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Pandora

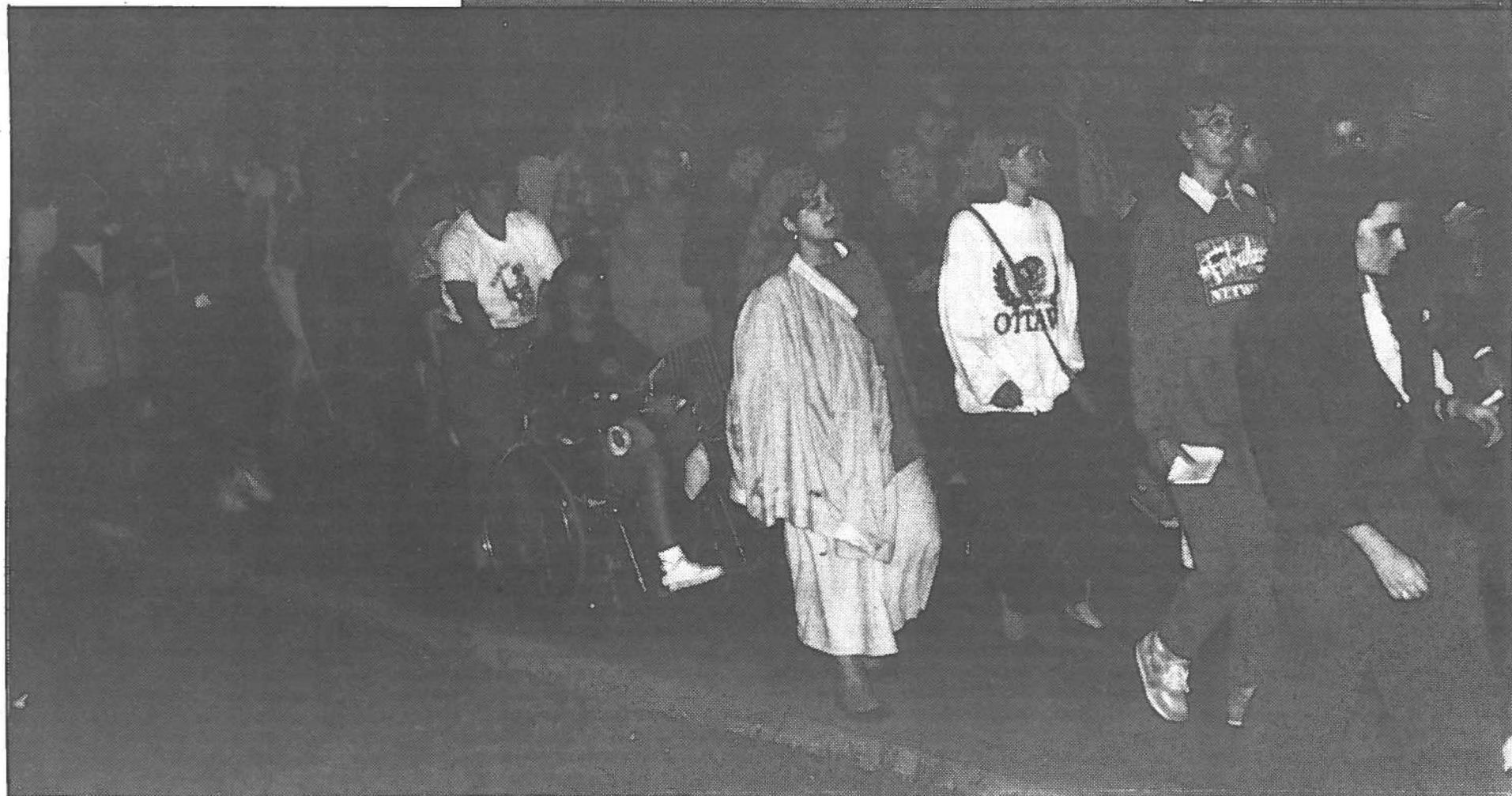
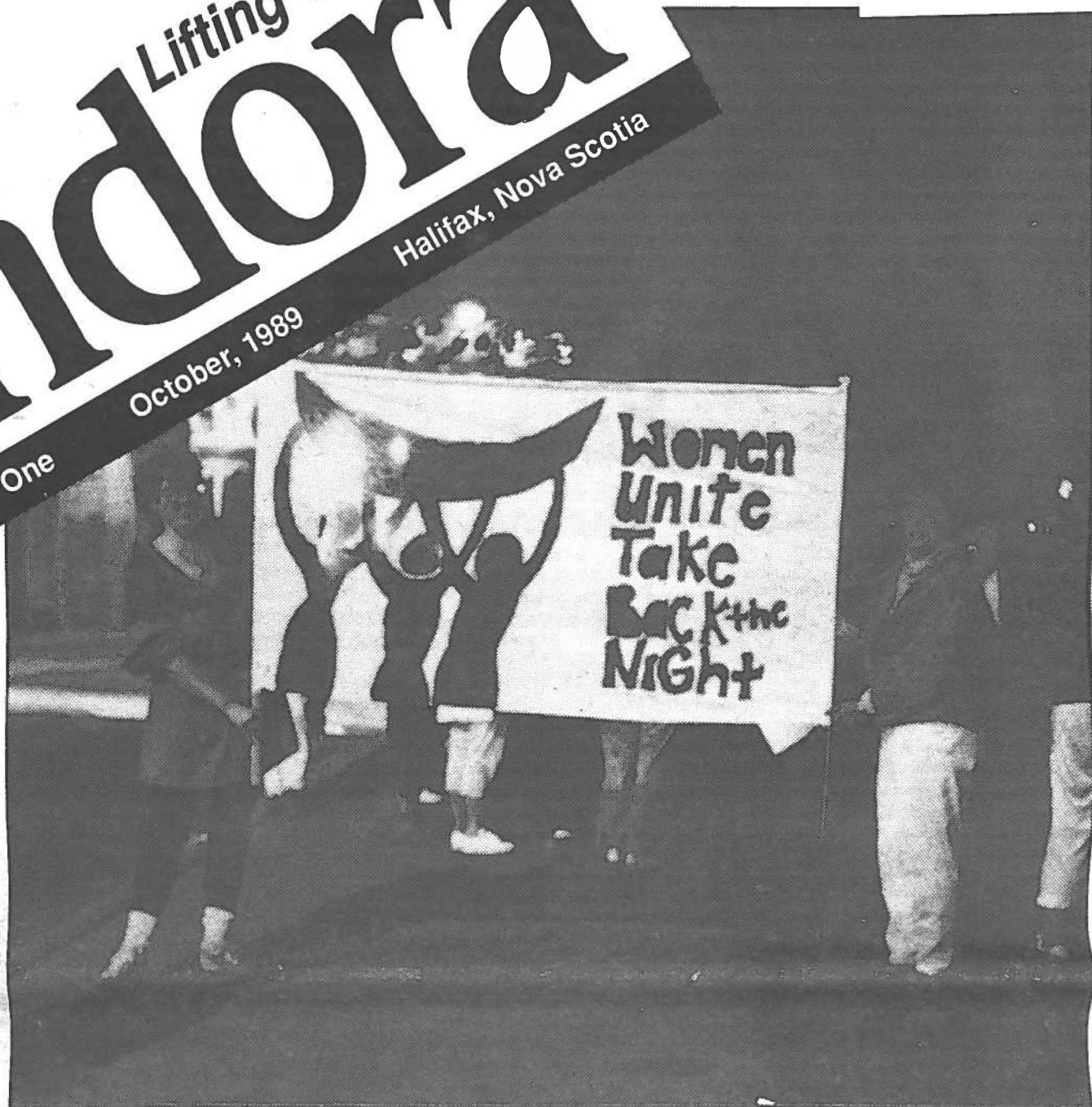
Lifting the lid off...

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Volume Five, Number One

October, 1989

**"I think it's high time
something was done.
There's too much
suffering people don't
know about. The system
treats victims like shit."**



"Being a victim is nothing to be ashamed of. Speaking up has made a big difference in helping me regain my self-worth. It gave me back some dignity. I am a survivor!"

Hypocrisy shadows NS abortion law

Amani Wassef

In the early months of 1989 there was rumor that Dr. Henry Morgentaler might open an abortion clinic in Halifax. When this rumor became fact the Nova Scotia government was quick to react to this threat by introducing a variety of legislative strategies to prevent its opening. The last attempt came on June 6, 1989 under the guise of new found concern for equality of health care for Nova Scotians. It was *An Act to Restrict Privatization of Medical Services*. Abortion was listed as one of the procedures to be restricted. Health Minister David Nantes stated "...The purpose of this act is to prevent the development of a two-tiered system of health care which would work unfairly to the advantage of the more affluent. It was predicated on universality and equal, insured access for all..."

The hypocrisy of the government surfaces when the act is examined under a more critical light.

Irony seems to veil the Nova Scotia government in that it predicated universal and equal access for all while in the same year it refuses to acknowledge homosexuals as human beings worthy of inclusion in the Human Rights Amendment. I also find this act an affront to all the women in Nova Scotia as there has never been a time when we have not been alienated by a two-tiered system of health care.

It does not suffice that health care covers only medicinal needs, but must extend to how we are treated on a daily

basis as human beings. It must allow us to make responsible decisions about our bodies without the impending threat of court injunctions and character assassinations. It must include commitment to ensure funds for transition houses, rape crisis centres, affordable day care spaces, second stage housing, adequate social assistance, support programs for single mothers, and programs for ethnic minorities. They are all crucial to the ideology of an equal and universal health care system.

They are all crucial to women's health, yet the Nova Scotian government has failed to ensure a commitment for any.

The highly charged issue of abortion is not, as it is often presented, about fetal rights. It is an issue of control and power over women. Women's interests, experiences and ways of know-

ing are not represented by those who hold authority. Women have been systematically excluded from the type of work which produces thought, knowledge and authority. For this reason, men's viewpoints have been represented as universal. It is from this universal stand-point that the Nova Scotia government can base its premise that there is no access problem for women. Claiming they have spoken to the "experts," they conclude the system is working fine. Why, I wonder, were the women of Nova Scotia not addressed, as it seems they are the real experts?

Despite government legislation, the Morgentaler Clinic opened on May 25, 1989, although, only as a telephone



Over 300 people marched on August 7 to show their outrage at the proposed legislation and support for women's choice and access to abortion services. (Photo by Anita Martinez)

counselling and referral service. Since that time there has been over 120 calls from women throughout the Maritime region. More than half of the calls have been from Nova Scotia residents.

My experience as a worker in the Halifax Morgentaler Clinic differs from that of the government in that there is indeed an access problem for women seeking abortions. The women hardest hit are from Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. For these women there is little choice but to travel the lengthy and expensive distances to Maine or Montreal.

After receiving a very desperate call from a low-income woman in Newfoundland, I checked out the possibility that she could come to Nova Scotia for an abortion. After some investigation, my answer was "...if we let one in it will be like opening the flood-gate. They all have special circumstances when it comes to abortion. You have to learn to see through these kind of women." It was not until this point

that I realized, with horror, the true nature of the anti-woman system we are fighting against. I also wondered if there was no access problem, why there was concern of too many women flooding the system?

A woman from Prince Edward Island was not even able to obtain the phone number for the Halifax clinic, as she was told by a social worker that the province was abortion free and she wished it to remain that way.

Women in Nova Scotia stand a slightly better chance of obtaining an abortion; however, it is not without hardship. Through the telephone counselling service, women have raised the following problems they have experienced in trying to obtain abortions: many cannot find a supportive physician to give her a referral; some are told she must sit before a board and plead her case; some are told abortion is permissible only in life threatening cases; some are flatly denied help; and some are told that only one abortion per

woman is allowed in Nova Scotia. For women under 19 years of age, obtaining an abortion is problematic without parental consent. It is again ironic that a woman under 19 years of age is not seen as responsible enough to make a decision concerning her body; however, she is deemed responsible enough to bear and raise a child.

Another woman called from New Brunswick who had decided to have an abortion. After phoning five different organizations in efforts to obtain information, she finally called the Halifax clinic in frustration. Each organization she contacted told her she could speak with a counsellor only after viewing an anti-abortion film. Feeling insulted and angry, she had to phone outside the province for assistance.

It is testimonies such as these that reveal the reality of women trying to obtain information on abortion, or the abortion itself. Regardless of where she is from, the decision is always difficult and there are always obstacles which must be overcome.

On August 8, 1989, the Canadian Abortion Action League (CARAL) went to court to challenge the Nova Scotia government with respect to the latest legislation. The outcome of the proceedings resulted in a postponement until September 28, 1989. On this date the Attorney General of Nova Scotia challenged CARAL on the grounds that "abortion lobby groups have no right to challenge anti-abortion laws because they have no direct interest in the case." Justice Merlin Nunn ended this last proceeding with an indefinitely reserved decision. Essentially, this means he can decide at his leisure whether or not to strike the Attorney General's application to deny CARAL standing.

If the Attorney General wins its challenge, CARAL will appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. If CARAL wins, a date will be set to proceed by way of a full scale trial. Until that time there is a lot of work to be done.

We must continue to write to our government stating our outrage at the repressive legislation. We must continue to rally in public to voice our concerns. We must continue to educate people to the real facts of access for women in both Nova Scotia and other Maritime regions. More than anything, we must remain strong in our battle for choice.

MORE WOMEN DIE IN CHILD BIRTH THAN IN LEGAL ABORTION



30% OF INFANTS THAT DIE DO SO FROM POVERTY CONDITIONS



IN 11 OTHER COUNTRIES MOTHERS HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF LIVING THROUGH CHILDBIRTH



I AM AGAINST ABORTION BECAUSE LIFE IS SACRED



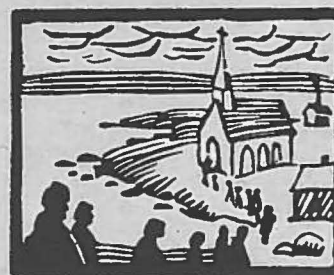
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Church Scene by Ruth Johnson

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Funded by a major grant from the Museums Assistance Programs of the Federal Department of Communications

Opening

Friday 20 October, 8 pm

Performance Night: *The Spirit of Africville*

Saturday 4 November, 8 pm

Conference: *The Africville Experience: Lessons for the Future*

Friday 17 November, 8 pm

Saturday 18 November, 10 am to 3 pm

Deaf, hearing impaired make video on sexuality

Linda M. Franchi

Cumberland County Family Planning of Amherst, Nova Scotia has sponsored a very exciting and innovative project for deaf and hard of hearing youth across Canada.

"Loving Yourself" is a three-part educational video in a dramatic format. It is the story of a family with four deaf teenagers who are coming to terms with changing feelings, body changes, relationships, and sexuality. "The story takes sex out of the bedroom and brings it to the dinner table for discussion."

The story is told in American Sign Language. Voice narration has been

added enabling parents, hearing audiences, and community resource people the opportunity to view this exciting video drama.

The family consists of Barbara, the mother; George, the father; Dave, Ellie, Jean and Bobby. The story follows different members of the family as they struggle with specific questions important to youth today.

George struggles to accept an openness and frankness in his children that is uncomfortable to him because of his upbringing. The children openly discuss things they have learned in sex education class, sometimes at the din-

ner table, and often with hilarious consequences.

Barbara balances being sensitive to and supportive of her husband while at the same time being very supportive of her children, and encouraging them to be open and honest in their communication and relationships.

Bobby, the youngest of the children, adds humour and fun to the story. In his early teens, he is concerned about dating and finding a girl who will like him.

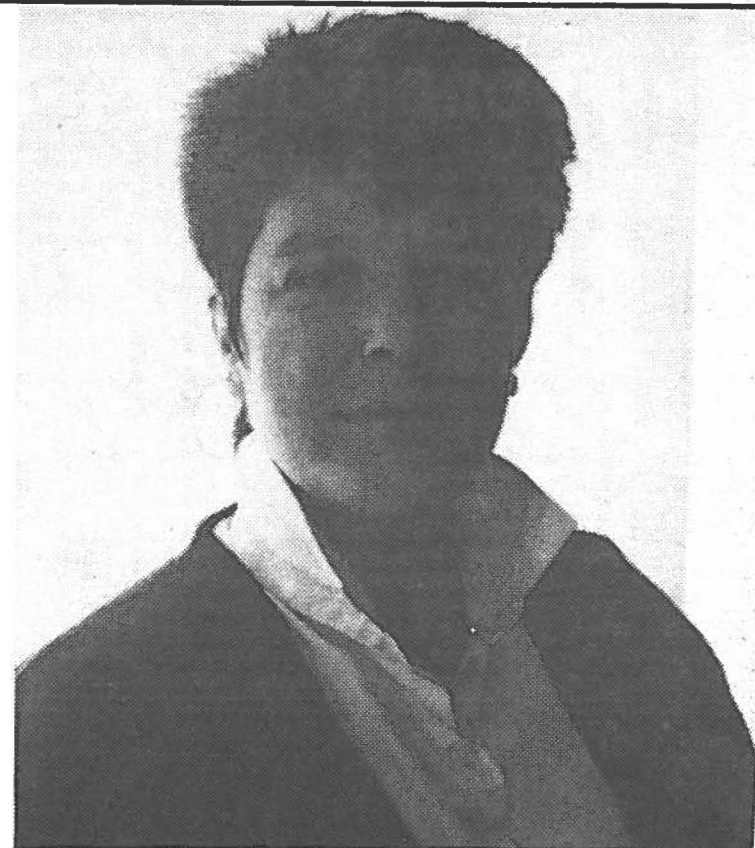
Jean is in her mid-teens. She starts going out with Jack and together they struggle with how you know when it's the right time to start kissing. They discover how important it is to talk honestly, and how easily misunderstandings can develop.

Ellie, a 17-year old, is starting to think about birth control. She wants to make sure that if she makes the decision to have sexual intercourse, she will not become pregnant. Ellie is making the transition to adulthood, and wants to know about the choices open to her.

Dave is in his late teens. Through him, we see how important it is to have supportive friends. We also see him struggling with fear of being rejected by his parents, and finally deciding it is more important for him to be honest about who he is. In making this decision, Dave becomes more independent and gains a stronger self-identity.

A major character in the story is Mr. Sherman, a sex education teacher. Many of the scenes take place in Mr. Sherman's class, where the four teenagers and their friends learn about the physical and emotional changes that occur during the teenage years. Through Mr. Sherman, viewers are introduced to Sign Sexual Vocabulary.

Through frank discussions of relationships, sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, birth control, and sexual orientation, "Loving Yourself" shows how these issues can be approached in ways that are respectful of everyone involved. It encourages an end to the



(photo by Anita Martinez)

Linda Franchi

silence that often exists in families and demonstrates the importance of honest and open discussion. Most of all, it emphasizes the importance of self-esteem and respect for others.

"Loving Yourself" invites discussion on the social attitudes and assumptions around self-esteem, dating, sexual activity, appropriate touching, birth control, sexually transmitted disease, sexual orientation, peer relationships, and parent-child relationships.

Cumberland County Family Planning has sponsored "Loving Yourself" in the hopes that deaf and hard of hearing youth will receive adequate information in a language they understand. Additionally, it is hoped this video will assist in preventing unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and encourage informed responsible decisions regarding sexuality.

"Loving Yourself" was directed by a deaf director, Dr. Don Bawgs. Most of the actors are deaf and hard of hearing youth and adults. It is the first video in Canada that has been made by and

for deaf people.

□ □ □ □ □

"Loving Yourself" was produced and written by Linda M. Franchi. She is proud to have been part of this wonderful video drama; an experience she will cherish for the rest of her life.



DAWN Canada would like to invite the women of the Halifax-Dartmouth area to join us in a social and film showing.

Join us at the Holiday Inn in Dartmouth on November 11, 1989 at 12:30 p.m. in the Hawthorn Room.

Introductory remarks about DAWN Canada (DisAbled Women's Network Canada) will be followed by a showing of "Loving Yourself." This film, written and produced by Linda Franchi, is a story of a deaf family dealing with questions about teenage sexuality. Sponsored by Cumberland County Family Planning, the film has voice and will also be signed. It is 90 minutes long and will be followed by a question and answer period with Linda Franchi.

If you wish to stay after the film showing and discuss the possible formation of DAWN Nova Scotia, the national Board of Directors will be happy to provide whatever resources they can.

All women are welcome. See you there!

Volunteers

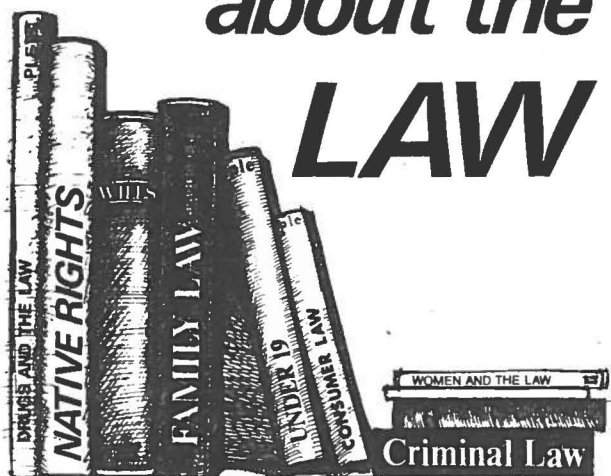
The basic upgrading (literacy) programs at the North End Library, Spry Centre, Thomas Raddall Library (Tuesday and Thursday mornings) and at the Sacred Heart School (Monday and Wednesday evenings) are in need of volunteer tutors. Workshop training will be provided.

Inquiries from potential volunteers are welcome

Please call 421-6987 or 421-6800

Halifax Continuing Education

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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. Our letter policy is printed on page 5.

This issue was produced by:

Rose Adams, Jane Baird, Yvonne Manzer, Debbie Mathers, Carrie Melsom, Amani Wassef, Darlene Young

With help from:

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Nancy Wright (Guysborough), Oona Landry (Antigonish), Alex Keir (Pictou County), Debbie Trask (Bridgewater), Dianne Crowell (Yarmouth), Carolyn Emerson (Newfoundland) and many, many, others. Betty-Ann Lloyd, Co-ordinator.

Contributors:

Anne Bishop, Sue Bone, Nancy Bowes, Barbara Cottrell, Dian Day, Linda Franchi, Skana Gee, Linda Harpell, Nancy Hay, Marie Koehler-Vandergraff, JM, Jocelyne Marchand, Judith Meyrick, Carol McLeod, Juanita Montalvo, Susan Pitman, Christine Reed, Margaret Robinson, Heather Schneider, Beatrice Schofield, Lee Seymour, Amani Wassef, Darlene Young

Thank you, one and all!

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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 (see detailed information on next page). 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.

Cover: Top photo by Anita Martinez; bottom photo by Debbie Mathers
Quotes from Laurie Gray

Presswork by Kentville Publishing

Pandora's still here, thanks to everyone

The last issue of Pandora was full of doom and gloom about the continuation of feminist publishing in Canada. Pandora was in trouble and Broadside had folded. This issue has some better news. Newfoundland and Labrador women have a new paper called Waterlily. And since you have a copy of Pandora in your hands and are reading it, it's obvious that our plea for women to help produce it has paid off.

About 20 women attended the orientation meeting. Some of the women willing to help out were unable to match their schedules with ours for this issue, or were out of town.

Other women, knowing of our plight, sent us stories. Many sent their best wishes. (Remember that the women who work on Pandora generally do not write the articles themselves. It's often a lot of work to encourage women to write, so we always appreciate articles sent to us.)

But those who were interested in and available for training started meeting each week. We soon split up into two groups; one for those who had experience with a Macintosh computer and one for those without. In each group, we talked about how our week went, discussed ideas for stories, worked with the computers, and generally got to know each other a bit.

It was fantastic having new women obtain stories since we could get a different perspective and new ideas.

We are still having problems, but they're problems of a different sort. How do we fold in all the differing strengths and interests of the women who want to help? How do we even contact them all? How do we find a schedule that's compatible with as many people as possible and what can we do to keep the women who can't make the meetings involved and interested? How can we avoid burn-out?

We don't have answers to all the questions; maybe we never will. But if you offered to help and we didn't get back to you, please accept our sincere apologies and try again. We're hoping to have regular meetings on the second and fourth Mondays of the month. Our first meeting for the next issue of Pandora will be at 7:30 on October 23 at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street. And please come to our dance on November 25 at Veith House. (We're hoping to have t-shirts ready by then. Purchasing one would be another way to help support Pandora and increase your wardrobe at the same time.)

We've always liked to think that working on Pandora is an unusual experience, so we asked the women who are training to produce Pandora to write a bit about how they feel about it.

"When I read the cover of the last issue of Pandora I was somewhat concerned about the future of the paper. I thought gee it would be too bad to see the paper fold due to a lack of womanpower. Typically I didn't think that I had anything to offer. I knew nothing about putting a newspaper together but I attended the public meeting and discovered that Pandora needed me, experience or not... Working on this issue has been fantastic. I have learned new skills, gained a wealth of information and have made some new friends; but most importantly, I have given my time and talents to a newspaper that has given me so much. Thanks Pandora!"

—Darlene

"Just think, I could have paid a lot of money taking a computer course! Instead I decided to step in to try to save Pandora. I came. I saw. I conquered. — well, I didn't really conquer, but I sure am having a lot of fun trying."

—Jane

"Going to my first Pandora meeting, walking into a room full of strangers, by myself, was hard. Very hard. But I was motivated by a strong need to see Pandora continue. I wasn't sure what I could do, or even if I belonged. Most of the women I know refuse to use the word feminist to describe themselves and question me when I use it to describe myself. I am a feminist but I've never been an activist. I read Pandora and go "Yeah! Say it again" but I don't get out to marches. I wanted Pandora to continue for women like myself whose only contact with the feminist community and spirit was through the words they read.

"I walked into that meeting trying to look inconspicuous and eager to help at the same time. I left still feeling unsure about my ability to help but needing to all the same. I'm glad I went, and I'm glad I'm here. I'm becoming more confident and feeling more comfortable about my role with every meeting. I'm gaining new skills and affirming myself and my convictions. It is a joy meeting women who are proud to be feminists and strong in their belief in women and women's choices. If you've been thinking about helping please do. I recommend it."

—Carrie

"So far, I've been given much more by Pandora than I've been able to give back. I'm being trained to work on a Macintosh and I am even learning some skills for putting together a magazine. My time schedule makes it difficult for me to contribute on a large scale, but I have to be able to help to keep it going for a while. I cannot imagine not having Pandora around. I don't have the time to go to every bulletin board in town to find out what activities of interest to feminists are happening. Pandora has been a valuable resource for me with its calendar of activities. In addition, Pandora talks about issues that interest me."

—Rose

"I wish we had more time for just sitting around talking, and I think we should make that time. Over the years a lot of time was spent on discussion of group process but there are now so many new members that it would be useful to again talk about how we would ideally like to work together as a group.

"I appreciate that we pay for baby-sitting and now raise this question when other projects are being organized. My exercise class pays for baby-sitting, as does my housing co-op. If organizations want the participation of women who can't afford to go out at night, they are going to have to consider the costs.

"I worry about Debbie because right now she has a lot of the responsibility and is always working. I think we should take up a collection to send her to Akala Point for a year."

—Yvonne

"When I heard Pandora was in danger of closing its doors I was quickly mobilized into action, knowing right away it was something I wanted to become involved in. Over the past five years, I eagerly looked forward to each issue of Pandora and this was something I didn't want to see end. As a result of this I decided to participate in its continuance.

"Since I began working with Pandora three months ago, I have made new friends, learned how to produce a newspaper (which was more complicated than I had ever imagined), learned how to solicit advertisements, and wrote two articles (which I had never done before). Learning how to produce Pandora was like taking a mini-journalism course. It has been both a rewarding and fun experience."

—Amani

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.

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.

Adoption fails parents

Pandora:

Recently I became aware that existing laws governing individuals who hold a government license to practice private adoptions in Ontario are insufficient to protect the rights of biological parents who elect to relinquish their children. I was led to examine the relevant legislation, within the Child and Family Services Act, after I give up my biological child for adoption in 1987 through the executive director of the oldest and largest private adoption agency in Ontario. Several months after the baby's placement I discovered, as a result of reading an article in the Toronto Star, that the baby's father and myself had been misled about options at the Toronto Metro Children's Aid Society (C.A.S.) and had valuable information withheld from us about his own agency's options for approximately seven months.

Specifically, we requested to be as involved as possible in the selection of adoptive parents. We were told that at the C.A.S. the social workers do the matching, whereas at the agency we dealt with we could specify the characteristics of the adoptive parents. We were informed that we would be presented with two or three couples who were the closest match to our criteria.

I was asked if one criterion was essential (Which is easily met by many couples). I specified that it was. In the next meeting we were presented with two couples: the first couple met the criterion; the other couple did not.

Months after the placement, the newspaper article revealed that the C.A.S. had been permitting biological parents to specify criteria of the adoptive parents and had been providing the option of the biological and adoptive parents meeting for the previous three years. Upon investigation, I learned that the agency we dealt with had begun such meetings even before the C.A.S.

As a result of us meeting with the director, in which he had considerable difficulty answering our questions, we brought our concerns to the attention of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ontario College of Certified Social Workers.

The Ministry responded by primarily emphasizing that the agency's pamphlet be modified. However, during the one year period in which we visited the agency, we never saw this pamphlet. The Ministry later informed me that his pamphlet has been discontinued. The College recently found the director to be "guilty of incompetence" but decided not to publish this finding and requested that the baby's father and I keep this information confidential. In our opinion, our objective of providing greater protection of birthparents who place tremendous trust in adoption workers has not been realized.

Two M.P.P.s, Mr. Rick Ferraro of Guelph and Mr. Richard Johnston of

Scarborough West support my efforts. I would greatly appreciate your readers taking a few minutes to express their views to Pandora and:

The Honourable John Sweeny
Minister of Community and Social Services
6th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1E9
Diane Drennan
Guelph, Ontario

Back-street abortion eulogy

No Dancers in Mourning
No dancers in mourning will follow them,
No-one will lay wreaths on their tombs.
The laws of men have destroyed them,
Their lives sacrificed for their wombs.
What manner of a people are we,
To so silence a woman's voice?
While we boasted of our humanity,
We gave these women no choice.
Wages for women are sixty percent,
Of what we cheerfully pay to a man.
There's never enough for food or the rent,
And they say, "Do the best that you can."
Tonight we are holding a memorial,
For these women whose only crime,
Was trying to ensure their survival,
In a world which gave them no time.
I say to you now, I say to you all,
We must remember these deaths in pain.
This eulogy is a desperate call,
Never again, never again, never again!
Annette Chaisson,
Copyright Aug. 28, 1989
All rights reserved
This eulogy was written for a Candle Light Memorial March for the women who died of back-street abortions

Betty Pete sends her regards

Pandora:

From Cape Breton I hear your call for help, but, alas I cannot make your meeting Monday night (June 19).

Even if I could, realism surmounts my good intent, for I know that I am called to contribute in other ways at this time in my life. As well, slow learner that I am, computers, high pressure and deadlines would leave me hanging on the ropes and Pandora climbing walls.

But consider me an enthusiastic and faithful reader who never fails to marvel and to learn from your pages. Many thanks to all ye who labour long and hard. Do not lose heart and hope, dear ones. May your neglectful public rally round and relieve your frustration and overwork in a very real way.

Here is your ridiculously low subscription fee and \$10 for a tippie of wine apiece, to lighten the load and lighten the lump.

We need Pandora! How can I help?

In Sisterhood,
Betty Peterson, Cape Breton

Reader rejects "woman's" role

Pandora:

Bravo! How fabulous to finally find an informative women's magazine! I was sent the March and June issues by Nancy, a wonderful, dear friend of mine who attends Acadia University in Wolfville.

I have always been the type of woman who has had to do what I've been told I can't. Do you follow? You know, being a woman I certainly couldn't do "man things." PHOOIE!

This year I decided to join the ranks of "look out, they're everywhere... motorcyclists." My husband cheered me on, but I could tell he thought I'd find it much too difficult... too heavy, too scary, too hard. Well, ha, ha, I've done it and now I cruise the highways and biways of life on my new '89 Suzuki 500cc café style racer. In red, of course, with matching helmet! Mind you, I now have a monthly payment to go along with it, but, hey, this babe got that without any help too!

I have, in the past two years, learned to do so many things. I've learned to play pool, which I don't mind saying, I'm very good at. I've learned to play guitar and even wrote two songs. And believe it or not, I've even been body-building for about eight months. No, those muscles don't look horrible. Boo Steroids! And certainly not last or least, I hope to join the Dartmouth Gun Club this September.

Nancy also informed me you needed female writers. Well, I am female and I not only print but I write too. Was this meant to be, or what? God, and everyone else, knows I love to talk and have something to say about everything (except why my brother has so much nasal hair!) So, if you know anyone who needs a woman of my capabilities, call me and we'll do lunch, ha ha.

Thanks for Pandora. It's perfect.

Lisa Whittington
(Pandora's note: It's wonderful to

hear from women, like you, who have expanded their horizons and tried new things. We always appreciate receiving articles from women about their experiences. As you may or may not know, the women who work on Pandora do not write the stories themselves. So, if you, or any other woman out there, want to write, just send us your article. Please check our guidelines which are written out in the staff box on page four. And we always like to get letters, especially the ones that say we're great—although we also like to know when we don't live up to your expectations!)

Waterlily, Nfld's newest women's voice starts up

Pandora:

Enclosed you'll find Waterlily, our latest feminist voice in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Pandora has been an inspiration to us this past few years (I've been a subscriber since your first issue.) Keep up the great work!

Waterlily is available at Red Herring and Atlantic News. Does anyone have suggestions for other distribution outlets in Nova Scotia or other parts of Canada?

Marian (White) Frances
for the Editorial Collective
Waterlily News
P.O. Box 367, Station C
St. John's, Nf
A1C 9Z9

(Pandora's note: Congratulations! We're pleased that Newfoundland and Labrador women finally have a voice of their own. Keep up the good work and good luck.)

Legislate decent fatherhood, not forced motherhood!

Pandora:

The following is too radical to send, as originally intended, to a daily newspaper. Have you any interest in publishing it? I hope so.

A few thoughts about the Daigle/Tremblay affair:

1. How far would this have gone if her name was Chan and his Singh, or if they were black, for example? I see a white, Christian, Franco (Anglo in other provinces) supremacist element to what we're witnessing, and it's ugly.
2. He tried everything he could, he says, to get her to keep the pregnancy—except being a nice guy. Obviously the person she really wanted to abort was Tremblay. With his child, he would always be in her life, and my guess is that he would make it an unending hell.
3. He admits to shoving her around after she got pregnant, but didn't leave any marks. What a hero! (Prospective cavemen fathers take note: don't beat your wife and offspring until after the birth.)

If he was physically violent with her when his precious "child" was inside her, odds are he'd abuse them both separately later on. Where would the anti-choice people be then? My guess is nowhere, reading their Bibles and minding their own business when it suits them.

4. Young women, wake up: having no man around is better than having a macho jerk around. All such rogues show their nasty ways, however subtly, early on. Life is not a Harlequin romance; you can't turn a warped man into Prince Charming. Get out before what happened to Chantal happens to you.

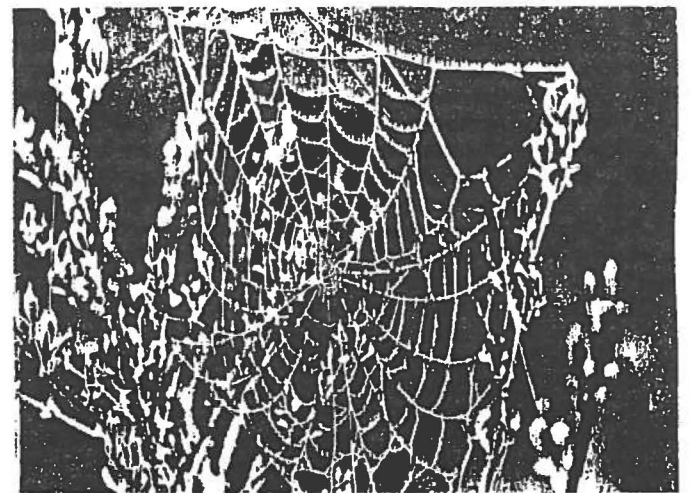
you. Whatever you choose to do after you're pregnant by a loser, the lesson is too hard, and price is too high.

5. Every woman who has had an abortion because the father of the fetus would make a lousy husband and Dad should get out and lend her presence, if not voice, to pro-choice rallies. Watch the ranks swell when these women show up.

6. Let's put Tremblay and his ilk on trial and legislate decent fatherhood. Only then can we seriously talk about legislating forced motherhood.

Sincerely,
Brenda Guild Gillespie
Dartmouth, N.S.

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

Pandora, P.O. Box 1209, North, Halifax, N.S. B3K 5H4



Company of Sirens teaches feminism through entertainment

Juanita Montalvo

Once in a blue moon we hear about a great show; a show that includes everything we ever wanted to see and hear—humor, song, social issues, entertainment, action, drama, feminism, dance. Usually by the time we hear these great reviews, the show is gone and will not return for another four years. Well this time, don't miss out!!

The Company of Sirens is a Toronto-based theatre company that packs a punch on today's important issues—daycare, pay equity, wife assault, sexual harassment, non-traditional jobs, sex-role stereotyping and racism. They will be touring Nova Scotia and New Brunswick with their two popular theatre plays *Foul Play* and *The Working People's Picture Show*. The plays are described as "truthful and terrific," "witty and satirical," "lively and entertaining," and many other adjectives not normally directly associated with feminist education.

Performances:

Oct. 20-22 UNB and Mount Allison U.

Oct. 24 *Foul Play* 7:30 pm McInnes

Room, Dalhousie Student Union Bld.

Oct. 25 *Foul Play* 12 Noon, Saint

Mary's University

Oct. 25 *Working Peoples Picture Show*

7:30 pm Halifax YWCA, Barrington

St.

Oct. 26 *Foul Play* presented by

Dalhousie Faculty of Health Profes-

sions. 12:30 IWK auditorium

Oct. 26 *Working People's Picture*

Show with *Foul Play*. 7:30 pm, An-

tagonish (contact Antigonish Women's

Centre for more info)

Oct. 27 *Working People's Picture Show* with *Foul Play*. 7:30 pm Wolfville.

Sponsored by Acadia University

Oct. 28 *Foul Play* 7 pm Nova Scotia College of Art and Design

Oct. 30 *Working People's Picture Show* with *Foul Play*. evening. Sydney. Holy Angel's Church (contact Ruth Schneider at UCCB for info)



Shopping notes— I wanna know why...

Okay, I admit to a few biases—I like to put on my clothes and not have to think about them for the rest of the day; I never buy clothes that need ironing; I don't shave (I hate razor burn, and the stubble I'd end up with, cuz as a single mom, listen, when I have time for me it's not going to be used shaving pits—that would be about #950 on my list of priorities).

Okay, so I have biases, but, I wanna know...

Why, when I go swimming, and women limp over with razor-burned inner thighs to ask where I bought my "grandmother" bathing suit with the short skirt on it, can't I say it's available wherever you buy bathing suits. (Actually, it's made by Sea Queen, which is about the only company that makes a few sensible bathing suits, and they're expensive, but you might luck out and find one in a second hand shop).

Why don't all skirts and pants have elastic waists, considering that

women's stomachs go in and out about an inch each month due to their period.

Why do I have to shop in the girls section for clothes for my son, so I can find him something that isn't brown or blue, or doesn't have a slogan like "Boys Club - Keep out" emblazoned across it.

Why is it so hard to find canvas shoes (the only way to go for comfort and smell control—just toss them in the wash).

Why do designers think women's middle toes are longer than their big toes? Can you think of any other reason for the existence of pointed shoes? As it now stands, you have to buy shoes two sizes too big in order to make room for the front of your foot. This results, however, in your heel slipping out, and you look like Clementine (wearing boxes without socks).

Why are there over 150 styles of bras, yet not one of them feels comfortable. I try to find tight-fitting cotton/

spandex T-shirts, which do as good a job, but where can you find them after summer's gone?

Why is it so hard to find a dancing dress—a no-sleeve, twirly-skirted thing that won't make me sweat. Don't designers dance?

Why aren't cotton clothes shrunk before they are sold, so you know what they will end up looking like after you have accidentally shrunk them.

Why are there so few sensible purses—you know, the kind that have a strap you can pull over your head and hang diagonally so you are left free to hold hands, carry bags, etc.

I also want to know whatever happened to "skorts," those short skirts with puff pants we wore as kids.

And finally, I want to know why aren't women demanding clothes that they don't have to turn themselves inside-out to wear, and if they do demand them, why aren't they being listened to.

Media Watch and CARAL announce new appointments

Kit Holmwood has been elected president of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL), the country's national pro-choice organization. She is replacing Norma Scarborough who stepped down after serving as president for the past nine months.

Kit has been active in the pro-choice organization since 1983, working in the Halifax, Ottawa and Toronto chapters. She first became involved in the women's movement as a volunteer counsellor at the Birth Control, VD and Abortion Referral Centre at Queen's University in the early 70s.

She has been on the national board of CARAL for three years and a Maritime representative for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, serving as Chair of the Reproductive Rights Committee for the past five years.

She moved to Saint John this summer where she plans to work with local groups to improve the availability of women's reproductive health services.

□ □ □ □ □

Debi Forsyth-Smith has been appointed as the Atlantic Canada representative to the national Board of Directors of

MediaWatch.

Founded in 1981, MediaWatch is dedicated to improving the portrayal of women and girls in the media by eliminating sexist and pornographic images and encouraging the creation of images that reflect the changing and diverse roles of women in Canadian society.

Activities of MediaWatch include:

- advocacy on behalf of the public,
- lobbying for legislative and regulatory change to improve the status of women in the mass media,
- research in the field of sex-role stereotyping and mass communications,
- public education in decoding media imagery, and
- development of educational materials.

This year, the organization will be concentrating its efforts on addressing the Broadcasting Act (Bill C135), the establishment of Broadcast Standards Councils and employment equity programs aimed at media employees.

Ms. Forsyth-Smith is President of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and has extensive background in the broadcast media.

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Artists meet to network

Marie Koehler-Vandergraff

Making art is usually an isolated and isolating experience—isolated because a lot of the work involves decisions and labour relevant only to the maker, and isolating because almost no one but another artist cares about what you do and why you do it.

When women artists meet after a separation, they don't ask "How are you?" ; they ask "How's your work going? What are you doing? Did you ever get that piece you were working on straightened out?"

It was to provide a forum for this kind of exchange that the Nova Scotia Women Artists' Network was begun. Rosemary MacAuley had heard enthusiastic responses to the Manitoba Artists for Women's Art program, also known as the Mentor program, which evolved out of Plug In Gallery, an artist-run centre in Winnipeg, as an effort to make women more "equal."

MAWA is a support structure for women artists through which experienced and well-regarded artists are hired to be mentors to less experienced artists. During the 12 months of a specific program the mentor talks with her mentee about her work, develops strategies for dealing with commercial and public galleries, shows her the ins and outs of grant writing, introduces her to friends and foes, and generally provides the strings and associations necessary to survive in the art world.

Several women in the Halifax area thought it would be beneficial to begin such a program here; but as we met and discussed what we wanted we realized that the literal MAWA program wouldn't work at this point in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia does not have a history of supporting the arts, nor any commitment to art education; moreover, it is particularly difficult to get funding of any sort right now from any level of government.

What we really wanted, we decided, was a support network which would assist all of us to overcome some of the traditional barriers to women artists being valued.

In our discussions, we agreed that one of the most persistent barriers was the insufficiency of women in Nova Scotia critiquing and reviewing each other's work: work which is not reviewed is not remembered. If you're applying for a grant and can't prove, with a piece of paper, that you've had

an exhibition, you appear weaker, no matter what your merits, than a candidate who has managed to show a critical review of (his) exhibition.

Another barrier, especially for rural women, is the lack of news about grant deadlines, exhibition calls-to-enter and exhibition openings. Unless you're exceptionally well-organized (or wealthy), it's almost impossible to gather your slides, make new ones, call in old ones, copy your c.v., arrange it neatly and write the necessary paragraphs in time for these deadlines.

The Art Gallery at Mount Saint Vincent University has initiated an Information Exchange Centre for Nova Scotia Women Artists. Beginning in November, they will make a weekly listing of all events of interest to women artists. This list will be prepared for DUET (Distance University Television Education) located at the Mount and broadcast over as many cable systems as possible throughout the province at specified times.

In addition, the Centre will maintain a body of information about women artists in the province which will be available to, among others, artists who want to network. We hope that this service will make information about NSWAN meetings more readily available to rural artists and help to lessen the physical isolation rural women artists feel.

NSWAN does not yet have a formal structure. We are meeting for business—to discuss aims and structure, discussion, critical reading and reviewing—approximately twice a month. A list of our meetings until Christmas appears below. We harbour a major goal, which is a weekend workshop on getting the most out of the "system" in March, 1990 and hope to spend the first weekend in December planning the workshop.

We hope that, hearing about us, more women artists will be eager to join us. We're interested in ideas and debate. So far we've worked by consensus. One of the important questions we have yet to deal with is: Do we aim for "equality" by infiltrating the male-dominated institutions or do we try something else, a parallel or alternative? If you can't come to a meeting but would like more information, please contact us by mail c/o Eye Level Gallery, 2182 Gottingen St., Halifax, N.S. B3K 3B4.

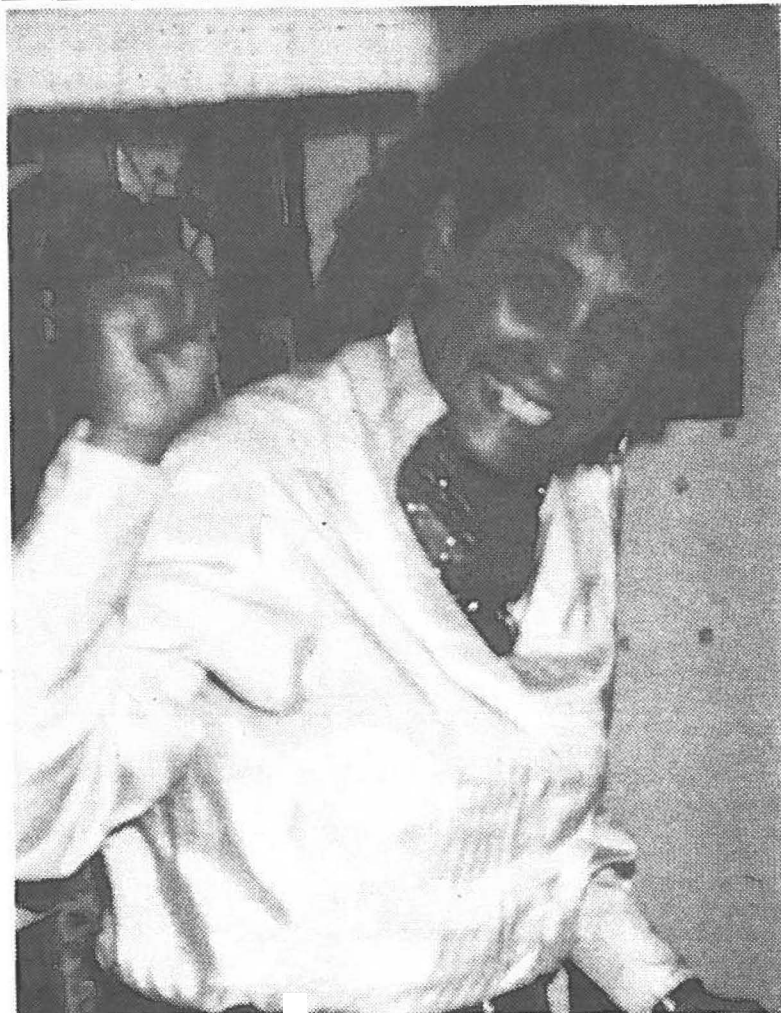
Ideally, we'll meet twice a month—once for business, once for discussions of slides or critical readings. We'd love to see you.

Monday, October 16, 7:00 pm, Eye Level Gallery: general discussion; bring 5 slides of your own work and 5 slides of another's to illustrate some issue in your own work. (If you aren't ready to bring slides, come to participate.) Also, exchange of resource material that you'd like other women artists to read.

Wednesday, November 1, 12:30, lunch at Rosemary MacAuley's house, phone 422-7565, business meeting.

Thursday, November 23, 7:00 pm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia: follow-up to previous general meeting; discussion of needs, discussion of current Eye Level exhibition by a woman artist.

December 1 — 3, Camp Hillis, Paradise, N.S. Workshop Session: grant-writing session for upcoming workshop. Discussions about critical readings. Inventive work session. Pay \$10 for bed, bring two food dishes for board, phone 422-7565 or 464-0898 for transportation.



Heather reminds anyone who wants to visit her to bring a ham since they are in short supply but great demand on the island. (Photo by Nadine McNamara)

Activist proud of successes but now needs to heal self

Heather-Dawn Schneider

My sisters—my friends:

Having worked and fought relentlessly deep in the bowels of the beast, I reach out to toast the courage of women everywhere and to bid you all farewell. Not goodbye—for goodbye is permanent, final, the end, and I am not finished, just weary, exhausted and heart-sick.

I return to the land of my birth for a while, to seek quiet and solitude in the sun in the hope of healing my body and spirit.

When I have restored my ability to laugh without crying, to breathe without hurting, to cry without the fear that I may never stop, only then can I return to the on-going battle of violence against women; the fight against the insult of racism; the rape of our daughters and sons; the misuse of our bodies; the denial of our rights, our beliefs, our intelligence as women; the destruction of our planet; the many unacceptable things that slowly eat away at our souls.

In 1984, a group of wonderful and courageous women began an organization known as Mothers United for Metro Shelter, better known as MUMS, and with daring and fearlessness we carved a deep and unforgettable path in Nova Scotia's history, a path that we hoped many would walk towards freedom. Daily we gave of our time, energy and resources to help others onto this path of healing. Now I am forced to retreat to try and find a path of healing of my own; to mend the damage to my body and spirit that has been ravaged in the battle.

As women, each one of us individually faces a battle of our own as we struggle to make this world a better place for ourselves and our children. Our progress is slow and at times can be disheartening. In 1984 MUMS claimed a cliché for our own "Back to

back—we defend each other." Today in 1989 it is still my heartfelt conviction that it is only through defending each other, back to back in every battle, in every crisis, it is only in standing together that we will eventually find freedom and peace.

In the past I have been subjected to debilitating abuse by violent and vicious men. I have been raped and beaten into submissive silence.

Very recently I have been forced to look closely into the ugly, repulsive face of racism and it has shocked, frightened and sickened me.

I have been victimized, humiliated and de-humanized at the hands of those claiming to be doctors, healers in the medical profession.

My fists, my jaw, are clenched in outrage and instead of my natural instinct to defend myself, to claw out the eyes of the liars, the racists, the perpetrators of unspeakable acts of violence towards women in so many nebulous and bold forms, I find I can only curl myself into the fetal position and weep bitter tears while praying for the strength to get back up and face down the injustices to my children, to my friends, to my sister, to my psyche. It is wonderful to be able to say: I rose to the challenge. I gave it all I had to give, with deep gratitude to the many wonderful women that fought with me, back to back, and who I now hold dear in the deepest recesses of my heart, for the courage they gave me to do what had to be done, to pry open the lid of Pandora's box and force society to face all of the horrific things they have deliberately stored away, where no one can see.

We, as members of MUMS and MUST (Mothers United for Social Transformation) successfully dragged out into the open:

the plight of low-income single

mothers,

the lack of decent, affordable housing for the poor,

the inadequacies of the welfare system,

racial discrimination and stereotyping.

...all of the things that were so neatly tucked away out of sight of those who would bleed with us, cry with us, fight with us, demand justice and fairness with us. I encourage women to sustain each other, support each other, keeping in mind all of the wonderful and dynamic women that have burnt out in the struggle. The battle has only just begun. My final words are a quote taken from the book "Hurricane Sundown" by K. Gilden. In the words of a slave in the year 1800:

"My feet are sore from inching along all my life

My knees are callused from being forced to beg for what's rightly mine

I have a permanent bellyache from all the things

I see in this society that I cannot and will not accept.

I have a crick in my neck from constantly binding my head to use it as a battering ram

My head hurts. And as I look around me today

I have to ask myself

Have we all been going backwards?"

In love, sisterhood and solidarity.

□ □ □ □ □

Heather has agreed to be the first foreign correspondent for Pandora. She left for Trinidad on September 28. She'd like to hear from women and would happy to receive and distribute donations of money and clothing. Her address is: 10 Kenneth Street, Neito Ville, Arima, Trinidad, West Indies.

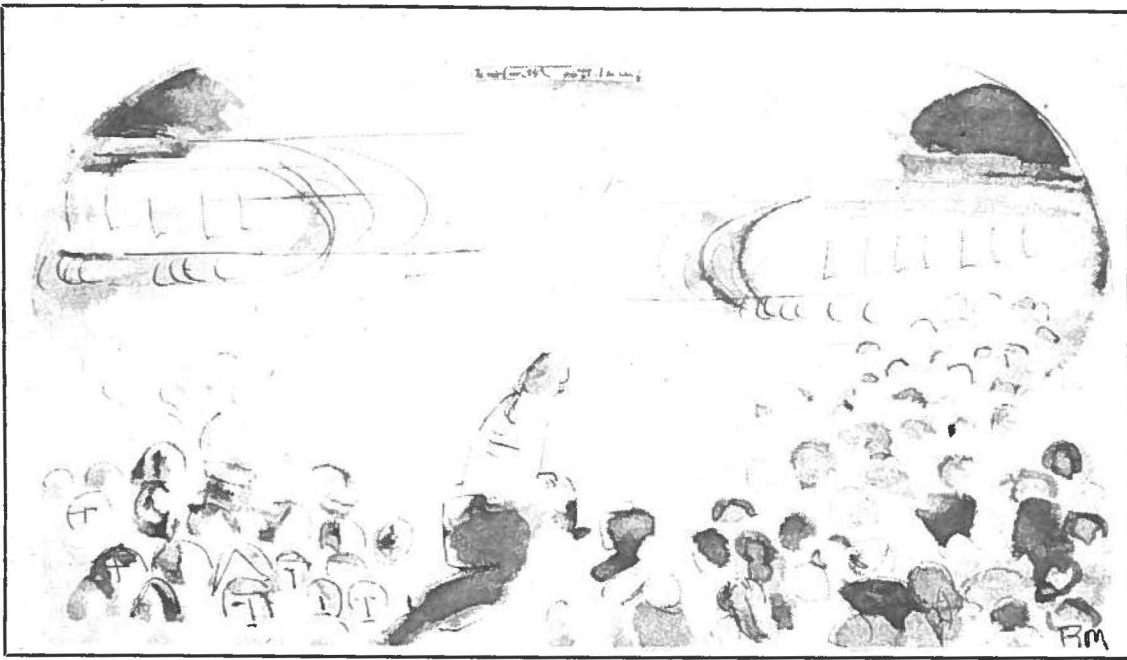
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 Halifax, NS B3J 2A1





A "country bumpkin" experiences the subways

Judith Meyrick

The subway is the precursor of "The Rapid Transit System," or RT's as they are called by Those In The Know. In recent years, as cities have sprawled further and further from their downtown cores, the development and implementation of faster, more efficient RT's has been essential. However, what the city planners have overlooked is ongoing public education, specifically in the field of RT use. This lack of guidance has had serious ramifications for me.

My first encounter with an RT was an experience that has caused me to shun cities which require me to hurtle round subterranean tunnels at speeds which leave me dizzy, breathing air which hasn't had any fresh input of oxygen in some years, in the company of people who appear to think that this is Living.

It was the spring of '82 when RT's and I first met. I was on my way to a conference in Toronto. I don't particularly like flying, but airports are a breeze. Tedious but predictable. So off I went one Friday night with my co-worker, negotiated the airport with no problem, and took the bus to the subway station to catch the above-mentioned RT to the hotel.

It was 10:30 at night in Toronto, and the subway station was crowded with people going the same way as I was, fellow travellers as it were. It was the time of the changeover, when the people who use the city during the day vacate their possession and turn the streets over to the people of the night.

I could hear grumblings behind me as I struggled to pay for the ride. The token seller was a man of few words and made it quite clear that he didn't care whether I got on the subway or fell under it, but that whatever I decided, I should do it quickly.

I eventually realized that his gestures were not friendly and that I should put the token into the turnstile myself. He was not going to do it for me. The roar of a train filled the station with noise until there was no other sound on earth. The hostility of the people standing in the queue behind me became tangible. The noise began to abate when I realized that it is considered bad form in Toronto to cause people to miss the train. I said I was sorry.

Still, the trains ran fairly frequently it seemed. I hauled my suitcase down to the platform, plunked myself down on

it and lit a cigarette. (Those were the days when I didn't know that there could be life without cigarettes. I have long since given up smoking, a habit for which I willingly suffered humiliation, degradation and poverty. However, there I sat, smoking.)

The tunnel again filled with the same rushing din I had heard earlier, which I now knew heralded the imminent arrival of the train. I stubbed out my butt, and like a good citizen walked over to the sandbin on the wall, making sure that no embers remained to start a subterranean fire. A desperate voice screamed what sounded like my name. I spun around, and to my horror the platform was now empty of people. The train doors were closed, except for one which had my bright red suitcase wedged into it. Someone was blowing a whistle a lot, too.

Subway carriages have doors similar to elevators. It seems if you hold them open the train cannot leave. I dropped the cigarette and sprinted for the train. I somehow managed to open those doors wide enough for me to squeak through and fling myself and my red suitcase into the carriage. With the offending obstacle removed, the doors closed silently and the train left.

But, alas, as I catapulted through the door, my arm had not followed at the same pace as the rest of my body and my hand was still clutching my briefcase outside the train. The rubber seals on the doors were wide enough to prevent injury to my arm, but narrow enough to stop me from easily pulling it, and my briefcase, inside. I looked around the carriage wildly for some assistance but it was not forthcoming. My fellow travellers were uninterested in my current predicament.

Fear is a great motivator. Grisly visions of my arm (or future lack of it) boosted my strength and I somehow managed to haul it inside. Once the briefcase was safely wedged as far as the rubber stopgap, I was able to take my leisure to pry it loose. Leisure being a relative term here.

I was somewhat hysterical, my composure was in shreds, and my big-city veneer had worn away to expose the small town girl underneath. And this small town girl did the only thing possible under the circumstances. She sat on her red suitcase and laughed, and laughed, loud and raucous in the hissing quiet of the subway carriage. Her face got red and puffy and still she

laughed. There is a school of thought that says that laughter is infectious. However, let me assure you that this adage does not hold true in subways.

Passengers on RT's are a stolid lot. They looked on dispassionately, blankly, unamusedly. Some of them were the ones who had missed the earlier train and it seems that my country bumpkin display was insufficient to atone for my misdeeds.

I have been to Toronto several times since then. I have managed to negotiate the subway system with only marginal anxiety, although my daughter has refused to travel with me if I insist on wearing a brown paper bag. But RT riders have long memories and I don't want my previous display of provincial ignorance to influence any future relationship I may be able to have with them. So my daughter and I have reached a compromise—I handle airports but once on the ground she takes over.

I don't do subways!

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CARAL seeks women willing to tell about their abortion stories

The Halifax chapter of CARAL (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League) is beginning a research project which we hope will improve the reproductive health care available to Nova Scotian women.

The research will document the stories of Nova Scotian women in their search for, and experience of, abortion services. Researcher Nancy Bowes will travel around Nova Scotia over the next seven months to interview women who have sought an abortion in Nova Scotia in the last five years. CARAL would like to hear from women who have had an abortion in Nova Scotia in that time period, who have travelled outside Nova Scotia to have an abortion, or who have sought an abortion but have given up the search.

We need women who are willing to

tell their stories—as anonymous subjects with their confidentiality fully protected—to Nancy Bowes. If you could tell your story, please call or write Nancy at the address below. If you know someone who fits the criteria and whom you think may be ready to tell her story, please pass this article on to her.

CARAL hopes that the women who tell their stories will benefit by seeing their experience in a feminist perspective—one that respects women and supports their right to choose abortion to end an unintended pregnancy.

If you can help, please contact Nancy at:

P.O. Box 101, Station M
Halifax, N.S.
B3J 2L4
Phone 454-6736

Lesbian Support Group provides safe place to share experiences

Darlene Young

Lately, I have had the opportunity to talk with, and listen to, several women who are struggling with the day-to-day reality of being lesbian in an oppressive heterosexual society.

These women have shared their personal struggles in dealing with the complex issues of life: coming out to family and friends, fighting for custody of their children, and raising their children as single mothers or co-parenting with their lesbian partners.

Each woman has recounted the emotional and psychological scars of being labeled different and feeling excluded from "normal life" (whatever

that is.) Lesbians are looking for some kind of support with their growing sense of isolation and frustration.

A Lesbian Support Group has been established in the Halifax area. Its purpose is to provide a safe place for lesbians to meet and talk about their lives with others who share similar experiences and struggles, in an atmosphere of care and support.

If you are a lesbian in need of such a support group and would like more information, please call Darlene at 422-6385. The meeting are held the first and third Mondays of the month at the Persons With AIDS office on Gottingen Street.





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My Wall

Linda Harpell

I've built a wall around myself. I worked hard on it over a long period of time. The wall is thick, the material strong and of good quality. I know it works whenever I hear people say "I don't understand you" or "you're being foolish."

But now I find that when I want to leave it, the wall blocks me too. I've tried several times before to break it down or climb over it. Yet the wall was too strong, and the effort too great to succeed.

A few times I tried to reach out to others around me, but my cries and my pleas went unheard, or others misunderstood my words. The wall seems to distort and change them.

There were times when I tried to find comfort from within myself. I turned away from the wall and went into the empty wastes within me. I found a little comfort, but never enough. Never enough.

The only way that I can get the closeness and warmth I need is if someone breaks through the wall, or at least helps me to tear it down. But everyone goes about their own lives with their own concerns and problems, unable to hear my words.

Their conversations flow around me and through me. Do they hear me? Can they feel my sorrow and loneliness?

As if from far off, I hear their talk as they discuss me. They ask one another "Who's fault is it?"

Whose? Mine... or theirs?

The wall is thicker now than it has ever been. A few times I managed to help different ones climb over the wall. I am shattered now. Too many times they have seen the emptiness, the vulnerability behind these strong barriers. Each time they left. Each time, the wall

has grown thicker, more impenetrable. The world outside has become inverted and dark. The disappointments, the negatively cutting things said and done block my vision of anything else. Sad, a word that covers my sighs and thoughts.

Help? No one hears me, even now. No one will understand/try to understand. Many shun me. So many more ignore me until I err or they condemn me for doubting goodness that they say they have. Is their message that comes to me now distorted? Less certain?

Again, the wall blocks my search for understanding and clear, certain answers. If I speak foolish words, words that I feel are true, they will break down my walls and devastate me to my utter ruin and end. I am alone in my thoughts, even if I plead to be heard by a gentle understanding other. If I speak, I will make the utter aloneness I feel an absolute reality.

Do I want the wall torn down? Do I want to be heard? Do I want to be reached by another? The answers are less clear, and I am less sure. Do I bother trying?



Shown at her farewell party, Linda Roberts (centre) accepts a bouquet of roses in honor of her long-standing commitment with Women's Employment Outreach. She will be pursuing a career at the Captain William Spry centre in Spryfield. She will be missed by her co-workers Diann Graham (left) and Jane Andres (right). (Photo by Brenda Conroy)

Wild Womyn don't get the blues



bathe downstream from the drinking water.

Cultural events sprung up spontaneously. There were tent gymnastics against a backdrop of forest green, a dainty dental floss ballet, morning fashion shows of nighties and work boots, dancing on moguls, music by moonlight, and a chameleon-like choral group turned comedienne.

Sporting activities included tent floating and snorkeling in sleeping bags, raindrop dodging, surf frisbee,

tent-catching, and "softy" ball for the inexperienced spiced with red hot pitching and sleazy base tending.

Archaeological curiosities included symbolic sand sculptures indicating very desirable early civilizations. Unfortunately there have been reports of theft of all evidence of an advanced civilization which had been nestled against the trees in the Downhill neighbourhood. One report is that it was seen being removed in a Toyota—license plate number unknown.

Dismantling the community happened with ease. After the meeting tent blew down the 20th time, it was left to lie. The main canopy came down with an amazing feat of consultation and cooperation among 15 capable women.

As the cars rolled away at the end of the weekend, we all knew we would return, lured by the plaintive call of a bass playing deep in the woods.

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The Wild Womyn Weekend is held each year during the long weekend in August. A lesbian-sponsored, woman-only event, it's a great source of community, friendship and relaxation for all the women who attend. If you are interested in obtaining information about next year's Weekend, contact Pandora and we'll pass your name and address on.

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PEI women extend support for Halifax abortion clinic

Representatives of several PEI Women's groups held a press conference in early August to express support for Dr. Henry Morgentaler's Halifax clinic, and to support the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League in its current legal challenge to the Nova Scotia government which is attempting to prevent the clinic from operating.

Groups represented include the Legal, Education, and Action Fund (LEAF), the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Women's Network, the Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, the PEI chapter of the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL), the Lesbian Collective, and the PEI chapter of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL/PEI).

"We are naturally very concerned about the outcome of this case," said Alice Crook of CARAL/PEI. "We welcome this clinic since it represents the best opportunity at present for improved access to abortion for Island

women. Dr. Morgentaler's Halifax clinic is intended to be a regional clinic for all the Atlantic provinces, as women in Newfoundland and New Brunswick also have extremely limited access to abortion. We deplore the ongoing efforts of the Nova Scotia government to stop Dr. Morgentaler from operating this clinic."

Said Lorna Gallant of the PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, "PEI does not provide adequate health services to women. A clinic in Nova Scotia would help to fill the health care gap, especially for lower income women who cannot afford to travel to Montreal or the States."

"We recognize that presently, women who are in need of abortion have to travel long distances in order to obtain the procedures and that this is costly and elitist as, of course, only women who have access to money have access to safe, early abortion," commented Shirley Limbert of the Lesbian Collective. "We whole-heart-

edly support the opening of the Morgentaler Clinic in Halifax so that women may at least have a choice of ways in which they can respond to this important health matter."

Vaughn Jelliffe of Women's Network also expressed support for the Morgentaler Clinic, saying, "The clinic will provide more ready and less costly access to abortion for those Island women who choose the procedures. Women's Network supports reproductive freedom for women."

"Women who return from Dr. Morgentaler's clinics in Montreal and Toronto tell us consistently of the excellent counselling and supportive care they receive," added Alice Crook.

"We look forward to these same standards of care being as close as Halifax. Already the Nova Scotia government's actions have caused a delay of several months. In view of our own government's lack of action, Island women need this clinic to be open. It is our clinic too!"



Lesbian and Gay Pride March, 1989, gave the community a chance to come out and celebrate. About 80 people marched the streets of Halifax. (Photo by Anita Martinez)

Lesbian and Ga A history of thei

Lesbian and Gay Rights Nova Scotia grew out of a conference on gay and lesbian youth sponsored by the Nova Scotia Children's Aid Society. The group was formed in 1987, and for the first year talked about preparing the ground for the addition of sexual orientation to the Human Rights Act "someday."

"Someday" suddenly arrived late in the spring of 1988 when we discovered that the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission would be working on a major rewrite of the Province's Human Rights Act over the summer. The group flew into action, making presentations to the Commission and its related committees and asking organizations to write letters of support. Organizations responded wonderfully. The late Dr. Tony Johnstone, Executive Secretary of the Commission, said he had never seen such a response on an issue of human rights. By early fall, the staff of the Commission submitted the new Act to the government, including sexual orientation as prohibited grounds of

discrimination. The Act also added marital status as prohibited grounds of discrimination in the area of housing (it was already there for employment,) and improved the protection of people who are currently experiencing or have in the past experienced mental health difficulties.

The battle began in October, when the Human Rights Commission itself voted that sexual orientation should be removed from the draft. Dr. Johnstone spoke out publicly against his own Commission, saying that they were political appointees who do not have the first clue about the basic principle of human rights.

Lesbian and Gay Rights went public for the first time talking about the split between staff and Board of the Human Rights Commission on radio. A reporter asked if the Commission vote was a surprise. The LGR spokesperson said yes, the Commission had seemed positive in their response to our presentation, but there was one Commission member who made a lengthy homophobic speech during that meeting.

That comment triggered a media hue and cry around Barkat Masih Khokhar, a Human Rights Commissioner who was ready to defend his homophobic views without apology on air and in print. Lesbian and Gay Rights

Introduction

Anne Bishop

The past year has been more than lively for everyone involved in the fight for a new Human Rights Act in Nova Scotia. For weeks we felt so close to success we could reach out and touch it; but at the last moment it was whisked out of our grasp. Now, after a quiet summer, it is time to pick up the struggle again. We have just begun.

The most encouraging thing about the year's experience has been the number of people who went out of their way to support lesbians and gay men in our effort to get basic human rights protection. People wrote letters, sent postcards and made phone calls. They asked their organizations to write letters of support and distributed post cards to everyone they could think of. Judging by the letters which reached the Minister's Office, four-fifths of our active supporters are women. Many, I'm sure, are readers of Pandora. This, then, is a good way to get some information out to you all.

I think it would be useful to repeat some of the basic information; that is, why we want to have sexual orientation included in the Human Rights Act, what it will and will not do. I hope those of you who have heard it all before will simply skip that section. The other pieces are a history of this past year of lobbying, an update on our current situation, and a brief personal reflection on the year's experience.

Myths of homosexuality: a primer of false beliefs

Why do we want to have sexual orientation added to the Human Rights Act?

Human rights legislation forbids discrimination in employment, housing and public services. Right now, anyone can fire a gay or lesbian person from a job, expropriate us from an apartment or refuse to serve us in a restaurant simply because we are gay/lesbian.

If the Human Rights Act listed sexual orientation along with the other prohibited grounds of discrimination, the person fired, expropriated or refused services could go to the Human Rights Commission and lodge a complaint.

Quebec was the first province to protect gays and lesbians (1977.) Their Human Rights Commission reports some secondary effects of the legislation as well. They find a general decrease in fear in the gay and lesbian communities, and increased reporting of violence. Without the legislation a person who reports gay bashing, harassment or vandalism puts their housing and job at risk.

Getting sexual orientation added to the Human Rights Act will not solve the problem of discrimination, of course. People in the protected groups can tell us about the long list of tricks employers and landlords use to get around the law, but it is a first step, and the struggle to get the changes is an excellent opportunity for consciousness raising, in the gay/lesbian community and in the general public.

There are a few false beliefs about lesbian and gay people which appear over and over again. It is amazing how many people, both in and out of the gay and lesbian communities, believe these lies.

The first is that we are asking for special rights, something beyond what other people have. In fact, we are simply trying to catch up with most other people in this society who have had

human rights protection for twenty years.

The second belief is that human rights protection for lesbians and gay men will legalize pedophilia. Many, many people believe that child abuse is a lesbian/gay problem.

Many groups have been accused of hurting children, including gypsies, black, Jewish, and disabled people. With child abuse and gay/lesbian rights emerging as public issues at the same time, the current fashion is to blame pedophilia on lesbians and gay men.

The fact is that the abuse of children or young people and sexual orientation have nothing to do with each other. Sexual orientation refers to people who are attracted to people of the same sex. The majority of gay men and lesbians form relationships between consenting adults.

Pedophilia refers to adults who derive some kind of sexual stimulation from misuse of their power over children. The figures are hard to pin down accurately, but all research shows that by far the majority of cases involve adult men abusing young girls.

Human rights legislation can only do one thing—prevent discrimination against lesbian and gay people based on their sexual orientation. It does not change the Criminal Code. Abuse of young people by any adult of any sex or sexual orientation would remain illegal.

The third widespread argument is that sexual orientation is a "lifestyle choice" like smoking, and therefore should not come under the Human Rights Act which protects people for things they cannot change, like skin colour.

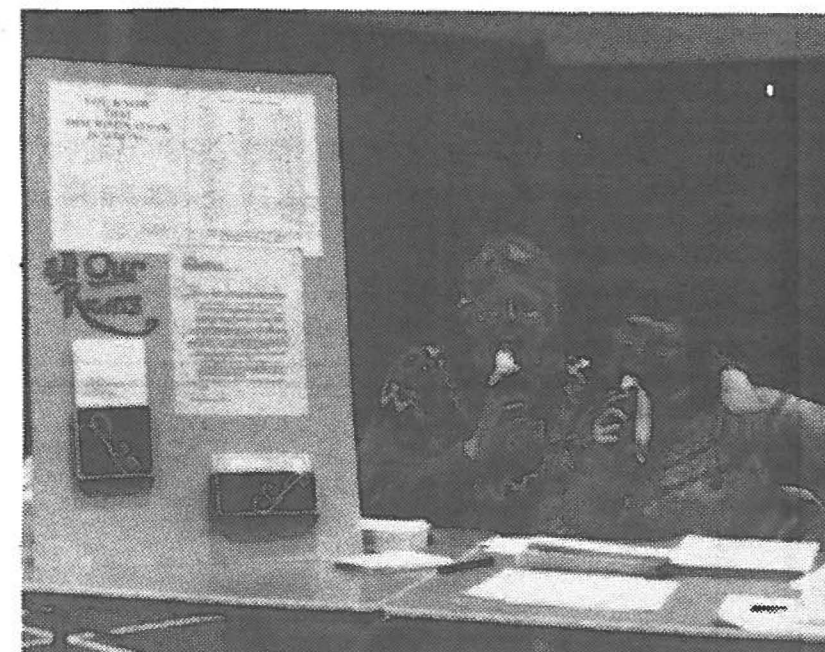
There are two responses to this belief. First, sexual orientation is not a trivial thing in people's lives. One does not get up in the morning and say, "I think I'll be a lesbian today."

Most unbiased research shows that sexual orientation begins very young, if

not before birth. Any lesbian or gay person can tell you that their sexual orientation is a deep part of their being. Too many can testify that aversion therapy, guilt, self-mutilation, shock treatments, marriage, prayer, and any other "cure" this society has come up with, are not enough to uproot what is an essential part of the person.

The second response concerns the Human Rights Act. It covers religion, which is just as much a choice, if not more so.

There are other myths afoot, but these are the three that come up most often, on radio phone-in shows, in newspaper columns, from interviewers, politicians, parents, friends, and, yes, active members of lesbian and gay organizations.



International Women's Day, 1989, proved to be a good time to discuss activities of LGRNS. Anne Bishop and Jan Morrell staffed the booth. (Photo by Anita Martinez)

Gay Rights, Nova Scotia: their activities this year

Nova Scotia was briefly pushed into the public light. Supportive response poured in from all over the province and from other provinces as well. The Minister Responsible for Administration of the Human Rights Act asked for Mr Khokhar's resignation. Finally, the Minister announced that the legislation would go forward to the Government Caucus with sexual orientation still included. Lesbian and Gay Rights began a series of unsuccessful attempts to meet with the Minister.

At that point, the new Human Rights Act disappeared from sight for a while in the civil service where it was drafted as a bill. The Throne Speech in February promised nothing but made a general statement about human rights protection for all citizens of the province. The Act re-emerged when LGR got word that it was to be discussed in the Government Caucus April 12th. The Government Caucus has the power to bring the Act forward into the legislative process or hold it back, leave sexual orientation in or take it out. LGR coordinated a press conference on April 11th and about 150 people came out to demonstrate in front of Province House on April 12.

After April 12th—silence. Nothing was announced about the new Act; it did not come forward to the Legislature.

LGR decided to talk with each of the Government Caucus members individually. To our surprise it turned out that a slight majority supported bringing the legislation forward with sexual orientation included. Not only that, but most of the key members of the Cabinet supported it. That meant that if the Act came forward, it would pass.

Apparently the minority in the Government Caucus opposing the Act were holding it back. Since no back-bencher would have the power to do that, we began to speculate that it must be Buchanan himself blocking the path.

We held a press conference to publicize this, a move which brought us some criticism (Nova Scotians don't like personal attacks on anyone) but again, a great deal of support. It did not have any effect on the Government, however, and there was still silence on the subject of the Human Rights Act.

On June 9th, just before the Legislature closed, the Government announced that the Act would not be brought forward. There was a flurry of press interviews again, and then everyone, in true Canadian fashion, adjourned for the summer.

Update: current/future activities of LGR NS

Now fall is upon us, and it is time to pick up the task where we left off. The Legislature will probably sit again in the spring. We need to keep up the pressure on the Government to bring the new Human Rights Act forward.

A major challenge facing us is forming a working relationship with other groups concerned about the new Human Rights Act, such as low-income single parents and people who have experienced mental health difficulties. There is also the possibility of joint action with other groups who have suffered at the hands of the Buchanan government, such as the deaf community and the Micmac people.

Some active members of LGR have left Halifax; others are very tired. We hope some new people will come forward, with new ideas and energy. The strategy for this year will take shape around that new constellation of people.

Certainly the people who wrote letters, made calls, and came out to demonstrate last year, and hopefully many more, will be the heart of whatever we do.

Anyone who wants to take part in these efforts, at any level, should leave a message on the LGR answering machine at 455-5729.

Bad things happen when good people don't speak out: a reflection on organizing

Like most other members of LGR, I began this year with very little experience of lobbying, and a great deal of fear about anyone knowing I am a lesbian. The year's activities have been a powerful and happy experience for me.

That is not to say there haven't been pain and problems. At one point I felt the group chose respectability over solidarity in a situation where I had little choice but to carry out the decision. Deeper analysis revealed a more complex situation than I had seen at the time. The group grew; I grew; but there was a time of painful, vulnerable isolation in between.

Other struggles have come from working with men. I believe we must work together to protect ourselves from the growing homophobia we are all experiencing in the age of AIDS. However, with three notable exceptions, I find the men in LGR unwilling to even question their sexist assumptions. They come running when there is public attention and "high status" work; when it's time to stuff envelopes, forget it.

The good news is I was surprised at how much support there is for the human rights of lesbian and gay people. If the legislation had come forward in the spring, it would have passed. Supportive letters and public comment have come forward steadily all year, sometimes from surprising sources.

Support has poured out whenever people could see the discrimination against us for themselves: for example, when Khokhar made his public comments, when Arnie Patterson of the Daily News suggested that child abuse is a homosexual problem, or when LGR representatives fielded a series of hate-

filled calls on the Maritime Noon Phone-In.

Apparently we have a larger problem with decent people who have trouble believing the discrimination exists, than we do with people who want to discriminate without hindrance. Or perhaps, as some famous person once said, "Bad things happen because good people don't speak out." It is not easy to do, but stepping forward and letting the shit fly is an excellent strategy. You find out you are not alone.

Above all, the year's experience has taught me something about coming out. Before this I probably would have told you that coming out is gay and lesbian people's most important political tool,

but now I understand it right into my roots. For every lesbian or gay person who has been beaten up, expropriated, fired, or had their house painted with ugly slogans, there are probably a hundred others who stay in the closet for fear of those things happening. That is how random violence works to keep every oppressed group in place. In our case, we are particularly well suited to being invisible, so we seek our safety in silence. We pay a terrible personal price for it, splitting ourselves in two, never experiencing complete integrity or trust. We also pay a high political price, allowing homophobic people to dehumanize us with no human face to challenge their assumptions, allowing all

the basically decent people around us to think it doesn't affect anyone they know.

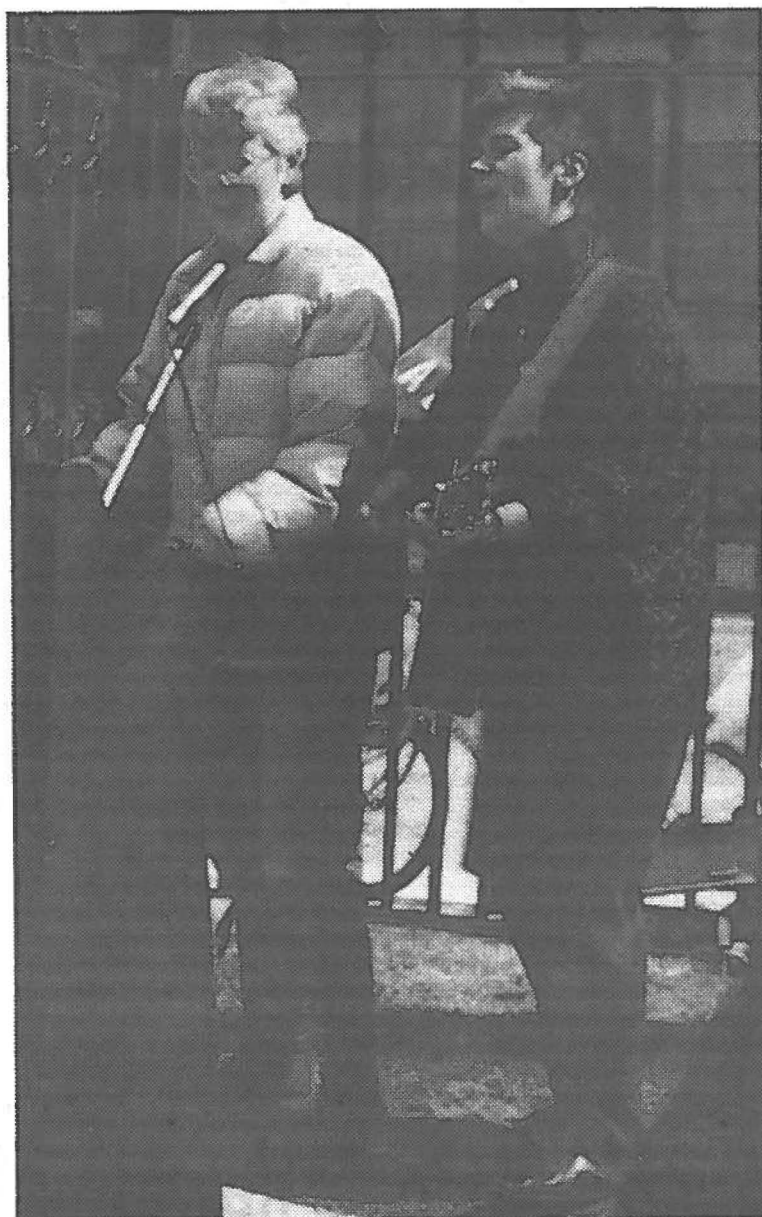
I know how terrible the fear is. I also know it doesn't ever go away. Every time I speak up for human rights I struggle to keep my voice from squeaking to a halt and suffer diarrhea and sleepless nights. I know that a gay, bisexual or lesbian person, even a straight person, can only speak up on this issue by their own choice, when they are completely ready. Who am I to say that anyone "should" come out? It took me many years to get around to it!

On the other hand, I feel a deep frustration that more lesbians and gay men don't come out. People can only start to see our oppression as a problem when it affects someone who matters to them. If enough of us were to come out, we could really change things, not just for ourselves, but for other oppressed people as well, because all oppressive attitudes are linked together. The support is there.

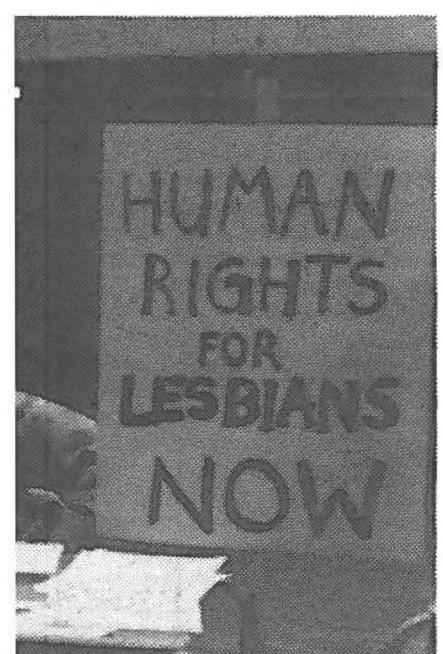
Coming out is unbelievably liberating personally. It restores an internal and external integrity which I haven't experienced for many years. It feels wonderful.

I urge all gay and lesbian people, in the words of the National Coming Out Day slogan to "take the next step." I urge others who care about human rights to talk about it, make it less acceptable to repeat homophobic lies and jokes. There is a coming out process for straight supporters of lesbian and gay people, too.

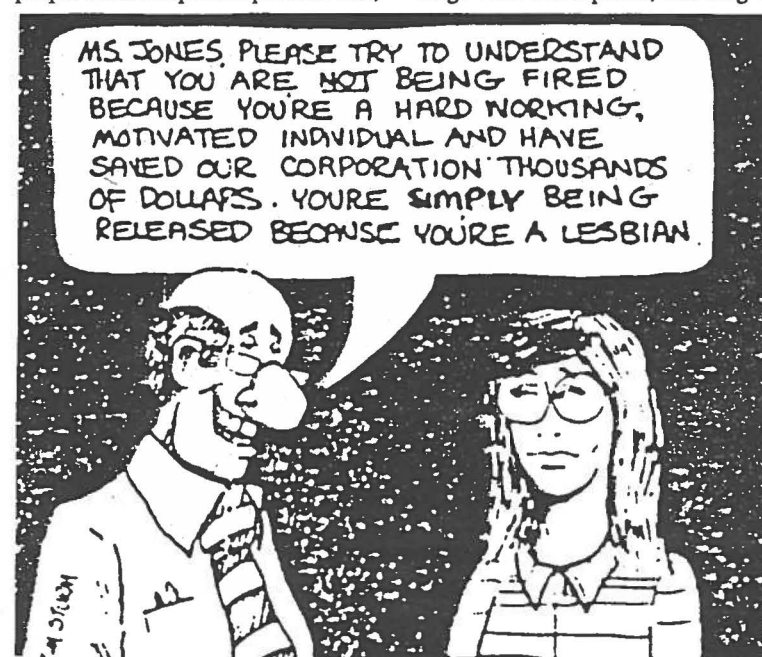
As an ancient witchcraft saying goes, "Where lies your fear, there lies your power also."



Anne Bishop and Andrea Currie entertain about 150 people at an LGR NS rally in front of Province House. (Photo by Anita Martinez)



disseminate information about the booth and stuffed their mouths.



Community rallies against brutal policy

South African women fight eviction

Lee Seymour

Vanessa is 27 years old with a broad smile which reveals her lack of upper front teeth. She has two children aged six months and two years and she lives with her partner, children and mother-in-law in a small shack in a community called Disa River just outside Cape Town in South Africa.

There are about 100 people in the community, many of whom have lived there for 60 or more years. There is no clean water; they have to use polluted water from a nearby river. Vanessa is certain that it is the water that is responsible for her eldest daughter's kidney problems. She's had one removed and suffered numerous infections with the other. Vanessa boils and boils the water but the infections return.

The community sits nestled under trees on the side of a hill. The shacks are all on the large side and comfortable inside. Ten children are playing with the chickens that strut around under the lines of washing. A lot of people in the community consider themselves fortunate to have work, a home and a community.

But one and a half years ago Vanessa woke up and saw a small piece of paper tacked to a tree. It was an eviction notice from the company that owns the land.

For the past 18 months Vanessa has been very busy organizing with her community to fight the eviction notice. She contacted a group called the Surplus People's Project in Cape Town which helps communities such as Disa River fight evictions and forced removals imposed on them by the South African Government.

Forced removals are part of the apartheid policy of separating the races into designated scheduled areas. For the black majority in South Africa this means living in either the barren homelands or in the crowded black townships like Soweto or Crossroads. For the whites it generally means choice farmlands or rich suburbs close to the cities. And for coloured people like Vanessa or Indians there are designated areas as well.

But there are many black spots—generally black or coloured communities which happened to be located on areas which have been designated for white habitation or needed for white development. Sometimes black townships or squatter areas are removed because they are too visible or too close to the white suburbs.

In the case of Disa River, the land is needed for the expansion of the neighbouring very wealthy white suburb. Nearly 4 million people have been

removed from these black spots over the past 20 years to the barren homelands. And almost a million more are slated for removal in the future.

The brutality of this policy is horrifying. It is one of the ugliest and often invisible aspects of apartheid. The homelands have become a vast dumping ground for the unwanted labour of South Africa—mostly women and children. Husbands and fathers, where they still exist, will often be away from home for most of the year, working in the mines or factories or farms of white South Africa. Some may send home money to their families; many do not. It is a grim life in the homelands, a life of grinding poverty and despair.

It is not surprising that communities like Vanessa's that have been slated for removal over the past years have been actively resisting. Opposition can take many forms. Most communities go the legal route, contracting lawyers through one of the para-legal groups like the Surplus People's Project, which have sprung up all over the country. Some communities have also mobilized international support. One community called Lawiakamp, which has been twinned with Minneapolis St. Paul, has been successful in keeping the bulldozers away.

Vanessa's community is fighting the eviction notice on the basis of common law which states that if the land has been occupied for 30 years or more and the owner hasn't claimed it to break the "period of presumption" and act as owner, then the owner's claim to the land is gone.

And Vanessa said that, "In a funny sort of way the eviction notice was a good thing. It has really caused people to come together, organize and be politicized."

"And it caused me to become active again. You know, during the state of



Homeless woman with her possessions after her shanty community in Port Elizabeth was bulldozed by police. (Photo by Lee Seymour)

emergency in 1986, I hardly noticed what was happening. I was in the hospital with my daughter. She lost one kidney when she was only three months old and had nine more operations during the height of the clampdown.

"We were only home one month when she got yet another infection and we were back in the hospital. I got really angry deep inside, so angry that we should be forced to live like this. Our roofs leak, the kids have T.B., we have no water, why should we be forced to live in poverty just so the white middle and upper classes can get

rich off the backs of our labour.

"We're sure we will win against the eviction because we can prove that some people have been on this land for 50 years. We've had dances to raise money for our legal costs and we've had T-shirts printed which say 'Is it a crime to ask for a decent house' and we're going to wear them in court so that the magistrate can see."

□ □ □

Lee Seymour works for OXFAM-Canada in Halifax. OXFAM supports projects with several of the removals struggles in South Africa.

Macho romance flaws otherwise good movie

Christine Reed

The Dead Poets Society is a sensitive film which concerns the relationships between boys and the men who rule their lives; fathers, school officials and teachers. Robin Williams is superb as the maverick English teacher who shakes up his old alma mater, an extremely conservative private boys' school called Welton, by encouraging the boys not only to revere literature as the language of passion and beauty, but to shake off conformity and learn to think for themselves. To hear Williams playing John Wayne playing MacBeth is to experience the joy of eccentricity.

They boys are, of course, infected by their license to taste life to the fullest and decide to revive the Dead Poets Society, originally founded when the English teacher, Keating, was a student at Welton. They get together after hours in a cave near the school to read and write poetry and explore the meaning of their lives.

Each boy, through his own interpretation of Keating's philosophy, comes into conflict with authority. Charlie, the extrovert, takes the license to be eccentric to its extreme. Todd, the shy one, must somehow find a voice. Neil, sweet and sensitive, must learn how to go his own way in spite of a heavy-handed father. Knox, the romantic, tries to find his way through the mystery of love.

The boys' characters are well-developed and well-acted, and appropriately balance the ability of Williams.

The one flaw in an otherwise wonderful movie is the treatment of the love theme. Knox's single-minded pursuit of Chris, in spite of her protests, reinforces the mistaken stereotype which equates harassment with love.

One scene I found particularly disturbing in its implications. Chris has fallen asleep at the party and Knox, very drunk, touches her hair and kisses her, actions which if she had been

awake would have been done against her will. Knox does not hurt her, but the idea that she is at his mercy is most definitely present. Her eventual acceptance of his "love" reinforces the erroneous idea that women really want to be harassed and are flattered by it.

I wish that the movie had chosen instead to illustrate Knox's sensitivity by allowing him to accept the fact that she does not automatically want him simply because he has unilaterally decided that he should have her. I would also have liked to see Chris shown as a person whose wishes merit his respect.

However, this movie is of course not about male/female relations, but about male/male relations: the patriarchal authoritarian mode vs. the egalitarian caring mode, here symbolized by Neils's father and Keating.

I applaud all efforts by men to reach for the expressive and emotional mode so long denied to them by the macho-man stereotype, and so necessary for the future of us all, but I do wish the same principles could be illustrated in the realm of their relationships with women. Sadly, most movies, like this one, are cast in the masculinist world view.

The movie is well worth seeing nonetheless.

Despite best intentions, we're not always perfect!

Barbara Cottrell

Almost 200 women attended some part of the CLOW Conference last June—and it was great! It's always exciting to see women getting together to network, to discuss the issues which affect our lives, and to have fun. I certainly enjoyed myself, and from the feedback we've had, so did most of the women there.

Organizing the conference was, of course, a tremendous learning experience for me. A number of decisions were difficult, and were made only after a great deal of thought and debate. For instance, we had one session called Women Overcoming Barriers. In this

workshop, women who experienced added hurdles: deaf women, women of colour, native and immigrant women, disabled women, came together to discuss how much more difficult it is for them to get the education and training they want.

After the workshop had been planned and organized, someone asked me, "Why do you always lump together women who aren't white and middle class? I think some women are getting fed up with that elitist attitude."

I thought about that for a long time. Eventually I phoned some of the workshop facilitators and asked their opinions. They decided they'd like to go

ahead with the workshop, but I feared some people might think we weren't being 'politically correct.'

Like most women, we try to do it right. We tried, and I hope we succeeded, to address issues of concern to women of differing ethnic, social, and educational backgrounds. But we did make a serious error of omission. We did not address those issues of importance to lesbians, nor did we do anything to help the many lesbian women who attended the conference to feel recognized. For this we are very sorry, and we thank the women who took a risk and talked to us about it.

Next time!

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Conference teams fun with learning

Margaret Robinson

On June 23, 1989, I had the opportunity to travel to Halifax and attend the CLOW Conference on Women and Learning. It was held at Saint Mary's University, with the workshops taking place in the Loyola Building.

The first workshop started around 1:30. We filed into a large lecture auditorium and watched a theatre piece performed by the women from GLOW (Guysborough Learning Opportunities for Women). The piece showed the many problems women are facing today, both in the home and in the workplace. The skit showed that with help from a supportive group, women can overcome their problems and reach

Center Cafeteria and had a break before the Gala started. I was happy they served non-alcoholic drinks. I sat at a table with my mother and her friends to watch the stage show. The first performer, a comedienne, Jane Wright, was simply hilarious. She helped loosen the audience and create a relaxed, open atmosphere.

The first singer, Catherine Reed, was equally good. Although I am not a fan of folk-type music, I enjoyed her performance immensely. She was brought back for an encore. There was a great feeling of belonging and camaraderie in the room.

A short skit by the Mulgrave Road Theatre Company was followed by

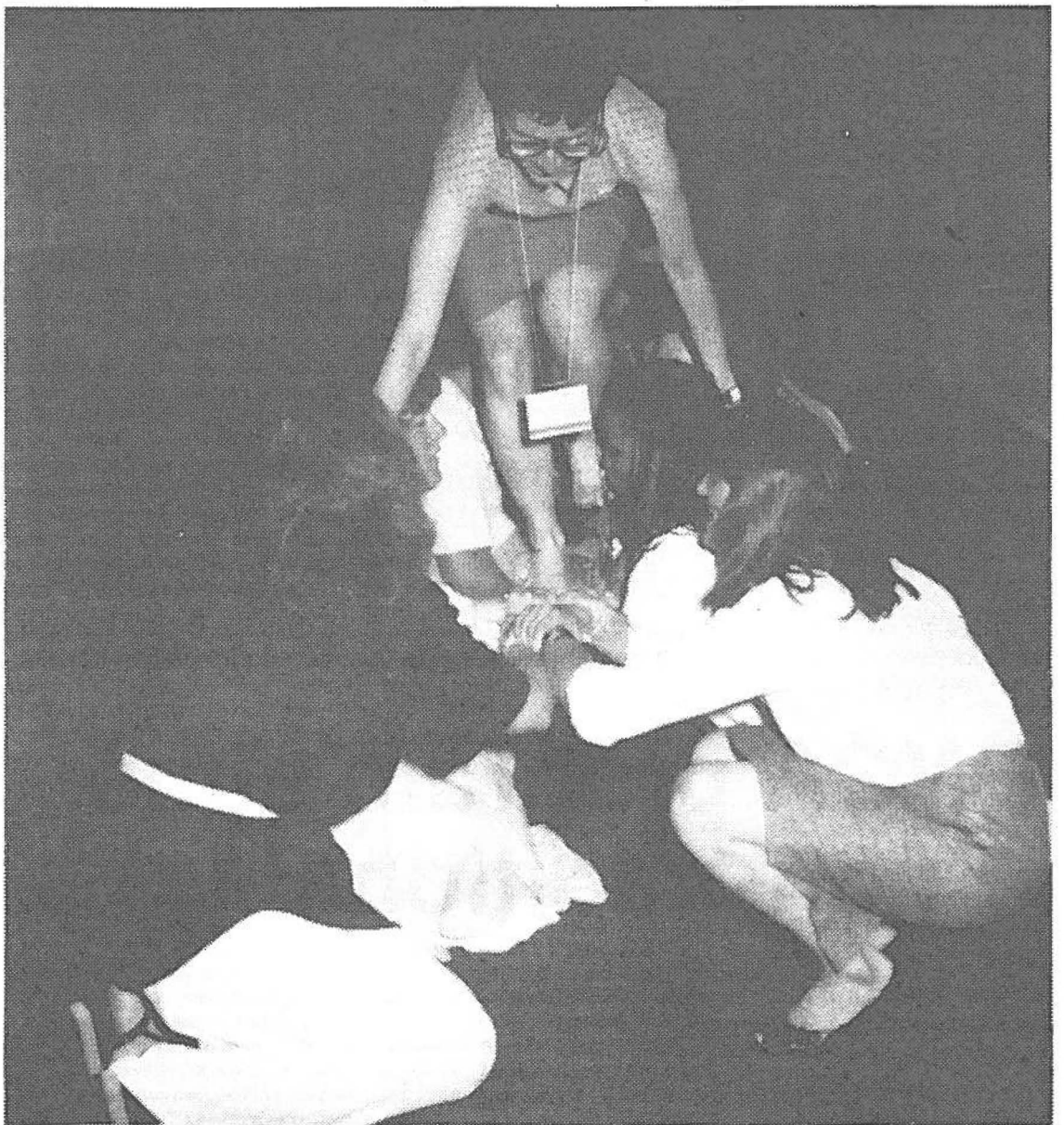
what was, in my eyes, the highlight of the evening. The music group, Four the Moment, sang a series of beautiful songs that covered topics from South Africa to the death of Betty Sparks, a mother who was beaten to death by her husband. They ended the night with us all singing Bread and Roses.

We began to head back to the Loyola Building. Some people went out on the town while others

ordered pizza and retired to their rooms. I wish there had been something going on then because I found it a bit of a let down.

The next morning at 9:00 we headed towards breakfast in the dining room. The first workshop of the day began at 10. I attended one on Young Women and the Future. I found this a difficult workshop because they asked questions that I had never considered. We again introduced ourselves in pairs, this time paired with someone we had never met before. We had to tell the group what our partner liked about being a woman and about being a woman at the age they are now. The consensus among the young women seemed to be that they enjoyed being a woman because they felt it allowed them special privileges, while they enjoyed being young because they were not responsible for bills and workplace pressures.

We watched the movie No Way, Not Me. It dealt with how young women, and indeed all women, have been molded for a life in poverty. It



One exercise at the CLOW conference was to build a bridge and have another woman cross that bridge. Then they made up a story explaining why the person was crossing the bridge and the obstacles the bridge helped her to overcome. (Photo by Lynda Rosbrough)

We are pushed towards more womanly jobs ...and told from birth what to do with our lives, what to wear, how to act, etc

Following the song, the women asked for volunteers to help with a piece of drama. They split the volunteers into groups. Each group of ten to fifteen members organized a bridge with their bodies so that one of the group could walk across. When this

task was successfully completed they made up a story about the bridge explaining why the person was crossing and what obstacles the bridge helped them overcome.

At 5:00 we had to choose one of six workshops. I picked a workshop on confidence building. We split up into partners and each introduced the other to the group after a few minutes of getting to know them.

In this workshop we attempted to realize and focus on our needs, our goals, and our abilities. We learned to accept the things we couldn't change, but at the same time realize and take steps to fulfil our potential.

At the end we wrote a letter, outlining the goals we hoped to have accomplished in six months' time. We put them into envelopes, sealed them, and gave them to Stephanie Langley, who will mail them to us in six months. This will enable us to judge if we are making progress in reaching our goals, and to see how our goals have changed in some areas.

At 7:30 we went to the Student

showed how our goals, expectations, and choices led to jobs that paid less than we need, and how short lived our time in the workplace usually is.

It showed how many young women are simply waiting it out in a job until they can get married. When a crisis does arise, they are usually inexperienced and under-educated, unable to handle it. We discussed alternatives in lifestyle and how we can shape ourselves to meet our needs and the demands of the future.

After lunch I attended one of the most emotional workshops I had gone to. Called It's My Life and hosted by Eileen O'Connell, this workshop was in the form of a discussion. We talked about our plans for the future, our life situation now, and listened to the advice of the older members in the room, many of whom had experienced the same things we were experiencing, or who could see some of us headed in the direction they had taken and regretted later.

We discussed how we are pushed towards more womanly jobs, and how we are told from birth what to do with our lives, what to wear, how to act, etc. We discussed how we have been told

that girls should be good at the more womanly tasks. How we are expected to excel in Home Economics and sewing, while boys are excused if they make low marks in those classes because they aren't expected to do that stuff anyway. We talked about how employers avoided paying some women proper wages by changing the name of the job (example: cook rather than chef.)

We debated how we are pushed into

She told us how, if we made a chart outlining all the major decisions in our life so far, we would realize how very few choices have been made by us, and how many have been forced upon us as the only sane choice.

I thought the most pressing question was how to achieve the self-esteem needed to stand up for ourselves, our rights, and our future when faced with all the little problems that "tear little strips of us away" until there is next to nothing of ourselves left.

After a brief rest we all returned to the lecture room where the conference had begun. We had come full circle, but with more complete understanding of ourselves, what we want, and how to get it.

At about 3:30 we engaged in a game of team feminist charades, in which we bridged the wage gap as we won the games. We played in teams, not competing against each other, but working together to bridge the gap.

After this task was completed we played a game of Dump the Budget (this was my favourite.) Again doing charades we acted out feminist slogans, book titles, and acronyms for feminist groups. Happy to say we succeeded in Dumping the Budget.

I think a special round of thanks should go to the women who performed sign language during the conference for the benefit of the deaf members of the audience. They were truly amazing and expressive as they managed to communicate the feeling present during the talks, announcements, plays, and especially the music.

I think everyone learned something about the world at this conference, but more importantly, they learned something about themselves.

If we made a chart outlining the major decisions in our lives, we would realize how few had been made by us

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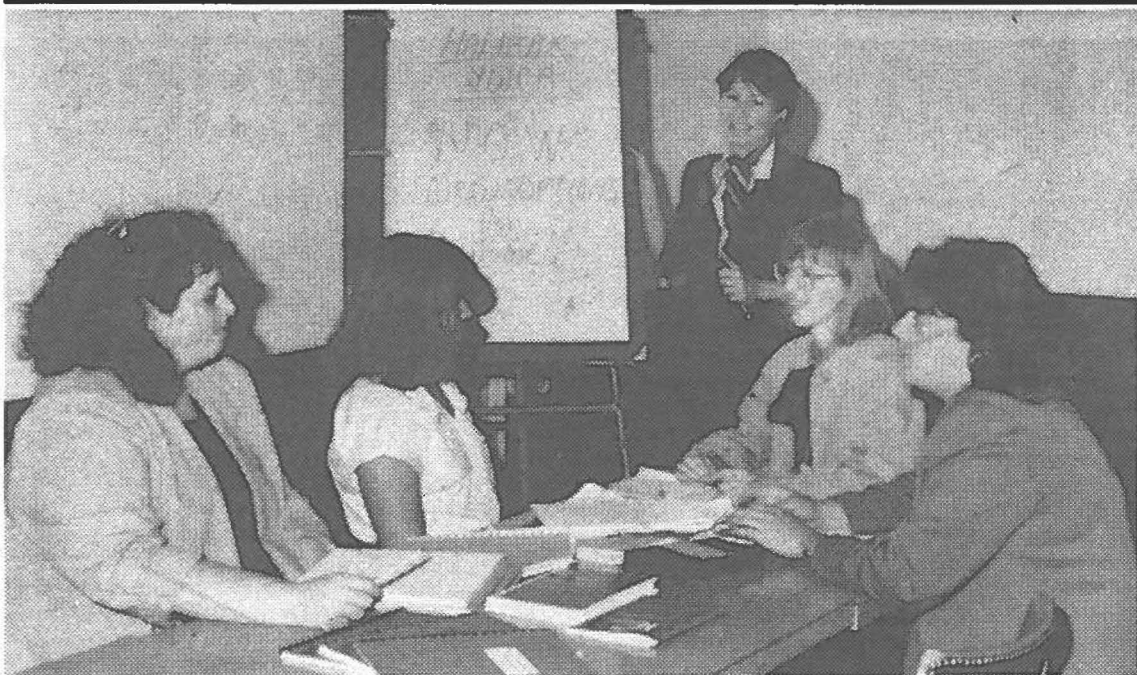
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The YW-NOW Team (left to right) Researchers Shelly Fillmore and Skana Gee, Project Manager Tricia Robertson, Curriculum Development Officer Madeline Comeau, and Researcher Darlene Penny. (Photo by Karen Ruggles)

YWCA program aims at non-traditional jobs

Skana Gee
YW-NOW won't put women on hold.

The innovative Halifax YWCA program, New Options for Women, is designed to expand women's occupational choices by accelerating their integration into non-traditional fields.

The planning project, now in its second phase, is funded by Canada Employment and Immigration under Canadian Jobs Strategy. A five-member team will spend the next several months developing curriculum and conducting a feasibility study to gauge public interest for a pilot program, anticipated in early 1990.

"The program will assist 'a workplace in transition' by providing made-to-order training for individual employers and women," said Project Manager Tricia Robertson, a researcher and native Haligonian.

Upon graduation, participants would be guaranteed employment in non-traditional, entry-level jobs, by their present employer. In some cases, women from outside the company would be recruited for the program.

Program objectives include creating awareness of non-traditional work issues among employers, unions, program participants, co-workers and the community; striving for work environments that are more receptive of women as co-workers; developing an individualized model for intervention in the workplace, tailored to the unique needs of each employer, participant and union; providing participants with classroom and on the job training in a supportive environment; advocating employment equity for women in non-traditional workplaces; and evaluating NOW's viability as a continuing employment equity program.

The Halifax YWCA has been working toward expanding its adult education services to include non-traditional training for more than a year. During this time, the Halifax YWCA Adult Education Advisory Group was formed to assist in planning and evaluating adult education programs for women of various education levels, income levels, and needs.

"The Halifax YWCA's interest in this type of program reflected its concern for women's limited occupational choices," said Robertson.

Her research into non-traditional employment — occupations in which less than 30 per cent of workers are female — uncovered some startling statistics. In Nova Scotia, the average female earns \$22,288 compared to her male counterpart's \$29,490; more than 63 per cent of working women are employed in the clerical, service and sales sectors; and only 13 of the 4,000 provincially registered apprentices are female.

Her research, she said, revealed major barriers preventing women from

"Because of the perpetuation of myths about what woman can and can't do, we really have to approach the workplace as a whole. It's not enough to simply give women the skills they need, we have to address the other barriers to allow for a supportive, interactive environment."

Comeau said peer support will also figure prominently in the NOW program.

"This will give participants a chance to share common experiences, solve problems and develop assertiveness," she explained. She would also like to "bring in women already working in trades and technology—not super women but those in ordinary, day-to-day jobs—to share their frustrations and rewards."

The curriculum, Comeau said, "will reinforce and build

upon the skills and experience women already possess."

Small to large employers will be targeted for the program, in fields ranging from building and ground maintenance to road repairs, carpentry, electrical service and computer technology.

"YW-NOW is timely for employers and unions because of the employment equity movement," said Robertson. It will assist employers to address the under-representation of women in trades and technology and other gender-segregated jobs within their organization.

In addition, employers will receive Canadian Jobs Strategy funding to subsidize the cost of re-training their female employees.

"This is a ground-breaking venture," said Christine Pottie, Executive Director of the Halifax YWCA. "The YW-NOW team is dedicated and enthusiastic, and we hope the public will be, too."

"With this type of program there will be a more positive attitude toward hiring women for non-traditional jobs. Each employer who participates improves opportunities for all women aspiring to non-traditional occupations by providing role models and opening new doors."

... first program in the Atlantic that addresses barriers facing women in non-traditional work.

entering non-traditional fields, including economic, social, institutional and attitudinal factors. Robertson discovered skill shortages in trades and technology across the country, and found the public, industry, business and community organizations supportive of women's participation in these fields.

Although she talked to people involved in non-traditional programs throughout Canada, "YW-NOW will be the first program in the Atlantic region that addresses the barriers facing women in non-traditional work. The program will eliminate women's fears of not getting a job after such a serious commitment and will educate women, their employers and co-workers regarding the misconceptions that surround non-traditional work."

Curriculum Development Officer Madeline Comeau admits designing custom-made programs for each participant and employer is not a simple task.

"But it's essential because the culture of each workplace is unique," she said. "We may be dealing with a woman facing rough language on the construction site, the isolation of being the only woman in the cafeteria at lunch hour, or a lack of support from family and co-workers."

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome affects ability to deal with stress

The following is a short selection from the new book *When You Can't Reach The Doctor* by Carolyn Dean, M.D.

Epstein Barr: This condition has been renamed the **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome**. It appears to be a reactivation of an already present mononucleosis-like virus. Apparently up to 90% of the population has antibodies to Epstein Barr, meaning they have had an infection. To most people it would seem like a normal cold or flu. With some people, primary infection can be severe like Mono, or the reactivation can be severe and can leave the person feeling fatigued, run down and having not been well since that particular bout of the flu. The symptoms are chronic headaches, swollen glands, periodic fevers and chills, muscle aches and pains, muscle weakness and sore throat and numbness and tingling of the extremities. The general feeling is one of incredible fatigue and inability to do even the simplest of tasks and also an inability to cope with any stress.

I have only begun to see this condition in the past three years. I do consider it to be a new presentation of an old virus, which to me means that the population that is getting this virus is more run down and stressed. They have had a reactivation of the virus because their body was not strong enough to fight it off or they came in contact with a chemical or pollutant that undermined their resistance and allowed them to succumb to the illness.

There is no specific treatment for EBV. The specialist in Toronto, Dr. Ann Mildon (who herself suffers from EBV) suggests plenty of vegetables, gentle exercise, rest and various natural supplements such as the B vitamins,

magnesium, Vitamin C and a multiple vitamin. I would also add echinacea, a herbal antibiotic that can be taken on a regular basis to avoid reinfection as well as B12 shots to increase the energy level. B12 has the ability to strengthen the nervous system.

There may be homeopathic remedies that help some people but if the vital force is very low, homeopathic remedies might create an aggravation of the existing condition so they should be used with much caution.

A seminar on Chronic Fatigue, Stress and The Immune System will be presented by Carolyn Dean M.D. and Kerry Croften Ph.D at the Nova Scotian Hilton in Halifax on November 10 and 11. The seminar is open to both the public and to health professionals and will covers new research, as well as how to boost your energy level. Cost is \$95. Cheque/money order should be sent by Nov 3, to: Nova Health Seminars, 5612 Drummond Court, Halifax, N.S., B3K 3Z4. Contact person: Sue Bone (902) 453-5706

Dr. Carolyn Dean has a general medical practice in Toronto and is a consultant for Candidiasis, Epstein Barr, and PMS patients from across Canada. She is the author of *When You Can't Reach The Doctor* based on her popular seminar: "Boosting Your Immune System" (Halifax and Toronto 1988) and in her teaching she bridges the gap between conventional and complementary medicine.

Kerry Croften Ph.D. has a consulting practice specializing in corporate health and stress management. She writes a weekly column for the Mail Star/Chronicle Herald called "Challenges," and lectures widely throughout Canada.

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Located near the waterfront in the restored area of downtown Halifax, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design offers programs of study leading to bachelor degrees in the areas of fine art, graphic design, environmental planning, craft, and art education, with master's degrees in fine art and art education.

The College has 45 full-time faculty and an enrollment of over 500 students. NSCAD students come from all over the world and about 60 percent come from within the Atlantic region.

NSCAD is the only degree-granting art college in Canada.



Carpentry challenges sex-roles

Beatrice Schofield
Susan Pitman

As a tomboy growing up on a farm in rural Nova Scotia, helping my dad with building and repairs seemed like a natural thing to do. As I moved into womanhood I soon realized what my roles and expectations from society were.

I have always had this dream of building my own house, but never thought of being a professional carpenter. Society and the educational system did not support me in following such a career.

I had talked about helping other people build their houses so I would learn the trade. I even wished I could live with a carpenter so I would learn.

About two months ago, a carpenter friend of mine said he had a job available as an apprentice carpenter if I was interested. I had two weeks before the job began to make my decision.

At the time I was employed by Family Services in Sussex, N. B., as an Employment Counsellor for the Mentally Handicapped. I had worked in this field for the past 14 years.

What a decision to make - from a secure salary to an unknown, seasonal workplace! With much support from friends, my lover, and my nine year old son Jason, I went for it.

Coming out as a lesbian had already challenged traditional roles for me as a woman. It had removed from me a lot of the myths around stereotyping who I am as a person. I discovered that it's OK to be an individual, to be who I am, despite the risks.

So off I marched to buy the tools in preparation for venturing into a "man's world," at least in this area. I went the day before Father's Day with my son. The clerk of course, assumed and asked if he was shopping for his father. She was left a little speechless when I answered "No! Shopping for Mother!"

When purchasing work clothes for women, I found the clerks supportive, but most items had to be ordered, except for my "pink & white" steel-toed sneakers.

Starting carpentry was creative and physically challenging. It's nice to come home tired in body but not mentally stressed. It's great to be able to put in a nail without having a conference on which direction it should go - and it's still in place the next day!

I am a person who has always done outside activities. I also do art work on commission. Through carpentry I feel that these two skills complement each other and may lead into some sort of small business for me in the future.

My apprenticeship program through Advanced Education lasts for four years. Six weeks each year I will be studying theory and design at the Community College in Saint John. When I complete my apprenticeship I will be the first female to graduate from this particular program.

I feel my presence and maturity in the classroom is a positive step for people being able to accept women in this field of work more seriously.

Through the apprenticeship program the employer is expected to give me on-the-job training on all the prac-



On-the-job training is important in establishing the logic and techniques of carpentry. Beatrice Schofield is shown at work building a house under the apprentice-training program.

tical aspects of house construction. My work is rated on the various modules by a skilled carpenter. As I become more competent with my skills and knowl-

edge, my responsibilities increase.

I ask a lot of questions so that I understand the logic of what I am doing. I do everything a carpenter does but I am not responsible for the head work of fitting it all together. Part of being an apprentice is to learn that skill.

It is a shame that we assign abilities to sex roles. The myth that only men can climb heights, or do jobs that require strength and stamina is stifling to both sexes. How many men are out there doing male-role jobs because they do not see other options open to them. They fall into the stereotypical roles as well.

My biggest barrier is my height. (I stand 5'2" in stocking feet.) Most things are built, such as stagings, for the rest of the crew's height, which tends to be taller than I am. This does not stop me from figuring out ways to get the job done.

What is it like to be a female apprentice on the building site? For my self, my own personal pressure is that I do not want to have special treatment because I am a woman. I want to do as much as "a male body" would do. Yet I am not going to do more than what I am capable of doing, just to prove that I can do it.

Luckily the people I work with are very supportive of my capabilities. They encourage me to learn proper techniques and skills, i.e. lifting heavy objects.

I do not feel any resentment from them because I have not acquired all the skills and techniques I need for some of the heavier, more awkward jobs.

Because my presence is not the norm, the men at the site have had to do some adjusting and in the process some comments came out sideways, for example at breaktime one day, a labourer trying to be nice, called up to the roof, "It's breaktime ladies and carpenters." The carpenter looked at me and said, "he never called me a gentleman!" It was funny!

My first job was working at a pool site where children had access to watching us work. The most noted comments came from the children, like

"Hey Mom, that's a woman up there!"

The most important impact that I feel I can give to the young people is the experience of seeing a woman doing a traditional male job.

I miss working with other females, the type of conversation and the companionship. It is a whole other ball game working with all men.

I look forward to being 40 and having my journeymen (journey-person) papers and being able to look back at the houses I have helped build. I hope to God they are still standing!

Gay And Lesbian Association Of Nova Scotia

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The Gay and Lesbian Association of Nova Scotia (GALANS) is accepting applications for the position of Administrative Assistant to work under a board of directors.

We are seeking someone with a previous background in non-profit groups who has skills in the following areas: programme and community development, including volunteer; bookkeeping, as well as administrative and communication skills.

Candidates need to be familiar with the gay and lesbian movement as well as being open and at ease with their sexuality. (This position is open to non-gays and non-lesbians.)

Applicants should have a degree or equivalent experience in community development (preferred), business administration or a related field.

Interested candidates should submit their resume to: Gay and Lesbian Association, P.O. Box 7145, North, Halifax, Nova Scotia, BOJ 1N0. Tel: (902) 423-2292.

All resumes must be postmarked by no later than November 30, 1989 and received by December 9, 1989.

Women's music festival postponed

Nancy Hay

The Atlantic Women's Music Festival has been postponed until the summer of 1990. Due to insufficient funds and no suitable location, the committee decided to delay.

A small group of women have been meeting to plan the arrangements for a music folk festival featuring Maritime women performers. At this time, we have held a fund-raising dance, discussed possible site locations and suggested musicians.

We are in need of interested women who can assist in organizing, performing, donating land or money for the event. Two of our members have left Nova Scotia, so we are especially in need of more womanpower.

An organizing meeting will be held in October. If you want to support women and music, please consider joining us. For further information, call Nancy at 422-3977 or Carol at 477-9771.

Home schooling re-awakens curiosity

Susan Pitman

Home education—what is it? It is a number of things to a number of people. For me personally:

It is the responsibility of a personal commitment to the education of my children.

It is love, joy, wonder, and growth for my children and for myself.

It is a step forward in my personal awareness of myself as a mother, as a woman.

It is making a choice where before there seemed to be little to choose from.

It is having a relationship with my children and the world around them that

is exciting, wonderful, hard, full of self-doubt, growth and demands.

I have three children. I am a 36 year-old single parent. I home educate. I am not living the life I dreamed of at 19 but I wouldn't change any of my experiences so far.

My three children are beautiful and wonderful. Through them I have discovered my own beauty and my curiosity of the world around me has been re-awakened.

Our days are not filled with sheets and pages of numbers and facts. We do not spend five hours sitting at desks.

This is usually one of the first questions I get asked. "How do you find time to do that every day?" The answer is simple. "We don't!"

As the young people in my life get older, they do more math pages and more writing, etc., but at their own pace and time. It is remarkable how little time they actually need to do a lesson. We do not do "busy" work.

When a lesson is completed or the interest is gone it is put away until the next time. Our every waking hour is a learning experience of some kind. Perhaps it is spent reading an adventure story about other parts of the world. This may lead to map reading, geography, searching for the locations of other countries in relation to our own, and a discussion about what the people are like in those countries.

The other frequent question I get

asked is, "But what about socialization?" For awhile I never knew exactly how to answer this. I knew my children were not lacking socially. I knew I did not want them being exposed to the schoolyard mentality. At least not until they could figure out all the dynamics for themselves. Then they can make



their own decisions concerning their involvement. I started to really look at my children's social life. There are around seven families in our area that home educate. We established a 'Group Day' once a week when we would get together to do things. Sometimes it is field trips, or workshops, or swimming, or playing games together. There are approximately fifteen children ranging in age from one year to thirteen years. They interact freely with each other, the older ones helping the younger ones.

My children also go with me to a lot of places they would never go to if they were in school all day. They get chances to interact with people of all ages— from preschoolers to the elderly, and a wide range in between. They see what people do for their work and they see what is happening in the world around them. They are free to play with school age children after school hours and on weekends. They have a fantastic social life, with lots of variations for practicing and developing new skills.

How do I find time for my work? I take it. I make it. My commitment to my children is real. I made that commitment before I conceived. My commitment to myself is real also and they both have to be honoured.

It is not easy home educating. My children do depend on me. They are learning skills leading to their own independence and as they get older

they tend to be able to do more on their own. There are days, however, when I would rather be by myself, or when I just do not want to respond to another question. These are usually fleeting thoughts and if I really cannot handle it than I go for a walk. I excuse myself, tell my children to see me about it in a little while, and I take the time I need to re-center myself.

This all didn't just happen. The self-doubt really hit when my eldest son was about 6 years old. Could I really "teach" him? I was always there. We set up time every day for lessons. I was forever trying to point out things to him on an educational level, to "teach" him at my pace, from my awareness. He straightened me out on all that. He rebelled! He refused to do lessons or book work. He turned the tables and taught me. I was wise enough at that point to listen to him. I learned the hard way just what it

might mean for me to home educate. The younger two have benefited by my trial and error ways with their older brother.

I am their teacher. They are my teachers. So is every person we encounter in our daily lives. When I stopped trying to fulfil the role expectation I had placed on myself, I was able to become an educator for them. That is, a person who responds to the natural curiosity human beings have, in a positive way.

There are lots of times I do not have the knowledge about the subject that one of my children is interested in. For example, electronics was something I blanked out long ago, or car engines. Through my children's eyes and through their curiosity and persistence, we took each other's hands and discovered together the wonders of all these secrets, which really are not secrets at all. My children have turned out to be my greatest teachers.

Yes, it is hard to do. It is hard when people question in depth the whys and

whatfors of what I have decided to do about educating my children. Yes, I feel self-doubt at times. If a person is really articulate in defending the conventional system, I may even feel guilt. These are my feelings, not my children's feelings. When I look inside myself and get close to that inner intuitive level I am learning to trust, I know I am right for me and my children. I feel strong in that knowledge and in the knowledge that if it gets to be no longer right for us all, we will know that too!

□ □ □ □ □

My children's names are Gabriel, 11; Sarah, 8; and Isaiah, 6. I home educate, manage a cafe on Saturdays, write a column on the environment for a local weekly, and occasionally other news items. I am a founding member of CONTACT; Women's Resource & Information Centre in Sussex, N.B. I am currently organizing an Atlantic Home Educators Network. Interested persons can write to me at Box 2303, Sussex, N.B. E0E 1P0

Jane Austen's life — one of sense and sensibility?

Carol McLeod

Although she had her detractors — including Charlotte Bronte and Mark Twain — Jane Austen remains one of the most popular British novelists of all time.

Born in 1775 to financially comfortable and socially active parents, she grew up in Steventon, a typical 18th century English village. She received most of her education from her clergyman father and as a child began writing parodies and sketches for the entertainment of her family.

At the balls, dinner parties and amateur theatricals she attended as a young woman, Jane sharpened her powers of observation and fine-tuned her ability to satirize the manners and behaviour of those around her. "Charles Powlett gave a dance on Thursday to the great disturbance of all his neighbours... who, you know, take a most lively interest in the state of his finances and live in hopes of his being ruined," she wrote in the late 1790s to her sister, with whom she lived most of her life.

Unlike most women writers of her time, Jane was content with her existence and with herself. She also stood apart from many 18th and 19th century female novelists in her ability to laugh at herself and to see the humorous aspects of life.

In 1796 she began work on her first novel, which was published 17 years later as *Pride and Prejudice*. As was the case with all her mature works, it depicts the manners and mores of Georgian England and features leading characters who are decorous and restrained. When the one publisher she approached in 1797 refused even to read the manuscript, Jane threw it in a drawer and started a new novel — *Sense and Sensibility*.

Published anonymously in 1811, it quickly went into a second printing and was followed in 1813 by *Pride and Prejudice* which was also published anonymously and which became an overnight sensation. When Jane's identity as England's rising literary star gradually became known, she declined



invitation to be lionized in London. Instead, she preferred to lead the rural life she knew and loved.

Although Jane has been described as both sensible and totally without sentiment, she still had her romantic side. At the age of 26, she fell in love with a man whose identity has never been discovered. After Jane's death, her sister revealed that the man had returned Jane's affection and that he had planned to ask her to marry him. However, he died suddenly and tragically, without declaring himself. Many critics feel that the warmer and softer quality of Jane's later novels reflect the great depth of her loss.

In 1816, with six novels to her credit, Jane developed what 20th century doctors have diagnosed as Addison's disease — a condition caused by failure of the adrenal glands.

She died the following year, at the age of 41 while still in the early stages of a new novel, which was eventually published as an unfinished fragment under the title of *Sanditon*.

Although Jane once described her work as something that "produces little effect after much labour," she remains one of the most widely-read authors in the English language. An estimated three million copies of her works are currently in print and members of the Jane Austen Society are scattered around the world.

Perhaps her appeal to modern readers has best been described by John Limbert, one of the Americans held hostage in Iran for 444 days in 1979 and 1980. "When everything around me seemed to be crazy and irrational, Jane Austen was a world of civility and reasonableness."

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Women's dreams transformed

Amani Wassef

V.O.I.C.E. (Violence Overcome in Creative Ensemble) is a unique Toronto based women's theatre group. Recently in Halifax, V.O.I.C.E. performed the original and collectively written play *Trials of Transformations*, a revealing and personal look at the plight of battered women in their struggle for freedom and dignity. What makes the play so unique is that it was based on the women's own experiences as former victims of domestic violence.

Two acts comprised the play: "Trials by Fire" and "Transforming the Dream." The first act, "Trials by Fire," made visible the multifarious nature of each woman's life, while emphasizing the commonalities of both their struggles and despair.

The play gave us a brief glimpse into the lives of Native Indian women, Hispanic women, Black women, White women, teenage women, poor women, and wealthy women.

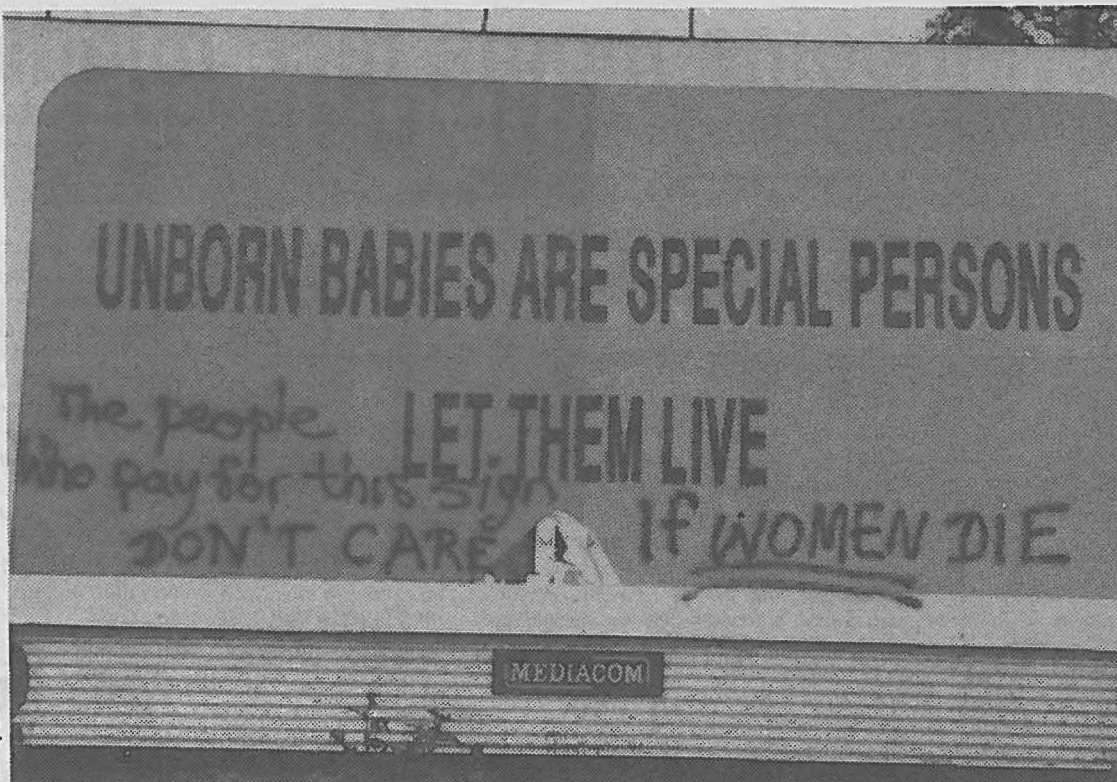
Emphasizing the compelling forces which confront all women trying to escape personal violence, the performers eloquently portrayed how each of the following events were terrifying and frustrating experiences: phoning the police, trying to escape, calling a transition house which is full, entering a transition house, filling out forms (which can be like learning Japanese) dealing with the legal system, social services and children's aid, and finding temporary shelter in a refuge for homeless women. While this sounds bleak and depressing, it was a look at the reality of these women's former lives.

On the more positive side, act two, "Transforming the Dream," depicted the women being transformed into strong, independent persons living free from violence. With the aid of a film clip, we saw each woman wan/wondering alone through a meadow, field or beach upon which she would discover a beautifully painted mask. When placing the mask on her face, she became liberated from her past life, and in celebration began to dance and sing. The powerful ending portrayed all the "transformed" women united in circular fashion heckling a court judge for his patriarchal and misogynist attitudes.

"Transforming the Dream" was a very mystical act, yet it conveyed a message of strength and determination for all women who are struggling to free themselves from the gripping cycle of violence.

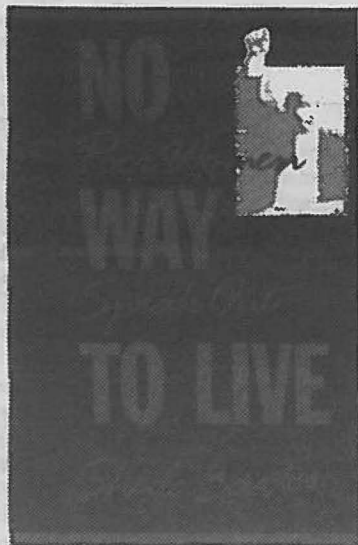
As a finale, the cast handed burning candles to the audience while singing "Candles in the Wind," an original tune by Arlene Mantle and Voice Troupe (director of the play).

The women of V.O.I.C.E. should be applauded for their courage and determination in performing *Trials of Transformations*. It makes visible the issue of domestic violence through the voices of women themselves. It not only serves an educational role, but more importantly, it sends a message of inspiration to all women still in crisis.



Pro-choice activists were triggered into action throughout Halifax by their outrage at anti-choice billboards. Despite local media criticism of this civil disobedience, we at Pandora found it delightful. (Photo by Brenda Conroy)

No Way to Live highlights poverty: Women are always vulnerable



Christine Reed

In *No Way to Live: Poor Women Speak Out*, Sheila Baxter introduces us to the women who live poverty. This is not a statistical study, although it does have some statistics. This is not a book by social scientists, government offices or health professionals, although their voices are heard in it. In this book, the women who live in poverty are given an opportunity to speak. For most, it is the first time they have been asked.

Baxter's technique for gathering her information was very simple—she asked poor women three questions: 1) What are the reasons for your being poor? 2) What could be done to change your situation? and 3) Do you think you will always be poor? The answers to these questions form the bulk of the material in the book, although pertinent statistics are interspersed throughout, as well as some commentary by the author and other anti-poverty activists.

The women who speak to us in these pages are on welfare or are members of the working poor. Many are single mothers. They are white women and women of colour. Some have a great deal of education, some have very little. Some have given up and some are still fighting and hoping to escape their poverty. They are all

frustrated and tired and angry.

It is truly disturbing to learn from them how very few safeguards there are to keep women from poverty. Elderly women, women with pre-school children, disabled women, and women who lack the skills which will pay decent wages are all particularly vulnerable, although any women at any time can find herself in the position of being poor. The following statistics from the book makes this crystal clear:

"Families led by women are more than four times more likely to be poor than are families with male heads." —Progress Against Poverty, 1987

"One in three female single parents relies on welfare as her primary source of income." Women, Poverty and Public Policy, 1985

"Single parents head one in five B.C. families, and 80% of single-parent family heads in B.C are women." —Vancouver Sun, February 7, 1988

"If a married couple divorces or separates, a woman will experience a 73% decrease in her standard of living, while her former husband's standard of living increases by 42%." —Victoria Times-Colonist, May 27, 1985

These kinds of statistics resonate as we read because they are interspersed with the real words of real women about the experience of poverty: how it feels to tuck your children into bed at night knowing they are hungry because it's the end of the month and the cheque hasn't come yet; how it feels to know your child is being taunted at school for not having what other children have; how it feels when you have to line up at another government office or food bank; how it feels when every day is a struggle to provide basic needs, while your children are bombarded daily with the images of the consumer society.

By the simple, yet innovative, method of asking poor women what they think and feel, Baxter has raised a number of urgent questions about the nature of a society that tolerates poverty of this magnitude amongst its women and children. The problem has gone far beyond the possibility of indi-

vidual solutions. As one contributor explains, when a battle looms at home over whether the children will or will not drink skimmed milk powder and you think that you as a mother needed a course in creative parenting, you have to remember that "this personal problem is faced by 35,000 single parents in B.C. who are on welfare and living at half the poverty line. It's faced by tens of thousands who work at very low wages or who try to survive on unemployment insurance."


One contributor discusses a public awareness campaign on the issue of non-support. Their posters contain such gems as, "Would you recognize your child if you met him on a bus?" and "Are you punishing your children

because you're angry at their mother?" Poverty, as these women make clear, is not just their problem; it's everybody's problem.

The women in this book live in Vancouver but I am sure that poor women in the Valley would not find much to disagree with. Poverty amongst women and children is rampant all across Canada. I myself recognize a great deal of this book, although I have never had to be on welfare. But I am a single mother.

No Way to Live should be required reading in every high school curriculum and in every professional school. It's available by writing New Star Books, 2504 York Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6K 1E3. Price: \$9.95

other
ART



Brenda Keddy
Kris Rogers

2094 Gottingen Street
Halifax-Nova Scotia
B3K 3B3
(902) 422-9464

STUDIO 15 YEARS

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Refreshments

Info: 426-6014

Low-income moms face middle-class microscope

Low-income mothers are judged by standards designed by middle class families. Instead, we should be applauding their heroic struggle to maintain family life.

Dian Day

Several years ago I attended a session sponsored by Children's Aid for prospective adoptive parents. From this meeting, and the one that followed, two things happened in my life. One was that I became a foster parent, the other was that I developed an on-going fascination with infertility and other reproductive issues.

As the only women present who already had a child (in fact, who was able to have more children, as far as I knew then), I was estranged from the desperation of the other participants. I found myself overwhelmed by the anguish of women who were unable to conceive a biological child.

Some of them had been through years of painful and invasive fertility testing, had endured the side-effects of fertility drugs, and had experienced a strained and automated sexual relationship with their partners in the process of not getting pregnant.

For the most part, the demand was for little white healthy babies who would be matched as far as possible in physical features, especially hair and eye colour, to that of the adoptive parents. In the supermarket, and at the playground, such children would be assumed to be the biological offspring of their mothers and fathers.

I was there because I had a vague notion that there were children in the world who needed homes and didn't have them, and I wasn't particular about age, health, or skin colour. We have been hearing for some time that there is a "severe shortage" of little white healthy babies (as if they were a commodity,) and prospective adoptors wait many years in a competitive baby market for the child of their dreams. This shortage had led many childless couples to consider adopting older children, children of colour, and those differently-abled or with health problems.

I was told by the child welfare agency that children of any kind were a scarce item. They did, however, have a desperate need for foster homes. There was also a possibility, it was suggested, that foster parents may be in a favourable position to adopt when a foster child who has been in their care is released for adoption.

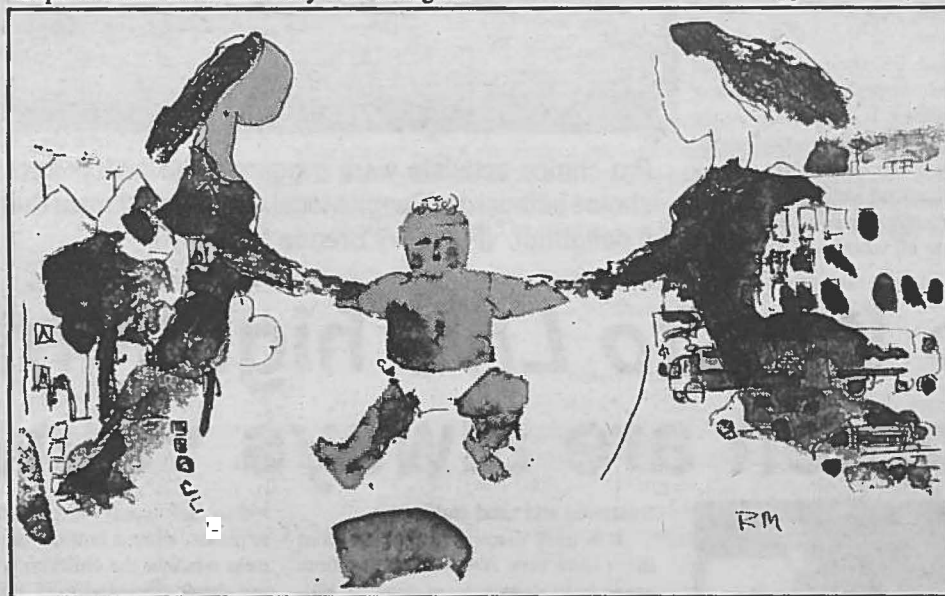
The foster children arrived, one by one—mostly pre-teenage girls who were enroute to Somewhere Else. There were a few times I refused to take a child because, from the limited information we were given by the social worker about the child's situation, I felt that coming to my house was no better for them than staying in their own.

Biological parents were consistently represented as "bad" parents by the child welfare agency. There was always a certain element of fear that the Other Mother, crazed and incoherent

and probably violent, would find out where we lived and appear on the doorstep demanding her child. Contact between biological and foster parents was unimaginable.

Once, I did have an arranged meeting with a biological mother and the worker about a child that was to be placed in my care. I remember it as horrible—a perfect example of a meeting where no communication takes place because the parties involved have no real sense of each others' lives.

Finally, one spring, two children were placed with us, and we were told they would be released for adoption within the month. They were biological



siblings, children of colour, still very young (the youngest just barely walking,) and beautiful. At the time, it all seemed perfect.

On the day of the court hearing later that month, contrary to what we had been assured, the children were not released for adoption. Instead, we embarked upon a lengthy process of waiting through hearing after hearing (with months of limbo in between) while the children's fate was slowly deliberated in family court.

We survived the head-banging episodes of the youngest child. We survived the externally-destructive behaviour of the oldest. We believed that their behaviour was proof of the neglect these children had allegedly suffered at the hands of their biological parents, rather than a probable result of their being removed from their home on many occasions. We began to think of these children as part of our family, and still we waited for the judge to make a decision.

At the final hearing, custody was awarded to the biological father, on the condition that he have

no contact with his partner, the children's mother, who, it was decided by the court, was the true "baddie." The following day, a social worker came and took the children "home" (though I thought of it at the time as taking the children "away from home.")

My grief at losing two children I loved obscured my analysis of the child welfare system for a long time. I felt all along that it wasn't a very good system, but I looked at it shortcomings through a narrow tunnel.

Over the past several years, I have come to see the issues involved much more broadly, for the most part as a result of the work I have done around women's reproductive decision-making. I have spoken with many women who are unable to conceive children. I have spoken with many women who became mothers through social pressure or by "accident" rather than by active choice. Most recently, I worked with low-income women who have had their children apprehended by the

is in crisis—there are simply not enough foster homes for children who have been apprehended. Why, then, are children being taken?

Recently I asked a social worker if she felt that there was a connection between the apprehension of children based on middle class values and the demand of children "of any kind" by a growing group of middle class couples who are unable to conceive. She answered (with some surprise that I could imagine such a connection) that there was not.

Unfortunately, I am unable to believe her. Middle class women are in jeopardy of losing their children to their ex-husbands. Low income and poor women (and men) are in jeopardy of losing their children to the state, and hence to middle class couples who want children desperately.

There is nothing inherently wrong with wanting children, if we can put aside the incredible pressures of compulsory motherhood that face women in our culture today (and in most other cultures and most other times.) The desperation of childless women is as real as the desperation of women who have lost their children. We should not be forced to make a choice between the degrees of legitimacy of women's pain.

All over the world women are in pain. We have heard that babies are being stolen from Third World women (buying a starving infant from an impoverished mother for \$10 still amounts to theft) to supply an international black market. Here in Canada children can easily be (and are being) stolen by the state.

I would not dispute that child abuse does exist and some children do need to be removed from their homes for their own protection and well-being. But willful child abuse (particularly child sexual abuse) occurs for very different reasons and in a different context than the global structure that creates economically disadvantaged women and allows the motherwork of those women to be scrutinized according to middle class values.

What we have to ensure is that we not collude in the theft of the children of poor women. If we are unable to conceive children, we must make sure that our adopted children are not coerced from the arms of their biological mothers, either through the withholding of resources or by actual apprehension.

If we are foster parents, we must know that most of the children in our care have loving mothers to go home to; loving mothers who are only as crazy as any of us would be if someone had taken our child.

If we have lost children to the state, we must fight and fight and fight to get them back.

If we are child protection workers, we must examine carefully our middle class bias, and lobby our agencies to provide additional funding for resources for any parent in need of our support.

We have to refuse to put our eye to the eyepiece of that middle class microscope, looking away instead to the heroic struggle of women to provide and care for their children in a world that is almost one hundred percent against them.

Examples from *Keeping Our Kids: Women & Child Welfare Legislation*

I would like to share with you a few of the herstories I have heard over the past three months:

A woman went to the RCMP and then to Children's Aid because she suspected her child had been sexually abused, first by a neighbour and then by the child's father (who she was no longer living with.) Nothing was done at that time. Later, after the woman's common-law husband lost his job, her child was apprehended and her partner was accused of child sexual abuse. His ex-employer just happens to be married to the social worker who apprehended the child. The woman has been allowed only one supervised visit with her child during the past year, while the child's biological father has had regular unsupervised access.

A woman left her abusive husband with her four young children

and struggled to survive financially. That struggle led her to working the streets and forging cheques. When her husband threatened to sue for custody of the children, she hid them, the girls in one place, the boys in another. The boys were found and apprehended by Children's Aid. She was told she couldn't see the boys until she gave up the girls. She did. She was told she couldn't see the girls until the court had decided custody. During this period, she discovered that her sons had been sexually abused by their father, and was told by the RCMP that nothing could be done about it. The ensuing custody battle lasted two years, and custody of her two sons was finally returned to her. Her two beautiful, blond-haired, healthy, pre-school daughters were each adopted by their middle class, childless foster parents. The judge so ruled because, he said, the

woman would have her hands full with the two troubled boys who had suffered at the hands of their father.

A woman placed her five year old child in voluntary care because she was unable to cope with his hyper-active behaviour and was unable to find any help. She placed him in the temporary custody of Children's Aid because she believed that they had the resources to help her son. When, after six months in regular foster care the child had not been taken to any kind of therapy, she decided to terminate voluntary care. She was told she could not have her child back because he needed help. He was then transferred to a "therapeutic foster home" in another province. Now she gets occasional progress reports of her son's development only if she sits quietly in the worker's office and smiles. If she loses her temper or shows any sign of distress, the worker with-

holds information, sometimes for months.

A woman's teenage daughter was apprehended by Children's Aid because she was running away from home. The woman spoke of her frustration in her inability to get help with her daughter, and the dual standard of discipline imposed by child welfare agencies—as a parent, the woman felt she had no right to discipline her child to make her stay home. The teenager was placed in Truro Residential Centre, where her depression worsened and her behaviour became even more problematic. She's still running away. She says she wants to die. She's slit her wrists. This, the mother feels, is the fault of Children's Aid.

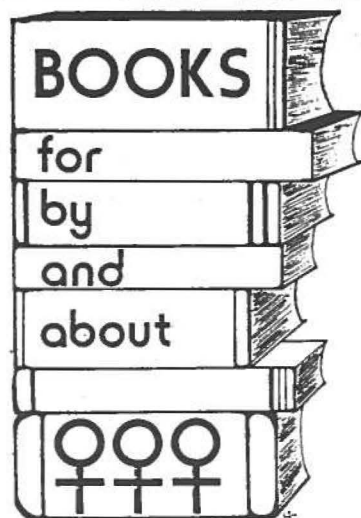
The frustration, anger, helplessness and sorrow in women's voices as they speak their stories is overwhelming. Their children have been taken in these

instances, not because they have been abused or seriously neglected, but because there are no resources available for families in need, and because standards of "proper care" are middle class standards.

□ □ □ □

The herstories in this article are taken from the final report that I wrote after organizing a provincial conference entitled "Keeping Our Kids: Women and Child Welfare Legislation."

Please note that the analysis is my own and does not necessarily reflect the opinions or beliefs of the Parent's Rights Group, the sponsoring body of the conference. I am greatly indebted to the group and the conference participants for giving me the opportunity to work with them and hear their stories.



Compiled by Jocelyne Marchand

When a Hostel becomes a Home: Experiences of Women by Lesley D. Harman

Through participant observation, the author studied homeless women who frequent hostels and the forms of social assistance available to them. The description of their lives is rich and revealing. She argues that the struggles which homeless women face are bound up with the forms of social control within capitalism and the ideology of patriarchy governing "women's place."

0-920059-80-5, \$8.95
Garamond Press

Changing Patters: Women in Canada edited by Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code and Lindsay Dorney

A comprehensive account of past and current changes in Canadian women's lives, focussing on women's role in initiating and responding to transformations in traditional mores and government policy. There is discussion of how changes in the economy, coupled with women's political pressure, have radically altered society's understanding of women's roles.

0-7710-2853-9, \$17.95
McClelland & Stewart

Canadian Book Information Centre tells us about new book releases

All of these books can be purchased from your favourite bookseller. For more information, contact the Canadian Book Information Centre nearest you.

In the Maritimes, CBIC is located at 1741 Barrington Street, Fourth Floor, Halifax, B3J 2S4 (902) 420-0688.

The national office is at 260 King Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1K3 (416) 362-6555.

The western office is at 1622 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver, V6J 1S5 (604) 734-2011.

The prairies office is at 100 Arthur Street, Suite 205, Winnipeg, R3B 1B3 (204) 3767.

FEW CHOICES Women, Work and Family

Ann Duffy, Nancy Mandell and Norene Pupo



Network Basics Series

Few Choices: Women, Work and Family by Ann Duffy, Nancy Mandell and Norene Pupo

How do women manage the conflicting and competing demands of family life, paid employment and personal ambitions? To answer this question, the authors interviewed 113 women engaged in full-time paid work, and part-time work. The interviews reveal that while strategies are being devised by these women, there are few choices that can satisfy their needs and ambitions.

0-920059-64-3, \$10.95
Garamond

Hard Travel by Lesley Krueger

Krueger has travelled widely and for her the displaced person is the great modern subject. Not that she's preoccupied with pain or loss. The refugee for her is the bringer of good tidings. The old gives way to the new, the past to the future.

0-88750-749-2, \$12.95
Oberon Press

Women, Kids & Huckleberry Wine



Women, Kids & Huckleberry Wine by Anne Cameron

An extraordinary new collection of stories from the author of *Daughters of Copper Woman* and *Earth Witch*. Here is an assortment of relationships: lovers, husbands and wives, children and parents, friends; and of strong individuals including Nan, whose frog causes consternation and chaos and Daleth who defies a fundamentalist sect and many others.

0-920080-68-5, \$12.95
Harbour Publishing



A Woman's Almanac: Voices from Newfoundland & Labrador by Marian A. White

This is White's fourth Almanac featuring twelve women of Newfoundland and Labrador. More than a desk calendar, it is a good read and will be in use long after the year is over. Also, a new format makes it easier to use.

0-920911-52-8, \$4.95
Breakwater Books



Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism edited by Judith Plant

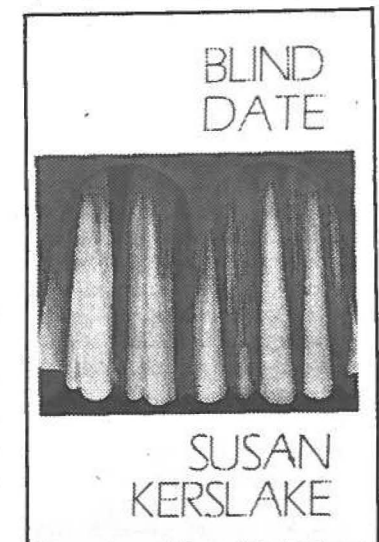
Drawing upon the combined vision and energy of feminist and ecological perspectives, this book brings together the spiritual, the political and the practical. There are more than 25 contributors.

0-921284-15-2, \$15.95
Between the Lines

Saffron, Rose & Flame by Cathy Ford

"In this collection of poetry, the author gives us her reVision of the life of Joan, experienced from the inside as the world falls apart revealing words. Read it as if you were Joan, reclaiming her life" Penn Kemp

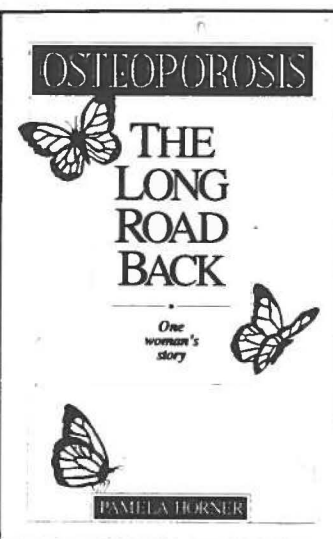
0-921881-07-X, \$12.95
Gynergy Books/Ragweed Press



Blind Date by Susan Kerslake

A new collection of short fiction by one of Nova Scotia's most imaginative fiction writers. Kerslake invites the reader into a rich panoramic landscape of hope and fear, discovery and despair. The stories range in setting from 19th century Prairie settlements to 20th century Maritime hospitals. The most unforgettable is a nearly-true story about the day that the Niagara River ceased to flow and the falls went silent.

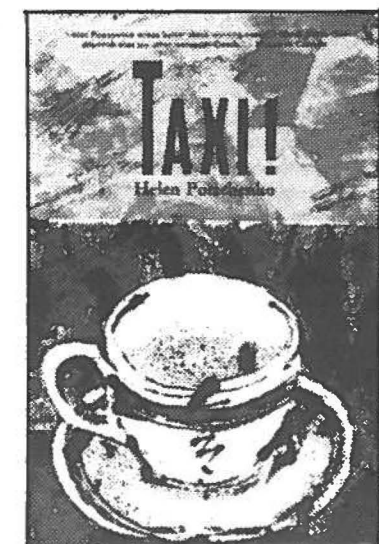
0-919001-53-X, \$9.95
Pottersfield Press



Osteoporosis: The Long Road Back by Pamela Horner

This is the story of one woman's struggle with and triumph over osteoporosis. It is also a self-guide for victims of this disease which is estimated to afflict one quarter of a million women in Canada.

0-7766-0226-8, \$9.95
University of Ottawa Press



Taxi by Helen Potrebko

Sharon is a cab driver. She travels the streets of Vancouver. As she drives drunks around skid row and takes executives to the airport, she comes face to face with the grinding despair of the poverty that exists, invisible, gnawing at the edges of upper-class apathy and self-satisfaction.

0-919573-89-4, \$11.95
New Star Books

Spaces Like Stairs by Gail Scott

Scott writes of women, community and writing. Open, subtle and ironic essays focus on the relation between post-modernism and feminism, on how audience and cultural context and political awareness all affect the way we write. The essays explore how the relation of writing/body/text spills over into questions of form and genre.

0-88961-131-3, \$10.95
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Notices/Calendar

PLEASE NOTE: We think the calendar and notices are important parts of Pandora. We like to think it helps keep women across the network informed about what is happening in the community. But it is a LOT OF WORK to try and keep tabs on everything that is going on. PLEASE... won't you call and let us know the dates of important events? Call Pandora at 454-4977.

Notices

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION:

•Women Employment Outreach offers free employment counselling services to women. Individual counselling is also available. Four-part pre-employment workshops start the first Tuesday of every month, 9:30 - 11:30. For more information call 422-8023.

CLASSIFIED

•Roommate wanted to share large house in Dartmouth with two wonderful women. Comfortable, homey atmosphere. \$240 per month plus utilities. Includes parking, washer/dryer and other amenities. Close to #1 bus route and ferry service. Phone 466-3493 evenings.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

•Canadian Woman Studies invites contributions to a special issue on Women and Housing to be published in the summer of 1990. Deadline is December 10, 1989. Contact Canadian Women Studies, 212 Founders College, York University, 4700 Keele St, Downsview, Ont M3J 1P3 (416) 736-5356.

•Women and Words of Newfoundland and Labrador invite submissions. Write: Women and Words, 19 Waterford Bridge Road, St. John's, Nfld, A1C 2N5

PUBLISHED MATERIALS:

•*Trivia*, a journal of radical feminist thought has published *Trivia 13* and *Trivia 14*, a special two-part series inspired by the Third International Feminist Book Fair in Montreal. Order from *Trivia* for \$10 (US) P.O. Box 606-A N Amherst, Ma USA 01059. Subscriptions (3 issues) cost \$16 (US).

•The Canadian Breast Cancer Series, a set of five books, *Understanding Breast Cancer, Diagnoses and Treatment, After Breast Cancer, A Time for Sharing, Glossary and Resources*, \$5/book, \$20 series inc. postage from Women's Resource Ctr, YM-YWCA, Downtown Branch, 100-209 Vaughan St., Winnipeg, Man. R3B 2N8.

•Halifax City Regional Library has published *The city, the province, the country, the world: How to be an effective citizen*. This list includes information about materials on how the government works, how to research, guides to working effectively around specific topics and more. From Halifax City Regional Library, 5381 Spring Garden Road, Halifax, B3J 1E9.

•A *Particular Class of Women*, an oral history about strippers from the sex workers' perspective, is now available from Lazara Publications, Box 2269, VMPO, Vancouver, BC V6B 3W2. Price \$7.95 plus \$1 postage.

•The government of Canada has published its "Directory of Federal Government Programs and Services for Women." Includes information about employment & retraining, educational assistance, social services, child care, etc. Free from The Honourable Barbara McDougall, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, 151 Sparks St, Room 1005, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1C3

•"A Guide to Provincial Funding for Women's Centres" and an education/employment workshop kit titled *Focusing Forward* have just been published by the Nova Scotia branch of the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CLOW). These materials are available free to women's groups from the N.S. Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

EVENTS & GROUPS:

•Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse meets every Wednesday 7:30-9:30 at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street, Halifax.

•Women's Music Festival needs women to assist in organizing, performing, donating land or money. Contact Nancy at 422-3977 or Carol at 477-9771.

•Veith House Headway program required volunteers for its literacy program. Contact Noreen at 453-4320.

•You are invited to the book-ordering committee meetings at Red Herring Co-op Books to advise and suggest book titles in areas of feminist theory, gay and lesbian, ecology and spirituality. Phone 422-5087 for more info.

•Third Place Transition House is open in Truro. Contact The Third Place Transition House, P.O. Box 1681, Truro, N.S. B2N 5Z5 (902) 893-3232.

•To mark the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, CLOW-NS has applied for a Secretary of State Grant to research and publish an *Anthology of the History of Women's Groups in Nova Scotia*. If you would like information about your group included in the history, or if you know of any defunct groups, please call Linda Roberts at 422-8023 or 455-8013 or Barbara Cottrell at 423-9654.

•Voice of Women Nova Scotia is looking for more women to become involved in the peace movement. Contact Marion Kerans, 425-3573.

•Transition House Association holds regular weekly support groups for abused women in Charlottetown, Montague, Summerside, P.E.I. Contact 892-0895. Collect calls accepted.

•Outreach Abuse Prevention is a non-profit organization providing seminars and workshops that focus on sexual abuse prevention for all ages. Free catalogue. Outreach Abuse Prevention, P.O. Box 1271, Stn B, Oshawa, Ont., L1J 5Z1 (416) 728-3163.

•North Branch Women's Group meets every Wednesday 10 am - 12 noon, Halifax City Regional Library, North Branch, Gottingen Street.

•LAIG (Latin American Information Group) meets 7:30 pm the first Tuesday of each month at the Oxfam-Deveric office, Veith House, Halifax.

•Coalition Against Apartheid meets at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month at the Oxfam-Deveric office, Veith House, Halifax.

•Listen to the Dinner Party Soundtrack (women's music in a feminist context) on CKDU 97.5 FM at 8 pm Sundays.

•Listen to Women's Time (news and interviews about women's issues) on CKDU 97.5 FM, Thursdays at 5:45 during the Evening Affair. Any community women's groups who would

like to announce events, call 424-6469

•CKDU: Women's Time needs volunteers to help out with programming. Contact Jennifer at 424-6479 or drop in to the station at Dalhousie University Student Union Building. You don't need to be a student.

•Anderson House Thrift Store, open Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm, is located next to the Food Bank in Charlottetown. Donations of used clothing and household articles are appreciated. Call 892-9557.

PHONE LINES:

•Victims of Spousal Abuse has a telephone line where you can reach a friendly voice, anonymously if desired. The volunteers are survivors of spousal abuse. Call 462-6228.

•The Pictou County Women's Centre in New Glasgow, N.S. has established a Rape Line staffed by volunteers. Phone 752-2233.

•The Abortion Information Referral Service 422-4123. Sponsored by CARAL/Halifax.

•Dial-a-Law: a toll-free, non-profit service which offers taped information through the phone. Hours: Mon-Fri, 10 am to 2 pm. 420-9000.

•GAE has an info line on gay and lesbian events and groups. Call 454-6551.

Calendar

October

October 15-22

Cultural Awareness Week in Nova Scotia. Contact Cultural Federations of N.S., Ste 304, 5516 Spring Garden Rd, Halifax, B3J 1G6, 425-6373.

October 16

•Meeting of N.S. Women Artists' Network, 7 pm, Eye Level Gallery.

•East Hants Women's Network meeting 7:30 pm, Elmsdale Regional Library. Speaker on "Women and Stress in the 80s" Contact 758-3364.

October 17

Workshop on menopause at Bridgetown Regional High School 7 pm. Contact Joy Bishop, 665-2593.

October 18

Person's Day. Films and videos for and about women. 12:30-4:30. National Film Board, 1571 Argyle St. Reception 4:00-5:30. Contact 426-6014.

October 19

Video of interview with Alice Walker and Maya Angelou. 8 pm, Women's Centre, St. John's, Nfld

October 20-22

•Feminine Face of Poverty: workshop. Tatamagouche Centre \$85. Contact Kathy MacKay, 755-6366

•Performance of Company of Sirens, UNB and Mount Allison Universities.

October 20-30

Company of Sirens will perform at locations across Nova Scotia. See article in this issue for places and times.

October 20-November 19
Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery presents *Africville: The Spirit That Lives On*.

October 23

•Pandora meeting, 7:30 p.m. at Veith House. All women welcome.

•Workshop on self-image at Bridgetown Regional High School 7 pm. Contact Joy Bishop, 665-2593.

October 24

•The Fatal Attraction of Fetal Rights, lecture by Shelley Gavigan, associate professor at Osgoode Hall Law School. Saint Mary's University Theatre B.

Burke Education Centre. 7:00 pm.

•Performance of Company of Sirens, 7:30 McInnis Room, Dalhousie University Student Union Building

October 25

•Performance of Company of Sirens, Noon, Saint Mary's University.

•Performance of Company of Sirens, 7:30 pm Hfx YWCA, Barrington St.

October 26

•Women and Health evening, Tatamagouche. Contact 657-3227 or 758-3364.

•Performance of Company of Sirens, 12:30, IWK auditorium, Halifax.

•Performance of Company of Sirens, 7:30 pm, Antigonish.

October 26-28

Cumberland County Transition House Association's Atlantic Region Conference in Amherst at E.B. Chandler Jr. High School. Titled Abuse: A Family and Community Problem. Keynote speaker: Linda MacLeod, author of *Battered But Not Beaten*. Contact (902) 667-1200

October 27

•A host of fortune tellers and witches: 5 pm, Women's Centre, St. John's, Nfld.

•Performance of Company of Sirens, 7:30 pm Wolfville.

October 28

Performance of Company of Sirens, 7 pm Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, Halifax.

October 29

IWD planning meeting. 2 pm Veith House, 3115 Veith Street. Contact Dolena 443-4321

October 30

•National Film Board premiere of *Goddess Remembered*, a one-hour exploration of goddess-centered religions of Western Europe from 35,000 BC. 7:30 pm Theatre A, Burke Education Bldg, Inglis St. Director Donna Reed will be present. Reception follows. Call 426-6014.

•Performance of Company of Sirens, Holy Angel's Church, Sydney.

October 31

Workshop on family violence at Bridgetown Regional High School 7 pm. Contact Joy Bishop, 665-2593.

October 31-November 18

Exhibition of oil paintings, "The Forgotten Dead/El Muerto Olvidado" by Rose Adams. Eye Level Gallery, 2182 Gottingen Street.

November

November 1

Business meeting of N.S. Women Artists' Network, 12:30 pm. Call 422-7565 for details.

November 2

Women as Winners, Milford Recreation Hall. Contact 758-3364.

November 3-6

Christian Feminism for the 90s—Reflections with Rosemary Radford Reuther and Shelley Finson: workshop. Tatamagouche Centre \$60 + 34. Contact Kathy MacKay, 755-6366

November 4

The Spirit of Africville, a performance piece at Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery. 8 pm

November 6

CRIAW (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women) meeting with guest speaker Susan MacEachern talking on "Feminist Art." 7:30 pm at the Nova Scotia Archives, corner of Robie and University.

November 7

Workshop on self-defense at Bridgetown Regional High School 7 pm. Contact Joy Bishop, 665-2593.

November 11

DAWN CANADA: social and film showing, Hawthorne Room, Holiday Inn, Dartmouth, 12:30 pm

November 12

IWD planning meeting. 2 pm Veith House, 3115 Veith Street. Contact Dolena 443-4321

November 13

•Pandora meeting, 7:30 p.m. at Veith House. All women welcome.

November 14

Open discussion at Bridgetown Regional High School 7 pm. Contact Joy Bishop, 665-2593.

November 17-18

Conference: *The Africville Experience: Lessons for the Future*. Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery

November 17-19

Popular Theatre—A Tool for Community Groups—a residential workshop by Lib Spry, Tatamagouche Centre, Cost \$130. Call 657-2231 for info.

November 20

East Hants Women's Network meeting. 7:30 pm, Elmsdale Regional Lib. Topic: Women in Business—Perils and Pleasures. Contact 758-3364.

November 23

•Meeting of N.S. Women Artists' Network, 7 pm Art Gallery of N.S.

•Premiere of *Half the Kingdom*, a one-hour documentary by director Francine Zuckerman that looks at feminism and Judaism. Call 426-6014.

November 24

Meeting at Women's Centre, St. John's, Nfld

November 25

Pandora dance! 8 pm Veith House, 3115 Veith Street. Child care provided on-site (call Pandora to let us know if you'll need it), wheelchair accessible.

November 24-December 7

Exhibition by Verlé Harrop at Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery.

November 26

IWD planning meeting. 2 pm Veith House, 3115 Veith Street. Contact Dolena 443-4321

November 27

•Pandora meeting, 7:30 p.m. at Veith House. All women welcome.

December

December 1-3

Meeting of N.S. Women Artists' Network, Camp Gillis, Paradise. Contact 422-7565 or 464-0898 for info.

December 3

Talk by Verlé Harrop at Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery 3 pm.

The New Year

January 12-14, 1990

Conference on South Africa in Halifax. Contact Bridge Pachai 424-4111 or Mary Mugenyi 420-5613 for info.

June 3-8, 1990

First World Summit on Women and the Many Dimensions of Power, conference organized by FRAPPE, (Women for Access to Political and Economic Power) Montreal at the Palais des Congrès. Objectives: to create an international network for exchange and communication among women, draw up common strategies for gaining access to power, put in place the means to give women the role we merit in decision making structures. Contact 822 Sherbrooke est, 3ième étage, Montréal, (Qué) H2L 1K4 (514) 521-0152.

June 19-23, 1990

Fourth International Feminist Book Fair, Barcelona, Spain.