

Pandora

Lifting the lid off...

Volume Six, Number Two

January, 1991

Halifax, Nova Scotia

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S.P.E.R.M.
parodies
the
absurdity
of
right-wing
'conceptions'



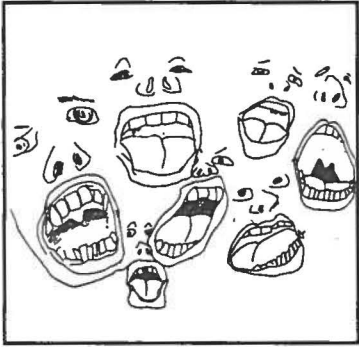
**Society for the Protection of Endangered Reproductive Materials
fights Ejaculationism, Orgasmism, and the Birds and Bees**

N.S. women break silence about abortion services

Amani Wassef

The decision to have an abortion is an intensely difficult one, often accompanied by unsupportive physicians and/or family members, long waiting periods, and misconstrued information. Until now, women in Nova Scotia have never had the opportunity to document their experiences, resulting in many years of lost herstories and isolation.

In an insightful and often heart wrenching account, the Halifax chapter of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) has provided a voice for Nova Scotia women through the recent publication *Telling Our Secrets: Abortion Stories from Nova Scotia*.



In this 107 page report, researcher and CARAL member Nancy Bowes, has provided a systematic account of 25 women's experiences of trying to obtain safe, legal abortion services in Nova Scotia. These experiences, related through the voice of each participant, range in intensity and incidence. Each testimony is unique and very personal, however, despite the variety of experience, there is a powerful sense of anger and hurt which consistently emerges from within each story.

Three overall themes arose from the research indicating that the present system of abortion delivery services in Nova Scotia is unsatisfactory and disturbing. The search for a supportive physician was noted as especially difficult, as Isabel from Metro says:

"He made me, sort of, squirm. You know, 'How do I get around this guy?' It was very exasperating... He seemed

to want me to say it in a certain way. I was watching for clues... In the end, I had to say, 'Oh my God, I'd be a basket case. I would probably have a mental breakdown.' ... That was quite uncomfortable, to have to denigrate myself like that."

The second theme focused on the enormity of delay women experienced when waiting for their appointments at the hospital, despite well-documented reports which indicate that waiting increases the health risk for women. "It was pretty stressful, because I was just in my first few months of university. I was trying to get used to that setting, trying to keep on top of my work there. Trying to be a mother to my son and I found I was sleeping all the time and I was missing classes. Just because I had been trying to deny the fact [of pregnancy] for so long, it had been really wearing... It was hard to be a mother to my son. It was hard to carry him around and it was hard to be patient and it was hard to be happy." Jeanette, Metro Area

The third predominant theme which emerged was the vast difference in the experience between the hospital and clinic abortions. Differences were apparent in the treatment, complication rate, environment and overall care given between the hospital and clinics. The Victoria General Hospital in Halifax performs about [88%] of all the abortions in the Nova Scotia. Some of the comments which were raised about the hospital are especially disconcerting, considering this high percentage. Jill, from the Annapolis Valley, recalls her experience at the V.G. Hospital:

"I found it very unfriendly sterile, businesslike... I could see people not going through with it or leaving [because of the environment]... The lounge where people go for CAT scans is more friendly... [The environment] sort of fits with the whole image of abortion... like, it's not really a legitimate medical procedure, so it's sort of been relegated to this... storeroom space, with no proper services."

Sally, from Northeast Nova Scotia

travelled to the Toronto Morgentaler Clinic. In contrast, she had this to say about her experience:

"[It was] sunny, cosy, airy, comfortable... that's everything: the furniture, the light, the people... It's all nice. It's a real sunny, wonderful house."

The extraordinarily high complication rate at the V.G. gave good cause to the anger experienced by some of the women. Twenty eight percent experienced post-abortion complications. Isabel, from the Metro Area left her abortion still pregnant. The frustration and absolute terror of such complications are well recorded in the following:

"[The attending physician] treated me like I was a moron. I had told him up front that I had had an abortion. He said, 'You had an abortion. The abortion was done two weeks ago. You're not pregnant.' Like there was no possible way. None. He made me feel stupid for asking... He, in fact, told me that my abortion was a traumatic experience, that I was possibly feeling guilty and that any sickness I still felt was psychogenic... all in my head."

After a lot of running around to another emergency room, and a subsequent diagnosis of an incomplete abortion from the first time, Isabel was scheduled for a second abortion.

"For the next two days, I just lay on the bed. I was prepared to die... I hadn't eaten a proper meal since the first abortion and that was over two weeks [before]."

The report is extremely important as it breaks the tradition of secrecy which has historically surrounded abortion, and which intentionally and effectively keeps women's voices silent. It further serves the purpose of deconstructing anti-choice propaganda which promotes the view that women who seek abortion services are selfish, uncaring, unthinking and irresponsible. Finally, it offers eight recommendations resulting directly from the findings of the research, which will hopefully be implemented to improve the overall abortion delivery service in Nova Scotia.

The notion of "choice" itself was revealed to be "a distant dream for some women," as it implies we choose from a range of possibilities. Many participants felt there was no choice, as Tammy from the Metro area explains:

"I didn't even make the decision; I just

knew that's what I had to do. There was no decision to be made."

Other participants expressed the agonizing struggle which they experienced, as Stella from Metro indicates:

"At that time of my life, I just couldn't [carry a pregnancy to term]. It was a really, really bad time, and I don't want to make it sound like a convenience or anything else... I mean, here I was, I was on welfare, had one child... a child having a child, trying to raise him to the best of my ability. Working a little here, a little there, trying to get on my feet, trying to grow up, trying to take care of a household, the whole works, everything. And I really, really thought about it. I think I considered every single possibility there ever was... I knew [abortion] was the right decision all along, but I had to admit it to myself."

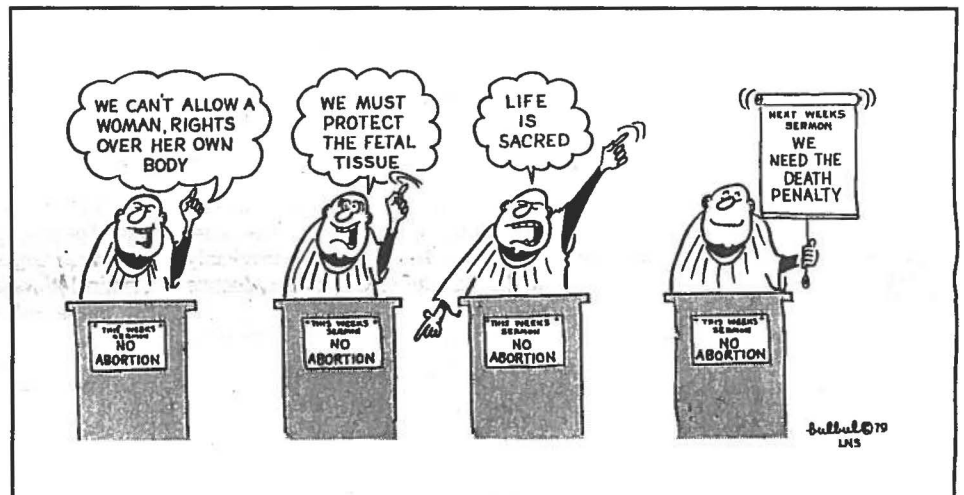
And still other women made the decision under threat and coercion. Catherine, from Metro explains:

"He gave me lots of threats. Threatening phone calls, threats to my face. He said, 'If you keep this child, I'm going to see to it, as soon as you start to show, we're going to shove you down a flight

ences with the staff and facilities at the Victoria General Hospital; however, the consistency and magnitude of negative experiences indicate that Nova Scotia desperately needs a more compassionate and competent system of reproductive health care. Nancy Bowes, in her conclusion states:

"It would be tempting to see their hurt and anger as regret for the choice they made, but, in fact, no woman interviewed for this research expressed regret for the choice she made. Some expressed regret that they had ever been in the situation of having an unintended, unwanted pregnancy, but none expressed the wish that she had carried that pregnancy to term."

The report is disturbing and calls attention to some crucial areas long overdue for change in Nova Scotia. The recommendations outlined within the report highlight these areas, and call upon the Nova Scotia Government and providers of health care to implement them. Dr. Robert Fraser, head of Gynaecology at the Victoria General Hospital, in a TV press interview, implied that not all doctors are comfortable dealing with the issue of abortion. What Dr. Fraser failed to discuss was the "ethical obligation to provide



of stairs.' He said, 'I'll do anything to make you miscarry.'... I was definitely scared. I didn't want to know if he was going to go through with them or not."

Stella, from Metro, recalls a similar fear:

"He reacted very, very harshly. Not violently, but violently angry. He told me that if I didn't get an abortion, that he would give me one, plain and simple."

The purpose of the report was not to recall 'horror stories' from women, nor to slam the Victoria General Hospital for poor services, but simply to document the wide array of experiences women within Nova Scotia have had. The pain and frustration recalled from the participants was very real, and not something to be ignored. Some of the women actually recalled good experi-

counselling on all options available to a women with an unintended pregnancy" [recommendation 3 (b)], as outlined in the Medical Society of Nova Scotia.

Personally, I found the report very educational and very sad. It made me sad that so many women have to experience such abuses and mistreatment at the hands of a medical profession we are supposed to trust.

It made me angry that it has taken so long to hear these stories, and even now that we have testimonies from Nova Scotia women to validate what we have known for so long, the Nova Scotia government continues its crusade to deny the efficacy and need of the Halifax Morgentaler Clinic. It makes me want to scream at the anti-choice protesters who promote the view that abortion is an easy and selfish choice to make for women who don't want to continue a pregnancy.

While each woman does not experience the same anguish as the women in *Telling Our Secrets*, we all share a connection to reproductive capabilities which enables a deep bonding with the women for their suffering and pain.

For your copy of *Telling Our Secrets: Abortion Stories from Nova Scotia*, call the Abortion Information Referral Service at 422-4123, or send \$5.00 to: the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, P.O. Box 101, Station M, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 2L4. Available at Red Herring, as well.



In *The Burning Times*, filmmaker Donna Read explores a phenomenon that until recently has curiously remained unexamined: the witch hunts that swept through Europe only a few centuries ago. This riveting film explores many factors that led to this women's holocaust, and points out how its effects can be seen today in widespread violence towards women and neglect of our environment.

We are often asked for more information by renters of this extraordinary film. If you or your group wish a facilitator to animate a discussion please call 426-6014. We have just the person to assist you. Lorene, a part-time NFB freelancer, is willing to share the knowledge she has gained through women's studies and history courses.

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SPERM (the Society for the Protection of Endangered Reproductive Material) members protest at Human Life International's lack of vision. From left: Mrs. Tess Tickle, Mrs. Adam Scribb, Mrs. E. Jack Ewelation, Mrs. Hans Krotum, Mrs. Constant Breeder, and Dr. P. Ness and wife. (Photo by Amani Wassef)

Media Watch study slams sexism

Jennifer Ellis

A new MediaWatch study of newspapers from across the country highlights the absence of women, both on the pages and in the newsrooms. Data gathered from 15 different newspapers published on the same day show that for every one woman mentioned, more than four men received coverage. The Daily News of Nova Scotia managed to refer to women a measly 13 percent of the time. The highest number of references were found in another Atlantic paper, The Evening Times-Globe of New Brunswick, as it referred to women 28 percent of the time.

In terms of who is writing the stories, men received an average of 70 percent of the bylines while women had only 30 percent. Either this indicates women make up 30 percent of the staff of the newspapers and wire services, or they are getting less than their fair share of the credit. Once again The Daily News ranked the lowest of all the newspapers as women received only nine percent of its bylines. The Daily Gleaner of Fredericton outshone all others as women had 56 percent of its bylines.

The language of the newspapers was also reviewed, and numerous instances of sexism were recorded. For example, one young woman at a demonstration against the G.S.T. was described by her "tight, black mini-skirt and coltish, stockinged legs." Another story noted how a singer was "undimmed by recent motherhood." Six newspapers published a wire story which referred to Ivana Trump's toenails as being one of her main attributes. Not as surprising, but nonetheless disheartening, were the 30 or so male-gendered terms used to refer to women or to people whose sex was unknown to the reader (i.e., spokesman, chairman, workman, firemen, salesman, six-man squad).

The repeated exclusion of women in the use of language, in the coverage of women and their activities, and in the writing of newspaper stories, perpetuates the notion that men are the only newsmakers, the only ones worth reporting on. As a study recently released by the Southern Newspaper Group's Task Force on Women's Opportunities so aptly puts it, "In Southern newspapers as in others, men, in the main, determine what is news and how to sell it to the public; men hold down the top jobs. If the medium is the message, the message comes through a male filter."

"It's hard to parody something which is already absurd"

The Society for the Protection of Endangered Reproductive Material (popularly known as "Ladies for SPERM") held a demonstration near the Dartmouth Holiday Inn at 2 pm, on Saturday, November 10th. The protest coincided with the Human Life International Strategy Weekend for Canadians and Americans at the Inn that weekend.

SPERM is protesting the presence of Human Life International in Halifax on the grounds that they endanger Precious Human Life through profound neglect and limited perspective. Their concern extends only as far as saving fetuses; but, as we all know, the true beginning of Human Life is the Sperm and Egg. What about saving them? They are the most vulnerable members

of our community, and the most in need of protection.

Furthermore, the Human Life International brochure is a dangerous document for children, adults and families. It actually contains the term "s__ education!" Do they not know that by publishing the word "s__," they cause hormones? Hormones lead inevitably to the waste of precious Reproductive Material!

Even more despicably, they have published the word "homos__uality" right in their pamphlet, where anyone could pick it up and read it! This is a blatant disregard of the fact that if this word was never used (along with its synonyms "g_y" and "l__n") these people wouldn't exist because they would never get the idea.

Homos__uals, g_y and l__ns are ruthless, blatant wasters of Reproductive Materials. Murderers!

Further, Human life International limits itself to attacks on Daycarism, disregarding the true culprits, such as Tamponism and Padism (all women should be pregnant at all times), Ejaculationism, Orgasmism, and all other Criminal Waste of Precious Reproductive Materials! True concern for life must start at its source. Eggs and Sperm. To waste even one of these Precious Gifts by throwing it away on a tampon or drowning it while washing the sheets is Murder.

SPERM also believes that there may be menstruating women attending the Human Life International Conference! In fact, we know there are; there

has been a leak. Where are their husbands? Don't they realize this is a criminal waste of Precious Reproductive Materials?

SPERM urges all our governments and citizens to return to basic moral values.

- Criminalize masturbation and menstruation
- Abolish birds and bees
- Achieve immaculate conception for all
- Ban literacy, so that people cannot get criminal ideas
- Demand more suffering, less suffrage for women

SPERM is currently carrying on several important pieces of research. We are rapidly moving towards the technology to change male bodies so that they issue only one sperm at a time, and eradicate menopause, that plot to end women's useful lives. We are also studying and publicizing the horrors of post-ejaculatory syndrome and post-menstrual reconciliation.

SPERM member groups include:

- Pro-Sperm Network
- Eggright Nova Scotia
- Campaign Sperm Coalition
- REALER Women (Righteous Eggoists Active for Letting Eggs Reproduce)
- Organization for Valuable Unborn Men (OVUM)
- Group for Irreversibly Repentant Lesbians (GIRL)
- Physicians for the Protection of Bodily Fluids

For more information, ask our husbands!

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Highlights— Human Life International Strategy Weekend:

The agenda of the Human Life International Strategy Weekend included such topics as:

Daycarism, Feminism, Women and the Mystery of Suffering, Sex Education, Inside International Planned Parenthood Federation (I.P.P.F.), Homosexuality and AIDS, Dangers of the New Age Movement, Chastity, and Post-Abortion Syndrome

Some highlights of the "outstanding" speakers at the conference: Fr. Ted Colleton: "in his 30 years experience in Kenya has never heard the word abortion."

Randy Engel: "has given us a careful analysis of the present sex education plague"

Dr. Paul Cameron: alerted people to a report that "blamed Christianity for the spread of AIDS, gave the OK to homosexual relations with children, and called the Judeo-Christian-Islamic analysis of homosexuality a 'social sickness.'"

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Pandora

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

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

Articles in Pandora do not necessarily reflect the views of the advertisers.

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Contributors: Darkspawn, Louise Ardenne, Dian Day, Patricia Doyle, Jennifer Ellis, Erin Goodman, Penelope Hutchison, Dianne Nickerson, Betty Peterson, Lori Savory, Amani Wassef

Thank you, one and all!

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Pandora is distributed to various locations throughout the province and the country. The editorial committee felt this 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: Photographs of SPERM by Amani Wassef.

Presswork by Kentville Publishing

We want it all... and we want it now

The members of Pandora put together a wish list for 1991.

- An organizing manual for events — a "How To" of where to get megaphones, march permits, etc., so we don't re-invent the wheel, and pull out our hair, every time
- Someone to start a business called Rent-a-Demo. For \$25 you get 40 people and one speaker with a loud voice; for \$60 you get 100 people (with megaphone) and 25 placards...
- The removal of G.S.T. from plugs and pads (menstrual products)
- Archbishop Hayes' mansion and estate to be donated to the lesbian community (upkeep, etc. included) to atone for the catholic church's oppression of women
- Non-toxic, effective flea powder
- For everyone's attitudes towards body image to radically change
- For more than 2% of children's books to have female characters that are other than mothers and sisters
- To have supervised designated play areas in shopping places
- A provincial union for childcare providers
- ...Make that a powerful national women's union, with the courage and support to go out on strike as necessary
- A March 8th (International Women's Day) walk-out for all women. Let's see how business and society copes then
- For men to stop making obscene and harassing phone calls
- A women's resource centre in every town and city
- A feminist-run animal shelter
- A women's restaurant in Halifax
- Large clothes that don't cost a fortune
- For used clothes stores to have a big/ large section
- Therefore, for all women who are waiting to lose weight, to donate their too-small large clothes to a second hand store (or to the large women in Pandora)
- Solar powered cars
- A new way to say "Hi" to friends —massage their neck
- A just legal system
- More (some!) good paying, non-exploitative, interesting, part-time jobs
- A good time-out place to go
- Birthday cards that don't put down getting older
- More hours in the day ... and night

- Pre-shrunk clothes
- A three-day weekend every week
- A women's trading shop and bartering network (beat the GST)
- A directory of trades-women
- For the anti-choice people to give their money and time to single moms
- For childcare workers to be paid at least as much as sports stars
- That someone would write the Pandora editorials for us
- For women volunteers (like those

at Pandora) to be paid for their work

- For more women to work on Pandora

- An end to all forms of oppression
- For John Buchanan to donate his senate salary to the lesbian community in their new location at Archbishop Hayes' estate.

Send us your wishes. From all of us at Pandora—have a happy, active, healthy, peaceful year—may you grow stronger, healthier, smarter, and love yourself more.

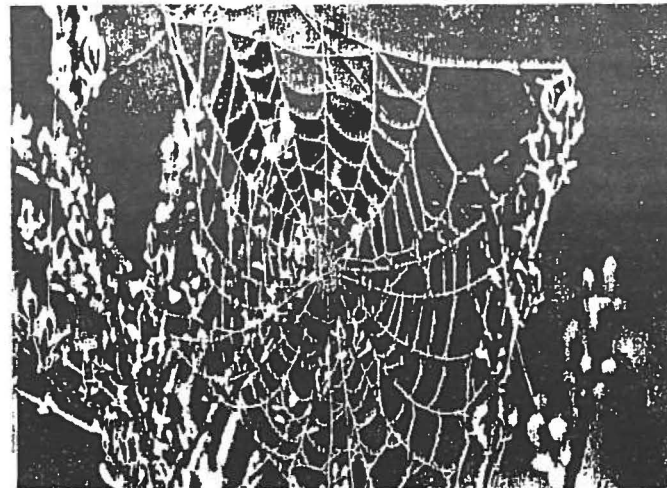
Vigil supports peace in the Gulf

The Voice of Women is working for a peaceful resolution to the current crisis in the Gulf. Beginning December 10, 1990, a daily vigil has been kept at the Halifax City Regional Library (Spring Garden Road) from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm. Pamphlets are being distributed and petitions are being signed.

The original plan was to continue the vigil until January 15, 1991, but given the heightened crisis, a decision has been made to continue for an undetermined period of time.

Please come out whenever you can to give your support for a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Gulf.

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

Women-only groups empower members

Pandora:

I was most interested in your editorial in the spring 1990 issue on why men of goodwill should not be allowed to participate in various women's organizations such as Pandora. You covered the topic well, and I just wanted to contribute my thoughts on the question, as it has come up in various guises as long as I have been involved with the women's movement.

One of the first times was when a feminist friend told me about Mary Daly's visit to UNB to speak. Mary Daly announced at the beginning of her talk that men would not be allowed to speak at the meeting although they would be allowed to listen.

My friend was only just at the beginning of her involvement with feminism at the time, and she was rather shocked at this "unfairness." Later she realized that "objective fairness" was not the issue here; the feminists' experience was that in any meeting where men were allowed to speak, they either heckled the speaker or took over the question period entirely with the end result that women were once more silenced and their questions and interests were not addressed.

Men need not be anti-feminist to behave in this way. No doubt many men have legitimate interest in the questions with which feminists are engaged. However, the reality is that men and women grow up in different worlds and are conditioned differently.

Study on women in military

Pandora:

I am researching a feature on Canadian women in the military, primarily focusing on enlistment motivations and how actual experience in the military compares to initial expectations. The study will be published in "New Maritimes" magazine. If you currently are, or once were, a member of the Canadian Armed Forces, and wish to participate in the study, please contact me at the following address or phone numbers;

Erin Goodman, 2648 Fuller Terrace, #4, Halifax, N.S., B3K 3V7, 455-2295 (h), 492-0444 (w)

Lesbian AIDS care-givers to be documented

Pandora:

I am intrigued by the number of lesbians who work in voluntary ways as care-givers of men who have A.I.D.S. and want to document our experiences. I would be interested to know why we do it, for what reasons, and whether or not doing so raises ideological concerns with which we must grapple. If you are a lesbian working with men with A.I.D.S. and would be willing to be interviewed, in confidence, please write to: Researcher, c/o Pandora Publishing, P.O. Box 1209, North, Halifax, N.S., B3K 5H4. Thanks for your co-operation.

Jeanette, Halifax

Men grow up with the assumption that they will be listened to, that women will defer to them and serve them, sexually or otherwise, that they will be able to get what they want from life, and that it is their role to take charge. And they act accordingly. Even the most kindly and sympathetic of men are trained to think this way and they can no more escape their conditioning without a great deal of hard work than we can, and they tend to have less incentive to do so.

Women, on the other hand, grow up with the assumption that they will have to accommodate their needs and desires to others, that they should defer to men, that they will probably not get all they want from life, and that they must learn to make do and be happy with what they are able to get, and they act accordingly. These assumptions are so ingrained into the male and female psyches that even being conscious of them does not invalidate them.

It means, however, that the pres-

ence of men in women's organizations has a most destructive effect on the women's ability to act, and it is crucial that these forces not come into play.

Women must be able to learn the organizational and communication skills they need for political action without interference or well-meant advice, and to develop their own kind of organization which is in many cases very different from the patriarchal model. They need to have the mental space to interact with each other without the consciousness of a male presence which may alter the ambience.

Furthermore, although we are separate individuals, we do start to work together on the common ground of being women, and much of the preliminary understanding necessary for group work can be accomplished fairly easily. Precious energy does not have to be expended on trying to explain this common ground to those who do not share it. The energy can be channelled into the actual work to be done.

We may try not to let the presence of men affect the spirit or the agenda or the atmosphere of the group, but the reality is, it does. And precious energy should not have to be expended on trying to make ourselves believe that it hasn't had any effect or in trying to counteract the effect. It is a sad comment on our culture that the sexes grow up in such different ways that it is extremely difficult for us to interact unselfconsciously with each other.

If men truly want to assist women in achieving their rights, they must start by acknowledging their own complicity in the present state of affairs. They should form their own groups, write their own books, express their own fear and their own anger at the boxes that gender stereotypes put them in.

Furthermore, there are many places where women and men can work together for their mutual benefit: in peace and environmental activism, for example, in working for the rights of children or in workplace organizing.

But a women's newspaper should remain a women's newspaper and a political action group for the rights of women should remain a women's political action group.

It is so hard for women to speak out even to each other; the conditioning to be silent and to endure is so strong in us. The women's groups we join and support and work with are our places of safety, the places where we can learn and grow without fear, where we can create ourselves and build on each other's energies. As Adrienne Rich writes in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence*: "As separate individuals, women have rarely been in a position to use our pain and anger as a creative force for change. Most women have not even been able to touch this anger, except to drive it inward like a rusty nail." Women's organizations must continue to provide places where we can "use our pain and anger" to change the world in which we live.

Chris Reed, Wolfville

WHEN questions ethics of payment to Grace Maternity Hospital for use of baby formula

Pandora:

The Women's Health Education Network (WHEN) recently received a phone call from a reporter in Toronto. She said that she had information indicating:

- that the Grace had signed a contract with Ross Laboratories to use and distribute their baby formula exclusively,
- that Ross Laboratories would supply the Grace with formula free of charge,
- that in return for this, the Grace was to receive \$300 for each baby born in the facility, and
- that this contract was to run for 10 years.

If this is true, it means that with more than 5000 births each year, the Grace would receive at least \$1,500,000 each year to promote a particular brand of formula. Over 10 years that is a potential of \$15 million.

WHEN is shocked. If the Grace is taking any money at all to promote formula, we wonder how sincerely it can support breastfeeding. Presently, the Grace has only one breastfeeding counsellor on staff to advise and assist the more than 5000 mothers who give birth there each year.

WHEN questions if this is any way related to the availability of free formula. The importance of breastfeeding might not be clear to new mothers if a formula alternative is promoted and is free while she is in the hospital.

The alleged agreement that the Grace will use the Ross brand formula exclusively is highly problematic. Hospitals are in a position to have great influence on the decisions new mothers make about feeding methods and formula brands. Mothers consider the hospital use or recommendation of a certain brand to be an endorsement of its quality. Mothers keep using what they're sent home with. Hospitals that enter into these deals thereby become a part of the advertising and promotional activities of the manufacturers.

The Grace is where most of Nova Scotia's babies are born. It is also the referral centre for the Maritimes. It would seem to be a big advantage for a company to have exclusive access to all those mothers and babies.

Every health organization of which WHEN is aware has a policy that recognizes breastfeeding provides the optimal nutrition for babies, and that every effort should be made to support and encourage it. Medical associations, nursing organizations, public health associations, and nutritional societies all support breastfeeding. Can the Grace be committed to a breastfeeding policy if it is being paid to push formula?

The World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines prohibit hospitals from accepting free formula. In the *Globe and Mail*, October 27, representatives of several maternity hospitals said they must live in the "real world," and, regardless of whether they violate the WHO code of ethics on marketing formulas, they can't afford not to accept deals with formula companies.

WHEN wants to know:

1. What is the nature of the agreement between the Grace and Ross Laboratories?
2. Did the Grace make its decision about which formula to use based on the quality of the product or the sweetness of the deal?
3. In its response to the reporter's questions, the Grace said that "price" was a criterion in the selection of formula brand. Does this refer to the price to the hospital or the ultimate price to the user? It is families who ultimately buy the formula. The incidence of breastfeeding is lowest in those economic groups where price is most likely to be a factor.
4. More generally, does the N.S. Department of Health have a policy, which can be publicly disclosed, on exclusive distribution deals between hospitals and formula companies?
5. Does the department have a policy of encouragement and support for breastfeeding as a preferred method of infant feeding?

WHEN thinks that there is something seriously wrong, and we are worried about it. We suggest that hospitals not engage in exclusive, long-term contracts with formula suppliers. Also, any kind of support or payment given to hospitals by formula companies

should be publicly acknowledged. All monies given must be used for providing educational programs, support for breastfeeding mothers and funding for on-staff breastfeeding counselors.

Breastfeeding is an important issue. WHEN hopes that you will share our concern. Please write to:

• Major Harold Thornhill, Executive Director, Grace Maternity Hospital, 5821 University Avenue, Halifax, NS,

B3H 1W3.

• George Moody, Minister of Health, PO Box 488, Halifax, NS, B3J 2R8.

• John Malcom, Administrator, Health Care Institutions Department of Health, P.O. Box 488, Halifax, NS, B3J 2R8.

Sincerely,

Janis Wood Catano, Corresponding Secretary, On behalf of the Board of Directors, WHEN

Letter to Campaign Life urging action against violence against women

October 26, 1990

Mr. Herm Wills
President Campaign Life Coalition
5871 Spring Garden Road
Halifax, NS, B3H 1Y2

Dear Mr. Wills,

Last Friday provincial Court Judge Joseph Kennedy struck down provincial legislation that prevented Nova Scotian women from receiving legal medical abortions at free-standing clinics in their home province. The Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia celebrates the imminent establishment of free-standing clinics because these will allow women to act more freely on their decision to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. In essence, Judge Kennedy's ruling makes it possible for Nova Scotian women to more fully control their lives. Buchanan and Nantes' paternalistic bid to dictate to Nova Scotian women what is "good" for them has failed.

But what of the women whose lives are controlled by abusive spouses? Who is acting on their behalf? In 1988 at least 97 women died in domestic violence in Canada. On the same Friday that Judge Kennedy's ruling came down, a Spryfield man was arrested, accused of the strangling death of his wife. The following Wednesday, a Sydney Mines man was charged with

second-degree murder in the stabbing death of his girlfriend.

The debate regarding the personhood of a fetus goes on - ad infinitum. However, there is no doubt that women and children are persons, entitled to the security we claim to afford all members of our society.

Open your eyes to the reality of women's experiences in our society. Consider the similarities between Buchanan and Nantes' attempt to control Nova Scotian women's access to abortion services through the courts, and the abusive husband's attempt to control "his" wife through mental and physical violence.

Cynthia Haughn has vowed that 5,900 Campaign Life (a local anti-choice group) members will take whatever action is necessary to prevent abortions at Morgentaler's McCully Street clinic. Scuffles and jostling outside the clinic will not prevent women from accessing medical services they have a right to under the law. Please consider the option of redirecting these efforts. Join us in lobbying the provincial government to immediately and adequately address the problem of violence against women and children in our society.

Sincerely,

Pauline Raven, Co-ordinator
Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia

Young Nova Scotian women spill their guts on sexuality, self-image, jobs and feminism

Dian Day
N.S. Advisory Council on the Status of Women

During the fall and winter of 1989-90, the Advisory Council administered a 60-question survey to over 1,600 randomly-selected girls in grades 10 and 12 throughout Nova Scotia.

The questionnaire included both open and closed-ended questions and covered a wide range of subjects, including family background and school data, educational and employment aspirations, sexuality, relationships, self-image, substance use and feminism. In addition to the questionnaire, four focus groups were conducted with young women in different areas of the province to further supplement the statistical data.

One of the questions we asked the students was, "How would you define a feminist?" Students' responses covered the widest possible range of ideas, with many strong feelings in both negative and positive approaches. Almost half of the young women provided us with a primarily positive definition, involving one or more of the concepts of women's rights, equality-seeking, and independence.

"A feminist is someone who is proud of her sex and would like to see a world in which everyone is just as proud, regardless of sex, race, etc."

"A feminist is an intelligent woman of the 90s who believes she can do or accomplish anything a man can do. A strong willed woman who knows men and women are equal."

Twenty-nine percent provided us with primarily negative definitions, and 22% said they didn't know or gave no answer.

Some young women provided us with a positive definition but followed it with an assertion that men and women are fundamentally different.

"A woman who wants that men and women are treated equally but often try to get more power over males. They ignore the fact that there is a natural difference between men and women." "Someone who thinks that men and women are equal at everything. They have to face it that that's not true."



"I don't think a woman's place is in the kitchen, but I do believe that a woman has a duty to provide a certain element of love and guidance that men, because of their nature, do not have."

"I think something has gone out of life. Men and women try to be equal and they aren't; they never will be. The sexes are different. Jobs and salaries should be equal but otherwise we are not the same. Men will always be raised by women who may be feminist but will still give their sons sexist influences. With everyone trying to be equal to the opposite sex there is no romance or gallantry anymore."

Some young women felt that feminists were demanding "extra" rights or pushing the pursuit of equality too far.

"I believe women are equal to men and deserve equal rights but I don't think they are deservant of extra rights."

"A feminist is a woman who is out to destroy the male race. They started out okay trying to get equal rights but there is a limit. They are still pushing too hard, this world is dominated by men, it should be more balanced, yes, but not the extreme they are pushing it. They want everything and they soon will start taking everything."

Some equated feminism with female chauvinism...

"A feminist is a female or woman that think she is better than a male and keep

calling the male race down."

"One who (when someone is talking about Mankind and says Man...) says 'what about woman?' etc. Someone who takes a spaz when someone said something that may or may not be meant as an insult to women. Feminists always take it as an insult."

"I think feminists are maniacs who are bloqued on their ways and being like that they're impossible to talk to, so, no one will eventually listen to them."

...or with lesbian images.

"A person who has chosen to cut off all her ties with males, refraining from sex with men, whether she be a lesbian or not."

"A feminist induces images of bra-burning lesbians. However, I guess, a feminist essentially is one who believes in equality (in the sense of opportunities, jobs, education) of women and men and who seeks out the establishment of the sex-role stereotypes embedded in our society."

"A gay girl/boy."

Some young women provided a confused definition involving both "feminist" and "feminine" elements.

"A feminist is a female that thinks that us women are not getting enough attention or enough time to show what we

can do. They don't like other females that have become a housewife and is a slave in her own home. Always dress feminist, like dresses and jewelry."

"Wears dresses all the time, carries a purse, thinks they're superior to men."

One young woman had an interesting sense of reverse "equality."

"I feel that a woman can do anything or be just as high as a man. Men aren't always superior, women can abuse men too!"

In addition to the question, "How would you define a feminist?" many young women chose to discuss issues of sexism and discrimination in response to the final question of the survey, "Do you have any comments or anything else you'd like to tell us?" Many young women demonstrated an awareness of how sexual discrimination affects their everyday lives.

"I feel that girls are discriminated against a lot. Women students had trouble with male teachers, asked guidance counsellor for help. He told them they were wrong."

"A surprising number of male teachers occasionally make sexist remarks about women (women drivers, women in sports...) Perhaps that men should learn more about the status of women."

"Give questionnaires on women to men! Some of my male friends (and teachers) need to come out of their shells. They don't realize that their comments are not only rude but sexist... I'm really sick of it."

"A lot of Cape Breton boys and men have very chauvinistic views concerning women (girls) and like to treat girls as second class citizens."

"I think that men think that they are better than women and the ladies should stay at home and have the babies and cook clean and that cooking

and cleaning is women's work and that men should bring home the money and I think that we should try to get men to think that we are equal because we are."

"I think that women still have to work harder than men in certain job areas and in sports, etc... to gain the recognition they deserve."

"In part of this survey it asks if I think men should be able to tell women what to do. All I have to say is who do some men think they are. They think that women do not have the same rights as them. And what they don't know is some women are smarter more educated and is able to do the same jobs as them, and sometimes even better."

All of the above young women also provided a very positive definition of a feminist, incorporating the equality-seeking or equal rights concepts, or both. It is clear that those who can identify discrimination in their lives are supportive of the feminist movement.

Although many of the above definitions are encouraging, sexism is recognized by only a very few young women as an obstacle to attaining their chosen career, or indeed, in all other areas of their lives. There is still a lot of confusion, ambivalence, and anger at the word "feminist" among young women today.

Equality-seeking women's groups must work toward a greater understanding of the term, among the general population and young women in particular. Not only do we need to Take Back the Night, we need to Take Back the Word!

For a copy of the report *Young Women in Nova Scotia: A Study of Attitudes, Behaviour, and Aspirations*, please write the Advisory Council on the Status of Women at P.O. Box 745, Halifax, N.S. B3J 2T3, or call 424-8662 (toll-free within Nova Scotia), or drop into our office at Purdy's Wharf, Tower 1, Suite 207, 1959 Upper Water Street, Halifax.

"... I am not the cause of another's violent behaviour ..."

Stopping Wife Abuse, Jennifer Baker Flemming

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

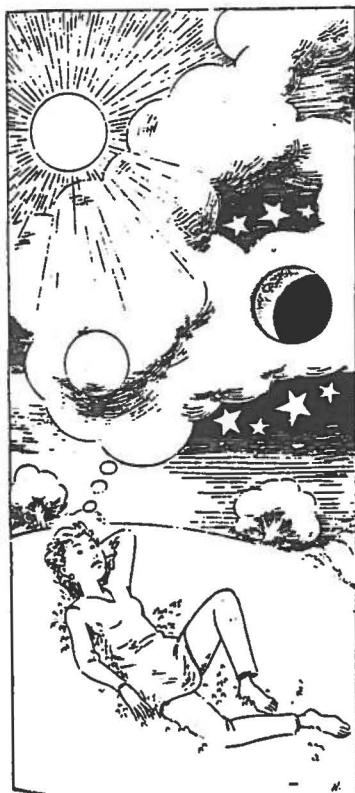


Advisory Council on the Status of Women



Definitions of feminism from the Young Women's study

Women's Rights	20%	
Equality Seeking	22%	49% positive
Liberated, Independent	7%	
Outspoken, Opinionated	2%	
Discriminates Against Men	5%	
Radical	3%	29% negative
Traditional, Feminine	10%	
Other	9%	
Don't Know	8%	22% don't know or no answer
No Answer	14%	



MicMac woman struggles to maintain voice & truth

© Patricia Doyle

I am scared. The challenge I face as I begin my studies is, "Will I be able to maintain my voice and truth?" Education imposes a style of thinking and behaving which is foreign to me. Education presents only the white, upper middle-class male bias. What does this mean for minority people attempting to earn their degrees? The question I raise is, "Why, in the face of the difficulties I will most certainly face, do I persevere?"

I hope to focus on some of the problems I have faced in the educational system. I hope to explain what it is like to be MicMac within a system that has traditionally devalued me, both as a MicMac and as a woman. But, will I be able to maintain my voice within such a system? Who I am and what I bring to the school experience is just as valuable and pertinent as what

"history" in a Catholic school created much shame in who I am. Yet, we were not godless, we believed in the Creator, and a spiritual way of life which may be different from what the Missionaries thought it should be. Thus, we were seen as having no God, no spiritual place in the world. This feeling that we have no place continues today.

I believe in the cyclical nature of the world. I believe that the sacred circle includes all people. My reality is not the same, on the outside, as the middle-class white students. Spiritually, I believe we are similar, yet my differences show. Cars, degrees and other outside trappings are used by this society to define its members. Thus, I am seen as less than valuable, less than human because I do not have any of those things. I am a single parent, I am MicMac, a student, and a survivor.

I try to live the sacred circle as well as I can. Spiritually, we all are beings protected by the Creator. I accept the fact that I am protected or I could not have come as far as I have come. Education, in the past, has meant the separation of my mind from the spirit. I have denied my voice, in order to please you.

The educational system implies that I must be less than a whole person. With its emphasis on grades and competition, the system has negated my spiritual beliefs. I know that my spiritual beliefs do not allow me to be so competitive. The hierarchical system of school with its emphasis on grades and competition negates my spiritual and cultural perspective.

Yet, this hierarchical system is never questioned. Am I to be a cute little cog in the system or will I be so demoralized by denying my reality, that I will leave school, in disgust? I do not want to give up on myself.

When I was thirteen years old, my eighth grade teacher called me a dumb Indian. Educators misinterpret our silence as stupidity. Our quiet respect for another's truth means being unable to challenge another's argument. In my culture, we do not argue with another's truth. So, in school, I was always quiet. I received good grades but could not speak up in class as well as "the others." The hierarchical system in school already has silenced me because my culture demands that I sit quietly.

I have been caught up in my shame of my Indianess, will I be again disempowered? I have cried in school with fear and anger. I have felt the pain of denying my heritage and spiritual beliefs, both as a child and as an adult.

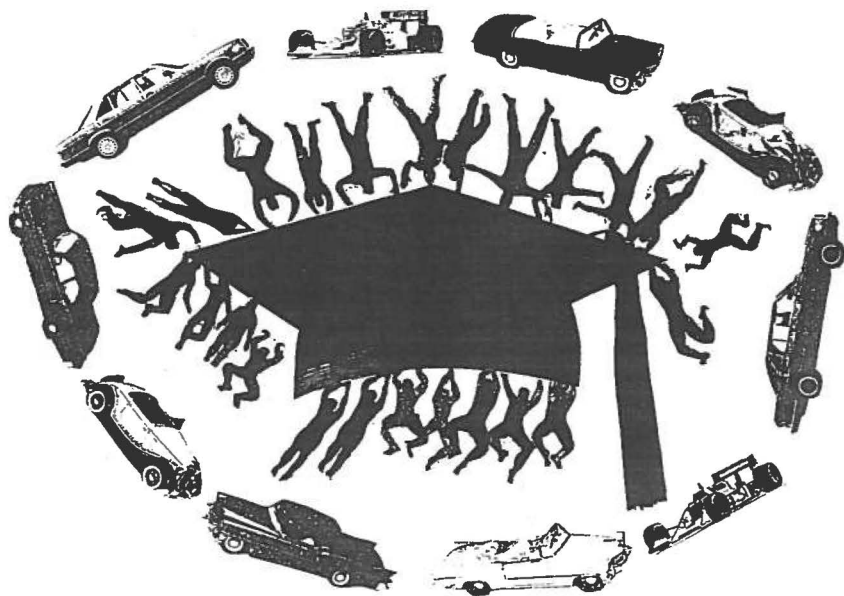
Within this system, we have learned that those who possess what the dominant society considers valuable will rise to the top of the hierarchy. Those whom the dominant society regard as less than human, will fall to the bottom. Thus, in order to succeed according to the standards set by this system, minorities have had to deny their reality. This is one lesson I have learned well in the educational system. I have learned to internalize the shame and hatred of the dominant society for who I am. They taught me that I am at the bottom. In the past, I have accepted this place.

Who defines what is good and bad in this society? The powerful people define what and who are good—mainly white middle class males.

Defining words, knowledge and others' realities requires tremendous power. I have given up my power in the past. I have allowed others in the system to define my reality and my soul. Never have I had the power to define myself until recently. During my university career, I have had to break down stereotypes professors held concerning my academic abilities. I eventually earned the right to define my area of knowledge, to do relevant research concerning my people as well as to write about what concerned me. I earned the respect of my professors. Yet, still I doubted my abilities. The pain of racism runs deep, the scars still hurt.

Yet, I need my pain to understand where I hurt and what needs to be healed. I need to heal this pain inside of me that contributes to my self-hatred. I need to stop allowing others to define and then devalue who I am. The child within believes she is flawed. It is up to me to teach this inner child the traditional ways of my people and to teach her pride in who she is—a strong MICMAC WOMAN. Only when I have taken care of my child within, only then will I be able to succeed at school. Only I can take the responsibility to heal my pain. It is not your responsibility.

By not owning my pain, the pain of racism, the pain of being devalued by the hierarchy, the shame of being MicMac, I am allowing others the power to negate my pain, my reality



Graphic by Rosemary MacAulay

and my self. By not owning my pain, I will fail at school. By waiting for you to fix me by not being racist, by not buying into the system, by changing the system for me, I am giving up my power.

School is so traditionally male, and competitive. Will those who hold such traditionally male views devalue my voice? Most likely. Yet my inner strength must be nurtured to keep me talking and owning my truth, even if it isn't what you think it should be. My pain will silence me if I make you responsible for it.

The pain which I own is the responsibility of me and my people. Making others aware of it will not take it away, but as the hierarchical system devalues all First Nations people, the pain is collective. Yet, I cannot speak for other MicMac women. I do not feel their pain. I do not speak for the foreign hierarchy. I do not know if they feel pain or not. Exclusion from the educational hierarchy collectively, as First Nations people, creates pain. The question which I must return to is, "Can I maintain my voice within an education system, whose sole purpose is to keep me out? Will I still be me?"

My voice is one of a MicMac woman. I ask the question "Why did I want to study?" For many years, success was a fantasy. I went to a Native conference and realized that my people need education to fight for legitimacy. Yet, education demands an ability to

study large amounts of knowledge and retain it. In addition, I must be able to make sense of this knowledge and apply it to different situations.

How does my voice need nurturing during this process? I must trust that I know what is right for me; I must learn to trust myself; I must be able to stand up for my beliefs, and to trust my spirit. Yet, today, I sometimes still feel excluded even from myself. The fear survives in me today. Coupled with that fear is the will to succeed and to earn my degree.

I do not want to lose my voice, which has taken years to develop, and which still needs nurturing. I have survived high school. Despite my immersion within this hierarchy, I have still been strong. One major problem with education has been the hope that if all us Indians got educated, we would all turn into nice white people. So far, this has not happened. Instead, I have gained more pride within myself for who I am, despite the fear and the shame I have carried for all of these years. Earning a degree will not turn me into a nice, upper middle-class white woman. Instead I will become a stronger MicMac woman who can finally do constructive things for her People. I will not stop being MicMac. We, as a People, will not disappear. We are not turning into anything except MicMacs with a sense of pride.

Education will not take away my First Nations spirit. I feel strongly that in order for my voice to be empowered, I must cling to my spiritual beliefs. I will not find that support in school but within my community. Education will not force me to maintain the status quo but to challenge it. My experience outside the status quo needs to be heard.

I have tried to share my feelings as I begin a new school year. My need to maintain my voice will increase as the year progresses, as it becomes easier to sit and be quiet and just get by. Because of my race and gender, I am doubly excluded. I need to trust my inner feelings. I must not separate school from my spirit. I must nurture my strength and find the confidence to stand up for myself with professors and other students. I am afraid. Yet there is no courage without fear, no growth without pain. A positive attitude must be maintained as well.

The women of my people have always been strong. It is up to me to maintain that strength. The psychological intimidation of racism, hierarchy and sexism will not defeat me. The essence of education, for me, is to survive intact. My heritage demands it.



Graphic from Cayenne

the "others" bring to their educational experience. Yet this has not always been the case.

Education, in general, for minorities has meant exclusion. We are different, less than white people. We are not allowed to forget it. From learning in grade three that we are savages to having racist teachers calling us dumb Indians, we have learned that our experience does not count. Most importantly, for me, I have been separated from myself. I have been separated from my spiritual beliefs which define who I am, A MICMAC WOMAN.

We were called pagans, heathens, godless savages who killed priests who came to save our souls. Learning such

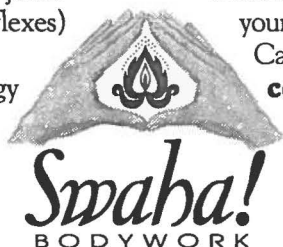
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EYE LEVEL GALLERY

"I loved the piece with the large type on the grass"

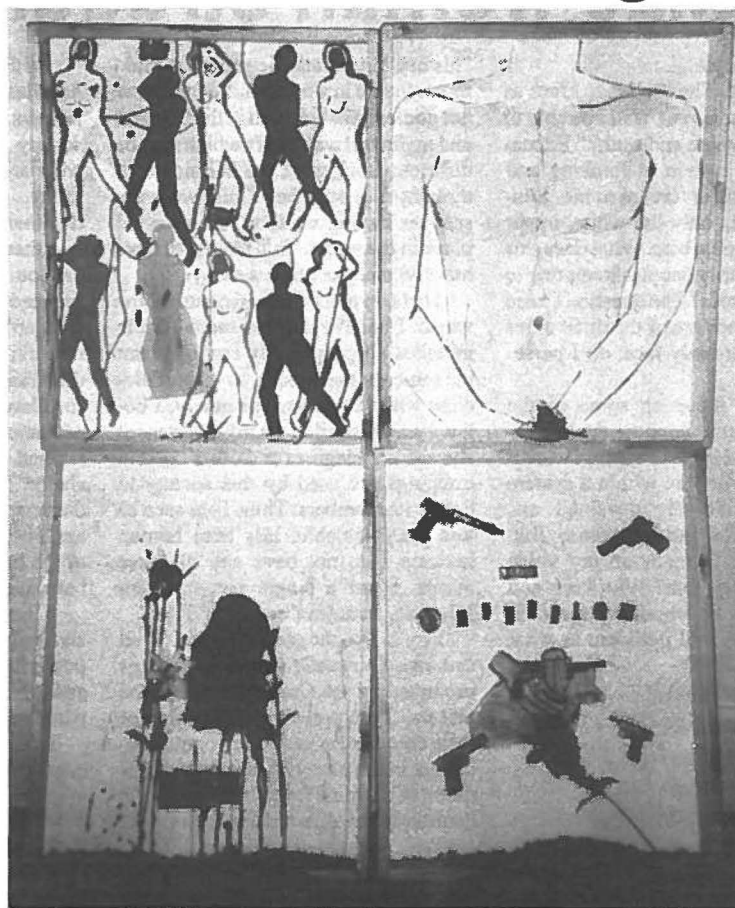
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2182 GOTTINGEN STREET, HALIFAX
TELEPHONE: 425-6412



Teri Robin Vernon
"Laughing Women" 1990

My particular concern is how commonly accepted media and advertising images serve to encourage negative perceptions and reinforce limiting stereotypes of women. This often leads to a pervasive climate of oppression in which many types of violence can flourish. By presenting this image of women laughing together I am trying to illustrate how positive and life affirming images can show us the way to a world where women's experiences and solidarity are celebrated joyfully.

Women Working Against



Buseje Bailey

In December Art Tapes a organized an titled, "Art Against Won statement."

The exhibit first anniversary women gunned Montreal on December 1991. The idea of the exhibit was to respond to the issue of violence, and to give women a knowledge of the experiences of women in Nova Scotia. The exhibit was open to all women, regardless of experience.

Photos by Am

Evolution of Man

He was born in Montreal. October 26, 1964
Blue for boys, pink for girls
Bouncing baby boy

His mother was a French-Canadian, his father Algerian
Eat you supper and you'll grow up to be big and strong
You're a growing boy, take some of your sister's

They were divorced when he was seven
You're the man of the family now
Dagwood and Blondie
Fred and Wilma

His school years were as carefree as other children his age
Boys take shop
Girls, Home Ec
Be a man
Fast Times at Ridgemount High
The Last American Virgin

He attended CEGEP and took sciences and electronics
Feminists want to be men
Dykes
What she needs is a good, hard...
It's a man's world

He applied to enter the Canadian Armed Forces but was rejected because he was "Anti-Social"

There's no life like it
Fight like a man

He did continue his education by taking a computer course at Control Data and a further Chemistry class

His neighbours said he seemed an ordinary sort who liked to listen to loud music

“She Was Hot”, “Satisfaction”
“She’s So Cold”
“Simply Irresistible”

He often wore army fatigues: he and a group of friends would rent war videos and action films from the local video store

Blow 'em away

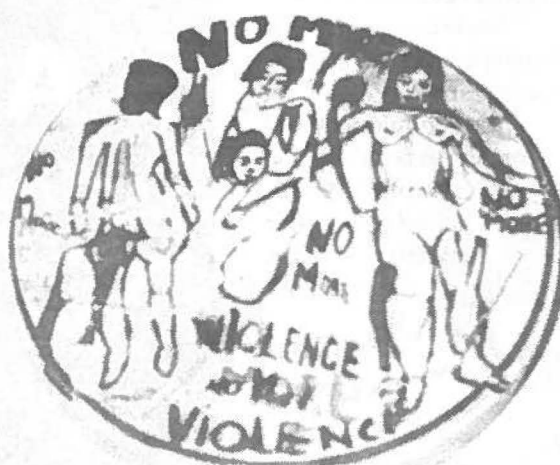
He was seen to frequent gun shops in the area
Why is beer better than women?
Take my wife, please
"No means kick her in the teeth"

So, the question is, why did this happen?

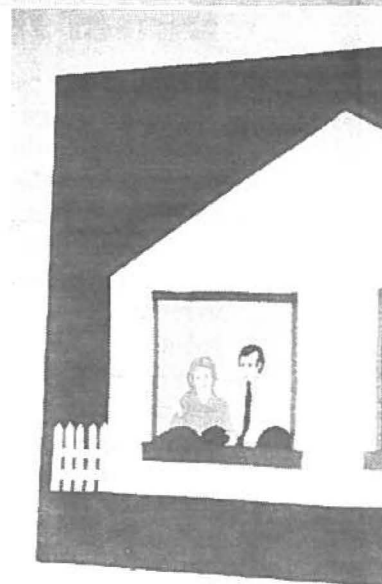
Lori Savory



Anita Martinez



Carol Langille



Barbara Carter "Home is not a

st Violence Against Women

ember, the Centre for
pes and Ann Verrall
ed an exhibition en-
'Art Against Violence
Women: a personal
nt."

exhibition marked the
niversary of the 14-
gunned down in Mon-
December 6, 1989. The
he exhibition grew out
esire to remember and
to this particular act
nce, as well as to ac-
lige the level of violence
nced by women in
cotia. The exhibition
n to all women, regard-
xperience or training.
wing a rally at City
ople marched to Eye
allery for the opening
ies and to see the ex-

by Amani Wassef



Krista J. MacRoberts 1990

Darkness behind
pain inside
scars to heal
tears cried
Brightness...
confidence returns
Healing takes time



Rose Adams "Memorial Piece" 1990

My sincere thanks to Jane Schaer and George Nelson of Heritage Memorials for the generous donation of their labour and the stone. Also, my heartfelt thanks to Stephen Mosher for moving in down the road with his woodworking tools and his friendship.

Tombstone reads: And if the grief we feel, the remembrance we have to continue, and the reflections we have to share, bring us into a world in which it is not empty rhetoric when we speak of each other as brothers and sisters, then, I think, the memory of the students in Montreal will serve us well.

—Ursula Franklin

Misogyny reflected in grocery line checkout

Amani Wassef

When I stand in the grocery store line-up, my eyes usually shift between the various reading material displayed, ranging from "Women's Day recipes of the 90's," to "The 5 year old boy who gave birth to twins." Most of this material I simply glimpse at without a second thought, with the exception perhaps to the odd chuckle of disbelief or groan of disgust. One day while waiting to pay for my groceries my eyes were drawn to a small pocket size book called "What Men Hate About Women." What struck me about this title was its explicitness in describing how men think about women. Usually the message in popular culture material is somehow disguised and hidden to avoid the reality of such thought. Anyway, I bought the 99¢ book, partly from the curiosity of wanting to know what could possibly be in it that I didn't already know (or what was presented as reality), and partly due to my outrage at such a publication.

The book begins by describing the basic physiological differences between women and men. For example, "[men have] male sex organs, abundant facial and body hair, thick vocal chords, more muscle and larger bone structure, and a tendency to favor torn T-shirts and baseball caps." In contrast, "females have bigger breasts, more body fat, and often have a can of diet soda in their predominant hand."

The book proceeds to outline various physiological differences between women and men beginning from foetal development to old age. At the infant stage, girls and boys were described as the fol-

lowing: "[Girls are] more responsive to touch, as well as sounds and smells, like the sensuous creatures they'll grow up to be." On the other hand, "Male babies spend more time awake and respond earlier to visual clues—thus preparing them, perhaps, for ogling centrefolds in adulthood." There were also some 'general' differences which account for women's and men's incompatibility. Here are a few mentioned for men:

• "Life expectancy as of 1985: 71.2 years, considerably shorter than women's (some m. swear, silently, it women who driv. them to an earlier grave)." [Obviously the number of women murdered by enraged male partners or misogynist killers was not considered.]

• "Sexual perversions are almost always found only in males [they finally got something right.] And for women it said this:

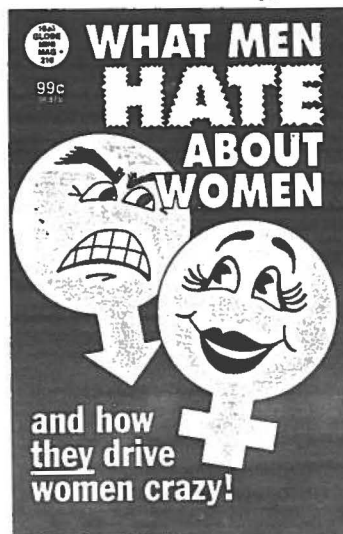
• "They have a better sense of smell—they can sniff a strange women's perfume on hubby's shirt from a mile away."

• "Despite all efforts and expensive creams, they wrinkle sooner because their thinner skin loses elasticity more quickly, and the bones shrink after menopause."

• "It's much more difficult for them to keep their weight down while eating a balanced diet." There is much more to the booklet including chapters on "Money," "Feelings," "Trouble spots" and "Looks aren't everything," however, I think the overall feeling of the book can be appreciated from the few

quotes cited above.

The ideology presented in this book is profoundly sexist and misogynist. The reasons given as to why men hate women are trivial and derogatory, usually relating to women's physical size or physiology. The portrayal of women is organized in a humorous fashion, perhaps to invoke still further a disrespect and trivialization of the things which perpetuate male hatred of women. Humor is grounded within the ideal and stereotypical notions of male complaints about women, with weight and beauty clearly emerging as the most important aspects of heterosexual relationships. Traditionally, humour has always been used at the expense of a minority or disadvantaged group or person. In keeping with this spirit, "What men hate about women" conforms with popular notions of humor using women as its victim. When I



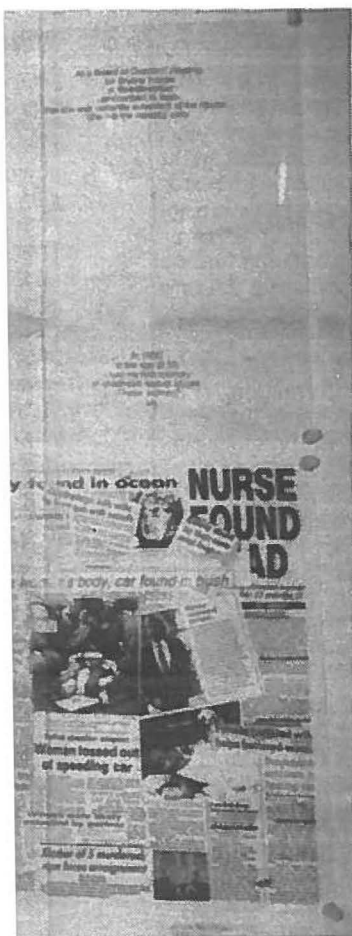
picked up the booklet, I didn't really expect to learn anything constructive or valuable, but at the same time I thought it was important to recognize how women are perceived and valued by a male-stream culture which awards us no respect or validity. And it is not only a lack of respect or validity that we suffer from, but at the hands of this culture we also encounter rape, violence, murder, harassment, and the normal everyday experiences of being treated as second class citizens. The booklet was a reminder to me of the

backlash which has hit the women's movement with full force in the last two years. Women's community groups and women on campuses across Canada have been bombarded with hate mail, spray painting depicting acts of violence against women and dangerous threats on personal answering machines.

The publication of a booklet such as "What men hate about women" is symptomatic of the larger societal problem which disregards the value of women and then trivializes it through humour (we have all heard the Marc Lepine jokes which have sprung up since December 1989). In Vancouver last year, a man arrived at a masquerade party dressed in fatigues pretending to be Lepine. He thought it was funny. At Osgoode Law School in Toronto, a group of men created the Lepine drama of female slaughter in their annual variety show. They also thought it was funny.

Lately, I've been feeling more and more like a victim, unable to escape the constant sense of fear I experience for publicly declaring I am a feminist. Recently, I watched a show on the back-lash against feminists at Osgoode Law School in Toronto, horrified to hear the stories of violence and threat against women who dared to speak out about the inherent sexism at the school. I then watched the Man Alive (ironically about dead women) show about the Montreal massacre and the effects it has had on the lives of women. What really alarmed me about the episode was the calmness and matter-of-fact nature in which women accepted and expected violence as a normal part of their lives.

I guess in a way I also expect some violence in my life, for I am a woman and I am a feminist. I, however, will never accept it and will continually fight against it.



not always sweet" 1990

Reflections of 68 years...

What it means to me to be a radical feminist

Louise Ardenne
Letter to a woman I met in the hospital
Dear Joan:

Although it must seem like it, I have not forgotten your request for my definition of a "radical feminist." Recuperation has just taken longer than I anticipated.

The other thing that has delayed my letter is my own thinking and the realization that I have grown beyond my old definitions. If you had asked me years ago what feminism is, I would have said something like, "It is becoming aware of the oppression of women and the destructive effects of this oppression, and being willing to work towards alleviating these conditions, politically, emotionally and intellectually." "Radical" only adds that I would rather change the system that produces these conditions than alleviate them. There is also the complication for me, now, that I cannot separate in my mind feminism, ecological needs and the imperative for peace. For the sake of this letter I will try.

As a feminist, I support the principle of equal pay for equal value. As a radical feminist I would like to change the system that lets men grow up thinking they are entitled to the larger share and to the free services of women, whether the women be wives, mothers, sisters, or friends. As a feminist I applaud and encourage gentleness and nurturing in men. As a radical I would like to change the schools, sports, clubs and military systems that want "to make a man of you, my son," which seems to boil down to "Men don't cry or show emotions," (except passion). It seems to me that our boys grow up emotionally deprived to become unexpressive, inarticulate men, that is, as far as relations are concerned. They can be quite articulate about sports, cars, jobs and other socially-designated male things.

As a feminist, I think girls should have a choice—soft, pretty, feminine things and/or tailored masculine things, a ball gown or a sports outfit. As a radical, I rebel against the system that says soft, lovely, cuddly things are for females only. What must it do to the young male psyche, to be taught that these things are not for males—that so many things are only for males to give (or give up) to females? Would we have so many transvestites if men were given the same freedom of dress as women?

Drop the Charges

Newfoundland women who occupied Secretary of State offices last spring are going to court at the end of January to face charges for trespassing. Their action kicked off the demonstrations across the country which succeeded in returning some Women's Program funding to women's centres. Provincial officials have said they will drop charges ONLY if the Secretary of State, Gerry Weiner, makes the request.

Please write immediately to: Hon. Gerry Weimer, Secretary of State, House of Commons, Ottawa K1A 0A6

Demand the charges against the 25 people that were charged in the Newfoundland occupation be dropped!

As a feminist I want women to have their own money, to learn about money and its management as an adult responsibility. I want them to learn even as tiny children, the dignity of personhood. As a radical I want these same things taught to boys. Only when money no longer means power over someone else, when every child is taught that their person is inviolable will there be an end to child, spouse, and elder abuse. As a radical, I want homes for people who batter, locked homes, with compulsory therapy. Battered, abused people should not have to flee, empty handed in the dead of night (or any other time).

This should give you an idea of my thinking. The male hierarchical system is wrong—hence I refuse to recognize it except to condemn it. With the possible exception of the military it must be changed, and even now the old type of military discipline with barked orders to lesser ranks is being modified, as women officers employ a quieter, more efficient way of leadership. I am ex-navy myself and I have watched with interest as the military moderates.

Religion again uses the male hierarchy. When I found it impossible to reconcile feminism with theology, I abandoned theology. Like most people, I have a deeply spiritual side, but I will fulfill mine without patriarchy or paternalism, which I see as the two most deadly of sins.

Now that I have written it out, I think my old definition of feminism is fairly adequate, only the meaning has become deeper for me. I was probably more superficial when I started—just aware that many things were wrong and hurtful, and that I wanted to be part of a group that worked to heal them. The connectedness of women in the women's movement is a wonderful warm experience. Empowerment, autonomy, co-operation—I applaud

them all. Feminism has become a way of life. I tolerate no sexist humour or comments. Probably because of my upbringing, my reproaches are usually gentle, but they are nonetheless direct and I make sure the receiver gets my point.

This is my year to organize myself, my books, my house; to give away all we no longer need; to see all my friends. Then I will be ready for old age, (I am 67 now) and spend the rest of my life as a "free-lance feminist" supporting, encouraging, and helping other women to be better, stronger and go further than I have.

Please keep in touch, and let me know your experiences with Women's Studies. I hope it will be the most enriching year of your life.

My warm regards,
Louise

□□□□□

Louise Ardenne lives in Seabright, is a senior citizen and a recent graduate of Mount Saint Vincent University.

Typist's note - Although Louise has not mentioned it, I would like to add that she graduated with the highest aggregate in her graduating class, overcoming the effects of a brain disease to do so.

The following note was included by Louise with the above letter:

As I wrote it out again tonight, I wondered if I had changed my thinking—I think I have. I am getting old and possibly set in my ways, so I am even more radical and like Maggie Kuhn will end my life as a "wrinkled radical"!

I hope so anyway. I envy your youth and vitality. There is so much to do and change and I am grateful there are people like you to do it, and regret I can't be a part of the next 50 years.

My warm regards,
Louise



Women's
Only Nights
Are Back

Second and Fourth
Tuesdays

Rumours is owned and operated for members and their guests by
the Gay And Lesbian Association of Nova Scotia

AMAZON	CRONE	RAIN	SUMMER	TIDE	WINTER	ART GALLERY	CAT-SITTING	RESTAURANT	SWIMMING	THEATRE	WALKING
ANNE											
CELIA											
RUTH											
SASHA											
THEA											
WILLOW											
ART GALLERY											
CAT-SITTING											
RESTAURANT											
SWIMMING											
THEATRE											
WALKING											

Gynogames: Where were the women last Saturday Night?

© Dian Day

Six friends were having Sunday brunch together at a restaurant (their first names were Annie, Celia, Ruth, Sasha, Thea, and Willow; their last names were Amazon, Crone, Rain, Summer, Tide, and Winter). During the meal they discussed their excursions of the evening before (one woman went to the Art Gallery, one was cat-sitting, one went to a restaurant, one went swimming, one went to the theatre, and one went walking). From the information given, can you determine each woman's full name, how she spent Saturday night, and (bonus question) each woman's position at the round table during brunch?

1. No woman's first and last name starts with the same letter.
2. No woman spent the evening engaged in an activity which started with the first letter of her first or last name (for example, neither Annie nor Ms. Amazon went to the Art Gallery).
3. Ms. Summer and Willow Tide, who were sitting next to each other, spent some time discussing the relative merits of their favourite forms of exercise, which they had been engaged in on the previous evening.
4. Both Ms. Winter and Thea were extremely allergic to cats and avoided them at all costs.
5. Sasha and Ms. Winter had both very much enjoyed the shows they had seen, and had a long debate concerning the relative importance of art and theater.
6. Neither Annie nor Thea has a seasonal last name.
7. Ruth had walked her dog in the park.
8. Thea sat between Ms. Crone and Ms. Rain and announced that the

fresh baked bread provided with the brunch was superior to that she had tasted the previous evening at a restaurant down the street.

9. Celia, who sat between Ms. Rain and Ms. Tide, did not go the Art Gallery. (see above chart)

This chart may help you to keep track of the information you've deciphered from the clues provided. As you go through the clues, make a mark in the intersecting squares of the grid which you know are not correct (perhaps with an "x" or by shading in the square) and make a different mark (perhaps a dot or a check mark) for those you know are correct.

Once you have definitely determined some information (i.e., from Clue #7 we know that Ruth had gone walking the previous evening) remember to cross off all of the other options in the appropriate row or column which you know deductively are not true - if Ruth went walking, she did not engage in any other activity (cross out the squares where "Ruth" intersects with "Art Gallery", "cat-sitting", "restaurant", etc.) and no one else went walking (cross out the squares where the other women's first names intersect with "walking").

To help you figure out where each woman was sitting during the brunch, you might want to draw a circle with six chairs around it. You can then fill in the space beside each chair with a woman's name.

If you get to the end of the clues and you still don't know each woman's first and last name and previous night's activity (and position at the table), go back to the beginning and go through the clues again. Some of them contain several pieces of information and it's easy to overlook something.

Dr. Carol Pye

Clinical Psychologist
Feminist Therapist

425-7043

Jezebel Productions formed to bring women's music and performances to town

Erin Goodman

It was a long, hot summer in Halifax, as I searched for entertainment that didn't come in the form of a busker.

Specifically, I was looking for women's music and performance. Entertainment that was within the means of my minimum wage salary, delivered in a positive community atmosphere.

I had to settle for mere crumbs. A spring benefit for the Service for Sexual Assault Victims was a fond but fading memory. An August night at Rumours with Earthwitch was a welcome, if brief, reprieve.

A glance through the upcoming schedule of events for the only "alternative" music venue in town was rewarded only with a token female performer or two.

A brochure for the Halifax Jazz Festival revealed no female representation in the Festival line-up.

Never before had the exclusion of women from alternative (never mind mainstream) artistic venues been so obvious to me.

I shared my sentiments with another woman, Lorene Dobbie. I envisioned organizing a woman's musical event, perhaps a weekend music festival. Her response was immediate, but her vision was much larger.

We identified the obstacles preventing us from enjoying women's music and creative expression on a regular basis. To the best of our knowledge, no one in Halifax had ever consistently promoted female performers.

Local women performers are the most frequently seen at benefits, demonstrations, and open-mike events. They have had to create their own performance venues. Many women have left to pursue careers in larger cities.

Women in the community have come together on many occasions to organize special events with local and out-of-town women artists. We were interested in, but not fully satisfied with, this process.

Lorene expressed her willingness to make a long-term commitment to the promotion of women's music and performance, perhaps in the form of a production company...

Since that initial conversation,

Lorene, myself and three other women—Connie Clarke, Yvonne Hanson and Jane Smith—have formed a very unconventional production company, Jezebel Productions.

According to feminist lore, Jezebels are strong, unconventional women, sometimes described as "she-devils" or "hussies." Pictou artist Catherine Hughes designed a wonderful logo that communicates the spirit of Jezebel.

Jezebel Productions is an all-woman, not-for-profit group dedicated to the promotion of women's music and performance. "Performance" incorporates dance, drama, performance art, comedy, etc.

I hesitate to define a specific Jezebel philosophy; it is highly fluid, and likely differs in some degree with each member of the collective.

We are interested in bringing out-of-province performers to Halifax, women who likely won't otherwise be presented here. In addition, we are

committed to creating venues for the promotion of local women's talent.

Our first event was a benefit held in October to help Jezebel get off the ground financially. The generosity of local performers—including Laura Smith, her partner David Hillyer, Rose Vaughn, Cathy Parter, Brenda Barnes and Joan White—made this event a wonderful success.

By the time this issue of Pandora is published, we will have held our second event, a concert featuring Montreal singer-songwriter Lucie Blue Tremblay, with the local Halifax trio of Rose Vaughn, Cathy Porter and Pam Mason as special guests.

Jezebel invites suggestions for performers, advice and inquiries. While the group is still in the developmental stage, ideas are necessary fodder for our continued activity.

Correspondence may be directed to: Jezebel Productions, 6227 Allan Street, Halifax, N.S. B3L 1G8

P.S. Future Jezebel events will be advertised in Pandora, when the publishing schedule permits.



Half of the 'Gathering' organizing collective, with film-maker Donna Read (in back). Joan Semple, Debrah Flemming, Marie Clare Chartrand and Lorene Dobbie.

"Gathering" supports community of women seeking affirmation of Goddess religion

Penelope Hutchison

On November 3, I reclaimed the word "witch" with more than 50 other women who had come to celebrate women's spirituality at the North Street church. The day was a chance for women to share their frustrations about Christianity, and to talk about their discovery of the Goddess.

Donna Read, director of *Goddess Remembered* and *The Burning Times*, joined us. She spoke of her journey through Europe and Mexico during the filming of both movies and showed slides of spiritual sites such as Malta, a place where the Goddess was once worshipped and where evidence of her existence lies carved in the stones and temples scattered throughout the island.

Through much of the day, I had to stop myself from wanting to cry. I was so overwhelmed with emotion. I have been searching for a long time for other women who believe that there must be something more to spirituality than the male-dominated Christianity which so many of us grew up with. I had always been uncomfortable, both politically and personally, with the white-bearded figure of God.

As a young girl I spent most of my time in church day-dreaming. In Sunday school the ministers could never answer any of my questions, and when they tried, the answers never made any sense to me. I eventually stopped going to church and spent my early university years reading up on everything I could find about the Goddess. When I walked into the North Street church, I knew I was among friends.

For the last few years, I have called

myself a witch in my own head. I rarely told anyone but thought often about the word and its place in my life. Starhawk, the author of many books on wicca, says the word "witch" means to bend or shape, changing one's own consciousness and the events in one's own life. I have never really done ritual in any formal sense but I began accepting the Goddess as a part of my life long before I thought there was such a thing as women's spirituality. In university I came into a feminist consciousness but felt that feminism was missing something for me. I was left physically and emotionally drained much of the time after participating in demonstrations. Then I met a woman who introduced me to the tarot and I never looked back. I love those cards and have been reading them since the first day I got my own deck.

The woman who introduced me to the tarot I renamed Kali, for she is very powerful and so often reminds me of that wonderful Goddess who understands so well the importance of death and change as a never-ending cycle in our lives. She taught me not to be afraid of change. She taught me that every end has a beginning. We used to spend hours talking about the Goddess and feminist spirituality, roaming the city for books, buying crystals and angel cards. Often we would gather together with many good female friends and read each other's tarot cards, always astonished at how accurate they always were. Those evenings by candlelight were a kind of ritual for us, where we shared our feelings and felt safer than we ever had before.

After the gathering at North Street

Church was over, I went to a party only to be faced with the patriarchal attitudes so graphically depicted in Donna Read's *The Burning Times*. On a chain around my neck hung a pentacle, a wiccan symbol of the elements. The people at the party saw the pentacle as a sign of satanism. They questioned me if I belonged to a cult. Did I worship the devil? I wanted to run back to those women at the gathering and remain forever in their protective circle. Instead I hid the pentacle away.

I realized that the "witch hunt" is still on, that it will be years before I can ever publicly call myself a witch. In *The Burning Times*, we are told that nine million women were killed for "practising witchcraft." I think that number is too low. We must include the 14 women killed in Montreal last December, and the more than 100 women who die in Canada each year from domestic violence.

The most empowering part of the day was the afternoon, when we joined together in a large circle, taking part in a ritual, singing and dancing. It was a chance to let the children inside us out for the afternoon. I think every woman there was full of happiness and energy once she left the church.

I felt a kind of power and safety at that gathering. The women I met were strong and kind. We became the kind of community for an afternoon, one that so many of us dream about. I only wish there was one every week. I know I was not alone in my thoughts.

Starhawk is coming to Halifax!

A fundraiser for the third film in Donna Read's Women & Spirituality series. It will feature a talk by Starhawk entitled *Re-defining the Sacred*.

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Beliefs withstand re-examination after break-in

Betty Peterson

It was a magical midnight, a mid-summer night's dream. The full moon across the Cape Breton harbour beckoned me and I stepped outside, bathed in the light that enveloped every blade of grass and pebble at my feet. Just the night for fairies, I thought, and sisters dancing in celebration. Earth-frangrance permeated the perfect stillness and I stood transfixed with the beauty and peace. Far-away lights from the village had long ago been extinguished. Reluctantly I came inside my summer cottage, locked the door and climbed into bed by moonlight.

Immediately the stillness was shattered by a dull thud outside—my imagination? Within seconds there was a wrenching crash, and I hopped out of bed and stood transfixed in the doorway of my tiny bedroom. Smash! Stones and bones of my collections scattered across the kitchen floor. Was it an animal that had slipped in a few minutes earlier while the door was ajar? Wishful thinking.

"Gimme your money," snarled a deep voice! Is this a nightmare?

"Get out of here! This is my house," I yelled in my best Rambo Grandmother voice.

Out of sight, the shape came nearer, knocking into the old wood stove. "Get out of here," I shouted helplessly, as the flashlight darted across the wall.

"Gimme your money or I'll get you," he growled.

Immobilized, I glanced about in the dark for escape. Across the room was the telephone, too far away in the dark for escape. To the right was the porch door, not yet unsealed from the winter. To the left, yes. I crept upstairs and quietly closed the heavy hatch and stood on it. Flight, not fight.

"This is it," I thought. Would he come up after me? Should I break a window and climb out on the porch roof? Then what? Easy old girl. I hardly breathed, heart pounding.

A weird, improbable memory flashed into my head—the standard question put to pacifists in WWII—"What would you do if someone tried to rape your grandmother?" "I'd bet on

Grandma!" Ho ho ho! Gallows humour! Too many old ladies raped, murdered and robbed on lonely Maritime farms of late.

Downstairs I heard crashing and rummaging in the bedroom, then running feet slipping on the rag rug and a banging screen door. Could I be so lucky? Was he gone? I rushed to the window to see a figure with a flashlight running down the drive.

I rushed downstairs and ran to lock the door against his return. No door! In one crash he had pulled it off the hinges! A rush to the telephone for help. Silence! Wires cut from the outside, and all this before I had gone for my midnight stroll.

He had been waiting.

As in a dream, I threw on my clothes, located extra keys and headed for the car. Down the winding driveway and through the woods I sped, but before I reached the main road, thump, thump of slashed and flattened tires, as I hurried to the village.

An icy calm steeled my nerves for the next few hours—a call to Sydney to locate a patrol car, a hurry order for a tracking dog from 75 miles away, the return to the scene of the crime to mechanically recite the story once more, a story that surely had happened to someone in the news, but not to me.

The unreality was heightened an hour later by the returning officer: the dog had veered off the drive through the dense woods on a seldom-used, little-known path leading to the main road and a getaway. This was not a stranger!

"No, I'm not afraid to stay here alone. I'll be OK. Thanks for your help." I fell into a troubled sleep. It must be someone from this island, then, someone who knows me, my minimum security, my vulnerability with no escape. Sickening thought.

Frustrating days followed. Time consuming details of new keys, car locks, identification, license and financial records, finger and footprint experts, and police statements. Many furtive break-ins in RCMP records,

do you expect? You're asking for trouble living out there alone." "Well, friends, I don't expect to have my door broken down and me lying there!"

2. Flight: "Just like I been tellin' you, dearie, get a gun and load it and shoot to kill." "Come on now, I don't believe in guns and killing and you know it."

3. Flight: "Be sensible! Close down the place and go back to the city for good." "This is my beloved home and no one is going to drive me away."

4. Fortress: "Any bejesus fool can break in there any time. You have to put bars on your windows and get a steel door." "Hey, I'm not going to live in a fortress... no way." (Hardly my style.)

5. Suspicion: "You know it's s o m e b o d y around here alright. There's an Indian moved in down the road — probably him. And that welfare family across the island, they're pretty hard up. Have you thought of him?" "No, but if I get sucked into suspecting my neighbours, one by one, I might as

well give up this way of life altogether."

6. Security: "Get a big watch dog." "Can't be bothered, I want to be free." "Better still, get yourself a MAN to protect you." "NO THANKS MISTER, for all of the above and more."

7. Gullt: Then I added my own reaction. "I have enough and maybe somebody needs it more than I do." "Come on now, Betty. Sure, you'd give the shirt off your back to anyone who

needs it. But this need was for drugs and dope."

Typical reactions, all, though not mine. I must confess to one of my own. I had waited for over an hour that night for help and finally the flashing lights of the RCMP to the rescue. In snappy uniform, out stepped one of the most beautiful young women imaginable.

"Oh no," I groaned, "why me?" Forgive me, one and all, for that latent prejudice. I swallowed, laughed at myself, shrugged and told my story. She was marvelous—efficient and warm.

So what has been the fall-out from my own reactions? After a few days of high energy and resolve, I faced extreme exhaustion as the excess adrenalin drained away, leaving an all-gone feeling.

Sadness: What has happened to the country life of old when we trusted our neighbours?

Regret for a time gone by.

Depression: It has to be someone who knows me and the area well. I've lived here for 21 years with the welcome mat out, and I feel betrayed. This was deliberate and planned. This is different from a winter break-in.

Relief: It was only money, with no bodily harm. My special place could have been trashed or torched.

Determination: I have a fierce love of my land, and when I put my foot on that earth, it is as if it grows there.

My land? Can one really own land? No doubt it was Native land anyway. How must aboriginal people feel? After that very night of my invasion, the dawn brought the assault on Oka. Another private space invaded. I identified completely. And yes, at the end came the anger and the outrage: shocking and uncontrollable. Though this was a minor kind of crime in an increasingly violent world, it has been psychological and emotional rape of my personal space, and I feel violated. It adds insult to the injury of a break-in this winter when all tools were stolen, and, far worse, when boxes of love letters, old family memorabilia from Sweden, and childhood pictures and souvenirs were dumped in a heap.

But enough of the past and of what seems like self-pity. What, dear sisters, in the context of present reality, is it like to be physically assaulted, to be helpless, defenceless, as are women among us and all over the world. I identify now with that powerlessness and fury.

But for a time I feared for the possible loss of my identity with the natural world, the freedom to roam at will and unafraid, my trust and openness toward the spiritual "Ground of Being." But I had learned somewhere along the way to acknowledge and examine these emotions, and to call forth and freely share my feelings with a few trusted women, even as I do here.

I have taken out my smudge stick and sweet grass given me by caring women; with it I invoked evil spirits in the dark corners of my sunny space and exorcised them. I renounced a fortress mentality—neither fight nor flight—and have accepted risk and vulnerability, though with increasing caution. I will try to live lightly for the years remaining and take what comes. Ultimately the only defense for me is defenselessness.

But beware, you marauders: I say TAKE BACK THE NIGHT from the men who prey on little old women on remote farms. We share what we have with all friends who come, but "Like a tree planted by the water, we shall not be moved!"



but none with the boldness of a door broken and someone asleep inside.

Word spread, and then came phone calls of concern and fear from local villagers expressing disbelief at such audacity. Though grateful for their many kindnesses, their responses began to trigger the most trying reactions in me. As I sought to answer each one, I dug deeper into my self-examination.

1. Blame the victim: "Well, what

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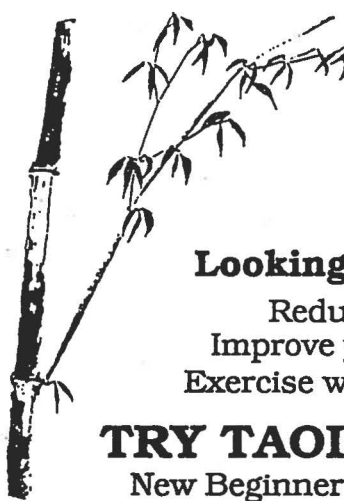
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Clinic operates despite anti-choice sabotage tactics

Darkspawn

Friday November 9th was a cold day, but the cold did nothing to deter us (ACCESS, clinic supporters and the Pro-Choice Network) or them (the anti-choicers) from petitioning in our own ways the cause of our groups. Early on we had slight twinges that today wasn't going to run as the usual day, but we weren't really sure what to prepare for. All we could do was wait and watch.

With the unfolding of the day came an unfolding of a new plot. The anti-choicers had traded in their script of a distorted evangelical parody for that of a B-grade spy thriller with a fairytale-gone-horror.

The main cast of characters included their scouts, side-walk pseudo-counsellors, spies and counter escorts; plus the usual "wear a circular path in the sidewalk" crowd. On our side were the escorts and clinic supporters who created a buffer zone of bodies in front of the clinic. Stay with me as I unfold what I observed from my vantage point.

ACT I: The Battle of the Crack: — This was a comic subplot that kept spirits high in the harshness of the weather, on our side anyway. The

"crack" was the partition between the cement slabs on the sidewalk. On either side of this crack both groups circled, mentally taunting the other to cross the crack. At times things grew tense, e.g. when anti-choice placards were rubbed "accidentally" against our people. In the end, the crack won the right to stand alone; and both sides, for most of the early part of the morning, respected the invisible barrier.

ACT II: Coffee Curdlers: — Mid-morning and coffee break time. Another woman and I set out to the coffee shop to warm up. We had only just sat down when we recognized an anti-choicer going by. That would not have been so strange in itself, except that less than 30 seconds later she doubled back. With glazed-over stare, she peered in through the glass at us. Something was amiss!

The question was what. We sat there, determined to finish our coffee, while a pair of women in green coats went by. They too were anti-choicers. They walked around the corner of the shop and then doubled back. I went outside to see where they were going. They met someone on the corner. Driving by in his vehicle came another anti-choicer... a man who looked like



Atlantic Coalition for Choice Escorts (ACCESS) are committed to helping women gain safe, anonymous access to abortion. (Photo by Beth Joudrey)

Doctor Morgentaler. We knew what was going on now. They were following and scouting the area. The day wasn't going to be so peaceful after all.

Back at the clinic, our facilitators were made aware of the current situation. The anti-choicers, no longer stationary, were now a mobile force. It was too late to make a major change in strategy for the day — we would have to adapt. We sent out people to follow them when they followed our people. Anything to throw them off guard.

ACT III: Manoeuvres, Scavengers and Prey: — This was the climax of my day. As a counter measure, ACCESS decided that it would be best if our people used cars to pick up the women. My co-partner and I had a woman to pick up and escort to the clinic. We saw

her but couldn't make a left hand turn on this street. The two women in green (anti-choicers) also saw her. They started walking toward her.

We rounded one corner, mentally hurrying the car on. Finally we made it around the last corner onto the road where our woman was. Neither she nor the two green women were in sight. We turned right and saw them, our woman in the middle with a green woman on either side of her.

We pulled up as close as possible, and I hopped out of the car and went after them. My co-partner followed along behind at traffic speed.

One of the green women looked back and saw me. She said something to her partner and each of them grabbed an arm of the woman between them and started to drag her—pulling her along. I caught up to them and tried to talk louder than they. I told the woman that her friends had been waiting for her and that there was a car to take her to them. One of the green women said "You are not her friend."

The woman was confused. She didn't know whom to trust. Taking her by the arm, I walked her toward the car.

The anti-choicers tried to grab her and pull her away.

Finally she was in the car. All that time, the four women were saying "Don't kill your baby," and "God will have retribution for you," etc. We told them to let us go and keep away from the car. My partner got us to the clinic. The four women ran there and were still shouting. The rest of their support group joined in on the wailing. Our people sang "Supercalifragilistic..." to drown them out. The woman was in the clinic. Safe. Harried, but safe.

ACT IV: There was an anonymous phone call from an "irate neighbour" complaining of the singing. Both groups were told by the police to quiet down. Both acquiesced.

ACT V: Similar incidents occurred throughout the day. We had to be on our toes. Our people did well (all the women made it into and out of the clinic.)

But there are other stories for other days.

This struggle will continue as long as the struggle for women's rights to control their own bodies and their own lives ensues.

"from we to just me" challenges traditional notions of motherhood and adoption

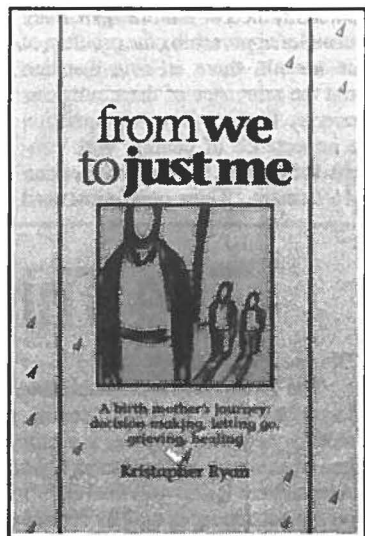
from we to just me

Written by Kristapher Ryan, Freedom to be Me Seminars (Winnipeg, Man.) 1990, 82 pages, \$12.50 paperback.

Kristapher Ryan has written a personal account of her decision to place her two sons with an adoptive family. This book presents an unusual decision and solution—and in doing so challenges the traditional definition of responsible parenting. For women who are mothers, Ryan provides an alternative view that recognizes many of us have no real choice in determining if we will become mothers. Societal assumptions about adult women as mothers result in many women having children without considering the personal costs this entails. The author describes her realization that the personal costs were too high.

In the first chapter, Ryan writes of her realization that she cannot continue caring for her 1-1/2 and 5-1/2 year old sons. She writes in a letter to her oldest son, "I tried every way I could to be happy being a mom. For over three years I tried, but I felt unhappy and trapped ... I couldn't take care of you the way you needed to be taken care of. One day came and I couldn't try anymore ... There is nothing you or your brother did to make this happen or to make me unhappy ... hurts from a long time ago ... make it too hard for me to be a happy mom."

The second part of this book describes the adoption process. Ryan wanted an open-adoption that would



allow her to participate actively in choosing new parents for her children. She also wanted to maintain contact with her sons after the adoption was legally final. The child welfare agency and lawyers were resistant to this arrangement. Ryan received little support after the children were adopted and the adoptive couple was advised by the agency and their friends to disallow contact once their legal status as parents was final.

Fortunately, Ryan chose a couple who supported her desire for contact with the children. The book describes how she worked with this couple to introduce her sons gently into their new

home. One chapter is written by the adoptive mother. It describes her fears and hesitations about Ryan's continued involvement with the children. Ryan openly describes her periods of grief and loneliness after the decision.

This book is worthwhile reading for several reasons. It openly discusses the limitations on self-development motherhood can impose—and the resulting frustration and negative effect on the children. The description of the author's experience indicates how the "giving-away of children" results in censure of the mother as a person by friends, family and the professionals involved.

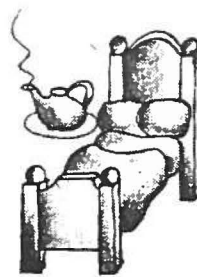
Finally, the open-adoption process that evolved in this case, presents child custody in a new light. There is no doubt that in this case the children were of central importance. The transition to their new home was relatively untrumatic. The process was unlike the adversarial conflict many birth mothers experience. Often, children, once in legal custody of their adoptive parents are cut off from their birth family. The proliferation of organizations established to connect adoptive children with their birth mothers indicates to me that this type of case management leaves children with unanswered questions that haunt them throughout life.

This book is worthwhile reading because it does challenge our traditional thinking about "motherhood" as well as the case management of agency adoptions.

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Church must learn appropriate responses to far-ranging problems of woman abuse

(Editor's note: Women experience violence in many forms of domestic relationships including dating, common-law, and co-habitation. The experience of terror, fear and isolation are common to all women experiencing violence.)

**Dianne Nickerson,
The Third Place, Truro
The Obstacles**

Let's look at some obstacles to understanding and acceptance of battered women and commitment to social action:

1. A major obstacle stems from our strong desire to believe in the goodness and security of the family, that our home is our haven, a safe place where we can let our hair down, take off our masks and be ourselves. A place where we will be loved and accepted unconditionally. A place where we can grow and learn about ourselves and others.

For some, the family may be a liberating experience. For many, the home is a prison. In fact, for too many women the streets are safer than their own homes.

Violence against women in the home is often hidden behind such terms as spousal abuse, marital violence, couple-battering, domestic violence and inter-spousal abuse. These terms cloud the issue and obscure the facts. They imply that each marital partner is equally likely to play the role of the offender or victim in violent incidents, that the frequency and severity used by each is similar, and that the socio-historical meaning and consequences of these acts are the same. This is not the case!

The majority of violence in the home is directed at women and children. Consider that: Dobash and Dobash, two Scottish researchers, found that 75.8% of all violence in the home is actually assault against a wife. Dr. Jack Byles, in a study of calls for

help to the Hamilton Police in 1974, showed women to be the victims in 95% of the calls. Dr. Pat Kincaid, in a study in Toronto of family court records, reflected the same figure — 95% of the assaults were against the wife.

2. Another obstacle is the definition of this violence against women and the forms it takes. Many women, because they have heard talk about battering and physical abuse, will say, "My husband doesn't batter me, he only slaps

touching. They talk of forced sexual activities as well as excessive jealousy and sexual accusations. They find it much harder to talk about being forced into sexual acts which they find distasteful or painful. Many of the women talk about the husband flaunting extra-marital affairs and subjecting them to unfavorable comparisons with other women. Some describe the humiliation of being forced to participate in sexual practices the husband gleans from violent pornographic videos and magazines. Many women submit because they see it as their wifely duty. Many are not aware that since January,

times are women. Those women who do kill their spouses are usually acting in self-defense.

3. For any social problem to be taken seriously, it needs to be proven that it affects a significant proportion of the population. Another obstacle is the belief that it's not a big problem in our society, in our community, in our church.

Consider these statistics:

•One in eight Canadian women are victims of wife assault (thought to be a conservative estimate).

•The FBI estimates a woman is severely beaten in the U.S. every 18 seconds.

•Violence against wives will occur at least once during two-thirds of all marriages.

•25% of all wives are severely beaten during the course of their marriage.

4. When confronted with a personal experience of violence, most people also experienced a crisis of meaning in their lives. Very basic life questions arise and are usually expressed in religious and/or philosophical terms. Questions like "Why did God let this happen?" or "What meaning does this

to get right with God and everything will be fine," is an attitude which is heard on occasion.

This perspective is an obstacle that blocks the fact that other issues are practical and important as well. Wife assault is complex and potentially lethal. These seemingly mundane concerns represent immediate and critical needs.

5. The misinterpretation and misuse of the Bible and Christian traditions can contribute to the guilt, self-blame and suffering which victims experience, and to the rationalization often used by those who abuse. This response, which is used to explain, excuse, or justify abuse, must be confronted.

Teaching that there are very simple answers to very complex problems which people face in their lives is a stone that must be moved. "Keep praying," "Pray harder," are inadequate responses, leaving the victims feeling overwhelmed by the experience of suffering. Misinterpretations of, or misplaced emphasis on, religious texts, can create substantial problems.

Most commonly, directives on marriage based on scripture are given to women and not to men, and state that wives must "submit" to their husbands. A strong

belief in the permanency of the marriage vows may prevent an assaulted wife from considering separation or divorce as options for dealing with family violence.

For the Christian woman, the promise of faithfulness "for better or for worse," "Till death do us part" is commonly taken to mean "stay in the marriage no matter what," even though death of one or more family members is a real possibility in abusive families.

In violent homes, divorce is not breaking up families. Violence and abuse are breaking up families. Divorce is often the painful, public acknowledgment of an already accomplished fact.

(Reprinted from *Word from the Centre*, the newsletter of the Tatamagouche Centre, Atlantic Christian Training Centre)

25% of all wives are severely beaten during their marriages

me." The definition I use in discussing wife assault is this: "Wife assault involves the intent by the husband to intimidate, either by threat or by use of physical force on the wife's person or property. The purpose of the assault is to control her behaviour by the inducement of fear. Underlying all abuse is a power imbalance between the victim and the offender."

The violence I've observed in the close to 400 women we've worked with over the past three and one half years comes in these forms:

Physical: Women from our communities have been slapped, punched, kicked, shoved, choked, pinched, had their teeth, arms and noses broken, been bruised, cut with knives, threatened with guns, had hair pulled from their head in clumps, and their bodies burned with cigarettes. One lost the baby she was carrying because of the assault she endured. One spent a week in hospital to avoid miscarrying and to have extensive tests done on her unborn child because they thought he might have sustained physical injuries as well.

Sexual: Women from our communities frequently speak of the demeaning jokes, name-calling, and unwanted

1983 it is against the law for a man to sexually assault his wife.

Psychological: This usually has been accompanied by at least one act of physical abuse and therefore has a greater power to induce fear. The offender has demonstrated his ability to carry out his threats.

Women in our communities have had violent threats made against themselves and their loved ones, threats to their property and pets, threats to kidnap the children, threats to commit suicide if she leaves, threats of deportation if she is under his sponsorship, and threats to use information he may have about her past life against her if she leaves him.

Other women have been forced to do degrading things, have had their favorite clothes cut up, their prized possessions burned on the front lawn. Some women have been terrorized by his driving dangerously or playing with a gun or a knife in her presence.

Many speak of being constantly verbally attacked — their personality, attitudes, and beliefs are all belittled as are any efforts they make to better themselves (example, Jessie, whose term papers were torn up at 1:00 am as she finished them). Others have spoken of their activities being controlled, and of their routines being disrupted (a woman worked two jobs, and he'd wake her at 5:00 am to do dishes or polish his shoes), and of their needs such as sleep, food, sex and money being denied (a woman, who made food stretch for her children, was malnourished, weighing 92 lbs.)

We hear of prescription drugs, life sustaining drugs, being denied to a diabetic woman and being fed to another woman in double and triple doses to keep her drugged and compliant, to weaken her instinct for survival and increase her helplessness. All women talk of being isolated from their family and friends.

Emotional: Abuse is less likely to be taken seriously because he appears to direct his rage at objects. Upon closer examination, we find that his targets are often very deliberate. He destroys her property, her photo albums, a cupboard she's built and spent weeks to sand and stain. The message is clear: "Stay in line because the next time it could be you." Pets are not immune to his destruction, nor are children. Both are used as a means to intimidate and control her behaviour.

All of these forms of assault can end in murder: Two-fifths of all homicides in Canada are between spouses. The vast majority of the vic-

Divorce does not break up marriages... violence and abuse does

have for my life?" are all indications of people's efforts to understand, to make sense out of an experience of suffering and to place the experiences in a context of meaning for their lives. These questions are healthy because they represent an effort to comprehend and contextualize the experience of the violence and thereby regain some control over their lives.

If these religious concerns are not dealt with sensitively, they will become roadblocks to the woman's efforts to resolve the crisis and move on with her life. For the clergy or lay counsellor approaching the problem of wife assault, there is little question about the relevance of these religious concerns. Rather, they may question the importance of dealing with concerns for shelter, safety, intervention and treatment. "These people just need

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The Third Place

Dianne Nickerson

The Third Place was established in February 1985 as a resource and referral centre for victims of family violence. It was set up to work as an auxiliary advocacy service to victims as they entered the safe homes which had been set up in Colchester County by the Victims of Family Violence Association. It also provided an office with resources for the clients and for public education, as well as operating a crisis line.

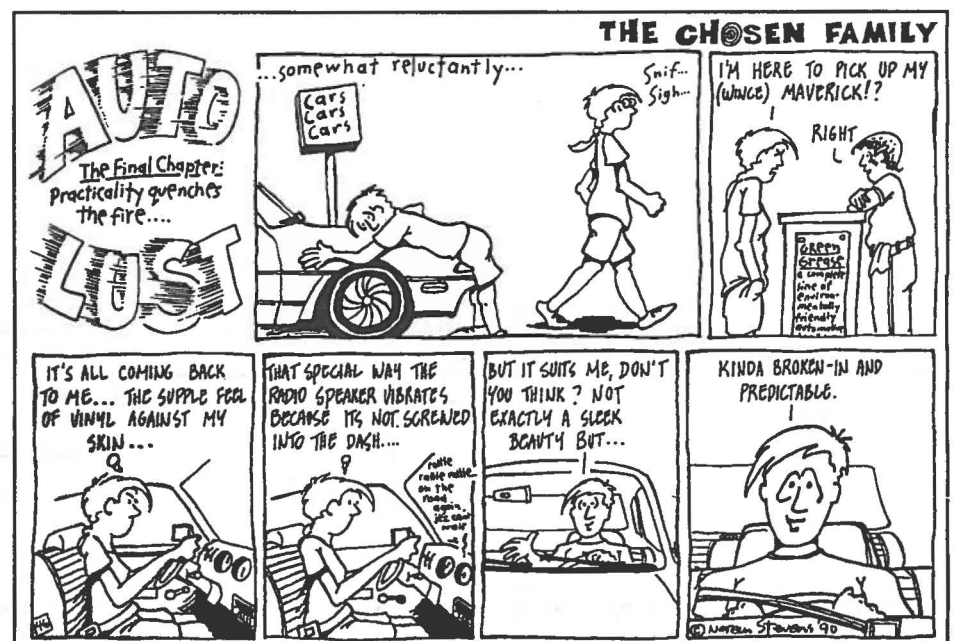
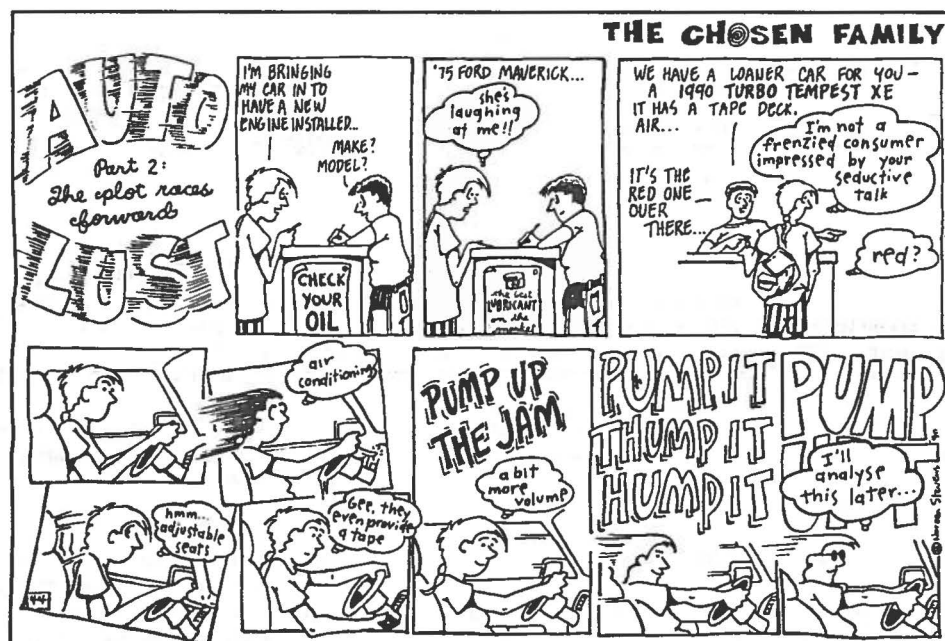
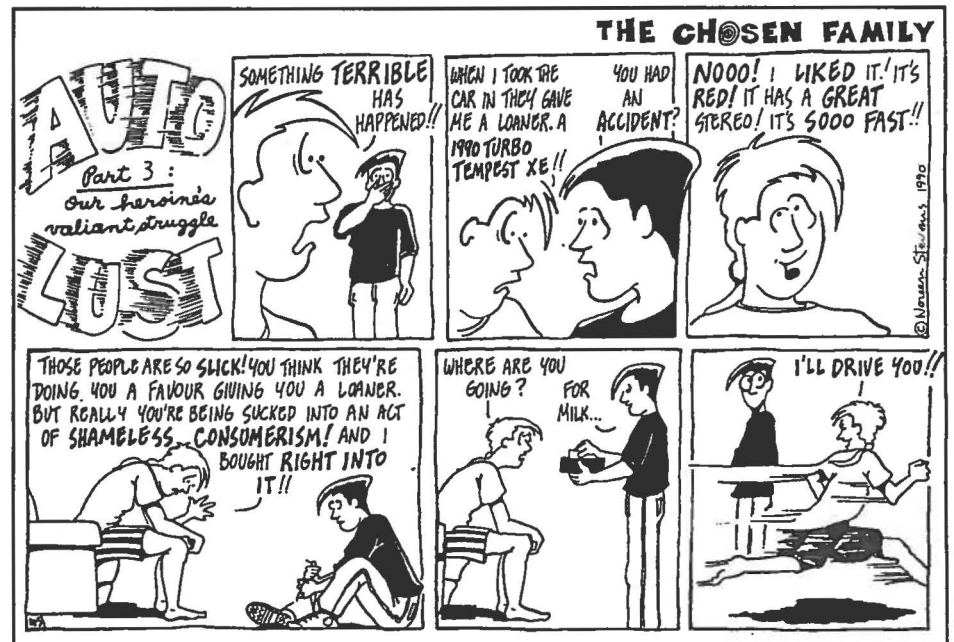
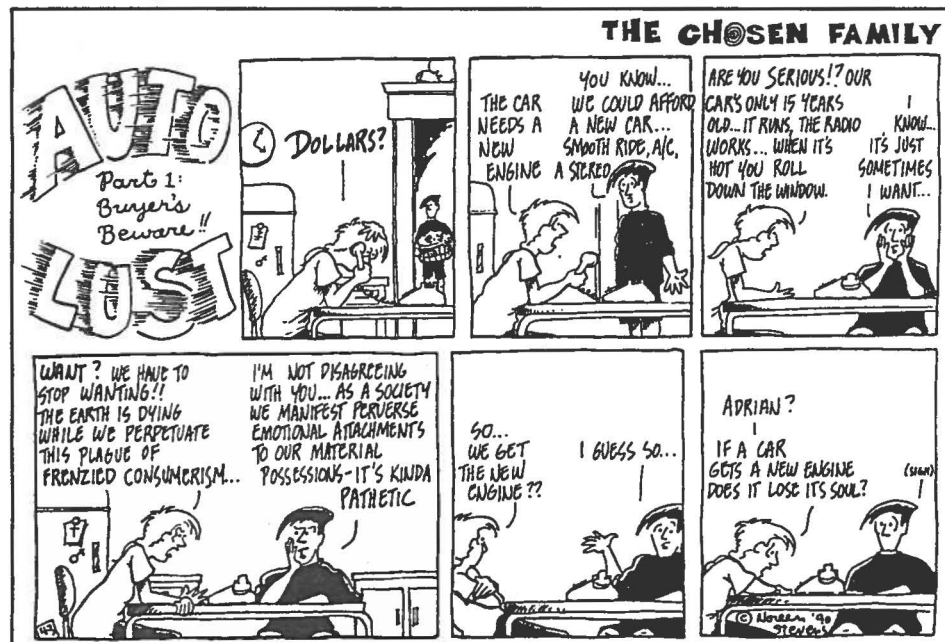
During the first three years of its existence, the Third Place has served 426 families. One third of these families entered the safe home, one third came into the office to explore their options or to get on-going support from our "Time-Out" support group, and one third called for assistance and information on the crisis line. Staff has consisted mainly of volunteers trained under a program set up by the original staff on the first of a series of short-term grants.

Since 1986 a steering committee has been working to establish a transition house that will be called The Third Place Transition House. A suitable facility has been leased and everyone helped to renovate it in preparation for its January 1989 opening.

It is a large house (24 rooms) with space to accommodate 15 beds as well as a child-care centre, a lounge for the older children and one for the women, a large multi-purpose room, and the usual office, laundry, kitchen, dining room, etc.

For more information about The Third Place Transition House, please contact us at P.O. Box 1681, Truro, N.S. B2N 5Z5, (902) 893-3232.

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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

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Notices/Calendar

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

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•I provide research and writing services for advertising copy to French-to-English and Spanish-to-English translation to brochures and annual reports. I also tutor. My research projects have been on immigrant women and language training, women's health and history. I'm interested in discussing trading services with seamstresses and other women. (Note: Would the woman who placed this classification please contact Pandora at 454-4977) Any readers interested in this ad can also call Pandora for more information. •Desktop publishing and editing services. Reasonable rates, fast and efficient. Call 423-9056

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, and individual counselling on improving women's chances of getting better jobs through upgrading and skill training. 4-part pre-employment workshops for women start the first Tues. of every month, 9:30-11:30. Call 422-8023.

RESOURCES

•A Women's Clinical Resource Centre to help in the rehabilitation of women addicted to alcohol or other drugs has materials on health, sexuality, life and vocational skills, and parenting techniques, and also publishes a quarterly newsletter and a list of the centre's new acquisitions. Drop by the Centre, or write NS Commission on Drug Dependency, Women's Clinical Resource Centre, 6 Flr, Lord Nelson Bldg, 5675 Spring Garden Rd., Hfx. B3J 1H1.

EVENTS & GROUPS

•The Feminist Therapists' Support Group meets every 2nd Wed. of the month in Hfx. For more info contact Judy at 425-4514

•The Social Action Committee of Bryony House will be holding monthly meetings the first Mon. of each month. All interested women are invited to attend. Call Rusty Neal 454-9636.

•Service for Sexual Assault Victims offers a parent support program for parents of sexually-abused children. The program includes Support Groups,

monthly drop-in nights, emotional support, accompaniment during court hearings, information and advocacy. Phone Helen Crant 455-4240

•The Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia invites any interested women to join the new Council or to assist in small tasks, helping W.A.C. to present a unified lobby voice and connect women's groups across the province. Contact P.O. Box 9436 Stn A., Hfx, N.S., B3K 5S3.

•Monthly drop-in for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Assault. Last Tue. of each month, 7-10 pm. This is an open evening for survivors who may want to connect with other survivors, obtain resources, or just drop in for coffee. 6450 Young St, Hfx. 455-4240.

•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 N.S. meets the last Sun. of every month at 7:30 pm at the Public Archives of N.S. in Hfx.. Phone Heather MacLeod, 422-3524.

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

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

•Third Place Transition House is open in Truro. 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 and to work on the co-ordinating committee, the newsletter, distribution of press releases, and administration. Phone 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 892-0895. Collect calls accepted.

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

•Listen to the Dinner Party Sound-track (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. Community women's groups wanting to announce their events, call 424-6469. Women's Time needs volunteers to help out with programming. Call Jennifer at 424-6479, or drop in to the station at Dalhousie University Student Union Building. You don't have to be a student.

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

•Lupus strikes approximately 50,000 Canadians, and 90% are women. Lupus Canada provides initial information services, and referral to the closest provincial lupus organization, on their now toll free line 1-800-661-1468

PHONE LINES

•Literacy Information Line has a toll-free number you can call between 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m. to get information on programs available to help you improve your reading, writing and math skills. 1-424-7544.

•Transition House Association of Charlottetown, P.E.I. announces that crisis line services at Anderson House are now available toll free. Women may obtain information and support by dialing 1-892-0960 toll free.

•Fredericton Rape Crisis Centre provides information on action, information and prevention. Call the crisis line at (506) 454-0437, or their business line (506) 454-0460. You can also write them at P.O. Box 174, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 4Y9

•Service for Sexual Assault Victims, 24-hour crisis line: 425-0122. Emotional support, referrals, information.

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

•INFORM-AIDS provides information, support, and referral services with regards to AIDS. Open Tues. to Sun. 5 pm to 9 pm. Call 1-425-AIDS (toll free from anywhere in N.S.)

•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, has established a Rape Line offering confidentiality, anonymity, information, and peer counselling for female victims of sex abuse, incest, and rape. The line is staffed by volunteers. 752-2233.

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

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

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

•Womens' Marketing at the N.F.B. (1572 Barrington St., Hfx. B3J 1Z6) is interested in screening print materials on dating violence. If you have articles, stats or info, please call or write them.

•Seeking recordings of live performances of feminist humour for a research project. Please send ordering information or titles of available material to Joanne Gallivan, U.C.C.B., Sydney B1P 6L2

•Contemporary Verse 2 will be publishing issues on the themes of race and culture, sexuality and orientation, and women and autonomy. Write PO Box 3062, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4E5

•Queer Press, Canada's only lesbian and gay publishing firm, is calling for submissions for its first book—an anthology of writings by and about lesbian and gay survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Deadline is Feb. 1991. Write Q. Press, PO Box 485, Stn. P, Toronto M5S 2T1 or phone 416-972-6690 or 416-461-5117

•Women's Press is gathering stories by women in prison, and ex-inmates, for inclusion in an anthology entitled Words from Within. Contact Pinelopi Gramatikopoulos, c/o The Women's Press, 229 College Street, Suite 204, To., M5T 1R4, or phone (416) 598-0082.

PUBLICATIONS

•The Company of Strangers will be available on VHS for rental or purchase from the National Film Board in April, 1991

•Women's Health Clinic has launched its newly created smoking cessation program for women called Catching

Our Breath. The booklet and accompanying Guide for Facilitators takes into account the social and economic factors that have caused women's addiction to tobacco and combines adult education methodology, group process techniques and a broad understanding of issues like body image, weight preoccupation and how women deal with expressing anger and other emotions. Write the clinic at 3rd Floor, 419 Graham Ave., Winnipeg R3C 0M3

•"Worthy of Recovery booklet" explores the issues that gay/lesbian patients encounter in treatment and early recovery from alcoholism (Order #6764). "Inside the Invisible Minority: Addressing the Special Issues of Addicted Patient Who is Gay/Lesbian" is a pamphlet for counsellors in the field of alcoholism. Both booklets are \$2.50 U.S. and can be ordered from Parkside Lodge-Westgate, 4601 Interstate 35 North Denton, TX 7620

•NAC has produced a commemorative bookmark: "14 women died in Montreal December 6, 1989. 106 women died in domestic violence in Canada in 1989. Mark this day." NAC also has available T-shirts and posters commemorating the day. The YWCA has produced a brochure and poster on violence against women. The Canadian Labour Council has produced a card that can be placed on your desk entitled, "Working for Change."

•The Directory of Action Research Projects recently published by CRIAW-NS lists almost 200 community-based research projects; a useful place to start looking for info about research on women in N.S. Buy your copy at a CRIAW meeting, or write CRIAW-NS, Box 8264, Stn. A, Hfx, B3K 5L9.

•The video "After the Montreal Massacre", a 1/2 hr. documentary screened Nov. 27 on Man Alive, is now available at the NFB.

•Hfx. City Regional Library has published a reading list about adoption, for birth parents, adoptive parents, and the adopted child or adult. The booklet is available free in single or multiple copies. Call 421-8044.

CALENDAR

Wednesdays at 10 am Women's Group. North Branch Library. Make your mornings your time to come to the North Branch Library for two hours of friendly conversation and informal discussions of local and global interest. The Women's Group will discuss such issues as North End bus service and health topics such as asthma, as well as enjoying visitors from other countries. All women are welcome. The coffee and tea is always on.

Jan. 15—Feb. 2 An exhibition by Marna Goldstein Brauner entitled "Textiles" is to be held at the Anna Leonowens Gallery, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 5163 Duke St. Halifax, N.S.

Jan. 22 First planning meeting for Fourth Almost Annual Lesbian Conference. 8:30 pm Projection Room, Rumours, 2112 Gottingen St, Halifax. For more info, call Marilyn at 454-5588.

Jan. 25—March 8 An exhibition of drawings by Kate Kechnie in the Robertson Library at University of P.E.I. campus, commemorates the

lives of 14 women murdered at L'Ecole Polytechnique. Opening is at 7:30, Jan. 25. Phone 902-964-3142 for info or if you can help with funds to cover framing costs.

Jan. 25 Training session for volunteers begins at Service for Sexual Assault. Call 455-4240

Jan. 26. Benefit to support Mohawk legal defence fund. Entertainment and auction. 8 pm at the Micmac Friendship Centre (corner of Gottingen and Cornwallis St., Halifax). \$5 or pay what you can. Tickets available from the Micmac Friendship Centre, the Red Herring or at the door. Sponsored by The Committee in solidarity with Aboriginal People and the Micmac Friendship Centre.

Jan. 25—27 Woman's Spirit, Tatamagouche Centre. Cost \$110. For further info call 902-657-2231

Feb 2. "Black Women's Blues Review" featuring local performers and starring Jodie Drake, a Toronto-based recording artist, actress and activist for Black artists' rights. A reception will follow. 8 pm Casino Theatre. For ticket information, phone Delvina Bernard at 443-4303 or the North Branch Library (Craig Smith) at 421-6987. Sponsored by the Ad Hoc Black Women's Group

Feb. 10 "Redefining the Sacred" talk by Starhawk, also featuring Donna Read, The Secret Furies and others. 7 pm, Casino Theatre—sliding scale \$10—\$25. Fundraiser for part 3 of Women & Spirituality Film series (Goddess Remembered & The Burning Times.) All welcome. Afternoon session with Donna Read and Starhawk (tentative). Women and children welcome. For more information call Lorene at 423-0135 or Joan at 426-6014.

Feb. 21. "In Service" Discussion and reception with participants of the CBC television drama written by Maxine Tynes and featuring local actors Suzy Gangoo, Merleta Williams, Heather Chandler, Sylvia Wedderburn, Peter Wilson and director Lulu Keating. 7:30 pm at the North Branch Library.

March 4—8 Films about women will be shown every day at the NFB on 1571 Argyle St., Halifax. Volunteers are welcome to help with programming and ideas, screenings and info tables. Phone Joan Semple, 426—6014.

March 6 "Sex Stereotyping and children" 10—11:30 am, Thomas Randall Branch Library. In subtle ways and in various forms, the media affects the way parents raise their children. Bring along both good and bad examples of media sex stereotyping for a group discussion.

March 8 International Women's Day! March 8 "Women and Democracy." 12 noon—1:30 pm. Main Branch Halifax City Regional Library. Common issues unite women around the world. To address them, women are playing a crucial role in pressing for democratic change. But do they equally benefit from those changes? A panel of women from Asia, Africa, and Latin America assess the role played by women and the implications to political change

May 4—5 Women's Health Education Network conference. Theme: Beyond survival: healing and flourishing. To be held at Windsor Regional High School. For more information call 455-6051 and leave a message or write to Box 99 Debert, N.S. B0M 1G0

June 14—17 National Action Committee on the Status of Women A.G.M., at Carleton University in Ottawa (Note that this is a change)