

# Pandora

Lifting the lid off

Halifax, Nova Scotia

September, 1988

Volume Four Number One

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"Why do men feel threatened by women?"

I asked a male friend of mine.

"They're afraid women will laugh at them," he said. "Undercut their world view."

Then I asked some women students,  
"Why do women feel threatened by men?"  
They're afraid of being killed," they said. (1)

62% of all female homicide victims were killed by a family member. (2)

Young people between the ages of 12 and 17 were primary consumers of pornography in Canada and 37% of them watched sexually explicit videos at least once a month. (3)

The way you treat a woman is the political act; everything else is elaboration. (5)

58% of child sexual abusers believe they did no harm and also believed that the children enjoyed it. They also feel that other abusers are bad for what they did. (4)

During the last five years, 4,200 refugee women have been raped by pirates in the South China Sea. Only 43% of the 1,000 women who have been abducted are known to survive. (6)

The Federal government announced earlier this year a \$40 million program over four years to combat 'family violence.' "It's not violent families we're talking about," says Lee, a worker at North York Women's Shelter. "It's men beating women. The government's giving us an extra \$10 per woman, with nothing for staff. Compare that to what (Prime Minister) Mulroney spent on the summit: \$20 million for three days."

"The money is being divided up by four or five different government departments, from health and welfare to Justice and CMHC (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.). What's left after the bureaucracy has soaked up its share is an insult to women. There are 264 shelters across Canada. You're talking about two extra beds per shelter," says MP Marion Dewar. (7)

# Mature students face special doubts about university

Deborah Preeper

Clutching my psychology book to my bosom, I crept cautiously into the classroom and hid safely in the back row where I hoped no one would notice me. I looked around at all the young faces and thought, "What the hell am I doing here? I'll never be able to keep up with these kids." Just as I was about to grab my book and escape, the professor entered the classroom. Too late. I was trapped. Nothing to do but stick it out.

That was the summer of 1985—my first day of my first class at university. Since that time, I have overcome my initial terror at being a mature student and university has been and continues to be a challenging, rewarding and, yes, enjoyable experience.

After talking with other mature students, I have found that we have all experienced the same doubts before coming to the decision to return to school. The following are just a few of the many concerns we had and an attempt to answer them for any of you who may be considering furthering your education.

**I'm not smart enough**

Not everyone in university is a Rhodes Scholar. Almost as important as I.Q. is the ability to organize your time so that you can get through the course load because there is a lot of work. If you are of average intelligence, you should be able to understand the concepts.

**I don't know how to study anymore**

It will take a little while to get into the habit of studying again. However, if you find that you are having trouble managing your studies, study skills courses are available at Dalhousie University.

**I don't know what I want to be 'when I grow up'**

First year is a time for the student,

no matter what age, to explore and find out what she wants to do. Take a variety of courses which interest you. If at the end of the first year you still aren't sure, Career Counselling is available at Dalhousie. If you choose another university, you should check with them to see what services they offer to students.

**I have a family, where will I find the time?**

Many of my classmates have families. One friend who is a single mother said that being a student has reaped some unexpected benefits. Not only is she a role model for her son, but they have also developed a new camaraderie as they struggle over their homework together.

**As for finding the time, you will have to put yourself on a strict schedule and perhaps rearrange your priorities. For example, does that living room carpet really have to be vacuumed every week?**

**I don't have the money for expensive university courses**

Student Loans are available to full time (three or more credits) mature students. To find out if you qualify, call Student Aid at 424-7737. Some of us work part-time and attend school part-time.

**I don't have my Grade 12**

If you don't meet the usual university requirements, you may be admitted under the University Exploratory Category. Once you have proven your ability, you are then eligible to apply for admission as a regular undergraduate student.

Once you make the decision, you will find that there are many, many more questions. I was totally confused so I went to see one of the counsellors at Henson College. They are in tune with the special needs of older students and provide both pre- and post-admission counselling.

Convinced? Going to sign up and take the academic world by storm? Stop right there! Mature students, once we finally do make the decision, are often so enthusiastic we try to take on too much and burn ourselves out. Start out slowly. Give yourself time to adjust to the rhythm of university life with one or two courses. After all, you've waited this long. What's the rush?

□ □ □ □ □

Deborah Preeper is a student at Dalhousie University and has now completed eight of the 15 credits she needs in order to obtain her B.A. in Theatre. This year she wrote her first play and also performed before a live audience for the first time.

## Coalition on Reproductive Technologies wants Royal Commission

The Canadian Coalition on New Reproductive Technologies is calling for the establishment of a royal commission to investigate reproductive technologies.

The Coalition is concerned about a broad range of issues that arise from the present and expanded uses of reproductive technology including surrogate motherhood, amniocentesis, ultrasound, the extent to which use of technology is optional, in vitro fertilization experimentation and results, physician control and genetic manipulation to mention just a few areas of concern.

Individuals or groups interested in joining the Coalition should write the Canadian Coalition on New Reproductive Technologies, c/o Dr. Margrit Eichler, Department of Sociology, 6th floor, 252 Bloor St West, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6. The Coalition is also seeking donations to assist with mailing and printing costs.



Four the Moment has performed at many socially conscious occasions. Here they are shown at the African National Congress march held in July. However, one concert met with controversy. Recently, they were told not to sing one of their songs at a government banquet. (See story and song below.) Photo by Susan Graham.

## Four the Moment censored in N.S. Artists outraged at silencing

### AFRICVILLE

At Negro Point, down by the blue Bedford basin  
Where catfish jumped, and ships went sailing  
We lived, we loved, we worked, and we ploughed  
and raised our children Black and Proud.

We built our Africville and we made it home  
Church on Sunday for a hundred years long.  
No matter, rats, cops, the dump next door  
We could have stayed for one hundred years more.

### CHORUS

Africville will never die  
Africville will never die  
Africville will never die  
Africville will never die.

The paper said, these people got to move  
For their own good, and our good too  
City planner said, these people can't stay here  
We need their land, for a container pier

### Repeat Chorus

Well, they forced us out, with trucks and threats  
Pushed down homes, while old folks wept  
Well maybe they saw bad water in the wells  
But we could see sunrise like no where else.

### CHORUS

Africville will never die.  
Africville will never die.  
Bulldozer can't break pride  
History ain't stopped by lies  
Africville will never die  
Africville will never die  
Africville has made us wise.

words by George E. Clarke, music by Delvina Bernard  
CAPAC © 1988

On July 7, Four the Moment (a nationally prominent a capella singing group from Halifax) was invited to perform at the July 14 closing banquet of the federal and provincial ministers of housing.

On July 12, the organizers of the conference contacted the booking agency and expressed concern that the long-standing issue of the relocation of the Black community of Africville had again risen at the housing conference. In light of this, they requested that Four the Moment not perform their new song "Africville" at the banquet.

A collective decision was made by the group not to perform at all and they issued a press release to expose the government for what it is—racist! The press release was picked up by the media, which forced the ministers to respond. Their response was that there was no written contract, thus trying to elude the critical aspects of the whole incident. They ran from the issue.

Delvina Bernard (who composed the song with poet George E. Clarke) stated, "We are outraged, as artists and as Black people in Nova Scotia, that our talent is only welcome as long as we remain silent about our history! We made it clear in the original negotiations that we would not be censored. Political leaders in this country can no longer be protected from the harsh reality of the history of racism in public policy, including housing."

"It is common for government and institutions to invite groups like ours to perform in hopes of gaining some credibility. We must always examine the hidden agenda of an institution to perform. The days of multicultural tokenism are over. If you want Black presence, you get Black reality."

## Lesbian Conference/Conférence pour Lesbiennes

Toute femme intéressée planifier un conférence pour lesbiennes, bienvenue à réunion à Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, Halifax, samedi le quinze Octobre à deux heures.

Pour plus d'information appeler au 429-6373.

Any woman interested in planning a lesbian conference, please come to Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, Halifax, on October 15 at 2 pm.

For more information call 757-3572 or 453-9475.



# When I grow up, I want to be ...

Sheila MacDonald & Innis  
MacDonald

Today I have sore feet. I had sore feet yesterday, too. But that's okay — I'm a business woman—an entrepreneur.

My sister-partner and I left "the man" behind, getting out from under the bureaucracy, and we set out to become rich and famous. You won't see us (yet) on *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, but we're having fun!

In April 1987, we (Innis and Sheila MacDonald) bought a modest Victorian mansion as a first step in starting a bed and breakfast business. For some months previous to that, we had been sharing a house and talking about going into business. I wanted a bed and breakfast to run during my "golden years," and Innis, working on her MBA, wanted a business.

In no time, the decision was made — the house, 2720 Gottingen Street in Halifax, sold itself: stained glass, four fireplaces, hardwood floors — the first and only house we saw.

Business to attend to: selling our own houses; convincing banks and mortgage companies we could do it; marshalling all the credit we could for the many purchases we'd have to make; and getting a little extra financial help from some "near and dears."

The fun parts: both of us resigning from our jobs — for me, on same-day notice — a move that didn't harm anyone, but gave me lots of satisfaction and a little revenge; for Innis, resigning her job after telling me she'd keep on working. If that sounds irresponsible, you'd have to know Innis — she had it all figured out.

So there we were, two sisters of an interesting age, rattling around a grimy, slightly furnished Victorian pile, calling ourselves entrepreneurs and our house Fresh Start Bed and Breakfast (open all year).

We had plenty to do — cleaning!! painting!! shopping!! We got some

help from the "hangers-on," three grown up children who lived with us here for the first year. They polished brass and moved furniture and laid carpet and unpacked and painted and cut grass. They also did the sulking and wrangling and complaining that even grown up children do when they stay "home" too long. (They moved out in May, 1988.)

During the "run-up" phase, spring of 1987, decision-making often seemed to be the greatest task — from the major to the trivial. We had long discussions about finances, but we talked at length about the colour of our towels, too (our theory was that coloured sets look too "personal" to be "collected" by a departing guest). We made decisions that were rarely hard and fast — we've been flexible and have

...two sisters of an  
interesting age...calling  
ourselves entrepreneurs

learned from experience.

We don't lack for advice and suggestions. (Sometimes we think it's because we're women, since most of it comes from male friends and relatives). We listen to the counsel and instructions politely and now and then we pay heed. We are determined, though, to do things our way. Innis is especially intrepid when it comes to attacking a new project head on.

Actually starting to receive guests was very exciting — and exhausting! During the first weeks, we moved our scant supply of furniture from room to room, trying to match the furniture with itself, and with the needs of our clientele. It took the two of us forty-five minutes to cook breakfast for the first two guests.

The first summer we were dead tired much of the time — our summer vacation was two half-day car trips to tourist bureaus on the Lighthouse Route and Marine Drive. But

sion and discouragement never entered the picture.

Our continuing tasks include advertising, evaluating the quality and success of our service, and planning new projects. Right here, there are two points we should make about our advertising: we wasted plenty of money on it: and we might have wasted more without the advice and help of some friends. One problem is to make advertising work during the winter. Oh well, we must be doing better since last year we were making raids on the train station, sticking our cards into the backs of the pay phones; this year, ad salespeople from glossy magazines are chasing our dollar.

Right from the start, we were eager to get our guests' opinions of what we were offering and thought that they might have some helpful suggestions for us. So we designed a report card. Approximately 75% of our guests fill them out. Overwhelmingly, they are very favourable, and the few criticisms we have received have been justified. We do act on them, if possible.

This summer has been easier for us because Rosemary, my daughter, is making this her summer job between years at University. She is a unique chambermaid — she also drywalls, fixes door knobs, and makes cookies.

Just so things don't get dull, we keep planning new projects. In March, we bought a coffee shop (that's another story). At present, our sons, Roland and Jamie, are running it as "Hole in the Wall Café" and its off-shoot, "Substantial Sandwiches." We expect more from our other interest, "Montague House Private Dining" during this winter. We do wedding receptions, dinners, parties — just ask! We say "Yes" on the phone, then hang up and say to each other, "Oh my God, how will we do that?"

In between times, Innis' daughter, Meg, brings Thea who is two years plus for babysitting, or Innis does a shift as Occupational Health Nurse at the Shipyard, or I give a class on the Legal Implications of Health Care.

This venture got off to a fine start because people were interested and helped us. Our Grand Opening was a gift from friends. The venture goes on, with support and work contributed by friends and family. And we have each other — sisters who hated each other for the first 25 years of our lives.

We have plans for next year. Just ask us!



Dolly Williams

(Photo by Susan Graham.)

## Women's Congress calls for solidarity and boycott of imports

Many women participated in the anti-apartheid march and rally held Saturday, June 25. Dolly Williams spoke as the Nova Scotia representative of the Canadian Congress of Black Women. Here are some words from her speech: "We need to stomp out racism and we need to stand together in solidarity. Our country needs to boycott South African imports to this country and, if the government is not going to do it, we the

people have to refuse to purchase these items. Every time we purchase a South African product, we are in effect behaving as hypocrites.... We must stand together in solidarity and voice our outrage at the shameful, dehumanizing and totally unacceptable system known as apartheid." For more information call the Coalition Against Apartheid (422-8338), or the African National Congress South Africa Support Group.

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## Party to celebrate Pandora's Fourth Anniversary

September 24, 1988  
Veith House,  
3115 Veith Street,  
Halifax

Entertainment: 8-9 pm,  
Dance: 9 pm - 1 am  
On-site childcare  
Cash bar  
Wheelchair accessible

\$4 employed/\$2 unemployed

# 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 reserve the right to edit, especially for length. However, we will let you know if we make substantial changes. Please write to us.

Our editorial guidelines continue to evolve. See Issue 2-4 (June, 1987) for more details and let us know if you have concerns about material that appears in the paper.

#### This issue was produced by:

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Toni Goree

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#### NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS:

Pandora is now being distributed free to various locations throughout the province, due to a lack of womanpower to do the distribution to and follow-up of bookstores. The editorial committee also felt that free distribution would allow us to make the paper available in other outlets such as libraries, health clinics, etc. (If any of you women out there would be willing to do distribution in your areas, please let us know.) This is in no way a statement that Pandora has so much money that it no longer needs to charge for the paper. We are, in fact, hoping to get more subscribers this way. If you want the paper mailed to you, 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 to help support the paper.

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1. Margaret Atwood, "Writing the Male Character" *Second Words*.
2. 1986-Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.
3. *Globe and Mail*, May 6, 1988.
4. Diana Russell, Toronto May, 1988
5. Pauline Bart as quoted by Sandra Butler, May 1988
6. *Refugees*, No. 41, May 1987, published by UNHCR

Presswork by Kentville Publishing

## If we can't read about the pain, we must question ourselves...

During the process of putting together this supplement on violence against women, a discussion began at a Pandora meeting one night. Supplements are usually only eight pages long, and we already had material enough for 14 pages, with more coming in. Length was only part of the issue, however; the rest of the issue was that too much material on violence against women might be overwhelming to women.

I want to ask all of you, as I asked my co-workers in Pandora, "Who is overwhelmed by this?" Not the battered women who are abused every day by their partners; not the women who are raped on the streets, not the sex trade workers who encounter potential violence; not the children who are physically and sexually abused.

These women and children fight back every minute of every day. To say that this material might be overwhelming is to deny their (and our, for those of us who may still live with violence, whether past or present) experience. This is especially true for women who are currently living with a present, or dealing with a past history of violence that they have not told anyone about.

Every woman who was able to write something for this supplement took charge of her life and gained power in her life. I know that some of the articles will be difficult to read; some were difficult and painful to write.

Think what it feels like to feel the physical and emotional pain that these women describe. It never occurred to me that the supplement would be overwhelming. If we can't read about that pain, then we need to seriously question ourselves about why we can't.

I know that the supplement may be painful for women who have not been able to examine the violence in their lives. For some women, it might bring back memories that have been submerged under layer after layer of protective coating. We can't hide from the pain and we can't protect each other from it.

We need to name the violence, to recognize it, to name the abuser, whether it is male, female, or institutional. We all have the potential to be abused by someone and one of the ways we can fight back is by writing about it and if that means there are lots of articles, we have to accept it because hundreds, thousands of women and children are abused.

We have to be outraged by that happening and we have to take our anger as women being abused and put it into action. We have to show up at Take Back the Night marches; our battered women's shelters need to speak out about

battered women. Service is crucial but action makes change. Our rape crisis centers need to be outraged every time a woman is raped. Our angry voice needs to shout out — one more woman raped, one more woman battered, one more woman gone hungry, one more woman gone homeless.

We have to refuse to accept this violence; we have to take action; we have to be accountable to each other for the violence all of us have endured.

We have to stop male violence. Men are fighting a war against women: we have to stop that war and do anything and everything we can to stop it. Violence against women is not a theoretical discussion that we have time to waste on.

I also know that it's not productive to print only the violence that is done to women. I agree that that can become overwhelming if there is no connection to resources that can help a woman deal with the violence in her life, whether past or present. We also need to read and know about women who have gone beyond that violence, who have taken the power away from that violence.

One of the things that seems to happen is that once women have dealt with their experience of violence and feel they can move on to living their lives, they are unwilling, or reluctant (I don't really know what the proper term would be) to go back to that process and talk about it. This, in a sense, makes them invisible to other women who are still struggling through that pain and anger.

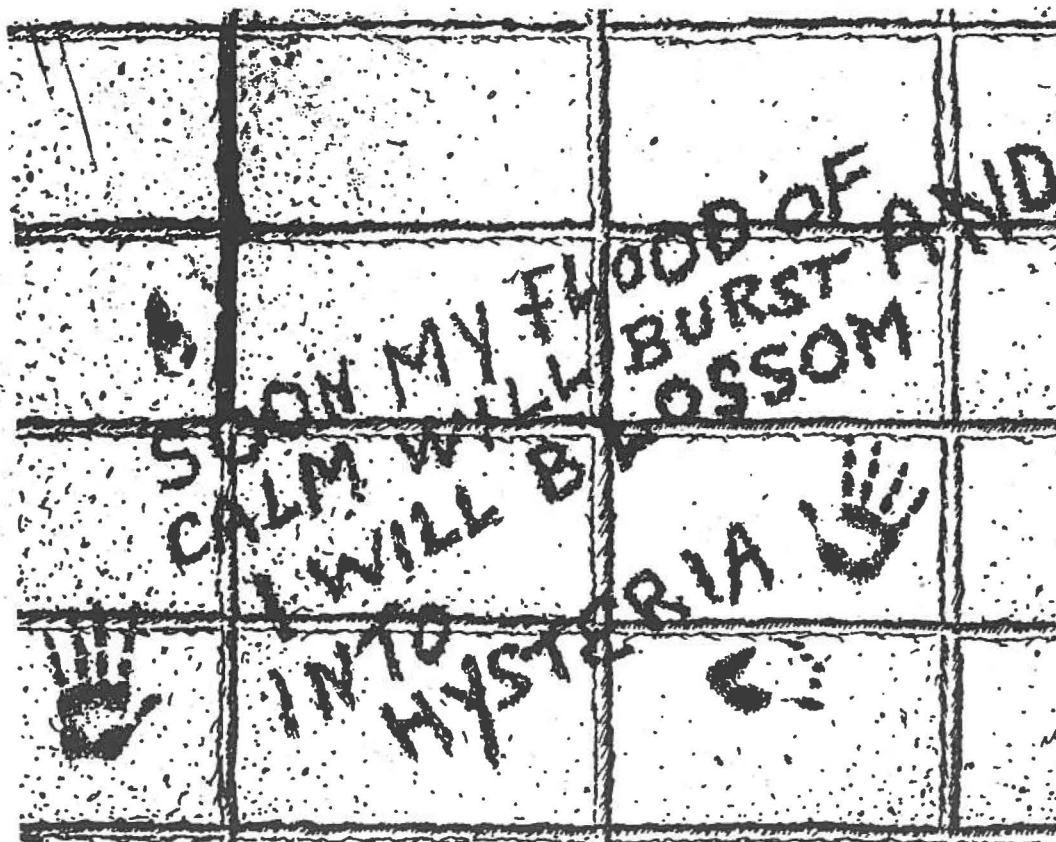
This supplement does have more voices from women who are still in that struggle than it does voices from women who have gone beyond it. That is unfortunate.

We also are very aware that there are many more forms of violence against women and children than are mentioned here; forms such as violence against the elderly, violence from the medical and psychiatric institutions, violence against lesbians, violence against disabled women, racial violence, and the list could go on.

The shortage of material on these issues does not mean that we think they are less important. It simply means that we did not get any submissions on them. They are all essential areas to explore and understand, and to act on.

The supplement to this issue gives voice to the women who wish to speak their personal experiences with violence. The December issue of Pandora will have a section that focuses more on what women can do about violence; about legal recourse, about self-protection, and more.

Catherine Lambert, Megan Ardyche



- Amazon



# Women in "big city" neglect vital part of own emancipation

**Pandora:**

I was very happy to read the feature **Women and Food: How eating reflects our powerlessness** in the June issue of Pandora. Proclaiming the need for women's emancipation from the patriarchal definition of beauty and slimness that predominates in our society is an important task in a liberal age that increasingly speaks of "post feminism."

After participating in the Halifax women's community for six years, I have recently moved to Toronto and am very disturbed by the number of weight-obsessive "feminists" I have met here. While I recognize that there are many women in Toronto who are accepting and celebrating their bodies, many of the self-proclaimed feminists who I have come into contact with are actively dieting and judging themselves and others on the amount of calories they consume.

While these women speak eloquently of the need to address questions of race, class and gender, and argue passionately against the violence and injustice done to women in Latin America and South Africa, they appear to have neglected a vital part of their own emancipation.

I've seen starvation diet guidelines tacked up on feminist fridges, watched eco-feminists pour saccharin in their coffee, and witnessed individuals who, having missed their suppers due to an overly long seminar, delicately refuse offered food saying "Oh, I'm not hungry, I had a muffin at nine this morning." I had the misfortune to witness two intensely committed feminists (whose eloquence on matters of feminist theory often leaves me feeling guilty over my modest knowledge of these works) competing with one another over whose waist was smaller. "I hate you, I hate you," the "loser" said to the other in a revealing jest.

On the one hand, I feel sorry that these women consider themselves fully liberated while they clearly remain so firmly trapped within a patriarchal structure that sets woman against woman. On the other hand, I am angry that they are using their slenderness to make themselves and perhaps their ideas more appealing to men, that they argue and compete with their sisters over pounds, and that they make me feel self-conscious and uncomfortable.

The liberating moment when I stopped judging my success and failure on the scale came after many years of

dieting, of hunger, humiliation, and guilt. In Halifax, I had come to feel relaxed in the feminist circles in which I moved. I didn't think twice about the hair on my body and the baggy dresses that sometimes resulted in a misguided soul offering me their seat on the bus because they mistakenly thought I was pregnant. But here in Toronto, in the company of these "feminists," I find myself once again feeling the urge to hold in my stomach, and decline food when I know that I am hungry.

Seeing your article has strengthened my resolve. Perhaps my experience in Toronto serves to illustrate that while feminism must address the economic, political and international issues so pressing on our agenda, we must remember that we can never achieve full liberation until we free ourselves from what Kim Chernin calls the tyranny of slenderness.

Erin Steuter  
Toronto, Ontario

## "Heroin" of love story poor role model

**Pandora:**

I am writing to you in response to "A Love Story" which was featured in the June 1988 issue. First of all, I applaud Pandora for publishing a story about lesbian love.

It was not possible, from the way the story was printed, to determine if it was autobiographical or whether it was fiction. When I read the word 'story' (as opposed to the word 'experience'), I assume that it is fiction and what I'm about to say has that assumption in mind.

Glad as I was to see this story printed, I am not glad to read so much detail about the main character's experience with problem drinking. In the last few issues of Pandora, there have been a number of articles dealing with women's addictions and the pain involved, and yet this story has as a major focus, graphic details of the aftermaths of excessive drinking and a main character who is able to find friends (and eventually a lover) who do not appear to be very helpful in regard to her drinking. I do not think providing a place to live and offering sympathy are very effective aids in helping a disease. I'm also concerned that this story may further the stereotype that lesbians have a lot of drinking problems, and that within the community this is not viewed with much alarm.

Alcoholism is, for the most part, a hidden disease, especially for women. I understand that the problems connected with addictions need to be made more visible, but I would have liked to have seen the main character in this story become healthy and whole with her new lover. Perhaps that's the next chapter.

Leah Nomm  
Halifax, N.S.

(Pandora's note: Thank you, Leah, for bringing this to our attention. The 'story' was, in fact, autobiographical. Pandora takes full responsibility for making it appear to be fiction and we hope not to repeat this mistake.)

## Pandora's letter policy

Pandora's policies are constantly shifting and evolving to effectively meet the needs of our paper. The following is an outline of our present policy relating to letters submitted for publication.

\*\*\*

Pandora reserves the right to publish only letters that fall within the guidelines of our editorial policy: letters must be written by women and be women-positive; we do not accept material that is intolerant or oppressive.

We prefer that letters are in direct response to an article or current concern. Should it refer to an article appearing in Pandora, the author of the article will be contacted and given an opportunity to respond.

Pandora realizes that the views expressed by the writers of letters and/or articles may be controversial. We welcome responses from our readers.

We will print letters anonymously, but at least two women in Pandora must know the woman's real name and have a contact number for her.

Pandora reserves the right to edit for length; however, the writer will be notified should this be necessary. We request that all letters include a phone number so we may contact the writer should it become necessary.

## Reproductive technologies may be getting out of hand

**Pandora:**

Here is a copy of a letter I sent to CARAL's Pro-Choice News. It may be of interest to others:

I was quite disturbed by an article in your Fall/Winter 1987/88 issue, "Guidelines for Fetal Use in Research Set" (page 5). It presented a very favourable view of the Medical Research Council of Canada's (MRCC) guidelines for embryo research — too close to mainstream media for comfort.

The article mentions that the MRCC prohibits the creation of embryos in vitro for research. The only source of embryos permitted for research, then, is the "extras" from in vitro fertilization (IVF) programs. Isn't this likely to mean increased exploitation of the women in such programs? Already these women are given massive doses of Clomid (a hormone very like DES) to superovulate them to produce not one but as many as 15 eggs. What will happen when they are the sole supply of embryos for experimentation? How many eggs will they be required to produce?

(Furthermore, the guidelines say that the production of embryos for research is not acceptable "at this point." Does this mean it will be okay at some time in the future?)

The article also gives a glowing account of the use of fetal tissue for treating Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other diseases. However, the MRCC guidelines permit the use of embryos only for IVF research and not for these experiments. Also the medical scientists most involved in this research are the very ones who are leading the research in IVF, genetic engineering, and the development of the artificial womb. Mere coincidence?

The MRCC guidelines allow embryo research up to 17 days gestation — three days longer than anywhere else in the world. Does this mean scientists are making progress on the artificial womb and can now keep embryos alive three more days? (Leading researchers advocate the use of embryos of up to six to eight weeks gestation. What does this mean?)

One key use of embryos is for improving techniques of genetic screening and manipulation. Researchers say the benefits to humanity include the elimination of hereditary diseases. Sound good? Who decided which diseases? One on the list so far is asthma — not to mention numerous physical and developmental disabilities.

Does this "purity of the race" mentality scare anyone? How about the idea of the artificial womb? The use of women in IVF programs to supply reproductive material for research?

It is crucial that CARAL members,

and other women involved in the continuing struggle for abortion rights, apply the skills, knowledge and insights you have gained there to the fight for other reproductive rights and against all forms of reproductive exploitation.

Brenda Beagan  
Halifax, N.S.

## Pandora forgot to acknowledge source

**Pandora:**

I am very pleased that you were impressed enough with the Commentary by Susan de Rosa, from the Summer 1987 issue of Women's Education des femmes, to want to reprint it in Pandora. I am even more pleased that you called both myself and the author to request permission. As is pointed out in "Collective Notes" in the Summer 1988 issue of Healthsharing, obtaining permission for reprints is a step too frequently overlooked in the race to find good, cheap copy for zero-budget publications. Thank you for your consideration.

However, having been asked and granted permission, I expected that a credit to Women's Education des femmes as first publisher would accompany the reprint. I was sorry to see that it didn't. It's not simply the author's work that's at stake but also that of the publication in soliciting,

## Daly's rage warranted

**Pandora:**

I wanted to add a comment to the debate on Mary Daly's talk at the Mount in March.

I sat in the audience greatly relieved that I wasn't the woman who had asked the Wrong Question, and felt pained for her.

On second thought — but these reactions exist side by side in my mind now — I thought, Way to go, Mary. Don't let us worship you, putting you on a pedestal from which you must Nurture and be Nice.

Daly maintained her right to her own rage and indeed, after presenting us with that lioness' feast of a speech, she had a right to be exasperated and even pained by such a gnawing mouse-like question (no offence there, whoever you were; I'm glad you got the questions rolling).

At the reception afterward, I stood with Mary Daly and listened as one woman after the other came up to scold her for her meanness. Some reception! Where is our fearlessness?

Claudia Gahlinger  
Cape North

shaping, editing, and providing the physical means. Besides, if you feel you've found a fine piece of feminist writing, we'd like your readers to know where it came from. They might be interested in the magazine.

So keep up the good work (Pandora is great) and when it comes to reprints, please ensure that everybody is credited. Isn't that what the feminist press is about?

Sincerely,  
Christina Starr, editor

Women's Education des femmes (Pandora's note: We apologize for this oversight and thank you for pointing this out. It will make us more careful in the future when it comes to reprints. Women's Education des femmes is a bilingual quarterly magazine available from 47 Main Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4E 2V6, phone (416) 699-1909. Subscriptions cost \$17 per year.)

## Women must judge potential risk of situation and beware

**Pandora:**

Although it was written before I read the June 88 issue of Pandora, this poem, DON'T WALK, is a response to Charmaine Wood's letter. Womyn have a responsibility to themselves to develop a "sixth sense" in regard to safety. There are ways to minimize potentially risky situations and there are times you can avoid them altogether and the only person fully qualified to judge that is you. But a womyn can't afford to make a mistake.

Don't Walk

Next time I'll march to  
Take Back the Night

A man loves me, won't leave me  
walking crowded Saturday-  
night streets alone.

Thinks I'm some  
harlequin heroine  
who was only ever independent

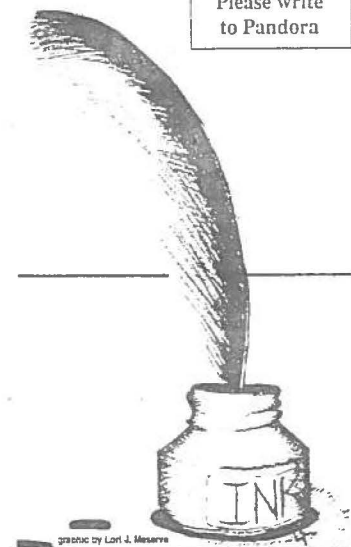
because I had to be

but now he's here  
so I can just  
let go my judgement  
(this is a reasonable walk,  
this is a bus-ride home)  
which has kept me safe  
so far.

And I can't tell him that  
statistically speaking,  
he's a hundred times more  
dangerous  
than any man I pass on the street.

So next time I'll march  
because a man who thinks  
he's got my own best interests at heart  
wants to steal from me  
the little part of the night  
I know I can claim  
Kathy Mac  
Halifax, N.S.

Please write  
to Pandora



# NDP makes inexcusable compromise

C.J. Mellett

I realize that the nature of Canadian politics is compromise. I can live with that on some issues. On other issues, I can't.

One of the places where I believe we can't afford a compromise is women's rights of equality in the Canadian constitution.

When the provincial NDP made the decision not to vote against the Meech Lake accord — to abstain from the vote — I think they made one of the inexcusable compromises.

The major problem with the accord is the attack on universal programs. These social programs include housing, health care, social assistance, education and daycare.

Because women are excluded from

earning fair incomes and because we are primarily responsible for childcare, these programs have a tremendous impact on the real lives of women.

The protection and extension of these programs has been the basis of the NDP from its birth in the CCF and the Regina Manifesto. I believe they are the major reason average working people and large numbers of women have supported the party.

Thus, philosophically, the Meech Lake accord is against the ideals for which the New Democratic Party has stood. It allows for "reasonable compensation to governments of provinces which choose not to participate in new national cost-shared programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction if the province carries on a program or initiative compatible with national objectives." (emphasis added)

How can I be so sure that this opting-out clause will result in the loss of national programs and standards? Because it is a concrete example of policies the Tories have already put in place. And these policies are already leading to a decentralized country, divided into special interest pockets, unwilling and unable to deliver universal social programs. We are becoming a country that is interested in filling the pockets of business and uncommitted to protecting those promised protection under the Canadian charter of rights and freedoms — especially women.

The area I know best is housing. The federal-provincial housing agreements of 1986-87 have resulted in housing programs that are dependent on the provincial governments' whims and agendas. Program delivery is dependent on the province's financial capacity and commitment.

There have been no surprises since this federal-provincial agreement came into effect. Ontario and Quebec have strong programs. The programs in British Columbia and Saskatchewan have been wiped out. The programs in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick provide only the bare necessities. Prince Edward Island has refused to sign the agreement. All of this can be traced to the costs of sharing the program.

A second philosophically dangerous aspect of the accord is the lack of protection for women's equality. Why should women worry about that? Aren't women's equality rights protected in the Charter of Rights?

We must remember: Meech Lake is a major constitutional amendment. We are intimately familiar with constitutional interpretations that have the potential for both positive and negative impacts on women. In a patriarchal society, unless strong positive support is exerted, the impact is usually negative. That is why women want protection guaranteed in every constitutional change.

We have expected and received support from the NDP on this issue. Why the silence now?

Not voting against the Meech Lake accord not only philosophically dan-

gerous, it is politically dangerous.

I know that I am not alone in voicing these concerns from within the NDP. Provincial NDP leaders in Saskatchewan and Quebec have publicly opposed it. I have heard at least one Nova Scotia provincial caucus member passionately discuss the issue. I know federal caucus members who nearly gagged when forced to support the accord.

So, why the harsh whipping of the federal caucus into agreement and the silence of the provincial caucus through abstention? The NDP has a history of being able to deal with conscientious disagreement within its ranks, without having to resort to gagging by party whips.

The opinion of the leader has never been forced on the membership, elected or not. I believe it is this higher ground which has won the work and support of women candidates, members and supporters.

Even if the caucus chooses to remain silent, there are many women who have worked on joint issues with

the NDP who won't, for one moment, remain silent. We will not jeopardize the hard fought inclusion of women's equality in the charter of rights and freedoms. We cannot concede any of the court battles to ensure that the legal interpretations of those rights protect women's interest.

There is no way that we can accept compromises over our struggles or be silent to the threat that Meech Lake means to the real economic lives of women. We can not accept that the struggle for women's rights is subservient to any other political interest — including the inclusion of Quebec in the constitutional process or the hunt for power by any political party.

In the world of political compromise, our concerns as women should be a serious issue both federally and provincially, going into the next election.

□ □ □ □ □

C.J. Mellett is a housing consultant by trade, an NDP member by history, a feminist activist by persuasion.

## Lesbian magazine reincarnated as Long Time Coming 2

There used to be a lesbian magazine called *Long Time Coming*. It was published in Montréal for several years in the 1970s.

Well, it's on its way back! The first issue will be published this fall under the name LTC-2. It is planning to be a national magazine that covers a wide variety of interests and perspectives.

"LTC-2 will make forays into both the gay and feminist worlds to see what's in them for lesbians, speak of our experiences as lesbians of colour, native and Inuit lesbians, lesbian immigrants, lesbian refugees, lesbians who have been institutionalized, lesbians

married to men, elder lesbians, lesbian mothers, lesbians in prisons, and business and professional lesbians.


LTC-2 will discuss love, celibacy, passion, lust, bars, cruising, and relationships among woman/lesbian friends and lovers, and capture the ideas, problems, visions and the glorious diversity of Canadian lesbians, whether butch or femme or androgynous, political or not, closeted or not, or lower class/middle class/upper class."

LTC-2 is looking for manuscripts from lesbians, anywhere up to 5,000 words — fiction, non-fiction, poetry. They are also interested in photos and graphics. They have a small payment schedule.

Subscriptions are \$20 for four issues — cheques payable to JAM Publications.

For further information, write LTC-2, Box 531, Place du parc, Montréal, QC H2W 2P1.

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# Pandora—Women speak out

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Take it back?  
Hell.

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DEMAND IT! Now is not the time to be timid.  
Seize it.

SEIZE THE NIGHT!  
But why the night? Why just the night?  
Are you safer in the day?

8000 women  
are murdered.

Every year.  
By their husbands.  
Day or night.  
DAY or NIGHT!

A woman is raped  
every 4 minutes.  
DAY or NIGHT!

A prostitute is murdered  
every 6 hours.  
DAY or NIGHT!

What is this thing you have about sunshine?  
Are MEN magically transformed by the rays of the sun  
like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde?

This is not a fairy tale.  
This is a HORROR STORY!

Little girls get fucked by their fathers.  
DAY or NIGHT!

Fucked and raped and screwed.  
DAY or NIGHT!

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT.  
But

take back the day as well.  
And the week.

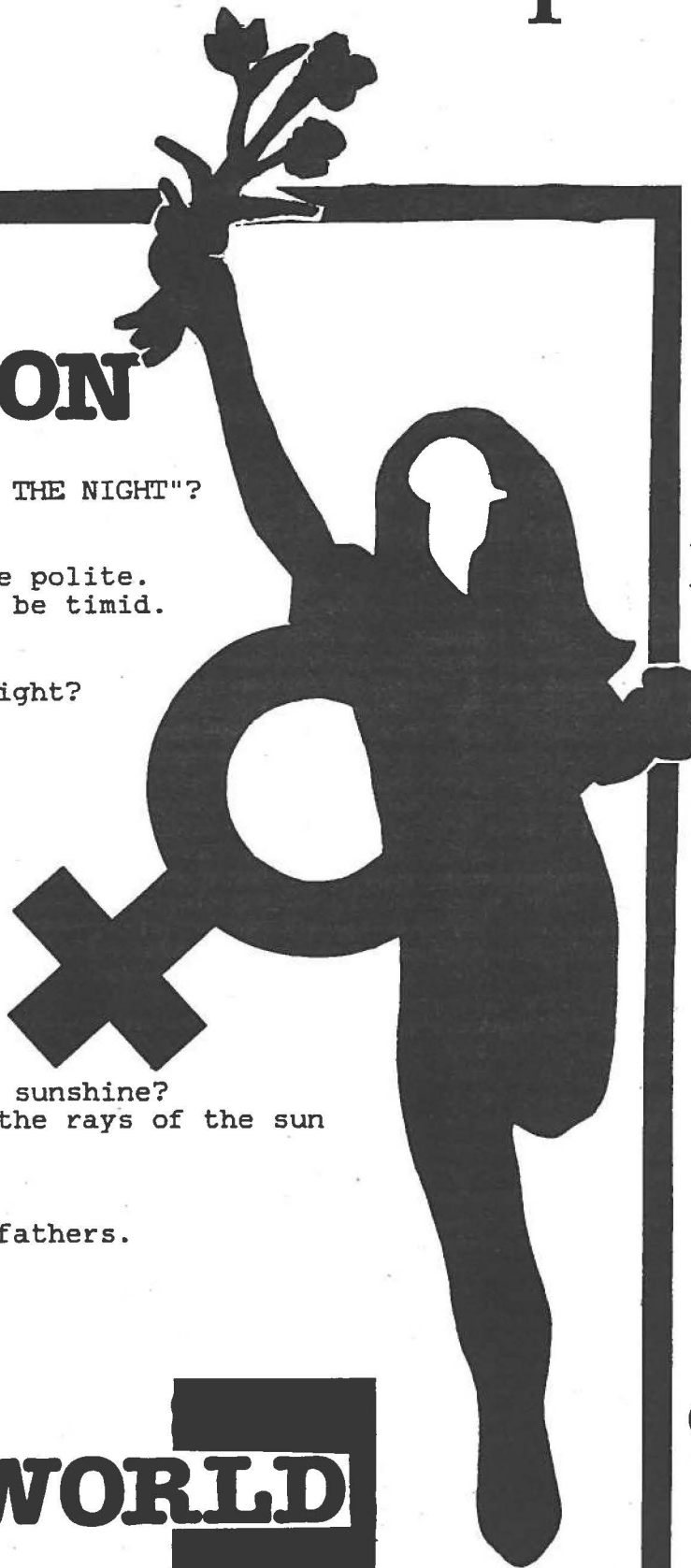
And  
the month  
and

the year  
and all the years.

And all the years after that.  
Take it back.

But...  
TAKE IT ALL BACK!

## NEW WORLD



Shout!  
Speak!  
Rage!  
Yell!  
Scream!  
Rant!  
Demand!  
Roar!  
Fight Back  
Rave!  
Nag!  
Shriek!  
Bellow!  
Resent!  
Blow up!  
Fume!  
Reveal!  
Explode!  
Lash out!  
Snarl!  
Expose!  
Complain!  
Accuse!  
Teach!  
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Protest!  
Vow!  
Examine!  
Refute!  
Divulge!  
Swear!

Supplement to Pandora September 1988

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# against violence



**This logo is a reminder of the black triangle prostitutes, sex trade workers and lesbians were forced to wear in Nazi concentration camps.**

# Other family members provided support, love needed for self-respect

Megan W. Ardyche

"Did you feel loved as a child?" my friend said to me one fine summer morning. My immediate response was, "No." My answer was short; my tone conveyed all the violence, hatred and fear that had dominated my childhood.

In a moment, though, I thought of other realities in my growing up years. To be fair, I thought, I should also talk about my father, my brother, my sister. So I said, that I always knew my father loved me. When I was really small, he would take me to work with him sometimes. I have memories of pounding nails in floors at a very young age. I think I was happy at those times, although I don't remember very much. When I got older, we would go for drives and talk. I feel that he always respected me as a person and cared very deeply about me.

And in my teenage years, my brother (one of them) and my sister were very important and I felt loved by them. My brother made it possible for me to get through those teen years and keep my sanity. Although he never 'talked back' to my mother, he made it clear that he supported me and that she was in the wrong. He looked out for me in the only ways a 15-year old could know to look out for a 12-year old—he made sure I didn't hang out with the 'wrong' kind of boy. As we got older, we would go for long walks and talk about our lives.

My sister, who was in university then, liked to have me come to visit her, and I felt like an intelligent person, one who even 'older' people would like to spend time with. I was so in awe of university students that I felt I must be pretty special if they liked my company.

Throughout my life, I was aware

that my mother had serious problems. She seemed to hate me and expressed that through physical, verbal and mental abuse. It was a long, long time before I understood that she hated her life and herself and that I was only an outlet, but I never felt that there was something terribly wrong about me that caused her to hate me.

I had never thought about all of these things in quite this way before. My initial response to my friend's question was "no" because the violence and anger completely controlled my life and the lives of others in my family. My oldest brother became an alcoholic, my sister left home as soon as she could, as did my brother/friend and I.

I attended a workshop last year on Adult Children of Alcoholics. Although I was not an adult child of alcoholics, I was certainly from a dysfunctional family and thought that it would be useful. When some of the characteristics that children from such families developed were described, I felt that they didn't apply to me. I didn't feel crazy about the conflicts in my family. I didn't feel responsible for my mother's happiness, or to keep peace in the house, or to look after anyone. I was always very clear that I had a problem with my mother, but that the problem was my mother. I was confused in that workshop because I didn't seem to 'fit the mold' as my background might indicate I would.

It was my friend who suggested that maybe the love I did feel from my father, brother and sister gave me enough self respect to counteract the hatred that came from my mother. When I thought about whether I had felt loved as a child and realized that I did, in fact, feel that I had been loved in con-

crete ways by those three people, I felt a shifting in my perceptions of my family. I remember no happy family times, but that caring gave me an underlying strength that helped me to cope, that told me I was alright.

It took me many years to understand the factors that had helped to make my mother into the person she was/is. It has taken me many more to realize that, although her anger was ever-present, there was a constant love for me as well from other, equally important people. That is a wonderful gift—to feel and acknowledge the love that was there. I am incredibly grateful for that love and feel a joy about my childhood that I have never felt before.

I am saddened to think that I have spent so many years not seeing, not feeling, that loving support; that my mother's anger was still so prominent in my memory. I am pleased to think that maybe now I will allow myself to remember more things about my childhood, now that I know there might be more good things to remember.

I have said that the experiences I have had in my life have helped me to become the person I am, and so I cannot really be sorry that those things happened to me. However, whenever I said that, I was *thinking and talking* about the negative experiences I have had. I never before acknowledged the basis that gave me the strength to come through those negative experiences. Yes, I felt loved as a child. I acknowledge that now. Thank you.

□□□□□

Megan Ardyche manages a small business, works on Pandora, tries periodically to learn Spanish, and does the best she can to become clear about who she is and what she wants.

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# Psychiatric care has both benefits and pain

**Illyah Mae MacKeigan**

I first went into the hospital in 1967. I was there for two years, as a recluse. That means I was a closed-in person on a locked ward. Heavy medication, heavy sedation.... I was on Chlorpromazine, 400 mg. four times a day.

I went to a psychiatrist and he told me my nerves were really bad and that I needed hospitalization but at a later date. He said to go back home and try to put my life together. A lying woman had broken up our marriage and I tried to patch things up best for the children but the CAS had taken the children away from me and that broke my heart. I came home one day, smashed up the dishes, cleaned up the rooms; I left the apartment in as good rights as I could leave it in. I locked the door and went to the N.S.

Yes, I went voluntarily, but prior to going to the N.S. that day I had taken an overdose of valium. You see I'm suicidal. I had called the psychiatrist and he talked to me all night to try to get it all out but I couldn't.

He said, well, you will have to be hospitalized, your nerves, you have been through a lot. You will have to go into the hospital and as soon as he said hospital I started to cry. In another few days you go down to the hospital. I went but I didn't want to go. I couldn't live alone; I didn't like to live alone. I would smash things, go through the house and throw everything around. It wasn't good for me to be alone.

In that (first) year I didn't see the grounds or the outside of the hospital or anything else. The ward was kept dark even during the day, no light or sun-

shine on the ward, no windows, no curtains open.

It felt terrible to be in a place that dark. I wanted to see the sun... to go out into the air, to go for a walk. I didn't know how to get there. I didn't know who to ask. I was really sick. I mean mentally sick, and I would go to the nurse and ask if there was a place you could go for candy bars and pop. She said, "Yes, but you can't go." I asked what was wrong with me, why I couldn't go.

They never made a diagnosis until after I met Dr. Holland [a year later]. It came from how my marriage ended and how I was left with nothing and left with two children to bring up. Just the pain of it all. I couldn't cope, with all the stress. I had to fight, fight fight with it all in me, to even exist.

One day one of the nurses said I could go off the ward for an hour. I saw this half door, [this is where Illyah meets her psychiatrist. She tells Illyah to lie down on a couch, relax and to tell her about her life, her past, present, future, marriage]. It was hard to talk about my childhood, my mar-

riage and hard to talk about my life as I saw it then, so it was all very hard for me. But I managed to spit it all out.

She was writing it all out and I thought, "Dr. Cavanaugh has a file too; what are they going to do compare notes?" She asked me if I wanted to go somewhere with her. I said I wasn't sure I was allowed. She said, "I'm the doctor and you're the patient and when I say you come, you come." She said

she wanted to be my doctor and wanted to take me somewhere. She took me up to an open ward. I was transferred from N3 to N4. I knew I could go out on the grounds... and have comradery.

My medication was reduced to 200 mg four times a day; well my mind was so bogged down by things, stress, I couldn't cope. I just wanted to forget. When someone would ask me what happened to my husband or children, I would get very irritable and would just about smack them, slam them. I didn't want them to interfere with my mind. I wanted to heal my mind. My mind is a good mind. And today it is even better than back there, but people have tried to screw me up with these mind boggling things they do. And it really gets to me.

I would describe those two years I spent in the hospital as a living hell. I had to be on programs to get my mind back. I had to write ability tests. I had to show them what I was made of. It was a good exercise; I got to use my mind to the extent that I told everybody what it was like. I couldn't have too much confrontation. It was little by little, piece by piece. I think those two years were helpful to me.

The way they did it was the norm I guess. I wouldn't want to go through it again. If your idea of being locked into TQ (Therapeutic Quiet Room) on shock treatment, traumatic shock, bottling it up, unable to cope, unable to use your mind, if you think of that as being fun, woman, you are not for me. It's unreal, it's not fun.

After two years they transferred me to Cole Harbour Rehabilitation Centre. They told me I had to go there. They told me they couldn't treat me in the NS; they never gave me a reason. They just said you are going. One day a bus came up and the driver said, "Is Illyah ready to go now?" and the tears came again.

I wasn't warned. The nurse told me to get my things. I asked, "Was it a trip?" and I said, "Where to?" and the



Illyah (in front) and her friend, Charlotte.  
(Photo by Sara avMaat.)

bus driver said, "To the end of the line, it's the end of the line for you." I thought I was going to prison. I was going to another dungeon, another N3. I thought I would never see Dr. C. again, although Dr. F. was really my doctor. He didn't tell me about the transfer to Cole Harbour because he was on vacation.

In Cole Harbour they stopped the valium, the percodan, the diazepam. They got going on some drugs I could handle: librium, mellaril, artane, haldol. When I got on haldol, I got the shakes, I couldn't stop. I couldn't get hold of myself. Dr. H. came on the ward and I said "Mom, take me off this darn pill"; she said yes.

I was diagnosed as manic depressive neurosis. Manic is high, depressive is depression and neurosis is nervousness.

I think the diagnosis was very accurate. With the mania I get high, irritable and with the depression I get depressed. When I get a depression, I hit rock bottom. I can't go down anymore, and with the neurosis I'm here one minute and I'm gone the next.

I was in Cole Harbour for five years. I worked on the geriatric ward giving the elderly patients baths, cleaning their beds and putting them in their

chairs, etc. I was paid \$4.00 a day. I had been slumping around the wards and Dr. F said to me, "You want to get out of here and for that you have to work." What can I work at? He was a regular old prick. He was a dictator, a Stalin, a Hitler torturing people. He had no mercy on patients who were sick.

This work bit—I was sick. As soon as he told me, I said I would do anything. He gave me electric shock treatment; I went down and I didn't get the medication and he put the electrodes on me and when I got the shock I barrelled off the table.

I have never been back to Cole Harbour. I've been back to the NS eight times during my second marriage, for six, seven, eight months at a time. The last time was in 1979.

I am still on Lithium carbonate, haldol, phenobarb. I see Dr. H. as much as I need to see her—once every two weeks. I love her.

I like to talk about this experience because I like to tell people how it affected me. I just like to tell you that mental patients are people. They aren't objects. They aren't pawns on a chess board or marbles; they are people; they are living, caring, throbbing, sharing, people that have hearts, minds, feet, bodies, souls, and spirits. Everything that happens to them reverberates around these things.

I don't think people see that. They say, "look at that fellow over there, he's shaking." They don't know, they are not schooled; they aren't learned at these things they're against, they are discriminating. That's the worse thing you could be. I got a load of it one time on the bus.

Women aren't pampered on psychiatric wards. They are violent to them. They drag them down to TQ. They have to get special care.

Torture. Say they get everybody down in the day room. The nurse would say, "You're a woman, don't you know how to clean". They don't want women to speak out, they want women to clam up; they don't want this women's liberation stuff; they don't want women's rights to be made known, although there are some cases when some women can speak out.

The last time, I got hold of a patients' rights booklet that said a patient could ask about their case and ask for counsel.

□□□□□

Illyah Mae MacKeigan was born January 19, 1944, Sandfield Mira, Cape Breton. She cares, shares, and likes nature. People are her asset not her liability. "I give them a smile and a wave of my hand. I'm an extrovert and I have ESP."

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# Child abuse survivor remembers confusion, hurt, doubt and panic

Sherry  
Flashbacks

Age 5: My sister, uncle and I are playing hide and seek. It is my sister's turn to seek, my uncle and I dash into the woods to our hiding spot. When we finally stop running he says, "Duck down here and put your dress over your head." I obey, asking why. He replies, "It's a surprise." Indeed it is. My uncle is throwing water on me and hollering, "Oh shut up you big cry baby, and if you ever tell anyone you'll be in 'big'

trouble." Now I'm in a cold dark room. This gigantic man is bringing a gross smelling round object towards me. I overhear my mother say, "She'll be wrecked for life." My mother is crying hysterically and hugging me.

Age 7: My sister, uncle and I are playing Chinese checkers at my grandmother's house. My uncle has one hand above the table and the other is in my vagina (I have been told that I cannot wear underwear on hot summer days because my vagina is still healing from the first time). I do not want him touching or pawing at me, yet I feel paralysed with fear; I am also angry. When the game ends and my sister leaves the table, I threaten, "If you don't leave me alone, I'm telling granny." I know he is afraid of my grandmother.

Sometimes, when playing, without warning or cause I am burdened with sadness and tears start flowing uncontrollably. On other occasions, I cry out, "My body is sore." My mother says, "Get on the bed and spread your legs." She relieves me of pain by putting a warm cloth and vaseline in my privates. Needless to say, my mind is enormously troubled with uncertainty and confusion. Whenever thoughts of the rape surface, I am panic stricken. Despite the urgency I frequently feel to approach my parents, I can't gather the courage. I believe whole heartedly that I am responsible for the rape and I will be punished.

Age 11: My stepfather is continually physically violent with me.

Age 12: I am using street drugs from a fast crowd. I gladly welcome this carefree attitude I receive from being high. I feel safe and am happy when I am stoned.

Age 13: By court order, the Children's Aid Society removes me from my abusive environment (my family's home) to a group home. My stepfather is outraged and announces, "I am washing my hands." I am forbidden by Children's Aid to go home without proper supervision.

My mother supports my stepfather and doesn't visit me at the home. I miss her so much that I begin to rebel against the house rules and skip school to visit her. After our visits, I feel lonely and depressed and again turn to drugs. My new guardians discover my activities and caution me to "get it together or we'll have to send you to reformatory." I understand but ignore their warnings.

Age 14: Feeling confident that my life is pointless, I naively take an overdose of pills. I really want to die and am angry when I wake up. I am sent to a psychiatric unit for observation. I run away to see my mother, but I am caught and sent to the Juvenile Detention Centre where I stay overnight and then I am sent to a maximum security reformatory centre until "a suitable placement is located." There is no escape from this place and little contact with the outside world.

Age 15: I am released into the care of a male social worker; he is driving me to a government group home. Excitement builds in me to finally have freedom. My happiness is quickly pushed away. He reaches over and puts his hand on my leg and then his hand is inside my underwear. I am scared. I

know if I protest I will risk my chance of freedom. He says nothing and I keep silent.

Age 16: I quit school and begin to work as a waitress which allows me to support myself and leave the group home. My life is comfortable now but I meet up with a girl I'd known in reform school. She is a prostitute. Following her description of the glamorous lifestyle, I decide to try this grand job. My first customer leaves me feeling beyond disgust. For a time I feel nauseated; however, this passes and it is just a job.

Age 18: My life is at a standstill. I move to a small city where I am unknown and start fresh. I settle into my new life; I have more respect for myself. I find out I am pregnant. I am devastated and hysterical and rush to my boyfriend for comfort. I confide the painful secrets of my past. Even though it is clear that this pregnancy resulted from prostitution, he still wants to continue our relationship. He begins making future plans for our life as a family. I contact the Children's Aid Society to start adoption procedures.

Age 19: Time to deliver. Emotionally I am exhausted with pain. I hear the baby's cry which makes me unable to conceal my tears. I demand they get the baby out. I don't feel the mother/baby bond. Even so, when I leave to go home, I feel grief for a loss. Gary and I almost end our relationship. He accuses me of giving 'his' child up even though he is not the biological father.

Age 20: I am happy when I discover my second pregnancy. Gary and I are still together but we are arguing often. He goes drinking for days; he makes me feel it is my fault. On occasion, there is physical violence. I love Gary and pray the baby will make us close again. But it just drives us farther apart.

Age 22: I have a nervous breakdown. Following my release from hospital, I work with a counsellor. I am advised to take anti-depression pills to prevent future breakdowns. I refuse and stop counselling.

Age 23: Gary and I are still together but not happy. I don't know why but we decide to get married. Afterwards, he is possessive and his behaviour is even worse than before. Two months later, I give birth again. I almost die, but am very happy to have my two kids.

Shortly after, I become involved in the women's centre. With their help, I begin to work through my experience of rape and child sexual abuse. I finally get the courage and phone my mother with many questions.

I am nervous when I ask her how she found out what my uncle did to me. There was a long pause. She said, "Didn't you forget that yet." She said "We heard screams and when we came out to the barn he was going right to town." I was stunned. I couldn't believe how cold and insensitive she was with her words.

I asked, "How come there was never any charges brought against him?" She replied that my stepfather's mother had a bad heart and that would have killed her. This was a lie, because she is still alive at 87 years old. Then she told me that my stepfather beat up my uncle.

## Images of abuse return

image. I am lying across a bed with my head over the side. he has his penis in my mouth. I am trying not to choke but I do. he will not stop. he tells me I like it. he is my lover.

image. we are at a summer place. he wants to make love. I keep saying no but my clothes are off. I don't remember how they got off or even what happened.

image. I am in a women's group the conversation is about violence that happened to them before they became feminists, not now. now they talk about their strength and power; how they have control over their bodies. I remain quiet, my silence goes unnoticed.

I am so good at my denial

image. we are driving back from holidays. I have read mysteries. he tells me that he knows I am stupid because I read such trashy books. I watch the world go by from the car window.

image. I listen to countless stories from women who are battered and raped. my relationships are healthy. I have no bruises, no black eyes. I am a liberated woman.

image. I am sick. I lay down and fall asleep. I wake up to him masturbating while reading pornography. I say nothing.

I am so good at my denial

image. I'm on the radio and television trying to explain why women are victimized. I never say yes I am one of the women we are talking about.

image. one day years later, working in a battered women's shelter, a woman asks me if I had ever been beaten up. I can't remember anyone asking me that question so directly.

image. we are fighting. he grabs me, throws me against the wall.

image. therapy sessions going over my childhood but never do I admit to my abuse. they never ask.

I am so good at my denial

image. I never discuss violence that happens to me after becoming a feminist. why would I, feminists don't get abused.

image. rape, battering, rape, battering. it does not happen to me. I am a feminist.

I am so good at my denial

image. the question remains. I cannot hide. the penis is choking me. his hands are on my throat. get me out of here. panic fills me. time and time.

image. I start putting images together. I have to forgive myself.

I am no longer so good at my denial

Catherine Lambert

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# Book enables survivor to see growth, change

On this page are women's emotional responses to the book, *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*. (Ellen Bass and Laura Davis). The book is a guide for women to use as we go through the process of healing. The stories written here show that women have found the book invaluable and that no matter where we each are in the process of dealing with our abuse the book has offered us encouragement and hope that we too can survive. Harper and Row Publishers, ISBN 0-06-096234-8. Red Herring has copies of the book in paperback for \$21.95.

**Noreen Richard**  
(With support from Cheryl Downton)

As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, I consciously started my healing process about four years ago. At that time, I was faced with only two possible choices — to begin healing or to give up on life. I was literally dying as a result of the abuse to which I had been subjected. I chose to live, and the active healing process began there.

I had struggled, off and on, over the

previous five years, to find some starting point, a foothold. Leaving home to attend university, and again, following the death of my mother, I grappled with wanting to heal, yet not knowing how, or even from what.

Although I knew, on some level, that something was terribly wrong, I was so adept at blocking my feelings, I couldn't discern the good feelings from the bad, and therefore blocked both. My survival had depended on a mechanical intellectualization of everything and everyone in my world. I relied on those around me for clues as to appropriate behaviours, actions and reactions.

Through work with my first therapist, I was exposed to the new concept that thoughts and feelings could be integrated to achieve a healthy balance. Over the intervening years, I continued the slow, deliberate struggle to grow, learning to integrate my head and my heart without one having to cancel out the other.

Over the last three years, I have read, and often re-read every book, article and resource pertaining to incest and child sexual abuse I could find — everything from novels, to first-person accounts, to feminist theory and perspectives, to research studies and resource guides. Finding *The Courage*

to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, was yet another opportunity for me to learn and grow, to continue my own healing process. I am grateful for its insights, clarity, support and encouragement.

*The Courage to Heal* provided me with a new strength. It not only affirmed me, and my own personal healing journey, it confirmed that those people in my life who have tried to help, as well as those who continue to assist me, are on the right track. It gave me the courage to keep on with the struggle, to achieve my goal — resolution — and to move on.

I was excited to recognize the parallels to my own healing. The chapters "Effects: Recognizing the Damage" and "Coping: Honoring What You Did to Survive" allowed me to clearly see where I was, then, in the healing process. Even in the short time between the first reading and the present, I have journeyed further.

Part three, "Changing Patterns," validated my need to express, confront and accept thoughts and feelings previously kept hidden as perverse, strange and unhealthy. By speaking the truth, acknowledging the confusion and supporting the reality, I gave myself permission to share and to grow... to move on.

This book has enabled me to take a good look at how far I've come from the woman who blocked out and rejected most of her world. Although the continuing process will be painful, *The Courage to Heal* has provided a guide for my travels.

With guide in hand, combined with the ongoing support of some family and friends, including Cheryl — a special friend and therapist with compassion and a multitude of skills and talents — I both know and feel that I will become whole and complete this part of my journey.

Lesbian History Archives



## "You were the apple of your father's eye, his special child"

If only someone could tell her that something happened to her.  
If only she could look at a photograph book and see some sign that something had happened.

If only an aunt, a sister, a neighbour, or a mother could say to her  
"I know something happened to you."

If only she could remember something.

But there is only empty space where there should be memories.

THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY NO MEMORIES ONLY FEAR!

She asks herself why do I think something happened?

She tells herself that NOTHING happened!

Then why when she reads *Courage to Heal* does she feel so much pain?

She looks again and again but there is nothing to show, only FEAR!

There are no days, no time, only FEAR!

*Courage to Heal* is a book about FEAR,

FEAR like she feels.

FEAR that keeps her awake thinking trying to remember.

But there are no memories.

She looks at herself in the mirror for a sign.

There are no signs.

She tells herself it did not happen!

Her father never touched her.

He is a good father, she is told.

"You were the apple of your father's eye, his special child,"

her mother tells her.

May be he never touched her, but she knew he wanted her.

She wonders what does that mean "want her", for what reason.

She never knew as a child, at least she has no memories.

Now he is old and now she feels different.

She no longer feels fear.

There seems no reason to fear him.

She thinks the fear is finished.

He no longer wants her.

She is no longer the apple of his eye.

*Courage to Heal* is about surviving, becoming strong.

It is about hope and healing.

SHE IS STRONGER!

SHE WILL SURVIVE!

SHE IS SURVIVING!

□ □ □ □ □

(The writer of this piece has decided to remain anonymous because she never discussed this fear with her father. Someday she may do it but even if she never does she will still feel strong. She thanks Pandora for the wonderful opportunity it has given her in her healing process.)

## Shelter from the Storm

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Saturdays at 1:30 pm, Sundays at 9 pm

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are available for \$66 from Angela Shaw,

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"I really feel alone tonight"

## Abuse slowly remembered

Anonymous

Isn't it amazing when you read a book and find that you have all the typical symptoms of something? ...that you're a classic case? ...which is what is happening now as I read about healing from child sexual abuse — like forgetting it ever even happened until the abuser or both parents have died; like spacing out, going away, during sex and at other times; like having tried to tell in some way (my suicide attempt around that time); like at first thinking it doesn't seem so bad (it was only fondling), and later remembering lying awake rigid with fear every night until it was over, remembering what it felt like. And when I took the twelve aspirins, telling people it was because my father hated me and even then not connecting it with the abuse (forgotten even then?), and making the connection between all of that and my bouts of insomnia as an adult.

It was when we lived in Kentville so I must have been in grade eight, or about to start, so I would have been twelve. I can remember the apartment — a long hall, my bedroom off it, twin beds with Donna, it must have been; she was a light sleeper. I think the first time it happened I must have been

asleep but I'm not sure. He came in and maybe sat on the bed and put his hands on my developing breasts to see how big they were. Is that what I thought — that he was curious? I know I woke up but didn't move a muscle — rigid, the word keeps coming back — very uncomfortable, sick to my stomach. I know it happened more than once. I can remember the lying awake, pretending to be asleep, waiting for it to happen. At some point I think I started sleeping on my stomach, pretending to wake up, trying to avoid it but never really letting on I knew it was happening — scared to confront him, to let him know I knew, fear of violence or what? More likely fear of shattering the illusion of parents as security, people who look after you.

Did it last for a week or two months? I have no idea — certainly not longer than a few months. We moved to a different house and I can't remember it happening there. But that is where I made the suicide attempt. The book says people often remember other abuse once they've remembered one instance. If I could forget that, why not something else? Perhaps when I was very young and not able to make sense of it.

I first remembered the abuse since

being with Ben. I remember telling him and being shocked that he thought my father was so awful to have done that. That was before I remembered how awful it felt or realized how profoundly it has affected my life, stopped me from feeling, stopped me from being whole. It was the other night, in the middle of the night, sick with worry that David might have been abused at Sheila's party, that I remembered the lying awake, waiting, the lying awake and then enduring it, and made the connection with my insomnia now. Again, classic to remember when something happens to your own child.

Now I feel like how can I even think about being with anyone again, about sex. I thought how bad it had got was just to do with Ben, although I also thought on some level, "What's wrong with me — why do I get freaked out and in a panic and not able to continue with sex, not able to continue having sexual feelings once it gets going, just turning off and then feeling like a prostitute and so upset if I let him just carry on anyway because by then he's so desperate for it, but in the end not being able to do that anymore. So how can I even think about another relationship? I really feel alone tonight.

Loving herself gives her base for change

# Aikido helps woman find her strength

Sara avMaat

I began doing Aikido four and a half years ago when I was already in my 30s. My reasons for starting were quite mundane. I wanted to exercise on a regular basis and felt I'd do better if I had the discipline of a class of some sort. I picked Aikido because I'd heard that a dance form I'd previously enjoyed had been invented by dancers who also practised Aikido.

Certainly I have benefitted physically from doing Aikido — my posture has improved tremendously, I am con-

siderably stronger, and after 30 years of flat feet, I now have arches! However, the reasons I continue to train go far beyond physical fitness.

A few months after I began Aikido, I noticed that when one of the Black Belts did a forward roll, he finished in a low stance. For a split second, his feet were rooted in the earth, his arms outstretched as if to support the entire weight of the world. He owned the mat.

I realized that when I finished a roll, I skittered off the mat as fast as I could go. I realized that I had spent my whole

life keeping my centre high and being as light on my feet as I could possibly be. I had spent my whole life essentially trying not to occupy space in the world. Lowering your centre is more than a way of improving your biomechanics so that it is easier to maintain your balance. Lowering your centre is stating quietly and simply: I exist in this space.

Ki means energy or life force. Ai means harmony, and do is the way or the practice. Hence Aikido is the way of harmonizing or blending energy.

On a physical level, this means never trying to stop or block an attack, never meeting force with force. It means blending with the oncoming energy and using the attacker's own momentum to throw him or her. This depends on great sensitivity to the energy of the attacker. The perfect timing and subtle directional sense take years of practice to develop. However, for a smaller person, it is ultimately an excellent means of self-defence as strength is never pitted against strength. It is also an art that allows one to render an attacker helpless without inflicting permanent damage. Aikido, then, is not about training to be such a good fighter you can survive an attack unharmed. It is about training to achieve such mental awareness and physical control that neither you nor the attacker is harmed.

To believe that possible in the restricted area of face to face physical combat leads one to wonder if this principle can be applied to other areas of one's life. Does it apply to emotional conflict? Does it apply to daily struggle against the various kinds of oppression on which this society is based?

I think it does.

For me, the beginning was learning to love myself. As I was growing up, my father directed a tremendous amount of verbal abuse at my mother and me. For many

years I tried to reject him completely. I never succeeded and all the while continued to be hurt by him.

I think that part of me felt that if I was treated badly, it must be because I was unlovable and worthless. I didn't want to believe this, so I would go back to him looking for love. When I was treated badly once more, I would be hurt again, thinking that meant I wasn't loved and was therefore unlovable. This, of course, makes no sense.

Over the past few years, there's been a huge shift in my thinking. I've finally begun to really believe that I am worthwhile and that I deserve to be treated well. As I concentrated on holding on to that belief and categorically refusing the bad treatment, I began to feel less need to reject the person.

For the first time in many years, I began to have positive feelings about my father. I began to realize that he treated us badly not because he hated us but because he hated himself.

I don't for a minute excuse the behaviour. It was wrong and will always be wrong. It continued to prevent our relationship from being what it might have been.

However, I began to feel real sorrow for the ways he'd been hurt and prevented from seeing himself as

worthwhile and for the fact that he had not been able to find a more constructive way of dealing with the pressures on him. I became able to appreciate what positive gestures there were since I no longer measured my self worth by their presence or absence.

As an ex-Christian who found many Christian concepts restricted rather than fostered my spiritual growth, I hesitate to use a word so heavily associated with Christianity. But it seems to me the word 'redemption' is the most appropriate here.

Acting in self-defence in the physical or in the emotional sense, from that calm place of complete self-respect, that seeks in no way to harm another, but that also refuses absolutely to accept that another has any right to harm you or anyone else, is a redemptive act.

Redemptive for oneself, first of all, because acting as if you believe you are worthwhile strengthens that belief, and secondly because if you refuse to allow someone to hurt you, you are freed from the need to hate him or her. It is also redemptive for the other person because you have refused to let him or

her play the self-destructing role of oppressor and shown that it is possible to be something else. Mind you, he or she may have to be shown over and over and by many others besides you before the lesson is learned, but the proc-

ess has begun.

I certainly do not mean to imply that loving yourself is something you just decide once to do and after that things are fine. It certainly doesn't make the oppression go away. However, it gives you a base from which to fight. It makes it more likely you will have the strength to walk away from, or the creativity to change for the better, a personally oppressive situation. It makes the ongoing struggle to change society less overwhelming.

For me, learning to love and believing in myself has been and continues to be a kind of struggle all on its own. Important tools for growth for me have been: feminist consciousness-raising, Aikido, re-evaluation co-counselling (a system of peer counselling) and books about transformation such as *Motherwit* (Marie Child), *Positive Magic* (Weinstein), *The Great Cosmic Mother of All* (Sjöo and Mor), and *Womanspirit Magazine* (no longer published). No doubt different people will need and find different tools.

But I think for many the starting point may be the same: finding others who love and believe in you. I think my process began and continues because I have friends who love and believe in me at times when I lose sight of it.

**Ai: harmony  
Ki: energy,  
life force  
Do: the way,  
the practice**



A small community in the northern mountains of Guatemala.

(Photo by Marion White)

## Guatemalan women suffer from violence and repression

Marion White

I heard a story about a little girl who was seen walking down a road singing "Life isn't worth anything, life isn't worth anything..." and I thought "How true this is for Guatemala these days."

Indiscriminate violence and a permanent state of siege have been the practice of the U.S.-backed government in Guatemala. Thousands of Guatemalan women are currently suffering the consequences of this repression and violence. Hundreds of mothers are daily searching for their missing sons and daughters. There is no justice system to turn to. The murderers go free and if the mothers dare to protest they run the risk of being murdered themselves.

After months and sometimes years of anguish, relatives of some who have disappeared came together in 1984 to form the Mutual Support Group for Relatives of the Disappeared (or GAM by its Spanish initials). GAM, the only human rights group in Guatemala is growing rapidly, as every day new people join with stories of a family member who has vanished. These women see GAM as the only hope for discovering the whereabouts of their missing

relatives.

Patricia Crowther, GAM representative in Canada, visited Halifax recently. "I refuse to accept that my brother is dead until there is proof, until the army admits they killed him. The last we heard he had lost his mind because of the torture he endured."

One objective of the GAM here in Canada is to have

Canadians write to their MP to ask that Canadian bilateral aid to Guatemala not be resumed until the government agrees to comply with the Peace Plan. Patricia said, "Aid is used by the military and none of it reaches the poor of Guatemala." She suggested, however, that aid be directed through NGOs (non-governmental organizations) like CUSO, OXFAM or Development and Peace.

As Canadian women we have to ask ourselves "Where would we be if

we were Guatemalan?" The answer scares me!! A lot.

□ □ □ □ □

Marion White is a staff person at the Halifax OXFAM DEVELOPMENTAL centre. She travelled to Guatemala in March to see OXFAM projects.

### Some facts about Guatemala

Area: 108,780 square miles (a bit smaller than New Brunswick and Nova Scotia together)  
Population: 8.5 million (65% indigenous)  
2% of the population owns 72% of the land  
47% unemployment rate  
92 children die daily from malnutrition and related diseases  
86% live in poverty with approximately \$300 income per year  
Assassinations and disappearances average 80 a month  
Since 1979 more than:  
50,000 killed  
1,000,000 displaced  
35,000 detained or disappeared  
150,000 children lost one or both parents  
200,000 refugees

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# Victim of child abuse reclaims vocabulary

Claudia Gahlinger

The body of memory: memory of the body. Agony of warmth flowing into frozen limbs: anguish of re-entering the body's memory. A painful process, but who wouldn't be grateful to have the use of their own hands returned to them?

Last August in Vancouver, during a writing course led by Quebec feminist writer Nicole Brossard, I found a safe space for recovering memory of sexual assault. For 20 years I had wandered on the outskirts of memory, in the suburbs of my body and of Meaning. I had sung quietly and aloud for Sense to appear. I was cracked. I suspected that the crack existed inside me, in my body (shameful female!) or in my memory. But the messages I got from society, from family and doctor and psychiatrist and the Church were: Nothing's wrong, nothing happened, it's only your imagination/hysteria/hypochondria, women are born sinful.

I realize now that because of this doubt and denial from my environment, and because of the physical and psychic violence of the assault itself, memory of it became unspeakable.

To live with amnesia for 20 years is hard labour but not fruitless. It breeds monsters: nightmares, phobias, senseless reactions to events. I was a puzzle to myself. Sometimes living in the suburbs wasn't far enough. I longed to escape to some psychic paradise, and settled for getting drunk a lot.

In the months that followed the first recognition, on an intellectual level, of what must have happened during childhood, I often felt a roaring in my body. A grand piano kept crashing from my tenth floor into the road. Chords reverberated like doom — the sound consciousness makes when it settles down into abandoned sensibility, the sound faith in society makes when it smashes on the truth.

The phases of remembering sexual assault are like those people go through

when they learn they are terminally ill: shock, denial, rage, acceptance. But dying into memory doesn't take you away from your earthly body, it plunges you right into it, at last. Everything, everything begins to make sense. Memory weaves you whole, which is cause for intense joy.

Since the beginning of remembering, I have been stalking and sneaking up and pouncing on and wolfing down memory with the help of many women: in letters exchanged with other survivors, through talks with a counsellor at the Service for Sexual Assault Victims, reading Sylvia Fraser's *My Father's House*, watching the National Film Board and Shirley Turcotte's film, *To a Safer Place*.

This stalking, like detective work, is leading me to many revelations about the past and how it connects with the present. It has led me to reclaim a lot of vocabulary and to revise many concepts. The following are some of them. This was written in a rage over the theft

be deaf and yet passes judgement.

The earthly one you adored. Protector turned predator. Who gagged you and threatened worse violence if you should tell so that you think twice before speaking your mind or telling your body ever again. The Big Prick.

Freud: Father of psychiatry. Pressure from outside caused him to change his mind, early in his career. He decided it wasn't sexual assault that caused hysteria after all — it was the play of archetypes on the stage of the mind. Fantasy, not reality, causes madness.

Freud's fantasy, not my reality, played on the stage of my mind, causing madness. Inner pressure changed my mind, late in my career.

Hysteria: Crying out in alarm, the bird hovers above her violated nest, the eggs touched by a human hand.

A woman talks fast and high, unable to settle into the violated nest, her own body.

Hypochondria: Having swallowed violence you try endlessly to express it, describe it, making metaphors for it. The emptiness, the darkness, the dis-ease become heart disease, cancer, fear of giving birth.

Sentimentality: The adult, her heart locked against the internalized marauder, woos the inner child, trying to recall her speech, trying too late to wrap a protective cloak around her.

The Voice of Reality: Says, It never happened. Or, You brought it on yourself, we'll say nothing more about it. Or, Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. You're just shirking responsibility for your life, backing away from seizing your will. Says (kindly) Childhood can be rough but why dwell on it, why open old scars. Forgive and forget. It's all a matter of attitude, why see yourself as a victim. Or, Incest is not very common, you are casting aspersions on all of society.

As one woman survivor has said, "I don't live in the past, the past lives in

## "Women are born sinful"

of innocence, my birthright; for other women on the same journey; and with a feeling that many people have no idea (as I didn't) what the reality underneath the words 'child sexual abuse' and 'incest' can be like.

Child: Screamed to God but He was deaf. To her mother, but she couldn't hear because the child's mouth was full, and good girls don't bother anybody, and this truth was too shameful to speak.

Put away inside because there is no room for her in the world, the child clamours, fades, comes to you in dreams. You woo her, singing all the love songs on the radio to her. You feed her lots of food and drugs and drink and smokes to pacify her or to shake her awake when you're afraid you'll lose her.

God: The one in heaven who must



What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? / The world would split open.

Muriel Rukeyser, *The Speed of Darkness*

(Graphic from Kinesis)

me, and I can't live fully until I've dealt with it." We have to remember, clearly, to insist on our truth and claim it, before anything.

This is not dwelling on victimhood, it is a necessary exploration and assertion from which to build a stronger self. To the people who romanticize incest or who refuse to take the sexual assault of children for the epidemic it is, we must be like detectives presenting evidence. Amnesia, multiple personality: these are typical and usually long-term responses to the assault. This silence speaks volumes about our society. It is a highly incriminating silence. This is not a love story either.

The Female Man: Strives for success in the world of the Fathers and dumps on herself when she fails. Ventures out, cuts herself loose repeatedly, is glad to be rootless. But feels existential despair, melancholy at the meaninglessness of life. Feels a deep empathy with her sisters but denies any similarity with them. Is proud and relieved to escape the traps of motherhood and the psychiatric wards, feels

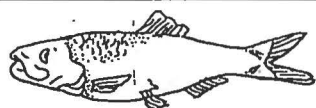
above sordidnesses like incest and wife battering. Is efficient and obsessed with abstractions. All an attempt to escape the forgotten memory of victimhood, of having been a target. Says, in effect, Never Again.

The Female Man is a house of cards.

Memory: Searching, you suddenly recognize him, and what happened. You don the armour of this truth and a fierce love for her, your childself. Leap onto your horse and gallop off to where she huddles still, in those woods, in that basement, in that bedroom. Scoop her up, cradle her, the healing begins. It isn't too late!

Born again: Intense gratitude to all the ones who believed you and helped you remember. They've given you back your life. Gratitude for a love that can begin to learn to radiate outward instead of busily feeding the starving child inside.

Re-remembering: I know what the female equivalent of impotence is. It comes from continually swallowing our tongues, suppressing our wills under the threat of violence or because of real violence. But what 'member' is a woman's power? What is fearlessness like? I have met it in little girls and in some women. I've felt it, briefly; it comes and goes. How do we reclaim and develop it? This, for me, is the next question.



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## Advisory Council on the Status of Women

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Halifax, N.S.  
Phone: (902) 424-8662

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 745  
Halifax, N.S.  
B3J 2T3

 **Advisory Council on the Status of Women**





Cora Ward and Vicki Trainor, two members of A.M.E.N. go through some papers before their meeting. (Photo by Brenda Conroy)

## Some women say A.M.E.N.!

Cora Ward

There are certain offices in our society that we, the general public, usually have great respect for. These are occupied by professionals such as educators, law givers and healers.

Even in the face of reality, it is sometimes hard to believe that someone in whom we put our trust is less than honourable.

I feel this way about doctors. I suppose in the back of my mind is the thought that this person had to be very intelligent and very determined to get those certificates and degrees that decorate the office wall. Maybe it's the sound of my mother's voice, consoling me, as a child, with words like "The doctor will make you all better."

Whatever the reason, it was for me, as it is for many women in doctors' offices, a matter of trust. I would never be hurt, and even if it took a while, I would eventually be cured. This was before I went to see a gynecologist in 1985 for a nagging abdominal pain.

During that visit, I was treated so roughly, with such little regard, that even if it were not for the implied sexual overtones of the visit I would have left in tears. There is no need for ice-cold internal instruments. I felt attacked by his rough handling of my body; I felt as though I had been raped. I was crying and obviously in pain as a result of his treatment of me. Even worse, the doctor's tone and his words (words like "doll," "dearie," "sweetie,") implied a delight in the opportunity to examine me.

It was my naive respect for this man's position that kept me from walking out of his office. And my fear that made me obey him when he ordered me to undress for a complete exam after being told my appointment was for a partial ("Take your clothes off for me, doll," "I want to see all of you").

I didn't realize that I wasn't alone then; that there were hundreds of women (and men and children) who were being subjected to bad, often terrifying treatment at the hands of professionals they trusted.

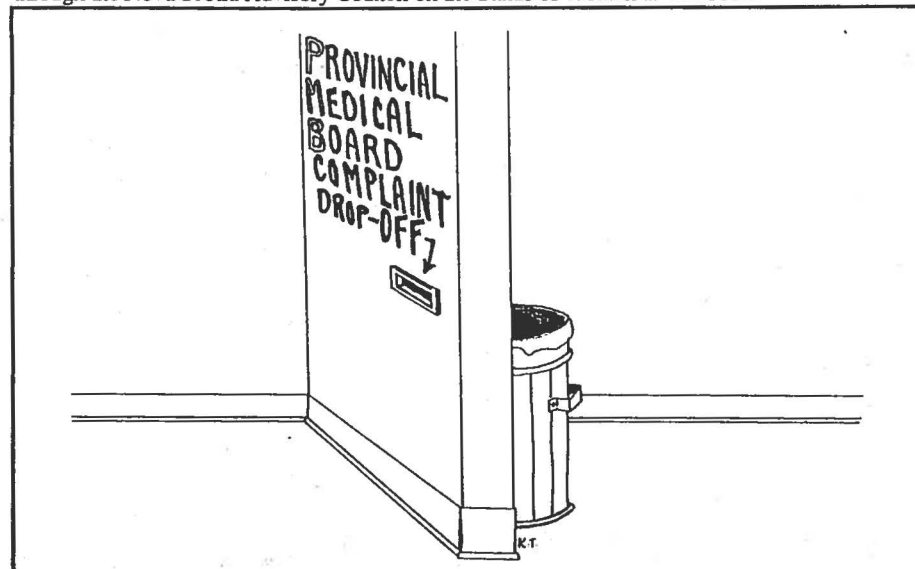
I became educated through this experience. I now know doctors are human; there are competent and incompetent ones. Some need counseling, many need retraining and a few should not be allowed to practice at all.

Since becoming active in Advocates for Medical Ethics Now (A.M.E.N.) in June, 1988, many people, mostly women, have told me their stories of mistreatment. The variety and severity of their experiences often leaves my heart aching. I am thankful now that, when people ask me how to handle the situation, there is a procedure we can follow together. The potential to end the isolation of medical victims began with the fight of Vicki Trainor and Carol Young and the support group they helped form.

A.M.E.N. is there for people who need support through an ordeal; information on how to file a formal complaint with the Nova Scotia Medical Board, or who need help through the grievance procedure process itself. We could also use your help. We are asking women's groups and individuals to speak out with us to effect change in the Medical Act and the procedures of the Nova Scotia Medical Board.

□□□□□

Cora Ward is a member of A.M.E.N. Women can contact her and Vicki Trainor through the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women at 424-8662.



# (Family) sexual abuse is (sexual abuse is (stranger

Mary Petty

When the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women reported a perceived problem in the way complaints about medical treatment are handled, a process began which has irrevocably changed many women's consciousness about medical treatment.

Several women had sought advice from the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women after getting nowhere in their attempts to lodge complaints against a gynecologist. Eventually the problem was brought to the public's attention when the Advisory Council presented a brief to the Royal Commission on Health Care. (See other articles on this page for more details.)

In speaking with numerous women over the past few weeks, I have heard many accounts similar to those which were formally heard on July 7. For many of us, medical mistreatment ranging from uncomfortable to abusive occurred when we were young.

My reaction to such treatment was to blame myself, question myself, accept the label which was offered by my doctor and attempt to forget how badly I felt. Years later, I understood my treatment in the context of the misogyny which we experience throughout our lives. I decided to seek medical services from women doctors and later to fight back in feminist clinic and self-help groups.

Eventually, I was able to understand the extent to which medical training validates sexism, enables doctors to indulge in elitism and allows them to exercise power and control over patients. The attitudes of doctors toward women and other people who do not share their class, race and social status are deeply entrenched. We have no indication that a new generation of doctors, even with greater numbers of women among them, is ready to address the cost of their privilege to the rest of society. The doctors who have spoken out to support their colleagues have done so by placing the blame on women who complained and on those who facilitated those complaints being heard.

I spoke with Vicki Trainor, one of the women who had contacted the Advisory Council and who eventually filed a formal complaint with the Medical Board of Nova Scotia. What had motivated Vicki to pursue her complaint for several years, when she was continually blocked by those who had the power to act on her complaint?

She explained that her outrage and anger after her experience with a gynecologist was so consuming that she simply could not live with it; she felt compelled to take action. Even though she continually questioned her-

self, wondering if she was crazy as she had been told, she knew she had been treated badly.

When she wrote down what had happened in a letter and attempted to give it to her referring doctor, he refused to take it. Instead, he wanted to talk with her — a conversation which consisted of invalidating her experience, rationalizing his colleague's action, and causing Vicki to question her own need to complain.

Still, she knew something was wrong and she sensed that other women were likely being treated the same way.

All of the brick walls which she encountered after she complained to the Medical Society confirm that the medical establishment protects its own and, in doing so, shuts out criticism. Victim-blaming takes the form of labeling the patient as a trouble-maker. Medical harassment is diminished as a "personality problem" or a "communication problem."

My question remains, however: why have most of us not complained

about our experiences of abusive language, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse at the hands of medical practitioners. In trying to understand this, I look to the important lessons we learn by the time we are adolescents. One is that it is natural and understandable that we should hate our own bodies. Another is that we are not to trust our own instincts because they are frivolous and wrong. We cannot get our sexuality right; we have too much or too little.

Any encounter with someone who has legitimate access to our bodies is embarrassing and we accept the blame for anything that goes wrong. An adolescent woman who is sexually active has likely gone into her doctor's office with reluctance.

### Assault experience similar to incest

How likely is she to complain if he tells her to strip or makes inappropriate comments about her body? He is only confirming the idea she has already, that she is "bad."

In reading about women who have been sexually assaulted by doctors during examination, I was struck by the similarity of their experiences to women sexually abused within their families.

Women assaulted by doctors feel confused by their own perception of this reality. They cannot believe it is really happening because it is so contradictory to their belief that a trusted authoritarian figure will not hurt them. They focus on themselves as the cause and consequently they are often unable to tell anyone because they cannot trust their own perception of what has happened.

Women who do report sexual assault by their doctors often face the same response of disbelief from others as do women who have been sexually assaulted by family members.

When we began learning of the prevalence of sexual assault in families, we realized that girls have to be warned about inappropriate behaviour in their homes more than in the streets. Who of us was ever warned that we should be on

guard against our doctors?

Looking at a vulva or breasts was supposed to be just like looking down your throat. Many of the women's stories I have listened to over the past few weeks refute this notion. A woman who was treated by an orthodontist for several years as a adolescent was frequently asked by this doctor to remove her blouse and bra so he could examine her bone structure.

### Women's lives become sexualized

Several women told me they were instructed to remove all of their clothing for examinations which clearly required seeing much less than their entire bodies. Women were told they had "nice breasts" and were asked to describe their sexual encounters. Pushing, grabbing and jerking bodies around on exam tables is so common that it would be seen as normal medical procedure.

When we question these things today, we are still told that we do not understand the intricacies of medical science.

I was once told by a gynecologist that I must be promiscuous because he was treating me (painfully and badly) for a sexually transmitted disease. I accepted all the blame which he was willing to impart. And as Vicki told me, one of the tactics for invalidating her

## Why get in

Jane Wright

In the Fall of 1987 the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women was contacted by two women who had complaints about a Halifax gynecologist. At the time of our meeting, both women had filed formal complaints with their referring physician, with the gynecologist in question, the Chief of Gynecology at the Grace Maternity Hospital, and the Medical Society of Nova Scotia. Their complaints were acknowledged by the Medical Society and dismissed as "communication problems." One referring physician refused to discuss complaints with the gynecologist because it might "hurt his feelings." The gynecologist did not respond to their complaints.

At no time during this process was either woman referred to the Provincial Medical Board. In fact, until the time of our meeting, both women were unaware of its existence.

The Advisory Council contacted both the Medical Society and the Medical Board for information so that we could accurately advise these women as to what further action could be taken. Information about the role of the Medical Society and the Medical Board was supplied to the women, and it was determined that the Medical Board was in fact the official body with which complaints should be lodged.

At this time, both women expressed concern about the process and the futility of their efforts in light of the lack of support they had received thus far. They feared that, once again, the word of the doctor would be accepted over anything they had to say.

Over the course of the next few months, the Advisory Council heard from three other women who had been



# (doctors') sexual abuse

complaints has been to insist that the offensive actions were "just language."

Women are typically harassed and degraded by having their very existence sexualized. To ask a patient if she experiences orgasm may be justified if sexual response is what we are asking about.

However, we see this question posed routinely in response to symptoms from headaches to excessive bleeding. It has no legitimacy in the medical assessment but it is clearly an avenue to sexualizing the problem and the woman. It says our physical symptoms are not real or that they are self-induced. We are either bad or promiscuous and bring on our own discomfort. Or, we are sexually repressed and bring on our psychosomatic symptoms.

A gross power imbalance in society is replicated in the professional-patient relationship. Women suffer from the same oppression in therapeutic relationships as in the rest of society.

## Race, class and gender differences lead to myths

There is the myth that physicians are smart people who can come from any race, social class or gender to struggle through a tough education in the name of humanitarian service.

There is another myth that men who specialize in gynecology are motivated by their love of babies and respect for

women. Gynecology is a bastion of misogyny. It provides the opportunity for men to trivialize women, to invalidate women's power and to assault women in the most insidious ways.

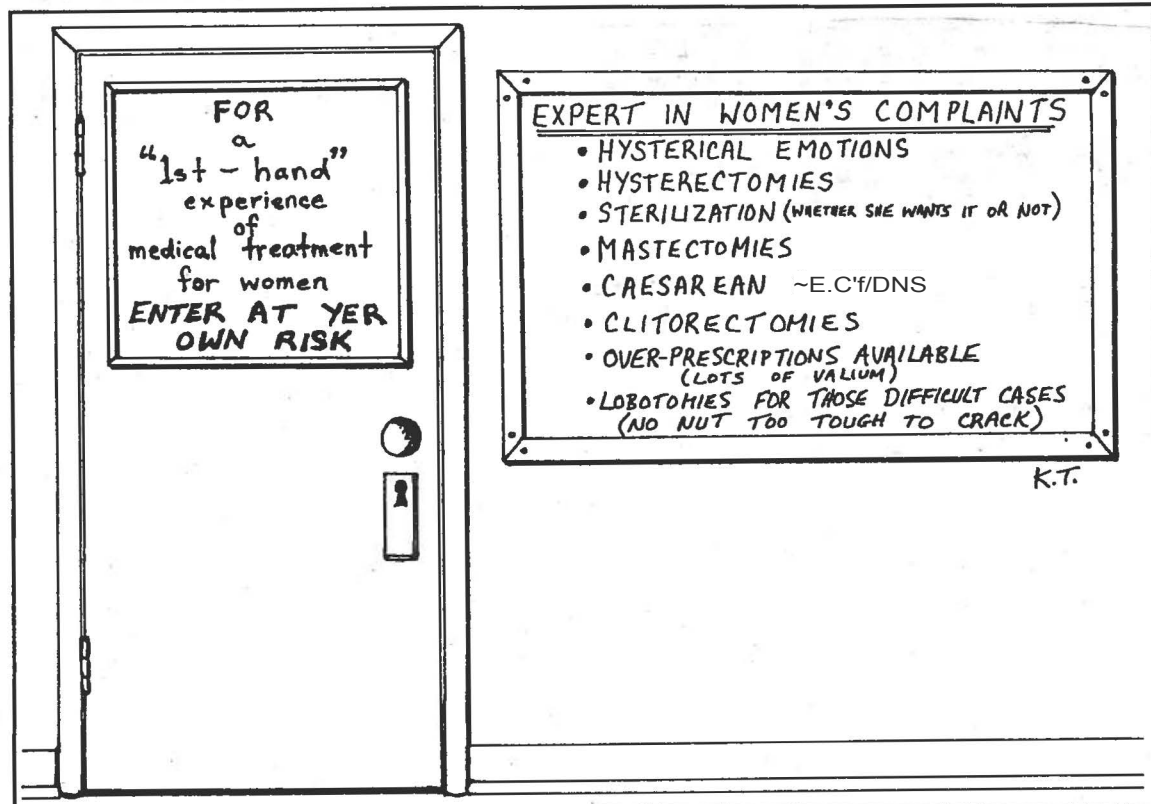
When beleaguered doctors complain about our expectations of them, that we expect them to be gods and to perform miracles, I would suggest that they look to the development of their profession's elite status.

## Why do some women support the male system?

It is no accident that we perceive them in this way and it is not something that we have imposed entirely upon ourselves.

It is true that we put our lives in the hands of doctors, but it is also true that they have expropriated our bodies in the name of professional control. Women's fear that we face the scenario of Margaret Atwood's *A Handmaid's Tale* all too soon is justified in light of recent attempts to court-order obstetrical interventions against the will of a pregnant woman.

Another question I have is why do we see vastly different reactions from women to the same medical practitioner. Does he discriminate among women in treatment or is it simply a matter of some women being more sensitive to language than others?



In shifting the blame to the women who have voiced the complaints, some "supporters" of the gynecologist in question would suggest the latter, that the women who complained have "no sense of humour."

When I asked Vicki to speculate on this question, she told me that she believes there was a factor of discrimination in her treatment. She said that at the time she saw this physician she was young and that she would not have appeared privileged. Her observation was that the other women who receive simi-

lar treatment from the same gynecologist had been young at the time.

Women do respond in different ways to all kinds of harassment. The women we saw who called themselves "supporters" are typical of the women Andrea Dworkin describes in her book, *Right Wing Women*. We are all trying to survive in a world where male dominance leaves us vulnerable to rape and other forms of violence.

Survival for some of us means fighting back and trying to change the world. For others, survival means clinging tenaciously to male values, defending and "supporting" the actions which keep us all oppressed. For these women, to stop believing that the rules and order work to protect us means facing the terrible reality that we are all vulnerable.

We wonder why these women could round up over two hundred of themselves in a few days when we struggle to gather ourselves into groups of twenty to fight back.

Women who try to survive by defending male dominance are systematically and rigorously supported by male institutions. Movements aimed toward the continued oppression of women (e.g. "pro-life" or anti-choice movement) are often organized within religious institutions.

## Change must begin from within the profession

The exposure of the inadequacy of the medical establishment's discipline and regulatory process should result in some reforms. As we have already seen, the Medical Board was quick to place two women on the Complaints Committee in the midst of this exposure. Certainly consumers of health care can benefit by such reform. The most offensive doctors will be on their toes for the present. Unfortunately, the problem of how women are treated by physicians is more difficult to address.

The attitudes toward women and other people who do not share their class, race and social status are deeply entrenched. As long as men are able and encouraged to see women as sex objects, these interactions will occur. As long as we are forced to seek health care services from professionals who refuse to criticize themselves or examine their power and attitudes, we will encounter the same scenarios we have recently witnessed.

Clearly, those who are called to task on such behaviors are defensive and self-righteous because they are behaving as they can be expected to behave in such a context.

## Director plays scary numbers game

Mary Petty

The Medical Board's own annual reports contradict their assertion that they never hear women's complaints of sexual harassment. Despite the fact that the "appropriate" avenues for lodging complaints were well camouflaged, the reports describe (in summary) an average of three complaints a year of this nature.

They do confirm that the board has never seriously addressed the problem. The reports consistently refer to the complaints as "communication problems" and recommend that physicians ask a third party to be present during examinations of female patients in order to protect themselves.

The experiences of Vicki Trainor and the other women who have spoken out are not to be written off as a "bad day" for the doctor, as Arthur Parsons, Executive Director of the Medical Society has asserted, or as "personal style" as a group of residents have said in defense of their colleague. This kind of behaviour on the part of doctors is not isolated or unusual.

Arthur Parsons graciously offered an editorial on the situation, coming forth as the representative of the besieged profession and as a colleague of the abused doctor.

He displayed a unique understanding of the value of patients in mathematical terms. He says that since the gynecologist has been in practice for nineteen years and has seen an average of ten patients a day, then twenty-seven complaints would not necessarily indicate sexual harassment.

What is he saying here? We can average out this thing and throw out a certain number of complaints? This is like saying that a man who rapes "only" one woman and is nice to 1,000 others is not a rapist.

In the U.S., the federal medical board receives an average of three reports a month of sexual abuse by doctors. They estimate that there are 15 to 25 more cases for every one reported.

## Did the Advisory Council involved in the first place?

through similar experiences. These women were informed about the Medical Board and the process for filing complaints. The complaints we had received over the past year led us to include a recommendation in our brief to the Royal Commission on Health Care regarding the current system for filing complaints and providing remedy to those negatively affected by the services of doctors.

In early May, in response to an article

on sexual harassment in the workplace, Debi Forsyth-Smith remarked that sexual harassment also occurred in other arenas besides the workplace. She suggested that sexual harassment also occurred between landlords and tenants, professionals and clients, and doctors and patients, among others. Further to this comment, a column appeared in *The Daily News* which described the way in which several women had been treated by their doctors. As a result of this media exposure, many women and a few men contacted the office of the Council and related their own experiences with the medical profession, the Medical Society and, in some cases, the Medical Board.

A clear pattern emerged from these calls. Firstly, an overwhelming majority of the callers did not know about the Provincial Medical Board. Secondly, although no one knew the identity of the

doctors we had heard complaints about, close to half of the callers complained about the treatment they had received from one particular gynecologist. Women clearly recognized the description of treatment from a few examples described in the newspaper.

A total of 60 complaints were received over a two-week period.

On June 8th, the Advisory Council set up a meeting to provide women with detailed and accurate information about avenues they might pursue to present their complaints. Resource people from the Human Rights Commission, the Service for Sexual Assault Victims, and Dawna Ring, a Halifax lawyer, were present at this meeting to outline the options available.

The women who attended this meeting, and others who have come forward since, have formed a support group—AMEN (Advocates for Medical Ethics Now). Many have subsequently filed formal written complaints about experiences they had been forced to internalize for years, believing they were alone and somehow to blame for the abuse they had endured.

It is clear that in some cases this abuse has had serious and even devastating effects on their lives.

A total of 60 complaints  
were received over a  
two-week period.



One referring physician  
refused to discuss  
complaints with the  
gynecologist because  
it might  
"hurt his feelings."

# Life changes for battered woman after Bryony House

**MJ**  
Nineteen years ago, I found out I was pregnant with my first child. My boyfriend said we should tell my parents.

Now a little history on myself: from the age of 11, my father would abuse me both mentally and physically. I was pregnant at the age of 18 and still didn't have a house key.

Sex was new to me—I was a virgin when I first met this man. I didn't know that I could say no when I didn't want sex.

Although I didn't love the man who made me pregnant, I felt at the time that he would be good to me. Also, it was an escape from my father's house.

My dreams were soon shattered. When my son was born, my husband became jealous of him, although he hid these feelings around my parents or his family.

He used to sulk and call me dirty names. Once he accused me of having sex with our dog. But I didn't argue with him. I felt I had made my bed and had to take all his garbage.

It got worse as the years went by. Five years later, my second son was born. My first son had just started school and I tried to keep my husband involved with me and the baby. But my husband was starting to call the oldest boy down. When my oldest was eight, he started getting into trouble with the police. My husband blamed this on me.

Once my husband made my son stand in the middle of the living room and told him he was a nothing and no damn good. I wasn't allowed to say anything, but afterwards I went to my son's room and cried and told him he was a somebody and that I loved him.

Then my youngest started to feel his father's wrath. When he was 12, his father started on him and I swore he wouldn't hurt this boy the way he had hurt his older brother.

I would come to my youngest's aid whenever I could. I would follow him into his room and tell him that I loved him. Even when his father started to throw things at him, I would go to his rescue.

We would argue all the time, no matter where we were. My husband accused me of sleeping with other people.

I did have a friend whose wife had died. He was left with two boys whom I liked, and we all became good friends.

Sometimes this man and I would talk on the phone. Sometimes I went to his house and we would have tea and I would play with his kids. My heart

went out to those other two boys who had lost their mom.

I didn't tell my husband anything about this. I was, and still am, afraid of him. But he found out by putting a tap on my phone. Then he went crazy. What hurt me the most was the accusation that I was sleeping with this man. I wasn't.

My husband questioned everything I did. My house became a prison. I couldn't even go to the bathroom without being accused of washing the other man off me.

I started to hate my house, hate the man I had married. I was torn between my two boys whom I love dearly.

One night, my friend and I decided to sleep together. My God, I didn't know sex was supposed to be so gentle and giving—I wasn't forced to do anything I didn't want to do. We became closer in every way. He was and is my strength.

One night I went to my friend's house. His 11-year old answered the door. I walked in and went to the big room, my usual routine.

At 9:15, my husband came to the door and called me a slut and an adulteress and that if I came home, I wouldn't be alive the next morning. My friend and I were in shock. My husband came back two minutes later and threatened both of us.

So I called Bryony House and I have been here four weeks now. I am ready to start a new life with my 14-year old. Because I am living in Second Stage Housing, my oldest boy cannot live with me. He lives with his father on occasion and, at other times, he stays with his girlfriend.

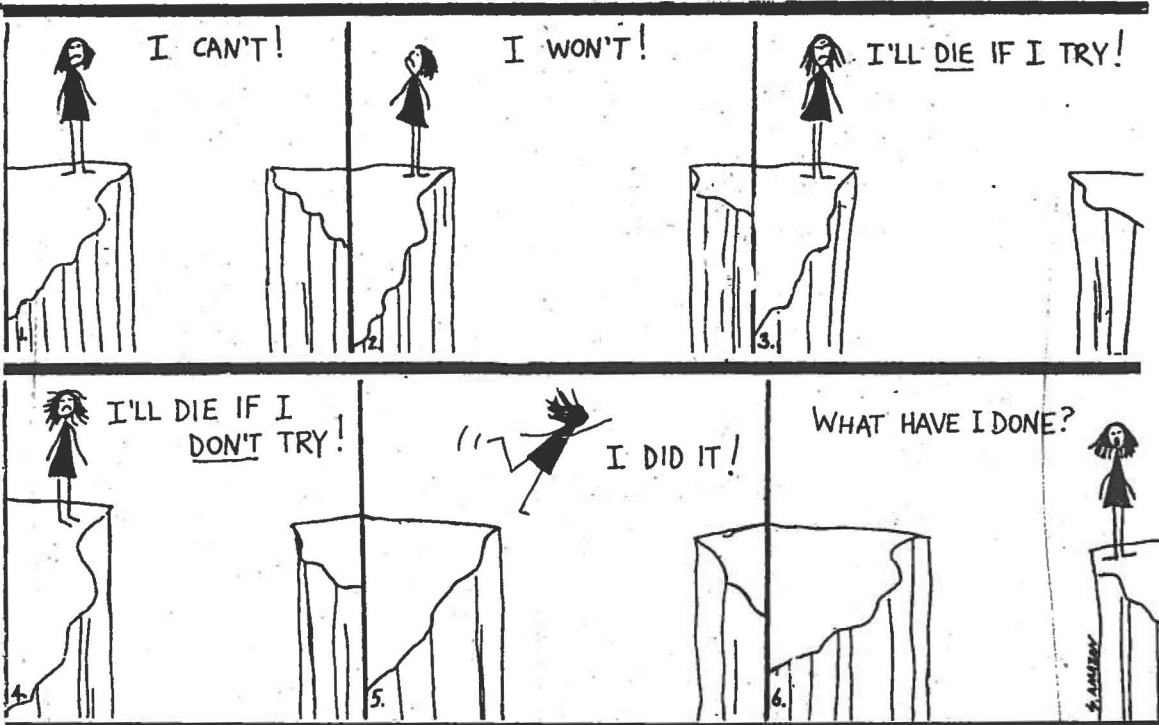
I am now at the prime of my life with a lot of good things to look forward to. My friend is still my closest friend and lover.

I now feel I am worthwhile and not all the dirty and degrading names my husband used to call me. My youngest son has failed grade 8 but we look forward to a new year. My oldest is not drinking any more and now has a full time job and a girlfriend whom I like very much.

Better days for us are just around the corner.

□□□□□

I am actively working with Senior Citizens and doing volunteer work with a food bank in Halifax. I am going to be taking a course in homemaking which will eventually lead into a Personal Care Worker course, primarily to work with Senior Citizens.



(Graphic from Big Mama Rag)

Better things in life are available

## Letting go can change you—take a chance and start living

Carol Millett

I wrote the following piece last June as the preface to a bibliography I compiled for Media Watch entitled *Resource Guide to the Media's Image of Women: A Tribute to Alice Cramden*.

Jackie Gleason died in 1987; unfortunately Ralph Cramden did not. Ralph Cramden was the character that took Jackie Gleason and the TV show *The Honeymooners* to stardom during the fifties and sixties. Alice was Ralph's wife. I don't remember the actress's name.

At the time I was a small child.

Ralph was a bus driver who emotionally, verbally, almost physically abused his wife. I can still see him raising his hand and voice, shouting,

"Shut up, Alice ... go to the moon, Alice." I don't remember how Alice responded to him.

At the time my father was beating my mother.

The power of imagery must be neither denied nor underestimated. Our perception of reality is created through illusion as much as it is through material. Of course, these are only my thoughts.

This tribute to Alice Cramden and my mother cannot in itself alter the illusion nor the reality, but hopefully it will contribute to the ever growing number of women who speak to the world: we are intelligent, beautiful, vital, creative women and we will not be beaten down.

\*\*\*\*\*

I'd like you to overhear a dialogue I recently had with myself. I welcome your comments.

What's stopping me from letting go?

Letting go of what?

Pain, sadness, fear, anger. Why the fuck am I holding on to them anyway; they're no good anymore. They served their purpose long ago.

So let go.

No!

Why not?

What will I replace them with?

Hmmm. Happiness, trust, courage, calm.

Those are noble replacements, but the pain, sadness, fear and anger package is easier to maintain. Mind you, after 30-odd years, it's dragging me down.

So let go.

No.

Okay. What's the worst thing that would happen if you wrapped the package and posted it?

Well... I'd end up crying in someone's arms; I'd enjoy sex more, maybe go exploring with a man even; I'd write more, and enjoy it; I'd say it's okay that my birth mother gave me away after I was born. I'd tell my other mother that I love her, and mean it, even though she thinks my hair is ugly and she doesn't like who I am; I'd say to my father, you hurt my mother and me, it's your responsibility. I no longer want to carry this pain and anger. But I get stuck here. I want to be angry, to hurt him back.

Anger is an energy shield you've used for self-protection—and for separation from others. Look at what you've said would be the worst things that would happen if you let go: being safe with someone, having happy sex with someone, communicating with someone. You want these things, why else would you ask what's stopping me from letting go.

True.

So choose.

□□□□□

Carol Millett, Halifax film and video producer, is currently producing, among other things, a massage therapy comedy video series.

## The Good Guys Are Mean Men In Disguise

The good guys are lying, mean, slimy, stereotypically bastard males in disguise. When I realized it something broke and my hope for life took on a weird shade of gray, like nothing will be good—I may as well go back to lying, mean, slimy, stereotypically bastard males who are up front about it. You led me to believe you led me to fail myself or maybe it's my fault I'll take the blame

because nobody else gives a damn. You sure are shit, do you know that? Don't talk to me because I like you. I want to be your friend so stop before I hate you. Just leave at nine, don't be back by ten. Are we both to blame? I'd rather it just be you. You're a good guy. A lying, mean, slimy, stereotypically bastard male. I like you.

Jennifer Ryan

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# Inadequate housing for single moms prompts study

Liz Bosma

Not long ago Mothers United for Metro Shelter (M.U.M.S) and other advocacy groups drew attention to the scarcity, inadequacy and high cost of housing. Almost weekly the media featured grim stories about the human costs of such a housing crisis.

Four years later, the face of the housing crisis has appeared to have changed; last year Collins House, the only shelter for single mothers with children, closed its doors. The shelter could not financially withstand the dips in occupancy; the numbers of calls to agencies from homeless single mothers dropped; and the Metro vacancy rate climbed to 4.7% in April '88 from 2.0% in April '86.

Although it may appear obvious that the housing crisis has 'eased,' what isn't so obvious are the number of low-income people who are still living in unsafe, expensive and overcrowded housing situations. In short, the shortage of affordable housing is still an issue.

For the past several months, a study was conducted to explore the kinds of housing difficulties single mothers experience. The Network for Supportive Services for Women, the survey's

sponsor, is a committee that formed after Collins House closed in order to identify and publicize the housing problems single mothers may be experiencing. The NSSW objectives are to examine the need for an emergency shelter for homeless single mothers and to assess this group's housing needs.

Thirty women were interviewed over a period of three months. Although the questionnaire that was used to interview single mothers was written primarily by the researchers and members of the NSSW committee, low-income single mothers were consulted for their expertise.

Each interview was extensive: usually two to three hours in length. The issues that were raised in each interview were not restricted to housing. Women spoke at length about how difficult it was to make ends meet on their meagre incomes.

The study, entitled *A Roof Over Our Heads*, defines homelessness broadly. The study borrows its definition, in part, from the Canadian Council on Social Development. This definition not only includes people who live on the street or spend their nights in an emergency shelter, but also people

who are living in housing that is beyond their means or does not meet their needs.

*Half a million Canadians who rent housing live in substandard or inadequate conditions and cannot find better accommodation that is within their means. Most of these people are elderly, single individuals or one-parent families, most of whom are women.*

Canadian Council on Social Development

The above definitions reflect the housing predicament that many women in this study encountered.

The following is a thumbnail sketch of the study's findings:

- All women were paying a huge portion of their income on shelter costs. Ninety percent of our sample were paying between 31% and 112% of their incomes for shelter. According to C.M.H.C. standards, anyone who spends more than 30% of income for shelter is paying too much.

- Because low-income single mothers are renting housing they can not afford, they do not have enough money left over to meet other basic needs. They rely heavily on churches, food banks, family and friends to help them out.

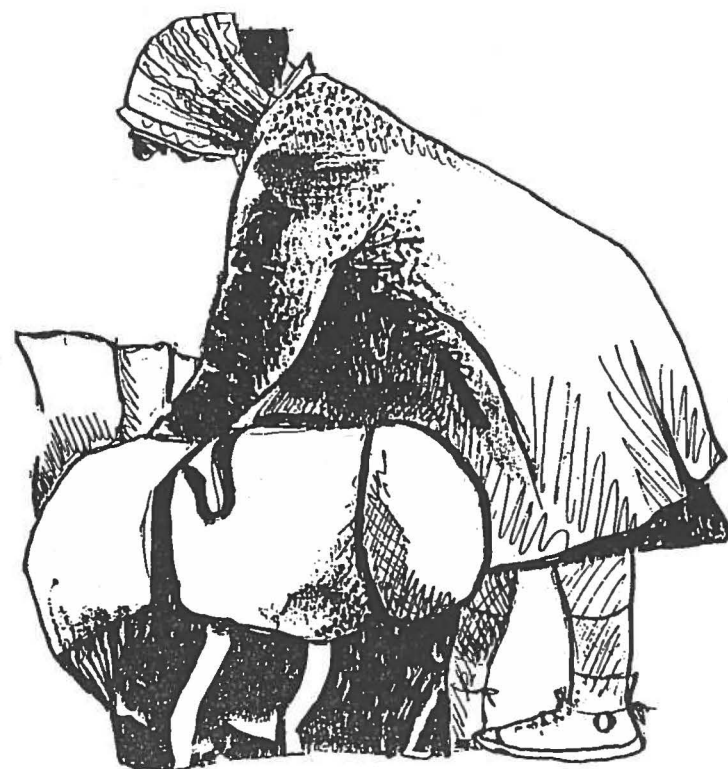
- Women found that access to social housing was difficult. They spoke of long waiting lists, restrictive public housing eligibility policies, and the complicated and discouraging process of applying for co-op housing.

- Little or no security of tenure: Transiency was a way of life for the women interviewed. Seventy percent moved at least once within a twelve-month period, and 60% moved between three and ten times within a 26 month period. For most of these families who moved frequently, children were uprooted from schools, daycares and friendships.

- Landlord discrimination was universal for this group. The women said landlords discriminated against children, social assistance recipients, single mothers and non-whites. Discrimination frequently prevented these women and their families from finding affordable housing.

- Eighty-five percent of respondents lived in low-income ghettos outside of the urban core — particularly in Spryfield, North Dartmouth and Lower Sackville.

- Women frequently asked agencies for help, particularly when they were homeless. In general, women had difficulty getting help from any of the social assistance agencies or from public housing.



(Graphic from Women's News)

## One woman's story—dissatisfied, but no place to go

(The following is a section from the report: *A Roof Over Our Heads, Single Mothers in Housing Crisis in the Halifax Metro Area, The Network for Supportive Services for Women*, written by Barb Blouin and Elizabeth Bosma. This is not a fictitious story; however, names and some details have been altered to protect the woman's identity.)

### JENNIFER'S STORY

Jennifer hears her two children waking up. Soon they will be asking for breakfast. Opening the fridge door, she groans; the fridge is on the blink again. The last time it broke, the landlord didn't fix it for almost three months. The milk is spoiled and the frozen food is thawing. It's close to the end of the month and Jennifer won't have any money to buy milk until her next welfare check comes. She runs upstairs to borrow milk from her neighbour.

After breakfast, Gina, who is four, asks her mother if she can play outside. Jennifer is reluctant to let her go out alone because there is no safe play area. The front yard is steep and faces on a busy street. Jennifer is afraid that Gina may roll down the hill onto the street. The "backyard" is a parking lot.

Jennifer checks her mail. Her stomach tightens when she sees the bill from the power company. Opening it, her fears are confirmed; she owes \$150. When she moved into this apartment, the landlord neglected to tell her that she had to pay for her own hot water. Jennifer has to juggle her bill payments just to make ends meet. This month, she can't see how she can afford to pay

the power bill.

Along with the mail, the newspaper has arrived. Jennifer scans the classifieds for apartments. For six months, this has been part of her daily ritual. Once again, she is discouraged by the lack of housing options. Most places are either too expensive or for "adults only." Today there are only three ads that look vaguely promising. Several phone calls later, only one place is still potentially available.

Even if Jennifer manages to clear the hurdles of high rent and landlord prejudice, there are other obstacles. Last week, she found a three-bedroom apartment that wasn't too much over her budget. But she couldn't rent it because she didn't have the money to buy a fridge and stove. Jennifer worries about where she will get the money to cover her moving expenses, such as the damage deposit, power and phone deposits, and the money to pay someone to help her move. She is still paying off a loan from Dartmouth Social Services for her last damage deposit. Every month, \$35 is deducted from her cheque.

Jennifer is afraid that social assistance won't provide the money to cover her moving expenses. Her requests for help for other items have been turned down before. Until two months ago, she and her two children were sleeping in one bed. When Jennifer asked social assistance for money for beds for the children, they refused.

"The worker said he didn't want to get involved with Family Benefits recipients. He said he had already helped me with my damage deposit. So I had to wait for my Child Tax Credit to come before I could afford beds for my children."

The thought of moving again makes Jennifer feel weary. She has moved three times in less than two years, and two of the moves have been within the past year. She longs for a time when her children can grow up in stable and decent housing.

"I don't want to keep moving a lot; it's hard on the kids. They make new friends, and then we have to move again. I want the next move to be my last."

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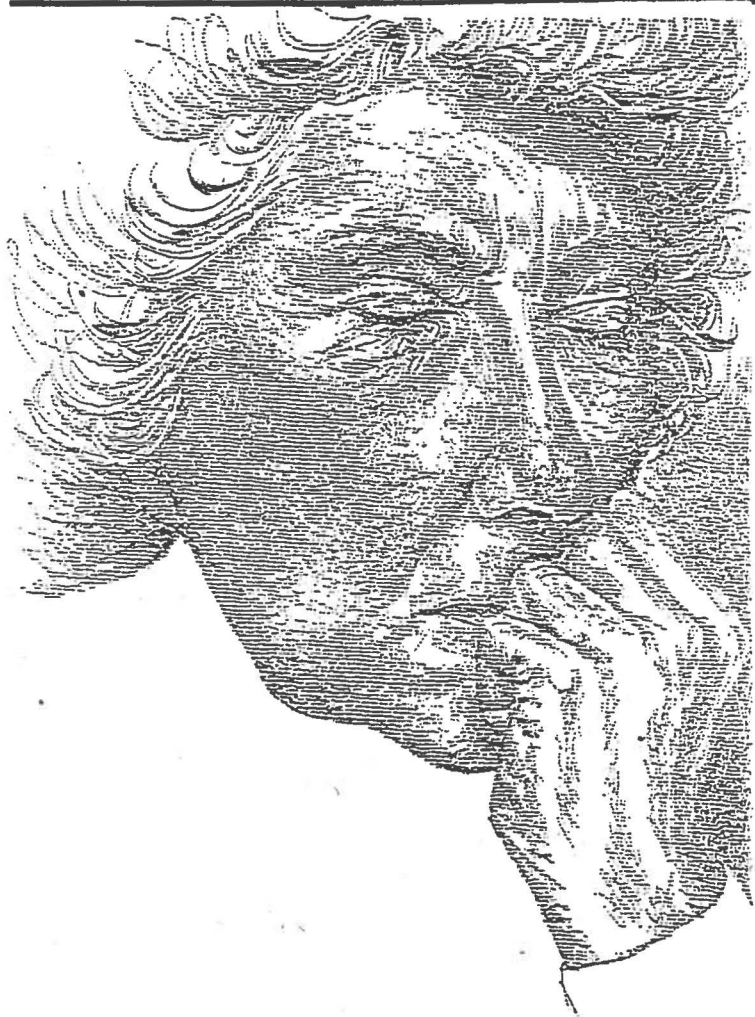
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(Graphic from Women's News)

## Hitting another woman reflected powerlessness, lack of choice

### Anonymous

There is something very pathetic about seeing two women fighting, especially two lesbians. One of the first times I went to a lesbian bar, a fight broke out between two women on the dance floor. My reaction was one of disgust. How could a lesbian, after going through the struggle to come out, after fighting that battle against a heterosexual society, then turn on another woman whom she knows has gone through that same process.

What I am going to write about is what I felt like when I hit a woman — my lover. The feelings that welled up inside me at the moment I reached out toward her in anger have a history which goes beyond my relationship with her to relationships with men; with one man in particular. A man almost twice my size, much stronger than me both physically and mentally.

Although he was not violent in the traditional sense of the word, he used his physical strength against me. We would play physical games — wrestling. He would always turn a game into a competition so that he could win. The feeling I remember was of complete and utter frustration.

It was not fear, but anger, feeling helpless both to immediately control what was being done to my body and to explain my frustration. Our games came to be about survival, a real game "played" within our four walls.

My goal was not to have the game stop because I was crying and he felt sorry for me; the goal was to make him stop because I wanted him to. My solution was to regain some control over my body by refusing to respond to whatever he was doing to it. I would close my eyes or focus on something and concentrate on being calm, on saying nothing, feeling nothing, and waiting. Eventually he stopped; so did the "games," eventually.

But my control was not real. It came

out of desperation. It was a reaction against him and to salvage my soul. If I could, I would stretch out my hand to his throat, toward his mouth. I would gag him. I would grab his head and smash it against a wall. I would silence him. I would take back my power with my anger.

But my body was powerless against his. His strength was always there. His security was always there. As a man, he has been trained to believe his honour sacred; he must win. He believes it so completely; he will not acknowledge his power nor his abuse of it.

I became a lesbian, and I carried,

**I had enough of feeling powerless...**

unconsciously, my pent-up hostility, anger and frustration to my first relationship with a woman.

As our arguments became more intense, so did my frustration. She had a temper, she could spew forth a verbal assault and the intensity of her hostility and anger was overwhelming.

I wanted it to end right away. I wanted to control my life, to protect myself, my ego. I had been insulted enough by/with men. I had received the anger of others too often. All I saw was her face, her body filled with hostility toward me, filled with her desire to humiliate me, to take power away from me.

I wanted to stop her; I wanted her to not say what she was saying. I screamed at her to stop. She did not listen; she did not even hear. My words bounced off against her wall of force and hit me in the face. My silence, my powerlessness was re-enforced.

I was in the same situation as before. I was paralysed to affect my surroundings. I have been well trained — for politeness, acceptance and silence. I felt the intensity of my anger from the

## Support needed but not found

# Mother filled with grief after children's abuse

LS  
MI CASA.....my house  
(Mother Intimately Concerned About Sexual Abuse)

In March of 1977, I learned that two of my daughters had been enduring sexual abuse from their step-father for more than five years. The abuse began around 1971-72, when they were approximately six years old.

Never once during all those years had I suspected there was anything amiss in my family. The girls have told me since then, "Mom, there's no way you could have known." The abuse was superbly well masterminded, as these things have to be in order to continue.

I now recognize 'signs and symptoms' from my children during that time: withdrawal, extra clinging to me, one performing poorly in school though obviously a bright child, the other becoming an academic over-achiever, allergies, aches and pains,

excessive tiredness in the mornings, loss of appetite and attempts to avoid the offender. These I took to be the usual 'growing pains' of childhood. I had not been conditioned to walk through life with my eyes peeled for a child molester in my own house.

I had skillfully disarmed my chil-

**Never once had I suspected there was anything amiss in my family**

dren by cautioning them not to talk to 'strangers.' Perhaps if I had given them a reason, they could have told me it isn't only 'strangers' who hurt children.

I had told them, "Look both ways before you cross the street, or you may be hit by a car." I told them, "Brush your teeth after you eat so you won't get cavities." Was I going to tell them that someone they like and trust could, one day, out of the blue, grab them by the arm as they walked past the bathroom door, pull them inside, and force them to perform oral sex? Was I going to tell them that perhaps some relative, neighbour or friend of the family might decide to touch the private parts of their bodies, and if that happened, they should tell me right away? Was I even going to think to tell them they had 'private parts' on their bodies? No, I wasn't. Things of that nature were never anywhere near my thoughts.

These were children... the closest thing on earth to 'sacred.' Society protects its children. I felt that my children were safe with me. No harm would ever come to them. This was my mind-set prior to March 1977.

I was not always the mother of sexually abused children. Come with me across that invisible line into my world of 'Mother the Victim'...

One of the children said 12 words; 15 small syllables, and with them, my world was shattered. These two children stood there looking at me to help them, protect them, fix it, make it better. There I stood, dead inside. Lost in a blackout. A whiteout. Lost. Dead. Empty. Gone. Alone. Grabbing back over that invisible line I had just crossed for some bit of reality to catch hold of, something familiar. Something. Anything. There was nothing there. Nothing to cling to. My world was gone.

Word of our plight got around. Family and friends showed mixed reactions: minimized the situation, laid guilt trips on me, ignored the children. Some people turned to me, eyes alight, asking for details of the abuse. Others turned their backs on us, wanting no part of this pack of 'victims.' My pediatrician threw his hands in the air and stalked out of the room when asked to examine the girls for the police.

The best, most genuine, concern came to us from the local policemen and policewomen, plus a surgeon who had recently attended our family and who consented to do the physical examination for the police. I would have gladly given the proverbial 'arm and leg' to have had even one person to sit with me, look me in the eyes, and say,

"I see you. I know your pain."

Years pass. We cope. It is not a healthy coping. The girls do better than I. (They were experts in the field of 'coping' by this time.) By some unspoken pact, we all keep 'the secret' a secret. I try everything I can think of to try and buy back their lost childhood.

In 1985, through counselling she had sought, we learned that one of the girls had been raped the previous year by her brother-in-law.

(The husband of the same sister who had been enduring the sexual abuse with her as a child.) Once was more than enough! Now one of my daughters is twice the victim of sexual assault; the other is an adult incest survivor, as well as my travelling companion on the road of 'ex wife of the sexual offender.'

The full impact of this situation hit me one evening in the supermarket. I had to leave my grocery cart and make a mad dash for my car, trying to get there before the tears came. I was engulfed by a feeling of isolation so complete that it defies description. I 'didn't belong where people were.' These offenders and situations hadn't merely put me down, but it was down... down... down... down... in the bottom of a black pit... all alone. There was no place in the world for me. I didn't belong where people were.

After identifying this terrifying feeling, I got mad. Then I got busy. I attended workshops, took courses in telephone counselling, studied and read sexual abuse prevention literature, sought counselling to help get my life

**I hadn't expected to find a child molester in my own home**

back together, joined groups which try to deal with the injustices suffered by women and children in our society.

All these endeavors have been enlightening as well as rewarding. To be 'doing something' after so many years of stagnation felt so good... but by far the best, most important thing for me is something that came about as a result of my constantly badgering my therapist, saying, "There has to be a group. I suffered nearly 10 years. It is the worst isolation I can imagine. There are other mothers out there hurting, all alone. I know it is unnecessary. With group support, we could help each other. This isn't something we can chat about over coffee with the neighbours. We need to be with other women who can understand the road we've walked."

One day my therapist simply said, "Well...start a group." I did. That group has been an unbelievably fantastic experience; a time of amazing personal growth for all of us, an education in itself...but that is another story.

That is where I have been and where I am. I will tell you where I'm going. I'm going as far as I possibly can to reach people: to urge them to educate themselves, to educate their children. Above all, I ask them to hear our pain, and by hearing it, realize they are all vulnerable.

There was no way I could have prepared myself to hear those 12 words that came between dessert and the dishwasher, yet there they were. It happened in my family. It could happen in yours at any moment.



# Directives not perfect — only first small step to combat violence

Patricia Lawton Day

The Attorney-General and Solicitor-General for Nova Scotia have issued new directives to Police and Crown Prosecutors in the province for dealing with instances of family violence.

In a memorandum to the RCMP and municipal police, the Solicitor-General has directed that police are to respond to and fully investigate all complaints of family disturbances and assaults. Where the situation warrants, the police should arrest the apparent perpetrator, and if the prosecutor is satisfied that sufficient evidence is available, the charges shall be prosecuted "regardless of the wishes of the complainant."

The sections of the criminal code to which these directives apply are charges of common assault, assaults with a weapon or causing bodily harm, aggravated assault or unlawfully causing bodily harm, and sexual assaults.

The directives, if taken seriously and acted upon, will have a two-fold effect. The first will be the prosecution of a greater number of perpetrators of violence in the family, and the second will be the removal of the onus on the victim to lay the charge and to prosecute it.

Until the directives, the female victim of common assault in the family

setting had to bear the burden of laying the information herself and taking the case to its completion. In many cases, women who have been subjected to violence had neither the emotional resources nor the stamina to withstand such a process.

In addition, prosecution charges required the services of a private lawyer, and lack of financial resources added to the burden. It is highly unfair that a victim of family violence should not be afforded the resources of the Crown, especially when one considers the negative effect of such violence on the family, and therefore on society.

These directives must be adhered to and put the prosecution of this criminal offence back in the hands of the prosecutor, where it belongs.

Female victims have often been under severe pressure by the family member perpetrating violence on them to withdraw the charges. Since the woman was responsible in the first place for processing the charge and taking it to its conclusion, many women fell victim again to mental or physical persuasion, and would drop or withdraw the charges.

Under the new directives, if a prosecutor lays the charge, the woman is a witness only and any decision to drop charges is not in her power. Charges are not, therefore, her "fault."

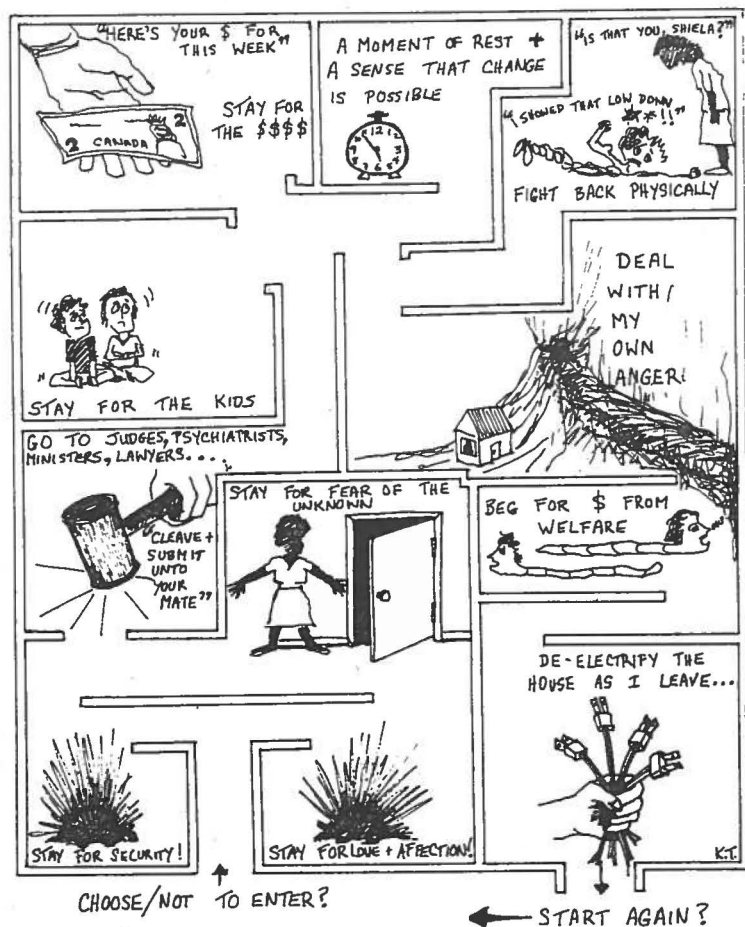
Objections to the directives include comments on the already overcrowded court dockets. To say the prosecution of perpetrators of family violence will cause such problems is to say that women, who are the victims of family violence, do not deserve society's protection. The answer simply is to appoint more judges. The Judiciary has to be sensitive to the issues of family violence and must impose tougher sentences. Fines of \$100 do not recognize the seriousness of the incident nor the ripple effect of such violence.

The memorandum to prosecutors and police is a positive first step. It acknowledges that society will not tolerate violence in the family and against women, and that society is prepared to protect the victims and prosecute the perpetrators of such violence.

But it is only a first step. There are problems in relation to other areas that need to be addressed. For example, women are currently being denied the right to lay informations based on threats only, because they must wait for a police investigation to be completed. That wait could be dangerous.

□ □ □ □ □

Patricia Lawton Day is a lawyer practicing with Buchan, Derrick and Ring, specializing in family law.



BATTERED WOMEN'S MAZE

## Sexual assault service offers help to victims

Veronica Singer

Today, if a woman is sexually assaulted in the Halifax/Dartmouth area, she has somewhere to turn to, namely the Service for Sexual Assault Victims (SSAV). SSAV was established in 1983 through the efforts of a group of Dalhousie psychology students and their professor.

Early in 1981 the students formed in response to a series of rapes that occurred in Halifax's south end. At that time there was no rape crisis centre in Halifax, Rape Relief having closed in 1978. Their study focussed on the courts, police, hospitals and social services and found all to be seriously lacking in procedure and protocol for support to the victims of sexual assault.

Through lobbying and writing campaigns, the group was able to secure a \$70,000 grant for one year to establish a telephone rape crisis service in co-operation with Helpline. The service operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In the first four months of operation, SSAV received 40 calls from across the province. The calls consisted of disclosures on past and present sexual assaults and incest.

Continued funding was received in the spring of 1984 and was two-fold: direct service to the victims and education and awareness for the public. SSAV has since expanded its operations to include four permanent staff: an Executive Director, Program Coordinator, Community Awareness Coordinator, and Coordinator for the Parent Support Program as well as a core of 50 trained volunteers who provide 24 hours, seven days a week confidential crisis intervention and counselling services to victims of sexual assault and sexual abuse, their families and friends.

SSAV offers emotional support, accompaniment during medical examinations, female physicians available on call, accompaniment when

reporting to police and support during the court process, information and advocacy. As well, SSAV provides one-to-one counselling for adult incest survivors and support groups for rape survivors, adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and parents of sexually abused children.

Another facet of SSAV is public awareness and education. SSAV provides workshops, public education in the community and a school program for Grade Nine students entitled "Personal Safety for Adolescents." The program explores issues such as sexual assault and abuse, assertiveness, prevention, and streetproofing.

The mission statement of SSAV is "to be committed to helping adult victims of sexual assault and sexual abuse regain their feelings of self-worth and control over their lives." Last year, 1987, SSAV received and responded to 332 calls for help.

For further information on SSAV and its services, contact Crisis Line, 425-0122 or Office 455-4240.

Pandora received an anonymous story from a young woman describing her situation. Unfortunately the woman did not sign her name. The policy at Pandora is that we do publish stories that are anonymous, but at least two women are required to know the writer's identity. We would very much like to publish this woman's statement in our next issue. If you would like to send your name to Catherine Lambert in care of Pandora, she will tell one other co-worker and we will not publish your name.

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# Exploitation of women causes poverty, too

Brenda Thompson

As most of you already know, the MUMS are a group of low-income single mothers who are battling the violence in poverty.

All of us have no problem seeing rape, wife abuse and pornography as violence against women. We cannot ignore the physical injuries, the trauma of rape, or the effect of viewing the degradation of women in pornography. We all know we can become the victims of rape or abuse.

We also know that in our society, money and power are intertwined into a simple rule — the more money you have, the more power you have. In our country, women have very little money.

We are underpaid and undervalued for the work we do in the workplace and our homes. Because of this lack of value, some of us die.

Lack of value and choices force women to stay in abusive marriages especially if we have children. Our Social Services system often forces us into prostitution and all its violence, simply to keep our children fed and housed. We put up with sexual harassment on the job because we cannot afford to quit.

Most of us already understand this, but it is surprising that so many people can't see welfare recipients and single mothers as victims of violence instead of "Welfare Queens" who have it easy living off taxpayers' money.

We, the women of the country, know how few real choices women have, yet society continues to blame the victims of poverty, the majority of whom are women with children, for the degrading circumstances in which they find themselves.

Twenty years ago it was common for rape victims to be blamed for the crime. What was she doing out at night? Why was she dressed that way? Ten years ago, it was not uncommon to hear that battered wives drove their husbands to beating them and obviously these women enjoyed being beaten or else they would leave. Although we don't hear these questions so much any more, when are the people of this country going to stop blaming the victims of poverty and start understanding the problems?

How would you feel knowing that you could lose your entire family's income if your social worker thinks you are living with a man? How would you feel knowing that you could have your children taken away from you if someone reports that you are not feeding them properly? On the basis of one anonymous phone call, you can lose your children and your income until you prove your innocence.

Contrast this to the way Billy Joe McLean was treated for his criminal offence and then you may begin to understand the injustices and violence of poverty. Of course, Billy Joe was not a Welfare Queen or a single mother. It would take almost four single mothers to cheat on welfare for a full year to equal the amount of money that Billy Joe McLean was accused of taking.

Poverty is violence. Our Social Services system practices violence. If you can be cut off welfare by a single anonymous phone call — that's extortion. Extortion is violence. If your welfare cheque depends on the mood of

Because of this lack of value, some of us die.

your social worker, that's violence. If your housing depends

on keeping on the good side of your landlord, including sexual favours, that's violence. If your children can be taken from your arms because of an anonymous phone call, that's violence.

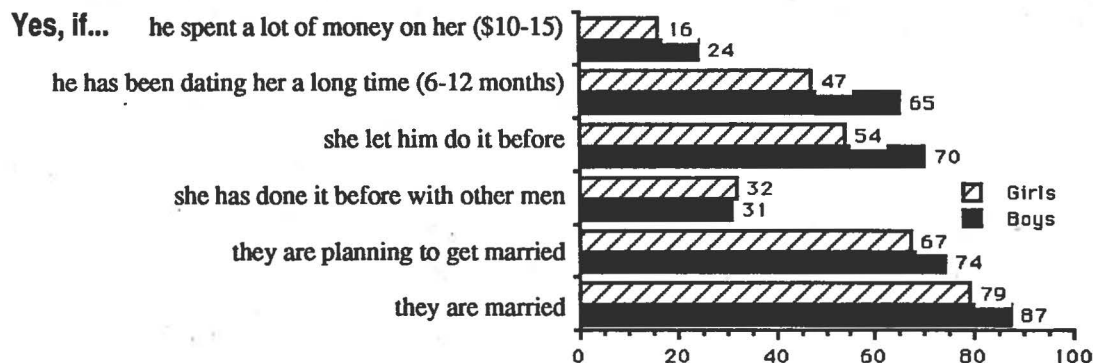
Women and children whose only crime is being poor as a result of being deserted and/or underpaid in the workforce are fighting daily to survive. Women and children on welfare are living on too little money and are being treated worse than prisoners in our penal system. Their bodies, their minds, and their emotions suffer under the constant onslaught of social workers, housing authorities, Children's Aid workers, creditors, and so on — very few of whom are supportive or even see them as people.

Mothers United for Metro Shelter believe that we're in danger of losing everything we think we have won if we don't address the root cause of violence against women — the undervaluing and exploitation of all women. We can only hope to stop the violence against us by fighting together to improve life for all women.

MUMS says — Take Back the Night, Keep Demanding our Rights!

My GOD! She looks an awful sight  
The result of the beating she got last night  
Her body's bruised — she's full of pain  
What bizarre accident, this time, can she claim?  
She lies there in bed, but she cannot sleep  
Hurts so bad, but she cannot weep  
So slowly the hours are ticking by  
If only she could break down and cry  
When she looks at the bruises on her arms, neck and head  
She wonders if it really so wicked to wish he were dead  
There's also bruises on her breasts and feet  
And asks herself, "Who says life's so sweet?"  
To leave — she wonders if she dares  
As she gets up and makes her way downstairs  
Then she decides to stay just one more day  
There's some treasures she would like to pack away  
But tomorrow never comes, it's true to say  
And so life goes on in its usual way.  
Gwen Wallace

## Does a man have a right to have intercourse against a woman's consent?



A Rape Crisis Centre in Providence, Rhode Island, conducts a sexual awareness program with adolescents throughout that state. They held a survey in which they asked seventh to ninth graders about men forcing women to have intercourse with them. The above graph shows their findings. It is shocking to realize that rape is condoned in any circumstances; it is double shocking to see what these young people believe are legitimate justifications. Would Canadian results be the same? Info from the Journal Bulletin, 5/1/88.

## Bathrooms one relatively safe place for battered woman

Debbie M.

I don't know why I find it so difficult to write this: it's not as though I consider it to be a big, dark secret — something so shameful that I must keep it hidden. And yet I realize few people are aware of this part of my life. Perhaps it's because this part of my history does not conform to the image I wish to present of myself: strong, independent, on top of it all.

Nonetheless, it happened and is now a part of me and my view of myself despite the fact that it happened almost 15 years ago.

I was a battered woman. Not wife, because, thank god, we weren't married. And it didn't last long. But it was long enough to have some deep effects on me, even to this day. I'll never forget the emotions even if I do forget the details.

We were living in Truro, for the most part. I didn't know a soul there. He knew many people — it was his home town and his parents still lived there. I had no one to talk to about what was going on, and I don't think I would have discussed the situation with anyone even if I did know people. My parents didn't approve of him, so I certainly couldn't consult with them. I was stuck.

I tried very hard to make the relationship work, but it seemed the harder I tried, the worse it got. I don't know how much was my fault. After all, I stayed. He would be so nice when he wasn't in one of his "moods." And I kept thinking he would change. But the strange thing was we never talked about it. He never apologized. He never admitted that it happened. And neither did I. I thought if only I did things right, things would change. So I kept trying to do things "right."

And I also felt if I could do this, if I could succeed, if I could make a home, with a man, then, well, I couldn't be a lesbian, could I? And maybe I stayed longer because of that.

He could be a charming man, when he wasn't drunk. But as time went by, he drank more and more frequently. And it took less and less to get him going. I could see his eyes change after just two beers and then I knew I had to watch out. It seemed that every time he started to drink, something would displease him and he would take it out on me.

I found if I went limp and slumped down to the floor, he would slow down in his attacks. There was more chance of being kicked in the face or belly that way, but it was often worth it to get him to stop sooner. (I don't know if he stopped at that point because he was afraid that I was seriously hurt or if it proved his dominance. I suspect the latter.)

Thank god for bathrooms, the one place in an apartment where you can go and lock the door. Where he couldn't get in. It became my refuge.

Sometimes I would get really angry at the unfairness of it all. Why was everything always my fault and never his? When I got outraged at his attacks, I would attempt to fight back. Although I occasionally did get a few good licks in, his superior strength would always win out.

But the worst part was my increasing lack of self-confidence. He was always calling me stupid and I began to believe him. I still tend to believe his words despite anyone's comments to the contrary.

I can remember some images from that time.

I remember the time when we were driving through the

streets of Truro. He was far too drunk to drive, but of course he wouldn't let me drive. He drove too fast, not stopping at stop signs or red lights. At one point he had to slow down a little to make a corner and I opened the car door and jumped/rolled out. I walked home, hoping he would be asleep when I got in. I figured I could stand a possible beating better than I could stand a probable car accident.

I can picture the time when we were staying at his parents' house, babysitting his little sister. He got into one of his "moods" and started hitting me. I slumped to the floor but this was one of the times he didn't stop at that point. He started kicking me and got a good one right on the side of my face. Finally I got a chance to run to the bathroom and lock the door. He then kicked the door in, breaking it in the process.

The next day I had a wonderfully great bruise completely covering the side of my face. (I confess I tried to hide the bruise on my face with my long hair, but I knew that was impossible to do completely.) The bathroom door was broken. And yet his parents said nothing. Nothing at all to me or to him.

I found out much later his father beat his mother. And after I left him, he hit on his younger sister. And his mother. And his wife, after he got married.

One summer Saturday afternoon after a trip to the local pub, he delivered a particularly bad beating. I escaped and locked myself in the bathroom where I could hear him go all through the apartment picking up furniture and throwing it at the walls. He eventually fell asleep, but he woke up when he heard me go out. He followed me in his car as I walked up the street. I crossed from side to side, and street to street, trying to avoid him. Finally I found a park where trees would hide me.

I thought about what was going on; I thought about my life. I considered what my parents would say and decided I could stand their anger and censure more easily than I could stand the beatings, bruising and humiliations of staying where I was.

Without friends to escape to and talk to, I really had no other choice. I would go back to my parents, tail between my legs, and finally admit they were right about him.

I didn't tell them, though, about what happened. I tried to get on with my life, being as hard-hearted as I could whenever he contacted me wanting to get back together. (This was made easier by the fact that he tended to call during the early hours of the morning while he was drunk.) But with time, the calls and meetings slowed down and ended.

But I have survived. And in some ways, I think the experience strengthened me. I am more sympathetic to the issue of battering and violence against women. I understand just how hard it is to get out of such a situation.

I'll never forget what happened, at least not permanently. I forget for days, weeks, sometimes even months at a time. But it's always with me whether I realize it or not.

I'm always extremely uncomfortable with people who have been drinking, especially if they are aggressive, and still attempt to avoid arguments and fights. I find it difficult even to have disagreements with anybody. If I find something uncomfortable, I still want to run away. And bathrooms are still my refuge.



Graphic from Women's News



# Abused woman leaves relationship to find few legal rights on her side

Judith Burgess

It was with mixed feelings that I walked through the spacious halls of Bryony House to get a cup of tea and try and calm my shattered nerves. I had been there first in 1980 and so was a 'repeater.' I felt safe for the first time in weeks. The thought going through my mind was "Who or what was at fault — me or the system?"

The catalyst, in this situation, had been my GED English teacher from Veith House. Talking to him, I felt myself thaw. He is a very sincere and encouraging person. I began to realize that I had been missing basic human understanding. I had felt isolated and shut off.

After he left, I called Bryony House and spoke to staff there. I guess she knew how emotionally devastated I was. We decided that I would go to the House that night.

Intakes, as they are called, can be quite lengthy since for most women this is the first friendly female face that she has seen in weeks. So the staff person is trying to get forms filled out and listen to the battered woman who is trying desperately to deal with what's left of her feelings. Feelings which start with grief and end with anger. Abuse and injuries are documented, including information on the abuser. Staff patiently but firmly told me that I had been brainwashed into believing I was no longer capable of anything. Well, it's been five weeks since I left and I'm back to writing.

People must start realizing that battering is a devastating experience for women and children and transition houses cannot be expected to operate on the shoestring budgets that they presently have.

Situations in our lives can have a profound effect on our mental and

physical health. I was sick to my stomach several times a day for the duration of my stay there. It saddened me so much to see most of the other women, emotionally devastated and completely drained spiritually, some to the point where they had nothing left to give their little children. "Oh, God" I thought, "this is not the way things are supposed to be." A woman takes a chance with a man, expecting a home, security and love and ends up with a legacy of violence for herself and her children.

Men who batter have serious problems and need professional help. However, it's the victims who end up going for help. Batterers believe they

talking about me. Why shouldn't he have tears in his eyes? He went to drama school when he was in university and learned to act.

My other friend was home at 11:30 at night when he went to see her. She told me he was loud and demanding and asking about me and then changed his tactics. He asked her to come down to the house with him to wait for me. She refused and then he said they could make some plans for Sunday. She replied that she was not interested and that I was her best friend.

This man was cruel. Frequently I tried to go for a walk to avoid the all-too-often arguments that occurred. He would block the door and tell me I was looking for another man. He would then proceed to call me a feminist bitch. He once forced me to the floor, sat on me,

and bruised my arm to prevent me from leaving.

The abuse didn't end with my leaving the man. I found that my rights were curtailed by limitations in the laws. It angers me to think that I have been over to the 'old' place twice now and I still haven't got all my things.

When I went with the police I was only allowed to get my clothes. Of course, the abuser got all the rights; all he could talk about was that I hadn't paid my share of the rent. (I later did, although it didn't get me any farther ahead.) He wouldn't let my mother in to help me so I had to move everything in the pouring rain myself. Then he said he

**It angers me that men think they can do exactly as they please because they are men**

have no problems.

The man I was with used intimidation, name calling, isolation, continual criticism, a repetitive diet, and continual put-downs to try to control me. He was very much into control and made up whole lists of 'don'ts.' I was not supposed to go to the North End Library, the Metropolitan Store, walk on Gottingen Street, or go visit a friend at Black United Front.

Although none of my friends even knew that I was going to Bryony House, this man tracked down three of them. He approached each differently. One friend is a respected member of the community (a professional). He repeatedly harassed her by phone after she asked him not to, and as if that wasn't enough, he phoned while she was at work and harassed her 16 year old son.

He went over and talked to one of my other friends and talked to her like a perfect gentleman. She told me he even had tears in his eyes when he was



(Graphic from Women's News)

had to go out and I had to hurry.

The second time I took two of my friends thinking that this might facilitate things. This was not so despite a lawyer's letter demanding that he return my things or face small claims court. He wouldn't let us in the house.

Since I had paid my share of the rent for July, I had every legal right to go in. Instead, he stood his ground and eyed us warily. He brought things to the door, one at a time, shutting the door after each trip. He took back the things he gave me and kept the things I gave him. He slammed the door in my friends' faces and stomped off as if he had all the rights in the world. He still has my dining room table, a living room chair, and a stool, among other things. So much for a woman's rights.

It angers me that men like this think they can do exactly what they damn well please by virtue of the fact that they are men. They commit 'legal' rape, 'legal' violations of the Criminal Code, and 'legal' theft by taking what is not theirs to take.

There are two sets of rules, one for them and one for women and other

minorities. What is the purpose of having a Constitution, a Human Rights Act and a Criminal Code if they are not in place to serve all of the people?

What amounts to a game of control has been going on for years, overlooked and ignored by the 'old boys network.' We have cops that do nothing, lawyers hamstrung by archaic procedures, and judges that throw cases out of court with the evidence in front of them.

We have broken homes, devastated women, sexually abused children, abused animals. Not much to say in the way of progress. Some of these people will be scarred for life — it's time somebody gave a damn.

Don't kid yourself, some will make it. They will rebuild their lives, provide for their children and find decent men and women for friends. But if we want to help solve this problem, we must assemble, organize, and protest.

We are valuable human beings. As a line from *Some Men are More Perfect than Others* reads: "Men who do not water their gardens have no roses to love."

## Incest survivor shares pain and her hopes for healing

Rhya

On September 8, 1987, children, women and men gathered together to protest violence against women and children. I was one of the women who organized the third annual Take Back the Night March in Fredericton for the Fredericton Rape Crisis Centre. I was, also, one of the women who shared parts of my life with the gathering:

**TAKE BACK THE NIGHT  
MARCH, SEPTEMBER 1987  
INCEST SURVIVORS STORIES**

Tonight many female children around the world cry before going to sleep. Their pain is incestuous assault.

Tonight, while we are gathered here, many of us remember the incestuous assaults we endured through our childhood and teenage years.

Women who have survived these assaults made on their bodies and minds are here among us.

Pain. It is a very strong and enduring feeling.

Peace. It is an even stronger and enduring feeling. We grab for it, it runs away from us. We grow into it, we become peaceful. We walk in peace, peace envelopes us.

Women know that incestuous assault offenders can be anyone in the family. It can be a brother just as easily as a father. Or a step-parent. The offender is not always male, but the

majority are.

To be an incestuous assault survivor means many things: sometimes it means trying to tell a best friend about the abuse and that friend's reaction is to avoid you or to ask "Are you sure?". Sometimes when you tell someone you are intimate with "I don't like to be touched that way" the responding actions and discussions leave you feeling very sad, lonely, scared, and even a little bit guilty...and wondering why you feel that way.

To be an incestuous assault survivor means living with the memories which follow you throughout your life. It means trying to convince yourself that the assaults were just nightmares. It means living in the same house with the offender long after the assaults have stopped because you're too young or too emotionally paralyzed to leave or are financially unable to do so. It means going to see people in the helping professions who don't know how to relate to you and your experience.

It means giving up on yourself, crying yourself to sleep at night, praying for strength...which you feel will never come. It means not knowing how to love yourself and convincing yourself that you are worthy of being unloved. It means, for some, suicide attempts, becoming dependent on alcohol, prescription or illegal drugs. For

others, it means mental, emotional, and in some cases, vocal seclusion for a very long time. It means getting so low that you need someone to point out the way to recovery. It means finding someone who is caring, empathic and firm. It means digging up the past, hurting, laughing, getting very angry, frustration, hating... and sometimes it even means forgiving.

Being a survivor of incestuous assault means working through the memories and getting on with life. Learning to meet life, to become all that you can be and to move towards the goals you choose for your life.

All of us here are victims in one way or another of the systems that make it easy for men and boys who assault women and children and to get away with it.

Children are easily frightened into situations where abuse happens. I know, because I was victimized as a child by my brother. I think that I am lucky because I was not assaulted by my father. It was not someone who loved me. The abuser was cruel, read pornography; he took my trust and blew my life all to pieces when he raped me.

I consider myself to be lucky. I am learning to move from merely existing to actually surviving. This has taken a very long time to do.

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N.B. We encourage all feminist researchers to register in the bank. Application forms available from CRIAW.

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On a nice day in June, 1987, school was out. A nine year old girl looked forward to walking to the home of a close friend.

This was not to be, for at a nearby street corner a man came up from behind, put one arm around her waist, and with his free hand reached inside her pants for her vagina.

The child was able to scream "Put me down!" and to push his hands away. Fortunately, he did not pursue the matter.

As she glanced back, she saw the man running and, knowing him from the neighborhood, identified him. Thus began an emotional ordeal for both child and parents.



bill@79 LMS

(Graphic from Kinesis)

#### SDB

The strain and stress was at times almost unbearable. The accused man was out on bail with a court order to stay away from the child. But he remained in the area. The child saw or encountered him when out playing, going to school and when attending events and performances.

The stress began to have an emotional effect on her and she began to get help from Atlantic Child Guidance.

The frustrations were too numerous to mention. Court proceedings at every turn. Our eyes opened to the fact that criminals have more rights and protections within the law system than the victims.

Just writing this raises conflicting

emotions, feelings and pain within me. The child was mine, my own flesh and blood, and the assault still hurts.

On that day in June our first step was to contact the police. I have nothing but praise for the officers who arrived. They sat in our front room and talked in an easy manner as our young girl repeated the events of the day.

Shortly after that, she repeated her story again to the first of the three prosecutors she would meet.

Though the prosecutor we finally had in court was very professional, compassionate and did his utmost to see justice served, he had only just come on the case.

The accused at least had the advantages of the same lawyer representing him from the arrest to trial. And the attorney was on his side.

At one point, one official inferred that where no sign of physical assault could be seen and since she might not be able to take the oath and because of other factors, the prosecution only had a case based on the child's word against the defendants. Perhaps we should not pursue our case, it was so weak.

The primary hearing was held eight months later and again she had to talk of the assault in front of strangers.

She also had to prove she knew what was meant by telling the truth. It is

not satisfactory that the child knows to tell the truth, not to lie. She often must understand the religious significance and must be able to take the oath.

I am a Christian and believe in the Bible myself, but I find this a form of discrimination based on religion. Are our courts inferring that children who are raised out of church or who receive no religious instruction do not have the right of the court's protection?

Fortunately in our case, though our girl was unable to take the oath both at the primary hearing and trial, the judges felt she comprehended the seriousness of the matter and knew the truth.

In the end, that didn't make much difference. The judge made it clear that there was no doubt the assault happened as described. But the judge also felt there was some reasonable doubt on the matter of identity. My daughter could not remember for sure about a moustache. She thought in June the assailant had none. But in the police photos and at court proceedings, he did. She was not sure of the colour of the baseball cap he was wearing that day in June.

And the police statement was not allowed because the accused had not been read the correct Rights. And there was the matter of her being unable to

take the oath. And the prosecutor had just come on the case.

And, in the end, it seemed like my daughter was on trial when you listened to that attorney who defended the accused.

Maybe I sound bitter, but I have heard of those accused of robbery, murder and other crimes where they were found guilty and sentenced on less identification. And they were not known previously by the victims.

Although no physical harm was done, such as beatings and rape, emotional harm was and will remain a scar for quite a while and perhaps permanently. She is in constant fear—especially when the accused is in the vicinity. She does not understand the decision of the court.

At a very young age she knows disrespect for the courts. She feels betrayed and feels the accused got away with lies.

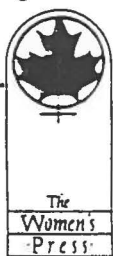
We fear if anything ever happened again she might hesitate to tell us or anyone else.

There are other emotional scars we see and try to deal with day-to-day but

cannot mention.

I strongly recommend that any other parent facing this ordeal call the Service for Sexual Assault or Family Services for help. Do not be so naive as to think that justice will prevail.

And I urge everyone to write to anyone in a position of authority to change the laws and to provide more parent support groups, public awareness programs and additional staff to set up and provide these services.



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## Some things I would recommend from our experience in court

- Those who supposedly uphold the law appear to have the view that unless bodily harm has occurred — why bother? Yet our education system and the media strongly point out that our children have the right to say NO. They urge children not to be afraid to open up and trust the police and others that enforce the law. Yet, what happens when they do?
- Police need to be trained in talking with children. They also need to be able to inform parents of other community services that might be able to help with legal aid and moral support. These services can help in the process.
- During the primary hearing and the trial, the child and the accused share the same waiting area! This puts tremendous stress on the child. This should be changed.
- Tape recordings and video tapes should be accepted as evidence. The child should only have to tell her story once. The child should not have to face the accused in the court room.

- Harassment laws should be extended to include all hand gestures and oral remarks made by family members of the accused. It is hard to prove that the family are doing this because the accused put them up to it. Sometimes family members can take it upon themselves to try to make the victim drop the charges.
- When an accused is out, pending trial, the restraining order should be extended to family members — especially when the accused is known to have caused trouble before.
- If the accused is acquitted for some reason other than being not guilty, the restraining order should remain in effect to protect the child emotionally and even physically.
- A lie detector should be given to the accused when he is arrested and it should be allowed in court. This could help the victim who has no witnesses and it could protect the accused if a mistake has been made.



# Conference speaker recharges battery

**Toni Goree**

The Women, Solidarity and Southern Africa Conference held last June in Toronto held no big surprises for me; yet in the end, I was glad that I went.

The majority of the women there were white Canadian, liberal-minded women, half of whom spoke French. These women had a genuine commitment of solidarity with women in Southern Africa, ready and willing to join their voices with those of women in South Africa demanding justice and liberation and condemning apartheid.

The minority of women consisted of what I as a Nova Scotian would call a hodgepodge; namely, Canadian immigrant women, women of colour who are working in Canada and the United States for international agencies, and the (three) Black conference speakers from Southern Africa.

As far as colourful Canadian-born content, there were two Native women and myself, a Black Nova Scotian. I was pissed off, but I was not surprised. Whites don't want apartheid in South Africa but they do want to maintain the power and privilege that comes from institutionalized racism here in Canada. It's so twisted it borders on funny, but nothing this twisted can be funny.

The conference kicked off with the usual get to know you games. Personally, I hate those damn games. Let's face it, this is the age of Opra Winfrey, let's ban the games and put the time to better use. And then, as always, there were the workshops. I'll sum up the workshops in one word, o.k. (or is that two words?)

No one caused trouble, which is too bad. All signs of anger were kept well hidden inside our souls. Every once in a while the air would get a little tense, but for the most part women waited for meal-times to share and vent anger. As we all know, women are socialized to ingest their frustration and anger, all the time pretending to transcend it. You might say we are programmed to self-destruct; it's not our fault.

Just before rushing out of the conference centre to catch my ride to the train station, I witnessed a Black woman crying and saying things like, "every time it's always the same old thing," and "I'm just so sick of it." But even here all voices were hushed... standard stuff really.

On the Saturday evening before we left, women got together in their own cliques and sang cultural songs as loud as they could, which is the proper way to do it if you ask me. However, the fact is there were just two groups singing:

**Whites don't want there to be apartheid in South Africa but they do want to maintain the power and privilege that comes from institutionalized racism here in Canada.**

French Canadians and Africans (plus of course the white liberal women who always manage to go on paid trips to Africa). You might say English Canadians had nothing to sing about. Other than "O Canada" or "This Land Is Your Land," English Canadians have no common cultural songs. That's multiculturalism for you or regionalism or whatever excuse you want to use.

So, we were left with two choices. Either to retire to our rooms, or peek in on the two groups that were having fun. That is, up until the African group shut their door to outsiders. So much for being First World. Anyway, there were no hard feelings — at two a.m. the drinking disco clique took over. This ended up being some women from every culture, and lots of English Canadians, including myself.

So why was I so glad that I went?

Because there was one person who made the whole event special. Her name is Feroza Adam. Feroza was in Canada representing the Transvaal Women's Federation of South Africa. She spoke about the current political situation in South Africa, the brutal economic hardships the people suffer under apartheid, the social/political/economic work of her organization, and so much more. She is an articulate, dynamic and sensitive woman who is capable of getting her message across, alienating no one. I am always in awe of such qualities in a person.

Let me give an example of just how much women enjoyed hearing her speak. Feroza used up all of the time allotted to her for speaking but there was still so much more to say that women in the audience unanimously agreed to postpone lunch, workshops and whatever else in order to let her continue. All too often just the opposite is what we want from conference speakers. No disrespect to conference speakers intended — it is just that usually the audience is tired or has heard it all before, or the speaker is tired, or has already told it too many times. Let's face it, it must be hard work to enlighten the ignorant dumb masses.



Feroza Adam (left), Transvaal Women's Federation of South Africa with Toni Goree. (Photo by Lee Seymour)

Feroza does it with style and force.

Following Toronto, Feroza came to Halifax and gave a talk at the Club 55 on Gottingen St. Over 70 people from the community came to hear her. This was an exciting moment for me as a Black woman living in a province known for its racism.

I was hoping people would be able to see that what is happening in South Africa is not so far removed from us here in Nova Scotia. And also for Feroza to see that the struggle goes on everywhere and Nova Scotia is no exception. Who wants to believe that the devil has such a strong foothold as apartheid in the world? We're talking scary stuff here!

For seven years now I have been reading everything I can about South Africa, talking to people who lived

there, going to talks and conferences. Yet it is brought home to me time and time again that I know so little about this beast called apartheid. This complete and utter evil is a demon that requires human sacrifice if it is ever going to be dismantled, but don't worry, it will be. The human sacrifice is happening. Apartheid is not a misunderstanding between Blacks and Whites, it is a war between good and evil. We must fight like a "dog with a bone" and then some.

And so I am grateful to Oxfam and Pandora for sponsoring me so that I could go to Toronto. I am thankful to my kids for doing without a Mom (yet again), and I am indebted to Feroza for recharging my battery.

And to you, my sisters, I say AMANDLA!

## Reformist university believes integrating men, hard work and faith can achieve feminist goals

**Mary C. Clancy**

Last fall a committee was set up under the Chair of St. Paule Cantin, then Superior General of the Sisters of Charity of Halifax. The mission was to redraft the Mt. St. Vincent University's Charter for the future, including the sale of M.S.V.U. to its Board by the Corporation of the Sisters of Charity. The committee was made up of Board, Faculty, Students, Alumnae and Sisters and it met steadily from late Fall to early Spring. The meetings were hard work and, occasionally, lively in the extreme, but in the end the new Charter was forged.

Mt. St. Vincent is not a hotbed of radical feminism. It is, however, an institution dedicated to the higher education of women. It has a tradition of belief that women can accomplish anything within reason if they are armed with the proper education. That "reason," by the way, is a feminist's reason, not a traditionalist's.

In 1925 Attorney-General Walter O'Hearn sponsored the first Charter of Mount Saint Vincent College in the Nova Scotia Legislature. In his support of the private bill he assured his colleagues that arriving at degree granting status would not constitute a threat to males at other institutions of higher learning.

The Mount began in 1873, twenty-four years after Halifax Bishop Walsh asked four Sisters of Charity from New York to come to Halifax. They began with an academy for young ladies on the shores of Bedford Basin and soon it was, as well, through an agreement with Dalhousie, a teacher training school.

By 1925 the Sisters and students were more than ready for the designation "College" and the right to grant degrees. Over the next forty years the institution grew and evolved but did not sustain any outward radical change. Course options increased with the number of students, of course, but the atmosphere, the routine, the spirit of the institution differed little until the 1960s.

In the 60s, as with almost everything else in modern society, the Mount changed a lot. Well, a lot on the surface. First there was an influx of students. The baby boomer generation, armed with government loans, greatly increased the number of students seeking University Education. Then there was the change in faculty, not only was there an increase in lay faculty but also many of these were men. Some of them were actually young!

At this time as well, many of the rules relaxed. Not as much as some universities, but the impact at the Mount was significant. Academic gowns were no longer worn to class, dining room and chapel. Indeed the policing of religious attendance to all of these things was relaxed considerably. This adaptation of the revolutionary winds of the 60s might not have seemed so radical to others but it was significant.

Young women were allowed to decide for themselves, to take responsibility for their actions, to actually be adult. The Mount was relaxing its disciplinary and supervisory roles, and in the process giving a sense of maturity to young women who might have expected their four years in university to

be a sheltered hiatus between the authority of father and that of husband.

In 1965 the Mount rewrote its charter and became known as Mt. St. Vincent University. In the late 60s and early 70s under the presidency of Dr. Catherine Wallace, students and faculty became vocal on civil and human rights; the university began to be seen as a place, where the re-invigorated feminist movement might prosper.

The Mount, as good ground for feminism, should be no surprise. The indomitable spirit of the first Sisters of Charity was passed on by them to each generation of students and fostered by faculty, alumnae and others who see Mt. St. Vincent as a unique and special place. For over a hundred years, young women have found on the hill in Rockingham a source of inspiration as well as knowledge. True, it's a quiet, almost sedate, form of inspiration. It believes in reform rather than revolution but it also believes and has proven that perseverance, faith, hard work and commitment can move mountains.

The Mount no longer belongs to the Sisters but the Superior General Sr. Louise Bray is the new Chancellor and the Sisters will appoint five of the Board of Governors. The tradition, the spirit of the Mount will continue to evolve based on the ideal of dedicated women.

Even the recent development of co-education can be turned to advantage; that is, to educate young men in the realities of women's oppression. Sometimes the job seems too enormous, but then so must the Rockingham woods have seemed to the Sisters over a hundred years ago.



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Donna Marshall

(Photo by Brenda Conroy)

## LINCing social need with political action

Donna Marshall

L.I.N.C. — Low Income Network Committee was formed by women on Family Benefits from across Nova Scotia. L.I.N.C. held its founding meeting in February 1988 and every woman had a story to tell about the hardships of being on family benefits.

These women were not surprised at the problems that existed. The most disturbing issue facing women and children on family benefits is the lack of coverage to provide pharmacare for themselves and especially for their children.

L.I.N.C. has written to Tom MacInnis, Minister of Social Services, demanding that the provincial government take immediate action to provide pharmacare for themselves and their children.

At the February meeting we found that there were too many cases where

women and children have suffered serious and on-going illness or disability; where they had to almost beg for help from the municipalities.

We are very concerned that under present social assistance legislation in Nova Scotia, only disabled adults on family benefits have pharmacare coverage. The dependants of these disabled adults are not covered by family benefits; nor are single parent families.

Most disturbing is the fact that many municipalities refuse to help because Family Benefit Allowances are higher than Municipal Allowances, making women and children on F.B. technically ineligible for "special needs," the category of assistance under which health care is covered.

"We're told to find the money in our family benefit cheques, money that isn't there. We take money from the food allowance or just do without the

drugs we and our children need."

All the money in the world cannot buy health, but some of that money for women and children can ease the suffering we, and especially our children, experience.

This is one issue that we at L.I.N.C. will fight no matter how long. We are asking the public to help us in this by writing letters and/or signing petitions which will be out soon.

□ □ □ □ □

If you have any questions or are interested in becoming a part of L.I.N.C., call Donna Marshall at 454-7129 or Carolyn Gabriel at 423-5059.

## Newest national newspaper starts

The newest newspaper for women is joining the ranks of the feminist periodicals in Canada in September!

The *Womanist* will carry insightful news and analysis from across the country, while also providing a unique analysis of national news and federal legislation from Ottawa. It will be published six times a year.

The *Womanist* is being created to empower and enable women. To go back to the basics, the common ground that has built the women's movement, while celebrating our differences.

What can we agree upon? That we, as women, are important. We have a right to be heard, to be respected and trusted.

As a movement we have a responsibility to enable all voices to be heard, equally. That is our commitment in this newspaper... to empower with ideas, information and inspiration.

Subscriptions are available from P.O. Box 76, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6C3, phone (613) 230-0590. Sustaining — \$25; Individual — \$5-10; Institution — \$15.

## Many different sexual diseases cause problems for women

Willi Broeren

STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) encompass over 25 entities which are transmitted through sexual contact.

Despite the publicity and concern about AIDS and the emphasis on "safe sex," the incidence of STDs has increased dramatically in recent years.

This article will focus on some of the more common STDs affecting women. STDs can present in a variety of ways including vaginal discharge, vaginal irritation or itching, abnormal bleeding, or genital sores or growths.

A variety of organisms can cause vaginal discharge. One of these is chlamydia, now the most common STD in Canada.

Chlamydia tends to be more common in women 15-24 years old and individuals with more than one sex

partner. It can present with vaginal discharge as well as abdominal pain, pain with intercourse, abnormal vaginal bleeding between periods or with intercourse.

Once diagnosed, chlamydia is easy to treat with a course of antibiotics.

Unfortunately, prior to diagnosis, this organism can spread from the cervix to the uterus and fallopian tubes and cause PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease).

Complications of PID include ectopic pregnancy and infertility if the tubes become blocked by scar tissue. Furthermore, infection with this organism does not always cause symptoms and a woman may not know she has an infection unless she is routinely tested when she has a Pap smear.

Other causes of vaginal discharge include gonorrhea, trichomonas, bacterial vaginosis (gardenella) and candida.

All of these, with the exception of candida (also known as moniliasis or yeast infection), are generally sexually transmitted. Diagnosis and hence appropriate treatment is made on the basis of the nature of the discharge as well as various tests.

Candidiasis, or yeast infection, is very common and most women experience at least one episode in their life time.

Unfortunately, a small group of women have frequent episodes of candida which causes genital itching, burning, and increased discharge. Predisposing factors include obesity, pregnancy, high-dose birth control pills, diabetes, antibiotics, bubble baths, tight-fitting clothes, nylon underwear, etc.

Various measures, including yogurt or lacto bacillus douches may help decrease frequent episodes.

The most common cause of genital sores is herpes. Herpes is an infection caused by the herpes simplex virus. There are two types: one which causes labial herpes or cold sores, and one which causes genital herpes, but both can infect either area.

Herpes is transmitted by intimate

sexual or close personal contact. The first signs of genital herpes usually appear about one week after contact with the virus.

The earliest symptoms are tingling and burning followed by the formation of blisters. These blisters then break leaving painful sores which eventually heal after about ten days.

Once infected with herpes, the majority of women will go on to have recurrences, but the frequency of these is highly variable. For some women, acquiring herpes causes significant emotional distress because of its "incurable" stigma. Medication is available to control the number and severity of outbreaks but it is very expensive. Recently a herpes support group for women has been organized in Halifax.

The most common cause of genital

growths are genital warts or condyloma which are caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). There is no accurate information on the national incidence of HPV, but it is felt to be much more common than herpes and increasing dramatically.

These condyloma are highly infectious and transmitted solely by sexual contact. They can occur anywhere in the genital area and may present as huge masses or as very small lesions detectable only with magnification.

The virus can remain latent in the skin for a long period of time before any symptoms appear. The average time between exposure to the virus and the development of lesions is three months, but this is highly variable.

The most serious problem with HPV is the strong connection between certain types of HPV and cervical cancer. Research now shows that HPV is involved in 90-95% of cases of dysplasia (abnormal cervical cells) and cancer of the cervix.

The most important test to detect the presence of HPV and abnormal cells is a Pap smear. All women should have an annual Pap smear. Most physicians also do routine tests for STDs when doing a Pap because of the possibility of asymptomatic infection.

The risk of acquiring a STD is dependent upon one's sexual practices. Limiting one's partners and the use of a condom significantly decrease the risk.

Lesbians are generally at low risk of acquiring STDs but may contract candidiasis, herpes, condyloma as well as other diseases depending on the sexual history of their partners as well as their sexual practices.

In view of the widespread nature of STDs and the potentially serious complications that may occur, it is imperative that women have regular gynecological exams.

In addition, any abnormal vaginal discharge, irritation, or bleeding, particularly following a change in sex partners, should be discussed with the family doctor.

## Life Planning and Learning Centre

If you are an unemployed woman living in Halifax County or the metro area, the Life Planning and Learning Centre can help. FREE services include:

- workshops and counselling
- assistance with interviewing
- resumé writing
- uncovering the "hidden job market"
- confidence building
- job finding clubs

Added focuses for the Centre are women experiencing barriers related to age, skin colour and access to non-traditional jobs.

For an appointment call: Life Planning and Learning Centre, 443-4450, ext. 281.



The Centre for Continuing Education  
Mount Saint Vincent University

## Classified Ads:

Feminist kittens need loving home. Call 757-3572.

Massages: Contact Carol Millett, 454-0570.

To Sublet: 1 bedroom apartment in women's Co-op in Halifax for October 1. Cost \$340 plus \$50 heat. Contact Brook at 422-4702.

Lesbian feminist kitty seeks home. Call Catherine 455-3866, evenings.

Wanted: 2 bedroom apartment for 2 women, 3 cats, and 1 gorgeous dog with soft brown eyes. North end area. Call Catherine 455-3866, evenings.

Wanted: women who want to play basketball. Contact Marie, 455-3960



# Child care must become priority in NS

Myrna Carlson

Do child care services in Nova Scotia represent the needs of parents and children; or rather the belief system of those in power?

What we need is a comprehensive, qualitative system that is accessible and affordable for all. What we have is a jumble of free market services which are purchased by parents at the going rates. Only a few precious subsidized spaces are available in public day cares. All other working mothers must choose a service according to their ability to pay.

The day cares, both public and private, struggle to remain financially viable, while maintaining competitive rates. The child care workers (mostly women) are grossly underpaid. There is a shortage of licensed spaces, especially for infants, and school-age children. Arrangements are often temporary, and seldom flexible. And as yet, shift-workers have few choices.

Because women tend to carry the responsibility of child care, it is they who must adjust their work schedules. The result is that more women work part-time, and accept marginal jobs. A 1981 report on Nova Scotia child care by Kathy Moggridge pointed out that while more and more women with dependents enter the labour force, child care resources are not keeping up to that growth. Thus, private arrangements such as a relative, neighbour or babysitter are the norm. If we, as a society, value children and women, then now is the time for change.

A group which is working to change some of the system's inadequacies is the Child Care Advocacy Association

of Nova Scotia (CAANS). This is a fairly new organization whose members consist of parents, child care workers, day care directors, union members, and other concerned people.

In June, 50 people came from across the province to plan and develop advocacy strategy. They took part in workshops covering areas such as video-making, media, public outreach, and election campaigns. From these workshops, four committees were formed. One group is responsible for political activity, another will develop policy, the third is handling publicity, and the fourth will work on building support through networking and collaboration with other groups.

Nova Scotia is behind many other provinces in child care advocacy. Because there is federal money available for day care currently, the timing is critical. We must lobby our government and encourage the politicians to endorse day care growth, and more important, to make day care a priority.



Clothing centre at Trinity Anglican Church (Photo by Susan Graham)

## Clothing centre offers comfort

Tina Goree

All Nation's Christian Reformed Church operates a children's clothing centre in the basement of Trinity Anglican Church at the corner of Cogswell and Brunswick Streets. Good quality children's clothing is available, free, to families who need it.

This past year, Jane Porter and I found ourselves to be the main volunteers operating the clothing centre. I

talked to Jane about my experience of going to the food centre and how the people in charge of the place made me feel degraded just because I was in need of food. So working at the clothing centre was a chance for me to make people who come to the clothing centre feel comfortable.

As well as offering coffee and cookies, we decided not to put a limit on the amount of clothing a family could take.

But to my surprise there are people who abuse this policy. Some people would come, take baby clothes, blankets, kids sweaters, and sell them. If they only realized that when they do this, other people do without.

But most people do appreciate that there is a place to go to get free clothing for their families. Jane and I are glad to be a part of this service and find it a rewarding experience.

## Wants good role model for daughter:

# Single mom fights stereotype

Andrea Noylander

An education for a single mother in the 80s has become increasingly important, if not absolutely necessary.

It is a well-known fact that a very high percentage of teenage girls be-

come pregnant each year. These girls are forced to disrupt or discontinue their adult education.

Teenage pregnancy has become a major problem in today's school system. More and more young girls are finding themselves pregnant and alone each year. These girls are often forced into making mature decisions in adult situations. Confused and lonely, some girls find themselves clinging to the idea of something to love and hold onto. Therefore a high percentage end up keeping their babies.

Other factors may also play a role in their decision. However, in my personal experience, this was the dominating factor. I consider myself quite fortunate. I was not forced to drop out of high school in order to look after and support my baby. I was forced, however, to seek temporary assistance from the municipal government.

Because I decided early in my pregnancy that I definitely wanted to continue going to school, I was able to be provided with an excellent day-care program right in the school I attended.

Most girls who find themselves in the same position are not as lucky. To me, keeping my child didn't mean giving up my education. I attended school until my eighth month. After the baby was born I returned immediately.

I found it hard 'fitting in' when I returned to school. People looked at me differently and they treated me differently. When everybody else was going to parties and school dances, I was home taking care of a baby. At first I resented my little girl and regretted my decision. After some time, though, I learned that I had to live with my decision. I never used my daughter as an excuse to fail, I realized that if I didn't get my education, the system would hold me back for the rest of my life.

In today's society the head of the household is often looked at as the male figure. Without a man heading the house, a single mother must be able to provide for herself as well as her children. It is very important for a woman, any woman, to be financially independent. For any number of reasons, a woman may find herself alone and

without any source of income. The man of the house could pass away, divorce or desert his family. The woman of the house, in turn, is left to support the family. It is my view that anybody without a proper education would find it impossible to do this.

The alternative most single mothers are faced with is government assistance. I feel that the time I spent on assistance was by far the most degrading, demoralizing time of my life.

While growing up, I had to struggle to create my own incentives. I was faced with very poor role models. Coming from a poor black family in Nova Scotia, my resources were very limited. Certain things were naturally expected from me; getting pregnant and dropping out of school were two of these.

I promised myself that I would not prove the stereotypes right. I would create a positive role model for my daughter so she would not prove the biased opinions correct. I believe that I can show my daughter it is not impossible to beat the odds and achieve success as a young black disadvantaged woman, and that she can do the same.

When I decided to become a single mother, I realized that I would have to compromise a lot of things. One thing I refuse to compromise is my future. My advice to any young girl is to avoid risking pregnancy any way possible. However, if she finds herself pregnant, don't use it as an excuse to hold you back. You can grasp your dreams no matter what the struggle. Hold on and do it for your baby's future, but more importantly, do it for yourself!

## Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery

On exhibit 23 September - 23 October

### Industrial Images/Industrial Imagination

Organized by the Art Gallery of Hamilton

Exploring Canadian artists' responses to our industrial evolution from rural to urban from 1900 to 1950

### Hidden Work, Hidden Workers

The portrayal of work and workers

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# Canadian Book Information Centre releases new book list

Jocelyne Marchand  
Not Vanishing, Chrystos

Chrystos is a Native American activist and speaker. She speaks the unspeakable in this first memorable book. Beth Grant, a Canadian poet, has said of her work, "She offers us her love, her fears, her anger... She is a true jewel among poets. I am honoured to read her words."

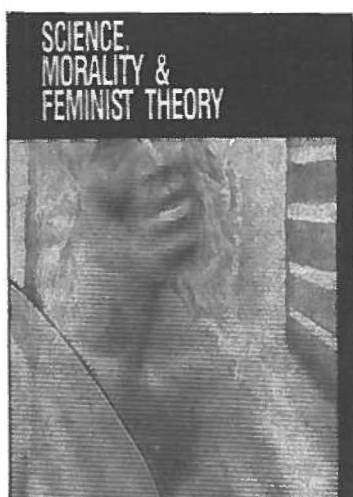
0-88974-015-1, \$9.50  
press gang publishers



**Working People and Hard Times**, edited by Robert Argue, Charlene Gannage, D.W. Livingstone

This book successfully brings together the writings of academics, trade unionists, community activists, and rank and file members. It makes an important contribution in that it combines the work of researchers with the experience of people in the workplace. It focuses on the relationship between theory and practice and how this connects with the struggle for self-determination in the workplace.

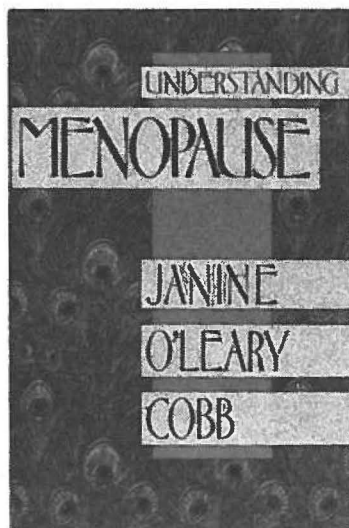
0-920059-52-X, \$16.95  
Garamond Press



**Science, Morality and Feminist Theory**, edited by Marsha Hanen and Kai Nielsen

Feminist theory is rapidly developing and will, rightly, become an increasing force in our cultural life. While not losing sight of the emancipatory aims of feminist theory and its importance as critical theory, this book examines in an incisive way key issues in moral philosophy, the philosophy of science, and philosophical psychology and argues that these issues, often treated separately, stand in need of an integrated approach.

0-919491-13-8, \$14.00  
University of Calgary Press



**Understanding Menopause**, Janine O'Leary Cobb

A practical guide which explains what menopause is, how to prepare for it, up-to-date medical facts, and the pros and cons of various procedures. It also addresses a woman's psychological and emotional state during menopause, providing information on marriage at mid-life, female friendships, and the aging process. Its clear non-medical language and warm tone will help women to realize that menopause can be a time of personal growth and positive change.

1-55013-077-3, \$16.95  
Key Porter Books



**Recent Mistakes**, Jan Horner

Stunning metaphor, erotic imagery, and precise language produce poems of truly original vision. Horner's poems/letters are intimate, funny, surreal, spiky, intelligent, and charming. Well known in the literary and feminist community in Winnipeg, Jan Horner has written a long-awaited first book which surpasses expectations.

0-8801-125-3, \$8.95  
Turnstone Press

**Who's on Top: The Politics of Heterosexuality**, Howard Buchbinder, Dinah Forbes, Varda Burstyn, Mercedes Steedman

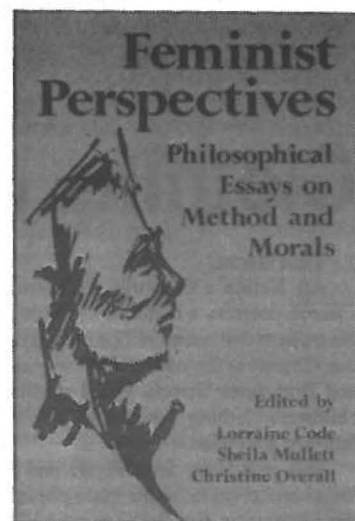
This provocative look at the politics of sexuality — traditionally ignored or obscured — discusses the structural and ideological factors pertaining to sexuality and power. The four contributors have boldly challenged the ways economic/patriarchal forces maintain dominance over us all.

0-920059-28-7, \$8.95  
Garamond Press

**Free Trade and the Future of Women's Work: Manufacturing and Service Industries**, Marjorie Griffin Cohen

Women have been ignored in the government and economic assessments of free trade, and the effects of free trade on the service sector have been largely overlooked. This book redresses this; it makes a major contribution to the free trade debate. It is the first study to examine the impact of free trade on specific groups of workers and to analyze its effect on the service sector.

0-920059-50, \$7.95  
Garamond Press



**Feminist Perspectives: Philosophical Essays on Method and Morals**, edited by Lorraine Code, Sheila Mullett, Christine Overall

The essays in this collection demonstrate that feminist enquiry gives rise to questions about the most fundamental methodological assumptions of philosophy and requires a recasting of the terms and issues central to moral philosophy. The contributors are all engaged in writing and teaching philosophy at the university level; all are committed feminists.

0-8020-6668-2, \$13.95  
University of Toronto Press



**The Corrigan Women**, M.I. (Jean) Dohane

This compelling novel is the saga of three generations of women and the men who touch their lives. Set in rural Newfoundland, the story weaves together the lives of grandmother, mother and daughter in an outport community, the tensions that draw them together, and inevitably, threaten to tear them apart. The author was born in Newfoundland and has lived in Fredericton, N.B. since 1954.

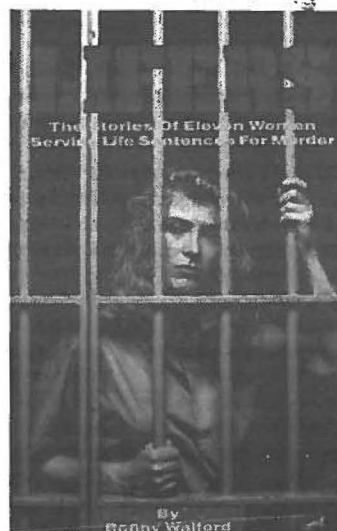
0-920304-67-2, \$12.95  
Ragweed Press



**My Mom is so Unusual**, Iris Loewen, illustrated by Alan Pakarnyk

This story describes a single parent family in all its foibles. A young girl and her unusual mother share affection, humour, sometimes anger, and more humour, and a whole lot of love. And because of her mother's unusual ways, the youngster is content about their being an unusual family.

0-919143-37-7, \$4.95  
Pemmican Publications



**Lifers: The Stories of Eleven Women Serving Life Sentences for Murder**, Bonny Walford

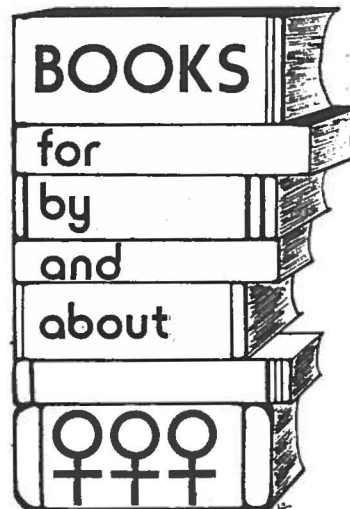
This book describes the shocking course of events that led 11 women to a federal penitentiary to serve life sentences for murder. Only one of these women maintains that she is innocent. Of the rest, one killed a stranger, two killed acquaintances, one hired a contract killer, two killed their husbands, and the remaining four had the misfortune to be in the company of men who killed. The author herself is a lifer.

0-920792-79-0, \$9.95  
Eden Press

**Don't: A Woman's World**, Elly Danica

This is a courageous book written by an extraordinary woman, an incest survivor. It reminds us how much sexual violence is a repeated assassination of our vitality, dignity and creativity. The author, a visual artist who lives in rural Saskatchewan, is not only a survivor, but a fighter.

0-921881-05-3, \$12.95  
gynergy books



**Fat Chance**, Donna Steinberg

What do you do when you've gained 32 pounds in less than 12 months and your boy-friend — who left you to join a computer doomsday cult — is having you followed by cult members? You find yourself a good fitness club and a tough, female body-guard to take you there. A humorous novel by the author of *I Lost It All in Montreal* which was published in 1983 to wide critical acclaim and commercial success.

0-920792-57-X, \$5.95  
Eden Press

All of these books can be purchased from your favorite bookseller. For more information, contact the Canadian Book Information Centre nearest you.

In the Maritimes, CBIC is located at 1741 Barrington Street, 4th Floor, Halifax, N.S. B3J 2A4, phone 420-0688. The CBIC does book displays anywhere in the Atlantic Provinces. Just give a month's notice.

The National Office of the CBIC is located at 260 King Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1K3, phone (416) 362-6555.

The Western Office is located at 1622 West 7th Ave, Vancouver, BC. V6J 1S5, phone (604) 734-2011.

The Prairies Office is located at 100 Arthur Street, Suite 205, Winnipeg, Man, R3B 1B3, phone (204) 943-3767.

**Are there any lesbians with physical disabilities who are interested in starting a sharing and/or support group?**  
If so, contact Jennifer  
at 469-9179, afternoons or evenings.



# Artistic satisfaction not guaranteed by literary success

Carol McLeod

Lucy Maud Montgomery was 33 years old when she rose to literary prominence in 1908 with the publication of her first novel, *Anne of Green Gables*.

Vibrant and gregarious, she was raised in Cavendish, P.E.I. by strict Presbyterian grandparents who tried to suppress her spirited nature. "I had no companionship except that of books and solitary rambles in wood and fields," she later recalled. "This...early forced me to construct...a world of fancy and imagination."

Retreating into herself, Maud (as she preferred to be called) began to write poetry and short stories at the age

of nine. She broke into print six years later and forever after yearned for literary success. "Oh, I wonder if I shall ever be able to do anything worthwhile in the way of writing," an early diary entry reads. "It is my dearest ambition."

After entering Prince of Wales College in Charlottetown in 1893, Maud threw off the restraints of her rigid upbringing and, by her own account, re-emerged "very vivacious...very fond of fun and good times generally..." For five years she lived on her own, studying, teaching, writing and reveling in her independence.

Then, in 1898, her grandfather died and she returned to Cavendish to look

after her grandmother. Cut off from the outside world, she again withdrew into herself. Her great release was her writing. Yet, as the years passed, she turned out nothing but sentimental and contrived stories that sold, but gave her little satisfaction.

Frustration, combined with the restrictions of life in Cavendish, brought on sick headaches and she was often confined to bed for days at a time.

Finally, in 1906, she dug out the manuscript of a story she had written and discarded several years before. Detailing the adventures of an effervescent orphan brought up on a Prince Edward Island farm, the book — like many that followed it — reflects Maud at her best: warm, ebullient and full of fun.

Although she was generally pleased with *Anne of Green Gables*, Maud was under no illusions about its literary merit. She was amazed when it was accepted and astounded when it became an international success.

Writing a sequel at her publisher's request, she was unhappy with the result and foresaw that if it sold well she would be pressured into turning out a string of Anne books at the expense of more serious work.

Within months, her fears were realized. The public clamored for more and over the next 30 years she added six new books to the series. Neither these nor the other novels she wrote truly satisfied her and she resigned herself to the fact that although she was a popular success and what she called "a good workman," she would never be "a truly great writer."

Disappointment in her professional



Lucy Maud Montgomery

(Public Archives Canada — C11299)

life was mirrored by disappointment in her personal life. After two unhappy love affairs, she married Ewan Macdonald, a clergyman for whom she felt affection but probably not love. "If two people have a mutual affection," she once wrote, "...their prospects of happiness together would be excellent, even if some of the highest up-flashings of the 'flame divine' are missing."

Time proved her wrong. Macdonald suffered from severe depression which made life a torment for him, for Maud, and for their two sons. As the years passed, Maud escaped more and more into her

writing. Eventually, though, the strain of living with Macdonald wore her down and after suffering several nervous breakdowns, she died in 1942 at the age of 67.

□ □ □ □ □

Carol McLeod is a writer living in Riverview, New Brunswick. She has written for many Canadian and Maritime magazines and journals including *Harrowsmith*, *Financial Post Magazine*, *Maclean's*, *Horizons* and *New Maritimes*. She has also written four books including *Legendary Canadian Women* and *Wives of the Canadian Prime Ministers*.

## Congress has ambitious goals for Black women

Linda Carvery

Black women have always been actively involved in the communities in which they live, mainly through their churches. What I see evolving in the 80s is young Black women and Black women in general becoming more involved in activities outside the realm of their communities. There is more participation of Black women in provincial, national and international conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.

We are eager for knowledge and we are bringing that knowledge back into our communities. We are not only observing, but we are participating, initiating and networking. Communication lines are opening up among Black women. We are informing and encouraging each other. I see our participation as being very positive, which undoubtedly will bring more harmony in our families and the communities in which we live.

The Congress of Black women is one avenue of bringing all Black women together as a group to learn and share with each other and lend support, and in doing so we can achieve.

The major goal of the Congress of Black Women of Nova Scotia is the development of an achievement and enrichment program for our Black youth.

There is an overwhelming concern over the high dropout and illiteracy rates as well as welfare dependency within our Black communities which leads us to believe there is a missing link to the chain of achievement of our Black youth.

It has been suggested that poor academic performance of many of our Black youth may be deeply rooted in poor identity formation and low self-esteem. Hence it has been suggested that increased self-esteem, positive role models and academic support networks would provide the support that Black youth need to perform to their full human potential. We will soon begin to investigate this issue and develop a plan of action.

□ □ □ □ □

Linda Carvery is the president of the Congress of Black Women of Nova Scotia. She was born here in Nova Scotia and lives in the north end of Halifax. Linda supplied the following information on the Congress of Black Women:

**Background:**

The Congress of Black Women of N.S. was formed in January of 1987. We are a local provincial chapter of the Congress of Black Women of Canada which was established approximately 10 years ago. We have a total membership of 44 women from the following Black communities: Halifax, Dartmouth, North Preston, Cherrybrook, Sackville, Beechville, Hammonds Plains and the former Africville community.

**Objectives:**

1. To provide opportunities for Black women to meet openly to discuss issues which affect us, our families and our communities.
2. To provide ways and means for bringing Black women in Nova Scotia and Canada to be one voice for achieving human rights and liberties for Black women in Canada.
3. To plan and carry out programs of education for Black women and the community at large.
4. To develop relations with other local, national and international organizations whose aims and objectives and purposes are in keeping with the Congress.
5. To constantly re-examine our objectives and purposes and adjust our efforts accordingly.
6. To develop other local chapters in the province of Nova Scotia.

## To grandmother, with love

Dear Nan:

July 1988

It's been three months since you left and I still don't know how to say goodbye. There's been many a time over the past couple of months that I've thought about you and the memories and knowledge you have left me. There are many things I wish I could have told you. Stuff that I doubt you could have related to then, but now I think that I can and should tell you.

I've always loved you, Nan, and you've always known that. But, over the past four years, I've come to view, love and respect you in a very different way. You see, Nan, while I was growing up, I tended to reject all the skills and experiences that you and your daughters represented. I did not want to end up married with kids, stuck in the middle of nowhere, not being able to control my environment, my life, but having to take care of other people's needs instead. I viewed your life that way and I rebelled against what you and your daughters represented.

I now know I was wrong. You lived your life the best you could. You overcame many different obstacles — you survived in an environment that was not exactly conducive to the survival of independent women.

It was society that forced you into those roles, and it was society that was forcing me into those same roles — it wasn't you.

The skills you wanted to pass on were not meant to chain me but were meant to enhance my life. I'm sorry now I didn't learn to knit, quilt, sew, bake, preserve, etc., when I had the chance. I could probably still pick up the skills but not the history, the meaning behind them that I could have gotten from you, my Mom, and my aunts, and I do regret it. I can't talk to the rest of my family about this — they'll just say I'm talking foolish. "Ah, there she goes again with her feminist stuff."

The funny thing is that the feminist stuff is what has given me the ability to view and admire you women in a very different way than I did before. I love and thank you for giving me that.

There are many things I'm going to miss about you — your laugh, your sense of humour (both of which you've

passed on to your daughters and hopefully to me), your memories, wisdom, and your comments. I'm going to miss looking forward to seeing and talking to you, kissing you hello and good bye. I'm going to miss your presence and strength. I'm going to miss you, grandmother. You see, now more than ever, I can't say goodbye. I don't believe in heaven or hell, but I do believe you are near me and always will be. I also believe that even though several months ago you probably wouldn't understand what I'm now saying, or even approve of what I say and do, you are not now restricted by earthly judgements. I believe you view and love me as the woman I am as I have come to view and love you as the woman you were.

Thank you.  
Gabrielle

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- Seniors Programs



# NOTICES / CALENDAR

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

•International Education Centre is organizing an exhibit of artistic/cultural expression by immigrant women to be shown at Saint Mary's University in early December. All women in Halifax-Dartmouth who have emigrated to Canada within the past 40 years are invited to participate. Contact Debra or Elaine at 420-5419.

•N.S. Council for Multicultural Health is planning a conference on multi-cultural health care for November. Contact Isaac 424-2378 or Pat 423-6534.

•Ts'eku Collective is a native Indian women's group compiling an anthology of indigenous women's writings in North America. The theme is "Native Women: Celebrating Our Survival." Submissions are invited from indigenous women. Contact Ts'eku Collective, 603 Powell St., Vancouver, BC, V6A 1H2.

•RFR/DRF (Resources for Feminist Research) is calling for papers on the Politics of Reproduction. Submissions should not exceed 3,000 words and must be received by February 1, 1989. Send to: Somer Brodribb, Guest Editor, RFR, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ont, M5S 1V6, (416) 923-6641, ext 2278.

•CRIAOW NS is compiling a directory of action research by/for/about women. If you have any projects you would like listed in this directory, please call Barbara Cottrell, 423-9654. PUBLISHED MATERIALS:

•Four publications in a new series are now offered by the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre: Sexual Assault: Information for Adult Survivors; Sexual Assault: Information for Families; Sexual Assault: Information for Partners and Friends; and Child Sexual Abuse. Individual copies are available at \$1 each plus postage and handling. Bulk rates also available. Order from Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre, 1045 Linden Ave., Victoria, BC V8V 4H3. Ph: (604) 383-5545.

•Communiqu'Elles has published the 1988 Canadian Women's Directory which contains names, addresses, phone numbers of women's groups and associations. \$9.95 plus \$1.00 postage. Communiqu'Elles, 3585 St-Urbain, Montreal, Quebec H2X 2N6 Ph: (514) 844-1761.

•The Conseil du statut de la femme in Quebec has published new resources on reproductive technology to coincide with their conference on October 29-31, 1987. Dilemmas: When Technology Transforms Motherhood, is available in both French and English. To order, contact Conseil du statut de la femme, 8, rue Cooke, 3 étage, Quebec, Que., (418) 643-4326. It costs \$3.95.

•The revised version of *Taking Care: A Handbook About Woman's Health* by Mary J. Breen is now available. This 200-page handbook on topics such as stress, eating well, menopause, fitness, patients' rights and birth control is written for women with limited reading skills. Copies are available free for individual women. Organizations will be charged handling costs. To order, contact: The Women's Health Project, c/o Peterborough YWCA, 216 Simcoe St., Peterborough, Ont., K9H 2H7, (705) 742-9852.

•Surviving Procedures After a Sexual Assault, an invaluable resource book for survivors of sexual assault and those working with survivors has recently been published by Press Gang Publishers, 603 Powell St, Vancouver, BC V6A 1H2. \$8.95.

•Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CLOW)

is launching a project to create a resource guide to literacy materials for women. They are looking for print materials which are used to teach women basic reading, writing, mathematics, science of life skills which are relevant to women's experience and are Canadian. Contact Martha Scott or Gladys Watson, Literacy materials for Women Project, CLOW, 47 Main St. Toronto, Ont. M4E 2V6.

•National Film Board has compiled a video "Images of Women in National Film Board Films, 1942-1987." They also provide a workshop which uses this video along with a discussion. Workshops can be booked through Rosemary Sullivan, 1965 St. Armand Road, Pigeon Hill, Quebec J0J 1Y0. Ph: (514) 248-2524 or Marion Dodds #4-31 West 11th Street, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1S6. Ph: (604) 874-7893.

## EVENTS & GROUPS:

•Are there any lesbians with physical disabilities who are interested in starting a sharing and/or support group? If so, contact Jennifer at 469-9179 afternoons or evenings.

•North Branch Women's Group meets every Wednesday 10 am - 12 noon, Halifax City Regional Library, North Branch, Gottingen Street.

•DAWN Canada: DisAbled Women's Network Canada is conducting a project to determine the needs and priorities of Canadian women with disabilities. Contact: Jillian Ridington, Researcher, DAWN-Canada, 3464 W 27th Ave, Vancouver, B.C. V6S 1P6, Shirley Masuda, DAWN-Canada project coordinator, 10401 Findayson, Richmond, BC, V6X 2A3, or phone DAWN-Canada at (604) 254-3485 (Voice and TTD).

•Listen to Sister Sounds (women's music in a feminist context) on CKDU 97.5 FM at 8 pm Sundays.

•The Abortion Information Referral Service 421-4123. Sponsored by CARAL/Halifax.

•LAIG (Latin American Information Group) meets 7:30 pm the first Tuesday of each month at the Oxfam-Deveric office, 1649 Barrington Street, Halifax.

•Coalition Against Apartheid meets at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month at the Oxfam-Deveric office, 1649 Barrington Street, Halifax.

•Listen to Women's Time (news and interviews about women's issues) on CKDU 97.5 FM, Thursdays at 5:45. Any community women's groups who would like to announce their events, call 424-6469.

•GAE has an info line on gay and lesbian events and groups. Call 454-6551.

•CARAL (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League) meetings, Elaine at 422-7698.

•The Pictou County Women's Centre in New Glasgow, N.S. has established a Rape Line. Confidentiality, anonymity, information, and peer counselling for female victims of sex abuse, incest, and rape. The line is staffed by volunteers. Phone 752-2233.

•Women's Employment Outreach holds a four-part, pre-employment workshops for women. They start the first Tuesday of every month, 9:30 - 11:30. Phone 422-8023 to register.

•We at Pandora don't know everything that goes on in the Maritimes. Any woman out there who attends an event you think others would like to know about, please write a short piece (500 words or less) to report on it. We would like you to use Pandora to network with other women. Let us hear about what is going on out there. Phone 454-4977 and leave a message.

## September 8-October 16

Visual Variations: African Sculpture: an exhibition of West African sculpture with lectures, films, musical performances, poetry readings, theatrical performances. Dalhousie Art Gallery, Black Cultural Centre, Dartmouth Heritage Museum. Contact Dalhousie Art Gallery 424-2403 or Black Cultural Centre 434-6223.

## September 11

12-7 pm Presentations of Chile. Common soup pot. Organized by LAIG. YWCA, 1239 Barrington St. Contact 429-1370.

## September 13

Women's night at Rumours. They will be playing lesbian and feminist music between 8 and 11 pm.

## September 13-November 1

The Africans: 9-part documentary video series, every Tuesday 12:30 pm and 8 pm. Dalhousie Art Gallery and Black Cultural Centre Thursdays at 7:30 pm from September 15-October 20. Contact 424-3814.

## September 14

Poetry reading by Maxine Tynes. Dalhousie Art Gallery. 12:30 pm.

## September 15

Deadline for proposals for Women, Art and Politics conference. See November 18-19 for more info.

## September 17

Black Cultural Centre's 5th Anniversary Celebration. Dinner and performances. 7 pm World Trade and Convention Centre. \$35. Contact 434-6223.

## September 20

•Save the Children Canada monthly meeting. 7:30 pm, I.E.C. Burke Building, Saint Mary's University. Contact 422-9618.

•Tools for Peace monthly meeting. 7:30 pm, Student Union Building, Dalhousie University. Contact Peggy, 835-0138.

## September 21

Deadline for proposals for conference on Women, Addiction and Identity (see April 7, 1989)

## September 23

Mortgage burning ceremony at Black Cultural Centre, 7:30 pm, 1149 #7 Highway at Cherrybrook Road. Contact 434-6223.

## September 23-25

Women's Action Coalition mid year conference. Stellarton, NS. Contact P.O. Box 9436 Stn A, Halifax B3K 5S3

## September 24

•Women's dance. Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, Halifax. Entertainment 8-9 pm; dance 9 pm - 1 am. Cash bar. \$4/\$2. On-site child care.

•African Bazaar. Theme: Culture, Commerce, and Citizenship. 9 am - 3:30 pm, World Trade & Convention Centre. Contact 424-3814.

## September 30-October 3

Native Adolescents: Stepping Stones to the Future, seminar sponsored by Native Mental Health and Canadian Psychiatric Assn. \$100, Hotel Nova Scotia, Halifax. Contact: Box 89, Shannonville, Ontario K0K 3A0 Ph: (613) 966-7619.

## October

Confidence Building for Women: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30-3 pm. To register, contact Cindy Sampson, 421-8766. Babysitting provided if notified before September 27 Halifax Regional Library, Captain Spry Community Centre.

## October 5

Criminal Law: Know Your Rights, youth program, 7-8:30 pm, Halifax Regional Library, Captain Spry Community Centre.

## October 11

Growing Up Today, Parenting Teens Series, 7-8:30 pm, Halifax Regional

Library, Captain Spry Community Ctr.

## October 12

Teenage Rights, youth program, 7-8:30 pm, Halifax Regional Library, Captain Spry Community Centre.

## October 13

Drugs, Alcohol and Teens, Parenting Teen series, 7-8:30 pm, Halifax Regional Library, Captain Spry Community Centre.

## October 15

Lesbian Conference Planning meeting. 2 pm Veith House, 3115 Veith Street.

## October 16

Choosing Quality Children's Records and Cassettes, 3-4:30 pm, Halifax City Regional Lib., Spring Garden Road.

## October 16-18

Third annual conference on Women/Chemical Dependency/Recovery. Holiday Inn, Saint John, N.B. For info: Contact Amana House, 371 Dufferin Row, Saint John, N.B. E2M 2J7 Ph: (506) 674-1832.

## October 22

The Two Sides of South Africa: How Young South Africans View Each Other, youth program at Halifax City Regional Library, Spring Garden Road. 2:30-4:30.

## October 25, 27

Getting a Good Job, 7-9 pm, Halifax Regional Library, Captain Spry Community Centre.

## October 27

Dignity and Autonomy for Seniors: Focus on Care Givers, Family and Seniors. Halifax City Regional Library, Spring Garden Road. 7:30 pm.

## November 5

Media Images: Whose Thoughts are These? youth program at Halifax City Regional Library, Spring Garden Road. 2:30-4:30.

## November 6

Best of Children's Literature, 3-5 pm, Halifax City Regional Library, Spring Garden Road.

## November 11-13

12th Annual Conference of Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) in Quebec City. Contact Faculté des sciences sociales, Bureau 3446, Pavillon Charles-De Koninck, Université Laval, Quebec, G1K 7P4, (418) 656-2832.

## November 18-19

Conference on Women, Art and Politics. Proposal deadline: September 15, 1988. Mount Saint Vincent University. Contact: Marguerite Anderson, Mount St. Vincent University, 166 Bedford Highway, Halifax, N.S. B3M 2J6 (902) 443-4450 or Wilma Needham, 23 Erskine St, Halifax, N.S. 469-6746.

## November 26

Vegetarianism: It's Not Easy Being Green, youth program at Halifax City Regional Library, Spring Garden Road. 2:30-4:30.

## December 1

Deadline for proposals for Racism & Other Forms of Oppression (See April 6, 1989)

## January 14, 15, 1989

Workshop on action research sponsored by CRIAOW NS: exchange of information on women's research done in NS, basic research skills workshop. Contact Barb Cottrell 423-9654.

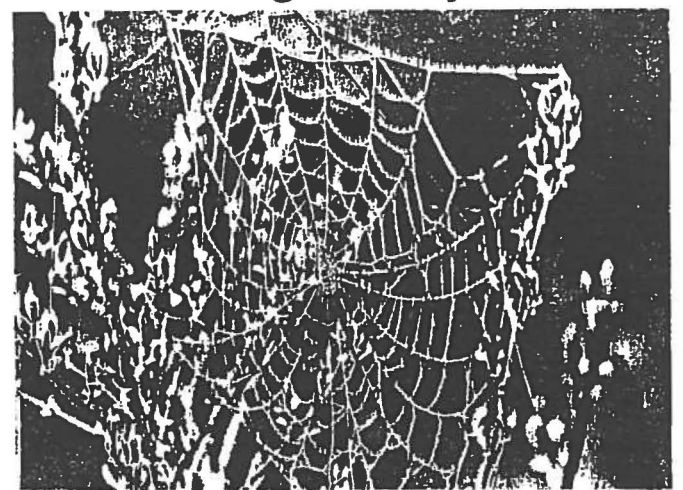
## April 6-9, 1989

Conference on Racism and Other Oppressions. Iowa City. Deadline for submission of one-page proposals: December 1, 1988. Contact: Women Against Racism Committee, c/o Women's Resource and Action Centre, Univ. Iowa, 130 N. Madison St, Iowa City, Iowa 52242. Ph: (319) 335-1486.

## April 7-10, 1989

Conference on Beyond Survival: Women, Addiction and Identity. Centre for Christian Studies, Toronto. Contact: Community Resources and Initiatives, 150A Winona Dr, Toronto, Ont, M6G 3S9. Ph: (416) 658-1752.

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