material is encouraged. In fact, we hope to work as facilitators for the publication of material produced by women who are without writing experience, especially for those without access to any other form of media.

Many women have contributed to the writing, photography, typing, lay-out, design, subscription sales, publicity work and morale boosting that went into the production of this issue. If anyone has been inadvertently omitted, we apologize. Sometimes it's hard to keep track.

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Betty Ann Lloyd

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Ann Chinn, Betty-Ann Lloyd

## Subscriptions:

Brenda Bryan, Diann Graham, Carol Millett, and many others who distributed forms along the way

## Distribution:

Unknown at press time — volunteers welcome!

## Cover photograph:

Alex Keir

**Pandora** welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. We have regular meetings the first and third Wednesday of each month, we have smaller committee meetings for things like distribution, lay-out, story editing, photography. We also have short-term tasks that require no meetings at all. Our next issue deadline is November 15, we will start working on it immediately.

There is an **open general meeting** on September 24 at the North End Library in Halifax. Women who attend this meeting will be asked for feedback on this first issue and suggestions for the next. Please attend. There will be absolutely no pressure to volunteer for work, although that will be one of many items on the agenda.

There is a **benefit** scheduled for October 5 at Veith House, Halifax. Please attend, it promises to be a lot of fun. Anyone who would like to help, get in touch.

## Correspondence and Subscriptions:

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Supporting subscriptions are \$5.00 for four issues. There is a sliding scale. Women on limited income, send what you can. We ask women who can afford more to provide a contributing or sustaining subscription.

Thank you to **Kinesis** for their role as model for this mast

Printed at Kentville Publishing

# We just couldn't keep the lid on Pandora!

## Betty-Ann Lloyd

Pandora began as an idea in the hearts of many women. The concrete steps toward actually publishing a 24 page tabloid began in early spring.

We knew it might be hard to gather copy for a first issue, so we decided to stock up on articles from other good journals — just in case. What actually happened is that by our deadline over 90 per cent of the women who had ventured an idea or been asked to submit an article had it at **Pandora's** door.

Not only did they have it done, but they usually wrote it twice as long as requested! In some cases, there were two or three stories. In all cases, there was a great deal of writing from the heart.

We decided that rather than cut whole areas, we would expand to 28 pages. I can't, personally, imagine doing that again, but who knows? The direction we go will be determined by your response and support — financial as well as moral and with time.

Many women want to know why **Pandora** is named after a discontented wife who couldn't keep her hands to herself and thus loosed all the evils on the world.

The truth is, **Pandora's** been given some pretty bad press over the last few thousand years. It's all a misunderstanding and I, among many, would like to reclaim her.

**Pandora**, originally, was the first woman, sent down to earth with all-gifts. She brought forth every thing that was.

She didn't pretend that it was possible to have life without having not-life. She knew that having fullness meant there would be hunger at some point. She realized that wealth is relative: for one to have wealth, another must have poverty.

She also gave the gift of everything between hunger and fullness, poverty and wealth. She knew that not only was there life and not-life, there was everything in between.

**Pandora** was a realist. She knew that fantasy gets you nowhere, unless you know what's behind the fantasy. So she decided that those who dwell on earth should know both sides and the middle.

Not everyone felt that humans should be allowed to know why they were given gifts. The Greek Hesiod — the Bruce Springsteen/Pierre Bertone of his day — was one who believed that ignorance was bliss. When he wrote the history of the gods, he cast **Pandora** as the interfering wife who makes a lot of trouble by poking her nose into forbidden places.

Ever since, **Pandora** has been blamed for all the evils of the world. What a reversal! It was **Pandora** who gave, all right. But what we have forgotten is that she gave the good, knowing that the bad was also, therefore, possible.

When Hesiod told the tale his way, it was the beginning of recorded history, of men's recorded history. And men have seen fit to continue the myth as it was first written down.

As an alternative to the mainstream media, **Pandora** would like to provide access to information for those often denied access. We hope to let the lid off experiences, opinions, news, that others would just as soon not have known.

That doesn't mean we have delusions that anyone will want to read **only Pandora**. It doesn't mean that every article will be

overwhelmingly investigative and full of new, shocking insight.

It merely means that we hope to allow women to name their reality in a way that the mainstream media does not. We realize that there is never a one-dimensional, ideal, perspective. What we want to do is open the lid, give you access to the inside of the box, and let you decide how you want to react.

## Already a peace activist

# Her name is Tara

## Brenda Bryan

Throughout this issue of **Pandora** you will see that our house ads (things like subscription ads and the ads for our meetings), have as their principle image a young female — Tara Kipping Perkins.

Tara is three and a half years old and is the daughter of Pat Kipping and John Perkins. She is becoming very familiar to many of us who work in the area of peace and environmental issues.

She attended her first peace activity at four months, at the Women's Petition for Peace on mother's day. Many of us got to know her better at the Women and Militarism gathering at Wentworth in February of 1984.

When we were looking for an idea that would convey the essence of this first issue of **Pandora**, we thought of a young person exploring the different uses of boxes. Someone trying to get into or out of boxes, someone finding special treats in boxes.

As we thought about this im-

age, we thought of Tara. We talked to Pat, then to Tara, about the possibility of setting up the photographs in her back yard. Everyone, including the photographer, Sara avMaat, agreed, and off we went.

The photos turned out better than we ever believed they would. We designed the ads and began to lay them out.

In the making of the ads, many thoughts came to mind. As women and image-makers, we have the responsibility not to exploit or take advantage of situations in which we have control. It was with a great deal of thought, love and concern of **Tara** and her family that we made these images.

Sara probably expressed our final sentiment best when she said that Tara was a willing subject who kept playing her own way, while being open to Sara taking her picture.

Tara, Pat and John have all seen these ads, given their approval — and much support — to the growing **Pandora**.

# We need an ad policy

## Betty-Ann Lloyd

At one of **Pandora's** regular meetings early in August, the question of political advertising was raised. I had just read the new advertising policy in **Kinesis**, the women's newspaper in British Columbia. They do not accept political advertising, so I figured maybe we should discuss the issue.

We already had an ad committed from the NDP. We had contacted members of the Progressive Conservative and Liberal party, but had not sold an ad.

That meant that, potentially, readers could see us as somehow being under the direction of one political party.

If we refused to allow any political parties to advertise because one or more refused to, however, wouldn't that put us equally under the control of the refusing party?

And could we not be swayed (or seen to be) by the presence of any major advertiser, whether it be a political party, a business or an in-

stitution?

There were several different opinions expressed — all the while admitting the financial practicality of accepting all advertising that was non-discriminatory.

We decided to have an interim policy: We would accept political advertising to a maximum of \$100 per political party per issue. That means rich parties would have no more possible influence than those less rich. We would make a point of contacting all the party headquarters, to provide an equal opportunity. We would raise the question here, on the editorial page.

What do you think? If we are going to accept advertising — and financially we have no real choice — than how should we decide?

Write us a letter or come to the open general meeting at the North End Library on September 24 at 7:30. Share your own experience or insight with us and perhaps we'll come to a resolve that everyone can live with.



## Feminist activism may cause backlash

# Prisons hold more than women criminals

**Diann Graham**

Women's crimes are usually those without victims (soliciting) and crimes of economic necessity (66 per cent of women appearing in Halifax courts are charged with theft under \$200, shop-lifting, or passing bad cheques). Fully 85 per cent of women who are released from prison will be back again for similar offenses.

Violent crimes are usually committed by women who strike out from within domestic situations after years of battering and abusive relationships with men.

Women who become entangled with the criminal justice system are a very small minority of the prison population (approximately 2 per cent). Women inmates exist in facilities with lower standards

And we should remember not only the glorious history of the suffragists, but also the actions of many other women over the six decades since the struggle for the right to vote: Women such as Annie Buller and Anna Mae Aquash.

**Annie Buller:** She devoted her life and energy to the cause of the working class. The authorities called her an agitator, and agitate she did. She went from the mines in Nova Scotia into the big cities and fearlessly spoke up, arousing an awareness of injustice.

She spent two years in solitary confinement as a result of the 1931 miners' strike in Estevan. The charge was "inciting to riot;" the reality was the need of the authorities to remove her from the struggle and to break her spirit.

sider the vast numbers of ways women can offend male privilege.

When white, educated women push for equality in the courts, under the charter of rights, or through the Trade Union act, there is a tremendous backlash in the justice system against all women. Justification for the backlash effect is cloaked in terms of the myth of increased female criminality as a result of women's liberation.

According to information compiled by criminologist Karlene

Faith the number of women involved in crimes of violence has remained steady at 10 per cent of all crimes since 1971. What has increased over 113 per cent since 1971 is the numbers of women involved in petty crime — which is the direct result of economic oppression and recession.

When these women come into contact with police or the justice system, they are dealt with more severely. This, then, is the backlash effect: as one group of women use the legal system to win

rights and equality, another group of women pay the price by increasing rates of incarceration and longer, harder time. The national task force on the female offender tagged this effect as "reduced paternalism on the part of police and judiciary."

If all women in conflict with the law are viewed, by the women's movement, as political prisoners, if all of us see ourselves as potential prisoners, we will not forget them in the struggle for all women's liberation.

## You too may become a female offender when you consider the vast numbers of ways women can offend

and with fewer services and options for programs than for male prisoners. It costs in excess of \$63,000 a year to maintain an inmate at Kingston Prison for women.

It is clear that the priority, as far as authorities are concerned, is to incarcerate a few hundred women every year at the expense of providing decent services to all women.

political activists may choose to break the law, but in making the choice to exercise that particular form of political statement, militant women must make the connections between their day in court as political activists, the common incarceration of women, and the overall oppression of women.

A government task force paper on the female offender states that "increases in female criminal activity result from a new (emphasis mine) phenomenon of criminality, involving breaking the law in support of political and social beliefs and ideologies."

As feminists, we recognize the ridiculousness of such a statement as saying that it is a "new" phenomenon to break the law in support of social and political ideologies. In fact, it is a time-honoured tradition of the feminist, in fact all, protest movements.

Perhaps what the authorities are just now realizing is that the spirit and strength of our foremothers is still present in women today. We can proudly look back and see the suffragists making their demands and standing steadfast — waiting to be arrested.

They persisted and attacked Buckingham Palace, placed a bomb in Westminster Abbey, held a succession of hunger strikes while in prison, did pavement art and smashed windows in an unprecedented act of militancy.

**Anna Mae Aquash:** She was born in Shubenacadie, N.S., and was murdered in 1976, a victim of the war between the FBI, the RCMP and the American Indian Movement. She was involved in the occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, and was arrested and jailed on several occasions in the reign of terror directed against the American Indian Movement.

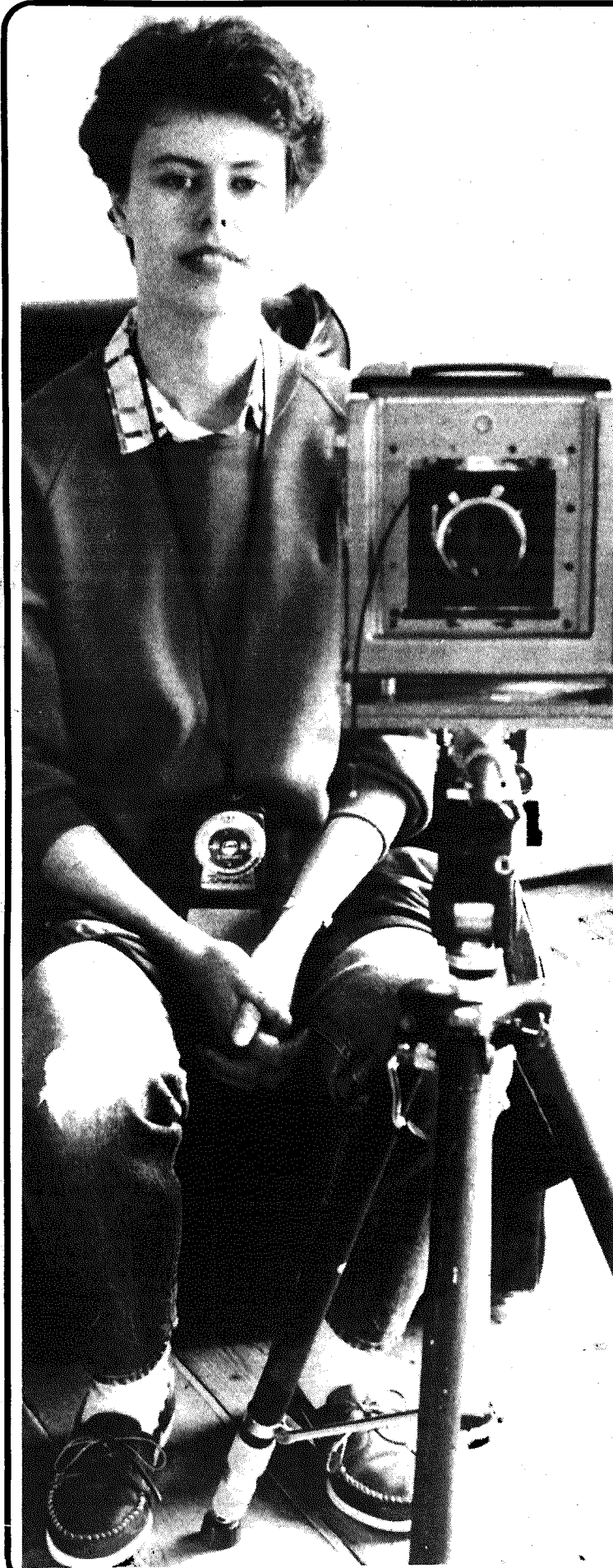
One of her most telling requests to a friend was to "save my letters so that when my girls are of age, they can read them and know the real truth . . . I'm not going to stop fighting for my country until I die . . . and then my girls will take over."

To bring the picture closer to home, Canadian women are being threatened by the spectre of politically active women being forced through the court system for a variety of charges: slander (the Donna Smyth trial); political bombings (Red Hot Videos and Litton); and peace protests (AMIE and pavement artists).

So what are the connections to be made between these radical, militant, politically active women and the women who are in conflict with the law and imprisoned for soliciting, theft under \$200. It is simply this. They all end up in jail, through the same court system, into the same lock-ups.

You may become the one imprisoned for opposing unjust laws, for championing ecological or peace causes, for protecting yourself from marital abuse or street assault, for being too poor or unemployed too long, for having no money to pay the bills or feed the kids, or for having no other single desirable skill in this society except as a receptacle for sperm at \$20 a shot.

In this society, women are all criminals waiting to commit our crimes. You, too, may become a female offender when you con-



## Who are Pandora women?

Pandora is a creation of a group of Nova Scotia women who feel it is vital that women have an alternative to the mainstream media. You will notice that we don't write "objectively." Like the mainstream media, we have a bias. But unlike them, we don't deny it.

We believe women have a great deal of news, experience, thought and opinion to share. Through these pages we, and in the future, you, will tell the stories that have not yet been told.

What appears in our first issue is the result of a collective effort throughout the summer of a large group of women, most of whom live in Halifax. We hope to become broadly-based so that we will address the issues of concern to women everywhere in the Maritimes.

We are planning three more issues: December 1985, March 1986, June 1986. If all goes well, we will look at becoming a monthly publication.

Write us with your comments — and check out the information about our open general meeting at the North End Library on September 24 and our benefit at Veith House on October 5.

**Women who work with Pandora**

The woman on our left here is Jan Skeldon, one of Pandora's photographers and darkroom technicians. Her photo was taken by Sara avMaat, another of our photographers and darkroom technicians. Jan is also an art college student, Sara is also a physiotherapist. Other women who have worked on Pandora are also journalists, club managers, researchers, graduate students, accountants, labor and political organizers, academics, and women looking for employment. They are mothers, daughters, sisters, lovers. If you want to find out more about them, you can come to our open meeting on September 24 at the North End Library or to the benefit and celebration at Veith House on October 5. Welcome!

# CALEA took a stand, saw positive results

Carmel Maloney  
CALEA Representative  
CLC Women's Committee

In the past, before the big game, the teams would meet to discuss the upcoming event. Both sides would agree that there would be no illegal pitches. While winning was important to both sides, we would play the game fairly. After the game, even the loser would be able to claim some level of victory.

But 1985 was to be different. One team wanted to change the rules. They wanted more. Because we had given things up in the past, we had nothing left to trade. No matter how we played the game using the new rules, we would never be able to reach first base. Finally, after all pitches had been made, all time limits exhausted, CALEA (Unit 1) struck out.

CALEA — Canadian Air Line Employees Association —

represents 4500 members who work as passenger agents, ramp and flight attendants, kitchen workers, mechanics, and freight forwarding workers. Our members are employed by Pacific Western Airlines, EPA, Air Canada, Air Ontario, Emery Air Freight and Eagle Flight Catering. The majority of our membership are women.

## STRIKE ONE!

When the Air Canada passenger

agents (Unit 1) came to play ball, they found themselves out of the park. However, management decided to play on its own, hoping the fans wouldn't notice that something was foul! After three weeks, some discussion and changes, the umpire called "Play ball." When all was finished, the scoreboard looked like this:

•Air Canada (AC) was demanding a rollback in the starting wage to \$5.75 an hour, plus three additional increments with no increase in the maximum salary. It would take six years to reach the maximum salary. We had already established a starting salary of \$7.37 with eight increments. The starting salary is now \$6.13 with nine increments. (It is worthy to note here, that during the strike, the pinch hitters were earning \$18.00-24.00 an hour.)

•AC was demanding unlimited part-time. They could already use 20 per cent of the total number of full-time employees. They now may use 30 per cent of the total number of employees (full-time plus part-time). This is to be increased to 35 per cent in 1986.

•AC offered a lifetime job security plan. There were so many exceptions, that the offer was finally withdrawn. Now full-time employees cannot be laid off while part-timers are working at a base. •A benefit package was negotiated for the part-time workers.

In the meantime, all was not well back at the ball park. EPA flight attendants found themselves warming up the benches we had just vacated.

## STRIKE TWO.

Among the important issues were: a longer working day at straight time; an increased number of hours they would have to work a month and a rollback in the starting salary so that new employees would earn \$645 a year more than the current poverty level.

They were 125 members strong. While they mainly stood their ground at Halifax Airport, they were able to cover most bases at some time. The strike lasted one month. The final score was: the working day was not extended; the number of hours worked was increased slightly; and a lower starting salary for new employees with the ability to catch-up within 18 months.

The future does not look bright for airline workers. Our jobs are being eroded by:

•technological change as airlines adopt the usage of sophisticated equipment  
•the increased usage of part-timers which threatens full-time employment

•conflicting federal government policies: while verbally committed to increasing employment opportunities for women, the federal government introduces and promotes such policies as "transportation deregulation" which threatens established full-time employment

•corporate greed: corporations are crying "hurt" while demanding more concessions from its employees. Yet they forget to limp as they run to the bank with the profits!

Because we have passed by the shortstop, we can look back. Being on the bench made us more aware of the procedures and politics of negotiation. Issues were brought to the forefront and discussed. It gave us time to renew old friendships and to establish new ones. We had taken a stand. We saw results. The teamwork was great! Whatever lies in the future, we know we will be stronger if we face it together!

## Centre welcomes lesbians

Darl Wood

Historically, people who love someone of the same sex have remained politically isolated and therefore powerless. Community participation is a healthy outlet for our frustration, anger and, often, fear. It can be a powerful political force and a useful way of directing energy, as well as an opportunity to express our individual selves.

Radclyffe Hall, Halifax Gay Alliance for Equality's (GAE) new community centre, affords a space that is by policy non-sexist, non-exploitative and non-opportunist. It is a place where womyn are encouraged to actively participate in developing their interests.

The facilities of the house are open to every womyn without discrimination. Separate activities for womyn are provided because we believe we have the right and the need of our own space to be able to define those needs.

What we offer to womyn is a space with library facilities, an over-thirty's group (mixed), a youth group, "Open Doors", which meets every Monday night; a sports group; a Francophone group; an alcohol and drug abuse support group, "Live and Let Live"; a video group; the Gay Health Association, Gayline, Speakers Bureau, Civil Rights Committee and the Gazette newsletter.

We are in the process of writing and distributing various information pamphlets dealing coming out, older lesbians, the "Open Doors" youth pamphlet, and a GAE general information brochure. I am personally elated about my pamphlet for teenagers (one for young lesbians and one for male gay youth) which is now in the process of being printed. With the co-operation of Planned Parenthood and local libraries, we will be able to distribute the first ever bit of positive information for lesbian teens in the province.

For more information: Write GAE, P.O. Box 3611, South Postal Station, Halifax, N.S. B3J 3K6

Radclyffe Hall is at 5559 Macara Street, Halifax, and the phone number is (902) 454 6551

## Are you politically correct?

What is politically correct for Pandora readers? Fill out the following questionnaire and send it to us at 5533 Black St, Halifax B3K 1P7. We'll share our findings next issue. If you want to be really politically correct, enclose your subscription money, or an extra little donation, or a letter — or all three.

A female who cleans houses as an occupation is:

- a) a charlady \_\_\_\_\_
- b) a cleaning woman \_\_\_\_\_
- c) a domestic \_\_\_\_\_
- d) household help \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Feminists are:

- a) people who believe in equality \_\_\_\_\_
- b) man-haters \_\_\_\_\_
- c) embarrassing \_\_\_\_\_
- d) threatening \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

A person who gets about in a wheelchair is:

- a) handicapped \_\_\_\_\_
- b) differently-abled \_\_\_\_\_
- c) crippled \_\_\_\_\_
- d) disabled \_\_\_\_\_
- e) physically challenged \_\_\_\_\_
- f) other \_\_\_\_\_

Canadian people of African origin are:

- a) dark skinned \_\_\_\_\_
- b) negro \_\_\_\_\_
- c) people of colour \_\_\_\_\_
- d) black \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Having children is:

- a) a way to provide grandchildren \_\_\_\_\_
- b) every woman's true fulfillment \_\_\_\_\_
- c) well worth the trouble \_\_\_\_\_
- d) usually accidental \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Politically correct means:

- a) knowing which words to use \_\_\_\_\_
- b) making the personal political \_\_\_\_\_
- c) having a raised consciousness \_\_\_\_\_
- d) to be continually learning \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

A person who believes in Christ is:

- a) born again \_\_\_\_\_
- b) saved \_\_\_\_\_
- c) religious \_\_\_\_\_
- d) a christian \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Canadians whose racial origin is in China are:

- a) Chinese \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Oriental \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Asian \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Canadian \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Other \_\_\_\_\_

A non-sexist spelling for "women" is:

- a) womyn \_\_\_\_\_
- b) women \_\_\_\_\_

c) womon \_\_\_\_\_

d) wimmin \_\_\_\_\_

e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Native Canadian women:

- a) live on reserves \_\_\_\_\_
- b) like to be segregated \_\_\_\_\_
- c) have full Constitutional rights \_\_\_\_\_
- d) are struggling to gain their rights \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

A female person between 16 and 24 is:

- a) a girl \_\_\_\_\_
- b) a woman \_\_\_\_\_
- c) a lady \_\_\_\_\_
- d) a chick \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Having your colours done is:

- a) passe \_\_\_\_\_
- b) interesting and useful \_\_\_\_\_
- c) incomprehensible \_\_\_\_\_
- d) fun \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Women who wear makeup:

- a) are not politically correct \_\_\_\_\_
- b) like the effect \_\_\_\_\_
- c) are trying to keep their job \_\_\_\_\_
- d) look better for wearing it \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

A woman who has a female lover is:

- a) a queer \_\_\_\_\_
- b) a dyke \_\_\_\_\_
- c) a lesbian \_\_\_\_\_
- d) gay \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Women in the military:

- a) need a job \_\_\_\_\_
- b) are militarists \_\_\_\_\_
- c) are Hard Core \_\_\_\_\_
- d) need our support \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Women-only events are:

- a) discriminatory \_\_\_\_\_
- b) boring \_\_\_\_\_
- c) a pleasant change \_\_\_\_\_
- d) for lesbians only \_\_\_\_\_
- e) necessary \_\_\_\_\_
- f) other \_\_\_\_\_

Buying toy guns for children:

- a) sets a poor example \_\_\_\_\_
- b) encourages militarism \_\_\_\_\_
- c) a harmless outlet for aggression \_\_\_\_\_
- d) children will improvise anyway \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Weddings are:

- a) symbolic of patriarchal domination \_\_\_\_\_
- b) fun \_\_\_\_\_
- c) the only way to keep a man \_\_\_\_\_
- d) simply a long standing tradition \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_

Right-wing women:

- a) sell Amway products \_\_\_\_\_
- b) hate feminists \_\_\_\_\_
- c) are taking over society \_\_\_\_\_
- d) are our sisters \_\_\_\_\_
- e) other \_\_\_\_\_



## Like the spokes on a wheel

# Uppity women work together for peace

Betty Peterson

"Granny, tell me. What are affinity groups?"

"Well, child, it's what they DO, not just what they ARE."

My point of entry came in 1977. By chance, or by design, I stumbled into a massive civil disobedience action organized by the Clamshell Alliance at the scene of the proposed Seabrook, N.H. nuclear power site.

In the midst of the seeming chaos and confusion surrounding 3,000 protesters and 1,500 arrestees, I became aware of smoothly functioning circles. There were spokespersons, like the spokes of a wheel, with the hub supported by each member carrying out a predetermined task.

Five years later, in 1982, we few Haligonians participated in Blockade the Bombmakers (the five nuclear powers) at the United Nations Disarmament March in New York City. Again, it worked.

And so it was, in the spring of 1983, that it seemed time to prepare ourselves in Halifax for the discipline of Nonviolent Direct Action. A three-day workshop, consisting of 25 women and three men came together. We were led by Lynne of Toronto and by Ken — who seemed to say all the right things, but in an authoritarian, subtly threatening, way.

Uppity women that we were, we had to challenge his process and style. Right on!

Despite all, we learned well, and

over the summer the affinity group NAGS evolved from that group. They challenged Halifax with their powerful **No More Hibakusha** street theatre. And they folded in supporters, acting as white-clad outriders.

These NAGS, using satire and black humour with devastating effect, continued their actions as Fools for Peace — pointing the finger toward Debert and things to come.

Other spin-offs from the NDA workshop included the 24 hour Remembrance Day vigil at Stadacona Military Base. Yet another, the Christmas Caroling against War Toys. All these actions were carried out by small groups of networking women —

by affinity groups.

January of 1984 brought the watershed experience of the Women and Militarism Workshop at Wentworth. Thirty-three women came from all over the Maritimes. Process flowed, with flexible agendas, brainstorming, web charts, diagramming, small groups and go-arounds.

Women of peaceful persuasion and strong feminist diversities shared their hopes and frustrations, their personal outrage at the continual violence in our patriarchal society.

Lesbian and straight together, we expressed our mirth and madness, our new bonding songs and a few primal screams. It was all joyfully creative, and no one

who participated will ever forget it.

But repeat it we could not. Just a week later, we came together with a few new women and some well-intentioned men, seeking solutions to peacemaking challenges in our midst. Radical lesbian feminists, women with partners and husbands, men wanting to be nurturing, and all shades in between. What a painful learning experience. A few withdrew, many persevered and the number of affinity groups grew — notably the United Spinsters.

Each group had a well-defined part in preparation for the next inspired action — Debunk Debert. Within six short weeks, on February 29, 1984, the government sponsored a practice drill in the Debert fall-out shelter. It was designed to save from nuclear fall-out, 349 self-important government heads and media cronies, mostly men.

Organized entirely by affinity groups, Debert was phenomenally successful. Over 100 women travelled many miles to protest and to affirm and celebrate life.

"We are the old women, we are the new women, we are the same women, stronger than before."

The climax was surely the too-real depiction of Hiroshima survivors, NAGS, carrying their blackened children. Our tears and keening at the gates of the Debert shelter were overpowering and bonding.

Blood-spattered clothes at the summer Tattoo and tainted dollar bills at the Pentagon Protest were more than local colour. They were a continuation of the same energy. The ensuing civil disobedience came together rather quickly, with the arrest of 11 women and three men, supporters in the wings. Through almost five months, despite differences in age, experience, background, intent and gender, we hung together.

This also became an affinity group — evolving and carrying along those who said they could never work with men, those impatient with group process, those who rejected co-operation with the legal system or who fumed at the long-haul time and energy involved. Rough edges had a way of wearing off.

A spin-off from the evaluation of Pentagon Day was another workshop on nonviolence developed by the Work-Study Group, in May of 1985. Many new groups attended: some members of the Youth Action Pact, the MUMS (Mothers United for Metro Shelter), the Housing for People Coalition and Friends of the Public Gardens. The circles are expanding!

"But, Granny, what ARE affinity groups?"

"Well, — er — it's not just DOING, it's BEING."

And, for sure, they're not for all women. They are a conscious bonding and commitment, a holding and supporting one another in the group. But with the individual freedom to let go. They are living out the old saying that "means determine the end," that process is "practice time for Peacemakers" (Holly Near).



The affinity group United Spinsters folded in many other women as support in their action around the summer Tattoo in 1984.

## Families with a difference

# Affinity groups place of growth

Gillian Thomas

It's odd that affinity groups, so much a part of the structure of the contemporary peace movement, were actually a war-time invention. The term "affinity group" comes from the Spanish **grupo de afinidad** and stems from the type of organization devised by Anarchists fighting Fascism in the Spanish Civil War. The groups were small and emphasized development of trust and empathy between members, making infiltration almost impossible.

Affinity groups in the peace movement in the 1980s are of two main kinds: There is the short-term group which forms to carry out a single action — frequently one involving civil disobedience or other form of high-risk, high-tension non-violent action. There is also the group which acts together in a series of actions over months or even years.

The long-term group, whether all women, all men or mixed, in-

evitably gets some of its style from the feminist CR groups of the 1960s and 1970s. Emotional support and extending each person's range of acting and reacting is often as important a part of the group's agenda as direct political action.

A central idea, for example, is that there should be no leader, that all members' ideas should be considered of equal value. Yet this is a profoundly "unnatural" way for a small group to operate according to all the psychological descriptions of group dynamics. Instead, the theory goes, one or two people will emerge as dominant and one person will almost certainly be "scapegoated," receiving many of the bad feelings of the group's other members.

To counter both of these destructive tendencies, affinity groups usually devise specific processes. The group must be small — somewhere between five and 15 members. Also, a good deal of

time is spent discussing not so much "what we're going to do" as "how we are going about deciding what we're going to do."

All this, of course, takes time. Anyone who's used to working in conventional political organizations with steering committees, presidents, treasurers and so on is likely to find an affinity group meeting aimless and frustrating. Even those of us who generally dislike formal structures find ourselves wondering when we are going to get on with the action.

It all requires more patience, more delicacy, more insight than most of us ever have, even when we're at our best. Because of this, the bonds between group members are usually strong and the support which the group offers individuals can sometimes be at least as important as that which springs from informal friendships.

For that reason, the commitment which an affinity group

usually calls for from its members is more demanding than that of membership in a larger group. Meetings are usually arranged so that everybody can attend, not just set for an arbitrary time in the hope that most people will be able to make it.

Similarly you can't just phone up and ask to join a local affinity group as you might join another kind of peace group any more than you can phone up a family down the street and ask if they feel like adopting you.

Because, yes, in the end, an affinity group is most like a family with all the tension and ambivalence that exists in real families. There's an important difference though: It's virtually impossible for a traditional family not to support and benefit from existing power structures. The main purpose of affinity groups is to challenge and change the whole structure and meaning of power in our society.

**Commissions are "them" not "us"**

# Reading porn no way to spend beautiful summer evenings

**Susan Clarke**

I had never given any serious thought about what it would be like to be a member of a government-appointed commission. After all, commissions are organizations to which you make submissions, hoping at least one member will be sympathetic to your concerns; at least one member will recognize that the issues you think are important should be mentioned in the report.

Commissions are the personification of "them" and not "us."

Nevertheless, in June, 1983, I was asked to be a member of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution appointed by the Department of Justice. My views about commissions began to change.

We were to make recommendations for changes in legislation (the Criminal Code and other legislation where necessary) after undertaking a thorough analysis of both issues and consulting with Canadians through public hearings to be held across the country.

We completed our work in February, 1985 (two months late in the time-honoured tradition of government-appointed bodies) by submitting a 750 page report,

complete with 108 recommendations.

But what is it like to be on such a committee? First, there is the surprise, not to say shock, of being invited to be a member. You are torn between accepting that you are considered sufficiently established/establishment to be invited to join the Special Committee, and thinking "if the

ment. No one wants to spend time and energy on a committee that has no chance of affecting government policy or at least making a worthwhile contribution to the public debate.

I imagine that many members of special committees and commissions face the two problems I've mentioned so far. What was obviously particular to the Fraser

**Their stories were often harrowing and always told with great intensity and passion**

government is inviting the likes of me, then the whole enterprise can't be very significant".

Secondly, people often assume that by being on the committee, you have abandoned everything you ever believed in and worked for. Co-optation is automatic and complete. At public hearings, you are "them" — and that takes some getting used to, and was certainly not how I thought of myself. Indeed, all of the committee members thought long and hard before accepting the appoint-

Committee was the subject matter — pornography and prostitution. It would be difficult to come up with two topics which are more emotionally charged, and which, in some ways, touch the very centre of our being.

The public hearings were, therefore, emotional experiences, which frequently ran the gamut from anger and hostility and frustration to caring, compassion and concern. What stood out throughout the process, however, was the seriousness with which

Canadians took the public hearings as a means of making their concerns known to the government, and the faith they had in the system to respond to their concerns.

In this sense, the public hearings were a very moving experience and as committee members, we felt a very real responsibility to try to relate what we had heard to those who had appointed us and to other Canadians who had not been a part of the process.

What we hadn't accounted for, however, was how we as individuals were going to cope with the enormous exposure we had to some of the more extreme forms of material and the intensity of people's experiences and feelings about the subject.

Having spent our days in very intense public meetings, we often went on to private meetings with people who had requested to see us. Prostitutes, parents of juvenile prostitutes, social workers, police and people whose lives had been affected by pornography all came to talk with us. Their stories were often harrowing and always told with great intensity and passion.

As difficult as listening to people, however, was the fact that we



**Susan Clarke**

had to become as familiar as possible with the current pornography. In June, 1983, I could not claim any special knowledge about the contents of pornographic films, magazines or videos, and had never visited bars that featured table dancers or nude male performers. As pornography became an issue for women, I had looked at various magazines and some films, but had only the average concerned person's understanding of the material. I had never systematically looked at what was available.

I cannot say my life has been improved by knowing what is quite easily available to any Canadian in the realm of pornography. I think I could quite happily have gone through life without having to deal with it. But you can't help bring about change if you don't know what it is you are dealing with, so I can't say that I regret having had to come to terms with the current wave of pornography. But at the same time, I did wonder how I came to be spending beautiful summer evenings looking at material which I found to be quite appalling and very disturbing.

It was not possible to turn off the committee's work and go on with your everyday life untouched by what you had seen and heard. I found I had little patience with those people who argued that pornography was harmless fantasy because I do not think most of them had looked at the sort of material which is now available, and thought about the implications of it.

Nor, as a social science researcher, did I find any comfort from many of the research reports available to us since the research was all too often poorly conceptualized and problematic. This was an added frustration as I felt that one of the communities to which I belong was not pulling its weight.

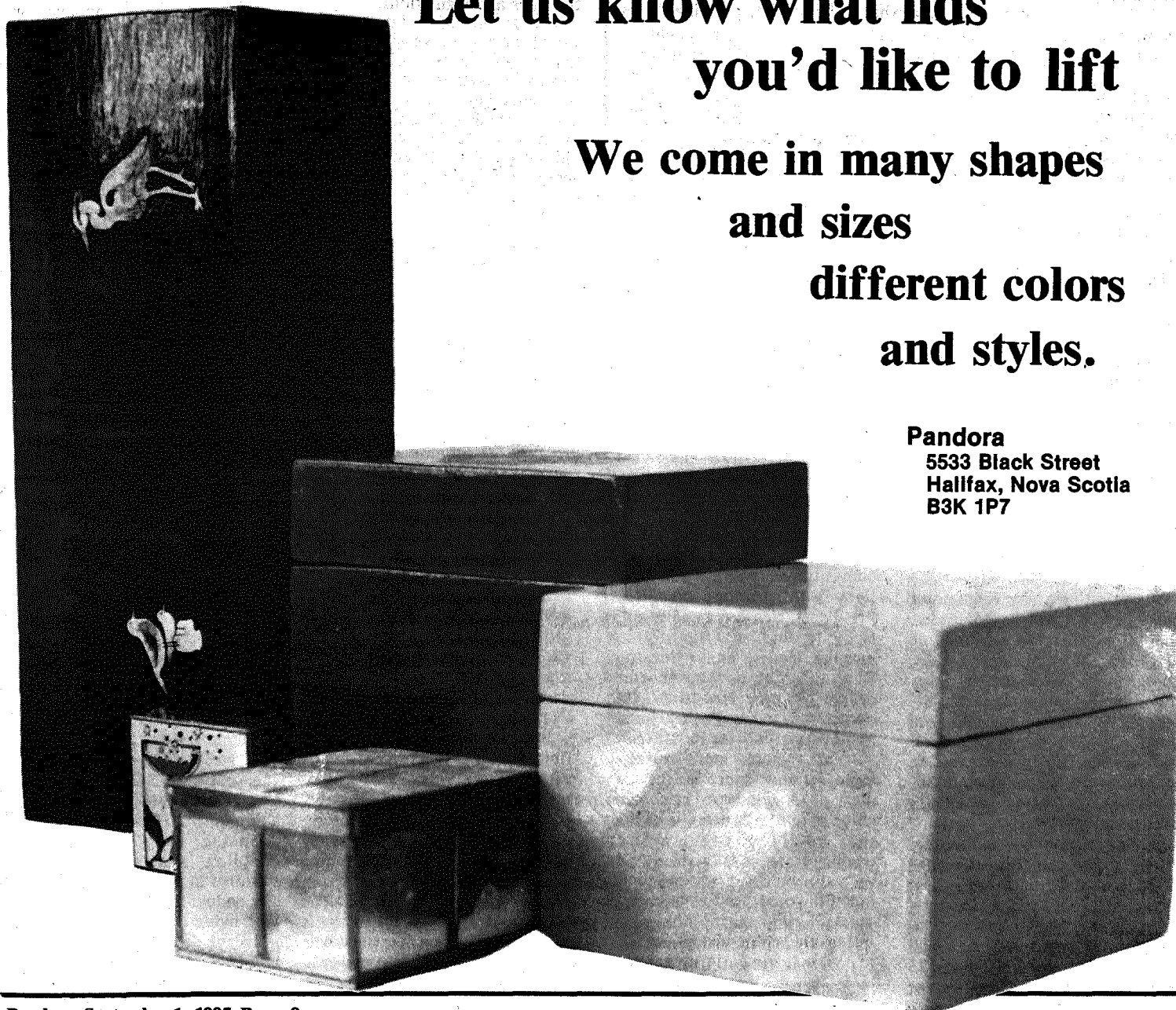
Nevertheless, despite the problems and difficulties of the subjects, I believe the committee came to terms with the issues in its report. None of us would consider the report to be the definitive word on pornography and prostitution. What we do believe, however, is that the report is an accurate reflection of what we learned and heard, and we hope that it will contribute to the debate on these issues.

**Let us know what lids  
you'd like to lift**

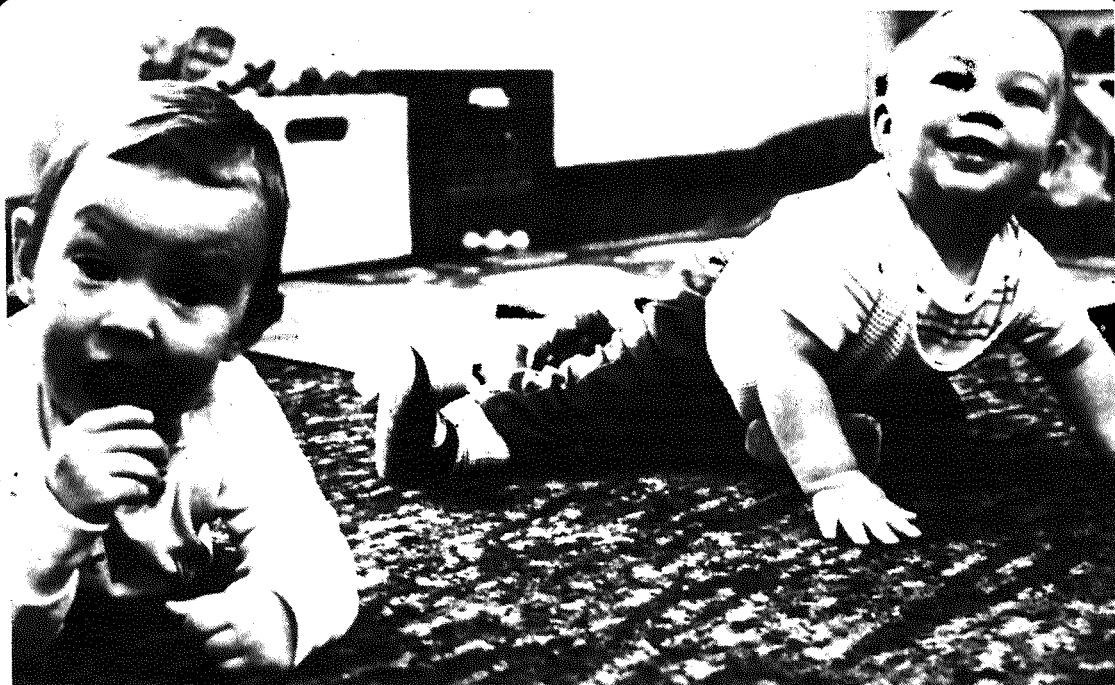
**We come in many shapes  
and sizes**

**different colors  
and styles.**

**Pandora  
5533 Black Street  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3K 1P7**







These happy babies are the youngest occupants of Jack and Jill Day Care and Preschool, Musquodoboit Harbour. At left is Melissa Gill with Jack and Jill Day Care and Preschool, Musquodoboit Harbour. At right is Odessa Bendell (photo by Margaret Davis)

## Daycare a touchy issue in rural communities

Margaret Davis

All too often, parents and daycare workers in urban areas are questioned either about their motives for putting a child into daycare or the importance of their work to society.

But if daycare's a touchy issue in the city, it's even more so in the country.

Carol-Ann Belisle chairs the board of directors of Jack and Jill Daycare and Preschool at Musquodoboit Harbour, on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore. According to Belisle, one of the barriers to running a successful licensed daycare centre in a rural community is "the traditional view that mothers should be at home until their kids go to school".

Today's women, however, want a way of life men have always taken for granted — good jobs and supportive families.

"Women who have spent their 20s establishing themselves in their careers don't want to lose that in their 30s, but they want their families," Belisle says. The existence of approved, reliable daycare helps ensure women can maintain both job and family.

She strongly disputes the notion that for Eastern Shore women, working outside the home is a self-indulgence. "For a great many women who come to our daycare, there isn't much choice. We have single parents who want — and need — to work, as well as people who feel it's their right to work and who don't want to give that up."

"For these women, daycare isn't a frill or a luxury, it's a necessity," Belisle notes that in today's competitive, rapidly changing workplace "the luxury of leaving your job for five or six years is gone".

Reliance on the extended family is another barrier to the establishment of rural daycare centres. "On the Eastern Shore, many people can call on

their mother or sister down the road, or their neighbor with small children next door.

"I don't discredit the traditional ways of looking after children," Belisle stresses, "because these are valuable. It's something that draws people to rural communities, where you know exactly the kind of home your child will be in."

Still, the traditional route is not for everyone. Belisle and her husband moved to the Eastern Shore without a family support system: "I was very relieved there was a daycare here meeting government regulations. This way I don't need to have someone come into my house, and I know exactly what my children are eating, how they're being disciplined, and what activities they're doing."

She feels her children (a son, 4, and a daughter, 2) have developed important social skills thanks to their daycare experience. "There aren't any other small children nearby, so my children wouldn't have had anyone to play with. At Jack and Jill they're exposed to children of different sexes and ages."

Belisle says there are other positive aspects to daycare socialization. "My children are more willing to go into new situations. I can take them to restaurants, or homes with kids they don't know. They can even go to concerts and keep still."

Despite the obvious advantages of daycare, Belisle says working mothers often feel guilty about "institutionalizing" their children.

"All working mothers feel guilty," Belisle says candidly, "but I think you get over it slowly. When I first left my son at Jack and Jill, he was five months old. I wanted to go down and see him at lunch times."

"It lessens the guilt to know there's a healthy, physically safe and emotionally stable environment for my children when they're not with me."

## More women fish than you might think

Valerie Mansour

The average woman is 33 years old, married, has children, and works 65 hours per week. Occupation? Fishing, of course.

On Cape Breton Island alone, 223 women make their livelihood on the sea. And a group called "Awareness for Women in the Fishery" recently completed a report into the working lives of these women.

The idea for the study, funded by the Secretary of State, came up at a women's workshop at last year's Maritime Fishermen's Union convention. A group of Cape Breton women decided it was important to find the common bonds between women who fished.

Project coordinator Kathy Squires of Bras d'Or said it was important to examine the role of women in the fishery: "It's good for women to realize there are others doing the same work."

Kathy fished for three years before taking time off to work on the project. "Before I fished, I felt removed from the issues," she says. "I heard all the stories at the kitchen table from one season to the other. Then I got right into it. Fishing brought all the hassles home to me. Women can have such strong input into the fishery once they are educated about all the rules and regulations."

The group, after interviewing 146 of the women who fish, found that while women work hand-in-hand with their husbands, 48 per cent said they had no input into major fishing decisions like buying new equipment. Their report did not say if the level of women's acceptance by their fishing partners was partly to blame, but rather speculated that "it would seem that women either are not as informed or are more apathetic towards the industry."

Most said they felt accepted in the day-to-day work, finding only a lack of acceptance on the part of the older fishermen generation. And 79 per cent said they felt their working relationship with their husband now created a more unified family. Only 58 per cent, however, said husbands now shared more of the household tasks than before the women had started fishing.

Some other typical problems continue as 20 per cent said they still have difficulties with childcare. Some families have live-in babysitters and others take their children out to babysitters before leaving for fishing early in the morning.

In the final report, women were commended for having overcome many barriers to work at what was traditionally a man's job.

"These women have broken a centuries-old tradition which implied that women on a boat were bad luck; that women being 'the weaker sex' were excluded from an occupation which required physical prowess; that women were too emotional and not logical enough to navigate the waters, to keep accounts, to run their own businesses; that men were the 'breadwinners' of the family, that a woman's job was in the home — if not making the bread, then buying it."

The group noted that changes in the past few years allowed this breakthrough to happen. Many women had established themselves as an integral part of their husbands' business by keeping the books. Many were influenced by women's breakthroughs in other non-traditional occupations. Higher education and qualifications gave women confidence. And the changing economic conditions in the fishery made women look towards fishing as necessary additional income for their family. Changes in UIC benefits also made fishing with their husbands possible.

The group's report includes information on the fishery as well as various recommendations to government, including changes in licensing regulations and income tax laws and the establishment of medical and pension plans.

## Childbirth video of doubtful value

Alex Keir

Here at the Pictou County Women's Centre, we receive 20 complimentary copies of *Great Expectations*, a valuable magazine for expectant parents which covers many areas of pregnancy, childbirth, and new parenting.

In the winter issue, all existing childbirth education programs were offered a complimentary copy of a video series called "Childbirth: From Inside Out."

So, we ordered one.

Two months later the video arrived and we previewed it. Or, at

least, we previewed the first 15 minutes of the first tape in amazement, anger and disgust. Over the next several weeks, I watched the entire series three times, took notes and finally wrote a letter to the publisher, with copies to *Great Expectations*, the producer, Video Medicare, the sponsor (Proctor and Gamble), the host Dr. John Tyson, PCANS, WHEN, and ICEA.

My major concerns were as follows:

•The information given in the

series does not allow for the immense variance between individual women's bodies and experiences

•Some of the information presented as fact is, in our opinion, of questionable factual value. Certain medical procedures of unknown (or in some cases established) risk are presented as perfectly safe diagnostic tools, suggesting that women have no need to question their use.

•It promotes the idea of "risk" and "risk scoring" in pregnancy

and, therefore, perpetuates the myth that pregnancy is a disease to be medically treated or, at best, an unnatural condition for a woman's body to be in.

•The assumption is made throughout the series that all pregnant women are married.

•A male doctor acts as host, and sexist pronouns are used by every health care provider who appears in the series.

The two tapes were returned to the publisher, along with the letter. To date, we have received no reply...

# NDP

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# Women exploited by weekly job ghettos

**Margaret Davis**

The other day I received a letter to the editor addressed, "Dear Sir". It wasn't the first time and perhaps not the last, but I still feel angry every time I open a letter like it. Although my name appears on the masthead every week and my initials are on the editorials, for too many people, "editor" is a male job title.

Our receptionist, bless her, is quick to correct phone callers with the same misapprehension.

"Is your editor in? I'd like to speak to him," someone (usually male) will ask.

"Yes, she is in. May I tell her who's calling?"

When I first began editing a weekly in 1976, I really was something of a rarity. At a newspaper convention in Winnipeg in 1977, an Alberta editor and I sought moral support in each other's company. As far as we could tell, we were the only women editors in attendance.

Public misconceptions to the contrary, in 1985 there are many women editors and reporters at weeklies in the Maritimes and across the country. But before we congratulate ourselves on spectacular advances for the cause of

women, we should examine the situation more closely.

Not long ago, a prominent Maritime publisher sat at a table in a hotel convention suite, surrounded by his exclusively female, award-winning editorial staff. Slightly in his cups, he made an expansive gesture and asked the table at large, "Why is it that I always hire women reporters?"

Someone (maybe even I) responded, "Because they're extremely talented and dedicated." I

vide salaries and working conditions attractive enough to encourage the talented to stay on.

For a variety of reasons, however, many women lack the flexibility that would permit them to move to better jobs. They may be single mothers with one or more children in school. They may be married to or living with men who hold secure jobs in small communities at a time when security is rare enough to be cherished. Or they may simply

are contributing to their community and society.

The organization of journalists' unions on large newspapers and the broadcast media has been vociferously opposed by management. Thus the task of organizing rural unions seems almost insurmountable, but it can be done. Britain's National Union of Journalists (NUJ) represents not only the *London Times* but the *Falmouth Packet*.

True, Canada's small popula-

debilitating. The woman who plans to enter this business must have more than her share of business acumen — and guts galore. But if you take comfort in statistics, studies of the entrepreneurial woman indicate that women in small business have a far higher success rate than men, because their expectations are reasonable, they research the market thoroughly and they're not afraid to ask for advice.

The idealism I felt as a student reporter more than a decade ago has dimmed a bit, but there's room for new hope — perhaps next time I'll be working for a woman.

(Since writing this piece, Margaret Davis has left her job as editor of *The Eastern Shore Weekly*. She is past-editor of *The Kings County Record*, *Miramichi Leader* and *Miramichi Weekend* and *The Hants Journal*.

Her M.A. dissertation for the University of Leicester, England, was — "Journalistic Autonomy: More Apparent Than Real." The dissertation was a comparison of attitudes among American and British journalists and used some original research done at the Centre for Mass Communication Research, Leicester University. Annotated bibliography available on request!)

## —They're talented, dedicated and work dirt cheap—

should have added, "And because they work dirt cheap."

It's all too true, and publishers (of 48 in the Atlantic Provinces, only three are women) know it. Women editors and reporters will work longer hours for less money than their male counterparts — at least partly because journalism is still a male-dominated field and they have something to prove. If a man louses up an editorial job, he's a lousy editor. If a woman does, it's because she's female.

Blame it on Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman if you like, but since the success of both the film and book versions of *All the President's Men*, the market's been flooded with aspiring journalists. Reporting jobs are rarely advertised for long and even small weeklies have found themselves inundated with hundreds of applicants for a single position.

This fact, combined with Atlantic publishers' traditionally cavalier attitude to editorial content, further conspires against improving the lot of women in the weeklies. You don't have much bargaining power when you know there's a waiting list of people ready to take over your desk tomorrow.

The turnover rate at weeklies is high, with many young people seeing them as stepping stones to more prestigious (and higher paid) positions in the cities. Publishers apparently share that notion, since few make an effort to pro-

prefer to live and raise their families in a rural atmosphere.

Motivation aside, an increasing number of women are eking out a living at weekly newspapers. In fact, if it hasn't reached that state already, the day is not far off when the weeklies will be yet another job ghetto for women. And if reporting for the weeklies comes to be seen as "women's work", its recompense will remain low. Reporters and editors will join the legion of other women — secretaries, waitresses, hairstylists, domestics, childcare workers — whose contribution to the labor force is undervalued, largely because of their sex.

I wish I could offer a pat solution to this problem. As I see it, there are two potential routes out, but neither will be easily achieved. The first route, bound to be met with publisher outrage in the extreme, is a national union for journalists. The second is for more women to venture into the perilous field of publishing.

North American journalists see themselves as practitioners in one of the most autonomous crafts in the world. Yet, especially in rural areas, reporters are quite powerless, most working long hours for low salaries (overtime pay is practically unheard of), few health benefits or pension packages.

Their main compensation lies in the interesting nature of their work and an idealistic notion they

tion and immense geography work against similar unionization, but we do have examples to follow in other fields — witness moves to unionize bank employees and the recent lengthy strike at Eaton's. It is not coincidental that both represent staffs that are almost entirely female. Women reporters would do well to consider carefully the concept of solidarity the next time they are sent out to photograph cashiers picketing the local supermarket chain.

Meanwhile, publishing needs more women. My recent experience with a fledgling weekly proves that the growing pains are intense, by times almost



## We need more throat

How many times have you gone home frustrated from a women's march, peace rally, or protest action with strained ears and sympathetic sore throat from trying to hear the organizers and speakers as they screech out speeches, songs, directions?

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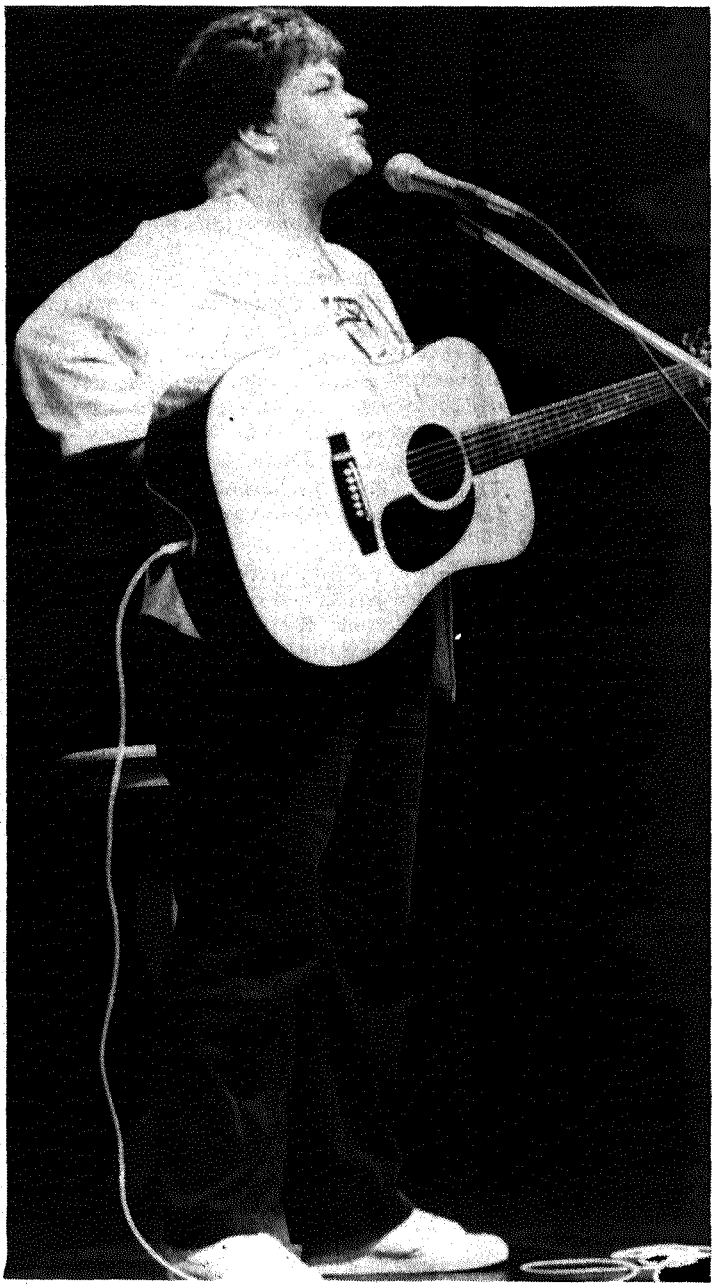
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## Judy Small concert catches fire!

Erica Munn

It was Friday, August 16, the morning of the Judy Small concert. Over the radio came news of a major fire at Dalhousie University. The Dunn Theatre, where the concert was to be held, would not be available that evening. Catch Fire! Productions (the name and the University event are co-incidental) made last minute negotiations. Word of mouth advertising was successful and that evening Judy Small mesmerized her audience in the Neptune Theatre.

The last minute scramble did not seem to affect the more than 200 women who gathered at the Neptune for an evening of song and poetry. Donna Smythe ignited the night by reading two visionary and introspective poems. The two women hold similar world views. They spoke of awareness, of nuclear war and of peace, the planet and other human concerns. And the response of the audience was enthusiastic.

But the spotlight that night was on Judy Small, a feminist singer-songwriter from Australia. Fresh from a western tour, she endeared herself to her Halifax audience with her life and her vitality. Judy Small sings with a big, dynamic voice and treated her audience to an evening of wit, humour and music.

Early in the concert she warned that by the end of the night we would know her family history, perhaps more than we wished. But she was wrong. We were left wanting more. A concert with Judy Small is like being in her living room. She offers personal, intimate thoughts and feelings about her life that creates a bond with her audience.

Judy has been called Australia's Nancy White. Her songs use satire and irony to convey their messages, and her audience loves it. "Poor Roly Poly People" (about being fat), "Alison and Me" (about friendship), "Annie" (about homophobia), "To Get To Heaven, Turn Right and Go Straight," it was all there.

But the crowd-pleaser of the night had to be "IPD," the new contraceptive device for men. The audience roared approval. Finally, "Mothers, Daughters, Wives" brought the evening to a close. It is a song for Judy's mother — about making choices — and on that positive, warm note, the evening ended.

Catch Fire! Productions should be proud. The Judy Small concert was a celebration, a celebration that united and renewed women in their friendships and in the powerful feeling of being a woman in the eighties.

## Internship at Redwood

# Making women's music a learning experience

Jennifer Leith  
with Rusty Neal

Last March, Rusty and I arrived in San Francisco to work for three months as interns at Redwood Records. This was the culmination of a series of events which started in late 1982 when a group of people who had worked together on bringing Yolocamba-ita to the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium decided to further test our newly acquired skills. We wrote Holly Near — asking her to perform in Halifax, with a coalition of community groups as the producers.

A year and a half later, she accepted and after six months of hard work, we had a full house and a wonderful concert. The event was everything we had hoped for. The next time Rusty and I wrote, we asked if we could visit Redwood Records to work and learn as interns. After a series of letters and proposals, we received a phone call accepting our proposal. Six months later we arrived in San Francisco.

San Francisco was not what we expected. It was so much more than the blue-eyed-blond surfer world we grew up believing in. What we saw was a city full of asians, blacks, latins and gays, language and cultural diversity. The gay population was a visible minority of 25 per cent of the city — no different than any other minority. We stayed for the first week with a sister of a friend from Halifax, in what we learned later is the "dyke-latin" neighbourhood.

Redwood is situated in two older houses in a black neighbourhood in Oakland, across the bay from San Francisco. On the right is an abortion clinic and next to that is a fast food place. Each day the prostitutes who work the street dawn til dawn walk up and down the street in front of the office. One Sunday afternoon there was a sniper shoot-out in the next block. At other times there were racial incidents at the corner stores between the local black population and the new Palestinian shopkeepers. Daily we could see bag ladies and men and bag children poking through the garbage behind restaurants. Oh America!

We sat through "Only in California" staff meetings that included discussions about who would be out of the office the next day because of protest activity around the US embargo of Nicaragua. There was the possibility that women would be arrested — with the resulting need to reschedule meetings and work.

Another afternoon the whole office cleared out to hear Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa address 10,000 people at the University of California in Berkeley. They were protesting the university's continued investments in South Africa. We passed Holly in another car, singing away, as she practiced a song

she had written that morning and would perform at the rally.

Though Rusty and I had worked and travelled in many other parts of the world, we felt we were exploring a new culture, familiar to us as women's culture, but different again from any thing we had experienced. In fact, when we arrived at Redwood we saw that Nova Scotia was off the map they used for performer's tours — they had to draw it in!

The women of Redwood were wonderful. Although we had our own work to do, we were also able to work with each person there, in every aspect of the business. We worked in the shipping room (those albums and tapes in Red Herring in Halifax originate in the tiny shipping room), on concert promotion, album covers, line notes and copyright. We worked with the artists and the media on album promotion, we worked backstage, we learned about networks and networking skills.

My main work involved the promotion and distribution of two new albums from Nicaragua, by the duo Guardabarranco and Salvador Bustos. I worked with Amy Bank on developing strategies for promotion with solidarity groups across the US. I also talked to writers in the media — from *Rolling Stone* to *Record Review* to *Time Magazine* and *People* about the albums.

Rusty was working with Jill Davey on the co-ordination of Ronnie Gilberts' 22-city tour through the US. Rusty had known of Ronnie as a kid, when Ronnie was in the Weavers. She was dealing with various producers and productions of Ronnies' tour and working to coordinate Ronnies' press coverage.

The women of Redwood work very hard for modest wages, and none of the musicians we met (including Holly Near) seemed to be making much money at all. Redwood Records as a company is expanding and going through expan-

sion pains. Job descriptions were changing. A general manager was newly hired to handle more of the business side which freed up the partners to handle the more "creative" sides with artists and albums. Burnout seemed to hover in the background with the long hours and the determination to get the music out.

The struggles of the women's movement could be seen on a different scale within Redwood: structure, process, professionalism, efficiency, computerization, who makes what decision, learning skills. With Holly Near taking a year off from touring, and with the decision to produce and distribute an increasing number of artists and albums, come new directions and new ways of doing things.

We have been honoured by the warmth of the women of Redwood. We were able to get to know and understand Americans as friends, as feminists and activists at home. Their openness and generosity was remarkable, as they shared with us everything from their feminist visions, their stories, their cars and their lives. They listened to us rant and rave about American imperialism north of their border as we shared with them parts of our selves and our lives as Nova Scotian feminists. And we learned the difference between the US government and Americans who are trying to change the system. And we learned about music. We had an opportunity to learn about the American women's music industry and develop our skills as producers of women's events. We, in turn, look forward to passing these skills along, to help bring great entertainment to Halifax!

Jennifer Leith is a Halifax educator and, with Rusty Neal, and Maureen Shebib is a co-producer of Catch Fire! productions.



Redwood Records is a women owned and run record company. It is structured as a partnership that is owned and managed by Holly Near, Joanie Shoemaker and Jo-Lyne Worley. It currently employs nine fulltime staffpeople, and has a core of dedicated volunteers as well. It is financed by money raised entirely in the private sector, from loans from individuals of \$1000-\$20,000.

Redwood Records manages the careers of Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert, and produces, manufactures and distributes their albums. They also produce, manufacture and distribute the albums of a growing number of other women artists as well as NEW SONG music, music which details the struggles of Latin America.

A complete catalogue of their

albums is available from Red Herring Cooperative Bookstore in Halifax. Redwood distributes the albums of Holly Near, Ronnie Gilbert, Judy Small, Connie Kaldor, Ferron, Linda Tilley, Sabia, among others. Redwood Records: 476 West MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94609

Redwood Records Culture and Education Fund is the non profit organization Holly Near and her co-workers formed to fund and co-ordinate the non-commercial cultural and educational work that is part of Redwood Records commitment to maximizing the effectiveness of its progressive cultural work. It publishes a twice yearly newsletter "Voices."

Redwood Records Culture and Education Fund: 478 West MacArthur Blvd., Oakland Ca. 94609

# Conformity, neutrality not in best interests

The law and its mystery once seemed romantic to me. It has been imbued with a mystical aura; there is a Masonic murkiness about the Latin and the somber shrouds. Lawyers and lay persons are set apart, a legacy of religious origins. High priests, and now in this century, high priestesses, possessing a sacred knowledge.

But even in understanding this, a true insight into the consequences of choosing to become a lawyer comes hard. It seemed to me that intimacy with the law guaranteed power. Intuitively, I recognized that such privileged learning would likely minimize the danger of not being taken seriously. And then there is the actual knowledge itself — all those rules and regulations, restrictions, prohibitions, precedents, limitations, doctrines, principles. Acquire knowledge of those and acquire power. I thought I had found the fuel-rod for social change.

My earliest visions led to more profound insights. As a lawyer, one is, even if unwillingly, a servant to the very system that one ideologically opposes. As feminism necessarily demands a commitment to substantial social change, lawyering for feminists is shot through with contradictions.

I have been taught, not to challenge and question, but to respect and conform to a ritualistic, male-dominated and defined, depersonalized set of values. Conformity, neutrality and objectivity are professionally approved qualities. The emphasis is on order and formality, special archaic language and concepts, and complex rules of procedure.

The law represents authority and legitimacy, it fails to ameliorate the real ills and contradictions of our world. It is actively intolerant of those on the periphery of conventional society, and of any challenge to the ac-

cepted order. It is the fuel-rod of non-change.

Our laws are the rules of the patriarchy. They serve a society defined by men, for men, and about men — their money, their control over the means of produc-

## Anne Derrick

tion, their property, their values, their morality. Our laws reflect our indifferent, avaricious and materialistic culture. These laws have preserved the subordinated condition of women, existing outside of equality.

In preparing us to be lawyers, we are disabled men and women, forced to operate within and uphold a tradition of rules and unquestioned values. Learning to be a lawyer does not equip us for social activism. It is not intended that it should. Quite the contrary, lawyering involves a process of professional assimilation both subtle and insidious. Often I feel locked in a deadly and deadening struggle with the very process, that of learning and professional

development, that I believed would educate and strengthen me.

Women working for change as lawyers and feminists face daily the insensitivity and inertia of the law. We must break free of the spell cast upon us by our training and our experience, by refusing to conform, by choosing to be partial in the interest we represent, by viewing our professional lives as an expression of our personal political values.

We must reject the choices that would commit us further into the service of the powers and the interests that define our world. We must be fearless advocates: advocates for change, advocates for true justice, advocates for women.

We should not believe much of what we hear. As women we remain disenfranchised members of a society not of our making. We must resist being co-opted, and challenge the law to hear — after all these dark, dusty centuries — a new language.

But it is not enough for the law to hear, it must change and, in resisting its power to change us, we shall change it.



## Dartmouth women get involved

# Candidates will be polled on issues

## Deborah Preeper

The Women and Community Action project is sponsored by Community Planning Association, Nova Scotia Division. It's the daughter of a previous project, Women and Community Dartmouth, which conducted a survey of one per cent of the female population of Dartmouth

from age 15. Women were questioned on a range of issues including housing, transportation, child care, health care, and education.

Community Planning, under a Canada Employment and Immigration grant, hired two staff persons, Anne White and myself, Deborah Preeper, to work on this

project. Our mandate is to prepare a series of newsletters and organize a series of workshops on issues that were identified through the survey.

Our objective is the increased understanding of, and action on, women's issues. We hope to empower women with information, knowledge, and experience. In

this way, we will develop the self-confidence to approach elected officials at all levels of government with our concerns.

With this in mind, we are looking for women in Dartmouth who are interested in forming a committee to circulate a questionnaire to candidates in the up-coming municipal election. The responses will be published in our newsletter as well as in the local press, so that women will know how candidates stand on issues **before** they vote on October 19. The questionnaire responses will also provide a written record of campaign promises.

The members of the Committee will be responsible for preparing the questionnaire with questions that **you** feel are important. The questions will be **yours**. Anne and I will be available to assist with typing and give advice on such things as circulation.

Time is of the essence! Nomination day is September 23. We would like to have the questionnaire ready to go out to candidates the next day, or as soon as we can get a list of candidates from City Hall.

As you can see, we have our work cut out for us. Let's show candidates that the days when votes could be bought with rum and chocolates are over! The price we are asking is sensitive social, economic and environmental planning.

**Forgive us  
our typos!**

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# City ignores Africville contribution

Maureen MacDonald

The name "Seaview Park" doesn't conjure up many images of Africville. Maybe that's the point.

Seaview Park was formally opened by Halifax city officials on June 22, 1985. It sets on the site of Africville, a black community that was more than 125 years old when it was relocated in the mid-1960's.

Some former Africville residents say a more apt description of what took place is that their community was destroyed and taken from them — supposedly for their own good.

The Africville Genealogy Society, an organization dedicated to keeping former community members in touch, were neither informed nor invited to the park's official opening. Two days before the ceremony, some former residents accidentally found out — and attended.

They're quick to correct any impression that the ceremony was a dedication to Africville. Emphatically they state "It was no such thing!"

Mrs. Elsie Desmond was at the opening. She lived in Africville for

43 years. At 73, an active community and Genealogy Society member, Mrs. Desmond openly wonders why the park wasn't called Africville Park. Her question is accompanied by nods around the kitchen table at a gathering of Society members.

"It's not right. The City should have recognized Africville, the land and where they got it," says Mrs. Laura Johnson, another Society member and former Africville resident.

Former slaves and their descendants, living in incredibly harsh circumstances further out in Halifax County, came to the shores of the Bedford Basin in the 1840's. The area is one of the most beautiful spots looking out on the basin — but the black settlers didn't come for the view. They came to be close to fishing and whatever limited employment they could get in the Halifax area.

Originally, there were eight families with deeds to land: the Browns, Carverys, Dixons, Arnolds, Hills, Fletchers, Baileys and Grants. In 1964 — when the relocation began — many of the 80 families could trace their Afric-

ville roots back at least 100 years.

Once settled on the basin, the community was shamefully neglected by the city of Halifax. Church and community leaders approached the city on numerous occasions requesting the same basic services provided to other taxpayers in the city: water, fire protection, policing, recreation and social services. Their requests fell on deaf ears.

City officials left the Africville residents alone, except during elections, when local residents were used to "get out the black vote." The inattention wasn't to continue forever.

In 1947, the City designated the Africville area for further industrial and harbour development. Although the community had prospered somewhat during the war, it was still without basic services and community conditions deteriorated.

Halifax, however, was expanding and all the facilities it didn't

want were put around Africville: the dump, the prison, railroad lines. Finally, in the late 50's, negative national and international media attention proved an embarrassment to the city. Rather than provide the needed community services, it was decided to relocate the people.

The first residents were moved in 1964. By 1971 80 families, 400 people, were relocated. Some were moved into Uniacke Square or other public housing developments. Others moved into the private housing market. Noone was adequately compensated for their real loss by any fair standard — although, at the time, the relocation process was hailed in many circles as a model of progressive social reform.

Today there is no memorial in Seaview Park that would indicate that this was a black community with a long history. However, one is being planned. Linda Matley, Society secretary, has been con-

tacted by the city staff regarding the monument.

"We're too late to have input into the design," she says. "That's been decided. But we will have input into what is written on it."

Minutes of a 1978 City Council meeting show that city staff recommended that the park, then in the preliminary planning stages, be called "Seaview Memorial Park." The Africville church was called Seaview United Baptist Church. Yet for some residents the name doesn't make the land's history clear enough.

There have been reports that a Prince Edward Island enterprise that specializes in children's amusement parks is interested in locating in Seaview Park. Ironically, the community that was bulldozed as an eyesore might be replaced by cardboard castles or fake metallic spaceships.

The local alderman is also talking about the city eventually building a boat launch in the park. How ironic that Africville died because the city never saw fit to pay the cost of water and sewer services for the black residents. Soon, more affluent Northenders, mostly whites, may sail away without ever knowing at whose expense they voyage.

The full story of Africville is best contained in the memories of the people who lived there. They pass this history on to their descendants, particularly when they gather annually under auspices of the Africville Genealogy Society. This year's gathering was held in Seaview Park. Former residents and their descendants — who now live not only in Metro, but all across Canada and the United States — gathered to remember their heritage.



Seaview Park today

## the Mount

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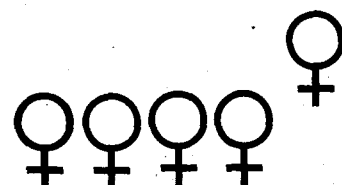
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# Housing Halifax ... facing a crisis

Halifax has a housing crisis and women are the hardest hit. But as the situation worsens, community groups have decided to no longer wait for government to solve the problems. They've taken action and they've begun to see results . . .

## MUMS persistent effort finally gets results

**Maureen MacDonald**

They call themselves Mothers United for Metro Shelter . . . MUMS. With Metro's vacancy rate stubbornly hovering between 0.4 and 0.8 per cent, and a provincial housing minister who openly states there isn't a housing crisis, MUMS have their work cut out.

packing punches in words. She had one copy she'd do over and over again in her own handwriting. She hoped it would get some response."

Sure enough, many politicians and government officials replied, but according to May, her resulting pleasure was short lived. "We soon figured out that while

before the provincial election, women from both groups marched on province house. The public and media response was overwhelming.

Eileen, an ex-Bryony house resident, now living in second-stage housing, was on that march — "I used to get so lonesome here that I'd go back to Bryony House to

**In some cases . . . women return to abusive spouses. "The violence you face with him is sometimes not as bad as the violence you face with the government."**

May sits at a table sipping tea and smiles as she recalls the night they chose a name for the group.

"We had so much fun. Remember?" she asks Eileen, another MUMS member.

"After the first march, people didn't know what to call us. We decided on MUMS because that's who we are and because we wanted people to relate to what we're all about. . . getting housing for our families."

May explains that she and Heather Schneider, MUMS chief spokesperson, met in the fall of '84 at Bryony House, a temporary shelter for battered women and their kids. On more than one occasion, they pooled resources and energy to search for apartments.

"Everything was against us, being separated with kids and on welfare. With Heather, she had the colour thing, too. We ended up going to Human Rights."

As a result, May explains, "Heather had all that anger in her soul. She started writing letters,

they answer, they never give the response you want."

It was then that Heather started talking about marching in a group, to educate the public and the politicians who were in the middle of a provincial election campaign. Soon they were put in touch with another group of women with similar concerns.

visit a lot." It was there she met Heather and May.

Eileen is worried now. Her time at second-stage is up. "I've been living here in second-stage since July of last year. I've looked everywhere. I've even looked outside the city. I found a really nice little farm house with two acres of land in Liverpool near my family.

**Their success to date has been the supreme collective effort of women who know the value of mutual friendship and support.**

This second group were ex-Bryony House residents living in second-stage housing. Although housed in apartments, these women can only stay one year before moving into the private market. They have to make way for others leaving the temporary shelter.

On November 8, three days

You could have a vegetable garden and everything."

Shaking her head she says, "The owner wanted a couple!" So, for now, the second-stage housing board has given Eileen and her two daughters, Dayle, 8 years and Diane, 9 months, a one-month extension.



APRIL, 1985: MUMS marching for housing: Heather Schneider with bullhorn and

Like any other organization, MUMS have had their ups and downs. May and Eileen are quick to point out the assistance they've received from the second-stage caretaker: "Without her we wouldn't have made it."

Financially, they've had to skimp money from meager incomes to cover babysitting and transportation costs. In June, they received a small sum of money from the local PLURA organization (Protestant, Lutheran, United, Roman Catholic and Anglican churches).

After the November march, Heather began receiving phone calls from other women, in battering situations, with housing problems.

May says, "She'd talk to them for hours. She'd take their problems on as if they were her own. For a while, she was doing so much that we really began to worry about her."

Now they all get calls and they all share the public speaking, brief writing and other tasks. They take turns holding the weekly meetings in their homes and they call emergency meetings to deal with

May: "We even called them to let them know we were coming. When we arrived at the legislature, security had been told not to let us in. We stood outside for a long time in the freezing rain and snow until they finally said only 10 of us could go in. Eventually, we were all allowed in the public gallery."

May was one of the five MUMS members who met with Laffin on April 2. "Right from the start, he

## Letter from

**August 26, 1985**

We are proud of what we have done and the work and determination we have.

Our cries were heard and an effort of Halifax to meet the housing needs.

We are grateful for the land provided in Halifax.

Plans have been drawn up for a building specifically for the parcel of land between Gottingen and Gerrish Streets. This building is being constructed for commercial use. The first floors will consist of two and three units.

We are going to be involved from the start. We will know the building from the ground when it is completed — hopefully.

The MUMS are also discussing other structures that we will develop on the site.

Some business possibilities will be discussed and a lunch counter. Those businesses chosen will offer employment.

We hope that others will join with us. We hope that others who are desperate will eventually see their needs being met.



# Housing for People Working together works!

**Valerie Mansour**

Housing for People, a Halifax coalition of about 30 organizations, is hoping that a community response will help alleviate the housing crisis.

"Often concerned people feel powerless," says Mavis Nixon, graduate social work student and coalition member. "By working together we can do something. This is a cooperative rather than competitive way of getting housing."

The coalition, including community groups like Dal Legal Aid, Veith House and the North End Clinic, labour groups and churches, meets monthly to plan ways of providing housing. Nixon says their plan is to match different groups in need of housing with the people who can assist them.

They have targeted 11 groups, such as single mothers, students, and the disabled. "The universal trait is that they are all low income people," says Nixon. Each group will search for funding in different areas, using the expertise of resource groups who know where to look for money.

"We all realize any kind of housing is desirable. If any target group gets housing, it'll help. We're not advocating any more Uniacke Squares, but we want roofs over people's heads."

Nixon says the coalition is not simply trying to pressure government, but rather wants to take part in how housing is delivered. She says the group does not expect to have immediate impact, but is looking at the future.

She does contend, however, that government could be doing more. "The province has never had the political will. The federal government wants out of housing and at the same time has cut allocations to the provinces."

"The city alone can't solve its own housing crisis, but they can do more — they've shirked responsibility for cleaning up substandard dwellings. They should be pressured to make landlords clean up their act."

Nixon sees the recent Halifax housing symposium as an election ploy. "But one thing they've done is get people fired up and they won't know what to do with our energy!"

The coalition's first public event was a housing walking tour in May and they are now planning an action for September.

## For Halifax city council: Solutions and more solutions

**Valerie Mansour**

Housing Halifax, the June symposium sponsored by Halifax City Council, was an opportunity for individuals and groups to tell the city how to alleviate the housing crisis. Following the first evening of submissions, Halifax alderman Don LeBlanc, who chaired the symposium panel, was on the radio complaining about the lack of "innovative" solutions. Community workers hope this longing for innovation will not become an excuse for inaction.

What is an innovative solution — a winterized balloon floating high above the city, with a two-bedroom unit inside for every homeless woman and her child?

The housing crisis is not new and neither are the solutions. The vacancy rate in Halifax is 0.2 per cent, one of the worst in the country. (Economists say a rate of three or four per cent is necessary for reasonable choice and competition.) There is simply not enough affordable housing.

As one presenter told the panel, there is no housing crisis amongst high income people. Exorbitantly priced condominiums are popping up everywhere; apartments which once housed low income people are being renovated beyond the affordability of the original tenants; not enough cooperative and non-profit housing is being created.

The situation in the city is desperate — even the emergency shelters have waiting lists. And, as many people told the panel, women with children are the hardest hit.

**Answers . . .**

Developers, builders and investors, not surprisingly, said only the lifting of rent review would alleviate the housing problem. This was disputed by community groups who said if rent review came off, there would be a crisis that would make the current housing crisis look pale by comparison.

They said the first thing the city must do is declare

a housing emergency or crisis. They must start with the basis that adequate and affordable housing is a basic human right for all. Once the political commitment is there, much can be done.

The following are some of the suggestions:

- There should be zoning by-law changes to encourage private developers to include low-income housing in their developments, allowing them to add extra units if in return they provide so many units of low income housing.
- The city should enforce its minimum standards by-law to help alleviate the misery of people living in substandard housing.
- There should be government assisted housing targeted to people with insufficient income.
- The municipal social assistance allowance should be increased to reflect the increase in housing costs.
- The city should support an amendment to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act which would make it illegal to discriminate against any one parent families when there are an appropriate number of bedrooms in the unit.
- Provide incentives to the private sector to open up rooming or boarding situations.
- The city should petition the province to amend the residential tenancies act to provide security of tenure following a one year tenancy.
- Create second stage and long-term housing for women going through emergency shelters.

With submissions from 38 groups and individuals, the panel has sufficient food for thought. Over the summer they have been meeting with various people with various levels of expertise. They have recently gone their separate ways to prepare reports on specific areas. They will meet again in September, perhaps, hope beyond hope, to give their recommendations to city council, before the October municipal election.



and Sherma Nickerson, Michelle Schneider Dayle Cooke, Cindy Nickerson

tried to intimidate us by setting down all these rules. Only one person would speak at a time and if anyone else made a point when it wasn't her turn, or interrupted, he said he'd leave. He even broke his own rule and I told him so!" she laughs.

"He told us he'd been in the war and had to go into ditches and he'd suffered, and I thought, 'but did you have to bring your kids with you?' His words were

like looking at us and saying we don't exist."

May, and the other MUMS expecting a sympathetic hearing, were very disappointed.

This summer, they've taken most of July and August off to relax with their children and rest up for fall activities. Then, their focus will be on municipal elections and submitting a proposal — along with the City of Halifax municipal housing program — for funding to develop a co-op through CMHC.

Both Eileen and May have seen women from their group leave the area to find housing. In some cases, they know women who return to abusive spouses. "The violence you face with him is sometimes not as bad as the violence you face with the government."

May says, "I can't stand seeing what it does to the kids. It's not right moving them from school to school and so many mothers worry about having to give their kids up or having them apprehended."

"You have to be very strong to get through this," says Eileen.

They and other MUMS members have made it through their first year. Their success to date has been the supreme collective effort of women who know the value of mutual friendship and support.

These women don't waste one moment claiming personal credit, in fact every statement is punctuated with lavish praise for "Heather's leadership", "Kathleen's support," "Laura's research," and so on.

The truth of the matter is, MUMS have revived the old adage: "the personal is the political." There are no personal solutions, only collective action for collective solutions.

## m the MUMS

have accomplished. Through hard have made a crack in the wall. n effort has been made by the City ng needs of a few. nd proposal made by the City of

for a three storey building design- of land located on the corner of s. The main floor of the building imercial purposes. The remaining l three bedroom apartment units. d from the turning of the sod, and rom the basement to the rafters efully by the spring of 1987. ssing three feasible business ven- the commercial main floor. will be a daycare, a laundromat business ventures will be of our oyment to the building occupants. oin with us in our efforts so that perately in need of housing will ng met.

**The Mums**



# Library lets the lid off women's issues

## Pat Kipping

Maybe it's because it's the end of the Decade for Women — and it wasn't long enough. Maybe it's because WIRRS' closing left a big gap in the community. Or maybe women are simply placing more demands on public institutions. Whatever the reason, this fall will see a real concentration on women's programmes and resources at the Halifax City Library.

**Services and Organizations for Women in the Metro Halifax Area**, a directory of 80 groups, volunteer and government services will be available free of charge from the library in October.

Black poet, Dionne Brand, will be the library's writer-in-residence from October 21 to 27. Dionne lives in Toronto and works with the Immigrant Women's Health Collective there. She was born in Trinidad-Tobago and came to Canada in her early teens. Dionne's poetry is powerful, personal and political. She has published five collections of poetry, co-authored two works on racism and is working on a collection of short stories.

Dionne will spend her time in Halifax reading from her work at public events and meeting with budding writers of all ages. For details of her schedule, contact the branch nearest you.

**Women and Development** is the theme of the lunchtime series at the Main Branch on Spring Garden Road. This begins October 3 and runs every Thursday in October. Linda Snyder of CUSO will begin, with an overview of the Decade for Women and a report on the Nairobi Conference marking the end of the Decade. She will also talk about her experience with women and development projects in Zambia and Botswana.

On October 10, Abigail Somanji, women's project officer for CUSO and OXFAM America in Zambia, will talk about women's groups there who are attempting to overcome traditional roles and develop income-generating projects in agriculture.

On October 17, Janet Campbell of the Women's Health Education Network (WHEN) will talk about organizing around women's health issues in rural Nova Scotia and Judy Mills will look at similar issues in Central America.

France Early of Mount Saint Vincent University will talk about her research into the historic roots of the North American women's peace movement on October 24. Winding up the series on October 31, Dr. Margaret Fulton will talk about the effects of technology on women — their health, employment and lifestyle both here in and in the Third World.

In an effort to make this series accessible to women with young children, the Children's Services

Department is providing a special programme for pre-schoolers at the same time as the adult programme. Juliana Seleti, a mother and teacher from Zambia has helped us develop programmes of songs, stories, games, films and puppet shows on themes related to the adult series.

The Adult Lending Department will use the occasion of the Women and Development series to add to its collection of books, records, magazines and cassettes in these subject areas. You are welcome to make suggestions for any materials you would like to see in the library by filling out a "suggestion for purchase" form.

One recent book I was happy to see added, as a result of a reader's suggestion, is **Sisterhood Is Global**, with articles about the women's movement in 79 countries.

The Reference Department at the Main Branch has numerous reports and government documents relating to women. Just ask your friendly reference librarian for what you need. There is also a large file of clippings, pamphlets and miscellany on women — biographies on Nova Scotian women, employment, business, medicine, politics, prison, etc. On a recent browse, I came across an interesting booklet

called 'Women: The Fifth World' published in 1980 by the Foreign Policy Institute.

Joan Brown-Hicks, in the Community Services Department, is one of the library's great human resources. This year, Joan is national president of the Canadian Congress on Learning Opportunities for Women. She has extensive files in her office and even more information in her head.

At the North Branch on Gottingen Street, there is a weekly **Women's Programme** which is planned and organized by women from the neighborhood. This group has been meeting every Wednesday morning for nine

years and has become a major force in the North End inner-city area. New women are always welcome.

A similar group is beginning this year at the Mainland South Branch in Spryfield. It will meet on Wednesday afternoons.

For more information about these and other library services, contact the Community Services Department at 421-7673 or the branch nearest you. Ask about magazines for women, non-sexist children's books, videos for loan from the North Branch and the library's new Sunday hours.

## Consumers help plan Grace Maternity

### Jan Catano

The Consumer Support Network (CSN) is an organization of groups and individuals whose immediate purpose is to facilitate consumer participation in the planning of the new Grace Maternity Hospital. We do this in two ways: by providing financial and organizational support for the women appointed by the Salvation Army to represent consumers on the committees planning the

new Grace, and by providing a way for the public to communicate with the consumer representatives.

CNS operates primarily by mail. We publish an UPDATE every six weeks (more or less), which contains information about the planning and contains a feedback sheet to allow consumers to respond to the representatives' ideas and pass along ideas and

concerns of their own. CSN also sponsors public meetings and will arrange meetings between the consumer representatives and any group requesting such a service.

CSN was founded by the Secretary of State Women's Programme until the end of June 1985. We have re-applied for additional funding, but haven't yet heard whether we will receive it. The extent of CSN activity will de-

pend on whether we receive funding, but we will continue to exist regardless of our financial status. We just won't be able to do as much, as regularly. If you'd like to be put on CSN's mailing list, send us your name and address.

CSN is a project of the Prepared Childbirth Association of Nova Scotia.

**Consumer Support Network, c/o Jan Catano, 6246 Shirley Street, Halifax, NS B3H 2N6**

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# For mother, daughter feminism only choice

**Margaret Davis**

They're mother and daughter — two feminists who share the same name but come from radically different backgrounds. Their strong personalities made for conflicts in the past. At 62 and 38, however, they say they've reached a new

understanding.

They're Margot Comeau-Metcalf and Margot Metcalfe, Jr. They live in Sheet Harbour Passage and Beaver Harbour, small communities on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore, where they work with women and rural education.

Ask Margot Sr. about the roots of her feminist beliefs and she says, "I was automatically fired the day I got married. You weren't allowed to be a woman civil servant and married in 1946."

She thinks back as well to her authoritarian father, who refused her permission to study design in Sweden because she was under 21 and he considered Sweden too immoral a country.

"I'm not bitter about it," Margot says now. "But later in life I wonder what I've missed."

A quick glimpse of her life story and you may wonder how many more bases she could have

covered. She started out in Lower Saultville, Digby Co., as the daughter of a well established Acadian family, leaving home to study home economics at the University of Montreal.

Her first job as weaving teacher for the Nova Scotia department of trade and industry set the tone for later work outside the home; in rural Cape Breton, she worked with the co-operative movement setting up cottage industries.

To Margot's Roman Catholic family, her marriage to David Metcalfe — a Protestant — was a disgrace. Her husband's family was scarcely more forgiving and it was years before the Catholic-Protestant marriage was accepted.

She moved, with her engineer husband and three children, to a steady stream of homes throughout the Atlantic provinces, Ontario, and the United States. They finally settled in Sheet Harbor when David Metcalfe took the job as site engineer for Eastern Shore Memorial Hospital. He died three years ago after a five-year illness.

Margot describes motherhood as "one of the most challenging things I did in my lifetime" but

after Margot Jr. began university in 1964, her mother re-entered the paid workforce. She began with a community television show on CBC-St. John's, Nfld., and worked her way through many jobs — from Red Cross youth director in New Brunswick to director of volunteer services at Abbie Lane Memorial Hospital in Halifax.

Today, besides being the provincial contact person for the Canadian Congress on Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW), Margot is on the board of directors of the Women's Health Education Network (WHEN), a member of Continuous Learning Association of Nova Scotia (CLANS) and the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. Last winter she was part-time co-ordinator of LEA Place, a women's centre at Sheet Harbour.

Margot praises her husband and family for their support, adding, "My work with youth in the '60s and my children's decisions about their own lives worked to make me more tolerant. Unlike with my own parents, the communication never broke down between us."



Margot Metcalfe and her mother, Margot Comeau-Metcalf keep feminism in the family through their work with women and continuing education. (photo by Margaret Davis)

## Many women have same dreams

## Daughter rethinks roles

Margot Jr. waits quietly for her turn to speak, sometimes smiling, occasionally raising an eyebrow at her mother's interpretation of family history. She has her own view of that part of her life.

"I had 23 homes in the first 18 years of my life. It developed certain skills, made it possible to be outgoing and to empathize with people, but left me very insecure and in need of a lot of stability in my life."

After studying history in Newfoundland, Margot spent a year at the Commonwealth Institute in London as a lecturer on Canada and the Atlantic provinces. Her socialist beliefs were sharpened and she met the father of her two daughters and established a partnership that lasted 10 years.

In the early 1980s, however, things became unsettled once again. She made a vast change in her life — something she refers to as "the equivalent of a nervous breakdown, without the nervous breakdown".

For three years she worked at nontraditional manual labor jobs such as silviculture, and in more traditional areas such as cooking, cleaning, waitressing and freelance writing. As a community schools co-ordinator — a job she took in the fall of 1984 — she has evidently found her niche.

Not surprisingly, given her varied background, Margot Jr. says her feminist perspective has many roots.

"It came as a reaction and a result of the example of my parents. It was a reaction to my father, who did not respect women unless they were very strong. And I had my mother's example — although because my mother was very strong it was difficult to stand up to her, and I was resentful of the fact that she had always to travel with my father."

Another significant factor, she says, was her younger brother's

recognition that he was gay. The two had always been close and her brother's discovery forced Margot to look at "the oppressive side of the nuclear family. It wreaks havoc when it is the expectation of society that everyone will live that way."

Margot says she made a conscious decision not to marry, at least partly out of loyalty to her brother: "I had a choice, he didn't. I never believed people were inherently monogamous or heterosexual, simply socially conditioned. Marriage puts too much emphasis on one sort of relationship — by overemphasizing marriage, we fail to see the value of the whole range of relationships that make up our lives."

On the intellectual side, "I felt the institution of marriage was oppressive to women and at that time women did lose many of their rights by marrying."

"My father came from a coal mining family and had great sympathy with the working class," Margot explains. "A lot of my leftwing views come from that. As a socialist, I saw women as unpaid labor in the home, which supported capitalism."

Interestingly, Margot found her pregnancies were a force drawing her even closer to feminism: "My introduction to feminism coincided with being at the mercy of my body, with two pregnancies, a

miscarriage and a false pregnancy."

When her younger daughter Claire was born, Margot and her partner had money worries and Margot found herself the victim of violent nightmares in which she murdered her baby.

"I became involved with a consciousness raising group and discovered many other women had the same dreams. This opened me to other women, so I could get on with my own life, realizing how useful it was to share our experiences."

"Most of the things we feel most upset and guilty about are the things other women have thought and felt."

Daughters Sonia, 14, and Claire, 12 are now "one of my greatest sources of joy," Margot says. "They're bringing me up to be a feminist — they catch me up all the time."

She describes both girls as articulate and creative. "But I try not to have any expectations for them, except that I'd like to see them go through life in a reasonably contented way with sympathy for others."

No doubt she hopes her daughters will also be able to say, as Margot says of her own mother, "My relationship with my mother was stormy when I was younger but now it's very positive. I really enjoy working with her."



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# Men's world — a matter of laughter

Relka  
with Betty-Ann Lloyd

A year ago I saw the film *A Question of Silence* in Germany. I remember leaving the theatre, laughing and laughing. I was laughing in solidarity with eight women on the screen, many more in the theatre, who recognized that the world men have made is a matter of laughter. Either you laugh at the crazy situation women are in every single day of their lives, or you murder. Or, in this film, you do both.

I felt what I had just seen was the acting-out of a feeling which our liberal-disguised, so sexist society produces in myself all the time. The women in the film just had enough. Their experience was, again and again, over and over, in many different ways, that they existed only to make men's lives go forward.

Their function was to do the jobs that allowed men to function. They were invisible, worthless, unless they disrupted men's lives by not being there to serve (to care for children, to arrange time, to serve meals, to provide sex).

When I saw the announcement that *A Question of Silence* would be here in Halifax in July, I was delighted to get another chance to see the movie. But at the same time I was apprehensive — and curious. Would Canadian women like it as much as the German women?

The level of aggressiveness and political radicalism is much higher in Europe than here, especially in Germany. European feminists would be much more likely to allow themselves some feeling of joy about the murder — such a simple, direct way of getting rid of a man. It is a somewhat tickling relief after all those never-ending talks and discussions and analyses of society and its patriarchal nature. One man less on earth is one man less to watch out for or to be afraid of.

I perceive that Canadian women are much more modest, polite — trying their best to find a compromise, even with opposite ends. Or perhaps, for Canadian women, those opposite ends just don't seem as far apart.

In this way, however, for me,

the most thought-provoking part of the film is that these women do not rationalize, they do not choose an accepted way of expressing their anger. They do not allow society to channel their revolting minds and in this way try to dissolve them. They don't start a committee on equality or anything like that. They just do it.

witness that something that was terribly wrong before has been put back in order . . . even if it is just for this single moment of that murder in silence. The three women took this man's life as a symbolic price for the constant bondage of their selves, the suppression of their vital energies

Like many of the women in the

have gone crazy just as much in their "normal" lives. She sees the very moment of normality is the moment of their direct action — the murder. And their refusal to defend that action is normal as well.

They know that either it will be understood or it will not be understood. They know it will not

On the screen, we see the bits and pieces of the lives of four women: a psychiatrist (Andrea), a waitress (Mrs. Jongman), a secretary (Ann), a mother (Christine). Then, seemingly by chance, these lives come together.

A smoothly patronizing shop owner looks up and sees one woman shoplifting in his boutique. When he shows her that he knows what she has done, she refuses to put the dress back. Instead she continues to take more and put them in her bag.

As they begin a slight struggle, a second woman sees what is happening. She deliberately puts a piece of clothing in her bag. The third woman sees what is happening. She begins to put a piece of clothing in her bag. They move together, scaring the shopowner. They finally kill him.

They kill him in a highly ritualized way. No word is spoken as they kick and gouge his body. It is all in slow, deliberate motion.

They have never met before. The murder has not been planned, it is not an act of fierceness or rage. Afterwards, they separate, do simple things of pleasure, then they carry on their lives, knowing they will be found and jailed.

They get their revenge.

But I also felt that it would be the murder (as it happens, not as the symbolic act) that the Canadian women would find hard. Here are women organizing non-violence workshops and there is the movie where a shopowner is beaten to death. It is true that a lot of women did not even go to the film because of the description of the film in the NFB program — a description that a lot of other women, including me, felt was very poor and did nothing to communicate the sense of the movie. Because the murder is really the smallest part of this story.

Compared to most of the movies shown, even at *Dog and Monkey*, this film had only this one moment of violence and even this was not graphic in the sense of seeing blood, of seeing the body at all. How much more violence do we see every day and never even comment on; how much symbolic violence toward women that is never even allowed to pass into consciousness.

And so I discovered that of the women who saw this film here, most thought it was wonderful. They enjoyed the recognition of the feelings that these women had — the feeling of having had enough — and they enjoyed the release of laughing at all the men who could not understand that feeling, who thought they must be insane to just go and kill a man.

And this is not so surprising because it happens too in the film. The four other women who just happen to be in the boutique at the time become intense observers of the movie. They don't move at all. They are all eyes — and with them I become Zeuge — witness. I

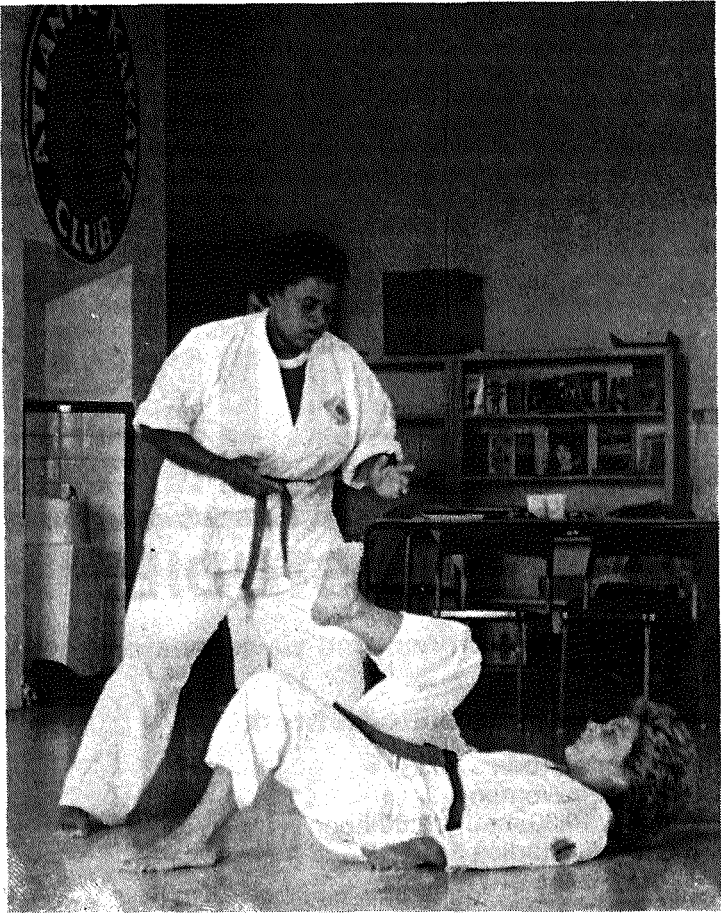
audience, the fourth woman in the film, the psychiatrist, becomes an important witness as well. Andrea must write a report concerning the sanity of the accused. She is surprised and disturbed as she comes to realize that these women are no different than any other "normal" woman she meets in her life.

She comes to identify with their action — and to grow increasingly impatient with all the men who assume that the women must be insane. Normal women do not kill "innocent" men for no reason at all.

Andrea knows from the beginning that the women may become insane as they are confined, for life, in their comfortable, if restricted, jail cells. But what she learns is that the women would

change the rules of society, so there is no need to be outraged or to be defensive. They know they could have not done it just as easily as they did it.

And that is really the kind of thought we are left with. These three women killed a man because they had had enough. Four other women witnessed the murder and the psychiatrist became a witness through understanding. They could have all done it. They could all not have done it. Being sane or insane is completely relative and, in fact, irrelevant. For me, this is exciting to see in a film. No answers are given, but my established way of thinking, of seeing things, is challenged. The drastic direct action is just as freeing and appropriate as the sharp humour.



## Martial arts in action

Over 30 women attended the third annual Wild Womyn Don't Get The Blues retreat in the beautiful Nova Scotia countryside this August. A womyn-centred, lesbian sponsored event that draws womyn from all across the Maritimes, this year's event was attended by over 30 womyn. There was a bit of a problem with wind on Friday night, but sunny skies drove most women to the beach for much of the rest of the weekend. Workshops be damned! (photo by Sara avMaat)

Why not  
write us  
a letter?

1586 Granville Street  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
(902)423-6814

## Rumours

— a social club for lesbians  
and gay men

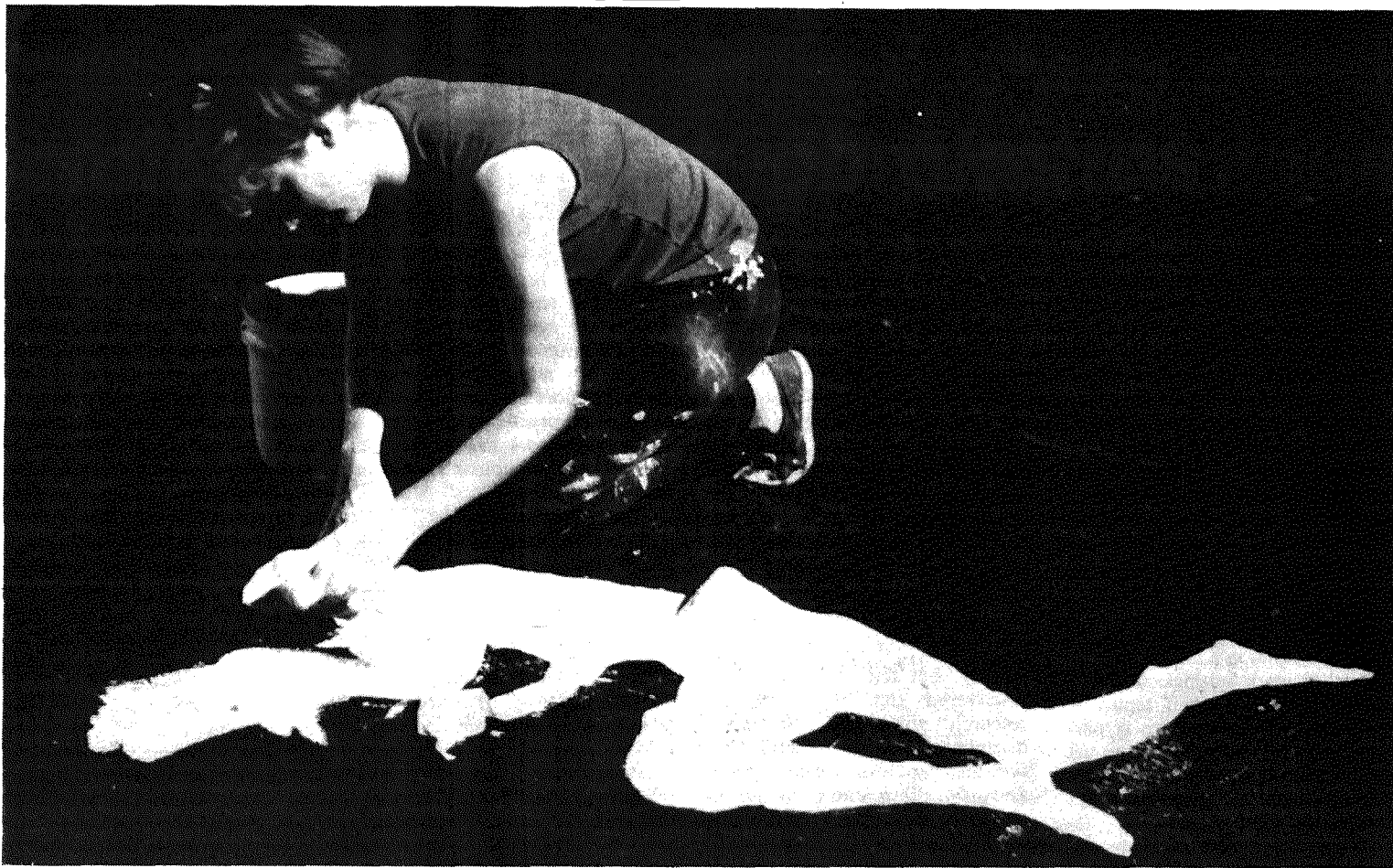
Women's night  
Every Tuesday night

Open Monday through Saturday  
8 p.m. to 1 p.m.

Appearing in Concert  
Bratty, Tuesday October 29, 8:30  
Members \$4.00, Non-members \$6.00

For members and their guests





Nancy Hughes leaves her shadow on the streets of Halifax during the shadow project, 1985. (photo by Jan Skeldon)

## Only images remain

The following information was posted near the shadows that appeared in Sydney, Halifax and Pictou County the night of August 5.

The International Shadow Project is a memorial designed to help people understand the effects of nuclear war and the nuclear arms race.

When the first atomic bombs exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki forty years ago, people who were within 300 meters of ground zero were instantly vapourized, leaving behind only their shadows.

The shadows painted on the streets represent the images of us that would be left after the detonation of a nuclear bomb. Unlike the shadows in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, these painted images are not permanent.

Canada plays an important role in the nuclear arms race, as well as contributing to the build-up of 'conventional' arms. The bombs dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki were built using uranium from Northern Ontario. Today, Canada is one of the world's largest suppliers of uranium. Our Candu reactors have been used by other nations to build nuclear bombs.

In Halifax we further endanger ourselves by allowing nuclear submarines and warships to use our harbour, and by subsidizing the weapons manufacturers who build factories in our province. The shadows of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are symbols of the waste and destruction caused by war; the resources spent on militarism could be providing us all with needed food, health care, housing, social services and education.

As artists and responsible human beings, we have attempted to provide images that will awaken all of us to the immeasurable threat posed by nuclear arms. It is our hope that people, seeing what will be left after nuclear war, will take actions together to avert our annihilation.

## Open letter from Inge As

# Inner work balances energy

Oh, Goddess! This world of ours is a mess!

We wear ourselves out trying, in our desperate ways, to put it back in shape.

We must, of course, continue the struggles for peace between the peoples of this world and within ourselves. For the liberation of womyn (and men) from our sex roles and cultural "destiny." We work in our different ways against the destruction and contamination of our one and only mother earth — and so on and so on!

We need to find new sources of strength and optimism. We are more than our physical bodies and our "physical" senses. And more than our heavy emotions.

Inner calm and clear thought is needed more and more. I invite womyn to work with me while I visit Halifax as we search together.

Inge is from Oslo, Norway, and has visited Halifax twice before. Two years ago, she held two courses in Healing/Meditation for womyn in Halifax and Pictou County. Her background is in graphic arts and she is now finishing her degree in Homeopathy. She has been active in the Norwegian feminist movement for many years, and is earning her living working with old people, as well as doing individual healing and counseling.

This fall, Inge is going to be offering four workshops in healing/meditation:

**October 4,5,6, Halifax**

Getting in touch with our own energy blocks •inner symbolism

•the Chakras (energy centres)

•projections

•dreamwork

•meditation

•individual and group exercises

•grounding

**October 18, 19, 20, Halifax**

Working with ourselves and others. Simple energy balancing techniques:

•your own healing potential

•learning about the energy structures and the aura

•dreamwork

•meditation

**October 25, 26, 27, Halifax**

Working with ourselves, others and crystals. Sending healing to others (distant healing)

•dreamwork

•learning about the energy structure

•aura

•etheric body

•working with crystals

•giving healing/energy balancing

•meditation

•dreamwork

**October 11, 12, 13, Pictou County**

A mixture of the three above for womyn in Pictou County.

For more information, write Pandora at 5533 Black Street, Halifax B3K 1P7 or leave a message for Brenda at 423-6755

*Write a letter!*

## Feminist publications require visible support

**Betty-Ann Lloyd**

There is a really fine feminist publication in British Columbia called **Kinesis**. I usually read it from cover to cover, not only to find out what's happening in the far west, but because I like the editorial policy:

"Its objectives are to be a non-sectarian feminist voice for women and work actively for social change, specifically by combatting sexism, racism, homophobia and imperialism. Articles and images in **Kinesis** are intended to work against the invisibility of women generally, and the specific invisibility of lesbians, women of colour, working class women, disabled women and other socially and politically disadvantaged groups."

These words say a lot about how I, personally, want to work with **Pandora**. We haven't worked out such a comprehensive statement of our intent — but I feel that we're working in this direction.

(**Kinesis**, after all, has a 13 year history!)

The tabloid, for July/August, was a wonderful 40 pages long: music, politics, Nairobi, sports, articles on women of India, peace, journalism, art and an article by Darl Wood of Halifax about women, specifically lesbian women, and the military.

Although we don't wish to take anything away from other areas of the country, how nice it will be if local women feel they have a voice here at home!

(This issue may still be available from Red Herring Co-op Bookstore on Argyle Street, Halifax.)

There was a story on the front page that wasn't really new, but still chilled my blood. **Kinesis** is published by the Vancouver Status of Women (yes, the Vancouver Status of Women). It is, therefore, dependent on government funding. Here is an excerpt from the story:

"Speaking out about feminism has its risks. For as long as feminists have been publishing newspapers, those newspapers have been getting negative feedback along with the numerous letters and comments from readers who like us and depend on us.

In recent months, Canada's feminist periodicals have been weathering an increase in destructive criticism, directed to the publications themselves and also to their advertisers and funding sources. **Kinesis** is one of the periodicals that has been contending with these letters and phone calls about our editorial content and policies."

**Kinesis** asks for support from all women who support the feminist press. You can write them directly c/o Vancouver Status of Women, 400A West 5th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1J8. You can also write directly to Walter McLean, Minister for the Status of Women, at the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. A few minutes time is all it takes.

Story ideas,  
distribution  
by-laws, advertising,  
photography, design,  
typing, phoning,  
lay-out night  
darkroom work  
What would you like  
to do to help  
publish **Pandora**?

**Call or write:**

Pandora  
5533 Black Street  
Halifax, N.S. B3K 1P7  
Betty-Ann Lloyd  
455-1287

## Mutual support needed by all women

Martha MacDonald

Is it possible to be a feminist and an academic? What does that combination mean to people? Some seem to think the result is an academic feminist — something like an armchair revolutionary or backseat driver. At best, totally irrelevant. At worst, a noisy nuisance.

Others think the combination means a feminist academic — some kind of radical troublemaker. This, of course, is what the academics imagine and scoff at — and fear.

It seems to be a no-win situation. If you try to be a feminist in academia, your male (and sometimes female) colleagues belittle you and see you as a threat. Your female (and sometimes male) allies on the outside suspect you of irrelevance.

Obviously there are certain problems in combining academic and feminist interests and goals. But that is true with any work identity one assumes. On balance, it is no harder or easier to be a feminist in academia than it is anywhere else.

We all live complex lives with many identities in addition to "feminist": worker, activist, lover, mother, friend. We have to inform all these roles with our feminism. No matter where we work, we want to conduct ourselves in good conscience.

In my experience as an economist, I have tried to be an academic and a feminist, or a feminist academic or an academic feminist. I see problems and great potential in all three.

All women in academia are suspected of being feminist academics, for women are still a small minority on university faculties. Women are subject to the same exclusions and barriers to advancement as are women in

other traditionally male occupations. Many women are in disciplines where their research or teaching is not particularly focussed on women.

Yet, they may be trying to be feminist in their treatment of students and in activism for equality within the university. These are what I call feminist academics. They often face isolation, ridicule and open hostility from their male colleagues and sometimes their students.

There are certain ways that activism is easier in a university than in other work settings. There is greater job security if tenure is secured (although tenure is particularly hard for feminists to get since they need approval from several layers of male colleagues within the university).

There is the principle of "academic freedom" which is intended to protect minority and unpopular views. There is flexibility and self-determination of work scheduling, thus allowing time to pursue feminist struggles within the university.

So, despite the barriers, small but active groups of feminists within most universities work to change the treatment of women from within, from hiring and promotion practices to course content. In their feminism, they are activists, not academics, within the university.

It is important that this work be done but much of the energy and accomplishment is unrecognized by the outside feminist community. (This is partly because of the suspicion that the university is such a cornerstone of patriarchy and patriarchal ideology that it can never be changed to meet feminist goals. This raises the question of whether separatism is the only right option — an issue I

won't tackle in this article!)

There are also many women, myself included, who are what I would call academic feminists. Our work is explicitly focussed on feminist concerns, we study "women," from a self-consciously feminist perspective. We face considerable opposition in our academic pursuits. My own research has been described as in a "peripheral" field in economics — that is, not important.

Not only is studying women considered a suspect intellectual activity, but feminists have also discovered that the standard research approaches of most disciplines are not useful for feminist analysis. They have adopted new, and suspect, methodologies in their work — including crossing academic disciplines. This meets with strong disapproval from the discipline-based academic establishment, as does the desire of most women academics to work with other women as colleagues.

In sum, there are major obstacles to doing good feminist research for and about women

while still maintaining your job and your academic credibility. These pressures often lead to compromised work, work that becomes more academic and less feminist or practical. However, a lot of good work has been done, research has supplied tools for feminist activism.

It is essential to recognize that academic feminists, feminist academics, have to avoid becoming isolated, have to maintain their links with the "real" world. They need the support of the broader feminist movement. And this brings me to the third question: being an academic and being a feminist.

As feminists, we want to participate as activists in issues outside the university, unrelated to our work. Like all women, we have to fight to find time for this. Despite rumors to the contrary, many academics — and I would say all academic feminists — work very hard. Their feminist work agenda includes making their research publicly accessible and making themselves available as resources for community groups.

Flexible hours do facilitate some kinds of outside feminist involvement, but it means the work spills endlessly into evenings and weekends. And, as for all feminists, this means burn-out and the sacrificing of some aspect of living.

For a great many women, the goal of being a "successful" academic is sacrificed. For each feminist working within the university, there are many who have been denied jobs, tenure or status within the university.

So, yes, academic women do have advantages that most women workers lack. They are generally better paid and can, therefore, better afford some of the material supports such as adequate daycare and good housing. But most believe this means there is even more pressure to do something worthwhile.

In the end, this means continued, mutual, support for those feminists struggling within academia and for those struggling outside. We all need help to get through the struggles and then to recognize and celebrate the victories.

## Doctors face issues of power on several different fronts

Rose Johnston

Can I be feminist and a professional? To me, being a feminist is to understand the depths of our oppression as women — not only as it affects my life, but also as it affects the lives of other women. To be a feminist is to understand how power and control over our lives are fundamental to our liberation, our autonomy.

As feminists, we are concerned about those who have power over us and, as a doctor, I am certainly in a position of power. I am given prestige and privilege whether I deserve it or not, just as men have privilege and power they have not earned.

By understanding male privilege, I can better understand how I am privileged as a doctor. I can also understand why my feminist friends would be angered at my taking advantage of this, just as I, as a woman, am angered at the privilege and power held by men.

Indeed, when I look at men, I say they should give up their privilege. However, this is a very difficult area for me. I recognize how money allows me choices and privileges that others do not have. And the fact remains that it is equally unjust for me to have this power, money, privilege, if it is at the expense of others.

I realize I am not above corruption (of liking that privilege) and I fear it will distance me from my basic beliefs. So, I do often have difficulty in being a feminist and a professional.

There are ways in which I feel I

am a feminist as a doctor. Take the workplace, for example. When starting out, I assumed the "doctor" role and, of course, doctors don't clean offices. The woman who manages the business and appointment parts of the practice made it very clear to me that her job did not include cleaning, either, and that we needed to share that job.

As always, it seemed that the oppressed had to bring up the issue of her oppression. This happens frequently for me. I am often confronted when being oppressive and, in this way, I struggle to be a feminist in every part of my life.

My other work-place is the hospital. I constantly watch myself to avoid taking advantage of my position by asking nurses and staff to get things for me when I could easily do it myself.

I also try to use my first name with other people, instead of "Dr Johnston". To many people, I am Rose; to others, Dr Rose; and sometimes Dr Johnston.

However, I do call people by their first names because I feel more comfortable with that. It is interesting to see someone during a visit refer to me as Rose and Dr Johnston both, depending on what their needs are; on when they need me to be "the doctor," and when it is okay just to be me.

In my interaction with people, especially women, there are many circumstances when my feminist understanding as a doctor is important, indeed critical. One day, I saw a woman who was battered by her husband. She said that when she told him she was going

to leave, his response was "I'm going to kill myself."

He took a gun, went outside and pulled the trigger — into the ground. When I said yes, this is one of the ways men manipulate women, and this manipulation is a pattern in a battered relationship, she got the message right away.

"You mean, all the ways he manipulates me are to keep me here." Yes!!

Another woman came and told me how her doctor kept her on nerve pills because of menopause. My immediate response was to say that that was outrageous. She, of course, already knew that in her heart, but had no validation for it.

Feminist doctors are needed to struggle against these injustices and help women understand more about how to assume some control over their bodies and their lives.

In summary, I feel it is possible to be a feminist in medicine, and there is no doubt about the tremendous need for feminist doctors. Personally, as a doctor, I am in a position of struggling within that system to create the kind of world I want.

Although I do feel I act as a feminist in my capacity as a doctor, and that this occupation is an important area for women, I do have a further concern. A completely different — and intriguing — question arises for me: "Can I be a doctor and be accepted as a feminist, an equal?"

Perhaps a question for the next issue.



ELIZABETH FRY

### THE ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY OF HALIFAX

Women Working with Women in Justice  
wishes to congratulate Pandora on its first publication!

For further information  
and/or an Elizabeth Fry Society of Halifax membership,  
please contact:

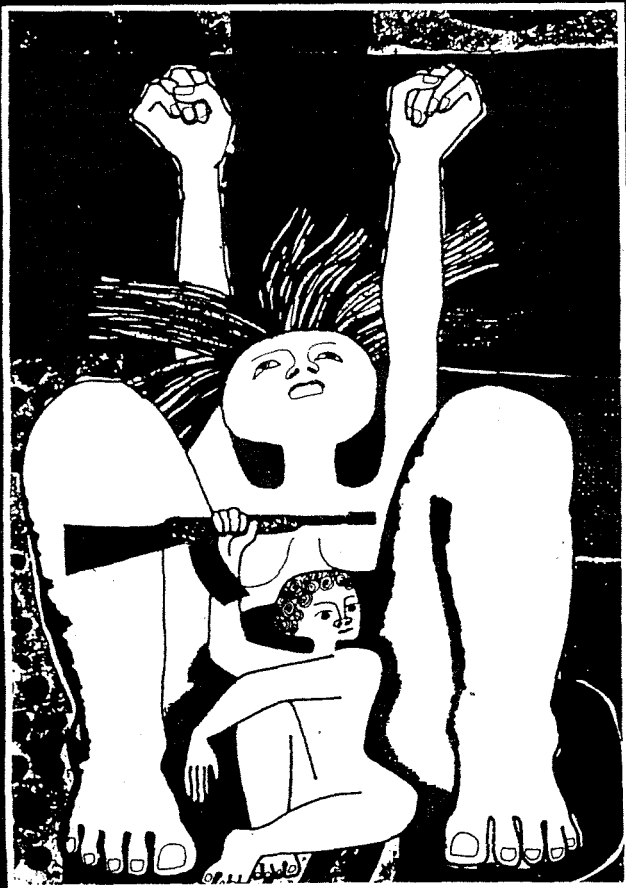
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Halifax, N.S.  
B3J 3J1

469-6590



## sweet ramparts

WOMEN IN REVOLUTIONARY NICARAGUA



## Nicaragua

# Women need solidarity

Barbara Harris

"We must look on as our children hungrily look for food in trash dumps and as they die off from malnutrition, malaria and intestinal infections. We look on as well as the older ones are killed in the streets, or worse, in the prisons under the worst kind of persecution and torture. And then, we must begin to look for shelter in the rubble, and care for our families in shacks made out of cardboard and flattened tin cans... We need you, women of the world; we need your support and solidarity in our struggle, the struggle of the Nicaraguan people. You are our guarantee for a future victory."

**AMPRONAC (Nicaraguan National Women's Organization) April 1979 (3 months prior to the overthrow of Somoza)**

With the popular revolution on July 19, 1979, doors were opened for far-reaching changes in Nicaraguan society. Women were deeply involved in achieving this victory, and would continue to be deeply involved in and affected by the changes to come.

AMNLAE, the newly named national women's organization, was and is essential in encouraging

women's participation in the process, helping women to develop their own projects.

Only 15 days after the victory, the new governing party, the FSLN, launched a massive literacy campaign. Literacy was seen as a crucial step in involving people in the decisions and process of governing themselves. One hundred thousand brigadistas, 60 per cent of whom were women, went to the remotest parts of the country to provide the first formal education most adults had ever had.

The literacy program also introduced many of the goals and concepts of the new revolution. One page in the literacy primer read "Nicaraguan women have traditionally been exploited." For many women, the literacy program was also the first time they had been encouraged to think politically, connecting learning to their own experiences. Despite family responsibilities, work, and traditional macho attitudes, 195,000 women (compared to 210,000 men) learned to read and write in the first year.

In 1980-81, following the successful model of the literacy brigades, 78,000 health brigadistas

learned and taught preventive health and sanitation skills. Seventy-five per cent were women, translating their sense of family responsibility into community activism. Free national immunization campaigns wiped out polio within a year, and other infectious diseases dropped drastically.

All these changes were not happening without some impact in the family. Family violence, a problem in the past, often sharpened as women become more involved in community and political activities. A women's legal clinic was established by AMNLAE in Managua two years ago, and has already handled 2,000 cases. Eighty per cent involve violence toward women, mostly domestic.

The clinic provides both legal and emotional support. Most of the legal rights of women are based on laws passed since the revolution. The new "Law of Relations among Mothers, Fathers and Children" states that parents are equally responsible for the family. Women have equal rights in decisions involving the children, and deserting fathers are clearly held responsible for sharing in the support of their children.

Clearly, laws are not enough. Attitudes also have to be changed. Public education campaigns aim to uproot the idea that only women are responsible for work in the home. One part of the new family law states that both parents shall teach all children to participate in domestic work.

Legal changes also affect other areas of life. Only one month after the revolution, a law was passed banning the sexist use of women in advertising — a situation Canadian women only dream of. Women are guaranteed 80 days paid maternity leave with job security, and equal pay for equal work.

For women in Nicaragua, the future holds endless possibilities. Right now, the main threat to that progress comes from the external aggression of the United States and its attempts to overthrow the new Nicaragua. It is no coincidence that the same forces funding counter-revolution in Nicaragua — President Reagan and the ultra-right — finance and organize attacks on women's rights in North America. They are the groups responsible for the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in the US, groups which stir up hysteria around sex education, abortion and gay rights.

Today, as in 1979, there is a clear need for solidarity between Nicaraguan women and women of the world. Our interests as women are one.

**Recommended Reading:**  
**Third World, Second Sex** Compiled by Miranda Davies  
**Central American Women Speak for Themselves** Compiled by Latin American Working Group, Toronto  
**Sandino's Daughter's** By Margaret Randall  
**Sweet Ramparts** By Deighton, Horsley, Stewart and Cain  
All available from Deveric Library, 1649 Barrington Street, Halifax.

Women's groups involved in Tools For Peace 1984 include Cobequid Women Together; The women's group of Mount Allison University, MATCH International, The United Church Women's Committee, Kentville, Voice of Women, Halifax, Women United, Sydney and the Women's Network, Prince Edward Island.

For more information write to 1649 Barrington St., Halifax, or call 443-1623 or 422-3115. Donations are tax deductible.

## CIA number one health problem

In 1982 Nicaragua was nominated by the World Health Organization as one of five model countries for primary health care. Today, the United States CIA-backed war against Nicaragua is its number one health problem. Last year alone, more than 30 rural health centres were destroyed and 25 health workers murdered by the contras. We are sending to Nicaragua medicines and vaccines, sutures and bandages, and all sorts of supplies to replace those that have been destroyed. We are sending these supplies with a message to our government: Join other nations of the world in condemning the US war against Nicaragua; give stronger support to the Contadora peace process; and let Nicaraguans live in peace so they may continue to better the health of themselves and their children.

From information in a Tools for Peace send-off 1984

# Tools for Peace local project

Barbara Harris

Tools for Peace, a people-to-people aid project between Canada and Nicaragua, is aid with a difference. It sends toys for daycare centres, sheets for maternity hospitals, typewriters and cameras for community groups, machine parts for factories and motor boats so doctors can reach isolated rural communities. On the east coast, Tools for Peace is one Canadian answer to US economic and military aggression against Nicaragua.

It began somewhat spontaneously four years ago when a boat was loading grain for Nicaragua in Vancouver harbour. Realizing that the boat would be sailing to Nicaragua partially empty, members of Oxfam, local solidarity groups, and trade

unionists seized this opportunity to send material to their counterparts.

The fishermen's union collected fishing gear from their members, farmers donated farm equipment, medical supplies were donated. Contributions arrived from church groups, individuals and other unions and companies. The longshoremen's union pressured the boat's owner to carry the six tons of cargo without charge — and loaded the boat voluntarily.

In a short time, over \$70,000 worth of material was on its way to Nicaragua and the Tools for Peace project had begun.

The initial boat project, as it was called, was a model of solidarity and solidarity remains an essential component in the campaign. Solidarity aid means

that we, the givers, feel that our objectives and the goals and projects we are supporting, are one.

The objectives of Tools for Peace are to encourage both material aid and political action in support of popular change in Nicaragua. In 1984, the campaign raised close to \$2 million in material and financial donations.

Thirty-two Maritime groups participated in TFP in 1984. Many of these were women's groups. In addition, women are a strong force in other participating groups like OXFAM, CUSO, Latin American Information Group, Amnesty International and Ten Days for World Development.

Dinners, raffles, parties, barn dances and concerts were some of the fund raising activities. School children in Amherst collected paper and pencils for children in Nicaragua. In Truro the price of admission to a Christmas party was one farming tool for Nicaraguan farmers.

This year's boat sails in January, 1986, and a container full of material will leave Halifax for Vancouver in mid-November. Volunteers will be working around the Maritimes, organizing fund-raising events and collecting and packing donations.

Through their action, the Tools for Peace committee hopes to raise people's understanding about the situation in Nicaragua.

Through this solidarity, it is hoped the Canadian government will be influenced to make Nicaragua a priority country for Canadian aid in Latin America — and to suspend aid to El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica until those countries stop interfering in Nicaragua's internal affairs.

## Laundry project now a reality

Claudette Legault

One of the first women's projects we were asked to support was a community laundry in Esteli. My first response was "Oh no, how am I going to sell this to feminists in North America?"

When I found out more about the project I discovered it was the first time these women had been able to get together as a group and decide on anything.

They were single parents, heads of families who earned their income taking in laundry for others. They washed clothes in the river, standing in the water while their

kids played around them. Many health problems arose from this: arthritis from standing for hours in the river, diseases from the water itself. And washing clothes in the river was slow work.

The women wanted to build a laundry, with cement tubs, with running water, where they could do the washing. It would be healthier for them and their children, it would be more efficient and they would have more time to get involved in community activities. That laundry project is now a reality.

# Reserve me a space next year, please!

**Darl Wood**  
**Gay Alliance for Equality**

Have I been a political lesbian so long that I've lost my sense of humour and forgotten how to laugh? I was beginning to wonder before I attended the International Gay Association (IGA) Conference in Toronto (July 1-7). When was the last time I really had a good bellylaugh at my self, or giggled at being so blatant about my choice of life style?

Womyn that I encountered at the conference made me do a lot of thinking about just how much we do or do not enjoy being lesbians. There is, of course, the ever present and serious side of our way of life — the oppression we face every day — that is anything but funny. But what happened to the sheer delight of it? I used to laugh a lot.

My self-appointed mandate for attending the IGA Conference, "Smashing borders: opening spaces," was to gather data, make

I would have blanched at being seen with such blatant stereotypes personified. Now I'm honored that they let me march with them.

"Sex and the State: their laws, our lives," the International Lesbian and Gay History Conference, was an integral aspect of the whole week: "Recovering/discovering our (Lesbian and Gay) histories is not only about the past. It is also very much about defining a vision of the future where we will gain control over our bodies and lives."

I mean, really, who could resist such workshop titles: "Tain't

ed" conference of this magnitude I'd ever attended, and it certainly was enlightening dealing with gay men.

Tell me, what is a lesbian feminist to do — exchange the homophobia/heterosexism of the Womyn's Movement for the sexist/classist Gay Movement? Or work in a Peace Movement which tends to have elements of all of these? These were major questions and issues which the womyn there tried to face and deal with in a large number of workshops and plenary sessions. Considerable time was spent in just sharing ex-

Womyn were openly re-thinking just where to place their energies. Is there a national Lesbian Movement? Why not? And what to do we about it? Should we have a separatist movement? With Yvette Perreault of the Lesbian Speaker's Bureau and Co-editor of *Stepping Out Of Line*, we were able to examine some of these important lesbian concerns. If all of our questions weren't exactly answerable, at least some gains were made in doing serious networking across the country as well as making international connections.

cuse me of being a "groupie," you could easily identify me as being the "cute" one at Alix DOBKIN's feet as she sang her set at the Lesbian Performance Night.

The energy was notably different from what an all-womyn's conference would have been, but I loved every minute of it. I was forced a number of times to confront and examine some of my own prejudices about bar dykes, butch/femme relationships, sexual minorities (and all that that entails), and womyn who refuse a political label.

That's not to say that I've compromised or changed my perspective or feminist analysis of womyn's oppression. What it means is that I have been progressively moving from theory to practice and from the abstract to my heart.

My missionary complex of trying to reach "those" womyn and convert them to acceptable

**Joyful in  
their lives  
as lesbians**



Sara, Coleen and Darl celebrate during the Lesbian and Gay Pride Day march in Toronto.

(photo by Sara avMaat)

contacts for the Halifax Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE) and talk serious lesbian-feminist politics. Thank the Goddess what I found was a group of individual lesbians from all over the world, from New Zealand to Belgium to Asia, and approximately 30 countries in between, who were absolutely joyful in their lives as lesbians.

The conference opened with the Lesbian and Gay Pride Day march; a number of people from Halifax (including an expatriate from Nova Scotia) rallied around the Halifax GAE banner. We sang, danced and hugged our way through downtown Toronto to the cheers, jeers and amusement of the general public.

I hadn't been so high or had so much fun at a demonstration since my first "Reclaim the Night" march. Could there just possibly be a connection? The sense of reaffirming the joy in loving other womyn was in and of itself intoxicating. There was an irresistible energy released at being able to hold hands and show affection without being attacked (at least physically) by an insanely homophobic society.

It was beautiful to watch older lesbians, lesbian youth, physically less abled lesbians, feminists and lesbians of colour, walking side by side with gay men — shouting slogans like: "Look over here . . . Look over there . . . Dykes and Fags are everywhere," while laughing and waving at biker-dykes zooming by on their motorcycles.

To my shame, up to a year ago,

Nobody's Bizness," gay life in the Harlem Renaissance in the '20s and '30s; "She Even Chewed Tobacco," and "Pat loves Mary, loves Joan, loves Louise," lesbian relationship in the '40s and '50s, by the Buffalo Women's Oral History Project; "Unfit for Publication," notes toward a lavender history of British Columbia 1859-1960s, a presentation by Indiana Matters, an archivist from the Provincial Archives in Victoria (I couldn't even resist the presenter's name!).

There were approximately 30 workshops a day to choose from. Most of them, to the credit of the Toronto womyn's community, were organized as womyn-only workshops. And that didn't even include the scheduled history presentations or evening events. For someone who is all but capable of activating a headache trying to figure out what to order at Tim Horton's, I was continually frustrated. I simply wanted to do it all.

This was literally the first "mix-

periences of the blatant and not so obvious kinds of oppression found in these movements.

There was general agreement that it was possible, and worth it, to work in our choice of movements by finding out own tolerance level.

**Working in  
our choice  
of movements  
by finding out  
our own  
tolerance level**

Meeting Evelin Eshuis, an open lesbian Communist member of parliament from the Netherlands, and Wenche Lowzow, an open lesbian Conservative member of parliament from Norway, was a unique experience. Seeing these two wonderful womyn from opposite ends of the partisan political continuum, saying many of the same things about the struggles of lesbian and gay rights, was a lesson in itself. What dynamic womyn — I think I'm in love again!

To my mind, the highlights of the week were the exorbitant energy performances by artists such as Beverly BRATTY (soon to be coming to Rumours), a strong lesbian rock singer-songwriter with an electric personality and wild clothing. The CLICHETTES, lip-sinc champs of the world, gave a hilarious rendition of "Having My Baby", which gave us all pains of laughter if not birth contractions.

While you can't legitimately ac-

**Moving from  
theory  
to practice**

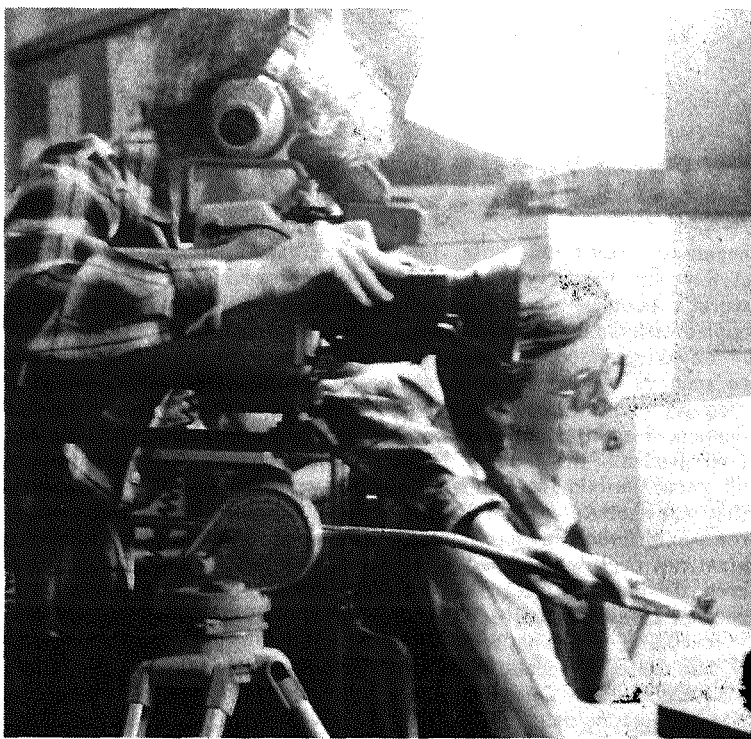
feminism has changed to how to communicate, not just from where they are, but from where I am as well.

Most importantly, what I gained from the conference was what I learned from my a-political sisters in some of the workshops: what support systems are all about. When five Shelburne lesbians were kicked out of the military recently there was no response from the Womyn's or Peace Movements. When I was exhausted to tears working with them in the mess that followed, most of the support for the Shelburne womyn and myself came from the apolitical sector of our community. And at this conference, they were the warmest.

When the feminist movement becomes too introspective, fine-lined and unaccepting of every womyn I, for one, plan to learn all I can from the keen perception of our alienating behavior as seen by the bar dykes of Canada. Their no-shit and to-the-point-if-you-don't-mind insight leaves me far behind in my own murky rhetoric. I was told not too long ago by one womyn that I was too real to be a feminist, and I felt strangely pleased without having betrayed my politics in the least.

This is not really coverage of events from the IGA Conference. It is a series of impressions and feelings I experienced throughout a week packed full of Lesbian and Gay culture, herstory/history and personalities. I returned to Halifax from this international gathering filled with a renewed JOY that . . . yes . . . Pat loves Mary, loves Joan, loves Louise, loves Darl.





Women and Video Exploration (WAVE) has taken the mystique out of video production for Pam Murphy (with camera) and Carol Millett. (photo by D. Barteau)

## Language, femininity, economics

# Women explore video to decipher messages

Judith Meyrick

Women have long been the victims of exploitation, fragmentation and abuse by a medium which infiltrates all aspects of our daily lives — the media. Television, movies, advertising and videos have all capitalized on the stereotypic woman for profit, for entertainment or both. They have perpetuated the perceptions and attitudes which people have toward women. And as the media, and indeed the technology itself, has been traditionally dominated and controlled by men, women have had much difficulty in gaining access in order to state their point of view.

In October, 1984, a group of five women came together in order to make a step toward gaining some control over this technology and the images which it presents. They called themselves Women and Video Exploration (WAVE).

The initial hurdle to be overcome, as always, was funding. Submissions were prepared to the Secretary of State which resulted in approval for a three-month project, and WAVE began its production career in April, 1985. The group has received encouragement from several areas other than the funding source. Local women's organizations, the field officer at the Secretary of State, the Centre for Art Tapes and individual women from the community have

all given firm support to the group. And this support is crucial to an organization staffed primarily by volunteers and which operates within a fixed and moderate budget.

Work on the videos has continued through spring and summer, with four more women joining the group during this time. Workshops on camera and audio were held. However, there have

been frustrating delays: difficulties in scheduling equipment; a worse than usual Halifax spring (through summer) making outdoor shooting difficult or impossible; summer vacations; and perhaps the ambitiousness of the project itself. Because of these delays, the term of the project has been lengthened to six months.

The goal for the premiere screening is now mid-October, and will take place at the National Film Board in Halifax. At this

time WAVE will premiere three videos:

**WOMEN AND ECONOMICS:** presents a woman living on a low income and looks at the problems of day care, employment and housing.

**FEMININITY:** examines through interviews the stereotypical roles which have been defined as feminine, and how these ideals have affected our self-images.

**SEXUAL BIAS IN LANGUAGE:** takes a look at the English language, and at how it renders women invisible, negates and dissects them; and looks historically at how bias has developed and how it affects women's perceptions of themselves.

The videos will be shown on cable, through schools, libraries, women's community groups and will be distributed through national distribution networks such as women's film and video distribution centres.

WAVE is interested in receiving feedback on their work, and any comments, suggestions or criticisms would be welcome after the premiere screening in October.

And out of all this work? Experience! (Not to mention three broadcast quality videos.) Experience such as video production, audio technology, organizing, advertising and distribution techniques; such as working within a collective. All this experience can be shared and used by women as we learn to assert control over the way in which we are presented to the world.

For more information, contact Carol Millett at 454-0570.

# Morgentaler clinic threatens comfort zone

Nancy Kempton

The difference between idealism and reality was the topic of discussion at a recent meeting of the active core group of CARAL, Halifax — Canadian Abortion Rights Action League.

There appears to be a wide gap between the ideal and the real. Hypothetical ideal circumstances would enable, if not encourage, Dr. Henry Morgentaler to bring his proposals for a free-standing abortion clinic in Nova Scotia to fruition. In reality, these proposed plans are being discouraged. Efforts toward their completion would, at present, be most difficult.

The discouragement comes not so much from the active protests of anti-choice groups, as from the passive inaction of those who, in thought and on paper, support the pro-choice position. Yet, one cannot entirely blame those with good intentions for not acting openly on them. We live in a society ridden with social and economic pressure tactics. Making the buck entails passing the buck.

In other words, in a society where socioeconomic pressures preclude the ability to freely voice controversial opinions, one is forced to hand off the visible acts of "defiance" to those who are not as threatened by stepping outside the boundaries of comfortable behavior. A comfort zone is set around all those who move in social and business circles because, more often than not, we interact with people we do not know well.

Fear of the unknown. We do not know the political beliefs of our acquaintances, so we do not risk discomfort by stating potentially controversial viewpoints. Our peers, partners, superiors, and subordinates can make our

lives uncomfortable should they differ strongly not only with our views, but with our propensity to voice these views.

Therefore, where CARAL supports Dr. Morgentaler's proposed establishment of an abortion clinic in Nova Scotia, we recognize that socioeconomic comfort zones may be a strong deterrent. While the final decision to set up such a clinic is one that will be made by Dr. Morgentaler alone, there are many factors which will influence his decision. One factor is the perceived degree of support from the public. At present, anti-choice groups are shouting louder. They therefore appear to represent a popular opinion. Are they really drowning out a silent majority?

**Proposed  
free-standing  
clinic  
only  
with  
community  
support**

A second factor is the extent to which those who silently support this proposal will act on their beliefs. When faced with an ultimatum — either they lend assistance to the program or the clinic will fail — different people will react different ways. Perhaps those who choose to remain silent, and/or keep zippered wallets, do not fully understand (either intellectually or emotionally) the

need for such a clinic.

The extent of this need is a third, and perhaps most important, factor in shaping Dr. Morgentaler's decision. For those of us with secure jobs, happy home lives, and supportive peers, it is all too easy to forget those less fortunate. There are many who cannot afford a quick trip to Montreal or the United States. There are many who do not have access to information about birth control and choice. A local clinic would provide readily available information and counselling services. Most important, there are those who act out of desperation.

Also, there are women who will follow the rules of the system. They will present their case to a therapeutic abortion committee of an accredited hospital. Some will be hit with the rude shock of rejection when this committee of strangers makes a profoundly personal decision "on the woman's behalf." Due to the lengthy committee process, the abortion is delayed. The greater the delay, the greater the risk the procedure carries for the woman.

This article is not an attempt to discuss the philosophical basis of the pro-choice position. This is, however, an attempt to remind those who share this philosophy that: "Philosophy doesn't pay the rent." Should the present scenario continue, and the clinic fails, we are in danger of being forced to face the two dirtiest words in the English language: "What if? — What if it happens to me?"

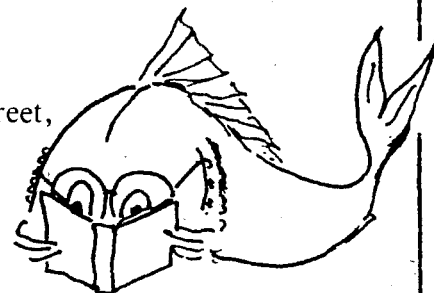
If you are interested in lending assistance to CARAL in any way, drop us a line at: P.O. Box 101 Station M, Halifax, N.S. B3J 2L4. Our next meeting is Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 7:00 p.m., at the Public Archives. All interested persons are more than welcome to attend.

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# Native women's concerns go unheard

**Kate McKenna**

I came to Halifax and the International Women's Peace Conference from WhiteDog, a native reserve in northwestern Ontario, where I've been living for the past year. I was returning home to Nova Scotia and to the women's peace community. I felt excitement as well as some apprehension.

I came with Josephine Mandamin, a native of WhiteDog. She

has been the community health worker for over 15 years. She is the brains and drive behind many community initiatives on the reserve and is responsible for much of the outreach to other reserves and the social agencies in Kenora.

It was a long way from the reserve where children sniff gasoline and drink long before they reach school age; where over a third of the deaths are violent;

where children attempt suicide, and often succeed, before Josephine can cut them down and give them mouth to mouth resuscitation.

I had spent the year trying to listen, understand and learn from an unfamiliar culture and environment. Nuclear annihilation seemed a distant threat in the presence of the despair, hunger and violence in people's daily lives. I

began to understand more concretely why the majority of the world's peoples are not preoccupied with the nuclear arms race.

I also learned what it is like to be seen as other. As individual men represent the patriarchy to women, I represented the white racist system of this country. They all knew I would leave in a way that they could not. I would receive different favoured treatment not because I earned it, or even desired it necessarily, but because I was non-native, white!

Josephine, somewhat reluctantly, had agreed to speak on one of the panels: "How Does the Arms Race Affect Women?" She does not like to speak in public but decided she would, out of her deep concern for the future of her children and grandchildren and her dream of security. She spoke on a panel that included a woman from the Philippines and a woman who works in Ethiopia with the United Nations.

When Josephine got up to speak, she told us that nuclear war was not the immediate concern in her community. She spoke of the environmental damage, the mercury poisoning of the river system that was the life blood of the people for generations. She spoke of the flooding of their rice fields, the uranium mining that is killing the earth and all that dwell on it.

The immediate and basic problems of survival are what she deals with daily and she was trying to tell us about them.

When the chance came for the audience to address the panel, not one question was directed to Josephine. Not one woman suggested we needed to press our government about native land claims, aboriginal rights, or expressed solidarity with the native struggle for self government. We did hear many ideas about the Philippines and South Africa.

Perhaps it is easier to deal with something which is more exotic. It excuses us from dealing with issues of injustice and deprivation at home. Or perhaps, something Josephine was thinking, but didn't say on the panel, shed some light on a shadowed part of us: "Privileged people feel virtuous at our expense." Were we feeling so virtuous with our emphasis on developing countries that we didn't feel we had to listen to what they had to say?

The only woman who even addressed a comment to Josephine told her that if she were really concerned about the future of her grandchildren, she had to be concerned with Star Wars. This was echoed in a workshop where someone else said: "We've allowed them to have their say, now they have to let us get on to what we are here for — Star Wars."

I felt such sadness and shame that day. I also felt a great sense of despair for I knew that the women were sincere and well intentioned. I only wish that there had been a translation service available that could have made Josephine's message comprehensible to the women from this part of the overdeveloped world. They otherwise seemed so incapable of hearing.

If funding could not be raised to bring more women from redeveloping countries, perhaps it would have been better to keep the numbers smaller, to tide the white presence. Or perhaps at the next "international" conference Canadian women should come as observers and practice listening to women who speak from their experiences of marginalization and struggles for survival.

Then perhaps there would be the possibility for a real alternative to bring about peace. In the meantime, maybe we all need to do some homework.

**"I'm so lucky to live here"**

## Democracy must be protected

**Pandora:**

I must tell you at the outset that when I went to the Women's International Peace Conference in June it was my first experience with the peace issue.

As I listened to the speakers and wandered around the campus meeting people, I was overwhelmed by the intensity of the atmosphere. I met a woman from Chile who, even here in Canada, was reluctant to speak, for fear of reprisal when she got back home.

One of the speakers was a woman from an island off New Zealand — a French colony. She is a native person who talked

about the nuclear weapons' testing around the island, about how her people were slaves of the French when they first claimed the island, about how they are still considered to be slaves and about being thrown in jail for demonstrating for civil rights.

I met her in the washroom afterwards and told her how moved I was by what she had to say and wished her luck. She touched my arm and smiled. My small expression of support seemed to mean so much to her.

The next day as I walked down the hall I overheard a group of women talking. One was saying

"Yes, they just disappear. Sometimes the bodies are never found." I wondered what it must be like to live in a country where things like that happen. I thought, "God, I am so lucky to live in Canada."

I can't get these strong, brave, gentle women out of my mind. They made me realize that what we have here in Canada is precious and must be protected. It's not perfect, but it is good; and we as citizens have an obligation to see that it isn't misused. We must make it our responsibility to insure that Canada is a "real" democracy, that elected officials and their bureaucracies aren't allowed to forget what the word democracy means.

I have included here an article about the project I am presently working on: Women and Community Action. The article describes one way women can become involved politically, and I would appreciate it if you could print it in your paper.

**Deborah Preeper**

## Professional, business women develop network

**Kim MacDonald**  
Newsletter Chairperson  
Halifax Professional  
Women's Network

The forthcoming year, 1986, is the fifth anniversary for the Halifax Professional Women's Network (HWN).

For all of you who have not heard of the HWN, it is an association geared to providing an opportunity for business and professional women to meet, exchange ideas and provide mutual support in attaining career and personal goals. The Network has an elected Board of Directors and a membership of 225 women from all areas of business.

The monthly seminars and lectures feature topics such as stress management, speed reading, and employee law.

On the first Monday of each month, the HWN meets from 5:30 — 7:00 p.m. for an informal get-together. This is an excellent opportunity for you to bring a friend and find out more about the organization.

The HWN Newsletter lists programs for the coming months and is a forum for Networkers to voice their opinions or advertise their services.

The Association now has a telephone answering service. Anyone can leave a message for a committee chairperson or find out

information about the monthly meetings. If you are interested, call 429-3131.

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Further Information  
See Friday,  
September 6  
issue of  
Halifax  
Chronicle-Herald  
or Mail Star  
for full details  
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### Registration:

For all classes to be  
held at J.L. Ilsley High

PLACE: J.L. Ilsley High      DATE: Sept. 9  
38 Sylvia Ave.      TIME: 7:30-9:00 p.m.

For all classes to be held at  
Halifax West, Fairview,  
Clayton Park, Titus Smith

PLACE: Halifax West      DATE: Sept. 9  
3620 Dutch      TIME: 7:30-9:00 p.m.  
Village Road

For academic and homemaking  
classes in all other schools

PLACE: Queen Elizabeth      DATE: Sept. 9  
1929 Robie St.      TIME: 7:30-9:00 p.m.

For business and general interest  
classes in all other schools

PLACE: Queen Elizabeth      DATE: Sept. 10  
1929 Robie St.      TIME: 7:30-9:00 p.m.

# DEVERIC

**Development Education Resource and Information Centre**

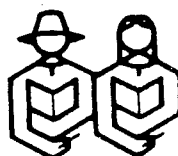
DEVERIC is a resource library containing materials on a wide variety of issues related to social and economic development. DEVERIC exists to serve the educational needs of groups and individuals throughout the Maritime region.

You can borrow these titles on women's issues from DEVERIC:

**Labour Pains. Women's Work in Crisis** by Pat Armstrong  
**Toward a Black Feminist Criticism** by Barbara Smith  
**Women and Housing** by Janet McClain & Cassie Doyle  
**Third World. Second Sex** comp. by Miranda Davies  
**Good Day Care** ed. by Kathleen Gallagher Ross  
**Loaded Questions. Women in the Military** ed. by W. Chapkis

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## Women stress their image

"Stress" is the buzzword of the 80's. Remember "Sex and the Single Girl?" Well, now it's "Stress and the Single (Married, Divorced) Girl (Woman)." "How to Have it All." "How Not to Have it All and Still Be Happy." The mass media has changed its emphasis — and their emphasis is, itself, another source of stress for women.

Among the current messages projected at women by society, three strike me as particularly destructive.

The first message is: **You are not ok as you are.** From a recent survey in the magazine section of a local drugstore:

- Your skin is not healthy and you don't know why, but we do (**Redbook**: The Best Thing For Your Skin — See a Difference In Days)
- You may think you're on the same wavelength as your lover, but probably you're not, and it's up to you to find out (**Glamour**: Lovers Quiz — Do You Really Know Each Other?)
- You don't even know how to sleep effectively, much less eat or exercise (**Vogue**: Active Beauty, Time to Eat/Sleep/Exercise/Work Better)
- You may have credentials an arm long, but you'll never get into a position of power in that dress (**Mademoiselle**: Power — If You Dress For It — You'll Get It)

•My goodness, you're so masochistic (**Journal**: How to Stop Them (Kids, Husband, Friends) From Running Your Life)

•Aging is awful and should be stopped (**McCalls**: The Total Anti-Aging Plan)

### Leah Nomm

•If you do age, then the least you can do is look good (**Lady's Circle**: How to Keep Your Looks at Any Age)

This short list of insults represents only one third of the magazines that were at eye level. There were two more shelves of "women's" magazines.

In stark contrast, none of the men's magazines (with the exception of the body-building publications) urged their readers to improve themselves, to "Excite your Wife — 20 Little-known Techniques", "Learn Discrete New Ways to Hide Your Receding Hairline," "Boxer Shorts or Jockey? Does Underwear Make the Man?"

Over 90 per cent of women I see in my alternate health care practice express dissatisfaction with some aspect of their own bodies. They have vague, or sometimes concrete, ideas that their breasts

are too big or too small (for what?); that their thighs are too fat or too thin or too lumpy. And it doesn't stop there — this dissatisfaction applies to many other aspects of women's lives.

Some who work at home feel they "should" work out. Those working out feel they "should" do more in. Those who are young and have children wonder if they had babies "too early," and those in their late thirties without children wonder if it is "too late."

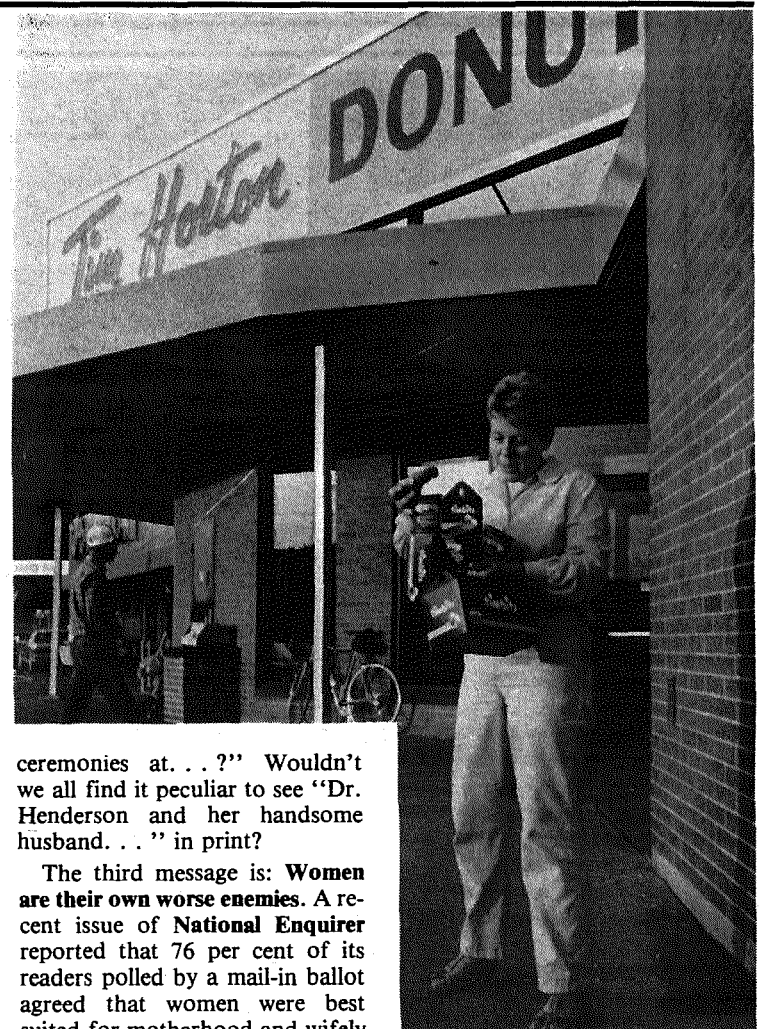
Women who pursue careers with self sacrifice and dedication are confronted by warnings that they will lose out in their romantic lives if they continue striving. Several books state that women are afraid of success and doomed to self-sabotage, while others extol them to work for greater achievement.

How can this propaganda be effectively countered? Women can become aware and critical of media messages that denigrate them and share this awareness with others. We can ask: Whose goals are being served if I buy into this societal message — the cosmetic industry? the fashion industry? the military? my husband? my employer?

If we are being urged toward self improvement, do we really want and value the results it will bring? Would we pursue a particular goal on our own, without media pressure? How do women in other cultures deal with this issue?

The second message is: **You are invisible.** Knowing that you exist, and then being treated as if you are not there, is a crazy-making experience. When a government official can say "on this particular issue, women and other minorities . . ." without also being challenged, then you know you have just been made invisible. (Fifty-two per cent does not constitute a minority.)

The media, likewise, reflects a lack of interest in women's accomplishments, women's problems and women's concerns. How many times have we read "Rear Admiral So and So and his lovely wife attended the opening



ceremonies at. . . ?" Wouldn't we all find it peculiar to see "Dr. Henderson and her handsome husband. . ." in print?

The third message is: **Women are their own worse enemies.** A recent issue of **National Enquirer** reported that 76 per cent of its readers polled by a mail-in ballot agreed that women were best suited for motherhood and wifely roles. The **Enquirer** stated that of those who agreed that women's highest achievements involved nurturance and service, an "amazing" majority were women. The exact figures were not given.

In tones reminiscent of colonial administrators we read over and over again that women cannot be responsible for their own futures because they cannot agree with each other. We are not suited for power. The recent emergence of the anti-feminist movement in Canada — represented by **REAL Women** — somehow deserved full coverage by **Chatelaine** a few months ago. But the article was not about **REAL Women**. It was about the "controversy" between their views and those of feminists.

For every woman who states, "I don't really like women much, I've always preferred men" and

for every declaration of the "truism" that women do not like to work for women bosses, someone will inevitably seize the opportunity to say: "See, women will never have equality and rights — they divide themselves."

Sometimes we do become self-righteous and elitist (especially when we think we know what and who is politically correct). Sometimes we are narrow-minded, or resent each other's power. But, disagreement, self-righteousness, elitism, narrow-mindedness and resentment have not prevented men from forming a society that meets their needs. These accusations, perhaps, come from the belief that, if women do anything, we must do it perfectly or not at all. Who needs that stress? We cannot let our strength be diverted by such tactics.

## No heros in women's movement

Pat Brennan-Alpert

Four Antigonish women attended the NAC (National Action Committee on the Status of Women) annual general meeting in Ottawa this spring. Lucille Sanderson, Barbara MacDonald, Lynn MacLean and Pat Brennan-Alpert were the delegation and are some observations on the trip.

I had read about NAC and seen the debates around the election and used NAC materials and research all this past year. I kind of idolized Chaviva Hosek, the President: soft spoken, effective; Louise Dulude, whose comments to Barbara Fromm were sharp and whose research was so useful; Carol Wallace, whose paper on women and economics transformed my idea of what ordinary people's understanding of economics could do; Doris Anderson, editor of **Chatelaine** in its best years.

I thought of these women as some kind of heros — smarter, bigger than life — different from us normal, regular women in Antigonish.

On the first night, I stood in this room full of heros, heard what needed to be done and felt overwhelmed. NAC President, Chaviva Hosek, gave the opening address. She stressed how important it was to welcome new women, urged us to enjoy as well as tolerate the differences between us.

She stressed that we must cultivate a relationship with our own MPs at home, to educate them about our aims and what good we have done in our communities. She felt that this government is more responsive to the backbenchers and that the work we do with our own MPs could have a great effect.

I did some socializing Friday night after the formal sessions and met two of my heros, Dorothy Ingalls and Carol Wallace. Speaking with Dorothy Ingalls is like standing in front of the fire on a cold night. You can almost touch the strong human spirit in her and you can see some of the qualities that come out in her work against pornography in Newfoundland and inspire other people to work with her.

I pictured Carol Wallace as a vogue model with a computer for a mind while reading her article "Women and the Deficit." There she was on Friday night, a slight, friendly woman in a red dress. We talked about economics and her four-year old daughter.

Saturday, we went to workshops on economics, social programs and transition houses, meeting more women, learning more. By the end of Saturday, I was physically exhausted, but I had learned one very important thing: there were no heros. The big names are volunteers, just like us, with families and jobs and a need for sleep. What they know comes from the volunteer work they've been doing over the years.

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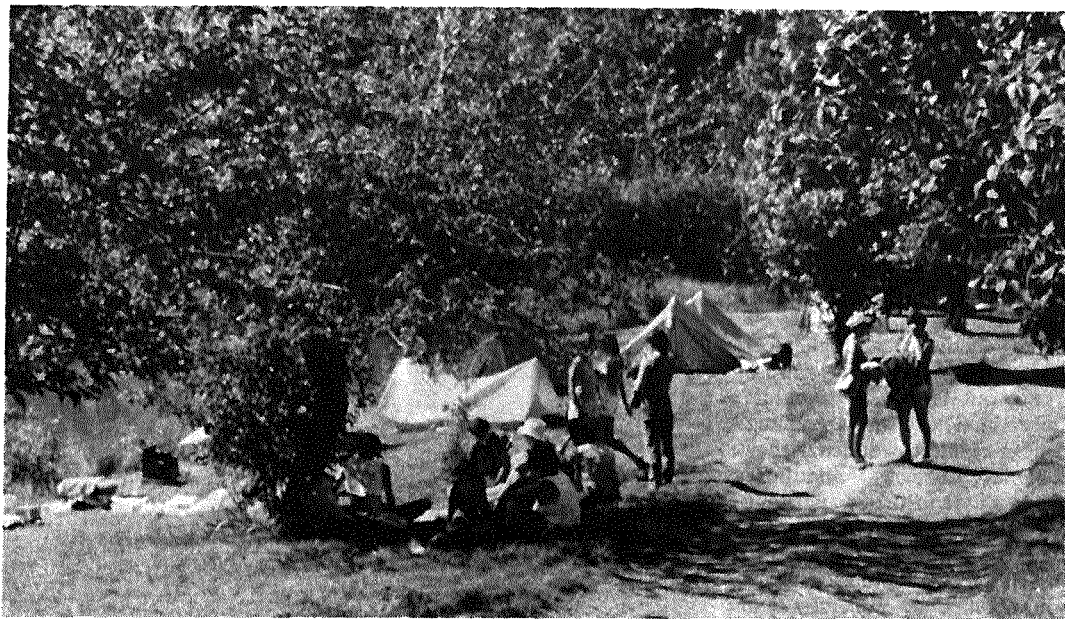
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## Third annual WWDGTB retreat

## NB network cuts across boundaries

**Fredericton** — More than 200 women will meet in Fredericton, September 20-22, at the New Brunswick Women's Network's annual general conference.

"Conference '85 is intended to concentrate its participants' attention on issues that cut across class and racial boundaries," says the Network's provincial coordinator, Murielle H. Young.

"Issues such as rape, pornography, batterment, equal pay, pension reform and world peace affect all New Brunswick women. These and other issues will be discussed in workshops at the conference. Then, during the plenary session, women will bring forward resolutions regarding these issues which will constitute the mandate of action for the Network for the year."

At previous meetings, participants concentrated on organiz-

ing the Network, drawing its models and choosing its constitution. "This is the first issue-oriented conference of the Network," Young explains.

"With the framework for a provincial women's network already in place, we can move away from constitutional disputes to the question of the status of women in New Brunswick."

The three-day meeting will begin on Sept. 20 with a "Take Back the Night" march, sponsored by the Fredericton Rape Crisis Center.

"Women will march down Regent Street after dark in protest of the violence they face in their cities and hometowns every night," says Young.

The conference is funded by the Secretary of State Women's program, and will take place at the Fredericton Motor Inn.

## Healthsharing provides vision

**The Healthsharing Book: Resources for Canadian Women**, edited by Kathleen McDonald and Mariana Valverde

**Judy Schuhlein**

**The Healthsharing Book** is a collection of the views of women in various areas of Canadian society. This publication, which aims to unify the women's health movement, is the offspring of Women Healthsharing, a group of feminists who came together in 1979 to publish **Healthsharing: A Canadian Women's Health Quarterly**.

Thoughtfully designed for the distribution of valuable information, each chapter begins with one woman's feelings about that particular subject. This is followed with an excellent resource section, listing related organizations, print, and audiovisual materials. The editors have included a full range of women's health issues in this invaluable collection.

Beginning with "Taking Health Into Our Own Hands", Kathleen McDonnell shows us the growth of the women's health movement across Canada and reminds us of the ongoing work towards a health system which respects the self-healing capacity of our bodies and our minds.

In "Women's Cycles", Anne Rochon Ford discusses the conflicting messages about our menstrual cycles, from the effects of ancient myths to those of the current male-defined medical model, or the superwoman myth which does not allow women to show pain or vulnerability. Rochon Ford makes the point that we must learn to accept the cyclic fluid nature of our bodily processes as a simple fact of life, rather than a curse.

In a chapter on sexuality, Mariana Valverde talks about erotic health, pointing out how the sexual liberation of the 60's

did not always result in real liberation for women. She touches on the frustrations in attempting to find a healthy sexuality, when men and women approach sex from different perspectives, as well as the problems faced by lesbians in a heterosexual world.

She encourages us to work towards breaking free of our addictive patterns and learn to have confident bodies and strong minds as a first step to finding erotic health.

The book gives numerous resources on many related subjects from minority women to overcoming eating disorders and ends with a look at the meanings of self care.

**The Healthsharing Book** promotes the visions that women, through individual and collective change, will transform our social context beginning with our health, which is fundamental to our well-being.

Excerpt from the Pictou County Women's Centre newsletter

**If you  
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Pandora?**

## Do you think you've found something in Pandora?

...if so, come to an open meeting on Tuesday, September 24 at 7:30 at the North End Library, Gottingen St. We will be looking for feedback, constructive criticism of this first issue, story ideas and more members for the Pandora team. Don't be afraid of getting stuck with a job if you attend! Your presence may be enough.

## Does it measure up for you?

...if so, come to a women's celebration at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street at 9 p.m. on October 5. There will be music, dancing. Childcare available, wheelchair accessible.



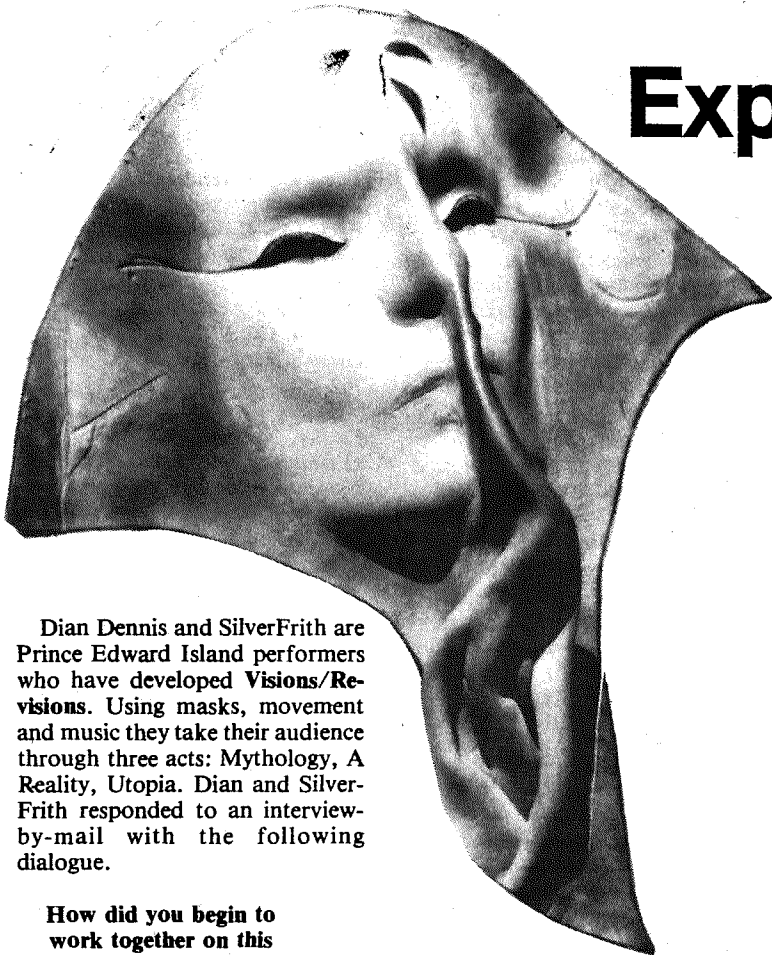
## Join us!

**Open meeting:**  
North End Library  
September 24, 7:30

**Celebration**  
Veith House  
3115 Veith Street, Halifax  
October 5, 9 pm



# Exploring female energy gives strength, power



Dian Dennis and SilverFrith are Prince Edward Island performers who have developed *Visions/Revisions*. Using masks, movement and music they take their audience through three acts: Mythology, A Reality, Utopia. Dian and SilverFrith responded to an interview-by-mail with the following dialogue.

**How did you begin to work together on this project?**

**SilverFrith (Wendy):** I've been playing guitar for years — starting out as a "folkie" in the 60s, studying classical and improvisational music along the way, and playing rhythm guitar in a traditional music band for a year.

At the time I met Dian I was working with the jazz guitar and experimenting with a mellow sound, trying to find my own voice and message. The prospect of Dian and I co-producing our own material was very exciting. And when I saw Dian's masks I was even more interested.

**Dian:** There's something about masks that has tickled my mind — the "stillness-alive" — facial features being an interpreter of a whole personality — the human mystery.

The first mask I made was a tremendous experience for me — "feeling life in the form." It has a sense of magic and in fact has been used for this purpose! After a few years of working with audiences of children, I felt I needed a change. Having used improvisation, I was tempted to work with a woman musician. Suddenly one night, I started working on a budget and description of this project! Around this time I met Wendy — I felt a deep connection and I asked her!

**There was also a workshop with Ellen Pierce at UPEI and Holland College . . .**

**SilverFrith:** This was my first experience with wearing a mask. It was a powerful experience and made me aware of the magic that masks are. Their use goes back so far into history, and I know we are connected with them at a deep, mystical level.

**Dian:** It was the first time I had met someone working with masks. She gave me a lot of ideas, advice and energy.

**What happened when you heard about the Explorations grant from Canada Council?**

**Dian:** Everything from then on seemed possible. We could concentrate on our creativity, our visions. It was a sign of trust.

**SilverFrith:** I've been a visual artist and musician for years and felt that suddenly some faith had been placed in my ability to produce. I felt glad, grateful and challenged.

**So what form did working on the grant take?**

**SilverFrith:** We started in

February by going up to our rehearsal (late at night — it was the only time available) and just throwing out an idea, trying to work with it from scratch, sort of improvisational exercises. We were trying to give our separate responses to the agreed upon ideas and just see what bringing together those responses of sound and movement would create. It was a fascinating process, feeling my concentration deepen until I was lost in the moment. That was on good nights! Sometime it seemed so difficult to concentrate, to let go of "self" consciousness, yet breaking through that was always exhilarating.

**Dian:** One thing that came up was that not only two artistic mediums had to come together but also two souls. So we would try some visioning and guided meditation — developing the links, feeling the web materializing in one's reality. That was the bottom line.

**What were you doing during the daytime?**

**Dian:** Masks — masks — masks! I experimented with different techniques of making masks — exploring connections with the spiritual aspects. The papier mache ones asked a lot of concentration of me. I would sit for an hour or more repeating a sentence representing the mask I had to come up with and then I would go to the clay and start with the form.

Sometimes I even worked with my eyes closed. I wanted to get to the form from another part of myself and that's how I searched it. Once I had the form in clay, I applied the paper mache to make a cast which could then be painted.

The leather masks required a totally different approach. I went into a cabin in the woods with my tools and only rice. No electricity, nobody around. I intended to go for seven days (to make seven goddesses) but it was so intense that after five days I had finished all the masks and was hungry for human contact.

**SilverFrith:** I was putting time into exploring the guitar. Before this I had been writing songs, but this work with Dian demanded quite a different approach — a more spontaneous, free-flowing expression. I enjoyed the experimentation with sound.

I was looking for a mood that would fit with the ideas we were forming. We were still continuing to improvise together, with the ideas, but not yet with the masks. My solitary time and the time together fed each other with ideas. It was a good basis for working with the masks when they were ready.

**How did Visions/Revisions take shape from this original exploration?**

**Dian:** Female energy was important to us and we were looking for a way to express its strength

and power. I had heard a song in Winnipeg and a friend of mine happened to bring the record to the Island around this time. The song is called "Burning Times" and speaks of witches and goddesses. The chorus is a chant of the names of seven goddesses. These names seemed just perfect to express what we were seeking — a way to reclaim our past.

**SilverFrith:** It seemed right to start with an experience of the goddesses of ancient times so as to affirm our woman-strength, to ourselves, to the audience. An affirmation, within the present male-dominated world, of the power of the feminine principle. We wanted to speak of our heritage as women.

**And the second part, Reality, how did that evolve?**

**Dian:** Another aspect we needed to express was "society," "oppression," but we didn't want to simply point at the BIG P (patriarchy) We didn't want to create that atmosphere. We didn't know how to go about it until I went to a drama workshop where we had to portray the seven deadly sins and it clicked: goddesses, Christianity, psychology's version of the seven deadly sins as defense mechanisms. It was all interesting and opened new dimensions.

A few days later I opened *Gynecology*. Mary Daly had her own interpretation the sins — it

was challenging, timely and beneficial. It really seemed that the puzzle was forming up, yet leaving enough space for further discussions.

**And the third part, Utopia . . .**

**SilverFrith:** We had been putting the first and second parts together by this time and had the sense that somehow we needed to bring it all full-circle — to suggest that we, and all women, need to find our own mythology and thus build new creative strengths to deal with these difficult times.

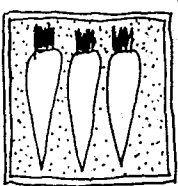
**Dian:** After talking about the past (mythology) and the present (reality), the next step seemed again really obvious. It was important in that third part to talk about our dreams, our imagination, our intuition, our visions, as a legitimate and powerful way of creating our reality.

Our reality is a choice often influenced by conditioning, but it's still a choice. We must cross the mind's barrier of reason to start being intuitive. That, to me, is spinning the cosmic tapestry.

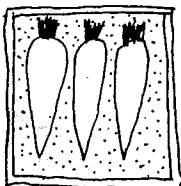
Many women in Prince Edward Island have had the opportunity to see *Visions/Revisions*, as have the women who attended the International Peace Conference at Mount Saint Vincent University. Dian and SilverFrith will be touring this fall. They may be contacted at Box 1856, Charlottetown, PEI, C1A 7N5.



## Satisfaction feast...



Vegetarian Restaurant  
and  
Bakery



Enjoy a wholesome meal or delicious desserts in our relaxed and friendly atmosphere...

• 1581 Grafton Street, Halifax, 422-3540 •

# Calendar of Events

## SEPTEMBER

### First Tuesday of each month

•Latin American Information Group, general meeting, 7:30 p.m., 1649 Barrington St. (Oxfam office)

### Every Tuesday

•Women's Dance Night  
Rumors Call 423-6814

### Every Wednesday morning North Branch Library, Gottingen Street

•Weekly Women's Program: planned and organized by women from the North End of Halifax. These women have been meeting for nine years and have become a major force in the North End inner-city area. New women are always welcome.  
Call 421-6987 for the time

### Tuesday, September 3

•Workshop series on Getting Back Into the Workforce begins  
Call 422-8023 for info.

### Thursday, September 5

•Angela Miles of the Antigonish Women's Centre will give a talk called "Why would a woman be a feminist?"  
John Paul Centre, Antigonish, 7:00 p.m.

### Friday, September 6

•Re-opening of the Antigonish Women's Centre, 315 Main St., Antigonish.

•Aileen Meagher: A Retrospective  
12:30 p.m., Dalhousie Art Gallery  
Call 424-2403

### Monday, September 9

•Halifax Professional Women's Network  
Monthly meeting  
Call 429-3131

### Tuesday, September 10

•Film: *Entre Nous*  
8:00 p.m., Dalhousie Art Gallery  
Call 424-2403

•CARAL Halifax meeting  
7 p.m., Public Archives

### Thursday, September 13

•Pioneer Women at Dalhousie University  
Talk by Dr. Judith Fingard  
8:00 p.m., Dalhousie Art Gallery

### Monday, September 16

•Pictou Co. Women's Centre  
Regular Meeting  
755-4647 or 752-4865

•Halifax YWCA fall programs begin. Halifax YWCA, 1239 Barrington St. Call 423-6162

### Tuesday, September 17

•Film: *Georgia O'Keefe: Celebration*  
12:00 noon and 8:00 p.m., Dalhousie Art Gallery, Call 424-2403

•CBC Radio Ideas Women at Greenham

History of Greenham Common peace camp, protesting U.S. Cruise missiles on British soil  
9:05 p.m. Concludes September 24.

### Wednesday, September 18

•Halifax YWCA Open House  
Free fitness and tours. Call 423-6162 for more information.

### Thursday, September 19

•Opening of the slide registry of Nova Scotia women artists  
Mount Saint Vincent Art Gallery, 443-4450

•Halifax YWCA Volunteer Recruitment Night  
Call 423-6162 for more information.

### Friday, Saturday, Sunday, September 20-22

•New Brunswick Women's Network annual general conference  
Call 506-452-8024 for more info.

### Friday, Saturday, September 20, 21

•Nova Scotia Federation of Labour-CLC Labour Education Studies Centre, fourth annual women's conference  
Registration Friday, 6-7 p.m., Citadel Inn, Halifax

### Friday, Saturday, September 20, 21

•Nova Scotia Coalition on Arts and Culture conference  
\$10 registration fee  
For information, call Brenda McGilvray, 422-7381, Ext. 225

### Saturday, September 21

•Atlantic Gays and Lesbians in Health Care and Social Services  
For information, call Barbara, 455-0380

### Wednesday, September 25

•Stress Management Workshop begins  
With Holly Irons, at Pictou Co. Women's Centre  
To pre-register, call 755-4647 or 752-4865

## OCTOBER

### Tuesday, October

•Workshop series on Getting Back Into Workforce begins  
Call 422-8023 for more info.

### Thursday, October 3

•Women and Development lunchtime series: Linda Snyder of CUSO will give an overview of the Decade for Women and report on the Nairobi Conference marking the end of the Decade. She will also talk about her experience with women and development projects in Zambia and Botswana  
Child care for pre-schoolers  
Main library, Spring Garden Road Call 421-7673

### Friday, October 4

•Who's Making What for Where? Amateurs, Professionals, Women in the Arts and Questions of History. Talk by Heather Dawkins, MSVU Exhibitions Officer  
Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, 443-4450

### October 4,5,6

•Workshop with Inge As: Chakras, dreams, meditation, and more  
Call Brenda 423-6755 for info.

### Saturday, October 5

•Time and Motion Study, a gathering in which women will discuss how they make time and space for their art work as well as living with the demands and constraints of children, employment, partners, domestic work, leisure and other pursuits.  
MSVU Art Gallery, 443-4450

### Saturday, October 5

•Fourth annual meeting of the New Maritimes Editorial Council  
Basilica Rec Centre, 200 Richmond St., Charlottetown, PEI, at 1:00 p.m.  
Call 423-8814

### Monday, October 7

•Pictou Co. Women's Centre  
General Meeting Call 755-4647 or 752-4865

### Monday, October 7

•Halifax Professional Women's Network  
Monthly meeting Call 429-3131

### October 11,12,13

•Workshop with Inge As  
Healing, crystals, meditation, dreams, Chakras, and much more  
To be held in Pictou County  
Call Brenda, 423-6755 for more info.

### October 11-12, 12-13

•Claire Culhane, author of *Still Barred from Prison: Social Injustice in Canada*, will visit Saint John Oct. 11-12 and Halifax Oct. 12-13 exposing injustice in the prison system.  
For information, Bill Bastarache, 506-693-2507 or Susan Clarke, 902-443-4450.

### Wednesday, October 16

•CBC Radio Ideas on Canada's abortion dilemma  
9:05 p.m.

### Thursday, October 17

•Opening: *Women and Peace: Visual Art of Resistance by Women From Across Canada*  
Mount St. Vincent Art Gallery, 443-4450

### Thursday, October 17

•Women and Development lunchtime series:  
Janet Campbell of the Women's Health Education Network (WHEN) will talk about organizing around women's health issues in rural Nova Scotia. Judy Mills will look at similar issues in Central America  
Child care for pre-schoolers provided  
Main library, Spring Garden Road Call 421-7673

### October 18,19,20

•Workshop with Inge As  
Energy balancing techniques, aura, dreams, and more  
Call Brenda, 423-6755 for info.

### Monday, October 21

•Assertiveness Training  
5-part series begins  
To register, call Barbara Cottrell, 421-2312

### October 21-25

•1985 Massey Lectures by Doris Lessing: *Prisons We Choose to Live Inside*  
Discussion of the information explosion by eminent feminist author, thinker.  
CBC Radio Ideas, 9:05 nightly.

### Saturday, October 26

•Compulsive Eating and Body Image  
This one-day workshop at Dalhousie will be presented by Toni Laidlaw. It will explore some of the following areas: expectations for femininity; personal meanings of fat and thin; emotional needs underlying com-

pulsive eating; learning to accept instead of punish oneself.  
9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
Call 424-2211 to enrol

### Sunday, October 27

•Non-denominational service to celebrate peaceful contributions of women and pay tribute to women lost during conflicts around the world.  
3:00 p.m. MSVU Art Gallery, 443-4450

### Sunday, October 27

•Black woman writer, Dionne Brand, will read from her work  
Halifax Main Library, Spring Garden Road  
3:00 p.m. Everyone welcome.

### Thursday, October 31

•Women and Development lunchtime series:  
Dr. Margaret Fulton will talk about the effects of technology on women.  
Main Library, Spring Garden Road Call 421-7673

## NOVEMBER

### Friday, Saturday, November 1,2

•Workshop: "Women In Transition"  
Dealing with employment, education, personal development  
Sackville High School

### Sunday, November 3

•Visual Expression of the Written Word  
3:00 p.m. MSVU Art Gallery  
443-4450

### Monday, November 4

•Pictou Co. Women's Centre  
General Meeting Call 755-4647 or 752-4865

•Halifax Professional Women's Network  
Monthly meeting Call 429-3131

### Tuesday, November 5

•Workshop series on Getting Back Into Workforce begins  
Call 422-8023 for more info.

### Monday, November 18

•Pictou Co. Women's Centre  
General Meeting Call 755-4647 or 752-4865

### Friday, November 29

•Feminist Approach to Ethics  
Presenter: Sue Sherwin  
12:15-1:30 p.m., Henson Centre, Dalhousie University

## DECEMBER

### Monday, December 2

•Pictou Co. Women's Centre  
General Meeting Call 755-4647 or 752-4865

•Halifax Professional Women's Network  
Monthly meeting Call 429-3131

### Tuesday, December 3

•Workshop series on Getting Back Into Workforce begins  
Call 422-8023 for more info.

### Friday, December 13

•How Feminist Research Relates to Women in Sport  
Presenter: Lisa Timpf  
12:15-1:30 p.m., Henson Centre, Dalhousie University

### Monday, December 16

•Pictou Co. Women's Centre  
General Meeting Call 755-4647 or 752-4865

## Looking for a way to...

have a lot of fun, meet people, get involved in the women's community  
Why don't you volunteer to work with us on Pandora?  
We have regular general meetings, committee meetings, and small jobs that never require any meetings.

Story ideas, distribution by-laws, advertising, photography, design, typing, phoning, lay-out night

### Call or write:

Pandora  
5533 Black Street  
Halifax, N.S. B3K 1P7  
Betty-Ann Lloyd  
455-1287