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Pandora

Volume Five, Number Three

March, 1990

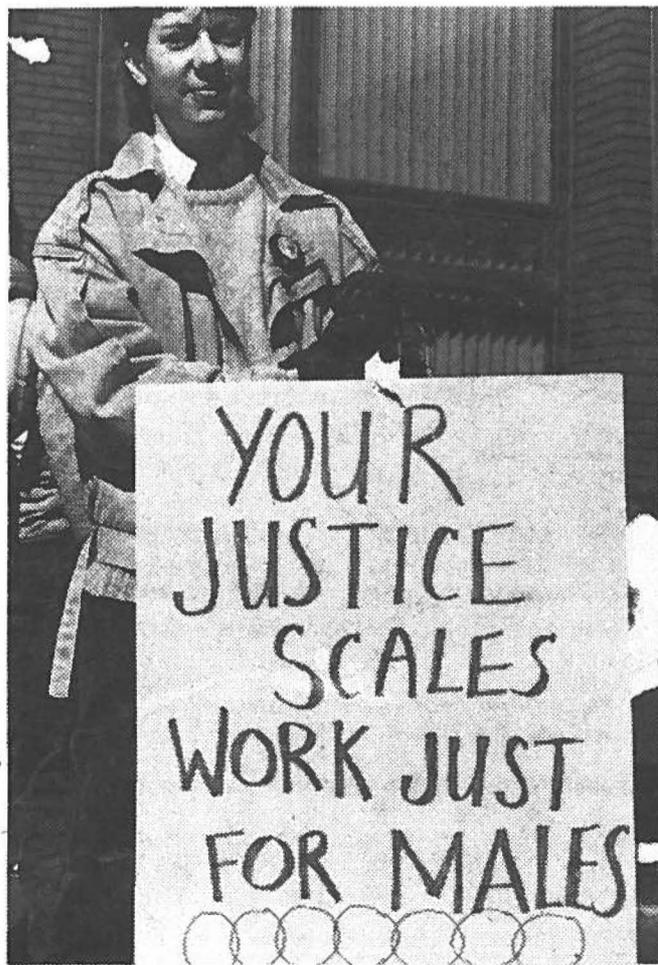
Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Now is
the time
to rejoice
in our
successes,
mourn
our
losses,
and lobby
for our
rights.

Have a
happy
International
Women's
Day!



While violence against women will always be a women's issue,

Men must take some responsibility for changing society

Sharon Fraser

(The following is a talk given by Sharon Fraser at a panel discussion for the Women's Caucus at Saint Mary's University on January 9, 1990. The event was held as part of a memorial for the 14 women who were killed in Montreal last December.)

I'm going to read to you from a column I wrote way last year, months before the Montreal massacre. This is a story I often tell and so it's possible you've heard it before.

"One of the stories I sometimes tell is the way a certain murder was covered when I was working at CBC New Brunswick. The murder victim was a 16-year-old girl; the murderer was her 17-year-old boyfriend.

Every time the girl was mentioned — and this was true of all the media —

it was noted that, at the time of her death, she'd been wearing a pink angora sweater and tight jeans. Every time the boy was mentioned, it was noted he was a cadet at a military college.

The producer of the current affairs radio show I was working on decided he wanted a member of our staff to attend the trial full-time and do comprehensive coverage.

I questioned this — properly so — and said although the news department would be expected to have a reporter in court, I had never known the current affairs shows to do the same thing. His chilling response to me was: "But this murder has sex appeal."

And indeed, it was covered almost lasciviously by every news outlet in the province."

I thought about it recently when I was reading an excerpt from the new book *The Good Times* by New York Times columnist, Russell Baker. His book has been almost universally praised by the critics and his fellow journalists as he tells, with lots of anecdotes, the story of his earlier career in newspapers.

But the part that stopped me short was his description of working the police beat and the murder coverage on the Baltimore Sun, where he began his career.

He says he might phone in to the city editor with a "little murder." The editor would probably say he'd take a couple of paragraphs and fill a little hole on page 16. But if Russell called in with a "good murder," he'd be sure to get the editor's attention.

Says Russell: "Any number of things could elevate a little murder into a good murder. Was the victim 'a prominent Baltimorean' or 'a member of an old Maryland family'? If so, good murder.

"Could the rewrite man justifiably describe the victim as 'statuesque,' the universally understood code

word meaning 'big breasts'? If so, good murder, especially if the murderer was still unknown and the cops could be persuaded to hint at sexual motives behind the crime..."

He concludes his section on murder with these thoughts: "The 'terrific murder' was one so uniquely gory, so sex-drenched, so mysterious or so diabolical as to be irresistible even to the *Sun's* stodgy readership. Such murders feature dismembered corpses, 'statuesque' women found dead in full nudity, husbands willing to kill to inherit a rich wife's fortune or to replace a cool wife with a warm mistress and similar elements."

There was nothing as blatant as this in the coverage of the recent murders,

although I found many media outlets turned this into us-against-them. Because they couldn't apply their usual standards of objectivity — they couldn't find people to quote who would say "this murder's bad, that murder's good" — they had to find another angle.

It became, who's to blame? Is this a women's issue? Is it only a women's issue? Is it the fault of men? Is it the fault of feminism? The coverage, I think, took away from our right to grieve and added an element of defensiveness to all news coverage. Many men were on the defensive immediately. Others went on the offensive. Feminists, in particular, were pushed into a position of defensiveness and guilt.

I found the coverage excluded the point of view of women who live with actual violence every day — women

spare their feelings, to comfort them and absolve them of blame. Well, many of us, as women and as journalists, have decided to stop doing that. We've decided that both at home and in the media we have to convince men that they are the ones who must take responsibility for the violence against women and children and they must do something about it — and that means more than lip service.

Now it's all very well for men to talk to other men about it. But that's not enough. It's also not enough for men to say I don't hit my wife, I don't buy pornography, I don't tell sexist jokes. Men must also make a commitment to help create a society in which all of those are socially unacceptable. It's been done with smoking — it can be done with sexist and misogynist behaviour.

But violence against women is not an isolated issue and the news media is

not the only culprit. Good, accessible child care, reproductive rights, affirmative action, and pay equity are also part of the same issue. So are the entertainment media — cartoons your children are watching and the violent games your sons are playing. So are the

words and actions of the biggest pop stars on records and videos. So are mainstream movies and prime time television.

So I have these suggestions for all men who want to change the world. Go to meetings. If there are no meetings to go to, organize one. Check out day care centres in your neighbourhood — if any. Find out how many children are on the waiting lists. Find out what your politicians really think, not by listening to what they say but by their records. Note that your governments in power have deplored the killings in Montreal at the same time as they're cutting funding for shelters for battered women, trying to tighten up the laws to control prostitution — which means getting it out of sight — and shelving plans for child care. Note that your news outlets haven't made that headline news.

Check out high schools and universities and note that athletic programs are not the only ones that differentiate between men and women in allocating budgets. Note that faculties which are traditionally populated by women consistently have fewer dollars budgeted than the male-populated faculties. In fact, recent studies are showing that as the proportion of women in law schools grows larger, the budgets for such schools is being decreased proportionally.

These are only a fraction of the things that have to be worked on, both within the media and without. Women have been working alone to try and make some basic changes in society but have reached the point in our development where we acknowledge that the people responsible for society as it is — white males — now have to take some responsibility for working on changing it.

But these are women's issues — don't forget that. They're women's because it was women who put them on the public agenda and we all know it's women who will keep them there. Women don't want that agenda changed — we simply believe it's time for men to take some responsibility.

Note that your governments in power have deplored the killings in Montreal at the same time as they're cutting funding for shelters for battered women...

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

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"We must celebrate even small victories in order to strengthen ourselves for the rest of the long slow walk to full equality"

Celebrate International Women's Day March 8, 1990

Please drop in during the Week
MARCH 5 — 9, 1990
8:30 — 4:30 p.m.

Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Suite 207, Purdy's Wharf, 1959 Upper Water Street
Halifax, N.S., Phone: (902) 424-8662
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 745, Halifax, N.S. B3J 2T3

Nova Scotia **Advisory Council on the Status of Women**



Demand tremendous:

Survival guide empowers single moms

Brenda Thompson

At 35,000 feet over Edmonton in November of 1987, I began discussing in earnest how to put together a resource book for single mothers like me who were lost in the confusion of surviving. My seat-mate was Sandi Kirby, and she was soon to be my feminist methodology professor.

I explained to her that in my activist work with low-income single moms, I kept finding inconsistencies and inaccuracies about what the rights of social assistance recipients were. It seemed to me that the only way women could find out about legal rights, resources, organizations, and survival tips was either by being activists or knowing someone who is. Finding out how to survive as a low-income single mom seemed to be a secret available only to a few.

Sandi encouraged me to talk with other single moms; to listen and to take notes on issues important to us. Later that year, in class, she taught us that our subjects in our research must also be participants, and that we must try to make our research empowering not only to ourselves, but also to the participants.

That spring I started interviewing low-income single moms to find out what was most important to them — what information they needed most to know. I attended conferences and listened to the problems being raised. I discussed the idea of the survival guide with them and got lots and lots of suggestions.

At the same time I began interviewing, I was also gathering information

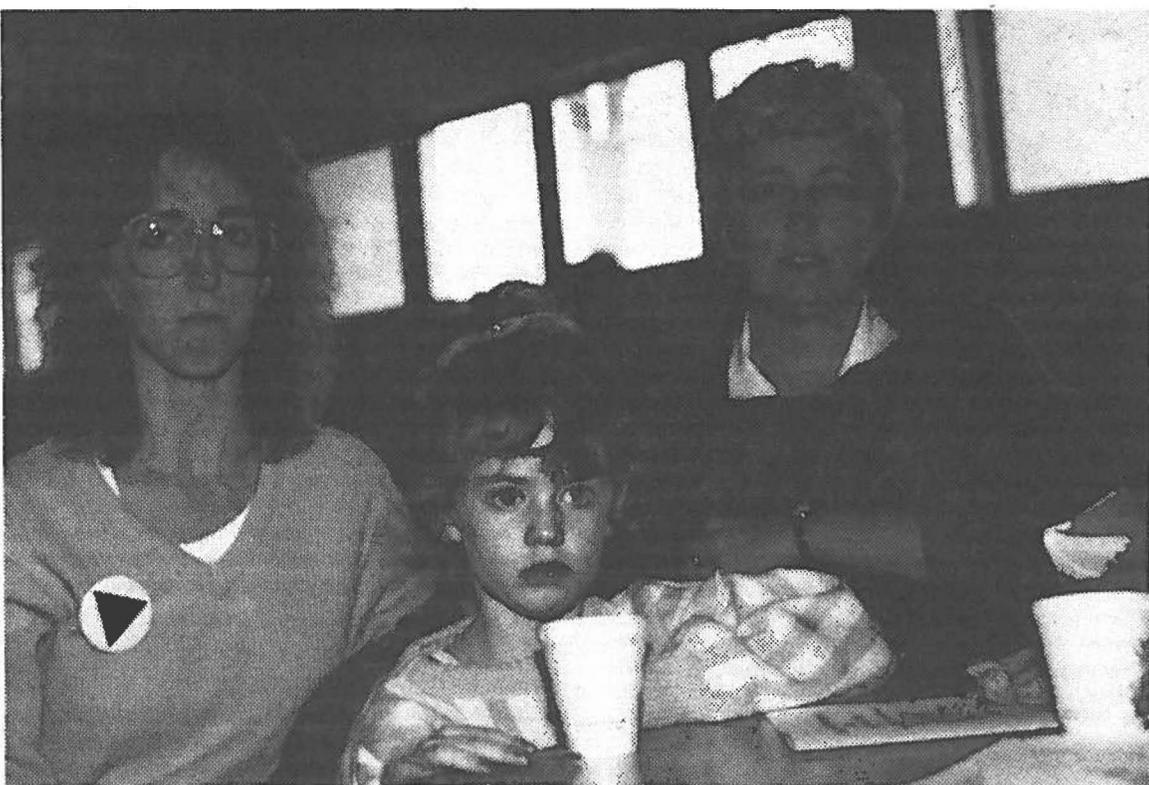
on how the social assistance system, the child protection agencies, the family courts and such, were supposed to work. This was gleaned from pamphlets, brochures, booklets and reports. Then I took notes from single moms who were experienced in survival on how these agencies really work.

I gathered enormous quantities of information. Boxes of files began to pile up in my apartment. My daughter learned to fall asleep to the sound of a pounding typewriter as I pared down the contents of the files and compiled the most accurate and realistic information. I kept those boxes of information for many months and through many moves.

I wasn't exactly sure how to go about putting this guide together, and I was scared that every word I wrote would be ridiculously wrong. Fortunately I had friends who were only too willing to listen to my ideas and encourage me. I also had friends who were willing to show me the way.

In the summer of 1989, I had the job of production assistant with Pandora. There I learned the basics of desk-top publishing. Debbie Mathers taught me a great deal about how to put a publication together, to make it interesting, readable, and inclusive to the reader. I worked on the guide in my spare time, and Debbie spent her spare time teaching me. She held my hand when I whined, and kicked my butt when it dragged. (Actually, it was gentle nagging.) And she managed to get me out of my procrastination pout. (All students have it!)

I decided that I didn't want to apply



(Photo by Beth Joudrey)

Brenda Thompson, shown here with her main support systems: her daughter Megan, and her mother Juanita.

for a government grant to put this guide out since I was afraid of being muzzled. I had every intention of aiming some well-deserved criticism at our provincial government and I did not want to be silenced by their money.

I also decided that I did not want to apply to any grass-roots women's organizations since I was not sure that I could actually put this booklet together, given the various demands of school and motherhood on my time. I knew that our women's groups don't have money to spare, with the recent cutbacks in Secretary of State grants.

In the end, I decided to go to various groups and ask for donations of services such as photocopying.

Well, the guide finally came together in late December 1989, and

Judith Davies and I and several others spent countless hours in front of a photocopier over the Christmas holidays, putting together 1000 copies of the guide.

As I write this, *The Single Mothers' Survival Guide* has been released to the public for 12 days, and in that short time almost 800 copies have been grabbed up.

The local media was initially slow in picking up the story about the guide, but once the news got around the demand for the guide has been tremendous. Requests are coming in from all over the province. Red Herring Bookstore reported that, in less than a week, over one hundred people entered making a bee-line for the booklet.

The local hospitals have requested

copies, as have various groups and organizations representing senior citizens, mental health, and tenants' rights.

It has become apparent that this guide is needed, and it is needed in more than just the Halifax-Dartmouth area. Plans are now being made for a second run of the guide; however, funds are needed this time since I simply don't have the time or energy needed to spend soliciting donations and then photocopying for days on end. Printing 1,000 copies would cost over \$2,000, and that's using the cheapest copy method and binding available. I need some help. If you think you could help out, please call Pandora at 454-4977 or write a cheque to: Pandora Booklet, Box 1209, North, Halifax, N.S. B3K 5H4.

Korean conference eye-opening experience: Women fight sexism, harassment, status quo

Kristin Roberts

At the beginning of last summer (July 1-8, 1989), I attended the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students in Pyongyang the capital of North Korea. The Festival is a huge gathering of Communist/Socialist people (aged 7-50 approximately) held every four to five years since 1947 when it was begun in Prague. The 13th WFYS was the first to be held in an Asian country and had 16,000 delegates from over 180 countries.

Canada sent a really strong, diverse delegation of 70 people. We had activists from native, gay, women's, French, trade unions, human rights, peace, etc., communities. And, as it turned out, Canada was one of only four countries to send equal representations of men and women. The rest of the countries sent more male delegates, with the result that at the Festival there was a highly unbalanced ratio of men to women (25-30:1, we estimated.)

This created several problems.

First, I was really looking forward to networking with other women and learning more about how women live and are treated internationally. This was next to impossible because most delegations only sent a token representation of women (some countries sent all male delegates) and finding women to eat with or sit with was difficult.

Secondly, there was a lot of sexual

harassment against the women who were there. From the first night we were in North Korea, we were surrounded by hordes of men asking for our room numbers or phone numbers, trying to grab us or kiss us, slap or assault us, etc. None of us felt safe or free from this harassment. We wanted to fight back!

So the Canadian women set up a meeting, for women only, to deal with these problems. We held it July 6 at the Canadian Club building. The men on the Canadian delegation (who were extremely helpful throughout the Festival) volunteered to guard the busses to ensure that no men tried to get into our meeting. As it turned out, we had over 60 women from 25 countries.

This meeting was really important and productive. We all sat in a circle and had a round-robin sharing of our personal experiences of harassment at the Festival. It was then that I began to realize fully the potential danger of the harassment. Some women found men waiting outside their apartments or even in their rooms, and one Korean woman was actually raped by four delegates. (They were arrested and put in jail but we haven't learned anything else about them.)

We also set up a "Take Back the Night" demonstration where we marched with men, both women and men shouting "No means NO!" Then a

report was read aloud that demanded a women's commission be set up for the next festival and that the permanent commission make it mandatory that women make up 30%, 40%, and then 50%, of the delegates over the next three festivals. Also, a sexual harassment board must be set up to reprimand those guilty of harassing women.

We also started an international address list and an international networking newsletter called *The Art of Communication—International Women's Network*. To get your name on this wonderful list and possibly subscribe to the newsletter, write to:

Kathy Goodman,
#60, Lane 36,
Sinsheng North Rd.,
Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

(The suggested cost of the printing and mailing of the newsletter is \$12 (US). This covers membership for 12 issues a year.)

In conclusion, the Festival was an incredible experience despite the obvious problems. I learned a lot about peoples' struggle for freedom and met fabulous individuals. I also learned about North Korean society, which, before the Festival, was one of the most isolated and closed-off countries in the world.

If anyone has any questions, or wants to see my slides, please feel free to call me at 455-8013.

International Women's Day Benefit Lunch



in support of
Bryony House

Thursday, March 8,
Noon to 2 pm,

Vinnie's Pub, Mount Saint Vincent University

Tickets are available for \$5 at:
Women's Studies Department
Rm 313, Seton Academic Centre,
Mount Saint Vincent University
and
Red Herring Co-op Books
1555 Granville Street
Halifax, N.S.

A benefit event dedicated to the
memory of our sisters
who died so tragically in Montreal.

Sponsored by Versa Services,
the Mount Saint Vincent University Women's
Studies Society and the Student Union.

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.

This issue was produced by:

Jane Baird, Brenda Conroy, Judith Davies, Diane Guilbault, Betty-Ann Lloyd, Debbie McDougall, Yvonne Manzer, Debbie Mathers, Carrie Melsom, Elaine Sharpe, Brenda Thompson, Amani Wassef, Darlene Young

Advertising by:

Amani Wassef, Brenda Conroy

Photo/graphics contributed by:

Brenda Conroy, Beth Joudrey, Anita Martinez, Debbie Mathers, Nadine McNamara, Barbara Morton, Noreen Stevens, Bernadette Sullivan

Distribution:

Nancy Wright (Guysborough), Cheryl AuCoin (Sydney), Oona Landry (Antigonish), Alex Keir (Pictou County), Debbie Trask (Bridgewater), Dianne Crowell (Yarmouth), Carolyn Emerson (Newfoundland) Debra Westaburg (Debec, N.B.), Louise Flemming (PEI), Amanda LeRougetel (Winnipeg), Joan Baccardax (Port Hawkesbury), Toronto Women's Bookstore, Ottawa Women's Bookstore, and many, many, others.

Contributors:

Wendy Ammand, Deborah Boyd, Myrna Carlson, Shelley Casmeay, Marie-Claire Chartrand, Dian Day, Sharon Fraser, Diann Graham, Diane Guilbault, Nancy Hay, Mary Keeler, Nancy MacLeod, Heather MacMillan, Jocelyne Marchand, Carol McLeod, Cathy Mellett, Lynn Murphy, Suellen Murray, Scarlet Pollock, Carol Putnam, Kristin Roberts, Barb Stephens, Jo Sutton, Brenda Thompson,

Thank you, one and all!

Correspondence and Subscriptions:

Please note Pandora's mailing address:
Pandora Publishing Assoc.
Box 1209, North,
Halifax, N.S. B3K 5H4
messages: 902-454-4977
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NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS:

Pandora is now being distributed free to various locations throughout the province. The editorial committee felt that free distribution would allow us to make the paper available in outlets such as libraries, health clinics, etc. (If any of you women out there would be willing to do distribution in your areas, please let us know.) This is in no way a statement that Pandora has so much money that it no longer needs to charge for the paper. We are, in fact, hoping to get more subscribers this way. If you want the paper mailed to you, subscriptions are \$5.00 for four issues. There is a sliding scale. Women on limited income, send what you can. We ask women who can afford more to provide a contributing or sustaining subscription to help support the paper.

Cover: Photos by Brenda Conroy and Anita Martinez

Presswork by Kentville Publishing

We're looking for your stories about violence, youth, age

In the wake of the Montreal massacre of fourteen women, there were repeated denials from many segments of society that Lépine's attitude toward women was a reflection of societal attitudes—that he was supported in his beliefs about women, and his reactions to women, by many in society. We know better.

Violence against women is always in our lives. We experience it in the media, in jokes, and in the courts. We experience it on a daily basis in what are often terrifying and isolating acts performed by "average men" in our society. The terror is never far away from us. It haunts us as we walk down the street, as we enter our homes, as we take the bus after dark, and in thousands of other activities we carry out on a daily basis. It may be subtle, or it may descend upon us with the power of a fist. No woman is free from this sort of acceptable terrorism, and yet society continues to deny that it exists. The on-going debate over whether Lépine's violence was an isolated act or simply a symptom of an increasingly deranged society suffices to indicate the denial.

An example of this surfaced while I watched the film *Driving Miss Daisy*. Throughout the film, Miss Daisy repeatedly denies her own prejudice by refusing to recognize it. Her inability to see how her complacency and active, unquestioning, participation in an unjust society is more damaging than the organized violence of a few.

This same issue must be addressed when we consider the Lépine murders—especially by those individuals who excuse Lépine as crazy. It is these people who distance themselves from men who rape or assault women. They hide behind the veil of tolerance which shadows our patriarchal society, condoned by the judicial system and other authoritarian bodies who act as role models for citizens to follow. In keeping with these role model judicial bodies, we find out that it took an entire year for the public to learn of the sexist remarks by Quebec trial judge Denys Dionne that "women are like laws, sometimes they are meant to be violated." (In the original French, his remark is even worse; the term means "rape.") Such a comment sends a strong message of approval and acceptance to those men who continually and brutally assault women.

We at Pandora feel the violence enacted out on 14 women in Montreal was in no way "an isolated incident." We have started to collect examples of things that we feel promote and condone violence towards women. Our goal is to publish the findings in our next issue (June 1990) and for this task we are asking for your help. In the next month or so, keep your eyes and ears wide open; record everything you feel perpetuates violence towards women.

Look at television, advertisements, billboards, magazines, comments on the street, language, jokes, etc. Please send your observations to us (P.O. Box 1209, North, Halifax, N.S., B3K 5H4) or leave a message on our answering machine (454-4977). We need to hear from you by May 15th so we have time to incorporate them into our June issue.

Here are some examples by Pandora women to get you started:

- A recent advertisement by Revlon Cosmetics portrayed Frank Sinatra and his wife. He was standing behind his seated wife pulling up and back on a pearl necklace he had purchased for her. It looked like he had her neck in a noose.
- The outside wrapper of a sponge brick listed three possible uses to relieve tension. One of these was "throw it at your wife to reduce maintenance costs."

—Carrie and Amani

Pandora calls her sisters, young and old!

We are planning theme issues for both our September and December 1990 issues. We are all pretty much of an age here at Pandora; that is, mid-twenties to mid-forties. We really feel the lack of input by younger feminists as well as older ones. So we would like to open up our pages particularly to these age groups, and we will start by printing stories by younger women in our September issue and by older women in our December issue.

We hope this will only be a start—we want to have all age groups represented all the time. So please, if you have felt excluded by us or anyone else because of feeling too young or too old (and we all know women are never the right age, just as we are never the right shape) then take this opportunity to get in your two cents worth.

Write about what it's like to be a younger or older feminist, or write about anything else that moves you. We need your submissions for the September issue by July 15 at the latest, and for the December issue by October 15.

We always say to potential writers for Pandora, "Pretend you are writing to a close friend." Even women who never thought they could write find they can do that. And that is what we want—personal stories of women's lives and personal opinions about the world as it relates to them.

If you enjoy reading the personal stories on these pages, think how you owe it to our other readers to send us yours.



The next couple of months will be exciting ones for women. There is just so much happening on so many fronts.

Federally, there's the issue of abortion legislation as well as cuts in the budget. We all know that women are going to be hit... hard.

Provincially, our MLA's are still trying to take away our freedom of choice by outlawing free-standing abortion clinics. Dr. Henry Morgentaler's trial for performing "illegal" abortions starts March 5. All pro-choice women are requested to rally in support in front of the Provincial Law Court on Spring Garden Road from noon to 1 pm each day of the trial.

It's ironic that Dr. Morgentaler's trial is being held during International Women's Week. Here we all will be, celebrating women and freedom and choice, and yet we are still unable to have freedom of reproductive choice here in Atlantic Canada.

Despite this irony, there are many events going on for International Women's Day (which has turned into International Women's Week, and maybe even fortnight!) See the calendar of events on pages 9 and 10.

The Women's Health Education Network will soon be holding their Annual Conference, as will the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia.

Meetings are being set-up to plan other events, such as the Third Almost Annual Lesbian Conference.

And these are only a few of many events happening in the next couple of months. (Check the calendar and International Women's Day sections of Pandora as well as the advertisements in this issue for more information.)

With all these events going on, this will be a busy season for women. We at Pandora would like to take this opportunity to thank all the women who work so hard, usually voluntarily, to aid the causes of freedom, equality and justice for all.

Pandora's letter policy

Pandora's policies are constantly shifting and evolving to effectively meet the needs of our paper and readers. 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 woman-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 they 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 name and be able to contact 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.

Enjoys Pandora, but who wrote L.G.R.N.S. story?

Pandora:

Another Pandora! Great! As always, the range of topics covered is wide, making sure there is "something for everyone."

I enjoyed the centre-spread on LGRNS (Lesbian and Gay Rights Nova Scotia). I wonder, though, why none of the pieces had a name attached? In items talking about the importance of "putting yourself out there" that would seem to be an important affirmation of the author's willingness to do what she is asking others to do.

Another article by Carol McLeod — another tidbit of our 'herstory.' One author (among many) I would be inter-

ested in having profiled is Jean Rhys. Is that a possibility?

I always enjoy the new books profiled by Jocelyne Marchand. What a treat!

Megan Ardyche
Halifax

(Pandora's note: The lack of a name on the LGRNS story is our fault, not the author's. All the stories were written by Anne Bishop, originally as one long story. We broke it up into the component parts, mainly to make it more readable. In the process, we neglected to put Anne's name on each section. We apologize to her and to our readers who were misled.)

Book on pregnancy doesn't deserve derision from women

Pandora:

On November 25, 1989, Pandora held a women's dance at Veith House in Halifax. For this special event, the Canadian Book Information Centre kindly donated four books to be given away as door prizes. One of these books was titled "Being Pregnant: Conversations With Women" by Daphne Morrison.

To my dismay, this book was treated as a joke, as no one wanted (or would admit to wanting) a book with such a title. When I read out the number of the winning recipient for the book, the room broke into laughter.

At the end of the night, the book was left on the desk by the front door. In curiosity I took the book home to browse through.

I found it a fascinating and often heart-wrenching account of issues facing pregnant women. I also found it representative of the issues facing all women and how these issues perpetuate our oppression. For example, it dealt with issues of racism, violence, drug-abuse, societal abuse of single mothers, sexual abuse by physicians, access to sperm donors for lesbians, and sexually transmitted diseases. It also dealt with miscarriages, abortions and planned pregnancies.

The book was divided into 15 short stories of women's experiences being pregnant. I found something of myself in each of the 15 herstories and yet I have never been pregnant. I learned things about women that I had not known before.

I felt the laughter was indicative of the increasing splits in the feminist

movement. It was saying that we had nothing in common with pregnant women, even though they are our sisters and suffer the same types of abuses we do.

I was disappointed that the book was not treated with respect and dignity, for this is how the women in the book should be treated. I recognize that not all women share the same interests in the type of literature we choose to read; however, I felt the laughter represented something more.

The point I am trying to make is that more often than not, we can build on similarities rather than differences between women.

Anyone wishing to discuss this further may leave a message on the Pandora answering machine and I will contact you.

Sincerely,
Amani Wassef
Halifax, N.S.

Heather reports in from Tobago to tell us about their concerns

Pandora:

Greetings from the sandy shores of Tobago. It is with bitter sadness that we heard of the senseless slaughter of women in Montreal — there are no words for this despicable outrage. Sitting here among women of colour and black women, we shared equally the pain of our sisters across Canada and wept openly for this. Yet another outrageous attack on women! We found great comfort at this time of anger by listening to *Four the Moment* and once again our strength is replenished to continue this battle to stop violence against women everywhere.

Here in Tobago, where I have chosen to make my home, I have begun to meet with on-going groups of women to discuss their concerns. I find the concerns of the women here in the islands to be the same as those repeatedly voiced by the women of North America. In both Trinidad and Tobago the women have identified incest as the number one problem. Number two? You guessed it — violence against women.

Even in this tiny island (less than

45,000 people) there is one room in a house being used to shelter battered women of which there is an incredibly large number. I have been asked to speak at several group meetings and I hope to begin a new group very soon of Women Against Violence. The work that needs to be done here, as everywhere, boggles the mind. But at least we know the rules and the ropes so this should be very helpful in all our endeavours.

I have requested that women send us any old summer clothing — shoes, etc. etc. The poverty is at a level more shocking than I have ever witnessed, but there is an irrepressible joy that just flows from the women everywhere we go. The beautiful splendour of the island, the singing of the birds, the warm and welcoming tropical ocean makes a very relaxing backdrop and is a very healing setting in which to work.

The island of Tobago is 94% Negro; the other 6% is divided between Indian, Chinese and white (mostly foreigners.)

We recently went to a Christmas Fair in a one-room school—a very small one room school—that houses

six classes and 149 children each day. We have decided to tutor our children ourselves and they are getting a really solid education that they could not learn out of a thousand books. We have been invited to spend Christmas with the family of a wonderful black woman by the name of Heather Grant who has become a dear friend and is the manager of the building in which we live. Her family lives in a very small village deep in the mountains. It should be an interesting and different experience for all of us.

All my love,
Heather Dawn
Tobago

We get thanks, subscriptions

Pandora:

Congratulations to each of you! The Pandora Oct/89 issue was recently brought to my attention. I have been delighted with its content and direction.

Please place me on your mailing list as a subscriber. Lots of luck in all your endeavours to research and to enlighten.

Regards,
Velma Noble
New Minas, N.S.

Pandora:

I appreciated the way the last issue was handled. When I saw it was to be on abortion, I thought, "Oh, oh," expecting a very strident tone and gnashing of teeth. Instead, it seemed to feature facts, common sense, personal experience, and humour. Congratulations.

Janet Curry
Truro, N.S.

Despite tight money, Pandora gets sub

Pandora:

My daughter and I have read Pandora since I picked up a copy of your first issue in a Fredericton book store — we have subscribed since then.

Now my daughter is in high school and I have gone back to school to finish a B.A. at the University of Vermont. I am studying art and women's studies — a field that didn't even exist when I dropped out of school on 1967.

I have a son in college, too — so money is tight; but my daughter is a Canadian citizen, born when we lived in Fredericton and we are both feminists who work at it every day — so I hope you can continue to send me Pandora. I know it's expensive to send to the U.S., but we need to know what's happening with you. I'm looking forward to spring 1991 when I graduate, and will soon thereafter be a paying subscriber again.

Thanks,
Karen Jackson

P.S. On Tuesday January 30, I'll be attending a memorial service at University of Vermont for the 14 women killed in Montreal December 6.

P.P.S. My sweet husband who works in publishing has helped me decide we can support you. The amount will not save maritime publishing, but it will help, I hope.

Karen Jackson
(Pandora's note: Thanks for the

subscription. But please be assured that we would never delete any woman from our mailing list purely because she cannot afford our subscription price. Lots of wonderful woman readers send us donations so that we can afford this service. We thank these anonymous women every day for their generosity. And lots of luck with university. It's a big, exciting step.)

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Political prisoner will receive Pandora and lots of support

Pandora:
Time to go intercontinental! I enclose a cheque for a subscription to be sent to:

Servinc Tekeli-Oztas,
Kapali Cezaevi,
Kadinlar Kogusu,
Yozgat, Turkey

Servinc is in prison in Yozgat for her alleged participation in activities of a banned political organization, the Turkish Communist Party. She began her sentence of four years, four months, and fifteen days in the summer of 1988.

Servinc is the only female political prisoner in Yozgat. She was listed in Amnesty International Bulletin, December 1989/1990 as a prisoner of the month.

Although the Turkish Communist Party is banned, it does not have a policy of violence, and therefore Servinc has been imprisoned for the non-violent exercise of her political beliefs.

Servinc has written in reply to my letter, "I feel quite well here in Yozgat, no need to worry." Amnesty says that many of those arrested with her were tortured (but it sounds as though she

has been spared this.)
"By the way, there isn't any women's prison in Turkey. The authorities can put women in any prison they prefer." She is allowed to read newspapers, periodicals and books which aren't forbidden (probably best not to send Communist publications!), and is allowed to accept gifts of coffee, which is her great prison luxury.

This is the first time I have received a response from a prisoner, although Amnesty International letter-writing gives me lots of chances to write (diplomatically of course), to ambassadors, presidents, and even kings. The records some of these guys have, it's a wonder the words, "Your Excellency" don't freeze in the pen.

Although it may not be wise to enter into political discussions, letters and non-religious cards would assure Servinc that we are thinking of her.

Or you can join Amnesty International yourself, either as part of a group or (like me) as part of the letter-writing network. You can get information from Amnesty International, Canadian Section (English Speaking,

130 Slater St., Suite 900,
Ottawa, Ontario. K1P 6E2
You think letter-writing is probably not really useful? Half the government of Czechoslovakia was on Amnesty International's list a few years ago. Some day it may be President Servinc Tekeli-Oztas saying, "Letters from friends in Halifax helped me make it".

Lynn Murphy
Halifax, N.S.

P. S. Please start the subscription with the issue after the one in which this letter appears. Mention of torture might not go down too well with the prison officials.

Please write to
Pandora!

We get letters!

Likes Pandora, but feels it could be better edited

Pandora:
Sorry, I've been busy with my journalism program: getting articles in on time plus putting out a yearbook for New Brunswick Community College—Woodstock.

I am happy with the quality of the articles published by Pandora... but have a tendency to edit all articles now for style, spelling, etc. (That's what the journalism program is doing to me!)

Thanks for sending Pandora even when I've not sent money. Contrary to popular belief, students are not raking in the bucks on student loans!

Laura Richards
Woodstock, N.B.
(Pandora's note: This seems to be a

good chance to explain our editing policy. While we do attempt to correct spelling errors [we know, we miss at least a few!], we do not generally try to change an author's style of writing. We believe that we, as white, often middle-class women, should not be imposing our values and our culture on other women.

We will change the words of an author only if the meaning is unclear or ambiguous. We also sometimes make small changes in paragraphing to make the story fit the space allotted it or to make the page seem less gray. We never make substantial changes in a woman's story without first contacting her.)

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Goddess Remembered explores ancient matriarchal spirituality

Marie-Claire Chartrand
Nancy MacLeod

The Goddess Remembered is the most recent in a series of films by director Donna Read which looks at women and female spirituality. This film follows her earlier work *Behind the Veil: Nuns* which looked specifically at Catholic women in the Church. *The Goddess Remembered* moves from specifics to take a general look at feminine spirituality in the realm of the Goddess.

Near the beginning, the film affirms a common belief that women experience themselves in a unique way. They are the birthers, the givers of life, and have an inherent attachment to the natural world and its cycles.

In *The Goddess Remembered*, we go back thousands and tens of thousands of years to discover that there is evidence to support the existence of the preeminent Goddess throughout the world. We are taken to foreign lands where we tread on the grounds of ancient temples where at one time worshipping the Goddess was a natural part of everyday life. The Great Mother was found portrayed in many artistic mediums. We find her grandly displayed in wall murals in ancient caves, in large stone monuments, in small statues and figurines, and many other art forms.

We see the Goddess as the nurturer of all life, the gatherer who gives birth to the young and skillfully attends the earth and her harvest. The society in which the Goddess reigned was egalitarian. There were no apparent value distinctions made between the female and the male; however, reverence for the life-giving and goddess-like characteristics of the female was present.

This peaceful egalitarian society can be followed thousands of years; then comes a break from this way of life with the onset of Greek culture and a male supremacist mentality. The natural human way of being with the earth and worshipping the Goddess was changed. Control, hierarchy, and domination moved to the forefront of social norms and with it war and violence became central to society's structure.

The male population felt more closely identified with the conqueror God and soon the Goddess was forsaken. A movement to destroy all

the control systems such as hierarchy, patriarchy, racism and sexism that exist in today's society.

Interspersed with the film's documentation of the Goddess, there are commentaries from various feminist scholars, writers, poets, storytellers, and theologians, who share their views and experiences of feminine spirituality and the Goddess.

On the whole, this documentary weighs heavily on the pro side. The documentation and commentary come together to provide a good blend of abstract and concrete, past and present.

The footage is clear and concise. The entire film represents scholarly research. The back-

ground music, played by Loreena McKennitt, was captivating. For those of us who saw Read's last film, *Nuns*, it was easy to make the links of our present experience of religion and what was hidden in our past.

If one were to find difficulty with this film it might be in the fact that a subtle message comes through that women alone hold the key to the future of our earth and a return to a Goddess worshipping society. But this is, after all, a film which looks specifically at women and their spirituality so we find no fault in the female bias.

Some might prefer that the women commenting in the body of the film be identified during the film rather than at its end. Ms. Read felt that the anonymity of the speakers during the course of the film gave the information credibility without drawing undue attention to the personalities involved (Jean Bolen, Starhawk, Mary Tallmountain). This film gives those of us already familiar with the Goddess an affirmation in knowing that our spirituality is rooted in ancient maternal ancestry.

The Goddess Remembered is a must for all to see. It puts us in touch with a dimension of ourselves which we often cannot name or validate. It fosters a resurgence of excitement and hope among those endeared to the Goddess and presents a new vision for those who have not yet acknowledged the Goddess.

This film gives way to Read's next production, *The Burning Times*, which is due to be released soon. In this new film, Read looks at the massacres of innumerable people (mostly women) because they adhered to a spirituality more in line with the Goddess than the God of the Christians. If *The Goddess Remembered* is any indication, we should all look forward to this new release.

We see the Goddess as the nurturer of all life, the gatherer who gives birth...(who) attends the earth and her harvest.

memory of her was begun in an attempt to obliterate her and deny she existed at all. It was the Warrior God who was now the giver of life: the female was only the receptacle of this life.

As the film shows us, no amount of effort was enough to wipe away allegiance to the Goddess. There are still Goddess-worshipping cultures to be found today in Africa, Greece, and among a growing number of the population worldwide. Even after the inception of Christianity and other male centered religions, people from all over the world are drawn to the sites of monuments to the Goddess still in existence. There is an awesome power about the statues of this large, full-bodied Goddess with her voluptuous breasts and grand, strong upper and lower body (a far cry from the anorexic goddess-like images we are taught to worship today).

The film comments on the detriment we have brought upon ourselves by losing touch with our Earth Mother. The effects of this loss are evident in



On March 8 to March 22, Marilyn Kellough will be displaying her first solo exhibition at Manuge Galleries, Hollis Street in Halifax. Marilyn would like to dedicate this exhibition to Michelle Martinello and friends for their love, support, faith, and encouragement. Photo by Barbara Morton.

Examining past lives helps release fear and puts us in touch with our true nature

Barb Stephens

When I started my studies 23 years ago, little did I realize that I was really on a quest to find out who the God in me was. The oldest of seven children in a French Canadian home, I was taught not to question anything. However, I was very curious and I wanted answers.

One day in my early twenties, the word reincarnation appeared and grabbed me and my spiritual light bulb went on. Twenty three years later, I have a lot of answers and am still looking for more.

The North American culture is built on the premise that what you can experience with your five senses is all that exists. The fact that we have six senses is ignored. We do have a sixth sense that is pure psychic feeling. This sixth sense adds extra information to the five senses and we should not ignore it.

We have so many wonderful tools at our disposal which are free. Using our built-in psychic sensitivity skills, paying attention to the wealth of information contained in our dreams, and being aware of the many levels of existence can provide a fuller, more well-rounded life.

There really are more things in life than we are aware of and we can get in contact with all of them.

We function on more than just the physical level. We are, on occasion, in communication with the minds of our family and friends, more commonly known as telepathy. We can also communicate with people in the non-physical or after-death environment.

We can, at will, travel anywhere, anytime, and we don't have to leave the comforts of our living room.

Reincarnation (or past lives) has become a favourite topic of mine. I feel that examining our past lives is an important means of release from fear

and a way of getting in touch with our true nature.

I give psychic consultations and sessions on past life recovery. The psychic consultations involve helping clients get in touch with their immediate problems and foreseeing the past and future possibilities. My accuracy is approximately 70-80 per cent. The sessions are usually one hour in length. I use psychometric methods (i.e. holding a personal object) or clairvoyance when applicable.

In the past life recovery sessions, I am able, with my clients' help, to take them back to a chosen time period where they see images of themselves and their situations. Through questioning, we find parallels to present day events. This often relates to images I receive through psychic consultations. There are many ways to find a bridge between the present and the past — we just have to become aware that imagination and déjà vu experiences may be past life memories.

I find more and more people are interested in finding out about their past lives. I don't use hypnosis as I have found many of my own past lives while being completely aware of my surroundings. I use this same technique when discovering something I did yesterday; logically I should be able to remember the distant past.

In addition to offering individual sessions, I also conduct workshops in my three areas of expertise:

- Development of psychic sensitivity
- Dream interpretation
- How to find your past lives.

I have recently written a booklet called "How to find your past lives without hypnosis." Any requests for either an appointment, workshop or booklet can be made by calling (902) 455-3837 and asking for Barb.

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Inequality between women and men strengthened by father's "rights"

Scarlet Pollock
Jo Sutton

Measures which support the social position of men as fathers also support the subordination of women and girls. Fatherhood is a position of senior male dominance through which men are enabled to practise and protect their privileges. Political moves to increase men's claims to children and to enhance men's decision-making rights over children are couched in the language of equality.

Yet, this is a liberal conception of equality which comfortably (for men) neglects the political conflict between men's dominance and the oppression of women. Equality in this liberal sense merely bolsters and feeds the political power that men have already taken for themselves.

The advantages which men are granted in employment, taxation, state benefits, housing, welfare services, and so on, give men the appearance of being better able to care for the material needs of children when custody comes into dispute. Legal moves to improve men's rights over children upon divorce, and outside of marriage, increasingly point towards the time when, once again, children go with fathers. It is not that men will come to do the work and take the responsibility for child care; it will continue to be women who care for children.

As the political inequality between men and women is strengthened further, women will find themselves unable to leave men for fear of losing their children. And if he leaves her, it will be another woman—father's mother, new girlfriend, new wife or housekeeper—who will be taken on by him to care for the children.

When equality becomes a social goal, men's interests are seen to be very important. Despite the widespread structures of inequality between men and women in our society, the family is

portrayed as an institution of equality.

The family is placed in isolation from the unequal outside world. Within this mythically equal family, a "balance" is being sought through a steady progression of policies which assert men's rights to children. Using ideology and myth, as well as juridical power, men strive towards the position of their 19th century forefathers. Equality for women is still over the horizon. Men's claims as fathers will serve only to push women backwards.

In fact, the claim of men to father-right over children has not come about in isolation from the world. Fatherhood does not only take place within a family; it exists as a set of political relationships affirming the dominance of men and within that, the dominance of the senior male. It is a hierarchical relationship where expectations and obligations are imposed upon those in a politically weaker position.

Fatherhood is the principle organizational model for our society. Apparently isolated events, such as court decisions and legislation on abortion act within a social structure which supports and even glorifies fatherhood and the power this carries for men.

Men have been able to use the rhetoric of liberal equality to enhance their social power over women and children. While appearing radical, they increase their level of decision-making and control. The propaganda is so persuasive that we are expected, in the name of equality, to validate men.

Feminism is being subsumed in the fight for fathers' rights. Based within a liberal notion of equality, it acts to undermine the political conception of the need for women's liberation from the rule of men.

Feminists are being called upon to fight for men's rights over women, while feminist language is used to further male dominance. "Equality for men" within a system of male domina-

tion can serve only to validate and perpetuate the oppression of women.

A positive strategy for women must involve social policies and actions which support the strengths of women, and the strength of women working together to counter male domination. State provisions and judicial powers must discriminate positively in favour



of women, adding to, rather than undermining, the possibilities for women organizing together against oppression. The maintenance of fatherhood and men's claims to children is a direct attack upon women and upon the feminist challenge to male domination.

Women can oppose the increasing power of fathers in ways such as these:

Free 24-hour child care

This principle implies not that children should be placed in child care facilities for 24 hours a day, but that women should be supported in caring for children at all times. Child care facilities run by women must be available to fit in with different employment hours, needs of other children, and so on. That is, there must be both awareness and practical support for women who are caring for children.

Feminist child care and shared mothering

The interests of men to protect their relation of power over women and

children means that it is preferable for women to share parenting with other women. In terms of both the responsibility and activities of raising children, women and children are in safer hands with women. Caring for children together offers women the emotional support and practical help needed, without having to become dependent upon men. Feminist alternatives in child care can provide for a strengthening of ties between women, the promotion of equality amongst children, and a direct challenge to male power.

Abolition of men's rights to child custody

Given that the divorce rate is reaching one in three, women who wish to care for their children without fathers must have this right upheld in court. Legal cases concerning the custody of children must give priority, not to joint custody, but to women who are primarily responsible for the care of the children. This provides single women with the opportunity of having children outside the control of men; it offers married women an escape from the men who retain control over them as "fathers" to their children; and it is vital for lesbians who are pioneering feminist alternatives in child care and shared mothering.

Abolition of men's rights of access

Present access arrangements are open to widespread abuse by men. They are able to use their greater income and resources to bribe the children, to question them about their mother's activities—and harmfully divide the children's loyalties. They may then use their access visits and the information they have acquired against the mother in court, if and when they wish to fight for custody again. Even when a woman is no longer married to a man, she is always tied to him and the power of the male state through the children.

Positively discriminated, girls-only institutions and organizations

As long as male domination exists, emphasis must be placed on positively discriminating in favour of girls. Because all individual males are part, even if a very junior part, of the male state, girls must be able to grow and work separately from men. This is based not just upon the abuse of men's power in our welfare and education systems, but also upon the fact that men have that power in the first place. At present health, welfare and education organizations prepare children for their "place" in a male dominated society. All must be radically redesigned if they are to prepare children for a society founded on equality.

Opposition to health and welfare policies which encourage men to take over children

Such policies as encouraging men to be present at childbirth make it possible for them to lay early claims to those children, to the exclusion of women. Currently fashionable images of men with children extol fatherhood, while mothers appear the faded background workers. Policies which present fatherhood as essential, and encourage men's "involvement" with children, affirm the power and privileges of men at the same time as they portray women and motherhood as inadequate. These policies are designed to increase the power of men over children, and through them, over women.

Fight for equal pay

Unequal wages assume that a man's earnings financially support a woman and children. The term "support" assumes dependence of women and children upon men. It is one of the ways that men, as part of the fatherhood, justify higher male wages and then ensure women's dependence on men for an income.

The relationship between a man and his sperm does not make him a social father

It is an enormous leap of the imagination to suppose that because men have sperm they have any rights to live as heads of families and to have social and political power over women and children.

Refusal to put a man's name on the birth certificate or to give children a man's name

There is great social pressure on women to indicate paternity of children. This improves men's chances of winning custody from women in courts, if and when they wish to contest it. Greater rights to custody of children for men is gained at the expense of women and children. It is often the fear of losing children which keep women in heterosexual relationships. This fear is well-founded as men increasingly regain controlling rights to children.

Opposition to hierarchical organizations

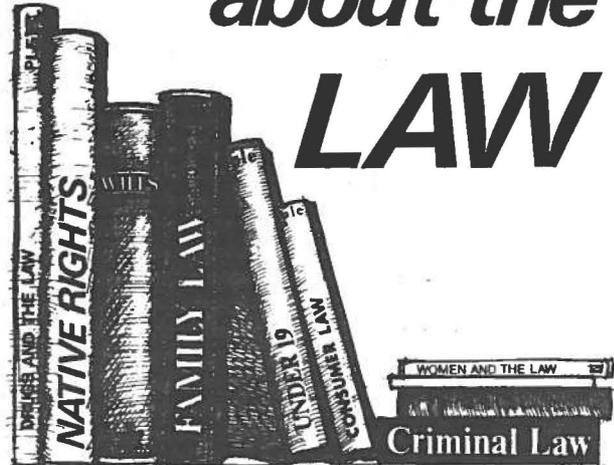
Organizations run as hierarchies, with a father-figure at the head. Competition, particularly between males, is an essential part of their way of working. Within these organizations, men operate as brothers as well as working their way up to senior positions as fathers. The Women's Liberation Movement has challenged this structure and developed non-hierarchical organizations which directly oppose the politics of fatherhood.

Challenging the rights and privileges of men

We need to question fatherhood in every social institution, and radically re-assess the power men hold as fathers. Fatherhood neither stems from, nor is limited to, "the family" at home. Rather, it is the central organizing force of male power.

In the home, men's claims to children must be undermined. In schools and other welfare organizations, girls must be provided with single sex units which positively discriminate in their favour. In employment, inequality in wages, conditions of work, management and unions must be confronted and opposed. The structures which uphold men's rights and privileges to be fathers over females and junior males, and the rights and privileges of all men over women and girls, must be challenged.

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Laura Secord finally seeks recognition

Carol McLeod

Although her name is now synonymous with ice cream and candy, Laura Secord earned her place in Canadian history because of her courage during the War of 1812.

The daughter of an American by the name of Thomas Ingersoll, Laura was born in Massachusetts in 1775. Moving to Ontario in 1795, she married James Secord, a merchant, in 1797 and settled down with him in Queenston.

Her life was uneventful until 1812, when friction between the United States and Great Britain led to the outbreak of war in North America. That October, while James was away on military duty, Americans invaded Queenston, commandeering money and supplies and searching for weapons.

As soldiers neared the Secord house, Laura saved a valuable collection of Spanish dubloons by tossing the coins into a cauldron of boiling water. Later that year she dragged James home from a nearby battlefield where he had been seriously injured in the leg and shoulder.

In June, 1813, Americans again forced their way into the Secord home. This time they ordered Laura to serve them dinner. As the evening progressed, the officers began discussing plans to crush resistance in the area by attacking Beaver Dam, a small British outpost a few miles to the west.

Laura overheard the conversation and realized that Lt. James FitzGibbon, who was in charge at Beaver Dam, must be warned. With her husband still recovering from his wounds, she was

the only one who could make the trip.

Knowing that if she went by road she would be arrested by American patrols, Laura decided to take a circuitous and treacherous 20-mile route through swamps and woods.

The next morning she had only reached her front gate when an American soldier stopped her and asked where she was going. With perfect composure, Laura said she was looking for a cow that had strayed from the barn.

To her surprise, the soldier believed her and let her go. By afternoon she had entered the swamp. Alone, unarmed, and soaked to the skin, she panicked only once — when a pack of wolves began to howl. However, the pack moved on and Laura continued her journey.

As night fell she reached the woods, where she sensed that she was being watched. Running into a clearing, she was surrounded by Indians. With the last of her strength, she told them where she was going and why it was important she get there. The chief, whose sympathies lay with the British, admired Laura's courage and ordered one of his men to take her to FitzGibbon.

An hour later Laura arrived at Bea-



(Photo courtesy of the Ontario Archives)

ver Dam, warned FitzGibbon, then collapsed from exhaustion. FitzGibbon revived her and had her taken to a nearby house to rest. She returned to Queenston the next day — the same day the Americans were ambushed near Beaver Dam by 400 Indians loyal to the British. FitzGibbon accepted the surrender of the American Force,

which outnumbered his by almost nine to one.

When the war ended in 1814, the Americans withdrew from Canada. However, life for the Secords did not resume its former course. James never fully recovered from his wounds and was unable to return to work for many years.

As for Laura, she was reticent for two decades about discussing her part in thwarting the American capture of Beaver Dam. Then, in 1839, at the age of 64, she decided that her efforts merited recognition. Writing to the Canadian government, she requested favourable terms for leasing a ferry at Queenston. The petition was denied. She was also denied a pension when James died in 1841.

Finally Laura presented a document outlining her wartime exploits to Edward, Prince of Wales, when he visited Canada in 1860. The Prince (later King Edward VII) was intrigued by the story and gave Laura a gift of £100. The resulting publicity made Laura a national celebrity. Poems and plays were written about her and historians began documenting her trip to Beaver Dam.

Basking in the new recognition, Laura died in 1868 at the age of 93.

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Troubling dreams vivid reminder of sexual abuse

A letter to my sister-in-law

I'm writing this for you who are finding your memories alone and without support on a military base in Europe. You are not going crazy, despite what my brother says. I know it feels like it, having to live through the pain again, having to suffer what you may have blocked the first time. Take courage you are not alone. I wish I were there to comfort and reassure you.

I had a bad dream this morning. It woke me up at 5:19 am. I'd been fighting my way out of it for a while, or fighting in it. I couldn't go back to sleep so I'm writing this to save the memory.

It started at some kind of women's

conference. You and I were both giving seminars in different rooms. I guess mine was about incest, although I'm not clear on that. I don't know what yours was on.

The seminar I gave went well. I felt good about it. But when I asked for feedback from the participants, I didn't get the response I expected. They said I was just talking surface talk and terms. They criticized my lack of feeling. I got upset, telling them I had pain, I'd felt pain. That was Mom they were talking about. That's how she dealt with it, not me.

The dream shifted - hazy. I was outside in back of the building. I'm aware

of you stumbling over soggy, wet, rolled carpets, but I don't talk to you — I don't even know if we are in the same place. I have the sense of wading through snow, ploughing — wandering and weeping. I'm remembering.

This is where the struggle starts. I'm little, I'm saying "You can't pee in me. You can't pee in me" over and over and over. Fighting (struggling and rocking). I'm not sure if I'm saying it out loud or just thinking it. My genitals are burning sore. This starts to wake me up, it is too real. I can't see his face. I'm not even really aware of him, it is just the struggle.

I wake up scared and exhausted. The burning sensation of my dream continues even after I'm awake. I talk to myself, it's okay, you're safe, he's a long way away. That feels better but not much.

I lie there possessed by the whole thing trying to establish my reality at 5:19 am, Wednesday, in Halifax. It's the first time I've ever remembered the pain. I'm still burning. Will I have to experience it all again?

Greetings!

March 8 International Women's Day

As we celebrate our solidarity with women everywhere!



Alexa McDonough, MLA
Halifax Chebucto
Leader, Nova Scotia NDP



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12 Noon - Lunch, speaker - Maude Barlow

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2:00 pm - Workshops:

Unionizing Women

GST and Free Trade

Funding for Women's Programs

Community Health Projects

7:00 pm - Panel and discussion on discrimination

(sexual orientation, age, race, disability, class)

9:00 pm - Dance

Sunday, April 8 -

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(Photo by Brenda Conroy)

International Women's



History of IWD in Halifax—rich, varied, and “disruptive”

Diann Graham, Nancy Hay, Cathy Mellett, Lynn Murphy, and Carol Putnam

March 8, 1990 will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the celebration of International Women's Day in Halifax. Although short, our history is rich, reflecting the energies and interests of the women—over 200 in all—who have helped organize the event and the changing political and social climate of the Halifax area. The organizers have primarily been women in their 20s and 30s, each participating, on average, for only two years.

As a result, we have had a constant influx of new faces, new ideas, and new energies. Many of these women are now actively involved in various facets of the women's movement as paid workers or volunteers, utilizing the organizational and leadership skills they learned when working on IWD committees.

Despite the ad hoc nature of the committees, new leaders have always emerged, enabling our celebrations to continue and grow each year.

The first IWD celebration in 1975 was organized primarily by the women of the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary group “In Struggle.” The event consisted of an evening at Veith House and included a play on women and work.

These beginnings reflect the historical roots of IWD which are inseparably linked with the struggles of women in the trade union movement. The women of “In Struggle” continued to be instrumental in organizing IWD events for the next four years.

From 1978 to 1983, IWD was organized and centered at A Women's Place, a Halifax women's centre which has subsequently closed. During this period we saw a shift in emphasis from trade unionist issues to other feminist concerns such as violence against women, pay equity, and poverty.

Some specific events come to mind. In 1983, a wreath was laid in Grand Parade in memory of a prostitute who was murdered on South Street on March 8 of the previous year.

In 1982 our focus was on housing issues, that year being the middle of Halifax's housing crisis. During the march we drew attention to the need for shelters for homeless women. We took direct actions in the form of pickets and sit-ins against rental agencies known to discriminate on the basis of source of income, and we lobbied the human rights commissions.

By 1983 we saw another change in the character of IWD. With its growing popularity and acceptance, specific groups such as those inside trade unions and universities (Patchwork, for example) began to develop programs to suit their special needs.

It became impossible for the central committee to function as the sole organizer of events which were now taking place throughout the week of March 8. Instead, we took on the task of gathering and publicizing information on the various happenings while continuing to organize the march and other special events.

IWD has also been a time to celebrate women's culture. We have had variety shows, displays of paintings, photography and architectural drawings, and an on-location videotaping of a segment of the “Women of the Arts” cablevision show. In 1982, a variety show held at NSCAD was the first to have full interpretation for the hearing-impaired.

As we look back through the years, we are aware of several recurring issues. One of these which has resulted in many heated debates, concerns the involvement of men. Two points of view have been put forth. On one side there is the belief that men should be included in order for them to show solidarity and support. Along with this there has been the recognition that some women

would not attend events if their male friends were excluded.

The opposing view is that all events should be for women only, thereby encouraging the involvement of women who feel uncomfortable with men being included. This view also asserts the rights of women to be independent of male control. As a result of these debates, men have sometimes been welcomed at marches, but never at workshops or dances.

Another recurring issue has been lesbianism. Lesbians have been active in organizing IWD events, but in doing so have remained relatively invisible. Sometimes this has been by choice, but at other times it has come from a lack of acceptance.

For example, when the dance was held at the YWCA in 1978, objections were raised over lesbians dancing together, so this event was moved to the Turret, Halifax's gay club at the time. On other occasions, lesbianism has been a focus of attention.

In 1985, lesbian organizers made signs protesting the expulsion of six women from the Canadian armed forces base at Shelburne for being lesbians. On the day of the march, many women, both straight and lesbian, carried signs in support of the Shelburne women.

Marches have been a part of the IWD celebrations since 1978. We have

been blessed with everything from bright warm conditions creating jovial, celebratory spirits (1989) to snow, very cold temperatures or freezing rain (several years) when only “mad dogs would come out.” But still we marched.

Several marches have had a unique flavour. As we gathered at Victoria Park in 1980, a police officer informed us that without a permit we had to stay on the sidewalk, to which we replied, “but we always march on the street.” After several minutes of conversation, one woman grabbed a poster and started off down the middle of Spring Garden Road, with everyone following.

The march ended up at the law courts, where the same police officer approached the woman asking her name. A large group of women encircled him, asking why he wanted to know. Finally he closed his notebook and left. The next year we were initially denied a permit to march because of this “disruptive behaviour.” We had to persuade alderwoman Debbie Grant to intervene with the police department and get the permit for us.

In 1986, about 25 anti-choice men and women, with banners in hand, decided to crash the march. There was much confusion until some of the old-time lesbian organizers stood up with the megaphone and shouted, “We're here to celebrate a woman's right to choose. Never again will you control our bodies, so let's get going.” They positioned themselves between the marchers and the anti-choice forces. A very rowdy march followed with a lot of spirited chants. At the end, a little shoving and a lot of confrontation were required to keep the anti-choice forces out of the workshops.

Although we have seen IWD grow and change over the years, organizing committees have been primarily white women, thereby limiting our focus. As we head into the 90s, we are attempting to address the issues of race and accessibility for the disabled.

We believe that in order to relate to the struggles and celebrations of all women, women of colour, disabled women, and other excluded groups must become involved as members of the central committee and as organizers of specific events.

With our eyes focused ahead, we look forward to what lies in store. But, at the same time, we are constantly reminded of the one aspect of IWD that never changes — “Oh god, the meetings, the dreadful meetings.”



(Photo by Bernadette Sullivan)

Woman with many...

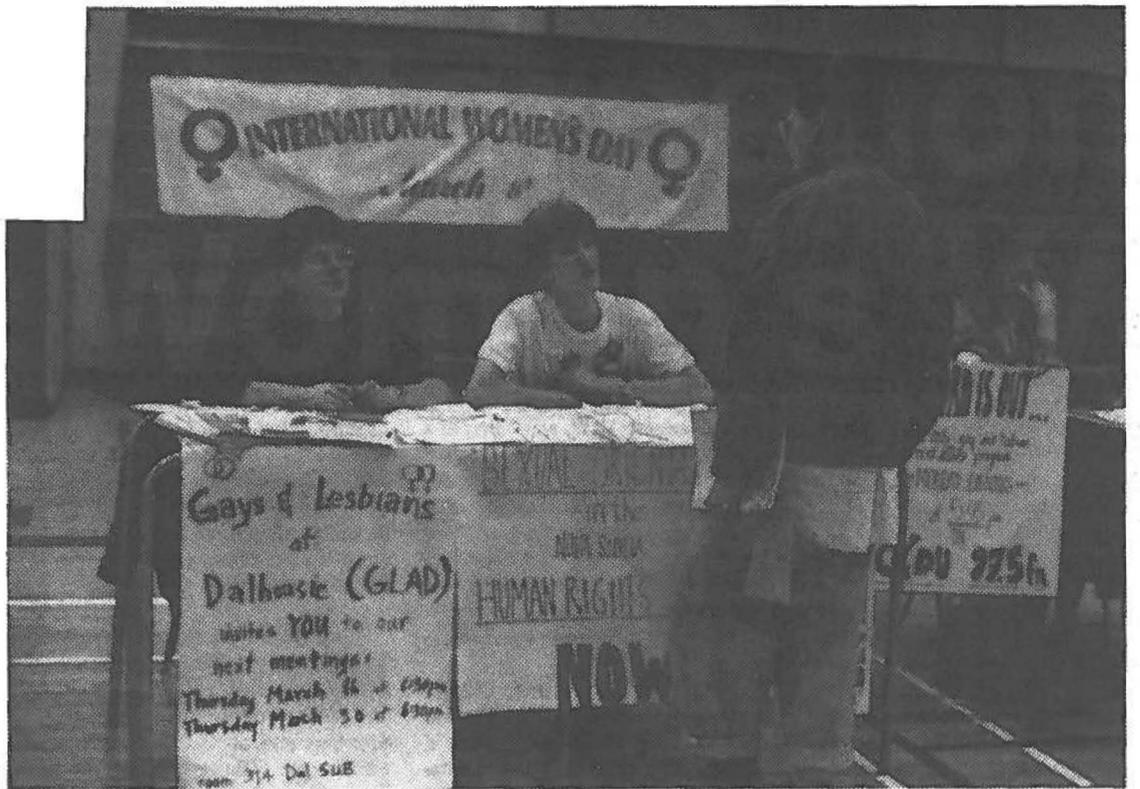
I am a woman with many sisters
Nisha, Pushpa, Nancy
Andrea, Elisabeth, Marie
Meg, Paula, Carlyle
You have taught me well
the wisdom
held in your hearts
the knowledge of your eyes
the light of your thinking.
I have been formed through
Your influential laughter.
Your agonizing irony.
Your hot tears and dry pain
I am all of you.
Here you have existence that
nize.
The thought that passed by
It was you protesting to
be heard quietly in a group
of men-friends, now loudly
in the ache of all women.
Sisters of the womb and of the
Caught yet freed by that birth
Overpowered and powerful
We will never control that
We shed our blood, sweat and
We pass our life out and share
Selfish to want our love-ship
Too much water can not drop
Too much fire can not make
So much hurting will break
You choose to heal me together
Sisters I can not leave with
Parts of me
through parts of you
The movement of all
women surfacing, wiggling
Struggling and shifting the
I've always dreamed of a big
But I would not bear them all
You are no burden.
Sister of a sister. Woman
of a woman. I am woman.
I am, a woman. Word-Painful
And more than this
I am a woman with many sisters

—Heather MacMillan,
February, 89

International Women's Week



(Photo by Beth Joudrey)



(Photo by Anita Martinez)



I.W.W. events of interest to women

International Women's Day, 1990, approaches, and still the struggle continues. As we enter a new decade, we as women struggle with poverty, against racism, against heterosexism, against sexual harassment, against violence, and against many other forms of social injustice. While International Women's Day (IWD) is a time to celebrate our accomplishments as women, it is also a time to make connections and increase our awareness and understanding of the social injustices women suffer. Some of these struggles take place in our homes, others in the workplace, others when we come into contact with traditional institutions.

In order to address some of these issues, the IWD committee has organized a Fair where various women's groups can participate. The Fair will include information booths set up by women's organizations, as well as workshops to take place on Saturday, March 10 at Bloomfield School (corner of Almon and Agricola streets.)

The workshops run from 9:30 am to noon. They include SSAV on sexual assault; a look at women's image in the media; Christina Inzunia on immigrant women's issues; and a fourth workshop on legal equality for women and the Charter of Rights.

The IWD March begins at 12:30 pm at the Bloomfield School. The opening speaker for the March is Maxine Tynes. The IWD Fair, also at Bloomfield School, runs from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. Childcare will be provided.

Other events taking place around International Women's Day include:

March 3: 8 pm. Coffee House hosted by Pandora at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street.

March 5-9: 12-1pm daily meet outside the Law Courts on Spring Garden Road (across from library) to rally support for Henry Morgentaler during his trial.

March 5-9: Open house at Advisory Council on Status of Women, 8:30-4:30 pm

March 5: 7:30 pm, Isabel Shay speaking on Native women's issues at the Public Archives building (corner of Robie and University)

March 6: 7-9 pm, Women's spirituality night. AV room, St. Patrick's Alexandra School, 2277 Maitland St.

March 7: The National Film Board Theatre is showing three

films: 7 pm: Half the Kingdom; 8:15: Goddess Remembered; 9:30: Older, Stronger, Wiser.

March 8: International Women's Day

• 11:30 am - 12:30 pm: Cynthia Enloe speaks on "Effects of militarization on women" at Dalhousie Law Building.

• 12-2 pm: NSCAD presents films: Abortion for Survival; Speak Body. Information display on women's issues and organizations.

• 12 pm: Mt St Vincent University: pub luncheon at Vinnie's Pub (\$5) Proceeds to Bryony House

• 1:30 pm, Shirley Sharzer talks about the training of young reporters and how they serve the public. Haliburton Room, University of King's College, 6350 Coburg Rd.

• 3-5 pm: National Film Board Theatre: Goddess Remembered; Mother and Daughter on Abortion; To a Safer Place; Black Mother, Black Daughter.

• 7 pm: Film at Bell auditorium, NSCAD: Naked Spaces.

• 9 pm: Rumours Club, 2112 Gottingen St, presents a Variety Night.

March 10: IWD Fair at Bloomfield School.

• 9 am breakfast.

• 9:30 - 12: workshops on women's issues.

• 12:30 pm: IWD March from Bloomfield School.

• 1:30-3:30 pm: Information displays from women's organizations.

• 9 pm: Women's Dance at Veith House, 3115 Veith Street.

• Opening of Third Annual Women's Show at Other Art, 2094 Gottingen St., Works will be on display from March 6 to 31.

March 12: 7:30pm: Counting Women's Unremunerated Work, Auditorium, 4th floor, Seton Academic Centre, Mount Saint Vincent University

March 13-31: Eye Level Gallery, 2182 Gottingen St, two women artists: Lesley Sampson "X" and Janice Carbert "DWELLing"

March 14: 8:30 pm: Centre for Art Tapes: films and videos by women at Rumours. Night Visions; Hair Piece: A Film for Nappy-Headed People; International Sweethearts of Rhythm; Just Because of Who We Are

March 15: 1:30 pm: Gillian Steward speak about the changing role of women in the media. Haliburton Room, University of King's College.

Landmark case rules women-only groups can promote equality by empowering women

Suellen Murray

"Sisters, if you want to get together to discuss women's issues, beware of letting men into your group, lest you find them defining your agenda and your problems, and then proceeding to 'solve' them for you."

From an editorial in Pandora, March 1988 (Brenda Conroy).

Pandora, a magazine produced "by, for and about women," is one of many organizations which has chosen to create a women-positive environment by opening its membership to women only.

The origin of most women-only organizations was necessity; men's activities dominated the mainstream, and women were excluded or relegated to the sidelines. In the past ten years, women have successfully challenged men-only organizations, clubs, and activities, using constitutional protections and human rights legislation. The victories have provided women with access to power and opportunities which were for centuries the dominion of men, but with these successes have come an increased danger to the membership policies of organizations for women only.

Consider...

In March 1988, the organizers of the International Women's Week at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax scheduled a women-only pub night at the university pub. After protests from students, the University Student Council refused to allow the

event to proceed, as a Student Union by-law prohibited any activity which discriminated against students based on sex. (The by-law was passed due to opposition to an all-male event scheduled to be held at the pub several years before.)

In February 1989, a member of a men's rights group called "In Search of Justice" filed a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission after he was refused a place in a self-defence class sponsored by the Wen-Do Women's Self-Defence Corporation. The case has gone through investigation, and a Board of Inquiry decision is pending.

On August 16, 1989, the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled that the Ontario Teachers' Federation could maintain by-laws which provided for a mandatory separate teachers' union for women. The case, launched by teacher Margaret Tomen and the predominantly male Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation, could have signalled the end of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, had Tomen's application succeeded.

Many of the challenges to women-only groups may be linked to the recent victories in Canada and the United States, where women gained membership to all-male organizations (most notably the Rotary Club and the United States Jaycees.) Others, like the Tomen case, are instigated by women who feel stymied by any gender segregation,

and who believe that advances in equality include the opportunity to join, or not join, an organization of choice.

As women and men, legislators, and judges, continue to define equality, all single-sex activities will come under scrutiny. The hard questions will be asked: Are women-only activities still necessary for equality, and if they are, can they be protected? Will there be times when a mixed-sex environment is more productive? Is it fair to include only women in feminism?

Why Women Only?

There are three reasons commonly

advanced to support women-only activities and organizations. The first is the pattern of male dominance in mixed-sex activities in particular, dominance of discus-

sion. Dale Spender's extensive research on language and discussion patterns (published in *Man Made Language*) indicates that men dominate conversation and discussion in mixed-sex environments by defining the topic, and by interrupting women participants. In reports prepared in 1982 and 1984 for the Association of America Colleges' Project on the Status and Education of Women, the devaluation of women's contributions in class and of male dominance of classroom discussion were cited as factors which can hamper women's success in mixed-sex educational settings.

Control of agenda-setting is a second reason why women continue to organize along single-sex lines. The experience of mixed-sex environments has often been the experience of an agenda dominated by male priorities and male experience, confined to a structure created chiefly by men. The experience, interests, and priorities of women have been ignored, or, when included, marginalized as a "special interest" or an extra. When women are the dominant force in an organization, they set the agenda, and their priorities become the priorities of the group. If equality were already a reality, then daycare, pay equity, contraception, and

sexual assault would be "people issues," not "women's issues." For now, if these issues are to be on any agenda, it will be women who initiate their inclusion.

The third reason for support of single-sex activities is the need for female role models for young girls and women, as single-sex environments are often among the few to promote women consistently in leadership roles. For example, the Girl Guides of Canada restrict their leadership roles to women only, while the Boy Scout movement permits women to have adult Scout roles.

In political parties, professional

the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that not only was difference in treatment not always discrimination, but that identical treatment of person in unequal positions may lead to inequality. In their judgement, the Court defined discrimination:

"I would say then that discrimination may be described as a distinction, whether intentional or not, but based on grounds relating to personal characteristics of the individual or group, which has the effect of imposing burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on such individual or group not imposed on others, or which withholds or limits access to opportunities, benefits, and advantages to other members of society."

The Andrews decision bodes well for women-only activities which have as their purpose the empowering of

women. With the emphasis on the effect of actions—in both equality and discrimination—women-only groups will probably not fall to a challenge simply because they are not open to men. It would seem that the membership policy would have to discriminate against men, having the effect of withholding access to opportunities, benefits, and advantages.

Other avenues open to women include provisions in the Charter and human rights codes which protect affirmative or ameliorative action (i.e. Charter s. 15(2)) or provincial human rights provisions which protect restricted membership in order to promote "sameness" in an organization. However, in Nova Scotia, the latter is only available for ethnic or religious organizations.

When considering their policies, some groups may decide to offer their membership to all people who share a common goal and promote their objectives. Many have moved in that direction already, including the National Association of Women and the Law, which is open to "all persons who support the objectives of NAWL." Others, like the Dalhousie caucus of Women and the Law, will allow their policies to evolve as the members' objectives change. In 1989, the caucus voted for open membership, stating that "the admission of men, rather than being a threat to the congeniality of the group, is an opportunity for optimism: 'We're getting through!'"

Unfortunately, while some groups may act of their own volition to consider their membership policy, others may be forced into the position by a legal challenge charging that any single-sex activity is discrimination. In the face of such challenges, women-only organizations have begun to ask the hard questions about the route to equality, and continue to work for the right to define their own individual answers.

If equality were already a reality, then daycare, pay equity, contraception and sexual assault would be "people issues," not "women's issues."

organizations, media, and university groups, many women have decided that women-only groups are more productive and more enjoyable. The remaining question is whether such groups will be able to protect their principles.

The Future for "Women Only"

In 1988, when Mount Saint Vincent University was making its decision on the women-only pub night, a public forum was held to work through the issues. Halifax lawyer Mary Clancy (now the Member of Parliament for Halifax) and Dalhousie constitutional law expert A. Wayne MacKay, spoke to the students about single-sex activities. In newspaper reports, Clancy emphasized both the importance of empowering women and the role that single-sex activities could play, stating that "every movement needs time alone, by itself, to gain strength." MacKay indicated that women-only activities were consistent with theories of equality, and pointed out that equality doesn't necessarily mean equal treatment.

The landmark equality case Andrews vs. The Law Society of British Columbia (February 1989) entrenched this perspective as the law. In the case,

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Veith House

Custody battle reflects classic power struggle

S.V.

In 1988 after nine years of marriage, I left my husband for a woman. The process of coming to terms with my lesbianism, of terminating my relationship with my husband and entering into a new relationship and a different lifestyle was very difficult, but the most painful process I have experienced as a result of leaving my marriage was the custody battle for my two children.

Upon leaving the marriage, my husband and I reached an amicable decision whereby the children would spend a week with me and the following week with their father. As time progressed, my husband and I realized that we would have to make a legal arrangement concerning custody of the children. It was then that my husband filed for sole custody against my joint custody suggestion.

Fearing that my lesbianism would influence the children in a negative way, and coping with the humiliation of losing me to a woman, my husband was adamant about not losing "his children" as well. Driven by his bruised ego and supported by our homophobic families, he initiated the battle for custody, determined to "win" at all costs.

As a result, I was forced into a battle that I did not want to fight. I do not believe that children are objects to be possessed, nor did I feel that I had a right to own them. I believe it was in the best interest of the children to maintain an arrangement which would enable them to continue to experience the love and nurturing that both their father and I could give them. My husband, however, had a different point of view. He believed that he was the better parent. He had the well-paying job and the comfortable home. He believed that he alone could provide an environment to raise the children "normally," since he had better moral values and wasn't "sick" like me.

It was difficult to hear my husband's arguments, to fight over who was the better parent. This wasn't the issue for me. I was concerned about what was best for the children, but for my husband custody became a game in which he could exert his power and authority and win what he felt was his right in the first place. Unfortunately, however, nobody wins in the custody battle — least of all the children. I realized that this battle was tearing the children apart. They were caught between parents they loved. Ultimately I had to decide if I would challenge my husband's petition in court, and I agonized over what to do. I realized that a psychological assessment might be helpful in making the decision, and as a result the whole family was tested.

Based on that assessment, it was acknowledged that my husband could financially provide a better lifestyle for the children since I couldn't compete with his salary. I couldn't offer them the luxury of a big home, the cottage at the lake, and the lavish gifts that privilege affords. It angered me to realize that money was an important factor in determining which parent should be granted custody, since by virtue of being a woman I would have less to offer than my husband.

Another factor to be considered was the contact the children would have with our families. Since I had acknowledged my lesbianism, I experienced strained relationships with my family, and my husband argued that the children would suffer because I would not allow them access to the family members who could no longer accept me because of my lesbianism.

The assessment also pointed out that I needed to take some time to rebuild my own life and that the best place for the children to be was with their father.

Some of these points made sense to me, but I really felt that I had no real

choice in the matter. I felt my husband would retain custody just by virtue of what he had to offer materially, and in light of his so called "stability" verses my "instability." Weighing all these things, I decided to allow my husband to retain sole custody of the children and provisions were made to guarantee me very liberal access to the children. Secure in that knowledge, I decided to take some time to rebuild my life and gain a renewed sense of myself. I left my home and job in New Brunswick and moved to Halifax with my partner to re-establish my life.

During the months that followed, I had numerous visits with my children, but arranging access and maintaining an ongoing presence in their lives was hindered by my husband. It seemed that "winning custody" was not enough for him. His custodial status became a position of power from which he continually tried to abuse me. I was being punished for leaving him, and the children became the instruments he used to bring me pain.

My husband made it clear on many occasions that I no longer had any say in the children's upbringing and I was only allowed to see them when he decided. He also made it clear that if it hadn't been for the courts' decision to grant me liberal access, he would have me out of their lives altogether. Along with this attitude, my husband continually put me down in front of the children and tried to draw the children into the middle of our arguments over custody and visitation rights.

Watching the children suffer in the midst of this continuing battle, and realizing that this flagrant abuse of power by my husband was causing me to be shut out of my children's lives and that this was detrimental to their well being, I decided that the only possible solution was to re-examine our custodial agreement through our legal counsel.

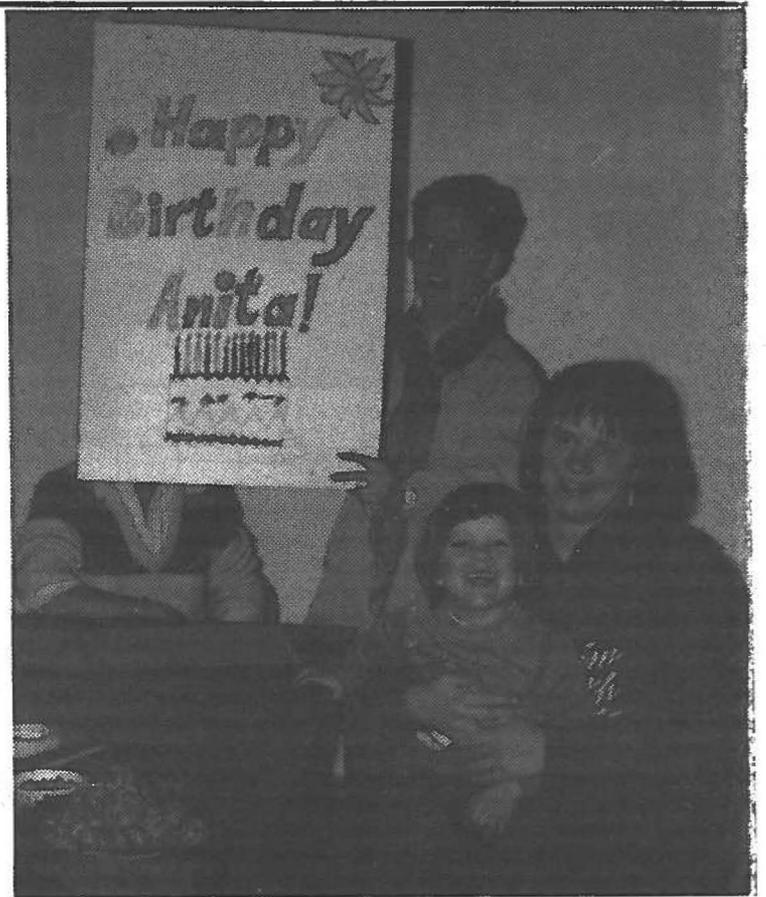
As a result, my counsel made it quite clear to my husband that custody at no time should be used as a tool to exert power over someone or to extract revenge for a bruised ego. Custody is granted so that the best interests of the children can be ensured, and liberal access of the non-custodial parent is a right, not a privilege, which ensures the best interests of the children.

Through this process, my husband came to realize that custody is never written in stone. His power and authority were questioned through my legal action, and the legal system made it clear to him that his abuse of power was not going to be tolerated and could result in a new custodial agreement.

Since addressing this power issue concerning custody, I and my husband (now my ex) have been experiencing an easier communication and interaction as he struggles to accept that we are equal parents together.

My ex-husband once commented, "I'd cut off my right arm for my children. What would you do?" My answer is, "I would stand as a whole person, willing to ensure the best interests of my children by questioning abusive powers and mindsets that dominate."

I have learned some valuable lessons throughout this process and I have been empowered to be a better Mom with less guilt and more freedom as I stand with integrity and love my children.



(Photo by Debbie Mathers)

Everyone helped to make Anita a huge birthday card. Margot Pierce, in back, and Brenda Conroy and son, Galen, hold it up for all to see.

Everyone had fun at Anita's fiftieth birthday party



Galen Conroy and Simon Manzer line up to get their piece of cake from Anita. The camera-shaped cake, made by Nadine McNamara, represents one of Anita's main pastimes. (Photo by Debbie Mathers)



Jan Morrell, Anne Bishop, and others share the good news when Audrey McLaughlin was elected leader of the NDP.

(Photo by Debbie Mathers)



Verona Singer dances up a storm at the end of the evening. She and several others celebrated until the wee hours of the morning.

(Photo by Beth Joudrey)

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Feminitions: fun for women

Women Only Conference creates fantasy list to heal our anger

Diane Gullbault

Violence against women occurs every day in our society. This reminder was on the poster of the Women Only Conference. The day-long conference was held at Veith House on January 27th.

For those of us who attended the countless vigils and services for the 14 women massacred in Montreal, this conference was an opportunity to move beyond grief to anger. The massacre reminded all women how vulnerable we are to attack in this misogynist world. We experienced shock, grief, fear and then anger and outrage. It was anger which still hadn't found an outlet.

All the women who attended spoke personally of violence against women in its many forms: incest, child sexual assault, rape, battering, sexual harassment.

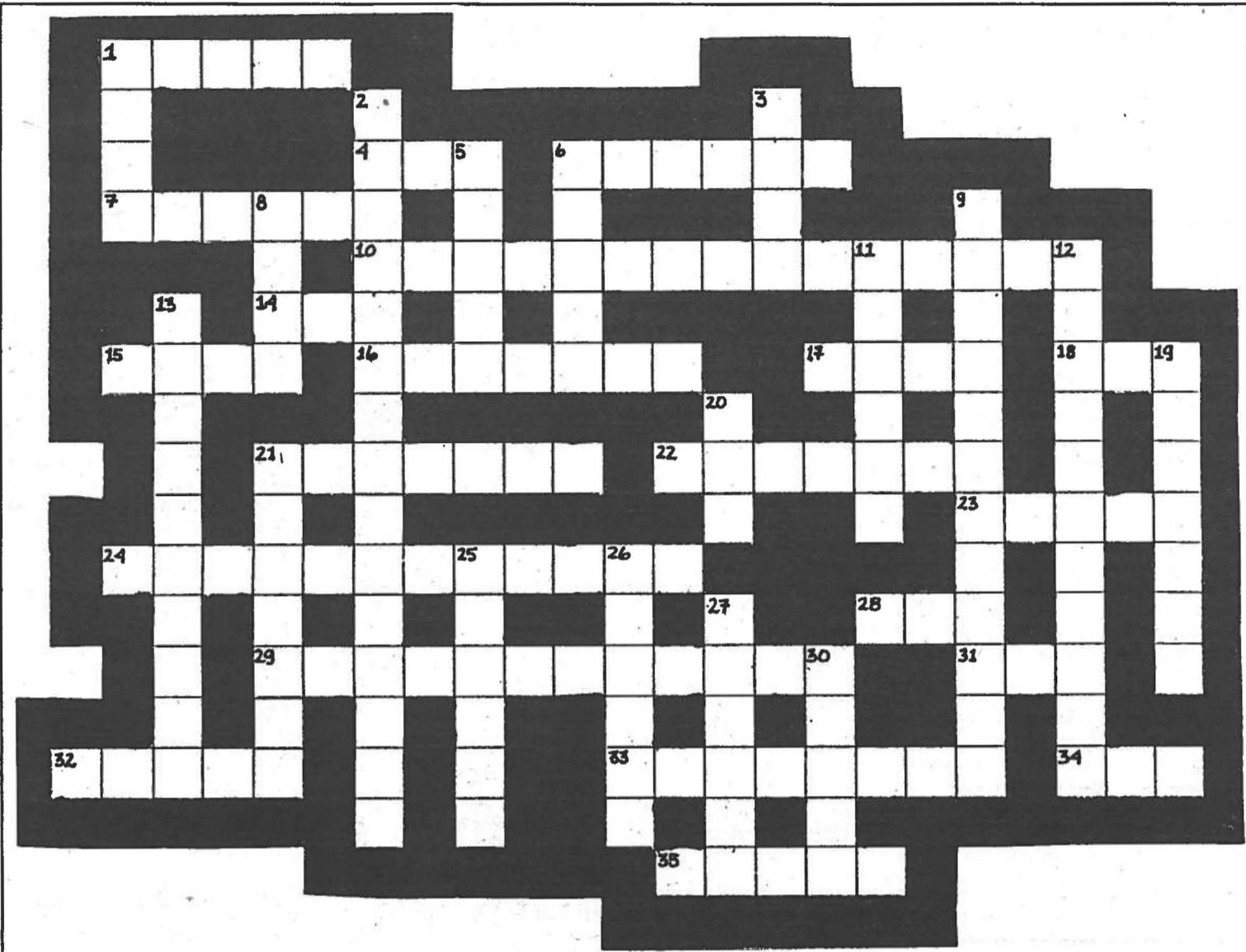
Although the morning session was meant to vent our anger and share our stories, the anger increased and we decided we needed strategies to deal with male violence.

The afternoon session was a brainstorming/fantasy "what I'd like to do to men." We made our lists and talked about strategies and solutions (see list at end of article.)

Some of the women who organized the conference would like to see more events like this one where we can "continue the process" and add to the strategies. Violence against women will end when women-hating stops and women are respected.

Brainstorming/fantasy list:

- Write about the anger/the incident in a) your journal, b) a letter to the abuser and/or c) letter to the parents or family of the abuser.
- Publish the name, address, description etc. of rapists, batterers, pimps, johns and distribute them as flyers.
- Spray paint their cars, houses etc.
- Talk about the abuse in schools throughout the educational system.
- Confrontation (confront your abuser with a group of women).
- Form women's support groups
- Respond to misogynist incidents through group campaigns or collective letter writing.
- Make harassing phone calls.
- Create safe spaces for women.
- Take a self-defence course.
- Castration
- Make December 6th an annual day of commemoration.
- Perform women's music and popular theatre.
- Revive the feminist party of Canada.



In this issue we have two puzzles of interest to women. We ask readers to try their hand in completing them. Send both entries to us and we will look through them to see if anyone has completed both correctly. If so, we will put them in a box and draw one to receive our prize: one of our new Pandora T-shirts. Send your entries to Pandora, Box 1209 North, Halifax, N.S. B3K 5H4 by April 30, 1990. © Dian Day.

- ACROSS**
- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. Witchcraft "religion" | 10. Lesbian and Gay Pride Day slogan 1987 (2 words) | 17. Academic womyn's sock colour | 2. Right-wing anti-choice group |
| 4. Medical catch-all condition for women | 14. Item in ashes | 18. Chauvinist | 3. Opposite of feminist (abbr) |
| 6. Meridian author | 15. <i>Gyn/Ecology</i> author | 21. Is not destiny | 5. Polish feminist group |
| 7. What feminist mothers don't buy | 16. Simone de Beauvoir | 22. Dinner Plate artist | 6. Wise woman or healer (past) |
| | | 23. Rape: Intercourse by | 8. The result of 29 across |
| | | 24. Tactic of early suffragettes (2 words) | 9. Spender's herstory book (3 words) |
| | | 28. Radical N.Y. group sock colour | 11. Alternative name for Athena, Goddess of wisdom |
| | | 29. Method by which independent womyn attempt pregnancy | 12. Controversial birth control dumped in Third World (2 words) |
| | | 31. Foremother of feminists? | 13. Family of suffragettes |
| | | 32. Symbol of wartime working women | 19. Female energy |
| | | 33. Traditional women | 20. Originally Old English "Heo" |
| | | 34. O'Keefe's expression | 21. 12th century "sister" |
| | | 35. <i>The Female Eunich</i> author | 25. One cause of toxic shock |

- DOWN**
- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. ___-envy (what men suffer) | 27. Womyn's kinship word (present) |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|

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about ♀ lesbian ♀

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Morgentaler's trial
♀♀♀♀♀♀

From victim to survivor...how can we change?

Conference focuses on surviving society's violence

Wendy Annand

The police try to describe a witness who was appalled by the callous behaviour and lack of positive action by citizens who witnessed a sexual assault.

A judge calls the actions of a child victim of sexual assault "provocative" — a child too young to know the meaning of the word and too young to have learned such behaviour through anything but sexual abuse by an adult.

A rape victim looking for justice and protection by the laws of our "civilized" society finds instead a confusing and impersonal maze through which she must grope her way largely unaided and unsupported.

A woman approaches a medical practitioner for very real physical symptoms and is issued unnecessary tranquilizers or, even worse, is sexually abused by the person to whom she turned for help.

Fourteen students in Montreal are massacred because they are women.

□ □ □

Women throughout this country are living in fear because of the violence that surrounds us or in pain because of the violence they have already endured. How do we learn to strike a balance between necessary caution based on a healthy fear and the kind of gut-wrenching fear that hits when a friend is raped, when our houses are broken into, or when we learn of a tragedy like the Montreal massacre?

How do we avoid being overwhelmed by our anger and our rage, which grow from this fear?

It's a good time to get together to talk, to cry, to rage, to share, and to support each other in our struggles around the issue of violence, both personally and politically.

Women are tired of being victims: of personal violence, of systemic injustice, of a justice system that is neither just nor a system, and of a political system that does not address our needs. Many women have gone beyond the role of victim and can truly be called survivors. These women have taken what life has dealt them and gone from being victims to being victorious.

Victim: One who suffers some injury, hardship or loss, is badly treated or taken advantage of.

Survivor: One who continues to live after the end or cessation of some thing or condition or the occurrence of some event.

There are those who think "survivor" is not a strong enough term. Is it not miracle enough that some women live on after the traumas they have endured? Is it not enough that any of us grow up with a healthy sense of our selves in this society which discriminates against us at every turn? Is it not cause to celebrate when a woman who has been physically and emotionally battered not only regains control of her own life but tries to help other abused women find their way?

Let us embrace the term "survivor"

and be proud to be called such. As the movie *Steel Magnolias* reminds us, "That which does not kill us makes us stronger." We need to learn how the survivors use their strength in their own struggles and how they then become activists, helping those who need a boost of energy to make changes in their lives.

We also need to believe that society can and will change for the benefit of all of us. Surely political events throughout the world over the past few months should dispel the belief that nothing will ever change. It obviously can and will if enough of us have a vision of the kind of world we want.

Undoubtedly, you have lots of thoughts on these issues. Well, the Women's Health Education Network (WHEN) is going to give you a forum for airing your opinions, for learning from others, and for focussing your own ideas on where to go from here. May 4-6 (Friday evening to noon Sunday) will see the 11th Annual WHEN Conference held at the Agricultural College in Truro. For those of you who have attended WHEN conferences in the past, you'll probably have pleasant memories of the workshops, the social times, and the friendships renewed and developed.

This year's conference is called "Burning Times/Surviving Society's Violence." We are very fortunate in having the National Film Board premiere of *Burning Times* as well as a showing of *Goddess Remembered*, two womanspirit films, with the director Donna Reid in attendance.

We're very pleased to have Jane (Stafford) Hurshman speak on her experience as a survivor. Saturday will also see some powerful workshops on topics such as: Surviving Childhood Sexual Abuse; Native Issues; Sexism Within Traditional Medicine; Economic Violence—Fighting for Pay Equity; Environmental Violence; Sexual Harassment; Choice—Should it be Legislated?; Sexual Assault from a Victim's Perspective; Racism; Historical Background of Incest; Economic Justice for Women; How the Media

Portrays Women; Women and Addiction; One Church's Response to Violence Against Women; Battering—Beyond Emergency Shelters; Inter-Connectedness of all Forms of Violence; Elder Abuse; Lesbian Culture/Social Oppression. As you can see, we hope to look at many forms of violence, not simply the physical and sexual violence that so quickly comes to mind.

You may have noticed that these are heavy issues which may well stir up some strong emotions in the participants. Recognizing this, we have arranged for on-the-spot assistance for those dealing with some of their own pain. A counselling room is being organized, hopefully staffed by volunteers from women's centres and transition houses, and a healing room of alternative practitioners is being set up for those who would like physical, spiritual or psychic assistance. And, as always, there will be lots of caring people around when you just want to talk about the things that are going on. We must not forget that the Annual General Meeting has to be squeezed in on Saturday, as well as entertainment,

laughter and dancing!

Sunday will be devoted to those things which give us the strength we need to be ourselves: a Womanspirit service, healing workshops such as Yoga, massage, dance, a hike, a psychic workshop, a Native workshop, and a description of how to start self-help groups. The National Film Board is also bringing in Debra Fleming, the creator of a series of stained glass panels, one of which will be the logo for *Burning Times* and for our conference. The artist will describe the symbolism of her panels for us and the colours will grace our joint events on Sunday.

As with any conference, its success depends upon the participants. We have tried, however, to hedge our bets by having some wonderful facilitators, speakers, and entertainers. Please come and join us and make this a truly memorable event.

For further information, call Darlah Purdy at 649-2685, Dianne Crowell at 643-2344, Janet Campbell at 895-0444, or Wendy Annand at 275-5554. Also look for the WHEN pamphlets and posters and pass on the word.

Dream journey entices, intrigues

Shelley Casmev

I awake. I listen with determined intent to the night sounds on the other side of my open window. The wind, a soft but whistling threat; the occasional passing car, tires crunching on a fresh snow; and I remember the dream which rented space in my sleepy head just a few short minutes ago.

I'm conducting a train, bound quickly for a place with which I am not familiar. The scenery I view is vivid and beautiful. I pass inconspicuously through tiny rural towns, villages of warm, humid summers 100 years ago,

a time when the church stood proudly as the physical and spiritual centre of life, a time when elders and puppy dogs would shuffle slowly down a dusty trail of dirt that someone called a road. They bask in the brilliant sunlight.

They are in no hurry. I feel they don't understand the concept of time—they can't be a slave to something that does not exist. I am so calm. I wish to remain here forever in my gorgeous hamlet, but my train runs and is picking up speed.

Children are tobogganing on the tracks. It is now winter and I am afraid. My pulse quickens as the possibility of hitting these kids enters my racing mind. They are so close. But I don't hit them. I sound my deafening horn. They turn slowly to acknowledge me and veer off the track. They are not hurt and my breathing takes on a calmer rhythm.

My ride continues. I am looking out the window, down hundreds of feet into a rocky ice-covered chasm that shelters what deceptively looks like a harmless, trickling stream. I know I have been on this route before and the fears of long ago, of a time in childhood, perhaps, linger hazily in the back of my pensive mind.

But as I look down into the majestic ravine, my fear dissipates and I am filled with a powerful sense of wonderment and awe. My hands are covered with a sheen of cool perspiration, not the sweat of nervousness and confusion but of appreciation and anticipation of my journey.

I must leave now; this place of supreme natural force will become for me a memory. I guide my train a little more slowly and carefully down the track.

I do not know where my final destination will be—I do not wish to know. But I will view everything on my journey with equal energy. I will be thankful for the mystery. Now my eyes are open.

I am awakening.

The Centre for Art Tapes celebrates International Women's Day with films/videotapes by women

Just Because of Who We Are—Heramedia Collective

Night Visions—Marusia Bociurkiw

Hair Piece: A Film for Nappy-Headed People—Ayoka Chenzira

International Sweethearts of Rhythm—Greta Schiller & Andrea Weiss

March 14, 8:30 pm, at Rumours, 2112 Gottingen St, Halifax

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Holly Near signs autographs after a recent concert. (Photo by Nadine McNamara)

Holly Near concert delights audience

Stielley Casmev

On February 7, I attended a concert at Seton Academic Centre at Mount Saint Vincent. The musicians were Holly Near, Ronnie Gilbert, and their pianist, John Bucchino.

Now, I must be honest and tell you that I wasn't totally struck on the idea of going. It had only been two weeks before that I had been exposed to the music of these people. Frankly, at the time, I thought the music too-low key and boring. Quite critical, perhaps, but take into account my years of bopping to pulsing male, macho rhythms. Macho, straight, rhythms.

So, against my better judgement, or so I thought, I decided to attend. I have never been so pleased and satisfied with being proved catastrophically wrong. I loved it. I loved them. The energy level was tremendous and the voices, oh, the voices. I truly felt privileged to be a part of the grand, perfect scene, and in my heart I knew that angels were singing to me.

I was awestruck by the harmony produced through these three artists, especially Ronnie and Holly. Both have very different and powerful voices. When they join in song they gave the audience the illusion of one perfect voice.

The pianist was excellent. The music wasn't simply being played — it was an extension of his soul through his fingers.

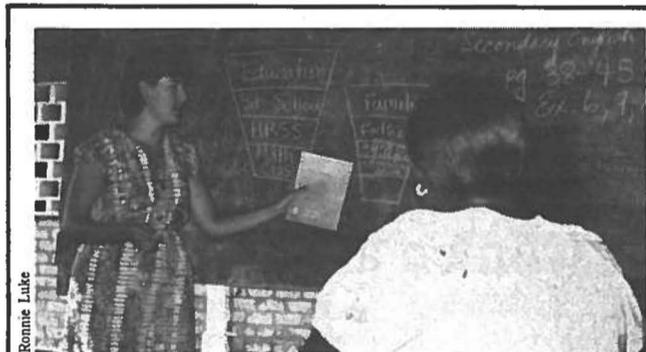
The only drawback of the entire affair was the lack of publicity. Seton Centre was less than half full, and though that did contribute to a more intimate feeling, I feel sad that so many people were denied this sharing. I feel terribly uneasy that so many people are left stranded bopping in the macho, rhythmic world.

Now, having the choice of two musical worlds, I am sure to be with

Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert when the need to spend quality time arises.

□ □ □ □ □

This article would not be complete without heartfelt thanks to my soul-buddy Nadine, who gifted me with the tickets and the experience. She wanted to expose me to women's music, and therefore I shared the evening with the most important woman in my life.



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Disposable diapers may be harmful to babies as well as the environment

Mary Keeler

The growing controversy about the environment is fast becoming society's prime concern: the deteriorating ozone, overflowing landfills, and non-biodegradable materials are problems that we can no longer afford to ignore. The type of diaper your baby wears has become an environmental decision.

In the autumn of 1989, the Grace Maternity Hospital, leaders in their field, asked the N.S. Department of the Environment to help them determine which are more harmful to the environment — cloth or disposable diapers.

The study, completed in December, 1989, found that disposable diapers in Nova Scotia account for about 2% of the total municipal solid waste. In an effort to reduce this burden on our landfills, the government encourages the use of cloth reusable diapers. By returning to cloth diapers, the Grace Maternity Hospital would be making an impact on environmental and health protection and facilitating the education of the public in this matter.

Each baby wearing disposable diapers for a 2 1/2 year diapering period will add over 3,000 pounds of combined non-biodegradable, plastic, disease-laden waste to our landfills. Landfills in most major Canadian cities will be filled to capacity within this decade. It costs the Canadian public approximately \$50 million a year to operate landfills, monitor pollution, and replant forests to keep up with the production of disposable diapers alone.

Our children deserve to inherit a safe, clean world, but by using disposable diapers we are creating a tremendous health hazard. Soiled disposable diapers that are not pulled apart and flushed down a toilet may carry viruses and bacteria to landfill sites where they pose a threat to groundwater supplies and garbage workers. In many areas the disposal of human waste in landfills is against safety regulations. However, enforcement of these regulations would be a nightmare.

Disposable diapers also threaten a baby's health and safety. The super-absorbent padding on the diapers provides an ideal medium for bacterial

growth and can cause skin rashes. Diapers designed for super-absorbency could encourage too infrequent changing, a possible hazard in Toxic Shock Syndrome, and, like other bleached paper products, disposable diapers contain toxic dioxins and other chemicals whose effects are yet unknown. The plastic shells in disposable diapers are flammable and have caused deaths from choking and suffocation.

Cloth is the only real alternative, and although it has performed well for generations of babies, the old fold and pin routine is no longer the only option. A Canadian company has created *The Indisposable Cotton Diaper™*. These cotton diapers are very absorbent and form-fitted, with soft waist and leg elastics which catch everything. They

require no folding or pinning and are fastened with Velcro™ which makes diapering easier for everyone.

Medical studies prove that cotton helps prevent diaper rash, since it keeps baby's bottom cool, and cotton contains no synthetics, dioxins, or perfumes to irritate baby's skin or paper and plastic to pull apart and ingest.

Cloth diapers can save a family \$1,000 or more per child, compared to the cost of disposable diapers. They can also be passed on to a second child.

When you consider the environmental issues, the cost savings, as well as the comfort and safety of the baby, is there really any other alternative?

For further information on diapering, contact *The Indispensables™*, Distributor—Mary Keeler 422-3039.

Have you seen?

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For

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Previous programs can be seen at the gallery.
For further information call the gallery at 443-4450.

National Action Committee

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) is the largest women's organization in Canada, representing over 500 non-governmental women's groups whose combined memberships total about 4 million Canadian women.

NAC's priorities include housing, social services, family law, minority rights, health, reproductive rights, childcare, employment policies, lesbian rights, violence against women, peace, pornography, and prostitution. For seventeen years now, NAC has researched, written and submitted position and background papers to government agencies and the public on all those issues as part of its lobby and education efforts. All NAC briefs are available at nominal costs from the Toronto office, address below.

In Nova Scotia, NAC has 33 member groups, including the Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia, transition houses, women's centres, counselling services, and women's committees of labour unions and political parties. If your group isn't a member, join us. We need you. And you need us. If you have ten or more members and subscribe to NAC's objectives, you can sign up. Fees start at \$20. If you are already part of NAC, remember that your group can send delegates to the Annual General Meeting in Ottawa, May 11 - 14, 1990. To apply for membership, write:

Anne Molgat, Membership Coordinator (NAC)
344 Bloor Street West, Suite 505, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1W9

For more information about NAC, write or call:
Susan Hyde, Representative for Nova Scotia
c/o Box 515, Sydney, N.S. B1S 2T6, 562-3202 (messages)

Father-child incest—Who is to blame?

Deborah Boyd

Most cultures, including our own, regard incest with disgust and horror. In spite of rigorous taboos against such perversity, child sexual abuse is extremely widespread and common. Who is responsible for the sexual victimization of children? Some will place the onus of the assault on the perpetrator, while others will blindly accuse the victim of asking for "it." However, there has been a societal trend to blame a third party for incestuous assault: the mother.

Mother-blaming is still one of the most profound myths concerning child sexual abuse, despite efforts to communicate that the offender alone is responsible for

the assault. In her review of literature pertaining to child sexual abuse, Sandra Butler, a renowned author on the subject, reported that the words "abandoning and colluding" are common words in much of the theories and analyses concerning mothers.

Many professionals, endemic to the present social attitude, are quick to blame the mother's presumed compliance as a critical role in her child's assault. They describe her as the cornerstone of the dysfunctional family. Those who follow this family-oriented model assert that although the offender performed the sexual assault, the behaviour of the mother sets the stage for incestuous abuse to occur. She is often pictured as rejecting, weak, and inadequate.

Professionals often corroborate with the offender's statements that the mother is unstable, unavailable due to her work outside the home, and sexually unsatisfying.

The fact is that many women work outside the home as a means of economic survival for their families, and also a means of expressing their individuality as persons. Furthermore, re-

search has indicated that many men sexually assault their children in addition to having sexual relations with their wives.

Child sexual abuse causes a dysfunctional family; it is not the result of one. The offender sets the stage for incestuous assault to occur.

The mother's assumed role in her child's abuse is rooted in the conjecture that mothers are responsible for the emotional wants and needs of their families and are consequently responsible for all the family's, even though they were unaware of, or not involved, with these problems.

For many mothers, the initial reaction to their children's disclosures of sexual abuse is one of shock and horror. These feelings are intensified when the offender is a spouse. Most mothers have no idea that their child was being victimized. Rolland Summit, a clinician in the field of child sexual abuse, reported that "contrary to popular social attitude most mothers are not aware of on-going sexual abuse."

One mother described her initial reaction to her child's disclosure of sexual abuse as a physical weakness, "It was the same reaction as a death, you get this hollow feeling inside and you're sick, you're physically weak." Another mother was shocked to learn that her ex-husband was sexually abusing their son: "I was in a state of shock; it was just like something broke inside of me."

The aftermath endured by victims is often one of guilt, betrayal of trust by the assailant, and disbelief by others. A mother frequently finds herself in a similar sequence of events. She feels guilty; even though she was unaware of the abuse and played no role in it, it is covertly conveyed to her that she has failed in her maternal role as protector

of her children. Fear of the offender and of betrayal, fear of some loss of economic security, and fear of the disbelief of others all contribute to her low self esteem. At this point the mother's need for support and comfort is just as crucial as the child's.

Mothers are often in a double bind when they encounter the labyrinth within the system. Those who suspect their children of being abused, and report it, sometimes find their own credibility put on "trial."

If the authorities do not believe a child, the mother is accused of being an over-zealous parent, falsely accusing her husband of sexual abuse. If her child is believed, some professionals are quick to identify something about the mother that contributed to the incestuous situation.

Reactions to sexual abuse varies

considerably for every family. Some mothers are conditioned by the manipulation, charm, and economic security provided by the offender. They may be physically, emotionally, and sexually abused by an offender and as a means of survival for themselves and their children, they do not dare challenge the offender. Research has found that in some cases the husband is over-controlling, emotionally cold and even physically abusive in a manner that verges on sadism.

Mothers who immediately intervene to protect their children by separating from an offender face many insecurities and self doubts. They must deal with the erosion of the family unit and a reduction in their standards of living. Custody disputes may result if the offender is found not-guilty.

The lack of evidence for a conviction

permits the perpetrator to have custody rights for unsupervised visitation and in some cases to file for sole custody of the children. Mothers are powerless to protect their children from recurring abuse.

Instead of describing mothers as instigators or facilitators of their children's abuse, we must be cognizant of the power that is employed by husbands and fathers as perpetrators. It is often easier to blame the mother, who has less power, than the offender who holds all the power.

Women cannot be held responsible for a perpetrator's abusive behaviour. Blaming wives and mothers for assaults that men commit is similar to blaming victims for seducing the offender. It is important for all of us to keep in mind that the anguish and pain experienced by the victim and the mother is the result of the offender's abusive actions — no one else's.

Blaming wives and mothers for assaults that men commit is similar to blaming victims for seducing the offender.

Feminitations #2

1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13	14		15	16		17	18	19	20	21	22	23		24
25	26	27		28	29	30		31	32	33	34	35	36	37
38	39	40		41	42	43	44	45		46	47	48	49	50
	51	52		53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61		62
63	64	65	66	67	68		69	70	71	72		73	74	
75	76	77	78	79										
80	81	82	83		84	85	86	87	88	89	90			

Complete this puzzle by solving the clues. Write your answer in the lines above the clues. Then copy the letter into the corresponding number in the form above. When you've completed this puzzle and Feminitations #1, send them together to Pandora at P.O. Box 1209 North, Halifax, B3K 5H4. We will draw from the correct entries to award a Pandora T-shirt. Please send your answers by April 30. ©Dian Day

* 32 11 84 48 59 81

A Christian saint said to have been killed by the Huns in the 4th century, along with 11,000 virgins.

* 66 9 50

First celebrated in 1910 (abbr)

* 69 14 53 89 44 7

Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas

* 8 57 82 54 45 15 34 6 72

61
The condition of being a woman

* 40 58 28 25 20 87

Manager of an institution

* 64 79 17 10 83

Magic number

* 43 5 36 77 60 54 51 39

11
A gift from the Lady of the Lake

* 62 37 87

A member of a convent

* 78 29 58 35 90 85 16 33

3 74 62
One who presides over a meeting.

* 21 70 54 38

Required women's wear in some cultures

* 1 80 52 63 49 26 68 61
"A set of ideas that help mystify reality" (Eisenstein)

* 19 47 13 42 12 55

She who gives birth

* 88 77 27 30

A woman who has received an order of knighthood

* 22 71 24 76 41 52

"Feminine"

* 75 65 86 56 35 3

Achilles' mother

* 46 18 2 73

What she weaves across the warp

* 31 81 67 23 38 4 27 77

84
Ancient tradition observed by witches that involves the lighting of tapers

the Mount

The Women's Studies Department and the Nancy Rowell Jackman Distinguished Chair in Women's Studies present the first two lectures in the

Women and World Development Series

Monday, March 12, 7:30 - 9 pm

Counting Women's Unremunerated Work

by Selma James, founder of the International Wages for Housework Campaign and author of *The Global Kitchen and Sex, Race and Class*

Monday, March 19, 7:30 - 9 pm

Three Immobilities: Women in Development

by Dr. Krishna Ahoja-Patel, holder of the Nancy Rowell Jackman Distinguished Chair in Women's Studies, Mount Saint Vincent University

Both of these free, public lectures will be held in Auditorium A, 4th Floor, Seton Academic Centre. A reception follows each.



MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA B3M 2J6

Feminists have long been the scapegoats

Brenda Thompson

Imagine what would happen to the world if women controlled their own reproductive functions without being persecuted. Not only could they control the population of the world, they could also control their lives.

Imagine if women could achieve financial independence, they would no longer be forced to depend upon a man for economic survival. Marriage would become a choice, not a survival tactic.

And if women could achieve equal educational opportunities, they could enter into occupations and professions

which give them self-esteem and self-respect along with their financial independence. In turn, these educated women

would create a shortage in the domestic labour and clerical field. This would force employers and the general public to realize the vast importance of these jobs and start to pay better wages and giving these employees what they deserve.

And if women had full participation in the political decision making process, instead of minor tokenism, the culture of the country would be enhanced as it would more accurately represent the real population of Canada than our current over-representation of white, upper-class males.

It is exactly these ideas, however, that some people find extremely threatening. Today in Canada we have very visible and vocal anti-feminist movements, some of which are led by

women. These women are claiming that a woman's place is in the home "...and they are coming out of the home to prove it." (The Feminist Dictionary)

The anti-feminists of today, however, are singing the same chorus as the anti-feminists of the Roman Empire. To understand the history of the anti-feminist movement, we must first have a history of the feminist movement.

The first recorded women's movement took place in the year 392 B.C. just after the Peloponnesian War. As happened during the Second World War of this century, women came out

marriage and childrearing, and initiated laws to force men and women to marry and women to bear children. It was the women who were fined and charged by the law if they failed to conform to their "traditional roles."

The independent women of the Roman Republic were blamed for the break-down of the family, the low birth rate, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, the high divorce rate and homosexuality.

Perhaps the longest and bloodiest anti-feminist movement was the witch hunts. In 1486, two Dominican Inquisitors, with the authorization of Pope Innocent VIII, wrote a publication entitled "Malleus Maleficarum"

(Hammer Against Witches) in which they specifically identified women with witchcraft. They wrote, "When a woman thinks alone, she thinks evil."

It was also during this time that the University of Paris legislated a move to exclude women from medical colleges. They did this through the use of fines and imprisonment. The charge of witchcraft against women healers eliminated the role of women in medicine.

The witchcraft persecutions were a reaction to the fear of atypical women. These women did not fit the singular, constricting, accepted role of wife and mother. The persecutions may have also been a reaction to the fear of women's sexual desire. The "Malleus Maleficarum" argued that a woman's

insatiable lust leads her to take Satan as her lover.

The witch hunts took place in Europe and North America from the 12th to the 18th century with the approval of the Catholic and Protestant churches, and it has been estimated that as many as nine million women were tortured and executed under the charge of "witchcraft." The women who were not persecuted as witches saw what could happen to them if they did not become properly submissive and conforming.

In the past, anti-feminist movements have been visibly led and supported by men. Even if women agreed with and supported past anti-feminist movements, they did not have the legal rights, money, education, or political opportunities to say so.

Today in Canada we have a group of women calling themselves R.E.A.L. Women (Realistic, Equal, Active, for Life) who are standing up and voicing their disagreement with the feminist movement. They are using, however, the very rights of law, communication, education, and political involvement which feminists won for them as women.

In short, R.E.A.L. Women are using the rights which feminists won to discredit everything which feminism has achieved for women.

Feminists have worked unceasingly to dignify the work of women in the home, to give women the freedom of choice over their reproductive system, for equality of pay outside the home, for the importance of financial security for housewives. They have fought for women's clinics, daycares, shelters for battered women, and full participation of women in decision-making politics; all of these services being a safety net which backs up women, either in the home or in the public sphere.

Feminists and anti-feminists are allied in that they are both committed to values that support personal well-being and the raising of children. The anti-feminists, however, see feminism as a move to force women to go outside the home, to become men. They believe that only strong family legislation will protect them from poverty and the struggles of single motherhood.

In a Brief to Members of Parliament on November 18, 1986, R.E.A.L. Women wrote:

"Of course, we must help the casualties of family life, such as the single parent, the abused child and the abandoned wife. However, we must not increase their numbers by implying that their situation is the norm."

In another presentation to the Standing Committee of the Secretary of State on December 11, 1986, R.E.A.L. Women wrote:

"...we wish to have integrated into government policy and legislation respect for, and the promotion of, healthy family life. This is based on our belief that the family is the most important unit in society. Strong families build strong nations."

R.E.A.L. Women are opposed to such policies as legalized abortion, sex education in schools, equal pay for work of equal value, universal child-care, homemaker's pensions and homosexuality. In one of their pamphlets they wrote:

"The birth control pill knocks the

libido out of many women and leaves them hostile to men" and "There is probably a relation between the pill and the suppression of maternal instinct and child battering."

Why is it these anti-feminist women fight so bitterly, abusing and degrading other women in public to justify their choice to stay at home to raise their families?

Perhaps anti-feminists blame feminists for their lack of recognition and respect because they are more visible and easier to blame than our male dominated government.

It is our patriarchal system of government that has consistently refused to recognize women's work in the home by leaving it out of the Gross National Product, refusing to grant Homemaker's Pensions and, until they were forced by feminists, refusing to acknowledge women's contribution to the marriage when dividing the marital assets in a divorce.

Perhaps even more disheartening than the anti-feminists is the notion that the women of the 1980s are in a post-feminism era. This label of post-feminism is also a form of anti-feminism in that it implies that there is no longer any

need for a feminist movement. It believes that we have entered into a new era where women have achieved full equality and that our social system is now "post patriarchal."

... men are still leading the anti-feminist movement as they did at the time of the Peloponnesian War but today they are using women as their shields and props to hide behind.

Where is the money coming from to support the anti-feminist organizations such as R.E.A.L. Women? In the U.S. the anti-feminist movement is financially supported by such companies as Ford, General Motors, Coca-Cola, Pepsico, Hershey, The Reader's Digest, Pizza Hut, Citibank, IBM, Exxon, Consolidated Food, Adolph Coors Foundation, the Betchel Foundation and fundamentalist groups like H.L. Hunt's Christian Crusade.

In Canada, R.E.A.L. Women have entered into a coalition with the right-wing, anti-feminist, male-dominated National Citizen's Coalition to fight against the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in Ontario. Funds from the pro-family movement in the United States are also being channeled into Canada to finance the pro-life movement.

From this evidence we can summarize that men are still leading the anti-feminist movement as they did at the time of the Peloponnesian War but today they are using women as their shields and props to hide behind.

Why is there an anti-feminist movement? Why does our system of society and government fear the economic and legal independence of women?

Perhaps it is because the economy of Canada and the rest of the world is built upon a system that is completely dependent upon two crucial functions that women provide. One is the unpaid labour of women in the home, and the other is the availability of low cost surplus labour that comes in the form of women who are exploited in low-status jobs.

If the feminist movement were to achieve female economic, political, reproductive and educational independence, this would seriously undermine the prevailing patriarchal system, and that is very threatening, not only to the people who are in power, but also to the people who do not know how to live any other way.

The independent women of the Roman Republic were blamed for the break-down of the family, the low birth rate, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, the high divorce rate and homosexuality.

of their homes to take up the management of business and industries while the men were at war.

When the city of Athens had fallen and the men returned home, they saw how the women had not only managed their businesses without them, but had also prospered. The men considered the women's success an insult to their manhood and tried to pass a law condemning women to stay in their houses at all times. The women revolted by protesting in the streets and by withholding sexual favors from the men. Sex, then as now, was one of the major bargaining chips that a woman held.

In the Roman Empire around 200 B.C., after the Punic Wars had ended, the Emperor Augustus wanted the women to return to the domestic life of



R.E.A.L. women & pro family advocates succeed by playing by men's rules

In October 1986, a study on organized anti-feminism was carried out in which 1200 questionnaires were sent out to subscribers of *The Interim* newspaper which calls itself "Canada's pro-life, pro-family newspaper." The questionnaire completion rate was 75% and 30% of the respondents were members of R.E.A.L. Women. The findings of this study revealed that the typical pro-family supporter is a Canadian-born woman in her late forties, early fifties, who was raised in a rural area of Canada and is either Catholic or Protestant fundamentalist, and attends church on a 63 to 96% weekly basis. Among the pro-family women, only 34% were in the paid labour market and the emphasis on education and career achievement is not pronounced.

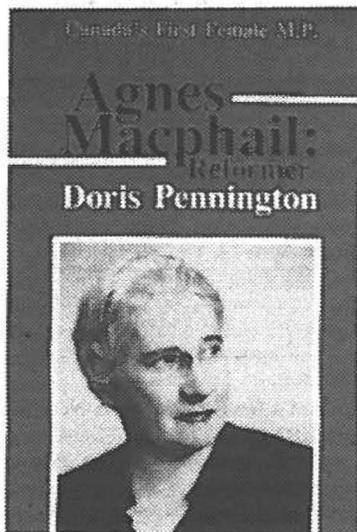
Of all the respondents, 39% have family incomes of \$49,000 or more, 79% own their own house, and 79% of the pro-family men and women

have been married for an average of 22 years, 69% have children and only 4% are separated or divorced. The rest are widowed.

Translated, this means that R.E.A.L. Women and the pro-family movement profile is of men and women who have long-term marriages and feel they have made a success of their careers. They are mostly middle-aged, and solidly middle class individuals who have made their careers during the forties, fifties and sixties before the Canadian economy began its recession and increased competition for middle-class jobs and status really began. They believe that their success comes from "playing by the rules" of the traditional marital and gender values and of the traditional work ethic. Their sense of moral superiority and resentment for deviants fuels them into activism.

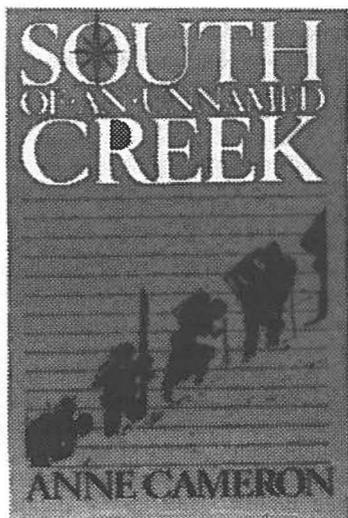
This material is excerpted from *Resources for Feminist Research*, a feminist journal.

Canadian Book Information Centre tells us about new book releases



Agnes Macphail: Reformer
Doris Pennington

A political biography of Canada's first female Member of Parliament, this book reflects her special interests in women's rights, agrarian policies, prison reform, and world peace.
Simon & Pierre, \$24.95 pb



South of an Unnamed Creek
Anne Cameron

In her latest work, Cameron gives us six of the most determined women to run, ride, cuss, laugh and deal their way through the pages of modern fiction. For all of these young women, the Klondike of the late 1890s is truly the frontier - a chance to leave despair behind, and to imagine and live their own lives.

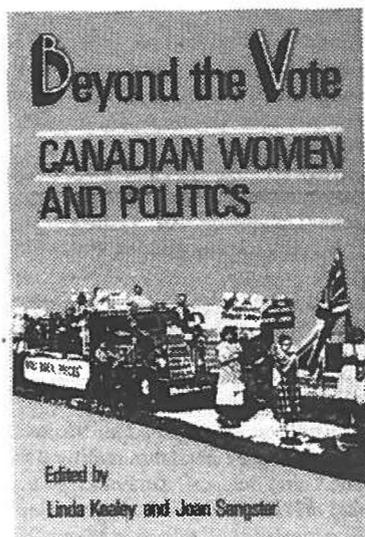
Harbour Publishing, \$19.95 hc



By Word of Mouth, Lesbians Write the Erotic
Edited by Lee Fleming

These are rich and diverse writings by women that challenge us to stay in touch with our eroticism and also challenges our notions of appropriate sexuality.

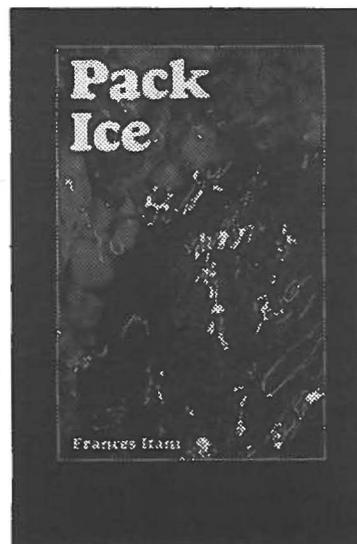
Gynergy Books, \$12.95 pb



Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics
Edited by Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster

Everyone knows what 'women and politics' means: those middle class women who battled for the vote, or the still-rare woman Cabinet minister, a woman in a man's world. However, the reality of Canadian women in politics is very different and these essays explore that reality in all its diversity. They provide a striking new image of the aspirations of four generations of Canadian women and the strategies they used to realize them.

University of Toronto Press, \$19.95 pb



Pack Ice
Frances Itani

This is a collection of stories about life, the sea and an island. The sea is more than a backdrop, it is the common ground on which women and men meet. It shapes their lives and controls their destiny. The author spends part of each year on Prince Edward Island, it's where she feels she writes best.

Oberon Press, \$12.95 pb

Up and Doing: Canadian Women and Peace
Edited by Janice Williamson and Deborah Gorham

Women have been instrumental in shaping the peace movement in Canada for decades. In this wide-ranging and unique collection, 37 women activists and authors document and analyze the herstorical and current events of the movement from the early part of this century to the present.

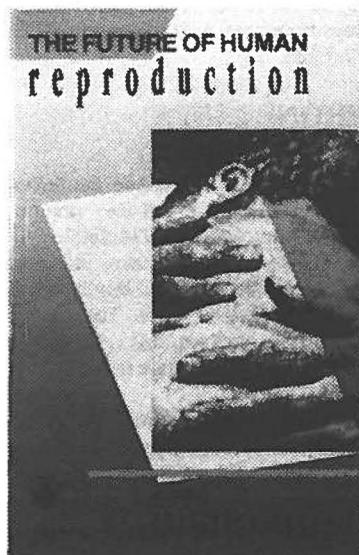
Women's Press, \$16.95 pb

Recollecting Our Lives: Women's Experience of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Women's Research Centre

This book is about the challenges women and children face in overcoming the consequences of childhood sexual abuse. Based on first person accounts of survivors, it describes their actual experience and outlines the types of support, resources and insights that women have found helpful in breaking out of the cycle of abuse.

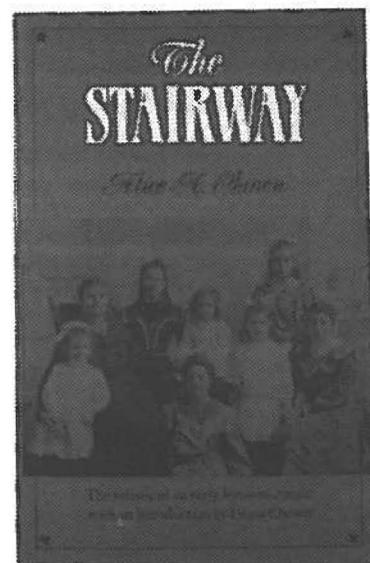
Press Gang Publishers, \$14.95 pb



The Future of Human Reproduction
edited by Christine Overall

Reproductive technology has become virtually synonymous with new choices for women. Through a feminist analysis, writers explore how the implications of technology are much more complex and far reaching than we think. A number of issues are addressed and critically challenged.

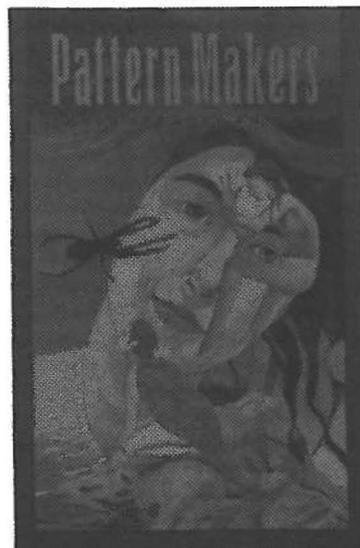
Women's Press, \$17.95 pb



The Stairway
Alice A. Chown

First published in 1921, this book is a welcome new source in the unearthing of the herstory of women in Canada. Written in the form of a personal journey, it is the story of a single, middle-aged Canadian woman who was a radical intellectual during the first quarter of the twentieth century. It not only relates the tale of her work and achievements but also reveals the problems she encountered—loneliness, rejection, semi-poverty, and illness.

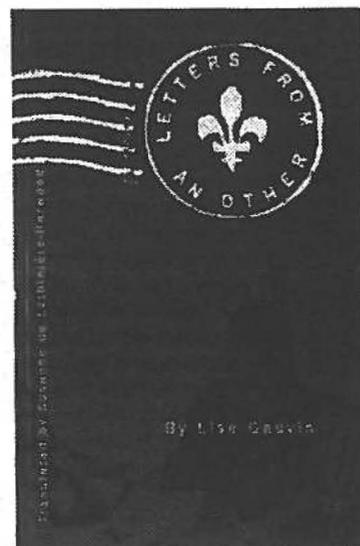
University of Toronto Press, \$12.95 pb



Pattern Makers
Sandy Frances Duncan

The surreal journey of three women and a spider. Through a fantasy that never forgets how much women give up of themselves, Duncan weaves an incredible saga of their journey towards healing and wholeness.

Women's Press, 9.95 pb



Letters From an Other
Lise Gauvin

A commentary on Quebec life, bilingualism, feminism, politics, cultural freedom and social justice in Canada during the 1960s and early 1970s. The letters give politically informed insight into the social and political forces in Quebec at a pivotal time in Quebec history.

Women's Press, \$10.95 pb

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, Ont., 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) 943-3767.



Hey Waitress and other stories
Helen Potrebenco

From a waitress who is determined that her daughter is not going to have a life like hers to a bank worker involved in organizing the first union in her branch, these are stories about real people told by a writer who knows and cares about their lives.

Lazara, \$12.00 pb

Midnight Twilight Tourist Zone
Sharon Riis

The story of Rosalie, a rural District Health Nurse and an elderly reclusive Polish neighbor is one of powerful magic. While the world is initially familiar, it becomes increasingly exotic. By the end of the novel, we know only that a short time has elapsed, yet whole new worlds have been explored.

Douglas & MacIntyre, \$21.95 hc



National Film Board presents films for International Women's Day

Wednesday, March 7, 1990

7 - 8 pm **Half the Kingdom** - A one-hour documentary exploring feminism and Judaism and profiling Jewish women who are challenging assumptions about women's place in traditional Judaism. The film features Norma Joseph, a professor of religion at Montreal's Concordia University; Michele Landsberg, writer and former columnist of the Globe and Mail, and Shulamit Aloni, Member of Knesset.

8:15-9:15 pm **Goddess Remembered** (see article in this issue).

9:30-10:00 pm **Older, Stronger, Wiser** - This film provides important glimpses of what life was like for Black women in Canada in the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s. Five portraits authenticate the unsaid history of Black women, demonstrating their resistance and their survival.

See also the IWD schedule in this issue for films to be shown on March 8.

The National Film Board Theatre, 1571 Argyle Street, Halifax. Popcorn provided, wheelchair accessible, all films are free. For info call 426-6014.

Notices/Calendar

NEWS BRIEFS:

•Libby Oughton has sold Ragweed Press/gynergy books, the Prince Edward Island publishing house, to Louise Flemming of Charlottetown. Ms Flemming says she "plans to keep the press in Charlottetown and to continue to build on its national reputation of literary quality and diversity."

Ragweed/gynergy specializes in books by and for women, children's books, Canadian literature and Maritime history. Gynergy is their lesbian imprint.

•Island filmmaker Lee Flemming has just completed the research for "Girls To Girls," a 20-minute, television style documentary film to be released in June. The objective of "Girls to Girls" is to encourage adolescents to be physically active by presenting peer role models.

Ms. Flemming will produce the film. Director is Carol Millett (Halifax) and executive producer is the Island Media Arts Co-op. The film will use a variety of television-style techniques to attract the attention of young women not usually motivated to be physically active.

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

•Women's Employment Outreach offers free employment counselling services to women including workshops on resume writing, interview skills, and the hidden job market. Individual counselling is also available to women on improving their chances at getting better jobs through upgrading and skill training. Four-part pre-employment workshops for women start the first Tuesday of every month, 9:30 - 11:30. For more information call 422-8023.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

•Eye Level Gallery, a non-profit artist-run centre in Halifax, invites artists to submit proposals. Deadline is September 30, 1990. Contact Eye Level at 2182 Gottingen Street, 2nd Floor, Halifax B3K 3B4 for more info.

•RFR/DRF is seeking perspectives on heterosexuality from a feminist standpoint and from women's diverse locations in lesbianism, celibacy and bisexuality. Contributions will examine the central role heterosexuality plays in the psychological, sexual and socio-economic and political dimensions of women's oppression and experience. Articles may be written in French or English and should not exceed 5,000 words. Deadline May 1, 1990. Submit to Resources for Feminist Research, 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6.

EVENTS & GROUPS:

•Looking for interesting women to form a feminist discussion group. Please contact Verona at 422-8580 in the evenings.

Nova Scotia Women Artists' Journal, for info about women artists, broadcasts Tuesdays 11:45-12:00 on ASN; Thursdays 10:00-10:15 am on channels 32, 22 or 8 until April 5.

•Concerned about the portrayal of women in the media? Get involved with Mediawatch and be part of a national network of women working for change. Mediawatch Nova Scotia meets the last Sunday of every month at 7:30 pm at the Public Archives of Nova

Scotia. Contact Heather MacLeod, 422-3524.

•Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse Support Group. For information, contact W.S.C.S.A., P.O. Box 1226 North, Halifax, N.S. B3K 5H4.

•The Metro Area Women's Centre Planning Committee needs much work and many voices, ideas to attain our goal of a women-only space. Please contact 425-1340 and leave a message or write to the Metro Area Women's Centre Planning Committee, 2191 Windsor Street, Apt B, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 5B7. Meetings will take place at the above address on the second Sunday of every month at 2:00 pm.

•The 14th Annual CRIAW (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women) conference will be held in Charlottetown November 16-18. The focus of the conference will be on bridging the gap between "dis-abled" and "abled" women. Organizers are using the term "dis-abled" in a broad sense to describe anyone who is not valued or respected because she has limitations and "abled" to describe those who are fortunate enough to be able bodied and comfortably off with the opportunity to do what they want to do most of the time.

A major objective of the conference is to provide a public forum for women's ideas. Organizers are working hard to attract participants from all segments of society. Contact Beth Percival, CRIAW Conference, 1190 Program Committee, P.O. Box 2271, Charlottetown, PEI C1A 8B9 (566-0690)

•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 Mary 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.

•Voice of Women Nova Scotia is looking for more women to become involved in the peace movement. They specifically want women who will work on the co-ordinating committee, the newsletter, distribution of press releases, as well as administration. Contact Marion Kerans, 425-3573.

•The Transition House Association holds regular weekly support groups for abused women in Charlottetown, Montague and Summerside, P.E.I. For info 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. Educational materials, books and a newsletter can be ordered. For a free catalogue contact 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 their events, call 424-6469. 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.

•Spinsters on Air broadcasts on Saturdays from noon to 2:30 pm on CKDU 97.5 FM.

PHONE LINES

•N.S. Advisory Council on the Status of Women has a toll-free number within Nova Scotia. 1-424-8662.

•INFORM-AIDS provides information, support and referral services with regards to AIDS. Open Tuesday to Sunday 5 pm to 9 pm. Call 1-425-AIDS (toll free from anywhere in Nova Scotia).

•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 any time, any day. 462-6228.

•The Pictou County Women's Centre in New Glasgow, N.S. has established a Rape Line. This line offers confidentiality, anonymity, information, and peer counseling for female victims of sex abuse, incest, and rape. The line is 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. General legal information on more than 75 topics. Hours: Mon-Fri, 10 am to 2 pm. 420-9000.

•GALA (Gay and Lesbian Association of Nova Scotia) has an info line on gay and lesbian events and groups. Call 423-7129.

•We at Pandora don't know everything that goes on in the Maritimes. Any woman out there who knows of an event you think others would like to know about, please write a short piece (500 words or less) to report on it. We would like you to use Pandora to network with other women. Let us hear about what is going on out there.

CALENDAR

March 3-March 15:

See listing of IWD events on centrespread

March 17

Nova Scotia Women Artists' Network workshop for women. 10 am - 4 pm. Eye Level Gallery, 2182 Gottingen Street. To register, call Rosemary MacAuley, 422-7565.

March 18

•Income tax service for seniors: Income less than \$20,000, book at least 1 week in advance at 421-6131. 6:30-8:30 Halifax City Regional Library, North Branch, 2285 Gottingen St, Halifax.

March 21

•Women's Employment Outreach's tenth anniversary. Celebrate by coming to their open house. 3-5 pm, 5639 Spring Garden Road.

•International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

•Income tax service for seniors: Income less than \$20,000, book at least 1 week in advance at 421-6131. 6:30-8:30 Halifax City Regional Library, Mainland South Branch, 10 Kidston Road, Halifax.

March 22

•National Film Board: Night Visions, Covert Action, Reversal, Fragments. 7:30 pm

•Covering the Planet: How the Media Decides What's News: Moderator Kathryn Morse hosts a discussion on media coverage of environmental issues. Halifax City Regional Library Main Branch, 5381 Spring Garden Road, Halifax.

•Understanding the Law: a 3-part series focusing on you and the law. 7 pm. Halifax City Regional Library, North Branch, 2285 Gottingen St., Halifax.

March 24

Rummage sale, 10 am - 2 pm, Veith House, 3115 Veith Street. Proceeds to go to Wimmin's Program at Veith House. For info or to donate, contact Nadine 454-5479.

March 25

Planning meeting for the Third Almost Annual Lesbian Conference. 2 pm Veith House, 3115 Veith Street.

March 29

•Understanding the Law: a 3-part series focusing on you and the law. 7 pm. Halifax City Regional Library, North Branch, 2285 Gottingen St., Halifax.

March 30-April 29

Refuse, installations by Barbara Lounder and Lani Maestro. Mount St. Vincent University Art Gallery, 166 Bedford Highway, Halifax. (902) 443-4450.

APRIL

April 3, 5, 10, 12, 17

Confidence Building for Women: Limited space available. 1:30 - 3:00 pm. To register, call Cindy Sampson at 421-8766 (Babysitting provided. Please call 421-8766 before March 27.) Halifax City Regional Library, Mainland South Branch 10 Kidston Road, Halifax.

April 4

•Income tax service for seniors: Income less than \$20,000, book at least 1 week in advance at 421-6131. 6:30-9:30 Spencer House Seniors Centre, 5596 Morris St., Halifax.

April 5

•Income tax service for seniors: Income less than \$20,000, book at least 1 week in advance at 421-6131. 6:30-9:30 Spencer House Seniors Centre, 5596 Morris St., Halifax.

April 7-9

Annual General Assembly and Lobby of the Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia will be held at Henson College, University Ave in Halifax. See ad in this issue. For more info, contact WACNS, P.O. Box 9436, Station A, Halifax B3K 5S3

April 7

Understanding the Law: a 3-part series focusing on you and the law. 7 pm. Halifax City Regional Library, North Branch, 2285 Gottingen St., Halifax.

April 18

Halifax Women's Network presents The Networking Event: Network, Have Fun and Promote Your Product/Service and Yourself. 5:30-9:30, Hal-

ifax Board of Trade Business Club, Upper Mall, Scotia Square. \$18 members; \$23 non-members. Includes meal. Call 429-3131 for reservations before April 12.

MAY

May 4-6

Women's Health Education Network (WHEN) Conference: "Surviving Society's Violence." Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro, N.S. Featuring workshops on positive ways of dealing with violence. Hoping to premier *Burning Times* the second film from the series Women and Spirituality. Director Donna Reed will be in attendance. Contact Darlah Purdy, Port Maitland, N.S. B0W 2V0 649-2685; Dianne Crowell 643-2344, or Wendy Annand 275-5554 for more info.

May 11-13

From Understanding to Action: Setting the Environmental Agenda of the Nineties, a regional conference presented by the Atlantic Environmental Network. Contact Kathryn Morse 454-2139, 3115 Veith Street, Halifax, N.S. B3K 3G9

May 11-14

National Action Committee Annual General Meeting. See ad in this paper for more information.

JUNE

June 3-8

First World Summit on Women and the Many Dimensions of Power, a conference organized by FRAPPE, (Women for Access to Political and Economic Power) will be held in 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 14-16

Women/Addiction/Healing A Journey Within, sponsored by Pictou County Women's Centre. Fee: \$265, includes Registration, meals and accommodation or \$165 for Registration and meals. Spaces are limited: reserve by contacting Pictou Co Women's Centre, P.O. Box 964, New Glasgow, NS B2H 5K7 (902) 755-4647.

June 15-17

Moving Forward: Creating a Feminist Agenda for the 1980s, conference at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario. Contact Women's Studies Conference, c/o Eaton College, Trent University, Peterborough, Ont., K9J 7B8 (705) 748-1430.

June 19-23

Fourth International Feminist Book Fair, Barcelona, Spain.

SUMMER

August 4-11

Gay Games III and Cultural Festival, Vancouver, BC. Contact: Celebration '90, 1170 Bute St., Vancouver, BC V6E 1Z6, (604) 684-3303. Fax: (604) 683-2276.

November 16-18

14th Annual CRIAW Conference in Charlottetown, PEI. Focus will be on bridging the gap between "dis-abled" and "abled" women. (See News Briefs for more information.)