

\$1.50

Pandora

Lifting the lid off

Halifax, Nova Scotia

September, 1986

Volume Two, Number One

Inside

Nowhere to go.. 7
Disabled women & accessibility

Ecuador.. 9
Photographing other cultures

Prostitution.. 14
Women and social welfare

Four the Moment.. 15
What to take seriously & when

Pornography.. 20
Feminists & civil libertarians

Still Sane.. 21
Women's revolutionary power

MEREDITH WAS SITTING ON A BENCH ON THE CHAMPS ELYSEES. WRITING. A FRENCH MAN SAT DOWN BESIDE HER. HE PUT HIS ARM AROUND HER. HE SAID YOU NEED A FRENCH EXPERIENCE. NOT A MOMENT PASSED AND SHE GAVE HIM A REINFORCED ELBOW KNOCKING HIM WINDED TO THE GROUND. THEN SHE SAID. "AND YOU HAVE JUST HAD A CANADIAN EXPERIENCE." HAH!

MEREDITH AND NANCY TAUGHT ME WENDO. THEY SAID - WHEN YOU STRIKE - STRIKE THROUGH THE OBJECT. YES THAT'S RIGHT - GO RIGHT THROUGH.

SOMETIMES I DREAM ABOUT HAVING TO DEFEND MYSELF. THE PROBLEM IS ALWAYS THE SAME: AS MY HAMMER FIST CONTACTS MY ASSAILANT. MY FIST GOES THROUGH HIM LIKE HE'S JELLY. SO I HAVE TO STRIKE OVER AND OVER AND OVER TO MAKE ANY IMPACT.

IF MEN GAVE BIRTH THEY WOULDN'T TAKE LIFE SO EASILY.



ONE DAY I WAS WORKING IN MY STUDIO, WHEN A MAN ARTIST CAME BY AND SAID, WELL INGRID - WHAT ARE YOU DOING? AND I SAID - OH - I'M ANALYZING THE STEREOTYPE OF THE MALE ARTIST IN HISTORY, AND HOW THAT KEPT WOMEN ARTISTS FROM BEING DOCUMENTED IN HISTORY. AND HE SAID - BUT - THERE WERE NO WOMEN ARTISTS. IF YOU CAN'T SEE ANY, THERE MUST NOT BE ANY.
INGRID KOENIG IN HER EXHIBIT, UN-COVERING GROUND, AT EYE LEVEL GALLERY.

Homophobic non-issue draws response

Feminist lesbian caucus member

First the bad news. Nova Scotia's attorney general, Ron Giffin, has a severe case of homophobia. On July 9, the symptoms presented themselves when he told a gathering of police chiefs that he would support any municipal force that wanted to begin, or to continue, discriminating against lesbians and gay men.

Now the good news. Individuals and groups involved in social justice issues of all kinds reacted with outrage.

The feminist lesbian caucus

mailed 62 letters the next morning, asking for an immediate broad-based response.

The civil liberties committee of the Gay Alliance for Equality arranged spokespersons for the media and also began a letter campaign. They held public meetings to discuss future action.

Labor unions organized call-in campaigns to the minister and to the premier.

An ad hoc group of citizens came together to defend the principles set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They told the premier "such an

attack upon the rights of a vulnerable minority threatens the rights of all Nova Scotians."

This theme repeated itself, time after time, in the copies of letters sent to the feminist lesbian caucus.

"We are writing to express our outrage at the recent statements of the attorney general of Nova Scotia, Ron Giffin, regarding homosexuals, women, blacks, natives and Jews," wrote one group.

"While it is true the minister did not specifically mention women, blacks, natives or Jews in his indignant defense of ignorance and bigotry, he needn't have.

When a government minister (in charge of law enforcement at that) threatens to violate the Charter of Rights in order to uphold his own personal, backward, uninformed, narrow (im)moral standards and then suggests he does this in the name of the "majority", he threatens fundamentally the rights of all the groups mentioned....

"His political objectives threaten our communities, families and children in ways that a brigade of homosexual police officers never would."

This defense of majority interests received interesting media coverage. Giffin reported figures that indicated he was receiving many more responses in favor of his stand than against. The figures used, however, did not begin to total the numbers of letters and calls personally witnessed by protesting groups and individuals.

What basis did he have for his figures? How did the media double-check his statements? Did they expect him to give a straightforward answer?

What groups outside the minister's office were checked? Did the media, for example, ask the premier's office how many calls it received — on the basis that most people complain to the boss after getting no satisfaction from the employee?

All the letters received by the feminist lesbian caucus were either written to, or copied to, the premier. The premier did not respond directly on the substance or intent of Giffin's remarks, however: "I don't support him, nor do I disagree with him, because I think it's a non-issue."

In this, the premier may find himself in a distinct, if not discriminated against, minority.

"Attitudes are changing," another group told him. "People of closed vision may soon be left behind. Meanwhile, the Charter of Rights must exist to protect min-

orities from misuse of power."

The news coverage of the situation was definitely spotty. News rooms at both CBC and CJCH expressed surprise that women would be interested in the issue at all. After all, it's really a power issue and women just aren't players in the game.

Policemen (following the network's language guidelines) are in positions of power over others. A gay policeman confounds the intellect since gay men, as a group, are not seen as powerful.

Policewomen confound both the intellect and the emotions. Women don't have power, period. A lesbian policewoman is obviously completely beyond comprehension on any level.

Editorial writers, however, were wonderful. From the Cape Breton Post to the Globe and Mail, the declared opinions were firmly against the attorney general.

Admittedly, most were happier discussing the implications for the charter of rights than the implications for lesbians and gay men.

Nevertheless, as with the letters and calls, our "pleased and surprised" response increased as the count of positive editorials grew.

The simple action of expressed support empowered and delighted the lesbians and gay men who were able to share in it. In some ways it seemed that common decency, fed by historical analysis, brought many of us together.

"We did not speak out in opposition early enough in Germany," another letter read. "In fact many did not speak out at all. Mr Giffin's speech and his intentions... require the opposition of all who have experienced the threats and subsequent actions of those who, in the name of "morality" and of an alleged "vast majority" are ready to legislate against citizens because of their sexual orientation."



Train a woman and you train the nation...

CUSO NEEDS:

- Community organizers
- Adult educators
- Rural planners
- Doctors/Nurses
- Small-business and co-op advisors
- Horticulturalists
- Home economist extension workers

Formal qualifications and experience are required.

Women, ignored for centuries by planners, are now recognized as the key to many aspects of Third World development. They are often solely responsible for raising families, for feeding and nurturing them, growing their family's food and for bringing in an income through small business endeavors.

CUSO has been in the forefront of Canada's work with women in the Third World for the past decade. In deciding on support for projects, the organization has highlighted the involvement of local women and, wherever possible, has made sure that women play a leading role.

But sometimes more than just money or administrative help is needed. Often skills or leadership training is required to support women in their struggle to earn an income, gain control over their lives, and improve their living standards.

CUSO is looking for skilled Canadian women to work with their counterparts overseas. The placements are challenging and demanding and provide a unique opportunity to work in another culture for two years.

Salaries are paid in local currency and are adequate to meet overseas living costs. In addition, we provide a generous benefits package which includes a \$6,700 Canadian subsidy. The placement of couples and families may present difficulties.

If you are interested, please send two copies of your resumé with a covering letter outlining your interest in CUSO, to: CUSO, Suite 518, 1657 Barrington St., Halifax, N.S., B3J 2A1. Attn: HL-1



UPDATE YOUR SKILLS THIS FALL



YWCA EMPLOYMENT SKILLS

TYPING (refresher or beginner)
WORD PROCESSING/MICROCOMPUTERS
EFFECTIVE BUSINESS WRITING
CONFIDENCE BUILDING FOR WOMEN

THE YWCA — GROW WITH US IN
BODY AND MIND

Registration begins Aug. 25/86
1239 Barrington St.
423-6162



After a long hard battle to get their farm, Jo and Scarlet are finally haying in their own fields. They share the land with two dogs, five cats, five cows, ten calves, 26 chickens and an awful lot of raspberries. (Photo by Alex Keir)

Buying a farm: finding the moment to shout

Scarlet Pollack
Jo Sutton

We are two women who have money from the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board at eight per cent to buy a farm. It took us 13 months.

We started by setting ourselves up as a registered partnership before we even lived here. This turned out to be important, not only owing to the legal status, but because several men in official positions have since repeatedly asked us if we're still together. The partnership of two women lasting 13 months appears to have surprised them. The importance they placed on it surprised us.

We made contact with numerous real estate agents. We don't know what they thought of us, but only one ever made a follow-up phone call after our visit to their office. By now we know almost every real estate office within an hour of Halifax. This took us to Truro, Windsor, Bridgewater and points in between.

Multiple listing didn't work, or else information was "lost." Farms which were supposed to be widely listed were usually only discovered at the originating agent's office, or on roadside signs.

Travelling the roads of Nova Scotia was helpful. We began to get a sense of the province, as well as noting "For Sale" notices. And we put out the word that we were looking for a farm, which is how we eventually found one. We had apparently been around long enough to look serious, and for news to travel.

We used the Department of Agriculture, Kentville, with its fancy modern building. It has information leaflets and booklets on open display or for taking away. Information is also offered at the desk alongside. At the Truro office you have to know what you're asking for — but immediately below they have the agricultural college library. The Department's agroclimatic atlas gave us a sense of good areas for farming. For two dollars a county, we got soil maps from the Government Bookstore on Hollis Street in Halifax.

We learned the language of modern agriculture. We studied farm management texts for correct terminology. A cow is a "unit", not an animal. A herbicide is a "tool", not a pollutant. We never used words like "ecology" or "organic".

We also learned some accounting. This was one of the most mysterious arts. After talking to several accountants about how cash spent, received and possessions (such as we had) were categorized, we were still lost. We didn't really want experts — we wanted shared information. The worst was an elderly English man who asked for our attempt at figures and said "my girl will add them up for you." He

possibilities? The last thing in the world they seemed interested in financing was farming. We stuck with the Farm Loan Board, making regular contact so they knew who we were.

After only a few months we did find a farm. It was lovely, but far too expensive. We tried to get help from the Farm Loan Board. Before seeing them we were given three pieces of advice about how to negotiate. Persistence pays (true, after a lot of it); find someone who will vouch for you (apparently an important part of Nova Scotia politics); and show you can shout.

We sat through a two and a half hour meeting with a Farm Loan Board Officer (they're male) waiting for the right moment to shout. He told us that if he gave us the application forms, he was obliged to submit them to the Board for approval or rejection. By the end of that meeting it looked like we wouldn't be given those forms. So we shouted. And were given the forms.

Of course, the application was rejected, but we had shown we could shout. Actually it was easy to do, as once we had a rejected guard-trained dog who only responded to shouted commands.

Our next application was the successful one. We'd learned the procedure, could shout, had been persistent, and asked to borrow a "more realistic" sum of money. We got a farm.

We're new in Nova Scotia. Not only were we not born here, but we've only been around for a year. There have been many women's communities who have helped us a great deal. We've found the women's communities friendly and helpful. Seven women were particularly helpful to us getting settled. They were Alex Keir, Bernadette MacDonald, Macha MacKay, Debbie Mathers, Melanie Panitch, Dawna Ring, Jane Robertson, Donna Smyth, and Gillian Thomas. Our thanks to them and all of you.

Jo and Scarlet stumbled into farming when looking for a house with a garden.

Learning the language of modern agriculture:

*A cow is a unit,
not an animal*

*A herbicide is a tool,
not a pollutant*

summoned a woman who was training for accountancy while alone, supporting a child.

We eventually found a women's co-op, where for two hours and \$30 an Asian woman showed us some basics and sat with us while we struggled to learn to do them for ourselves. If ever you're in Yorkshire, England, go see her; she's what sharing skills and information in a feminist way are all about.

We talked to the Farm Loan Board. They seem to know most of the farms in Nova Scotia, but never appeared to know of a farm for sale. They did give advice — people go broke in hogs, beef doesn't pay, vegetables are too risky and the season is too short, people don't buy lamb. Dairy pays monthly with the milk cheque, but quota is too expensive. Anyway, what will happen with free trade

Help Nicaraguan women fight with more dignity

Colleen Edmonds

For many women, the struggle for equality must be just a part of their struggle to survive. The women of Nicaragua have been striving to share in the construction of their country since the revolution of 1979.

However, the U.S. backed "contras" are destroying the results of their hard work: day care centres, schools, health clinics. The American economic embargo has also meant that many manufactured goods that we take for granted are in short supply.

AMLAE, the Nicaraguan Women's Association has chosen the slogan "Risistiremos con dignidad—we will resist with dignity".

Tools For Peace, a national coalition of groups collecting goods and money to support Nicaragua, in conjunction with AMNLAE, has targeted sanitary napkins as a priority item for this year's collection. Providing sanitary napkins for Nicaraguan women will help them to survive the war with a little more dignity and independence.

Halifax Tools For Peace is presently planning for this year's collection: in addition to sanitary napkins, we are looking for blankets, pens and paper, simple hand tools for building and farming, bulk sewing and cooking supplies, and monetary donations. For more infor-

mation on donations of materials, money, or time, please contact Peggy Mathews at 835-0138.

Betty Watts, of Halifax, has recently returned from a tour of Nicaragua. "White shirts, cement sinks, and the need for medicines for their children", are central images in her perception of the struggle of Nicaraguan women. Betty will discuss her experiences in the next issue of Pandora.

Women who write!

We are planning to devote eight pages of our December issue to women's literary work.

We encourage any woman to submit poetry, short stories or excerpts from longer prose works.

Submissions may be any kind of creative writing as long as they don't violate our editorial guidelines.

Any woman who has photo/graphics that illustrate her work may submit those as well.

Submissions should be no longer than 800 words.

We would love to publish everything but there is only so much space! So, not everything submitted will be printed. If you want your material returned, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. Please include phone numbers as well.

Pandora Literary Supplement

**Deadline for
submissions is
September 23.**

**Joanne Jefferson
2708 Belle Aire Terr
Halifax B3K 3W8**

Pandora

Pandora is published four times a year by Pandora Publishing Association, a non-profit organization of women in Nova Scotia.

Pandora is a newspaper produced by, for and about women. We actively seek participation on any level from women who do not have access to mainstream media. We welcome submissions — written and photo/graphic. We cannot accept material that is oppressive or intolerant. We are, however, committed to working with women to help them express their experience in a non-oppressive way. We encourage women to tell us when we do not meet our own standards. Not everything submitted can be included and we do reserve the right to edit, especially for length.

Our editorial guidelines continue to evolve. See Issue 1-4 (Summer, 1986) for more details and let us know if you have concerns about material that appears in the paper.

Co-ordinating Editor:

Betty-Ann Lloyd

Copy Group:

Joanne Jefferson, Betty-Ann Lloyd, Gwyn Matthews, Brenda R. Bryan, Debbie Mathers

Outreach:

Sara avMaat, Gwyn Matthews

Networking Project:

Debbie Bennie, Nancy Brister, Brenda R. Bryan, Pat Dingle, Joanne Jefferson, Kate McKenna, Judith Meyrick

Design:

Elizabeth Bosma, Brenda R. Bryan, Joanne Jefferson, Betty-Ann Lloyd, Debbie Mathers, Jan Skeldon

Photo/graphics:

Sara avMaat, Nancy Brister, Alex Keir, Joanne Sinclair, Jan Skeldon

Production:

Sara avMaat, Debbie Bennie, Elizabeth Bosma, Linda Brown, Brenda R. Bryan, Margaret Davis, Shelley Finson, Joanne Jefferson, Marilyn Lamb, Betty-Ann Lloyd, Valerie Mansour, Debbie Mathers, Gwyn Matthews, Rosemary Sampson, Jan Skeldon, Jeanne Thibodeau, Elaine Wright

Calendar:

Elizabeth Bosma, Joanne Jefferson, Betty-Ann Lloyd

Advertising:

Mary Lou LeRoy, Betty-Ann Lloyd

Administration:

Betty-Ann Lloyd, Debbie Mathers, Judith Meyrick

Phone Tree:

Sara avMaat, Mary Lou LeRoy

Group Process:

Linda Brown, Brenda R. Bryan, Mary Lou LeRoy

Trouble-shooting:

Elizabeth Bosma, Linda Brown, Betty-Ann Lloyd, Gwyn Matthews

Scapegoat:

Mary Lou LeRoy

Distribution:

Mary Lou LeRoy, Debbie Mathers, Jeanne Thibodeau with a cast of hundreds, including Joella Foulds (Sydney), Nancy Wright (Guysborough), Oona Landry (Antigonish), Katherine Kechnie (Charlottetown), Sharon Fraser (Montague), Alex Keir (Pictou County), Debbie Trask (Bridgewater), Andrea Lynn (Wolfville), Diane Crowell (Yarmouth), Carolyn Emerson (Newfoundland)

Contributors:

Elizabeth Bosma, Nancy Bowes, Alison Brewin, Brenda R. Bryan, Celine Chabot, Margaret Davis, Linda Christiansen-Ruffman, Colleen Edmonds, Jeanne Fay, Jo-Anne Fiske, Barbara Harris, Terri Harrison, Joanne Jefferson, JoAnn Latremouille, Mary Lou LeRoy, Betty-Ann Lloyd, Thelma MacCormack, Judith Meyrick, May Ocean, Scarlet Pollack, Judy Rhyno, Heather Schneider, Joanne Sinclair, Maureen Shebib, Jo Sutton, Roberta Way-Clark,

Correspondence and Subscriptions:

Pandora Publishing Assoc.
5533 Black Street
Halifax, N.S. B3K 1P7
messages: 902-455-1287
Second Class Mail Registration No. 7122

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.

Cover:

Design: Brenda R. Bryan, Betty-Ann Lloyd, Jan Skeldon.
Photos of Ingrid Koenig's exhibit by Jan Skeldon.

Presswork by Kentville Publishing

We've had a truly significant year

Betty-Ann Lloyd

What can I say? We've survived. It's September 1, 1986 and Pandora women have experienced a truly significant amount of joy, frustration, hard work, plain and simple fun this first year.

Three of us started out with a vision of women working with words and images to produce a newspaper. Now there are a dozen core members who seem to live and breathe Pandora. There are also a couple dozen more who write articles or join in at least once each issue to lend a hand on production, proof-reading and distribution.

Most of us worked together through loves won and lost, through family deaths, new jobs, intermittent unemployment. We've gone on retreat — spending two beautiful days near Yarmouth looking at how we have worked together in the past and how we want to work together in the future.

We are buying our own computer, moving into Veith House, working with Joan Riggs of the **Breaking the Silence** collective from Ottawa to host this year's **Canadian Feminist Periodicals Conference**.

We've made lots of mistakes. We haven't always supported each other when support was needed. We haven't always looked at the wider impact of some of our decisions. We haven't always got our priorities straight.

But on the whole, I think that we have acted in ways that speak of our respect for each other and for the women's community.

Perhaps I am naive in this. Certainly it is in my best interests to believe our hearts and actions are in the right place. I am one of the women who have lived and breathed Pandora this last year. With several others, I have invested enormous amounts of energy and time for no pay and little glory. Our reward has been the sense of community we feel with our sisters on the paper and our pride in the final product.

The next year is going to bring a lot of changes. We are losing some key members right away. Others are planning to leave later on. This means other women must step in to take our place. The paper will no doubt change as the women who produce her change. And I, for one, look forward to the changes. What we lose in one area, we will almost certainly gain in another.

I remain eternally optimistic that whatever happens with Pandora, it will reflect what the women's community wants. If a paper is wanted, it will continue. If this paper becomes more international, more concerned with

images than words, more involved in the art community than the peace community, more radical, less radical, whatever — it will be because that is where the energy is coming from.

I hope we will continue to receive support from all the women who believe that women need to work with words and images to produce their own newspaper. You are all invited to take part in the process by writing, attending meetings, working on any aspect of the

production. We will be looking for community involvement in putting on the feminist periodicals conference, we will continue to develop our editorial guidelines, to discuss, among other things, the politics of copy-editing, group process, coalition politics and the issue of lesbian and non-lesbian women working together.

You are all invited to take part. Just give us a call and we'll do our best to make you feel at home.

**Pandora, 5533 Black Street,
Halifax B3K 1P7 455-1287**



Pandora Retreats

Towards the end of June, Pandora women gathered to re-evaluate and share their experiences and visions. These discussions took place in a very relaxed atmosphere on country land outside Yarmouth. Though much of the weekend was spent getting to know each other better, having fun, walking and swimming, we also discussed Pandora's future at great length. Many of the suggestions have already been implemented and we're working on the rest! In the photo above, Elizabeth Bosma and Betty Peterson walk with women down a country road. (Photo by Sara avMaat)

Letters

Rise up with your spraypaint, sisters

Pandora:

I thought I'd write and share with your readers some of the anti-sextist sabotage that's been done around Halifax lately so that it can get more attention, and perhaps inspire others to act rather than sit around and talk. In March the sad slogan Lesbians are Lizards was changed to Lesbians are Lovely!

The "Downtown Connection" a popular strip-tease and "Exotic" dance club had SEXIST SCUM sprayed across its lovely sign. The covers of magazines such as Playboy and "Biker's World" were plastered with black and yellow stickers reading "This exploits and degrades women" at various news-agents. Prospective customers were too ashamed to buy them then (I watched with glee).

What will you do to cleanse your neighbourhood from sexist crap??

With sisterly love...

A local vandal

GAE and AGL go unmentioned for contribution

Pandora:

Thank you for your coverage of the Stepping Out of Line workshops on lesbianism and feminism. The workshops were well-attended and have had ongoing results; for example, the establishment of the new Coming Forward group.

We were disappointed, however, that no mention was made in your story that the workshops were sponsored by Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE) and Atlantic Gays and Lesbians (AGL). These mixed (gay and lesbian) groups provided partial funding, and all the volunteer organizing committees, and the use of the gay/lesbian community centre, Radclyffe Hall.

There has been criticism in the past that GAE does not sufficiently address itself to lesbian issues, so it is important that the group be given recognition for a successful effort in that direction.

Yours sincerely,
Lynn Murphy, Organizing Committee.

She thinks we're fabulous feminists

Pandora:

Pandora is a superb publication! I simply relish reading it from cover to cover and it is utterly wonderful to know that there are so many fabulous feminists milling around Halifax and its vicinities.

I should very much like to make a generous monetary contribution

to your "sustaining" fund but I find it impossible to do so right now. I shall as soon as I can!
Thank you sincerely,
Colette Bishop

"Average" women need support to explore concerns

Pandora:

I have been a faithful reader, cover to cover, since I received my first issue. I have always considered myself a staunch feminist. I believe in the power of women and have worked for several years as a counsellor in various settings; all dealing with women, their frustrations, pains, hopes, dreams, aspirations, and desires.

I believe that the "average" woman still needs a great deal of encouragement to feel secure and comfortable enough to be able to explore and express her concerns over her issues; her day-to-day problems dead-ends which she reaches as she progresses through her daily dealings with her boss, her children, her man, her own prejudices.

She is still struggling over division of household chores and child care responsibilities. She is still hitting barricades in career and job advancements; she is still caught up in and confused by our bureaucracy which haunts us all.

Lately, I have felt that the left-wing feminists, who appear to be better educated, certainly more scarred through experience, sometimes forget the "little" struggles.

I feel that the lines are being drawn: lesbian vs. heterosexual; single vs mother; outside career vs homemaking. We must be careful not to become a "house divided".

We are fighting to make changes, but we must not alienate those who do not yet feel strong enough to speak out. We must not become blinded by our individual struggles that we lose sight of the collective struggle, all women.

In Sisterhood,
Janis M. Leone

Car crash delays Darl's Greenham Common journey

Pandora:

Until yesterday (July 29) I held out hope that I would soon be leaving for Greenham Common Womyn's Peace Camp in England. Due to a very untimely car accident at the end of May, I was prevented from going on the first of June as I had planned.

It is with regret and a great deal of sorrow I would like to let your collective and the Peace Community know that I will not be able to go this year.

I have made a very difficult decision and will take my doctor's advice to postpone the trip for six months and at that time re-evaluate whether I am physically and emotionally prepared to attend the Peace Camp.

The good news is that I hope to renew my plans in early spring. Until then, the support people have shown me in the way of finances will be kept in trust for that purpose.

Presently I have become a semi-recluse in the wilds of Central Colchester County; there to convalesce and nurture my spirit which has taken quite a battering.

My plans for the next months are very much in the air but I promise to continue writing those controversial articles that get my blood racing so deliciously (others, too, I hope).

I want to thank you all for your support. I will bounce back as usual and hopefully with my sense of humour intact. It just may take a little longer this time.

Love to all,
Darl Wood

Calling feminist cartoonists for talent bank

In order to establish a talent bank of feminist cartoonists across Canada, women who would like to be included are invited to submit their names, addresses and a sample of their work to Susan De Rosa c/o Communiqu'Elles, 3585 St. Urbain Street, Montreal, QC H2X 2N6. The bank will be accessible to feminist magazines and associations across Canada.

New England music retreat cancelled by homophobia

Pandora:

It is with deep sorrow and great anger that we announce that there will be no New England Women's Musical Retreat on Labor Day, 1986.

On May 18, when we arrived at Ten Mile River Scout Camp for an on-site meeting, the Boy Scouts presented us with the following conditions for rental of the land:

1) that the word "lesbian" be removed from all printed materials;

2) that the chapels not be used by us; and

3) that a 25% increase be paid for Scout insurance in addition to a 5% increase already contracted for.

We believe that the first two conditions were the direct result of the article entitled "1,000 Lesbians Gather for Week-End Workshop," which appeared on Sept. 3, 1985, in the Times Herald Record of Middletown, N.Y. We, the 10 member planning committee, reached a unanimous decision that we could not comply with the first condition which is directly counter to the purpose and philosophy of NEWMR. We pointed out to the camp director that NEWMR is an event open to all women and challenged their blatantly discriminatory policy. He was not willing to make any changes.

Having been through three site searches in the last five years, we knew it would be virtually impossible to find another site at this late date. We decided instead, to commit ourselves to a vision of NEWMR '87. NEWMR has always been the creation of hundreds of women; we ask you now for your continued support and input. Here is what you can do:

1) Please contribute as generously as you can. We need money for expenses already incurred during the last five months of approximately \$5,000.

2) Work with us or hold your own fund raising event in your community.

3) Help us with a land search for NEWMR '87. We need at least 250 acres with both open land and privacy. Ideally, we would like future NEWMR's to be held on woman-owned land.

Please send money, comments or questions to: NEWMR, P.O. Box 217, New Haven, CT 06513. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope if you want a response. You can also leave a message on the NEWMR phone: (203) 529-6840; return calls will need to be collect.

During this difficult and hopeful year, we will be relying on your support in sisterhood. As Yania Pearson said from the night stage during NEWMR '84's opening ritual, "Feminism is a belief in abundance; there is enough to go around. In almost every situation, we get back more than we put out, whether that is love, energy or money."

In sistersong,
The NEWMR Planners

Got any snappy quips or retorts for new book?

Pandora:

We are compiling a boook with the working title *Retorts, Quips and One-Liners for Women*.

We are soliciting material from any woman who has ever been in

an embarrassing or tense situation and was left speechless or sputtering with rage. What we want is the line we thought of hours, yea, even days, later, or the line that you read or heard or had supplied by a friend long after the event.

Send us your favourites, either your own or anonymous or creditable quotes. The great line that made you say, "I wish I'd said that!" or "Why didn't I think of that when...?" Comebacks for the street, the office, the bar or the boardroom - for all occasions, we want them humorous and light-hearted, or serious and sharp.

Send them to Retorts, #167, 253 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1R5. Part of the proceeds will be donated to our local Coalition of Battered Women's Shelters. Thank you.
Jocelyn Weatherby
Helen Hatton

El Salvador aid bloodies hands of our government

Pandora:

Three years ago I had the opportunity to meet a woman from El Salvador who was on a speaking tour of Canada. LAURA PINTO works for a human rights organization called Mothers of the Disappeared. Last month she was kidnapped, tortured and raped by the US backed government forces. She is still being held incommunicado along with several other human rights workers.

I am angry and very horrified at these recent attacks on people involved in monitoring human rights violations.

It makes me sick to think that our Canadian government resumed aid to this oppressive regime. I believe there is blood on the hands of our government — the blood of women like Laura Pinto whose only crime was to ask for information about her disappeared family.

When will the repression and killing stop?

When will the Reagan administration stop supplying the weapons to continue this repression and killing?

When will our government take an independent and just stand?

When will Salvadoreans be able to live in freedom?

It is extremely difficult to learn that individuals that I have had personal contact with are being tortured but it has given me even more determination to continue the struggle for peace and justice for all.

Marian White
Halifax



Abortion law found guilty

Nancy Bowes

As Pandora readers may recall, late in 1985, the local chapter of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) was undecided whether or not to heed the national call for an abortion tribunal in this city.

A request in these pages for feedback from the Women's community generated a few phone calls, all of them supportive. Early in January, we decided to go ahead; much energy and time went into the planning and execution of the event, held Monday, April 14 at the Public Archives.

The event itself could not have gone better. Genuine, heart-felt stories were told with pain and with humour. Coverage in local newspapers was good, but that was the extent of the coverage. None of the electronic media deigned to cover the tribunal, and as a result, its impact has been limited.

For those of you who are learning just now that it occurred, I offer a description of Halifax's own Abortion Tribunal.

Four dedicated actors read the abortion stories of women who felt they had to remain anonymous. Three courageous women told their own stories and told them with the quality of detail that forces an audience to attend to them.

The stories ranged from the heart-rending memories of a young Pictou County woman who was denied an abortion, was forced to carry the pregnancy to term and give up the baby for adoption, to

the pained memories of a young mother suffering from post-partum depression who, in 1969, could not cope with another baby in addition to her two young children.

While the judge, Halifax lawyer Anne Derrick, adjourned to consider her verdict, CARAL Halifax member Jane Wright gave a moving recitation of Marge Piercy's Poem, "Right to Life."

The judge's verdict was harsh: the abortion law does discriminate against women. She said that the law is not evenly applied across the country, resulting in different regions having unequal access to Therapeutic Abortion Committees. She concluded that the abortion laws must be repealed and that all Canadian women should have access to medically-insured, safe, early abortions if they desire them.

After a short break for refreshments and T-shirt and button sales, an ad hoc group of concerned actresses put on a production of the Rebeck-Colodny masterpiece skit, "Choice Now," first performed in 1985 on the steps of the Court of Appeal in Toronto. The skit provided a fitting end to the evening by allowing members of the audience to laugh at the absurd system that represses women.

Commemorative T-shirts from the tribunal are still available. The T-shirts are yellow with black printing, "Speak out for CHOICE - April 14, 1986 - Halifax, Nova Scotia." Requests for T-shirts may be directed to Nancy Bowes at 425-6185. The cost is \$10.



Laurie Hutchens, CUPE National Representative, with Mary-Lou LeRoy. (Photo by Sara aavMaat)

If you want to make changes you have to be on the inside

Mary-Lou LeRoy

Getting involved in unions is not unlike getting involved in a political party. Once you show that you are interested, your phone never stops ringing.

There is, however, an amazing amount of apathy in people. Nobody wants to get involved. If getting involved means putting out some effort and losing some personal spare time, a lot of people just are not interested, even though getting involved would mean working toward improving one's own well-being.

So, when someone does show some interest and puts out some effort, she is welcomed with open

arms -- and immediately put to work.

I've been a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees for almost five years. My first three years were smothered in that dreaded apathy that had been present in me since the onset of my teen years. "Who cares, I'm bored, you do the work of negotiating, grieving, and arbitrating, but I will gladly take any raise in pay you fight for."

I am not really sure how that changed. Maybe nostalgia hit me — I am the daughter of a Cape Breton steelworker. I remember the strike at the plant and marching with Dad in the Parade of Concern after Black Friday in 1967 when Hawker Siddeley pulled out of Sydney.

Maybe responsibility hit me. I was beginning to learn that if I was going to get what I wanted, I was going to have to be the one to fight for it. Silver platters, like the one I had always gotten things on, were becoming expensive, especially since I now had to buy them myself.

Nostalgia, responsibility, and the strong determination I had inherited from my mother all contributed to my gaining interest in fighting for a better way of life for myself and for others.

I soon discovered that "interest" was an infectious disease that had been waiting to be triggered in me, and once triggered, it quickly spread.

I decided that if I were going to have a say in how things work, I would have to have an executive position. At a union meeting two years ago, I had my best friend nominate me for the position of vice-president. I have been vice-president of our local since then.

I recently decided to become involved on a larger scale, beyond the realm of our local. I found out about our National CUPE Equal Opportunities Office in Ottawa and our provincial CUPE women's division through making some phone calls. Thus, I attended the first CUPE Women's school held in Tatamagouche in May, and the Annual General Meeting of the Nova Scotia Division of CUPE in June.

It was the first time I had ever attended the N.S. Division's Annual Meeting, but before it ended I found myself elected to serve as an alternate on the Provincial Health and Safety Committee. This was the result of a nomination received by another delegate who had attended the Women's School in Tatamagouche with me.

The opportunity for women to get involved in their union is always there. Get in at the grass-roots level, make contacts, and work your way up. Service and dedicated hard work gets noticed — if we are vocal about it.

This doesn't mean that we have to constantly praise ourselves in the presence of others. It just means that sometimes we have to tap people on the shoulder to let them know we are there and that we demand to be counted. Mind you, sometimes it is necessary to jump up and down and scream in their ears — but so be it.

Don't wait for someone to notice you and then become discouraged when it doesn't happen, because more often than not, it won't happen. You have to make it happen.

It's easy to close our eyes and let the world be run by others with no input from us. It is less stressful and certainly doesn't take up as much time as getting involved does. But, if we close our eyes and offer no input, what right do we have to complain when things go wrong?

It is easy to lay blame when things go wrong if we let others do the work. It is a little more difficult when we have to admit to some responsibility on our own part.

On the other hand, when things are going well and our endeavours are successful, it's rather nice to take some of the credit for it.

The labour movement and its history is fascinating. Many workers have struggled for what I have today. The least I can do is be responsible for what has been handed down to me and to try to improve upon that.

Mary-Lou LeRoy works as a counsellor at the Metropolitan Group Homes.



Technical University
of Nova Scotia

GRADUATE STUDIES

FOR A FUTURE OF OPPORTUNITY

Inquire:

P.O. Box 1000,
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2X4
Telephone 429-8300

Nowhere to go

Terri Harrison

Have you ever wanted — needed — to run away? I have.

Once, I was a carefree, able-bodied child. My parents' marriage was relatively stable, even though my father's severe arthritis sometimes strained their relationship. They had their fights, but basically they were happy; we weren't rich, but there was enough money for necessities and the occasional luxury. My sister and I felt wanted and safe. Mom and Dad weren't abusive parents, and they were only social drinkers.

Then the entire family was involved in a serious car crash. My father was killed, my mother and sister critically injured, and my back was broken. Eventually, my mother recovered fully, but my sister developed epilepsy and severe emotional problems. I became a paraplegic, paralyzed from my chest down.

That's when everything started to change. We were going through terrible upheavals and conflicts. We tried, as a family and as individuals, to piece our lives back together, but there were pieces that were lost or destroyed. We could never find or fix them.

My sister and I began to hear a great deal of, "...the way it used to be," and "...when your father was alive." I tried to help Mom; she was having a rough time, but I'd been close to my father, and it was just as hard for me to learn to manage without him. Besides, I had a disability to contend with. I really don't know what my sister was feeling, but she seemed half her eight years, depending on my mother for everything. None of us received the compassionate support we so desperately needed.

Alone, widowed, with two disabled kids, Mom simply could not cope. That's when the abuse started.

I don't remember exactly when she started drinking heavily, but she changed quickly and radically. She turned on her grief, resentment, hatred, doubt and guilt; she turned on us, especially on me. The more she drank, the more unstable and abusive she became. Even when sober, she was so moody, I never knew what to expect; one moment she was reasonable, the next, she was screaming at me.

At that point, we were still living in the country. My sister returned to school, but I was not allowed to go back. They wouldn't take a paraplegic.

The insurance money was in trust for my sister and me. Mom was too proud to accept widows' allowance, so she had to work. For almost a year, whenever I wasn't in hospital for more surgery, I was left alone every day with only my cats for company.

Now I realize how dangerous that was. What if I fell out of my chair and couldn't call for help? I felt abandoned, neglected and depressed. Many times I wanted to run away, but I had nowhere to go. One year after the accident, Mom began seeing a man. A few months later, they were living common law.

At first, I liked him. He had two children, a boy and a girl. My sister and I got on well with the girl, and for a short while, I was friendly with the boy.

Even if there'd been room in a shelter, none of them were accessible



Photo by Sara avMaat

In our December issue we will have a story about a support group for young disabled women that has been started in the Halifax/Dartmouth area. Any disabled woman, or friend of a disabled woman, can get more information about this group by contacting Lisa Mahen c/o Pandora at 5533 Black St., Halifax, N.S. B3K 1P7

I'm not sure why we hit it off, but it was to prove the worst friendship of my life. He was a drug and alcohol abuser; it wasn't uncommon for him to get drunk, and then use my sister for target practice, hurling beer bottles around the living room. Nor was it uncommon for him to crawl on my bed beside me while he was drunk or stoned. He'd pass out there.

He was supposed to be my brother, although he rarely acted like one, and his father made few attempts to solve my problem. "He's a growing boy..."; I heard that one constantly. As I already understood the direction of my sexual preferences, I wasn't impressed.

In that home, fighting was a nightly ritual. The alcoholic bouts increased; whatever togetherness remained was destroyed. Even when I might have avoided being dragged into the constant fights, I couldn't just sit there and ignore what was happening to us. It hurt to hear the yelling, screaming and slapping. It scared the hell out of me. My sister was lucky, she could blank most of it out. Not me.

Due to bad management and an incompetent lawyer, Mom and her 'husband' lost our business and our home. One winter, when neither had a job, we only had Cream of Wheat to eat. Whenever I was in hospital, my sister always came in at mealtimes, begging me to share my food with her. Even she couldn't ignore hunger.

By that time, I was in school, but I couldn't attend very often. I was regularly in and out of hospital, and my home life was going to hell. I stopped giving a damn about myself. I was sick of being harassed with, "If your father was alive, he'd kill you," or, "If I'd known this was going to happen to you, I'd have had you aborted," and, "I didn't really love your father." Was any of that supposed to excuse her?

I was also raped by my so-called 'brother', and I got pregnant. Of course, it was my fault. It didn't matter that I couldn't kick; that he practically broke my wrists to get me to stop struggling. A quiet, quick abortion took care of the problem.

In reaction, I started taking. Soon my drug habit was almost as bad as my mother's alcohol addiction. In and out of the hospital, I was stoned most of the time. **Anything to escape!**

Over the years, nothing improved very much. The drinking, fighting and screaming continued. My relationship with my family didn't improve, and there were many times I wanted to run away. But where could I go? Even if I could have plucked up the courage, how could I have left? I couldn't get into a car without help, and even if there'd been room in a shelter, none of them were accessible. They still aren't.

At least some able-bodied women, although faced with the possible repercussions of running from explosive situations, can find somewhere to go. They can find doors to knock on, and sometimes there are shelters able to hide them. I had nowhere to go. Why not?

Terri is now out of that environment. She has graduated from high school and is living with an easy-going, sensitive lover. Terri Harrison is a pseudonym.

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT OUTREACH

2nd Floor
5194 Blowers St
Halifax 422-8023

Sponsored by the Halifax YWCA
Funded by CEIC

Offers Free Workshops For Women In

- Resume Writing
- Job Search Techniques
- Interview Skills
- Upgrading and Re-training Courses
- Assertiveness Training
- Confidence Building

For more information call
422-8023
(free childcare available)

Participatory Design in Hospital Construction

ISSUES AT THE GRACE, INFIRMARY AND CAMP HILL

« The Groundwork Continues »

All Hospital Staff Members, Users and Potential Users Welcome

Birkenstock Sandals

- custom molded by your own feet
- Yes! Birkenstock makes duty shoes

Pacific Shop

1541 Barrington Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
422-2177

'BASTA YA' - "enough already" - is the slogan of many Central American women as they struggle with poverty, machismo, and the threat of war. (slide-tape show, 25 min., 1984)



1649 Barrington St.,
P.O. Box 3460, Halifax, B3J 3J1
902-429-1370

METRO BIRTHING ORGANIZATION

PRENATAL CLASSES
861-1498

LOCAL P.C.A.N.S.
CHAPTER



Judy Rhyno clowns around with the kids from the Spryfield Recreational Centre during one of their activities.
(Photo by Sara avMaat)

Helping kids get breeze on hot day

Judy Rhyno

The Spryfield Kids' Recreation Club is a non-profit organization for children between four and 11 years old. It is a place where they can get away from the pressures and confines of city life and participate in other activities such as swimming, crafts, camping, train trips, and special events such as contests, tours, and special guests.

Over 200 children have participated in the club and have made it a roaring success. The children are great and the reward is in seeing their enthusiasm and smiles—although I have as much fun as they do!

The club has been in operation since March of 1982 and since then many low-income children have enjoyed trips at a minimal price.

We meet on Friday nights for a swim or Wheelies and on Saturday for a variety of events.

Emmanuel Church in Spryfield has been helpful in letting us use their church hall and the Lion's Club of Spryfield has donated our van. We have several very devoted community service workers.

Believe it or not, being a single mother of four, a full-time student, part-time city recreation worker, Block Parent co-ordinator, etc., can be done!

The club will continue at least until I finish my Law Degree and then it will operate on a larger scale in the form of a farm named by one of the children—Miracles. This will be home to approximately 200 children in trouble with the law. Hopefully it will be a safe refuge for some of the elderly as well.

As I was once a child in trouble with the law myself, I feel very lucky to have these children to share good times with. Finally the hell I've been through has had a purpose.

Most low-income families and single mothers live with stress daily. Funds are often scarce. It is hard enough just getting by without worrying about recreational needs for your children. In a world with such vast problems to hurdle, the club's a fresh breeze on a "hot" day.



DR. LEAH NOMM
ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING
• • • •
STRESS MANAGEMENT

From a feminist perspective

Evening groups in Halifax
Phone 835-9216 and 455-1410

A second chance at formal education

Re-entry takes courage

Roberta Way-Clark

I'm now struggling with a thesis for an MA in education titled "The Older Re-entry University Woman: The Culture Shock She Experiences as She Steps Down to the Student Role".

This is a subject very dear to my heart and one I know well, because I am an older woman and I have returned to education. I feel fortunate that I had a second chance at education. So many women of my generation do not get this opportunity and I feel for them.

As part of the research for my thesis I did ten in-depth interviews with older returning women students.

I chose to do only women partly because I wanted to investigate and perhaps thereby understand my own experience in re-entry to education.

Leah Cohen, in her book "Small Expectations", says older women have a triple whammy against them. "They are old, female and poor." I maintain they have a quintuple whammy against them. They are old, female, poor, under-educated and alone. Younger women (who are already aging) will be better-educated than my generation and may have better pensions, but still you will be poorer than your male cohorts. So you will be old, female, poor and alone still.

What can more and better education have to offer the women who are now old? And how can we

facilitate the re-entry into university of these women and those who are now middle-aged?

Through research such as mine, I hope the re-entry of women will be made less traumatic.

I think of my own return to university and the panic and uncertainty I felt. The stress of the new role of student was very real to me and I think it is one of the main reasons why older learners are not much in evidence on our campuses. If they do come, many are scared off by the unfamiliar, often intimidating university milieu—our low self-esteem is often the stumbling block that keeps older women from even beginning.

"Old and stupid" is the stereotype many older women have bought and it is reinforced by society in general, and the university milieu in particular.

My own re-entry was every bit as traumatic as any. But I was fortunate. I met the right people. Dr. Mairi MacDonald of Mount Saint Vincent University welcomed me with open arms and told me how great I was to attempt it. She is still telling me that and I'm in graduate school.

Small victories helped to raise my self-esteem, but it did bounce back and forth. It was lowered by my being mistaken for a professor, a Catholic sister, even the president of Mount Saint Vincent. I was taken for everybody but the cleaning staff and a student. All this reinforced the idea that what I was doing was non-traditional and

possibly deviant for a woman "my age."

But there were good things. One supportive man said something that has stayed with me. I said, "If I do this I'll be 65 when I get my PhD." And he replied, "You'll be 65 anyway whether you get it or not."

Just last week I saw a sign that said "Old Age and Treachery Will Overcome Youth and Skill." Now that gives me hope, but still it is difficult to re-enter. Well then, why bother?

Older women come back to a learning environment either because they need more education in order to survive in this increasingly information-saturated world of work, or because they wish to further their personal development as human beings in a difficult and complex society.

On a more practical note, women are now living until 85—90 and still retiring either from work or the wife/mother role at 55—65. Thirty years is a long time to do nothing. It is also costing society too much to support these non-productive adults. Continuing education can help them on to second careers and/or part-time employment.

Re-entry takes courage, however, even with help. In my research, as I question older women for my thesis, I have been surprised at the number of these women who gain courage at or through life transitions or accidents.

These transitions periods are often traumatic, but they can be very powerful, and often lead to learning. As one part of our lives changes, we are more apt to change others.

Another aspect of transitions is that as husbands die or desert and children become totally involved in their own lives, friendships become one real source of support. These friendships are based on mutual respect and a shared empathy, and are particularly characterized by their intensity and loyalty.

It is my opinion that similar helping relationships are essential for older female students. Educators have a duty to develop appropriate peer advisors for these mature students and this is what my thesis is all about.

It is my growing conviction that if we as older women are not angry, we should be! One of our demands must be for better education and greatly improved access. My interviews are revealing that many older female students are frightened and bitter. Perhaps this leaves no room for the more appropriate anger.

I don't want you to think all of this hasn't been fun because it has. I now agree with Leo Buscaglia when he says, "Life is worth living." Only I would add, "All the way."

Roberta Way-Clark went to Mount Saint Vincent University at 57 for a BA and Diploma in Gerontology. She is now at Dalhousie University finishing an MA in Adult Education.



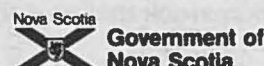
...the number you can call toll free from anywhere in Nova Scotia when you have a question about the provincial government. Our lines are staffed by knowledgeable people who can provide general information about the most frequently used government programs and services.

And, if we don't have the answers ourselves, we can tell you who does. Some enquiries of a more specialized nature may be redirected.

The Province's new toll-free telephone line provides equal access to government offices for everyone, on a wide range of questions including such things as:

- family benefits
- housing programs
- business registration
- perk tests
- labour standards
- general interest topics

Call toll free from anywhere in Nova Scotia between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays. 1-424-5200—the number to get answers.



YOUR LINE TO GOVERNMENT



South America

EQUADOR

All over Central America, street vending is one of the major sources of income for women. Thousands of women work in the street-markets of Ecuador. The pictures on this page were mainly taken at the Saturday food and craft markets in Otavalo. As I travelled, the whole question of taking pictures was a dilemma. How to communicate that you want to take a picture out of respect, not because you feel something is cute or quaint? How to avoid using the camera as a tool of North American power and privilege?

There were many pictures that I did not take, feeling that it could be an invasion of privacy even to ask permission. Other times I asked permission and was refused. I took some wonderful photos with people's permission.

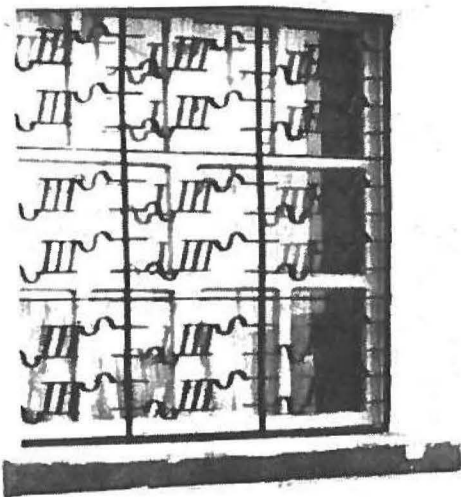
These pictures were all taken without permission. I knew I was taking them for Pandora, to try to make some (one-way) connection between women in Canada and women in Ecuador. This partially legitimized the invasion of privacy to me. They were also taken in a market selling handcrafts to swarms of tourists, most with cameras. It seemed that the price of selling goods to tourists included selling your image. So I participated in this and still feel ambivalent.



photos
and
text

Barbara Harris

"In Ecuador, one of the questions I asked myself was which is more difficult, more soul-destroying — to work 14 to 16 hours a day just for minimal subsistence, a poverty that would be unthinkable to most people in Canada, or to be unemployed, a "normal" Canadian condition, with hours of time, knowing that your society has no place for you?"



"When I travel, I look at our society from the outside, to see how it could be different, to challenge the values and patterns I take for granted at home. I take photographs to try to bring this perspective home to friends."



Dear Daughter

I thought you might want to know how I feel now and how I felt when I first learned you were a lesbian.

I was sure at first that it was just a passing fancy that came into your mind. I was discouraged that I would never be a grandmother to your children and never attend your wedding. And I thought you weren't normal.

I see now if I had read the signs I would have realized the truth long before you told me. Like the three proms you attended because I kept saying how important in a teenager's life a prom is. I know now why you picked guys who were sort of feminine to go with. You felt safer with them and since I wanted you to go, you went.

You were never interested in boys except one, and he is definitely a homosexual. Again, you were probably attracted to him because society demands we have friends of the opposite sex and he was a safe friend.

Now that I think about it, even when I complained about your pimples you used to tell me people were going to have to accept you as you were. Not reading between the lines again.

I suppose there were lots of times you hinted but I didn't want to hear those things. I wanted you to be what society considers normal - having male friends.

I guess it really took me as much as three months to believe you were serious about being a lesbian. I kept hoping and praying you would change your mind, but I see now in your heart you really want this.

When you told me once you were gay and not a lesbian, that there was a difference, I thought "Good, she's not sure." But now you know they are the same. You refer to yourself as a lesbian.

When I went to Rumours (a club for lesbians and gay men), I went because it was important to you and I guess I was

curious. I guess I expected people to be doing some heavy petting in corners.

Remember when we left, I said "You're just normal people." I meant it nicely. You're

not different, you're still my daughter, whom I love very much. You're still my best friend and confidante to whom I can tell my innermost secrets. You just like or love women

more than men.

I know life won't be easy for you because you are in a minority group that society does not accept. But I wish you happiness with whoever you choose

to be your partner when you find someone to love.

I hope you cherish this letter. It comes from my heart.

Love always, Mom

Dear Mom

I know you thought your letter would hurt me, but I already knew everything you had to say. You had never expressed yourself in writing before and you had never said everything you said all at once. You told me them a few at a time -- but now they are all in one place.

Whenever I'm feeling down, I'll just re-read your letter.

I first realized I was different during high school. People were talking about boys and dating. I wasn't interested in those things at all. Although I had heard about lesbians in our community, I was scared of them. People talked about them as if they were weird. People said you should stay away from them.

I really hated myself when proms came around because I couldn't tell you how I was and why I didn't want to go. I felt resentment toward you because you made me feel like I had to go. I really love you and I didn't want to hurt you, so I never said anything.

I had met a woman who I later learned through gossip was a lesbian. I started admiring her because she had courage to come out of her shell. Every chance I had, I tried to be with her.

The first time I ever told someone that I was gay was my graduation day. I was driving along, thinking about the ceremonies that would take place that night. As I passed in front of the tavern I saw the car of the woman I admired so much. I was determined to meet someone that I could talk to. (I knew that I couldn't talk to you because I had heard you talk about lesbianism before and I wasn't impressed.)

Anyways, I walked into the tavern, we started playing pool, drinking and talking and one thing led to another and everything came out. We started seeing each other shortly afterwards.

I remember that you couldn't figure out why I was so happy and talkative because usually I was in a bitchy mood all the time!

I started meeting a lot of people and I started to feel good about myself. I was finally at peace with who I was. I don't have to tell you how people in a small town are, but they started talking. People started picking on my friends who were straight because they heard I was a lesbian. I lost a lot of good friends because of people's stupidity.

I knew that I couldn't stay hidden from you very much longer. As much as I hated to leave, it was my time to go

applied to go to school in the city. I made it look like I really wanted to better my education. I could see that you were really pleased because you've always wanted the best for me.

I told you I was gay two days before I moved up here. I couldn't leave with that big secret on my mind. You didn't have the reaction I suspected. You weren't shocked, but mostly hurt. You were hurt because I had kept it to myself for such a long time. You knew before I came out and told you. I guess I underestimated you.

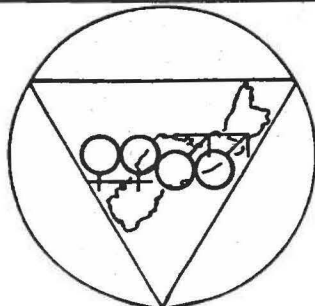
Life in the city is really great. I've made a lot of friends, mostly lesbians, and I don't feel different anymore. I feel like somebody, a person who is no different than anyone else.

The biggest frustration I have is that I have to live two lives, the straight life and the lesbian life. I only went out publicly once -- during the International Women's Day march. It was great to be up there. I wasn't hiding anymore. I was amongst people who had and who were going through the same thing I was.

I remember when I called you up a few days afterwards and told you about it, you were scared for me. I hope that by reading this letter you'll understand why I did what I felt I had to.

I can't tell you how lucky I feel having a mother like you. I wish everyone could talk to their mothers like I do. Thank you, mom, for being there when I need you the most -- right now.

Love, your lesbian daughter



**FOR MORE
INFORMATION
CALL
454-6551**

INVOLVE YOURSELF WITH

G.A.E.

**Gay Alliance for Equality
community groups include:**

- Civil rights committee
- Speakers bureau
- Over 30's
- The Gaezette
- Rumours Social Club

a social club for lesbians and gay men

Women's Night every Tuesday

Hours: 8:00 pm to 1:00 am
Monday to Saturday
for members and their guest

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

featuring a disco and a quiet lounge

Les Haligoniens ont tout le loisir de dormir

Une discussion un peu plus délicate de Halifax

Celine Chabot

Mes impressions sur la Nouvelle-Ecosse? Eh bien, si vous me le demandez, je vous dirait que... c'est beau. Pas très recherché comme réponse, je sais, mais n'ayant pas l'esprit très analytique, ce qui en ressort est une idée générale, mais sincère.

J'ai encore beaucoup à découvrir sur les provinces de l'Atlantique, mais ce que j'en ai vu à date m'a agréablement surprise. Surprise, parce que d'abord, la Nouvelle-Ecosse est beaucoup plus grande que je ne l'aurais imaginée. Bien sûr, il y a les cartes géographiques, la documentation, etc.... mais l'idée que j'avais de ma nouvelle province adoptive était, disons, stéréotypée (petite île de pêcheurs, etc).

Je dois avouer qu'étant de Québec, (non, pas Montréal!), je n'ai reçu qu'une éducation très relative sur les déroulements politiques, sociaux et économiques des Maritimes. J'ai corrigé cette situation embarrassante, bien entendu, depuis mon arrivée ici l'an dernier. L'intérêt, maintenant je l'ai, alors il ne faut pas m'en vouloir.

Je disais donc que la Nouvelle-Ecosse, ça valait le coup d'oeil. Il y a des régions, des paysages, des routes à vous couper le souffle, aucun doute là-dessus. De plus, sa richesse historique et la culture du peuple acadien sont autant d'attraits fascinants. Mais passons, je n'ai pas l'étoffe d'un guide touristique.

La reste est un peu plus délicat. Si je ne craignais de chatouiller la sensibilité de certaines, je parlais de "choc culturel". C'est toute une mentalité, un langage, un rythme de vie qui est différent. Je dois insister sur rythme de vie, car c'est je crois ce qui m'a le plus frappée.

Après ces années vécues au Québec et à Toronto, où la course et le stress font partie de la vie quotidienne, il est bon de s'arrêter et de respirer un peu l'air salin du "Canada's Ocean Playground".

Méto-boulot-dodo, peut-être, mais à un rythme beaucoup plus nonchalant. D'ailleurs, les Haligoniens ont tout le loisir de dormir, puisque les clubs ferment à peu de choses près à l'heure où les Québécois se préparent à sortir.

Côté travail cependant, il est assez difficile de te "déconditionner", de ralentir et de te mettre au

pas des gens avec qui tu fais affaire. C'est qu'il ne faut rien brusquer; si ce n'est pas aujourd'hui, ce sera demain, c'est tout. Pas de quoi en faire un drame...

Je me dois également de souligner qu'au travail, j'ai rencontré à maintes reprises une attitude très conservatrice. A prime abord, l'attention que l'on me porte est de

beaucoup diminuée, du fait que je sois une femme. Le besoin s'impose alors de rassurer ces messieurs, d'une façon ou d'une autre. "Non, je ne suis pas la secrétaire". "Oui, je peux très bien répondre à vos questions". "Mon boss? Il travaille à Toronto". "Oui, voilà le numéro (si cela vous chante de dépenser vos sous pour parler à un

Homme)".

Bref, nous sommes en terrain d'hommes (d'affaires). Entre eux, ils se comprennent. Par ailleurs, l'influence militaire qui nous entoure ne fait décidément rien pour améliorer cette attitude, mais ça, c'est une autre histoire.

Celine Chabot vit à Halifax depuis le premier janvier, 1985.



Patchwork co-ordinators Lynn MacKinlay and Alison Brewin work on a quilt together at the display they organized for International

Women's Week at the Halifax YWCA (photo by Jan Skeldon)

Patchwork gathering resources for women

Alison Brewin

On Dalhousie campus there is a small brown house with a very active basement. What is being born there is a Community Women's Resource Centre that has

visions of a healthy and happy community in the Metro area. Funded by the Secretary of State's Women's Program, Patchwork: A Community Women's Resource Centre is being developed at a rapid pace.

For the women of Halifax, September is an important month. It opens a season of activity and renewed energy. Though Patchwork will not be opening officially until late October, her doors will be open to volunteers

and members interested in being a part of her early development stages.

With Patchwork's Advisory Committee, the two co-ordinators Lynn MacKinlay and myself, Alison Brewin, have developed a list of services that will be available upon opening. All activity between now and late October will focus on ensuring that the following services are provided permanently and effectively:

1. A centre providing resources and information regarding women and women's concerns in an informal meeting place. For those without physical access to the centre, a phone number and mailing address.
 2. Free space for women's social justice groups needing a place to meet.
 3. A forum for women's collective voice and action for the raising of awareness and women's community.
 4. Facilitate women's discovery of choices in their personal, economic, social, political and cultural development.
 5. Encourage, initiate and support research and study into the experience of women and the women's movement.
 6. A liaison to further develop the rapport amongst women of different experience; eg. generation, class, culture, sexuality, physical ability, race, spirituality, and any other social division that tends to overlook women's commonality.
 7. To support and work with other community groups and projects that work towards the betterment of women's lives.
- Anyone wishing to become a member, volunteer, or learn more about Patchwork, please call or drop by any time between 10 and 4. We are also accepting donations of any kind: Henson College, 1247 Seymour St., Halifax, B3H 3J5 (424-2526, ask for Lynn MacKinlay or Alison Brewin.

the float room stress reduction centre

The first of its kind in Canada, The Float Room is a lightproof, soundproof room featuring a 6' x 9' tank filled with an epsom salt solution warmed to skin temperature. The benefits of floating include dramatic stress reduction, accelerated learning and healing, enhanced memory and creativity, lowered heart rate and blood pressure. Gift certificates for therapeutic massage and floatation are available at:

**The Float Room
in The Courtyard**
3rd Floor
1569 Dresden Row
Halifax
423-4407

HALIFAX TRANSITION HOUSE ASSOCIATION

"BRYONY HOUSE"

*"Help for Battered Women
and their Children"*

Open 24 hours a day — 7 days a week

Phone: 422-7650

Bryony House ad sponsored
by Maritime Tel and Tel

Rose Adams Megan Ardyche Sara avMaat Debbie Bennie Elizabeth Bosma Nancy Bowes Emily Boyle Pat Brennan-Alpert Nancy Brister Linc
Latremouille Claudette Legault Jennifer Leith Mary Lou LeRoy Betty-Ann Lloyd Christine Lucas Kim Macdonald Martha MacDonald Maure
Lisa Timpf Chris Toplack Virginia Turner Maxine Tynes Barb Webber Nina Winham Darl Wood Nancy Wright Berit As Inge As Liz Archiba

Rose Johnston Wynne Jordan Katherine Kechnie Alex Keir Nancy Kempton Pat Kipping Tara Kipping Perkins Joy Laking Bernadine LaPointe Marilyn Lamb Oona Landry Jo Anne
eider Judy Schuhlein Maureen Shebib Heidi Shipp Carol Sinclair Jan Skeldon Betty Smith Bernadette Sullivan Jo Sutton Peggi Thayer Jeanne Thibodeau Gillian Thomas

Canada, in the United States and England. We appreciate your believing in our future and look forward to working with you over the next year. Please write us a letter

according to the first myth.

The Myth of Pandora

Earth-Mother had given the mortals life: This puzzled them greatly. They would stare curiously at one another, then turn away to forage for food. Slowly they found that hunger has many forms.

One morning the humans followed an unusually plump bear cub to a hillside covered with bushes that hung heavy with red berries. They began to feast at once, hardly aware of the tremors beginning beneath their feet. As the quaking increased, a chasm gaped at the crest of the hill. From it arose Pandora with Her earthen pithos. The mortals were paralyzed with fear but the Goddess drew them into Her aura.

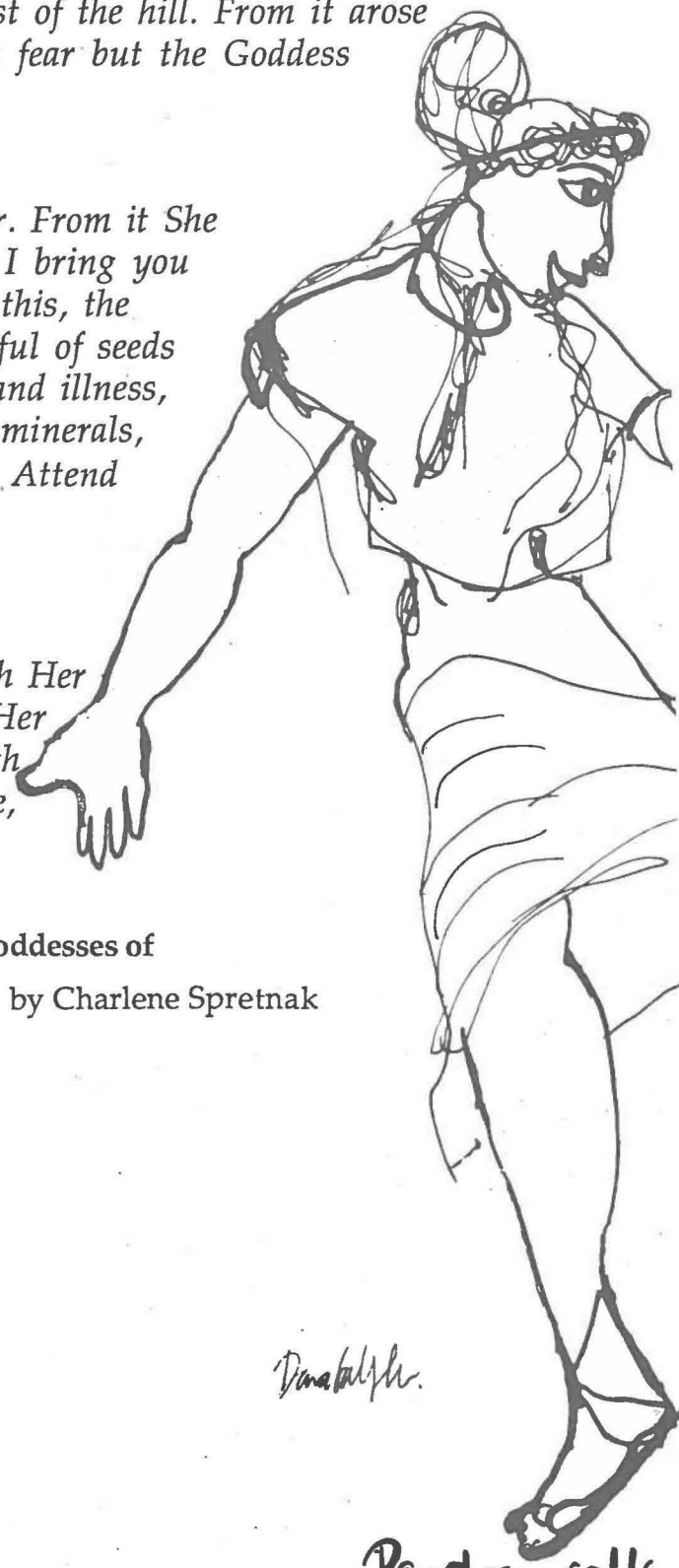
I am Pandora, Giver of All Gifts. She lifted the lid from the large jar. From it She took a pomegranate, which became an apple, which became a pear. I bring you flowering trees that bear fruit, gnarled trees hung with olives and, this, the grapevine that will sustain you. She reached into the jar for a handful of seeds and sprinkled them over the hillside. I bring you plants for hunger and illness, for weaving and dyeing. Hidden beneath My surface you will find minerals, ore, and clay of endless form. She took from the jar two flat stones. Attend with care My plainest gift: I bring you flint.

Then Pandora turned the jar on its side, inundating the hillside with Her flowing grace. The mortals were bathed in the changing colors of Her aura. I bring you wonder, curiosity, memory. I bring you justice with mercy. I bring you caring and communal bonds. I bring you courage, strength, endurance. I bring you loving kindness for all beings. I bring you the seeds of peace.

From Lost Goddesses of
Early Greece by Charlene Spretnak



Photos by Jan Skeldon



Pandora calls

Pandora calls

Barbara Harris Ruth Harvey-Rochette Kit Holmwood Susan Holtz Megan Holtz Karen Hudson Cristina Inzunza Joanne Jefferson Andrea Johnson
May Ocean Betty Peterson Mary Petty Scarlet Pollack Deborah Peeper Bev Rach Reika Sudie Rakusin Rosemary Sampson Heather Schn
r Carolyn Wallace Jane Wright and the many, many women who have encouraged and supported us, including our 508 subscribers, across

la Brown Brenda R. Bryan Cathy Busby Joan Campbell Shelley Casmey Jan Catano Ann Chinn Linda Christiansen-Ruffman Susan Clarke
en Macdonald Debbie MacDougall Macha MacKay Barb MacLennan Spears Susan MacPhee Carmel Maloney Valerie Mansour Debbie
d Calder Fiona Chin Yee Gloria Clifford Jennifer Lynn Clifford Diane Duggan Sharon E. Enman Helga Hoffman Jenny Horsman Anne

Kathy Coffin Lois Corbett Barbara Cottrell Dianne Crowell Andrea Curry Margaret Davis Dian Denis Anne Derrick Kate Dods Caroline Emerson Jeanne Fay Mary-Anne Finlayson
Mathers Gwyn Matthews Elizabeth May Pat McKeever Kate McKenna Sue McLeod Adele McSorley Judith Meyrick Angela Miles Carol Millett Judi Milne donalee Moulton-
Kate Emma Kivisild Pat Lefebvre Gina MacIntyre Susan Maclean Jane MacMillan Rae Mariel Alexa McDonough Suzn L. Morgan PEI Women for Peace Pictou

Shelley Finson Jo-Anne Fiske Joella Foulds Sharon Fraser Anne Fulton Dawna Gallagher Lorette Gendron Mary-Liz Greene Dianne Graham B
Barrett Kathy Moggeridge Erica Munn Rusty Neal Wilma Needham Sara Newman Joan Nickerson Leah Norm Eleanor O'Donnell M
County Women's Centre Marion Priestley Magi Redmonds Suzanne Rosson Heather Robertson Leslie Sampson Dorothy Thibodeau

Linda Christiansen-Ruffman

Pandora is one of nine groups featured in a study done for UNESCO, an agency of the United Nations. The study - "Women's Involvement in Political Life: A Pilot Study" - was done by CRIAW, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women with a national research team. I was part of that research team, and I have been asked to tell the story behind the study I did of Pandora. Many people associate the word political with governmental parties and holding elected office. Our study challenges this definition as too narrow. We recognize that women have a long history of largely invisible political struggles - for housing, against violence, for peace, for clean water, for accessible daycare, for urban reform, for equality in employment, for better health care, even for the vote.

Political activities of women include activities, not only in government or in political parties, but also in women's, community, church, and labour organizations, as well as in groups meeting informally around kitchen tables.

The ways in which people in a community define what is important and attempt to do something about it is political.

Pandora was originally selected for this study because of its potential political role in identifying women's issues, creating and spreading women's news and linking a variety of women in Atlantic Canada. By its existence, women's voices are empowered; there is an opportunity to discuss women's issues seriously.

Pandora is important in women's political struggles to create and legitimize women's voices and women's political culture, to expose and mobilize against women's oppression and to begin articulating feminist visions of a transformed world.

Important events in our lives, and in the lives of our communities, are not highlighted by the mainstream media. The media defines and promotes male definitions of reality. Pandora, therefore, has a role to play in the slow reconsideration of what we call "news".

At the same time as news is being created, its existence in print helps to assert the validity of our experience and both the commonalities and the diversities of women's lives.

In studying Pandora as part of the research project, I was interested in conceptions of politics at the individual, group and community levels. I gathered data through interviews and questionnaires with women and by attending meetings.

As individuals, some women described their very involvement with Pandora as a political act, while others commented on their political education. Some women were making connections between the personal and the political, were challenging and changing their own conceptions of the political and were increasing their feminist consciousness.

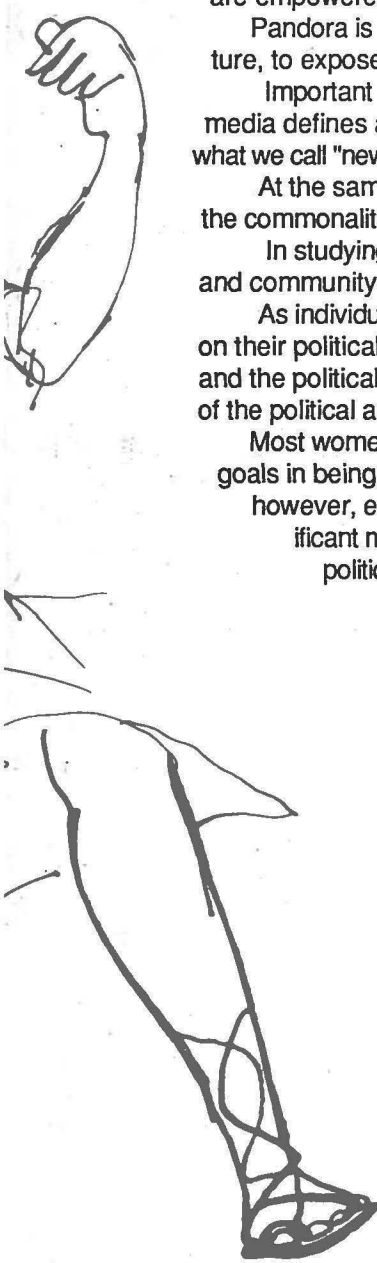
Most women did not mention the political when asked about their goals in being involved in Pandora. When asked directly in the survey, however, everyone thought of her involvement as political. A significant minority said they did not consider their involvement as political when they first became involved, less than a year ago.

Women described some of the political policies governing the practice of Pandora as a group of women. These included: "involving people from different backgrounds", being "inclusive of women's different ideologies" and practicing non-hierarchical, consensus-oriented process.

At the larger community level, the paper was seen by many as a force for "awareness, education and change". Its presence was seen as affirming that "women as a group and as individuals have ideas worthy of publication", ideas which previously have been "actively ignored". Although the potential political consequences of Pandora in the larger society were clearly recognized by the women involved, goals for Pandora were not articulated or confused with political rhetoric. The paper was seen as offering a voice for women, a vehicle for communication, networking, information-sharing. "Pandora can 'hear women into speech'" and "forge common links and connections among women."

After spending time at meetings of Pandora, and after surveying many of the active members of the group, I feel good about being a woman. I am impressed by the integration of the personal, the collective, and the diverse community interests in the political practices of the group. I think that we as women who are not politically involved in these activities should thank those who are - for their time, commitment, energy and accomplishments.

Linda Christiansen-Ruffman has been active in CRIAW-Nova Scotia and is currently vice president of the national organization. She teaches sociology at Saint Mary's University



her sisters.

Institutionalized poverty — social assistance — leaves some women with no choice but Prostitution

Jeanne Fay
Maureen Shebib

In the Spring 1986 issue of *Pandora*, Anne Derrick reviewed the new laws concerning prostitution. In another article, Anne described the recently formed Women's Alliance for the Support of Prostitutes - W.A.S.P.

In the spirit of continuing to broaden our understanding of prostitution, this article will address in more detail one of the central issues for the majority of women working in the sex trade.

At the outset, W.A.S.P. declared that we make no attempt to address the current debate among some prostitute women and prostitutes' advocates as to the "merits" of prostitution. As suggested by one report at the recent conference in Toronto on the politics of pornography and prostitution, there are at least two conflicting viewpoints.

W.A.S.P. considers it unnecessary to align ourselves with any perspective other than one that simply allows every woman the maximum genuine choice as to whether she will work in the sex trade.

We repeat a caution raised by Anne in her article: before any of us condemn a prostitute on allegedly moral or feminist grounds, we must re-examine our definition of prostitution, recognizing that many women end up prostituting their sexuality without ever directly trading sex for money.

Consider menial jobs in which women are often sexually harassed by an employer who silences them with the threat of firing.

Is this not a form of prostitution?

What about women who stay with men and engage in sex to ensure their kids are fed and have a roof over their heads?

We would not condemn our sisters for this behaviour, but rather the system that denies us options.

Dare we condemn our sisters in the sex trade when their options are the same or even fewer?

The issue that lies at the heart of prostitution - in our view - is economics. It is a simple truth that many women who are or will become involved in the sex trade do so as a matter of survival.

Without the income from prostitution, these women and their children would live in poverty.

Many, if not most, women who work in the sex trade are

simply choosing prostitution over poverty on social assistance or part-time work at minimum wage.

It is precisely the absence of a real choice for many women that must compel us as feminists to be concerned about prostitution, not because of middle class morality and feminist puritanism.

The lack of choices and resultant poverty are easy to quantify.

To begin with, the rate of unemployment is now running at 13.3 per cent for women in Nova Scotia. In actual figures that is 22,000 (Statistics Canada: April 1986).

Even if every sex worker were to obtain a minimum wage job, the issue of poverty would remain.

The poverty line for a two-person family in 1985 was \$11,850 (Statistics Canada). A woman working full-time at minimum wage in Nova Scotia grosses about \$8,400 a year.

Not only is a minimum wage job in itself not the answer to poverty, consider also the lack of affordable daycare and housing in Nova Scotia, particularly the Metro area.

If the rate of unemployment and minimum wage aren't enough to bring the issue into focus, this province's welfare program surely will!

A woman with one child on Family Benefits, Nova Scotia's long-term welfare program, receives \$8,100 a year, or \$675 a month. A single woman without dependents, unless disabled or over 60, does not qualify for Family Benefits.

The shorter term programs administered by the municipalities provide even less assistance, for example \$554 a month for a woman with one child under six (City of Halifax).

Both programs allow "maximum" amounts within the total allowance for shelter (rent, heat, lights). If by chance your total actual expenses for shelter fall below the maximum, you receive the lesser amount.

So, if you are lucky enough to find a two bedroom apartment for less than \$428 (say \$350), you will receive only \$350 plus

the cost of fuel and lights and a household allowance up to a maximum of \$428.

Therefore, if your total shelter costs come to \$400, you don't receive the extra \$28 to use for groceries or other necessities.

Even more unfair and more prevalent is the fact that if your apartment costs \$500 plus heats and lights (a more realistic figure for a two-bedroom apartment in the Metro area), you will still receive only \$428 for "shelter".

W.A.S.P. is planning workshops and a conference. For more information contact Anne Derrick at 422-7411

The balance is made up purely and simply by using grocery money.

Ask a welfare mother if she eats four out of four weeks a month. Many do not.

The monthly rates shown above for a woman with one small child are not the absolute maximum amount of assistance that might be available for a woman in Nova Scotia. The key words, however, are "might be available."

As illustrated, the Family Benefits program, administered solely by the province, provides slightly higher amounts of assistance for food, clothing, and shelter than does any given municipality. Yet, with the exception of people with diabetes and the disabled, no other assistance is directly available from the province.

Meanwhile, the 66 municipalities in Nova Scotia - all of which set different social assistance rates, all universally lower than Family Benefits - are responsible for allotting discretionary assistance for items classified as "special needs".

Just what are "special needs"? Such items as prescription drugs, telephone, glasses, appliances, furniture, dental care, school supplies, daycare, security deposits for apartments and lights, moving expenses, and special diets are the staple "special needs".

They are designated "special" and are discretionary (subject to the approval of the municipal social services director or his delegates), because they are not absolutely essential to physical survival.

Eligibility for special needs is typically determined by assessing what the applicant is currently receiving, let's say from Family Benefits. If this amount exceeds what they would otherwise receive from the municipality if they were a regular municipal assistance client, taking into account the cost of the special need item, it can be - and usually is - refused unless a compelling case is presented.

Suppose a woman with one child receives \$675 a month from Family Benefits, as opposed to \$554 from the City of Halifax. If she needs \$75 eye glasses in the eyes of the City of Halifax she does not have a "budget deficit" which would make her eligible for special needs assistance. Thus, she may well not be granted this assistance.

It is important to note that most municipalities implicitly - if not quite explicitly - expect women receiving the child tax

(Since this article was first written, special needs assistance has been all but eliminated in the City of Halifax and County of Halifax. It is simply not available to women on Family Benefits and very difficult to obtain by women on municipal assistance, as already suggested.)

There is much more to be said about the welfare system in this province. However, we hope to have made our point by now. Put simply, women involved in prostitution are very often there just because of the economic reality of a system where women are systematically oppressed and impoverished.

The final answer to prostitution lies in a society where women do not have to choose between poverty as a welfare recipient or minimum wage earner and the trading of sex for money.

Such a society can only be achieved by our collective struggle to take power from those who exercise it in the interests of the already-wealthy.

Nor can it be achieved as long as women are divided by our differences and by our different choices, especially when our choices are rooted in this oppressive, exploitive economic system.

Jeanne Fay and Maureen Shebib both work in the community planning office of Dalhousie Legal Aid. This article is contributed on behalf of W.A.S.P. by Jeanne Fay and Maureen Shebib, with the help of Anne Derrick's previous research and writings.

credit to use this money for special needs.

Women are commonly required to account for the expenditure of their child tax credit when they apply for special needs assistance. If the municipality thinks the woman has squandered the money in some fashion, they often deny the assistance required.

It's here!

The CRIAW Bank of Researchers

A computerized database of C.V.'s of feminist researchers working in various fields and committed to the advancement of women in Canada.

REGISTER NOW!

CRIAW

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women

151 Slater, Suite 408
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3
(613) 563-0681

You have to be able to distinguish Four the Moment what to take seriously and how seriously to take it

Judith Meyrick

Halifax Natal Day was sunny, warm, a wonderful Nova Scotian summer's day, perfect for the traditional "concert on the hill". The crowd numbered in the thousands, sitting on the side of citadel hill drenched in the evening sunshine, waiting for the entertainment.

Four the Moment sang early in the concert and their songs were heard over the city. Songs of freedom, of racism, of oppression and of women, strong women, black women, resonated over the hill. People in the Public Gardens heard their music. But the crowds sitting in the sunfilled evening were uncomfortable. Pretty heavy topics for a summer concert on the hill.

But they sang well, and those on the hill heard them anyway, as well as the tourists on Spring Garden Road. And for Four the Moment, that was why they were there. To be heard.

"At first audiences don't know how to react. We are different, they wonder where the instruments are. They often expect gospel. After all, we are a black group."

"We don't give them many clues. And then they hear themes of black struggle, of feminism, and the message makes them sit up, it strikes them emotionally."

Their music is very much Nova Scotian, and tells about the history of slavery, of the struggle of black communities to eke out an existence, of the strength of black women. They like to sing original songs which reflect their experience in Nova Scotia. Songs such as "I Love You, Woman", which speaks of the history of black struggle, and particularly the struggles of black women.

"People here in Nova Scotia are in tune with nature. That has always been important to us, the country, fresh air, water. It is im-

portant to go fishing, to walk in the woods, enjoy the things around you, even if you can't afford to go away on the big trips. This imagery runs through "I Love You, Woman". It has been taught to us from the time we were small - spring, rebirth, hope. What's the most joyous occasion in a black family? The birth of a new child, a new hope, a beginning, the hope that perhaps for this baby things will be different, that this baby can have what you have worked for all these years."

The first time the group sang for a black community was at the opening of the Black Cultural Centre near Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, in 1982. Until then, this community had only seen them on cable TV. It was a large audience and the response was over-whelming, a standing ovation.

"It was an important event for us, because until now we had sung only in the white community, and we had no idea about how this music connected with the black community."

Four the Moment is composed of three black women and one white woman. This racial mix has often caused difficulties for the group as a whole. The white community has tended to contact the white member, to use her as a "bridge", either to arrange for bookings or to discuss problems.

"White groups would contact me about dissatisfactions with the group, that they were late, that they hadn't sung the right things, but would not say these things to the black members of the group. And the group was expressing anger to me that they were not able to express to the white community. There was no common ground to do this. It was as if I was expected to "get these women to behave". There was no recog-

nition that the differences were cultural, and I found it difficult to deal with the communities' fear of addressing the problems, and their unwillingness to recognize that these are racial issues, that it is a function of racism that causes these situations."

"It still happens. People from

benefit concert for the people who had been evicted from their homes. The concert was sponsored by Folklife, who were part of Expo, which people were being asked to boycott.

Did Four the Moment think the letter to Fuse was justified?

"Not at all. The writer did not

tion made without concrete, anti-racist work going on within their own organizations, or in their own struggles."

"People from the white, liberal, left community sometimes take an attitude that they "own" groups. Lillian Allen is "ours", Arlene Mantle is "ours", Four the Moment



Four the Moment has performed throughout Canada at festivals, conferences, rallies, concerts and special events. They have no formal music training, they come together from a desire to express their feelings of being women in Nova Scotia and being black in Nova Scotia. They sing a cappella, and their music is a blend of blues, folk gospel and soul. They

have been featured on CBC Morningside and Identities, and have performed at the First Canadian Women's Music and Cultural Festival in Winnipeg, the Northwinds Folk Festival, the Winnipeg Folk Festival and Expo.

From Left: Debbie Jones, Delvina Bernard, Andrea Currie, Kim Bernard.

(photo by Sara avMaat)

the peace community, from the women's community, call to ask how the group would feel about doing this thing or that thing, not wanting to say the wrong thing or be inappropriate. What we do now is send them on to the manager, another white woman."

"Having a white member of the group has added something to our image. It makes us a lot more acceptable, and makes white people a whole lot more comfortable. But I think that our objective has not been to maintain that order, it has simply happened."

A recent letter in Fuse magazine (May/June, 1986) by Kandace Kerr was highly critical of Four the Moment, among others, for performing at Expo. She was angry, and rightly so. She sees Expo "as a manifestation of everything that keeps me down. It, like other world fairs, is little more than a celebration of capital. It sickens me to see musicians and performers that I respect coming here to be part of a glorification of a system that sees people like me as the enemy, that values profit, that delights in exploitation."

Ms Kerr goes on to say that she suggests "that we don't care if you think you have a message for those people inside. If you really had a message that would shake people up, you wouldn't be in there in the first place, and you wouldn't have accepted a contract to play."

The day they arrived in Vancouver, Four the Moment went down to Stanley Park to play at a

know us, or why we were there, or why we wanted to be there. I think it is presumptuous of someone to lump everyone into a little corner and say that we are all part of the exploitation of the poor people in Vancouver. It think it is ridiculous."

"The whole process of the group responding to the Fuse letter has been an education for me, because it really got me. It moved me, made me feel guilty and here I was at the airport going to Expo. On the plane, three of us got into a conversation and I realised that it is a different challenge to me as a white woman, not being as sensitive to what that kind of challenge meant to the black women in the group."

"I said I was feeling guilty, dealing with the enemy, and Delvina turned to me and said: "Well, I do it all the time." That had not occurred to me and this is after five years with the group. I cannot assume that my consciousness is all correct."

"When it comes to singing for the white women's community, which includes almost no black women, or in the folk festival community, there should never be adversarial roles. The corporate sector sponsored Expo, they are the enemy."

"There is an assumption by white, liberal, progressive people that they are on the same side of the struggle as black women, as Four the Moment, and this is not a correct assumption. It is an assump-

is "ours". And with that, they feel they have the right to declare who is our friend and who is our enemy."

"These people are prioritizing for me what my struggle is. I struggle on lines of male/female, black/white, rich/poor. In this case, they are saying that this is a rich/poor struggle, and that should be my biggest enemy, not the black/white, or male/female. That enrages me, these attempts to prioritize what my struggle should be."

The future of Four the Moment is undecided. They talk of perhaps an annual reunion, keeping in touch with tapes and spending time together each year. They are not clear about what the future holds. But what they are clear about is the friendship and love shared between the women, the support, and the good times.

Essentially, they enjoy each other, being together, having fun, doing their own thing, coming together. And the laughter, the ability to laugh at oneself and allow others to laugh also, it keeps things in perspective, and restores a balance of humour.

"For black people, there are so many contradictions, it's like schizophrenia. It's like you have several hats, a black hat, a white hat, a rich hat, a poor hat, so who cares if you go down to the Rideau Centre and sing for people who are "in the struggle", you laugh at all that. You have to be able to distinguish what to take seriously and how seriously to take it.

BUCHAN, DERRICK & RING BARRISTERS•SOLICITORS

Flora I. Buchan, B.A.,LL.B

Anne S. Derrick, B.A.(Hons.),LL.B.

Dawna J. Ring, B.A.(Hons.),LL.B.

1545 Grafton Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2B9

(902) 422-7411

Cathy Quinn's odyssey as an artist

It began ten years ago in Duncan, B.C. Dissatisfied with her life as a young housewife and part-time Safeway cashier, Cathy enrolled in Malaspina College's Leisure Studies program.

The mandatory art courses in this program sparked Cathy's interest in graphic design, which she pursued first at the University of Alberta and then at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. In her last year at N.S.C.A.D., Cathy turned to video as a medium for the expression of her ideas.

For three years she worked as the Managing Director of the Centre for Art Tapes*, a user-run institution for the training in, and production of, audio and video works. In her spare time, Cathy worked with the radical theatre collective, Popular Projects. Last year she resigned from the centre to begin a career as a freelance video and performance artist.

Cathy's performance pieces, **RIGHT HONOURABLE** and **Hali-Facts** formed a part of the latest Ecphore Group show. **Hali-Facts** was originally developed for the cross Canada touring show of Halifax video works, **Life Like It**, which Cathy organized and accompanied. Her video, **Look Up: The Sky is Falling**, was included in last fall's **Women and Peace Show** at Mount Saint Vincent University.

Cathy has recently applied for funding to do a series of ten performance pieces, **Street Works**. Canada Council willing, we hope to see her soon in the streets of Halifax.

The above text and interview below are by JoAnn Latremouille.

Q. Whether we like it or we hate it, we are all very knowledgeable about television. Less well known is the fact that a great deal of artistic activity today is using the same technology as television. It is usually referred to as video or art video. How would you distinguish this work from television?

It's true that the technology of television and video is virtually the same, but video is not a dominant shaper of ideology in the same way that television is. Video is not in everybody's living room in North America. The main difference is in distribution. There are multinational corporations that have control over television...for good reasons from their point of view.

It has been very difficult for artists to get their video work shown on television, which would seem a logical route to go. Other artists choose not to go that route at all.

Video can be used by organizations, by women's groups for example, to get across very defined goals and aspirations, to get their messages out. Video as a medium has the potential to enable groups to present very clear messages about what they are doing and what they hope to accomplish.

Q. Why have you chosen

to work in video rather than film?

I like instant results. I appreciate the immediacy that video offers. As soon as you shoot something in video you have the choice of playing it back. In film there is a lapse in time for processing.

Q. Do you think that video will ever be as beautiful as film can be?

As beautiful in terms of resolution? Film makers often talk about the high degree of visual resolution, the crispness possible in their medium. That's the difference between film and video, that and screen size.

I am told that the quality of video technology is improving dramatically. Some people predict, and maybe it's happening as we speak, that video quality will be comparable to film. That hasn't happened yet with the equipment I have access to.

Q. If you as a video artist don't make works for television how do you get funding?

When you are a video artist/producer in Halifax, the options are very limited. I am in a situation where I want to pursue my work in video and performance art and I see very limited possibilities for doing that. There is virtually no support from the city or the province. The only game in town for video funding is the Canada Council and they're out of town. They're in Ottawa!

Q. The large corporations like Lavalin for instance who lavish great amounts of money on painted works, haven't discovered video as an art form?

Not to my knowledge. There wasn't one piece of video work in last fall's **INNOVA** show which Lavalin sponsored.

I don't know if anyone has ever approached business for funding. It's highly unlikely that corporations would back an artist to do a piece that's critical of their objectives and values, and a lot of artists working in video are using it as a tool for analyzing and criticizing the status quo.

Q. One of the themes in your work right now is the connection between military funding and the lack of mo-



RIGHT HONOURABLE

Kathy Quinn and Ian Townsend-Gault with plastic back scratchers saying "over to the right, a bit more to the left" etc. with a distorted Oh! Canada playing in the background. (Photo by Mark Simkins)

ney available for the arts. Were you as sensitive to militarism before you came to Halifax?

Certainly not. There was not really an obvious military presence in Edmonton. Even if there was, I'm not sure I would have challenged it then. As I've experienced more of the world and grown as an artist, my political awareness has been heightened.

When I was working at the Centre for Art Tapes, I had a wonderful view from my office window. From the Alexandra Centre I could see the harbour, and Dartmouth, and where they park the submarines.

I came in contact with a lot of people who were asking some important questions. I started to realize that the military presence which was right under my nose on a daily basis was having an effect on me.

When the Centre for Art Tapes would go to the Nova Scotia Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness to ask for a pittance to support our work, we would be given the run-around. Then we would find out that they were, and still are, pumping all sorts of money into that military spectacle, the Nova Scotia Tattoo.

Why do those discrepancies exist? Why is it important to prop up this circus that glorifies war and military activity, instead of supporting a little cultural institution that is doing quality work and struggling to keep its doors open? Because I lived through that, because I experienced that first hand, I developed an even greater commitment to opposing those kinds of inequities.

Q. Although all your work deals with serious themes and is highly critical of various corruptions that exist within present day society, you make extensive use of wit and irony. Is this something that you have developed consciously or is this just a natural part of your being?

Both. They do come very naturally to me but they also serve a very practical function. They lure people into a work. They serve as entry points for the audience.

People are familiar with humour and they can form an identification with a work that makes them laugh.

I question that as a tactic, though. You ask me if it comes easily and I say it does but by now I am also very conscious of it as a strategic device. So that it is now a manipulative device.

Q. Do you think that "manipulative" is necessarily bad?

Well, I am still trying to work through and resolve this. At the moment it feels right to me, so I continue working with that methodology. I see the kinds of responses that I am getting and the broad range of people that I am reaching and that is the bottom line for me. It is so important that I reach people. If what I'm doing or how I'm doing it is creating obstacles so that my message can't get across to people then that's a sign of failure.

I really like to laugh myself and I think a lot of people do.

Laughter serves to break down barriers, social barriers. When people are less rigid, it's easier to get through, to have a dialogue.

Q. Recently you have been shifting your focus from video and into performance art. Is this because of the even greater sense of immediacy that performance gives?

That's it for sure. I like taking risks and I always have. I get a lot of satisfaction from putting myself in situations where it's not defined what the outcome will be. Performance allows the most immediate feedback of all.

Performance is in itself a very difficult medium to define because you can use so many other media within it — music, theatre, visual arts, the whole range. There are no rigid parameters. It's still wide open for the performance artist.

In the work I like to do, street works, there is a large element of chance; chance in the audience that happens by, and in the number of distractions that might present themselves. I want to work outside the gallery system, outside a controlled situation. I want to reach a broader audience. I want to work in the public domain.

JoAnn Latremouille has her own business as a landscape architect and is a freelance writer on the arts.

*Individual women or groups seeking instruction in any aspect of audio or video production may contact Fran Gallagher-Shuebrook at the Centre for Art Tapes, 429-7299. The Centre is willing to conduct workshops throughout Nova Scotia.

A SHELTER FOR WOMEN

In need of housing, food, clothing

ADSUM HOUSE

2421 Brunswick Street, Halifax
429-4443 423-4443

Farmers

Farmers Co-operative Dairy Limited
Owned by Nova Scotia Farmers

Production and Distribution
Operations
Hammonds Plains Road
Bedford, Nova Scotia

(902) 835-3373

Emergency Shelter For Women and Children

Collins House is a short-term emergency shelter for women and their children who are homeless due to various social and economic factors.

Collins House

1094 Tower Road
Halifax, N.S. B3H 2Y5
429-8291 422-6009



Women's Emergency
Housing Coalition

With your help, there's a much brighter future!

Feminist theatrics target the young in peace piece

Joanne Sinclair

Peacemaker is a play no child should miss (or adult for that matter). It is a delightful legend of war and peace.

My four-year old daughter and I arrived at the Dunn Theatre amidst swarms of other children attending the Children's Festival of Nova Scotia. As harried supervisors madly counted heads and attempted to maintain order, two red-robed harlequins approached, prancing up and down the aisles and motioning to the children by clapping their hands this way and that, then extending their arms to the audience and wriggling their fingers.

The children responded in kind. Clearly I was missing something.

The set was bloody red and I couldn't help thinking the most horrible thoughts: "Is this really going to be a play for kids?"

I had my doubts. The only images it conjured up for me were gruesome.

As the play begins we meet Simp (Janys Chambers), the petite Red who explains about her land, a place where everything is red. She also explains that this was not always the case.

With the help of two silly-looking puppets, Simp tells the children of a bridge, once shared by the Blues and Reds. In olden days they would take turns on alternate occasions crossing the bridge and everyone got along just fine.

One day (you guessed it!) a Blue and a Red tried to cross the bridge at the same time. Neither would allow the other to pass first. The ensuing argument soon enough involved all the Blues against all the Reds, and vice versa.

The leaders decided that, to "keep the peace," the bridge must be destroyed and a wall put in its place.

Now we have the history and the story begins. Simp meets her friend, Franny (Sandra Vacciana), to practice for their show in the upcoming carnival. They're quickly evicted by Mr. Man, a delightfully self-important cockney guard and protector of the wall. Played beautifully by Nicola

Kathrens, he enforces the curfew and makes sure his tall tales of the horrible Blues will instill terror in the hearts of Simp and Franny.

They do, and the two are only too happy to scurry home to safety. Simp, however, has forgotten something by the wall and must return to get it.

It is then that Simp meets Bluey, (Sue Hill). The meeting is a beautifully contrived sequence. The set, props, lighting and music (performed by Julie Cooper) all meld to create just the right images.

The children are easily drawn into this world and are as happy as Simp and Bluey on discovering that she and the "enemy" have so much in common.

Franny returns and, assisted by Simp, also meets Bluey.

Through the ensuing twists and

turns of events, the lesson is learnt.

As a mother and citizen who is reasonably concerned with the state of the world, I must admit to experiencing quite a rush on hearing an auditorium full of children earnestly pleading that the new-found friends "break down the wall!"

It is on this note (and with that same rush in mind) that I feel compelled to add my only criticism of the play: the blatantly sexist naming of the guard, Mr. Man. Justifiable perhaps, but sexist nonetheless.

I see no sense in educating children out of sexist attitudes toward women only to cultivate that same attitude toward men. Mr. Man is clearly a brainwashed bumbler without too much upstairs.

The play doesn't try to conceal that it has a strong and serious message, one I would have thought difficult to convey to a target audience of five to nine-year-olds.

The play was written and performed professionally and, through the use of humour, colour, music, athletics and rhythm, the show not only held the interest of the children, it was irresistible fun.

I could only recommend that the show tour again - this time for a target audience of adults.

Joanne Sinclair is a working mother of a four-year-old daughter, is presently heavily involved in running a large housing co-op, and has a strong interest in arts and communication, both through her skill as a musician and artist and through her appreciation of a variety of art forms.



Mr. Man (Nicola Vacciana) warns Franny (Nicola Kathrens) about the blues. Recently this 33 year old young people's theatre company has developed a collective process which works toward challenging established and institutional attitudes to gender, race, class and sexual orientation.

In 1983, the group developed The Women's

Company to create jobs for women in a male dominated profession and to make an initiative in non-sexist education. The company represents the experience of women by developing imagery and language from a female perspective. It hopes to provide an affirmative experience for girls and a challenging experience for boys.

(Photo by Brenda Price)

HALIFAX DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD CONTINUING EDUCATION

Registration for fall term will take place

September 8 and 9. For more information,

see September 5 edition of

Halifax Herald / Mail Star

or phone 421-6800

Dept. of Continuing Education
Halifax District School Board
1929 Robie Street, Room 125

Special Opportunities

for Study
and Development
at Dalhousie

This fall we are offering seminars, workshops and courses on topics such as:

Blending Families
Divorce Mediation
Literature & Psychology
Compulsive Eating &
Body Image
Communication Strategies
& Skills

Genealogy
Speed Reading
Career Options
Writing Skills
Development
Landscape Gardening
Practical French

... and more

Call 424-2475

for further information and a copy of our complete Fall '86 schedule.



Dalhousie University
Henson College of Public Affairs
and Continuing Education

Politics of bisexuality

"I would like people to realize that my bisexuality is a definite choice"
Let's make this a dialogue — respond with a letter or article

Joanne K. Jefferson

When I was in Junior High School we had sayings about bisexuals: we would say that they "swing both ways" or were "AC-DC". It seemed that there were always negative implications to those words, and I remember thinking that those people must have had extremely decadent, sexual lifestyles, and that they couldn't commit themselves to anything.

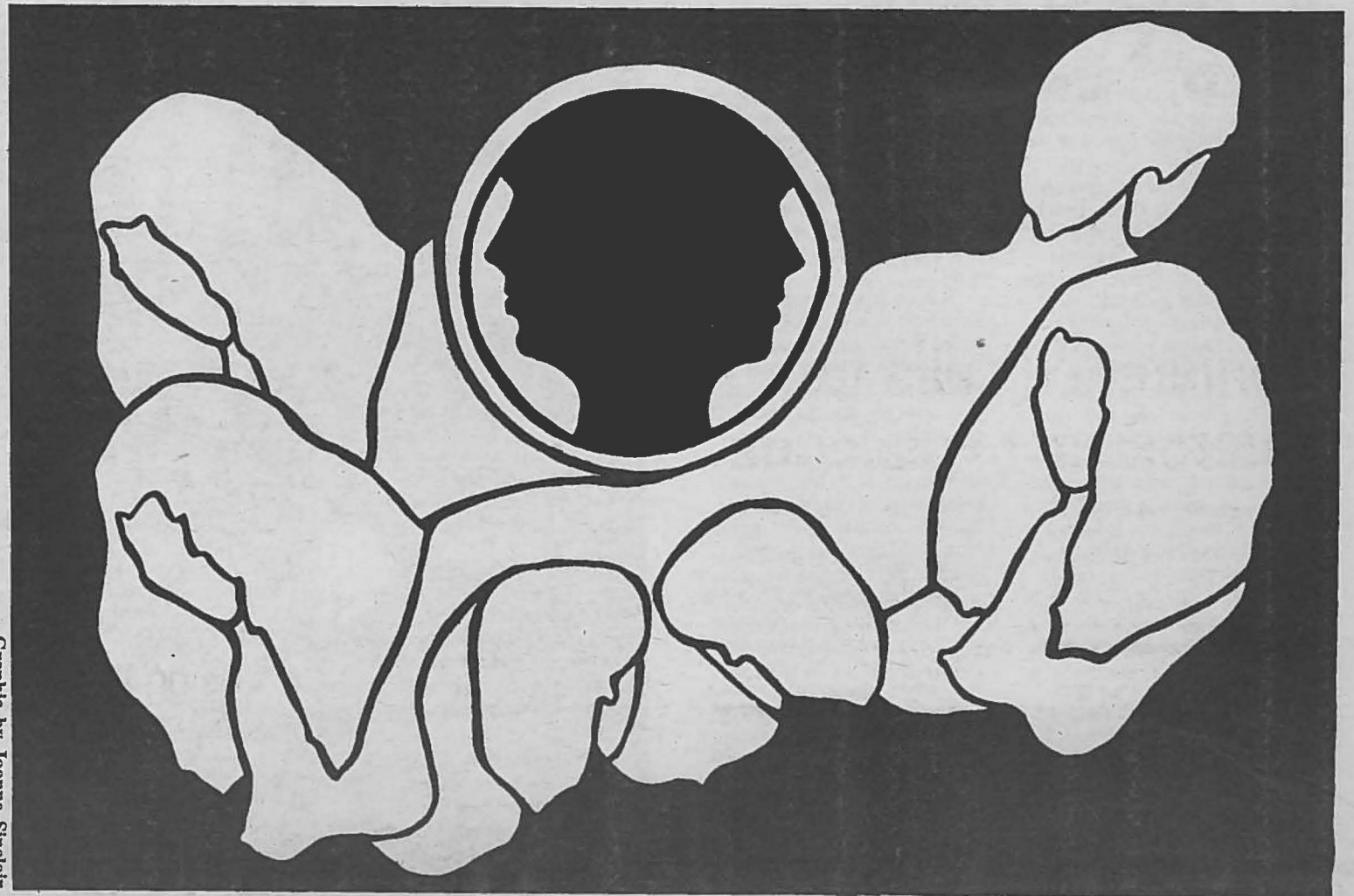
Now I feel most people I know are less overtly cruel, but I still get the feeling that many people think of bisexuals as being undecided about their sexuality, and possibly deviant. Many homosexuals seem to think that people who identify themselves as bisexuals are really just afraid to make the decision to call themselves gay.

Ideally, we should not have to label ourselves, but for now I think identifying ourselves with labels helps us to find support and information, and it helps us to educate others about who we are. Part of the problem is that many of the words we have to work with emphasize one part of who we are and leave out everything else.

I call myself a bisexual, but I would like people to realize that my bisexuality is a definite choice, that it is a choice about more than sexuality, and that it is a way of life that needs more visibility and more support.

I think it's time bisexuals became more vocal, because I think we can do a lot to expand boundaries and to contradict many feelings of fear and isolation. But to do this, we need to think of ourselves as an identifiable group. We need to see the word bisexual on posters, and in books, and to hear it from people's mouths.

I have always had questions about my place in the slots society has established; about my sexual and cultural identity. I am involved in a committed relationship with a man, but that has not made me forget that I strongly identify with women, especially with lesbians, or that I love many women in



Graphic by Joanne Sinclair

many ways. I don't think of myself as being either gay or straight, I think of myself as being bisexual.

I feel, however, that by identifying myself as a bisexual I have fallen into the crack that automatically opened up between the straight world and the gay world. I'm never sure where to go; whether it will be appropriate for me to participate in certain activities, or to include myself in certain groups.

At the same time, it is disturbingly easy, from day to day, to hide; to let people think what they want about me so that we can all feel safe.

When I'm with a group of women who think I'm a lesbian I find it very easy to be what they want me to be. And I enjoy it; it's part of who I am. But I also often do not mention my male partner.

When I'm with a group of heterosexuals, I automatically fall into the slot of being a woman who lives with a man, and who just happens to also be involved in the women's community. That role is also part of who I am. But I'm careful in those situations to leave out any references to exactly how I feel about my part in the women's community, or the fact that I support my lesbian friends

with more than just liberal sensitivity.

So in both cases I can fit in and be accepted, but I also leave part of myself behind. That is painful, especially since I don't feel like there are any more than two or three places I can be whole, even though all parts of me are in my head all the time.

I'm sure many people think of bisexuals as being able to take advantage of both cultures (gay and straight), and therefore more fortunate. And some people think that because I live with a man, I am safe. But the truth is that I often don't feel as if I belong in either

culture, and I think that in many ways it is scary and threatening, both for me and my partner, to say I am bisexual.

I want to feel that I don't have to be embarrassed about adding the word bisexual everytime I hear someone talk about gays and straights together. In fact, I want everyone else to say it for me. I want people to acknowledge that we exist, not as sexually selfish or scared people, but as proud, strong people who need to be able to celebrate our identity and culture.

Joanne Jefferson is a Halifax writer who has recently become active in the women's community.

NDP

**New
Democratic
Party
Women's
Rights
Committee
423-9217**

3115 Veith Street

453-4320



- Counselling
- Youth Programs
- Pre-School
- Education Opportunities
- Haircutting
- Seniors Activities
- Ceramics
- Special Programs

Microcomputer Support Specialist

Renee R. Davis

*Training and support services to all microcomputer users
Business and educational applications*

Business: (902) 423-1658 Residence: (902) 429-8949

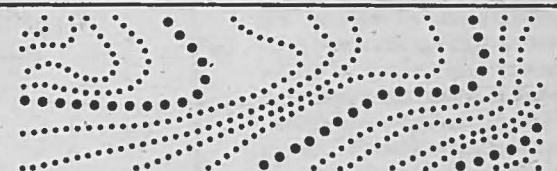
TAROT CARD READINGS

BY APPOINTMENT

Pandora readers — \$10.00
(Cut out this card!)

MADELINE STONE

days 422-2177
evenings 429-0443



**Design
Alliance**

Landscape
Architectural
Services

Joann Latremouille C.S.L.A.

P.O. Box 1586 • Station M
Halifax • Nova Scotia B3J 2Y3
425-8495

Fighting racism, sexism, classism, homophobia

New paper links Black sisters

A non-profit newspaper run for and by Black women is now available in Canada. You can subscribe and/or send donations to Black Women's Collective, PO Box 44, Station P, Toronto M5S 2S4.

The following is a statement — **WHAT WE BELIEVE** — from the collective:

The Black Women's Collective is a group of Black women who came together to unite and organize politically and autonomously around Black

women's issues. Our Lives is one way that we can speak to each other about ourselves from our own perspective. It is a way to link with other Black sisters.

The background of the women in the Collective are diverse. Some of us were born and raised in Canada; some in isolation in white communities and some from Black Canadian communities whose history in Canada goes back hundreds of years. Some of us are from different parts of the Caribbean and arrived in Canada

anywhere from early childhood to recently. Some of us are from England and South Africa. We are working class and middle class. Some of us are not employed. We are writers, artists, domestic workers, musicians, teachers, social workers and health care workers. Some of us are mothers.

We have all been involved in political work in the Black and women's communities and are tired of the way in which our voices and our issues as Black women are ignored or treated in a cursory manner.

Those of us who worked with white feminists were fed up with white women's racism and their expectation that we should devote our labour to issues of priority to them, for their benefit, as they ignore the fact that all issues are shaped by race, class and sex.

Those of us who worked in various Black community organizations are tired of male sexism and the unwillingness of both men and women to address Black women's issues or challenge sexism.

Homophobia is too often unaddressed or justified as a correct position by our community. Black lesbians must often hide our lesbianism or face being ostracized.

We in the Black Women's Collective have come to the realization that communities and organizations that do not fight all oppressions — racism, sexism, classism, homophobia — can only oppress Black women. If we continue to give our labour and support to these organizations and groups, we will perpetuate the injustices against us and further the interests of those who oppress us.

The Black Women's Collective supports all Black liberation and Third world struggles against capitalism and imperialism as these struggles are materially linked to ours.



Untitled No. 2 Diptych

Paintings by Nicola Wheston

Losing friends : Gaining Friends

The following are excerpts from an exhibit introduction written by Nova Scotian artist Leya Evelyn. *Losing Friends: Gaining Friends*, paintings by Nicola Wheston, was on display in the Upstairs Gallery of Mount Saint Vincent University from July 16 to August 17, 1986.

"This work is autobiographical. It is a visual journal of Nicola Wheston's experiences, featuring people prevalent in her life. Based on studies and memories, all the work consists of portraits. Composed of an overlay of imagery, of interlocking repeated patterns, transparent and superimposed, these paintings portray the many faceted nature of experience. A contrapuntal weaving of birds, windows, faces and masks creates a single harmonic texture characterized by its mood of curious investigation...."

"The artist is confronting both herself and the people close to her through portraits and self-portraits. The viewer is drawn in to the world of the person portrayed as well as the artist's personal confrontation with the experience of the that person...."

"These pieces are windows on the world, what goes on inside and out: being on the inside looking out and being on the outside looking in simultaneously. We can see that there is no difference between the two."

Conference calls for heterosexualism dialogue

Lesbian politics and visibility was a much-discussed issue at the Canadian Feminist Periodicals Conference held in Orangeville, Ontario this spring. The women who participated in the visibility workshop presented a resolution to the plenary session that was supported by the representatives of the ap-

proximately 40 publications present.

They committed themselves to the principles of increasing the visibility of lesbians and lesbianism through feminist periodicals and of furthering the dialogue on heterosexualism as a cornerstone of all women's oppression.

This can be done through support for lesbians within our publications, for lesbians within our communities, for lesbian publications in Canada and Quebec, for publications under attack for lesbian positive/anti-heterosexist positions or articles.

We can also continue the education for ourselves, individually, for our groups, communities and readership as we develop an analysis of lesbian politics and heterosexualism.

We would like anyone who is interested in contributing to this dialogue — a letter or article — to get in touch with us at Pandora, 5533 Black Street, Halifax, B3K 1P7 or 455-1287

New MATCH video focuses on common ♀ struggles

MATCH is proud to announce a new video production entitled *Women: All One Nation*. Twenty-eight minutes in length, it emphasizes the commonality of women's struggles throughout the world.

Unique in its combination of global perspective on women's issues with a feminist perspective on global issues, the video depicts the connections between women in Canada and the developing world.

Groups will find *Women: All One Nation* a useful introduction to global women's issues.

Produced for MATCH by Asterisk Film and Videotape Productions with a grant from the Women's Program, Secretary of State Department, it can be rented in Canada for the nominal sum of \$5 to cover the cost of postage and handling.

MATCH has a sliding scale starting at \$50 for groups, schools, universities, churches, unions and libraries who wish to purchase it. It is available in 1/2 inch videotape in both VHS and Beta formats, in English and French versions.

MATCH is the only Canadian development agency that concentrates its support exclusively on women through overseas project funding and education in Canada. For more information on the video and MATCH's other programs, please contact Sherralee Galey, 401-171 Nepean, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2P 0B4.



THE HALIFAX TAI CHI ASSOCIATION

Teaching TAOIST TAI CHI and TAOIST MEDITATION

The culmination of the internal martial arts, for stress control, self-defence, health and higher powers.

A registered charity

1649 Barrington St. 4th Floor
422-8142

With a Difference: Women and Art

Do you draw, weave, paint, write, or make art in some other way? Are you interested in how the women's movement has affected how art is made and understood? This ten-week, interdisciplinary course is offered on Tuesday evenings beginning September 30. It combines short studio projects in your medium with gallery visits, reading assignments, audio and visual presentations, and group discussions. Topics include the status of Canada's women artists, women and craft, and the renaissance of women's writing. The instructor is Barbara Louder. The instruction fee is \$90.00 and the materials fee is \$10.00. Registration begins September 3.

For more information:

Continuing Education Department
Nova Scotia College of Art and Design
5163 Duke Street
Halifax, N.S., B3J 3J6
422-7381, local 185 weekdays, 9 am - 5 pm



Feminists, civil libertarians must make concessions

Natural allies now working in separate camps

Thelma MacCormack

The feminist debate on pornography and censorship has been bitter, divisive and seemingly constant. Within the last year, however, there has been a shift in emphasis. Pornography is receiving less attention, censorship is receiving more.

This new direction is partly the result of the Fraser Commission which went beyond frustrating and inconclusive discussions about the specific effects of pornography on behavior.

The members of this committee redefined pornography as a generalized, ideological threat to the aspirations of women for equality. We must choose, they said, between equality and freedom of expression. We must choose between Section 15 and Section 2 (b) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The spirit of modern history and the consensus of Canadians, they said, was in favour of equality.

Many feminists, however, do not regard this as a choice. For them, equality and civil liberties go together — sustaining, nourishing and reinforcing each other. Without freedom of expression, feminism is equality without self-determination and without liberation.

Ultimately, equality without freedom of expression goes against the most revolutionary and special aspects of the feminist critique of patriarchy: its theory of the repression and pathology of dependency.

Moreover, a rift between feminists and civil libertarians at the present time — in our increasingly conservative economic and political environment — endangers both groups. These two old allies of the past continue to need each other.

But if there is to be a rapprochement between feminists and civil libertarians, it must be on the basis

of a contemporary understanding of civil liberties by feminists and a feminist understanding of civil liberties by civil libertarians.

Civil libertarians have inherited from their past an 18th century concept of dissent and a 19th century concept of the free marketplace of ideas. Both remain important. The right of dissent is still the test of a free society. The records of Amnesty International can bear witness to that.

But 20th century theorists have recognized that a major form of censorship in modern bourgeois democracies is economic. Dissident groups are not gagged as much as denied access to the mass media of communication by the forces of the market.

For this reason, the modern civil libertarian emphasizes access as well as dissent and the free marketplace. Access (or, as I have elsewhere called it, "affirmative process") must become a mandatory third principle.

Modern theory also makes a distinction between political freedom and social tolerance, between state and society, between dissent and transgression.

Feminism, for example, is dissent. It attacks a power structure based on the sanctity of the nuclear family and a gender-based division of labour.

Pornography, which is a grotesque extension of the misogyny of mainstream culture, is not dissent. It is a form of the profane, a transgression which tests the tolerance of society.

The two concepts, dissent and transgression, cannot be argued in the same way or defended under the same rubric. They must be treated separately and differently.

Nevertheless, the analytic distinction should not obscure the fact that what we have learned from 20th century totalitarian exper-

ience is that freedom and tolerance are joined at the base. One cannot be severed without the other dying.

There is, then, a specific feminist opposition to censorship based on a feminist understanding of civil liberties. Whether the two groups, feminists and civil libertarians, will re-establish their former relationship of overlapping membership and mutual support is more problematic.

It depends on feminists being able to live with pornography

(dropping the campaign for censorship) and on civil libertarians being able to accept the role of the state in supporting and subsidizing feminists in their efforts to create their own culture.

Without these concessions, both feminists and civil libertarians may be the victims of a neo-conservatism that would like to see women's anxieties about pornography get in the way of a joint support for gender equality.

Thelma MacCormack oc-

cupies the Distinguished Chair in Women's Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. She further discusses the Fraser Report in "Deregulating the Economy and Regulating Morality: The Political Economy of Censorship," in *Studies in Political Economy*, No. 18, Autumn, 1985. A further analysis is upcoming in *Atlantis*.



MUMS members present at the awards dinner included: Deb Jessop, Jeanne Thibodeau, May

Ocean, Heather Schneider, Odette Lavoie, Jenette Alladin, and Rachael Nathaniel.

MUMS pleased by recognition they work as a group, not as individuals

**May Ocean
Heather Schneider**

When the M.U.M.S. (Mothers United for Metro Shelter) first organized, we agreed that one of the main objectives of the group would be support and part of this would be to assert and recognize the value of each of us.

In our organization we have different skills and we each have different levels of energy to contribute at different times. The quality of our organization is determined by the whole group working together.

We felt a little uneasy when Heather Schneider was personally nominated for an award by the Association of Social Workers in

honour of the work she has done with the M.U.M.S. organization. We brought our concerns to the Association expressing our need that the whole group be acknowledged in order to build up each member's self-esteem. They considered our request and the changes were made. Heather accepted the award on behalf of the group.

We were really pleased when we heard that the YWCA was also willing to accept the nominations made to the group as a whole. Five different organizations — Collins House, Bryony House, Adsum House, Working Women's Education Committee, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women — all nominated the M.U.M.S.

This summer, six representatives of the M.U.M.S. attended a tea at Government House in honour of all the Nominees. And, of course, the M.U.M.S. always rely on these opportunities to show ourselves to the public in our usual witty way. We attended the tea in M.U.M.S. fashion, sporting powder blue and white T-shirts with M.U.M.S. insignias and individual names printed in black velvet on front and back, black bow ties, and dress pants. We were at least guaranteed that we did not go unnoticed and we certainly got our message of unity across.

Later in the summer, we attended the luncheon where some of the nominees would be selected for the YWCA's Women of the Year Award. We were pleased that we were provided with enough free tickets from our sponsors to enable each member of our core group to attend.

During the selection process, our group and sponsors felt a little uneasy when it dawned on us that we could possibly be rejected.... Now we know why they cry at pageants. We were honoured and pleased that we were chosen for the award. Our hearts went out to those who were not.

The YWCA and the Association of Social Workers are honoured by the M.U.M.S. for their readiness and willingness to change in order to show recognition and support to our group and the work we have done.



The Art Gallery Mount Saint Vincent University presents:

THE ART GALLERY, MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY presents an OPEN STAGE, OCTOBER 23 at 8:15 pm for women to perform their poetry and music. Register before October 4. This is one of the events connected with two major exhibitions:

26 September - 26 October

Downstairs: *In Her Place: Changing Images of Women in Western Society from the 17th to the 20th Century*

Upstairs: *For the Audience* Recent Work by feminist artist Janice Gurney, Toronto

Official Opening Saturday, 4 October, 8:00 pm

Symposium: *Making History*, October 6 & 7
Keynote Speaker Dr. Linda Nochlin

For more information call
443-4450

Saint Mary's

Sociology 320.0
Women in Canadian Society
Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.
to 9:30 p.m.

Classes will take place at
Dartmouth High School

Registration:
Tuesday, September 2, 6:30 p.m.
to 7:30 p.m. at Dartmouth High
School, Victoria Road entrance.

Still Sane

Jo-Anne Fiske

Meanings attached to gender distinctions are arbitrary. Rooted in myth, they appear as the truth and henceforth as society's scripts for social order.

Contemporary myth is, as Barthes tells us, depoliticized speech. It does not deny things, "it purifies them, makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and external justification."

In the hands of psychiatry, gender myths are manipulated to define "reality" and "sanity". They deny the political nature of psychiatry's project — compliance with a male-dominated, heterosexual social order.

In short, psychiatry's assault of the "sane" upon the "insane" is purified of its patriarchal oppression of all women.

To confront and shatter the mythic order of psychiatry is to rebel, to transform reality through revolutionary language.

Still Sane, by Persimmon Blackridge and Sheila Gilhooly, is a collection of 27 sculptures and personal narratives, that provides the essence of feminist politicized speech that makes anew our understanding of sanity and womanhood.

Persimmon Blackridge cast her sculptures by molding plaster over Sheila Gilhooly. The effect, captured in black and white photography by Kiku Hawkes, is powerful. Chronologically, we are drawn into Sheila's three-year struggle in a mental institution. Her pain, defiance, bewilderment, anger and ultimate triumph come alive in facial expressions and body posture to transcend and thus empower the accompanying social comments and "facts."

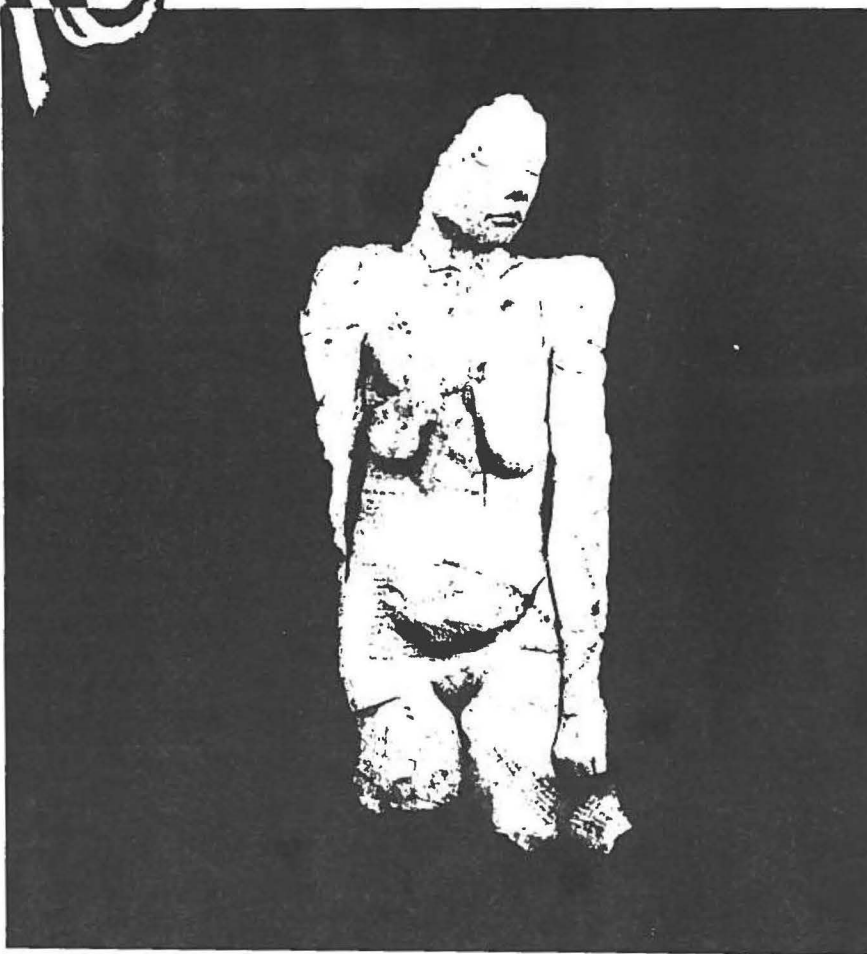
More quietly, Sheila's sparse recollections vibrate with emotion as she relates how she was designated "sick" because lesbian, "insane" because resilient to patriarchal/psychiatric control.

Emerging from incarceration in a mental hospital, Sheila Gilhooly celebrates her sanity by coming out thrice over: coming out lesbian, coming out feminist and coming out sane. By publicly announcing her sanity, Gilhooly simultaneously denounces psychiatry.

The revolutionary power of *Still Sane* lies in three supreme qualities of its expression: in the power of the life-size sculptures; in Sheila's direct, honest but simple narrative, in the interweaving of these artistic expressions with equally terse, direct, factual statements which describe the full extent of psychiatry's intervention into the private lives of women.

Good art, it is said, shocks. *Still Sane* not only meets this criteria of art, it embodies the special project of feminist art. In intimate image and word, the political is personalized in social comment. The personal is politicized.

Jo-Anne Fiske teaches sociology and anthropology in Mount Saint Vincent University.



"Thorazine
Mellaril
Serentil
Stelazine
Haldol
Cogentin
Elavil
Lithium
Librium
Serax
Milltown
Valium
Serenace
Equinil
Tolnate
Surmontil
Nembutal
Fenzol
and others
I had to take
without ever
knowing
their names."

Brenda R. Bryan

I've sat down a number of times to write this review. As I leaf through the book yet again, I find it hard to keep my focus. I flip from centre to front and from front to back over and over again.

Finally, I begin to realize where my aversion to this task comes from. My mind keeps flipping back to story after story of similar horrors that my lesbian friends have and continue to encounter all the time. This book, *Still Sane*, triggers my pain and fear. The visuals and text sink into my heart and I understood the importance of this work.

I think the reason I feel this impact so clearly is because the visual presentation and text leave no room for misunderstanding. The approach to Sheila's story is honest and direct, coming from the experience of the women themselves. This is what, to me, makes this feminist art.

In a male-dominated society, this is not as simple as it may seem, for most women are dealing with the indoctrination of this society and have been taught to believe that our values and feelings as women and, especially, as lesbians, are not worthy of acknowledgement. Fortunately Sheila and Persimmons have fought past this and have told a story that illustrates the violence and malice that this society holds towards women and, more intensely, towards lesbians.

The message is clear: our medical institutions are the tool of the patriarchy and, as such, are not to be trusted to look after the well-being of women. More important to me, however, is Sheila's victory over incredible circumstances. Incarcerated, drugged, battered by shock treatments, rape and brainwashing, these medical institutions tried to "cure" her of her lesbianism.

It is hard to believe we are still in the time of the witch hunts.

It wasn't that long ago that I sat in my doctor's office as he advised me to see a psychiatrist. He told me I should go on the anti-depressant Desyrel for three to six months. He told me that it requires close observation to get the right dosage.

My first response to him was "I don't know of any head doctors I would trust given I am a lesbian. And no one in the community could really recommend one either." He responded in his consoling voice, said he knew of a

couple, and wrote out the prescription.

At that time I was heading for Vancouver, on sick leave from my job. I took the prescription and told him I wouldn't get started till I got to B.C., since the medication was inclined to make you sick for awhile. He insisted I see a doctor as soon as I got there. I left the office with the information on anti-depressants and a terrible feeling of loss of control of my life.

In the airport, with pills in hand, I read the information. The fact that stood out strongest was that I couldn't stop the drug, even if I felt better. A close second was the fact that the drug was no more dangerous than shock treatment.

Give me a break! Caught in the dilemma of rescuing myself from pain and depression, I had forgotten my place in the world. Feeling helpless, I turned to what was readily available to me.

Unfortunately, what was available wasn't what I really needed. I didn't need a system that would neither recognize nor respect who I was.

The night I arrived in Vancouver, I put my hands on *Still Sane*. It was like a message from the goddess. *Still Sane* is the success story I needed and, unlike the many women who have no way of knowing there are alternatives, I never did have to take the pills.

This book is a reminder to all women of how vulnerable we really are. It is also a reminder that we do have the power to overcome incredible oppression. My thanks to both Sheila and Persimmons for their courage and strength in putting this work together.

Brenda R. Bryan is getting ready to go to Heartwood in California to spend some time healing herself and learning how to heal others.



Still Sane by Persimmon Blackridge and Sheila Gilhooly, is published by Press Gang in Vancouver. It is available at Red Herring Co-operative bookstore in Halifax.

Women forced to depend on government priorities

Elizabeth Bosma

When Collins House, an emergency shelter for women and their children, faced the possibility of closing its doors because of lack of funding, the issue of homelessness and the desperate need for emergency shelters for women made headlines in all the local papers.

there. It means constantly asking can we afford it? Can we do without it? Is there any way we can shave off the costs? If we have to make some cuts, will we have to make do with less staff?

Like the woman dependent upon a man for money just to buy groceries and other necessary items, so too are emergency

But it usually doesn't work out that way.

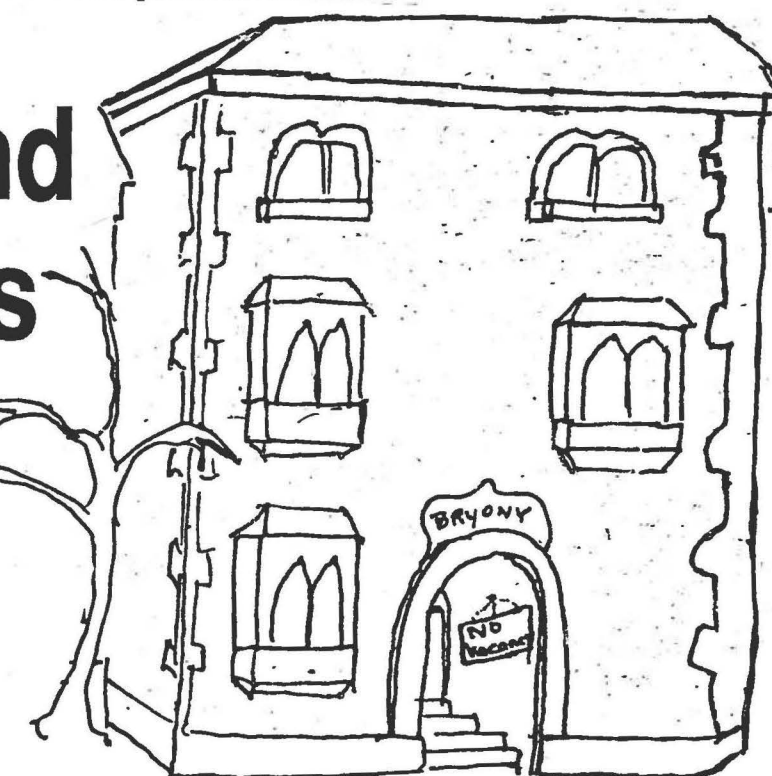
Norma Proffitt, executive director of Bryony House for over a year, says the Board (Halifax Transition House Association) Bryony House submits a budget to the government every year, but usually they get less than what was asked for.

"The government gives us the amount that they think we should have. So when they say they provide 75% of our funding, what they are actually saying is they give us 75% of the budget they have approved. So in fact this year, we only received 62% of our actual costs from them," says Proffitt.

Bryony House also receives a lump sum from the city of Halifax, Halifax County, and Dartmouth. For women from other counties, Bryony House bills them separately.

But more often than not, Bryony House will never see that money from individually billed municipalities. Often Bryony House has to write them off as bad debts.

"A good proportion of municipalities don't end up paying. Most municipalities want Bryony House to call before admitting them. We always try to notify them, but when it comes right down to it, we aren't going to have



Daily graphic/ADM.

positions fluctuates with the rising or falling tide of funding. Staff persons are usually funded through government work grants or from private sources.

But last spring the government announced its decision to 're-structure' the Canada Works program. A change that works out to the disadvantage of non-profit agencies like Bryony, Adsum and Collins Houses. Last year, Canada Works allotted 75% to non-profit agencies and 25% to profit agencies. This is now reversed, making it harder for non-profit agencies to rely on government funding for staff positions.

Sister Virginia Turner, ex Internal Director, currently the Administrative Officer of the Board (Association for Women's

"The house seems to run at a deficit every month. We receive \$23 per person per night which still isn't enough. And many women who stay at Adsum House don't fit anyone's category, and so we have to pick up the tab. So our revenue from our billing usually doesn't equal our expenses."

For Adsum House, their life-line is their core of 60 volunteers. Without them, Adsum House wouldn't have the means to provide the range of services they do for the residents.

Heavy reliance on non-paid staff and private donations seems to be an increasing trend for emergency shelters in Halifax in a time when all levels of government are cutting back on social programs.

It can be a vicious cycle. Not enough funding to hire staff. And yet without staff, there is no time to work on long-term economic strategies.

Collins House received only a small increase in their per diem.

So, as a result, emergency shelters like Collins House are left to put band-aids on large financial wounds

Collins House new executive director Gail Murphy says the Women's Emergency Housing Coalition will probably have to rely on more private donations (non-government funding) since Collins House was only given a small increase in their per diem. And she is not optimistic about the returns on fundraising since there is a lot of competition for the charity dollar.

And paralling the government's reluctance to increase funding for these emergency shelters, are growing cuts in social assistance programs which the women who use these shelters depend on. An increasing povertization among the low-income coupled with general government cutbacks is certainly asking a little too much of women.

Elizabeth Bosma is a full-time social work student who completed her field I practicum at Collins House. This article is one of a three part series on emergency shelters and the women who use them.



For me, a third year social work student just starting my placement at Collins House, those headlines had particular significance. It was my first staff meeting when the executive director told us the grim news: "Collins House closes its doors May 23 unless the Board (Women's Emergency Housing Coalition) can find alternative funding arrangements that will withstand fluctuations in the occupancy rate."

It was a difficult moment. Some staff cried. Some sat there too stunned to speak. When it sunk in, there were many questions. But the primary worry was about the women who used the shelter. Where would they go?

Solidarity won over despair. Staff wanted to know what they could do to prevent Collins House from closing. Already suggestions were being made as to how to rally community support for the house.

Fortunately, Collins House didn't close its doors. Two days later, after considerable number of meetings with funding agencies and the Board, Collins House received a three month reprieve from government funding agencies.

But Collins House is not alone in its struggle to keep financially afloat. Other emergency shelters like Bryony House (a refuge for battered women and their children and Adsum House (a shelter for women without children) are feeling the financial pinch.

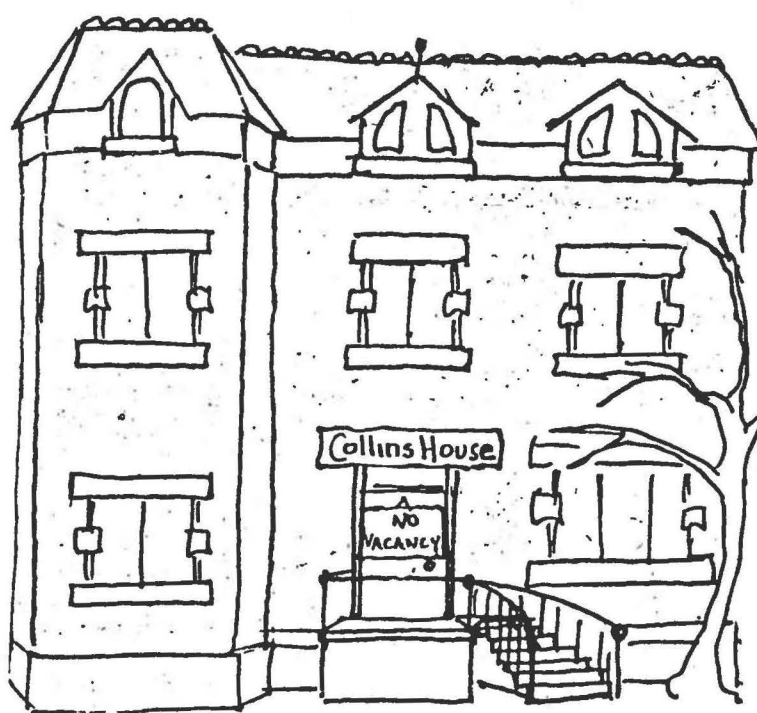
While working at Collins House, I saw how financial insecurity put pressure on both the staff and the women who lived

shelters dependent upon government funding. Like the woman living with a man and having no control over how much she receives, emergency shelters usually get a smaller amount than what they ask for. And like low-income women, shelters have to be damn resourceful just to survive.

The Woman's Emergency Housing Coalition opened Collins House in November of '83. It is funded in part through federal, municipal and provincial contributions. As well, a large amount is donated by agencies like the United Way and other private sources. Most, if not all, government funding comes in the form of a per diem. If a woman and her child(ren) stayed at Collins House, the municipality where she last resided is billed a daily rate per person.

Collins House, like all other emergency shelters, has an average occupancy rate of 101% and have long waiting lists. But Collins House ran into serious problems when the occupancy rate dropped below 85% during the first four months of 1986. A welcome reprieve for the staff and residents, but not Collins House's pocket-book. In order for revenue to meet Collins House's expenses, they require an average occupancy rate of over 85%.

Although not in financial crisis like Collins House, Bryony House is experiencing a decrease in their government funding. Ideally, Bryony House receives 75% of its funding from the provincial government in the form of a grant.



municipalities deciding who is battered and who is not. In fact some municipalities won't pay unless a woman is physically abused. They don't accept mental or verbal abuse," says Proffitt.

Financial vulnerability has direct consequences on the services emergency shelters provide. For most shelters, the number of staff

Residential Facilities) as of August 1, says the Administrative Officer position was created in response to the demand for extended services. Adsum House has always had to rely on fundraising to make ends meet. Like Collins House, Adsum House is funded on a per diem basis, and like Collins House it doesn't cover their costs.

Writer, teacher finds new vehicle for change

Last March, the powerful Board of Governors of Dalhousie University quietly made a new addition to its ranks. The new member of the Board is Black, and a woman — Dartmouth teacher, author, and broadcaster Maxine Tynes. Halifax writer and researcher Eleanor O'Donnell asked her about her new position.

...I feel the prestige of it all, but I am also a '70s grad, so there's often a bit of speculation about the "importance" of it all. It can't just be the prestige appointment for me. It has to be a working appointment.

I'm concerned about minority concerns as they pertain to the university. I know the university doesn't have a wide range of Black Studies or Ethnic Studies. I think it's long since time for something like that to be established. Right now I'm mulling over ways to approach getting attention directed towards that.

Q. What has it been like to be a woman on the Board?

When one or two of the female members are absent, their absence is very great because we are quite few in number. Some of them are members of long standing, and tend to be vocal and high-profile and re-address issues. It's interesting thing sitting on the Board...

It's very staid. It's ultra-conservative and it's very quiet. I look around and I think to myself: now everyone is coming here to this meeting with pre-conceived notions of what will happen at a board meeting. It feels as if everything is homogenized... The minutes are read and accepted as a package and issues are raised that seem to have a foregone, unspoken agreement even before they're raised.

Everything is done by committee. Meetings take the form of

reports from committees and things are usually agreed upon, or put aside for discussion at another meeting. The waters seem so very calm, so very quiet...

It's very slow-moving also. I was appointed in March, and you'd think it would be like leaping in feet first and getting your teeth into something and wrestling it to the ground. It hasn't been that way, it's been slow. But maybe once I can sit on a committee, maybe I can satisfy my own inclination to want to get hold of something or get something moving... (Maxine has been appointed to a student affairs committee and a committee dealing with community relations.)

It's like looking down the corridors of power. People speak of corporate power. Well, this is the power of academia — that quiet and unobtrusive power that an institution holds over society. It's looking down those corridors and understanding how it perpetuates itself.

Q. How do you feel being in those corridors yourself, knowing that's where you are?

I think I can make these new discoveries work for me and maybe make them work for some other people too. Seeing how things work is something that happens very early on. I am now just past that stage of having my feet on the ground, knowing the drill. That's the first step. Then one tries to make that work. Using it as a vehicle of change. It's another audience to tap... It's a very high-powered audience and a very eclectic one... Politically I'm grown up enough to know that often in spite of all your best intentions and in spite of your history of involvement of whatever type, ultimately what connections and whose ear you have means everything.

Q. What will be your measure of success of the Board of Governors in the coming years?

I'll measure success by how issues are dealt with that are perhaps outside of the norm. There is a great deal of attention being paid right now to financial concerns. The university needs a lot of money. Who is going to survive this terrible financial crunch? Students of privilege always survive. Not minority students.

All the difficult things about being a young person — needing to find money, needing to find work, needing to get established — are magnified once one becomes identified with a non-majority group. And I'm not necessarily talking about abject poverty; I'm just talking about people who want to get by....

Escalating fees is a real issue that results in educational genocide when we look at disadvantaged peoples, no matter what colour they are. I don't want to be privy to that, to be part of that.

I want to get a dialogue going about it at least, an on-going dialogue.

Photo by Sara avMaat



Maxine Tynes

Compromising on appearance

Margaret Davis

It has often seemed ironic to me that one of the issues that divides women — both inside and outside the feminist movement — is the deceptively superficial one of personal adornment.

To wit: "You won't catch me throwing away my lipstick and joining those women libbers!" Or: "That woman's wearing eyeshadow — she can't be truly committed to feminism."

When there are so many other problems to worry about — inequitable pay rates, lack of child care, inadequate housing — it may seem trivial even to raise the question of how the way we look affects our perceptions of each other as women. But, in fact, the debate is more than skin-deep, reaching into long held notions of what is feminine and what constitutes proper feminine behaviour.

I've been describing myself as a feminist for at least 15 years, and depending on whether my circle was rural or urban, have been described by others as either radical or moderate. For at least the same amount of time, I've worn makeup, shaved my legs, and developed an attachment to simple but stylish clothes.

My first major expenditure on entering the work force was for contact lenses. What's more, when my fingernails are all the same length, I've been known to paint them pink — or even red.

With the exception of nail polish (which, I swear, is only an occasional affectation), I can justify my use of other cosmetic products by noting they all contain sunscreen, a necessity with my extremely fair skin. I'm not sure how I justified the practice before sunscreens became popular, but never mind. The very fact that I feel the need to rationalize my behaviour is an indication of my vulnerability.

It was easier to get dressed in the morning before the advent of the phrase "politically correct". When the conversation turned one evening to the topic of "politically correct" shoes, I looked down at my feet and realized mine were not. Correct in the political sense, that is, although the shoes were slim and stylish and comfortable for most activities short of backpacking in the wilderness, or planning to overthrow the patriarchy.

For many women who profess feminism, there remains a strong urge to hold onto that elusive quality known as femininity. Definitions of femininity have changed over the years, but the emphasis on physical

appearance has not. If anything, the demands on women have increased with the illusion that we can "have it all".

Whereas in the past a woman's chief point of barter was her appearance and ability to have children, today the ideal woman is a top level executive who manages to balance equally the demands of work, husband, children, pets, and community service — all without denting her manicure or mussing her hair.

Some women choose to escape this impossible ideal by divesting themselves of all the artificial trappings of femininity. Others, like me, seek to

achieve a compromise between unquestioning acceptance of the myth and its abandonment.

One woman I know, in her early 30's, looks back on her radical student days with some wistfulness, but acknowledges that her highly visible position in a conservative rural community means adherence to at least some of the conventions of femininity. "I just don't want to look that different anymore," she sighs.

It may be comforting to know that conflicting ideas of feminism and femininity are not uncommon. In her refreshingly candid book, *Femininity*, Susan Brownmiller gives an example that illustrates the dilemma perfectly.

Some years ago, Brownmiller soothed her feminist conscience by refusing to remove hair from her legs and underarms. Interestingly, however, she has not been able to bridge the gap between the symbolic act and its public perception. Hence, she is almost never seen in sleeveless tops, doesn't wear dresses, and in summer bleaches the hair on her legs so as "not to look too odd on the beach."

No, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me either, but then neither does my continuing attachment to blusher and lipstick. So maybe it's time to replace the analysis and the agonizing with a more constructive approach. Women of all persuasions must put aside our separate concepts of "politically correct" appearance and work together non-judgementally. That way, we'll have much more energy to expand on the concerns that affect all of us.

Not only does Margaret Davis wear makeup, but she recently got married. Still, she insists she hasn't sold out. (And here at Pandora, we hardly notice the difference!)

On the political correctness of gilding the lily

Women come to their own strength when they join with other women



Pandora has received a grant from Secretary of State Women's Program to develop a provincial network of individual women and women's groups.

Our primary focus will be to develop a mailing list that will be available to women involved in social justice.

Phone or write for more information
423-9469 (10-2 Mon to Thurs) 429-4069 (any time)
Networking, 5533 Black Street, Halifax B3K 1P7

Calendar

•Can your co-workers say the word lesbian? While in the presence of gay and lesbian clients, do they appear "homosexually challenged?" Atlantic Gays and Lesbians in health care and social services is a groups which offers support and information to each other about issues affecting us and our gay and lesbian clients. For more information call Liz at 422-2867 or Ken 425-6967.

•Coming Forward, a group for lesbians, meets every Monday at Radclyffe Hall, 5559 Macara St, Halifax at 7:30 pm.

•Red Herring Co-Operative Bookstore will be holding a number of orientation meetings for anyone interested in becoming a volunteer. Call 422-5087.

•Feminist lesbian caucus meets to discuss issues around living as lesbians in a heterosexist society. Some of us are also interested in direct action projects. Call 429-4069 or 455-1287 for more information

•Citizens for Local Economic Development is a group of men and women who support increasing government support to local, small business and technology and who oppose the trend towards militarization and megaprojects. Call Cathy MacDonald at 455-3852.

September 3

•National Film Board will be showing the film "No Longer Silent". Several Indian feminists document their struggle in India. Shown at 7 & 9 pm. 422-3700.

•Regular Pandora meeting at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, 7:30. All women welcome. Call 455-1287

September 5—October 12

•"Revising Romance, New Feminist Videos" Four one-hour programs. Dalhousie Art Gallery 424-2403

September 10

•"Speaking of Nairobi", a film produced at the July, 1985 Women and Peace conference. 7 & 9 pm. at NFB. Free admission 422-3700.

Women Take Back The Night March

Women constantly live under the threat of violence. In our homes, on campus, in our work place, in the streets. Take back the night marches are a form of direct action where women, together, create a safe space.

Meet at the Dalhousie student union building University Avenue

**Friday, Sept 19
9:30 pm.**

For more information
Patchwork 424-2526
Pandora 455-1287

September 13

•Donna Smyth, Nova Scotia author and activist, will be reading from her new book "Subversive Elements" at Red Herring Co-op Bookstore. 422-5087.

•Atlantic Gays and Lesbians in health care and social services meet at Radclyffe Hall, Halifax. Call Liz, 422-2867 or Ken, 425-6967.

September 14

•Martha Glenry will discuss her work and her exhibit, Memoranda, at the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, 3 pm. Call 443-4450, ext 339.

September 15-17

•"The Trip to Bountiful", Geraldine Page as a "feisty, gospel-singing senior citizen" Wormwood, 7 & 9 pm.

September 16 and 17

•First Atlantic Conference on Women and Chemical Dependency and Recovery. Contact 506-674-1832 or Amana House, 37 Dufferin Row, Saint John E2M 2J7

September 17

•"Fibre Fissions", six Nova Scotia fabric artists talk about weaving the traditional craft of quilting with new contemporary forms. Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, 8 pm.

•Regular Pandora meeting at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, 7:30. All women welcome 455-1287

September 19

•Women Take Back the Night March, beginning at 9:30 pm in front of the Student Union Building at Dalhousie. All women welcome. For more information call Pandora at 455-1287 or Patchwork at 424-2526, ext 232.

•"Peace research and education: Lessons from Scandinavia" at the Halifax Library. Part of the Preparing for Peace Series. Call 421-6983

September 23

•Women and Video Explorations (WAVE) will present three videos at NFB at 7:30. Contact 454-0570.

September 24

•"The Next Step", three half-hour films examining the need for more and improved services for battered women. After each screening, representatives from Collins House and Bryony House will be available for discussion. NFB, 7 & 9 pm. Call 422-3700.

September 25

•"The Soviet Union and International Security" at the Halifax Library. Part of the Preparing for Peace Series. Call 421-6983

September 26

•Judith Barry, video artist from New York, discusses feminist video at the Dalhousie Art Gallery, 12:30 pm.

September 26-28

•Annual conference of Canadian Society of Women in Philosophy. A wide range of feminist topics including "Philosophy Sex and Feminism" and "Is a feminine ethics enough?" Individual sessions free Call 424-3811.

September 26 — October 26

•Two shows at the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery: "In Her Place", Changing images of women in western society from the 17th to the 20th century. "For the Audience", recent work by Janice Gurney raises key questions in current feminist art practice

September 28

•First MUMS workshop at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, Halifax, from 9 am to 3 pm. To look at the welfare system, women's experience within the system and follow-up strategies. Call 435-1567

September 28 — October 26

•Film series on women and art at the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery. Sundays, 2 pm and Mondays 12:15 pm. Call 443-4450.

September 30 — October 28

•Art History Series: Looking at Art From a Woman's Perspective, with Katherine Brown at Mount Saint Vincent University, each Tuesday at 7:15. Fee \$15.00. Call 443-4450.

October 1

•Regular Pandora meeting at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, 7:30. All women welcome. Call 455-1287

October 2

•"The UN: Practical Peacekeeping" at the Halifax Library. Part of the Preparing for Peace Series. Call 421-6983

October 3-9

•"Home of the Brave", where performance artist Laurie Anderson "uses the concert format to display her obsession with the effect of technology on personality." Wormwood, 7 & 9 pm.

October 6

Symposium: Making History — Women, Art and Power in the 19th century. Keynote speaker, Linda Nochlin.

Mount Saint Vincent Art Gallery, 8:15.

October 7

•Janice Gurney discusses her work at the Mount Saint Vincent Art Gallery, 7 pm. (See September 26)

October 9

•"Three views of NATO" at the Halifax Library. Part of the Preparing for Peace Series. Call 421-6983

October 10-12

•Atlantic Gays and Lesbians conference (Moncton). Call Jos. Laviolette 506-858-4181 or write c/o Université de Moncton, Moncton, N.B. E1A 3E9.

October 14-15

•"Las Madres: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo". Every Thursday in the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, the mothers of disappeared children gather with their photographs. Wormwood, 7 & 9 pm.

October 15

•Regular Pandora meeting at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, 7:30. All women welcome. Call 455-1287

October 16

•"The Growing Peace Movement: from Fringe to Mainstream" at the Halifax Library. Part of the Preparing for Peace Series. Call 421-6983

October 17

•"Dramatic Readings: Soviet Women Speak Out" organized by Renate Usmiani at Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, 8 pm.

•Feminist, singer Connie Calder will be performing at a benefit for Teamann House at the DeCoste Centre in Pictou, 8:00, \$12.00. Four the Moment and Joella Foulds are on the same bill. Call Karen Vance-Wallace at 752-7554

October 18

Novelist Joy Kogawa will read from her work for Red Herring Co-Op Bookstore. Call 422-5087

October 19

•"The Times of Harvey Milk" at the Student Union Building, Dalhousie, 8pm.

October 21

•"Feminist Theatre in the 10th Century", a lecture by Renate Usmiani at Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery at 12:15 pm. Call 443-4450.

October 23

•"Open Stage", musicians and poets, organized by Michele Gallant at Mount Saint Vincent Art Gallery, 8:15 pm.

October 29

•Regular Pandora meeting at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, 7:30. All women welcome. Call 455-1287

November 6-9

•The second International Congress on Women's Health Issues will be held at Dalhousie. The theme is "The Impact of Culture, Society and Public Policy on the Health and Care of Women." Write Phyllis Noerager Stern, Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S. B3H 3J5

November 6-9

•Coming Together Again: A Women's Sexuality Conference will be held in Toronto. For registration information write to: Side By Side: Canadian Feminist Resources, 275 King St. E., Toronto, Ont. M5A 1K2 (416) 626-5465.

•Atlantic Women and Housing Conference, Memramcook Institute, Moncton, organized by the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers, 1094 Tower Road, Halifax B3H 2Y5

November 7-9

•10th CRIAW conference with the theme "Feminist Research: Retrospect and Prospect" will be held at the University of Moncton. For information, write: CRIAW Isabelle McKee-Allain, Département de sociologie, Centre universitaire de Moncton, N.B. E1A 3E9

November 12

•Regular Pandora meeting at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, 7:30. All women welcome. Call 455-1287

How can you bear to be without Pandora?



Subscribe now!

Name _____
Address _____
Community _____ Province _____
Postal Code _____ Telephone(s) _____

Subscription rate for four issues: Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer
Supporting (\$5) _____ Contributing (to \$50) _____
Sustaining (over \$50) _____ Institution (\$15) _____
Outside Canada (\$10) _____ Gift from _____

We may be asked for our subscription list by groups interested in passing on information. Each request is discussed by the editorial group. Please indicate if you do not want your name included. _____

Pandora, 5533 Black Street, Halifax, N.S. B3K 1P7