

# Lifting the lid off... Pandora

Volume Seven, Number One  
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Special issue on  
women and the media

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**Pandora exposes herself  
to the media**

# Women's money meets women's ideas

In late September, at the almost-annual Lesbian Conference in Halifax, a discussion started about money. It seems the Conference organizing committees have been slowly but surely building up a bank account over the years. The question is: Whose money is this, should it be used, and how?

Well, it turns out several other groups in the feminist and lesbian communities are in similar situations. So it was decided to call a community meet-

ing to get input must get as many women as possible.

This meeting, which was announced in the last issue of Pandora, was held November 17 at Veith House. Only six women showed up; five more sent in their ideas and suggestions. We discussed the issues for several hours, and now we want to share our discussion with the community(ies), and get your feedback.

It was agreed that whatever deci-

sions were made needed to get as broad a base of community support as possible. Hence, this article! Ideally, at least one past and one current member of all the various groups and committees should be part of decision-making. Unfortunately, some groups were not represented at the meeting. Obviously, the signing officers of various bank accounts would have to be in agreement with whatever decisions get made....

Despite the small numbers at the meeting, it turned out we had signing officers present for at least seven community bank accounts. Based on the information we had, it seems there is almost \$10,000 in various accounts! Of course, some money is needed by each group as start-up money for the next event — the next International Women's Day, the next Lesbian Conference etc. Less those amounts, we figure there is a total of about \$4000 to

\$4500 of excess money around, money available to do something else with.

About half of the total money comes from lesbian-identified groups. After some discussion, we decided it's necessary to protect this as lesbian money — that we need some way to ensure it gets used for lesbian-identified interests, especially since lesbian events cannot be supported by Secretary of State funding, while other feminist events can.

Next we did some brain-storming about how to use the money! That was FUN! Most of us feminists and lesbians are so used to never having any money — it was fun to daydream a bit for a change!

We came up with 26 ideas (some of which were mailed or phoned to us) and listed them all on a big flip-chart. Some were practical, and some were dreams! The suggestions can be loosely categorized by whether or not they require a long-term financial commitment, and whether their results are temporary or permanent.

Some ideas that would have long-term results, but would also require long-term financial commitment include: a women's center; a lesbian nursing home or hostel; a women's club; a women's campground or bed and breakfast; a lesbian pension fund; buying or co-owning a building; land for women's use.

Some ideas that don't involve long-term financial commitments, but have fairly temporary results (sort of one-shot deals — use the money, then that's it) include: a huge trip to Michigan; a lesbian film festival; donate the money to a cause or group (Pandora was suggested); hold a free conference; a big women's spirituality event; bring in a big-name entertainer; donate to lesbian political candidates; put on a huge women's music festival.

Some ideas that are immediately affordable (so they don't require long-term payments) and have fairly permanent results include: setting up a lesbian archives; a feminist/lesbian video library; buy a van; a button-making machine; make a film; support lesbian artists; buy video and/or audio equipment; make a building wheelchair accessible.

Some suggestions were about how to manage and coordinate the use of money for various purposes. They have implications about leadership and control in our communities. They include: making low- or no-interest loans to individual women; setting up a Women's Foundation/Political Action Fund.

We talked about the implications of the various ideas, and then had a "Dotmocracy". Each woman had 5 dots, to place by the suggestions of her choice, indicating her preferences and the strength of her preferences. The idea with the most dots wins!

In this case, the winner was A Nova Scotia Women's Foundation/Political Action Fund! The second runner-up — a close second — was the idea of Making Some Existing Community Building Wheelchair Accessible, in turn for guaranteed rentals and low rates. (There are details about these two in the accompanying article) The other suggestions that made our top five were: A Women's Club (Bar, Café, etc); A Lesbian Archives; Buy Into / Co-own a Building that is frequently used for community space.

**We need feedback!  
What do you think?**

## And the most popular ideas were ...

- creating a women's foundation,
- making a building accessible

What to do with extra feminist/lesbian community money.... oh what a delightful dilemma!

At the Money Matters community meeting November 17, (see the accompanying article) we talked about what to do with the money slowly building up in bank accounts which have been established for annual (or almost-annual) events like International Women's Day (IWD) and the Lesbian Conference. We identified our top two suggestions. Here are some details:

### 1/ Nova Scotia Women's Foundation / Political Action Fund

In this option we would combine the bank accounts into one account controlled by a Board. The amount we figured could be almost \$10,000, more if other groups wanted to become part of it. We talked about the following details:

\* The Board would have one representative of each of the last organizing committees for various events, so that the history, location of things like placards and banners, etc., don't get lost when the next organizing committee starts work.

\* Remaining Board members could be elected by an annual meeting, open to everyone in the women's and lesbian communities.

\* The primary task of the Foundation would be to ensure start-up money is there for each of the community's annual events — IWD, Montreal Massacre Memorial, Take Back the Night, Lesbian Conference — maybe Wild Women Don't Get the Blues? a NS Women's Music Festival? a visiting performer each year? women's/lesbian events in rural communities? Then the money would be returned after the event, along with any money made. If money is lost, money made in other events could make it up, although, obviously, a lot of losses would wreck the whole thing.

\* The second task of the Foundation would be to lend seed money for women/lesbian fundraisers. The seed money would be paid back, no interest, and the group would keep the proceeds.

\* A certain proportion of the events supported would have to be for the Lesbian community, since a lot of the money was raised through lesbian events.

\* The Foundation could apply for Charitable Status so that women (or anyone — parents? men serious about opposing sexism?) could give their

money to it and receive a tax deduction, women could leave their estates to it without their heirs being taxed for it, and women/lesbian groups who want to apply to private foundations for funding could do so through the Foundation's Charitable Status (private foundations will only give money to an organization which has Charitable Status — they exist for tax write-offs!).

\* Because Charitable Status limits political activities, like lobbying, action on abortion issues, etc., a certain amount of money (\$500? \$1000?) could be kept out of the Foundation and put in a Political Action account. It could be lent out as seed money for groups/actions which could not be supported under the Charitable Status rules. The Board of the Foundation could double as the Committee responsible for the Political Action account, constituted as a separate body, with a separate name and by-laws. We'd need a minimum of five women to devise and develop a structure for a Women's Foundation.

### 2/ Making a Building Wheelchair Accessible

Every time a women's or lesbian event is planned we run into the same problems about space. There is a real lack of affordable, wheelchair accessible community space around Halifax. Holding events in non-accessible places effectively states, "Women in wheelchairs are not welcome." That's simply not acceptable.

Veith House is accessible, but is too small for most events. Bloomfield school is accessible, but is expensive and cannot be licensed for liquor (the bar is the major fundraiser at dances, etc.) The North End Church is very nice space, is relatively affordable, but is not wheelchair accessible...

Given that we don't OWN a building, and haven't got enough money for even a downpayment on one, one option might be to help a building owner renovate a building that is frequently used for women's and lesbian events, to make it wheelchair accessible.

We would have to find a cooperative building owner, someone we

could trust. We could offer the assistance in making the building accessible in exchange for a guaranteed number of rentals per year at reduced rates. We could also stipulate that if the owner were to sell, we would be given first option to buy; or that any sale include the contract with the women's/lesbian communities for reduced rentals....

This would be a concrete, visible project, so that women could see how our money was spent. It would be affordable immediately, with fairly immediate and hopefully permanent results. And it would increase the inclusiveness of our community.

Some women are investigating whether there are other sources of funding to make non-residential buildings accessible.

So, those are our favorite ideas. What do you think? We need feedback! Do you support these two ideas? Which would be your first choice? Do you prefer one of the other suggestions (see accompanying article)? We also need your name so each woman can only vote once and so on!

**Please take a few minutes to fill out  
this questionnaire and mail it! Thanks.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you support the idea of a Women's Foundation/Political Action Fund? Yes  No   
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you support the idea of making a building accessible? Yes  No   
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

(If you like both ideas, put a big star beside your first choice.)

Would you be able and willing to give some time to:  
Organizing a Women's Foundation? Yes  No   
Making a building accessible? Yes  No

If "yes": Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Are there other suggestions in the article you prefer to these two choices?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

Money Matters, c/o Pandora Publishing, Box 8418 Stn A, Halifax, NS B3K 5M1

# Study of women's portrayal in media helps Pandora

by Sharon Fraser

I taught the course Women and Media in the Women's Studies Department at Mount Saint Vincent from September to December, 1991. The class was made up of ten students — all women — and although we followed the formal course outline to a reasonable degree, we also used our class time to discuss issues of the day, particularly as reported in the media. Some of our classes resembled old-time consciousness-raising sessions.

The course description looked like this:

This course will focus on the question: Are the mass media mechanisms of oppression for women or mechanisms of liberation?

The goal of the course is to enable you to discover for yourself that this question has a variety of complex answers. You will be able to analyze in a more sceptical and sophisticated way the treatment of women and women's issues in the mass media. This course will help you to bring feminist thinking to media studies.

We'll examine how women are shaped by the media as objects, subjects, and consumers. We'll consider whether women have changed the media through writing, producing, directing, etc. The format of this course will be lecture/discussion with student presentations as a regular feature.

In the first part of the course, we'll examine, through lectures and discussion, the language — verbal and visual — of the mainstream media, including the news, advertising, television, magazines, etc. We'll touch on films and videos. We'll look at who controls the media and why control is important.

In the final section, we'll look at women in the mass media and discuss

their influence in making changes — or not. We'll consider whether it's important to separate women's issues from other issues, whether it's important for women to have a place to make their voices heard outside the mainstream.

\*\*\*

Early in the course, we decided that we'd like to contribute to the publication of an issue of Pandora as our class project. After a certain amount of confusion and a confusing amount of coordination, we had our articles prepared and they appear in this issue. Because the course dealt with media and its images of women, we decided that each article should have some connection with media coverage (or lack of coverage) of certain women's issues.

One of the students' major projects during the term was to write and present a seminar and then write a paper incorporating the discussion that arose out of their seminar. Throughout the course, we had worked at making connections between the way women are portrayed in the news, in advertising, in fashion and in pornography.

The portrayal of women in these media became the subject of many of the students' presentations. I've chosen excerpts from the papers and you can read them throughout this issue.

The students also participated in the ad sales for this issue and, as I write this, we're making arrangements to get together with members of the Pandora collective to work on the production of the paper.

Some of the students, accustomed to writing for a very small audience (often an audience of one), felt a bit nervous when they knew they were writing for a publication.

I hope you'll agree that they seem to have superseded their self-consciousness and put together some worthwhile material for Pandora's readers.



## Rose Vaughan Trio

Jezebel Productions invites you to the benefit launch of The Rose Vaughan Trio's debut release *Sweet Tarragon*. Halifax favourites, The Rose Vaughan Trio will perform in concert on March 28 at The Church, 5657 North Street, in Halifax.

The Rose Vaughan Trio is comprised of "three talented and lively" Halifax women who play original, contemporary folk and jazz music. The Trio is led by melody writer and lyricist, Rose Vaughan, and includes Cathy Porter on piano, flute and percussion, and Pam Mason on double bass.

The Rose Vaughan Trio first captured audiences' imagi-

nation when they opened for Québécoise singer/songwriter, Lucie Blue Tremblay in Halifax in 1990. Their song *Man/Main Moon* received first Runner-Up Award in the 1990 CBC song contest. Featured on CBC's *Swinging on a Star* with Murray McLaughlin, the Trio recently completed a week-long CBC recording session of 13 of their songs.

Doors open for this event at 8:00 pm and tickets are \$5/\$7. Advance tickets are available on the March 8th weekend. *Sweet Tarragon* compact disks and cassettes will be on sale at the concert. There will be a cash bar (N.S. Liquor ID required.)

## Women's Health Network recognizes links between well-being, social problems

The groundwork to create a Canadian Women's Health Network has begun. After years of project development and consultation, Women's Healthsharing has received Health and Welfare funding to strengthen the links between organizations, groups and individuals throughout Canada who are

working on issues which affect women's health.

This project will gather information about women's health activities and organizations to create a current Canadian resource list. An issue of Healthsharing magazine will be devoted to each region, in our case the Atlantic Provinces, and will include the current resource list for that area as well as articles and graphics by regional contributors. This issue will be freely distributed within the region.

A Canada-wide conference on women's health issues which will focus on sharing resources, linking our struggles, and determining a structure for the Network, will bring the regions

together.

This is an opportunity for those working on women's health issues to share their resources, analysis and vision. It is essential that the concerns of women from diverse ages, classes, cultures, physical abilities, races and sexual orientations be included. It is vital to make links between women's well-being and systematic social problems such as heterosexism, poverty, racism and sexism.

For more information regarding the Canadian Women's Health network, please contact the Regional Animator for the Atlantic Provinces, Alexandra Keir, R.R. #2, West River Station, NS, B0K 1Z0.

## Jane Hurshman Corkum January 1949-February 1992

The death of Jane Hurshman Corkum is a terrible tragedy, one felt not only by her family and close friends, but by the many women to whom she gave hope for their own survival, and by all of us who worked with her. But the tragedy of her death should not overshadow the victory of her life. Jane talked about her victory of survival last November in Dartmouth.

"Hello from all the years of pain that I and my son endured and all the pain of a bruised body and spirit. I want to make people aware of what can happen to them and their children and their dreams. Only then will life have a meaning and the pain go away and the nightmare end. It has been almost ten years, and for me the healing is not complete. There is still a lot to do and a lot to be said, and I expect to be around to do that. I cannot rewrite my past or forget it. By speaking out, I can also help

myself and give my life a purpose and meaning and replace those old fears.

"Fear and shame and failure are all the emotions that are experienced by a



Jane Hurshman Corkum  
(Photo by Anita Martinez)

battered woman. I was born in a time when people did not reveal their personal problems. Emotions were kept inside, a secret. We all keep up appearances. And it is all part of early conditioning and very deep-rooted. Battering and violence is not the taboo; speaking out against it is. It can only continue if we remain silent. I want to tell you not to be silent. Come forward. Be heard. The more that come forward, the sooner we can change society's attitudes. Tell your story, no matter how shocking. We must unite with one view. Do not cover up the bruises or your story. I want you to know that there are women out there being battered right now. There is still not a day that I don't wake up and think 'Who is it happening to now?'"

—Excerpt from a speech that Jane gave to the Dartmouth Task Force on Violence Against Women. November 1991. Courtesy CBC.

## TV women stereotyped

Sherry White on women in prime-time television

Sherry White wrote about how women are portrayed in television entertainment, primarily sitcoms. She categorized the TV women under *The Good Wife*, *The Bitch*, *The "Slut"*, *The Mother* and *The Witch*.

Here's part of what Sherry had to say about *The Mother*:

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We see them on every show and sometimes they are working mothers, sometimes they are single mothers, sometimes they are homemaker mothers. Claire Huxtable (*The Cosby Show*) is my favourite example. She is a highly-paid, prominent lawyer, while her husband, Cliff, is an obstetrician. We see him in his office quite often and sometimes, the entire show will be focused on his work. But there is only one time I can recall seeing Claire in her office and it was not a show that focused on her job. Claire is a mother. She is the mother of five children and Cliff could be considered number six. He is always behaving like a child, trying to sneak junk food and buy appliances behind Claire's back and she is always there to catch him with his hand in the cookie jar...

# 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.

This issue was produced by: Sara avMaat, Judith Davies, Sharon Fraser, Sandi Lanz, Yvonne Manzer, Debbie Mathers, Colleen McKee, Carrie Melsom, Beverley Rach, Elaine Sharpe, Jeanne Thibodeau, Amani Wassef

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Thank you, one and all!

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## NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS:

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 photos by Tonë Meeg

Presswork by Web Atlantic

# Were we heard?

Members of the Pandora editorial committee spent the week of January 13-17 at the Lord Nelson Hotel attending the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission Inquiry into our alleged sex discrimination. The following are some of our thoughts and feelings about the process.

During the week of the Pandora inquiry I learned a lot about bureaucracy, judicial process... and restraint. It was hard for me to remain calm while I listened to absurdity, patronizing remarks and irony. Generally, whenever I hear something disturbing or unfair I jump to my feet to vocalize my concerns; however, during a judicial proceeding, such behavior is not permitted.

I felt outrage at how some of the witnesses were addressed and undermined. Under the rules of cross-examination, attempts were made, unsuccessfully, to unsettle strong and concise women who testified to the disadvantaged situation of women in our society. I felt the safe space which Pandora had created for women's voices and experiences had been violated and tested. Proof in itself of the need for women-only spaces.

As a witness for Pandora, I experienced that violation personally. Pandora provides me an opportunity to escape the demands of the male-dominated world I survive, live, and work in.

My special relationship with Pandora as a small women's-only community was torn as I watched and experienced male definitions and bureaucracy invade our thoughts, opinions, experiences and policies. We were no longer operating on our own ground, but became vulnerable to the rules of those who were defining the agenda of the inquiry. I wished I could just jump up and scream out "this is crazy and we're not going to take it anymore."

One of the more positive experiences I had at the inquiry was the sense of community and support among the spectators. Occasionally, our feminist collective-sense-of-humour got the better of us and we found ourselves laughing aloud at one or another of the absurdities. This naughty behaviour only caused the adjudicator to remind us that the case was very serious and not intended to be a means of public entertainment. Fair enough I suppose, but there were times that were ludicrous beyond belief.

I'm glad the week is over and all that is left is the final arguments on March 6, 1992. I'm optimistic about the evidence and believe that in the end justice will prevail.

—Amani

One thing I won't forget, though, is that justice in the legal sense is male, based on male norms and male text. I'm consequently somewhat sceptical about benefits to women in the outcome of the hearing, but — and I never thought I'd say it, and it takes courage to reveal — I'm glad I was there to hear. What I lost personally was little in comparison with what I won; what it cost me was worth it. The irony that it took a legal attack by a man to strengthen my woman is not lost on me.

What did I lose?

Sometimes, good humour. There were times during the five days in January that I felt tense, irritable, resentful, angry, or sometimes even embarrassed. Not for us — for them, the other side(s), trudging their oblique and tortuous trails to and around the battle-

ground. The money spent here wasn't just ours; it cost every taxpayer and every person whose case was backlogged or forgotten in pursuit of Pandora. Watching it squandered on sidetraps outraged me.

So much for equanimity.

Just as we all did, I also lost sleep and energy and money for food and parking and Pepsis.

The personal losses and costs were minimal. The winnings were big.

I'd gone into the hearing believing Pandora little and alone. I was wrong. We were not alone. The care and concern for us shown by the coalition who spoke for us, the women and men who wrote, the people who testified, and the people who heard, is heartening. As the days passed, I felt wrapped in communal warmth, comforted even in a hostile environment. That sense of community was a win.

Those who testified made me prouder still of womankind. I deeply admire the bright, courageous, articulate few who used their words as skillfully as surgeons use their knives and guarded them as jealously. They do not sublimate the power of their knowledge and life experience into personal ego-bolsters; they use it to support other women. I value their dedication — and I learned so much from them!

The most important win of all for me is that through the testimony my formerly hazy sense of Pandora's place in women's struggle for equality was clarified and confirmed. I suddenly saw a continuous line of women that stretched from past to future: the women of the past, who struggled behind us, for the same

need sheltered spaces to protect our growth so that we may achieve equality.

After five days of learning and listening, I am strengthened in myself as a woman and a feminist, and prouder still of where and how I stand, because now I see it clearly.

It was a hearing worth hearing.

I hope we were heard.

—Judith

Although Pandora survived the week, there were times when that seemed less than a sure thing. We entered the arena with mixed emotions, but we'd made a decision to participate and we were going to do the best job we could.

We danced with the system, to their rules, in their ballroom. It was damned uncomfortable, frustrating and tiring, but we survived, elegantly. Our success testifies to the strength and courage of women in this community who testified for us or who supported us with their presence and good wishes.

It was my first exposure to the judicial system outside of shows such as Street Legal and LA Law. I took the week off work to be there and I'm glad I did. I had never envisioned myself as the 'bad guy' in a human rights case. It seemed inconceivable, still does, still is.

Sitting there in the inquiry room I experienced a range of emotions, once, so intense, I had to leave the room. I felt my powerlessness within the system, I felt futility, I felt incredible, violent anger.

I also felt pride. The women who testified brought me joy with their strength, humour and insistence on defining their own terms of reference. Anne Derrick, our lawyer, was a marvel, competent, witty and on top of everything.

Looking back I have mixed feelings. Women spoke of the things I hold true, but they did it in a male space with male rules of cross examination and confrontation. They spoke in a forum where men could attempt to mold and mutilate their words and intent. It was a hard, scary, and frequently demeaning place to be. We lost our safe place, our women's space, our right to define who and what we are.

The inquiry was not a safe place for women: It was not our agenda; and our energy and commitment were not used to empower women. That

makes me sad, and angry, and it leaves me at a loss.

The dance continues. On March 6th, the lawyers will make their final arguments and presentations to the adjudicator. I do not know what the results will be. What I do know is that we will be fundraising and using our energy and time to respond to the ridiculous charge which has been brought against us. There is better work we could be doing.

—Carrie

For me, one of the more positive aspects of the hearings was the history I learned — the hearing was a mini-course in feminism and the history of women in Nova Scotia and in the media.

(Continued on page 14)



Pandora has nothing to hide  
(Photo by Tonë Meeg)

things I'm fighting for; Pandora standing now to defend, hoping to hold and even gain ground; and shadowy women who will someday lead.

Ours is not a small and futile battle; it is an integral part of the women's continuum. Pandora and other women-only spaces are the vital links between the struggles of women past and present and the ultimate equality in society for women in the future. Because women have been, and are, deliberately excluded from the development of the texts and practices of the underpinnings of this society (law, medicine, religion, business, etc.), we have been silenced and oppressed. Sheltered spaces such as Pandora give us a safe place to birth our own agenda, teach it, nurture its growth until we someday send it forth a mature adult who will stand beside the texts and practices to have an equal say in society. Women

# We gets lots of letters of support ...and some money, too. Thanks.

**Pandora:**  
In today's society, women are the victims of much oppression and inequality. To find a source of inspiration and empowerment for women is not only a joy but essential in women's fight for equality. To have this source, such as Pandora, taken away is disheartening and detrimental to all women.

There are very few facets of society that women have full and unchallenged claim to. When there exists this source of "women-power" it provides a glimmer of hope for today's women and women in the future. The existence of Pandora is a milestone for women. An all-woman magazine is vital and indispensable in empowering women.

The claims of discrimination against Pandora are unfounded. The cry of discrimination is simply a cry from patriarchy disputing the distribution of power and authority in this aspect of society. Pandora represents and defends women as equal and capable, deviating from the typical characterization of women as subordinate, feeble-minded and incompetent. Pandora is defending women's rights to women's space in society. In a society that is male-dominated, the need for a feminist magazine is overwhelming.

Pandora is a magazine that is written by women, for women. In this society, freedom of the press is an unalienable right to all people—men and women. Freedom of assembly, of choice, and of expression are guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Pandora and its authors are asserting their rights to freedom. The criminality is not in their practices but in the dissolution of this essential feminist magazine.

—The Women's Centre Collective, Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario

**Pandora:**

I am enclosing a Christmas donation to assist in your legal defence against the malicious charges of sex discrimination. This man's pseudo indignant stance of justice denied is on a par, though far more costly, with MP John Crosbie's peevish complaints of being dealt with unfairly following his latest slew of offensive sexist remarks in PEI.

The attack against Pandora is obviously designed to rally strong anti-feminist feelings in the community and to make women pay. The attacker could have sent his letter to any daily newspaper for editorial consideration. He choose instead to thrust it on a small underfunded women-only quarterly paper which in essence acts as a women's community newsletter, created and published by a small band of dedicated female volunteers. Suspect? I think so, and judging from letters in the general press on this matter, many men as well as women think so too. I am astonished and disillusioned at the handling of this case by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. Sincerely,  
—Hildred C. Martin, Wolfville

**Pandora:**

Please accept our modest donation towards your defense of the sex-discrimination charges. We are a small group in Halifax but stand solidly behind women's rights.

The International Socialists see it as a priority to defend and offer our assistance to any oppressed groups, especially when under attack. We defend the rights of oppressed groups to organize separately to ensure their voices are heard, and to defend and extend their rights.

We find the charges against Pandora to be of importance to our organization as well, because we will suffer if you do not win your case. If you lose, it will open the door for other sexists, racists, homophobes and anti-abortionists, etc., to challenge our right to refuse to publish their ideas of hatred.

If there is any way in which the International Socialists can help you in your struggle, which we consider to be our own struggle, please let us know. Feel free to contact us if you need our help.

—Jackie Desrochers, International Socialists

**Pandora:**

I heard Elizabeth Cusack-Walsh on CBC this morning. Bravo.

Best of luck and thank you for fighting on behalf of all women, whether or not they recognize or appreciate our efforts.

Barbara Bateman, Fredericton

**Pandora:**

With you we struggle for change in this world, and for us womyn's space is one important aspect of our strategy.

We deplore the actions of those men who wish to silence you... and by extension, silence womyn everywhere who dare to speak out.

Please find enclosed some financial support from womyn who stop by the Concordia Women's Centre and who were outraged at this court action by a man... who demands the "right" to take up space in one of the small spaces we have claimed for ourselves, and in so doing, depletes our already stretched resources.

We send you energy and strength.  
—Concordia Women's Centre, Montreal, Que.

**Pandora:**

I can't tell you how happy I was to find you! After 11 years away, I recently returned to Nova Scotia, and Pandora has provided me with that desired (read "life-sustaining") link to the Nova Scotia women's community. Thanks.

I want to add my voice, and a few dollars, to support you (us, really) in this asinine legal case with which you are faced. Stay strong, know you are needed, and stay focused on the never-again-to-be-silenced women standing beside you. Keep letting us know how we can help, and we will.

In solidarity,  
—Wendy Chappell, Truro

**Pandora:**

I had been intending to renew my subscription and feel it's urgent to send a little more to help with the burden of legal costs. Not much, but I'll help in other ways (write to the Human Rights Commission) and follow the progress of your case, as Pandora means a lot to me.

I also enclose (for publication, hopefully) a review of an art show by my neighbour Catherine Hughes which I wrote following the exhibit in Pictou the first week of October.

Thanks, and lots of good energy to you,  
—Paige Prichard Kennedy, Pictou Co., NS  
(Pandora's note: The review is printed in this issue.)

**Pandora:**

I've just read the coverage in *Common Ground* of your struggle with the N.S. Human Rights Commission. Your argument about women not constituting a special-interest group is terribly important. The fact is, we crosscut and are more than 50% of almost every oppressed/disadvantaged group in this society. Enclosed is a cheque plus a very real appreciation for the endless work this must involve.

—Helen Levine, Ottawa

**Pandora:**

I will be in a better position to help financially after January — let me know if further \$\$ is needed for your defence.

—Nancy Warder, Nfld

**Pandora:**

Knowing that your publication is now under attack from one man who cannot grasp the true sense of rebalancing thousands of years of the most grotesque inequality imaginable, I am stirred to renew my subscription as I have been meaning to do, and to send my heartfelt support for your battle to maintain your "women only" editorial policy.

Every day I scan the "mainstream news," listen to the CBC and search hard for any voices of women, especially of women who dare to speak about the many ways that the truth of what has been done to women continues to be hidden, ridiculed, denied.

For one man to take on Pandora as his personal challenge to the women's movement is proof once again that the tiniest footholds in rebalancing what has been done to us as women are prone to knee-jerk reactions by men who are used to having it all their own way.

The Human Rights Commission's acceptance of this complaint is further proof that this government department is still functioning on a naive level in regards to the situation of women.

The death threat aimed at the workers in your office confirm once again that when women are talking about equality we are really talking about safety for our lives in a world in which men's hatred of women rages unchecked.

All the more power to you in your work. It is, in a very real sense, the life breath of women who will not be silenced.

In sisterhood,  
—Tamarack, Ottawa

**Pandora:**

Please find attached a contribution from the Dalhousie Women Faculty Organization to help defer the legal costs involved in responding to the charge against Pandora that has been brought to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. We recognize the importance this issue represents to all women's groups in the province and perhaps the country. We believe it is essential that you succeed in establishing the right of women's groups devoted to identifying and challenging oppressive structures in society to set their own agendas and methods of procedure, including the right to determine editorial policies. We wish to offer both our moral and financial support to you in this struggle. Good luck.

—Susan Sherwin, Dalhousie Women Faculty Organization

**Pandora:**

"I heard the news today"... concerning the reaction to your editorial policy re: material from men. As a member of a small newsletter co-op at a Winnipeg women's centre, we discuss these kinds of issues regularly. I understand your viewpoint. I work for the day when even those who do not understand do not react with violence.

Know that you are not alone. In numbers there is strength.  
—Alison Campbell



"More Windows"

The following letter was written on the back of a card beautifully drawn and coloured by the author.

**Pandora:**

The corollary to Pandora's "ceasing to exist" is dismayingly obvious... I, for one, do not particularly relish the prospect of being bound and systematically "gagged" ever again... Watching the world mutely, helplessly through a window, or mirror not of my own choosing or design (my collage...)

Pandora, you were there for me in 1989 when you published my account of a personal struggle with harassment (see June, 1989, p 16) you eased my feelings of

isolation and fear in doing so and helped me to affirm to myself and others "We are not here to be victims." Unfortunately, at this moment, I am still using my time and creative energies to resolve this issue. Mine is a standing concern, with the NB Advisory Council, Status of Women, my only thread of hope through the legal system labyrinth men call Justice. I am but a small, distant voice; you are my resounding echo... I am here for you.

—Janet Doucet, Bathurst

# Pandora gets more letters of support

Dear sister writers, publishers and readers at Pandora:

Enclosed is \$\$ to support your publishing women's rights. You have my complete support.  
—Betsy Warland, Ganges, BC

On the evening of December 6, the Secret Furies had provided \$\$ for interpretation for the Deaf, through Lesbain and Gay Rights Nova Scotia. The interpreter got the flu and didn't come. Kirsten Nichols stepped in and provided interpretation. I sent her a cheque for the money we had allowed for those services. I got the address wrong on the envelope, however, and it came back to me. When I phoned today to get the correct address, she said thank you for the thought, but she would rather we donate the money to Pandora. So — voilà — a cheque for you. A donation from Kirsten.

See you soon,  
—Anne Bishop, Halifax

I think this sex-discrimination action against you is outrageous. Please keep me posted on what happens if you are able to. I'm also very interested in custody/access actions.  
—Susan Boyd, Ottawa

I have read in Kinesis (the Vancouver Status of Women newspaper) about the threats against Pandora and her collective. I want to tell you that you are brave women and to send you some of my supportive loving energy. We must not give in to male violence and systematic silencing of our voices. This small donation may help a bit. More than money, I want to let you know that I care that you will carry on until you need not to. Whatever else you do be good to yourselves in all of this.  
—Jennifer Penny, North Vancouver

At a recent conference "Women Uniting for Change" held in Thunder Bay, the Pandora situation was explained and "the hat passed."

Enclosed is a cheque and the concern and best wishes of women from Northwestern Ontario.  
—Margaret Phillips, Northern Woman Journal

Sorry I couldn't give more. Best of luck to you. Hang in and don't lose heart. Feel free to hit me up for more later.

In support,  
—Susan Joanis, Cambridge, Ont

At least two positive consequences arise from the recent Pandora Human Rights affair: one is further proof that patriarchy is vigorous, subtle, and resilient; the other, of course, is increased publicity for Pandora. I wish to take a subscription for Pandora.  
—Ginette Jaillet, Moncton, NB

Once upon a time, in 1922 to be exact, Canada celebrated Thanksgiving early in November, and it has always given me a quiet pleasure that I was born on that particular morning. So, ever since I have been able to, I have celebrated my own private Thanksgiving by making life a little easier, a little more fun, and a little more interesting for three other women (or groups of women.) It seems to me that Pandora should help me celebrate this year.

Good luck! You are important.  
—Louise Ardenne

The enclosed cheque is from RFR (Resources for Feminist Reseach). We had a panel series on "Feminist Politics" just before the holidays and we're sending you part of the proceeds. Good luck! And if there's anything we can do, let us know.  
—Phil Masters, Toronto

Keep up the struggle! Enclosed is \$\$ for a one-year subscription and the remainder to help defray legal costs for the sex-discrimination dispute.

Sincerely,  
—Grace Gannett, Weston, Ont

We hope you win your struggle. Wish we could send more. Keep it up!  
—Emily Boyle, Jane Matthews, Saskatoon

Keep up the good work! Please sign me up for a subscription.  
—K.A. Thompson, Oakville, Ont

I send strength and best wishes to sisters in struggle.  
—In solidarity, Julie Black, Ottawa

I admire your efforts in this battle for women's rights. Thank you for providing a space for me. Keep on with the continuing struggle.

In sisterhood,  
—Nancy Hay, Halifax

What kind of person would feel so threatened by the very existence of a woman's forum that he would seek to destroy it? It is a measure of your effectiveness, in an awkward kind of way, that this action has been taken against Pandora.

Enclosed is a small cheque to help in the struggle, with a large dose of moral support. Thank you for all your labours of love to make this paper happen.

—Janet Larkman

I read in the recent issue of Healthsharing your need for resources for the legal costs associated with the sex-discrimination case. Please use the enclosed donation as you need.

—Carolyn Johns, Nepean, Ont

The women of W.O.M.Y.N. organization hope this donation will help a little in your important work.

In sisterhood,  
—Carmen, Fredericton

## Support comes in various guises

Pandora:

I am appalled at the spectacle of a journal such as yours being hauled before the Human Rights Commission. The fact is that if the Commission finds Pandora "guilty", it will in no way promote justice. It will have the effect, in fact, of giving the traditionally oppressive group another opportunity to oppress. It can be of no possible benefit to the male who has started this proceeding (except his personal satisfaction) or for males in general since it will merely confirm the power they already have.

The Reagan-Bush era is with us. Challenges to Affirmative Action, dismissal of charges of sexual harassment, derision for democratic views ("political correctness"), racist and sexist slurs condoned, and the co-opting of public institutions to promote reactionary principles — that's the climate in our society now, brought here through Mulroney's adulation of these arch rightists.

I have read Pandora since its first issue. It's a great journal; it's a courageous one. I hope like hell you will win, but I'm aware that the intention of the man bringing the case against the journal is to destroy it by draining energy and money from it.

I wish I could do more — but here's a bit of money to add to all the other bits I hope you receive. As for the energy — may it come to you in visible waves from all of us out there concentrating our collective energies on you.

—Kay Tudor

P.S. I'll send a copy of this letter to Wayne McKay, a Human Rights Commission member.

Come Live With Me

(A take-off on the poem "Come Live With Me and Be My Love" by Christopher Marlowe)

Come live with me and be my drudge  
And I'll not bear you any grudge  
For ugly looks and mean take-home.  
For noisy kids and food undone.

To keep life pleasant I will jog  
To the local pub for a little jog.  
If in the night the kiddies cry  
Keep them away from where I lie.

And when some day I lose my cool  
Because you've acted like a fool  
Don't call the cops or carry on  
The law's on my side — ask Judge Dionne

—Kay Tudor

## I've done it all

A friend said  
How come you don't wear  
no jewellery,  
no makeup?  
How come you don't  
make yourself  
look good?

And I said,  
I've worn it all  
in my day.

I've worn spike heels,  
earrings,  
bracelets and bras.  
I've worn girdles and garter belts  
and pointed shoes.  
I've worn padded shoulders  
and wide leather belts  
that cut me half in two.  
I've worn long skirts,  
mini skirts  
and no end of things that  
hurts.

I've painted my nails  
and once or twice my  
toes.  
I've been burned for a perm  
and slept on curlers.  
I've plucked hair from  
eyebrows  
and periodically from a mole.  
I've shaved my legs  
And underarms  
And deodorized the lat-  
ter.

I've put perfume behind  
my ears  
and flowers above 'em  
I've curled eyelashes,  
painted my lips and  
rouged my cheeks.

I've done it all.  
I was brought to heel.  
But I ain't doin' it no more  
And, god, how great I  
feel.

—Kay Tudor

## Stepping Stone seeks safe houses near metro area

Pandora:

I am writing on behalf of the Program Committee of Stepping Stone. We are currently trying to locate accommodations which could be used as "safe houses" during emergency relocations for women who work as prostitutes and possibly their children.

An emergency relocation is when a woman who works on the street is in danger and her whereabouts need to remain unknown for reasons of safety.

An appropriate safe house would need to meet the following criteria:

- Smoking permitted
- Willingness to accept children
- Available on short notice
- Unobtrusive host(s)
- A private room
- Laundry facilities

•Stable environment

•Preferably no men (most women who are going through an emergency relocation would be more comfortable in a space with no men. However, depending on the circumstances, this condition is negotiable.)

•Located within commuting distance of the city

Each safe house location would be used on an occasional basis for a period of 24 hours to two weeks. If needed, financial compensation could be arranged.

Should anyone be interested, please contact either Andrea Currie (420-0103) or Maria Medioli (492-4199).

—Maria Medioli,  
Chairperson, Program Committee

## Pandora doesn't reflect all women

Pandora's note: We have recently received a letter from a woman who has cancelled her subscription. She felt that we did not reflect her concerns. She felt the paper was full of bitterness, frustration, anger and "a general closing in of ranks rather than openness." She believes feminists should be more accepting of a broad range of views. Although this woman did not sign her name, we felt it is important to discuss the issues she raises:

It's unfortunate Pandora does not reflect your views, but we do not pretend to be "objective" or to cover all points of view in all issues. If you do not agree with what we write, why don't you consider writing an article yourself? Maybe other readers would be inter-

ested in what you have to say. After all, we are a community paper.

Most of our stories are written by women just like you — not journalists, not writers, not "experts" in any of the usual senses of that word. They are experts only in being women, living in this society. Yes there is anger, fear, and frustration in many of their voices. The women who write for Pandora write of their own experiences, and, unfortunately, many of these experiences are sad, bitter, and frustrating. If you have had other experiences, we would love to hear about them. We can never get enough good news.

Since your note was not signed, we do not know whom to delete from our mailing list. If you receive a copy of this issue, please contact us again.

## Women in Development:

# Kenyan women work to improve lot of women

by Regina Nyamu

Over the years, a number of women's groups that are working on regulating and improving the status of women are rapidly increasing all over the world, even in the Third World, developing countries.

One such organization is the Kenya Women in Development. It originally began under the leadership of white women in 1952 during the struggle for independence. Kenya Women in Development grew rapidly in the early 1950s, drawing its strength from African women who formed local groups in order to improve their families' health and welfare.

A training institute known as the Kenya Institute of Administration was established, in part to train African women in leadership at the local level. By the late 1950s African women were preparing themselves for national leadership positions in the organization.

The Kenya Women in Development has developed into the largest women's organization in Kenya and has a membership of 1.5 million with over 25,000 women's groups branching from it. This shows that women have become more aware of their roles in development and have consequently organized themselves to meet the challenges of development. The purpose of the movement is to improve the socio-economic and educational status of the women of rural members' communities to a level they can help themselves.

The Kenyan women, just as in any other African country, work for many hours a day; that is, an average of 15 hours a day. This mostly applies to the women in the rural areas. Considering the work they do, one may regard them as incredibly strong and hardworking. Most of the time they are hoeing or harvesting with their babies and firewood on their back.

Despite the women's burdens, women traditionally have low status and no say in decision making. They lack adequate facilities dealing with family-planning and health, and they are denied education. The Kenya Women in Development tries to deal with these problems by setting objectives and plans for the movement.

The Kenya Women in Development has a number of objectives. These are:

- To promote integrity, honesty, truthfulness and the activities of the organization.
- To develop and improve the status and conditions of the life of women and girls of all communities in Kenya. They hope to do this through social contacts, thus encouraging women to be good neighbours and to recognize the value



Baby about to be weighed (Photo courtesy of CUSO)

of self help through service and mutual co-operation among all its members. An objective is to implement programmes geared to improve the standard of living of families by using effective methods of training. They also do it by initiating and encouraging physical development such as group ownership of land, building institutions, small scale industries and other enterprises and last by embarking on new appropriate technology aimed at making the life of women less burdensome, so as to help them contribute more effectively to the national economy.

c) Another objective is to help find solutions for the disadvantaged women, children and disabled persons in the society at large.

d) They also work on promoting the legal status of women and children of Kenya.

e) To promote health for families in Kenya.

f) To promote leadership of women in the country through education.

g) To co-ordinate with other non-political women's organizations at national, provincial and district to grassroot levels.

h) To co-operate with other non-political societies with similar aims and interests.

i) To set up branches at district, divisional, locational levels throughout the country.

j) To raise funds locally and internationally in support of Kenya Women in Development.

k) To initiate other programmes for girls, and lastly

l) To do all other things as are necessary to fulfil its aims and objectives.

To achieve the above objectives, the organization has initiated and implements various programmes

One of them is the Energy Conservation Programme. This programme works at creating an awareness and introducing women to energy-saving devices. It also trains women in management, production and maintenance of cookstoves

and also provides education and technology towards reducing firewood usage, through the introduction of agroforestry and fuel-saving cookstoves.

Another programme is the Mother and Child Nutrition Project. Its objectives are to train women on better methods of food production, storage, preparation and preservation. It also trains women on better methods of feeding and weaning of children and on better methods of establishing and maintaining kitchen gardens.

A third programme is the Integrated Maternal Child Health Family Planning Programme. Its objectives are to improve the health and social economic status of communities by providing information, education and motivation on maternal child health and family planning to eligible clients and also provides training to men and women who can assist in dissemination and provision of family planning services through community-based distribution approach.

Apart from those named above, the movement also has other minor programmes like the dress-making project and the AIDs education programme.

The movement's future plans are: Since the movement is conscious of the fact that 80 per cent of the rural labour force is composed of women, hence appreciates that any change for women requires a complete face lift of the national development strategies. It also hopes to provide training skills and services in various aspects of income and general national development, and also hopes to sensitize women in ownership of property.

Since the U.N. Decade for Women Conference which was held in Nairobi, (Kenya) in July, 1985 the women in Kenya have made great strides in various fields of human endeavour. They have engaged in various professions and activities that were previously assumed to be the preserve of men.

It is clear that the level of the women's movement in Kenya, cannot be compared to the women's movement in this part of North America. Any assistance that would be of use in order to help the women of Kenya or the movement itself would highly be appreciated. This help would be in the form of suggestions and ideas, financial or even technical or material.

One necessary thing that lacks for the Kenyan women is Transition Houses or anything similar that would help battered women in Kenya and that would be one of the things that would be nice to introduce in Kenya and again this might require suggestions and a lot of help from countries like Canada that already have them.

The fight of the status of women is a fight of every woman, and is a fight that should be done in co-operation and help from each other, and so we as women should join hands and win the fight to raise the living standard of women.

## How are women supposed to look? The world according to kids

Bobbi Harris-Jennex on advertising

Bobbi Harris-Jennex gave a seminar about the effects of advertising on women. She began by presenting the results of interviews conducted with girls and boys of various ages. Here are some of the answers given by girls 13 to 19 years of age to the question "How do you feel women are meant to look according to our society?"

- Women must be slim and trim.
- They must be beautiful all the time.
- To be sexy and young means being successful.
- To please a man, you must smell good, feel good, and look good.
- If you gain any weight, you must lose it.
- Lips and legs are important.
- Breasts are very important.
- If you have good make-up and the right perfume, you should be able to catch a man.
- To be a woman you must be sexy and still be a wife and mother.
- According to society, TV and magazines, winning the man of your dreams is the ultimate goal.

Bobbi's presentation was very visual; she had collected a numbers of ads from fashion magazines to illustrate her point that women are presented with an "ideal" to live up to that is usually impossible. She showed us some of the ads and asked us to guess the product being advertised. The women in the ads were generally in various states of undress, and it wasn't easy to determine what the product was. We were interested to find that one device used by advertisers was to use a semi-naked woman with the naked part being the part the advertised product would cover. A woman naked from the waist up, for example, could be advertising a t-shirt. Or naked from the waist down, could be advertising jeans.

## How are women portrayed in advertising?

Lynn Day on women in advertising

Lynn Day presented her seminar on the portrayal of women in advertising, comparing the portrayal to the way men are portrayed, and paying particular attention to the connection between gender role stereotypes and female health disorders. One of her sources was Jean Kilbourne, the filmmaker who made *Killing Us Softly*. Here is part of what Lynn had to say:

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Many advertisements use partial or complete female nudity, sexual suggestiveness, and innuendo to sell products not only to men but also to women. If a man is also portrayed in the ad, Jean Kilbourne compares how they are pictured as follows: he is in control and she is passive and yielding — clinging to him. The woman is looking at the man while the man is looking away. A sexual relationship between the woman and the man in the ad is often implied. The message to the man is clear: sexual access to the woman is the reward for buying the product...

Are Canadians satisfied that women are factually portrayed in advertisements? ... I know that I do not see myself reflected in the majority of ads portraying women. And if I do not see myself — white, middle-class and privileged — what hope is there for black and native women, physically challenged women, poor women and older women to have the opportunity to see themselves in advertisements?...

# Going for a "balanced" approach

by Mary Jardine

The social problem of violence against women received extensive media coverage and exposure in the weeks preceding the second anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. Some commentaries have dealt with the massacre specifically, while others have adopted a broader approach in addressing such issues as wife-battering and sexual assaults against women. Those favouring a more comprehensive approach have attempted to identify the links connecting the various types of existing dangers which confront women on a daily basis.

In the initial aftermath of the Marc Lepine rampage, two frames of analysis emerged with which we are all familiar: In the first, Lepine's actions were characterized as symptomatic of

violence which is directed against women in various spheres; the second was the insistence that the massacre was the isolated irrational act of a madman.

Recent commentaries would indicate that proponents of the latter view are in retreat. However, it is clear that the undercurrent of resistance and denial to the problem of violence against women still exists.

For example, in a column in *Globe and Mail* (Dec. 6, 1991), a female writer asks why the only legitimate response to the massacre is a political one. She goes on to say that it was a highly atypical occurrence, one which is not representative of most women's experience.

What the writer fails to grasp is the fact that all women are potential victims of male violence. The danger applies to women from all walks of life, regardless of educational, ethnic or class background. This reality is reflected in the recent killings of Patricia Allen, a well-respected Ottawa lawyer (shot by her estranged husband with a cross-bow) and that of Nina DeVilliers, the daughter of a prominent neurosurgeon who was abducted in broad daylight and subsequently found murdered.

The social reality indicates that violence against women is becoming more widespread and is increasing in intensity. Despite this, many journalists and writers attempt to deflect attention from this issue by advancing opposing views which distort public perception

and understanding of the problem.

In a column entitled "Women aren't the only victims" (*The Globe and Mail*, Dec. 6, 1991), a writer advances the claim that "males are victims too... Men are viewed as the omnipresent predators and all women are viewed as the weak victims of male oppression."

Some writers accuse women's activists of denying or overlooking other victims of violence by placing undue emphasis on the problem of violence against women. They argue that other victimized groups exist and that no one

is gaged in similar activities. However, such factors are irrelevant in the context of violence against women. A woman can take such precautions but she is not significantly protected from the threat of violence — a woman is vulnerable in a much broader range of activities. Women are abducted, ambushed, attacked and raped in any number of settings. These attacks occur at night, in broad daylight, in the home, on city streets, on campus and at the workplace.

Other groups in society are targeted

and victimized for a variety of reasons, some due to 'lifestyle habits'; however, the fact is clearly emerging that female victims of violence

are targets of male aggression solely on the basis of their sex.

I would like to describe certain thought patterns and examples of circular reasoning which I have identified in my considerations of recent media reporting relating to the issue of violence against women: In most reports, Marc Lepine's rampage has not been characterized as anti-female; similarly, in media reports which outline the rape, murder and assaults committed against women, the perpetrators are never described as anti-woman or anti-female.

But women who speak out against the gross excesses of male violence are verbally attacked as "anti-male." Male columnists who insist that the Montreal Massacre was an isolated random act have consistently ridiculed and trivialized the women who speak out on issues of sexism. Not incidentally,

**(Perpetrators of violence against women) are never described as anti-women or anti-female. But women who speak out against... male violence are verbally attacked as anti-male.**

group should be categorized separately. What those individuals are apparently incapable of understanding is the reality that violence against women is a social phenomenon operating within a unique set of dynamics which may be defined and identified separately from other social phenomena.

Those familiar with basic criminology theories are aware that lifestyle patterns and habits have been identified which can greatly increase one's chances of becoming a victim of violent crime.

For example, the most consistent indicator or factor which increases the likelihood of becoming a crime victim is the number of nights per week spent outside one's home. A man therefore, can greatly reduce the possibility of violent attack by reducing the number of nights spent "on the town" or en-

assistance from the government. The government does not provide sufficient funding for the operation of transition houses. Therefore, they must spend a great deal of their time and energy just keeping their heads above water and finding alternative ways to acquire money.

Transition houses have not been looked upon as an important necessary social need. Helping thousands of battered women and children is not considered as important as education or health care, or as important as many other areas where government money is spent. As long as federal and provincial budgets reflect this, the plight of battered women is not likely to get better.

One of the problems is that as long as transition houses exist, people can more easily ignore violence against women. If people believe that the transition houses are solving the problem, then they themselves don't need to do anything. Just because the transition house exists, wife-battering doesn't stop. A transition house does help the women who need help; however, it doesn't prevent or solve the problem.

Society must undergo a great change to eliminate violence against women. The public at large must become more educated and made aware of violence taking place. Concerned men and women will have to work

together to educate and to change legislation.

The media also plays an important role. In my media class, we talk a lot about myths and images. We feel a true representation of women is not given by the media. Our culture is expressed through television, movies, music and forms of advertising. The images and stories these types of media portray are that of narrow, unrealistic gender roles. Direct pressure from the public must be put on the media to give a more accurate picture of women.

If women could relate to other women, maybe they would realize they do not need to put up with the abuse. Battered women lose their sense of self-worth and end up depending more and more on the man who is beating them — not only for money but for everything. Women do believe themselves alone, and who are unaware of transition house help services, may feel they've no alternative but to remain in their situation.

We must become more concerned with violence against women. Transition houses offer a great help to battered women; however, we must eliminate the violence so transition houses are no longer needed. Violence against women must be stopped. And it must be made public that women are no longer going to accept or tolerate the violence. We will fight back.

these are the same individuals who, in writing about the horrific murder of Patricia Allen, define the issue as one regarding the regulation of cross bows.

Journalists who are hell-bent on distorting the issue with irrelevant side issues reflect an anti-feminist bias. Psychologists who postulate theories of widespread abuse by women are given prominent credibility and publicity. Such theories gain approval and are accepted at face value, despite the fact that sexism was, and continues to be, pervasive and influential in the development of psychological theory.

It is evident that violence against women is a battle which must be waged on many fronts. Clearly, it is not only the general public which requires education on this complex social problem. In many instances, biased information presented by journalists will have the effect of doing more harm than good. Of particular importance in this matter is the establishment of links which will demonstrate the relating factors which contribute to violence against women at all levels.

## Work of trailblazing women journalists undervalued

Jocelyn MacLean on women pioneers in the media

Jocelyn MacLean presented a seminar which looked at trailblazers — women in the media in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The conclusion she reached is that there has been much progress in the numbers of women who work in the media, but there's not a great deal of evidence that things have changed too much.

Part of her conclusion was based on her research and class discussion:

A column called "Over the Back Fence" written for *The Calgary Herald* in 1941 discussed the idea of "the system" for the home. The columnist described how this system was used to keep her household in working order. A column written for the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* in 1991 described that same system running the home but referred to it as "the list." After 50 years, columnists' articles are still referring to the same sorts of topics for mothers and housewives.

More conclusions:

\* The reason many people have not heard of these early women journalists is due to the fact that their work has not been valued

\* Most women journalists are still on the periphery of their field, with the men dominating the media

\* These journalists and other trailblazers in the women's movement are not prominent in our education system

\* Creating value for their work relies on who writes history and who remembers it

\* The whole ideology behind the feminist movement is more complex than the small rights and privileges that have been gained for the young women of today. Many young women do not recognize this fact.

## Images of women in advertising unchanged in 10 years

Michelle Rouleau on women in advertising

Michelle Rouleau presented a seminar about women in advertising, concentrating mostly on women presented as being fulfilled by doing housework and by buying certain household products.

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[Studies show] that when sex stereotypes are enacted in television commercials, women de-emphasize achievement in favour of homemaking as compared to men, and compared to women who had seen reversed sex role commercials. Women of 1970s commercials were seldom shown combining out-of-home employment with management of the home and personal life.

A study by Courtney and Whipple stated that television commercials did not reflect the true representation of women in the labour force. In 1974, one third of married women (in the United States) were employed, but commercials did not feature a working wife. Women continued to clean house, launder, cook, serve meals, while men gave the orders, gave advice and ate the meals. The idea that women could manage work, family, and child responsibilities had not yet permeated television advertising and did not reflect the impact of the women's movement...

Today, women are not pictured any differently in commercials than they were 10 years ago. Women are not talking to the population at large but to dogs, cats, babies, children and women dieters. Women only talk to those of "inferior" status, and to other women concerning feminine hygiene, headaches and diets.

## Violence against women must be made socially unacceptable

by Michelle Rouleau

Dear Pandora Readers:

I am a student presently taking a women and media course. After listening in class to a talk given by Mary de Wolfe, director of Chrysalis House (a transition house in the Annapolis Valley) and doing some reading on the subject, I became aware of the need, the purpose and the problems facing transition houses.

In today's society, people are starting, little by little, to become more aware of violence against women. As the awareness increases, more women seem to be admitting that they too have been abused by their partner. When women come to terms with such a problem, some type of help will be needed.

Transition houses offer an excellent service to women in need of support. They give women an immediate alternative to fearful and dangerous situations.

Transition houses deal with the symptom of abuse. Until the problem of abuse is solved, these houses will always be needed. Transition houses will also continue to exist until society makes violence against women socially unacceptable.

Much of the time, the importance and necessity of transition houses is not recognized. For example, they are not getting adequate media coverage and



# The media and the abortion issue

## — Is the coverage biased?

by Colleen McKee

Because of the emotional baggage accompanying my upbringing in a strict religious household, I have avoided confronting the issue of abortion. However, the controversy in the past few years over the Morgentaler abortion clinic in Halifax (as well as the governments' reluctance to address the abortion issue) has forced me to examine the issue particularly the way abortion is presented in the media.

In my examination it became clear that the mainstream media is no ally to women in their fight for reproductive rights. The media constantly juxtaposes images of women on opposite sides of the issue and manipulates the coverage in such a way as to imply that all women are bitchy and cannot agree on anything. Just the use of the labels "PRO-CHOICE" (for abortion) and "PRO-LIFE" for those opposed to abortion are emotionally loaded words.

In much of the written coverage it is generally not difficult to distinguish the areas of the bias and it is interesting if you look at photographs printed in mainstream media. The bias is, albeit subtle in some cases, quite evident. In its use of these images the media trivializes and weakens the arguments supporting women's right to choose reproductive freedom. The end result of this manipulation is to again silence women's voice on an issue crucial to the whole society.

In *The Globe and Mail* on May 14, 1990 is an article about pro-choice supporters marching on Parliament Hill the previous Saturday. There is a photograph of a group of young women marching with a banner demanding legal abortions. These women look angry and are shown shouting. Words used to describe the mood of pro-choice gatherings are usually strong: the women "marched", they were "loud", "noisy."

On the other hand, the pictures accompanying pro-life supporters are gentle images of both men and women

invariably pushing a child in a stroller. The rallies are described as "orderly" and in the *Globe* article these demonstrators "held hands and encircled three neighbouring hospitals."

The day before in the *Halifax Sunday Daily News*, May 13, 1990 it was reported that the largest anti-abortion demonstration in the city's history had



taken place. "Halifax police estimated the size of the crowd at between 2,500 to 3,000 people...Participants who formed a line at least three blocks long ranged from infants to senior citizens. Officers at the scene reported no incidents. One hour before the anti-abortion protest began, a much smaller but more vocal group of abortion-rights advocates rallied..."

In another article in *The Daily News*, Saturday, December 16, 1989 we are presented with a photograph of

Dr. Henry Morgentaler in his clinic. In front of him is an abortion table photographed at an angle which makes the whole image somewhat menacing. On the same page, underneath the picture and article about the clinic, is an article talking about the fetal transplant plan. "A proposal to use aborted fetal brain tissue for transplants into Parkinson's patients, is causing an uproar among anti-abortion activists." The implication is clear!

The people who are shown speaking for the pro-choice movement are often portrayed as unattractive or are shown in unflattering angles, whereas those who speak for the anti-choice group are shown as quite attractive and are often shown holding cute babies.

I looked at a number of past articles, both pro-choice and pro-life and the wording of the articles and the accompanying photographs invariably present this slanted view.

It would seem in our present society, with the pill and other forms of birth control readily available, women have a lot of choice about when or whether to become pregnant. But the media in consort with society pushes women into early relationships by implying that women only have value if they can attract men, ultimately into a permanent relationship, preferably marriage.

After a woman is married there is a great deal of societal pressure for her to have children. Lip service is paid to the glories of motherhood, but those women who stay home to look after children are looked down on, and their contribution is devalued. How often have we heard the question, "Do you do anything or do you just stay at home?"

If a woman goes out to work she receives on average sixty-five cents for every dollar a man makes; choices of jobs are very limited, and her chances of advancement are limited by the fact that she is a mother and a woman. In addition, the fact that women bear the major responsibility for the care of these children, is not recognized in the workplace by giving a mother time off to look after sick children.

Neither has society adequately addressed the problems of proper day care arrangements or after school care.

Also, society and the media do not emphasize that in today's world the majority of women with pre-school children has to work, either because of the high cost of living or because they are single mothers (whether through choice or divorce or being widowed). There is also little attention paid to the fact that a significant percentage of the



fathers of these children evade or avoid paying child-support. Even in intact marriages where both parents are working, it is documented that the majority of child care and work in the home is done by those women who hold down full time jobs.

Society does not paint an attractive picture of single women, especially a single woman with children — whether she has become pregnant because of rape or incest or by her own choice. The pro-life movement sup-

presses birth control information, while at the same time offering little assistance to those women who become pregnant because of lack of knowledge or victimization. But these people also claim the right to force a woman to have a child against her will.

If those segments of our society who spend so much time blocking or trivializing the pro-choice movement were to spend their energies in helping to change the inequities in society, they might better serve their cause, and we would come closer to the ideal that every child conceived was celebrated.

The opposite of pro-life is not anti-life. It is freedom and a better life for both women and children.

The photos on this page are not the ones referred to in this article. They are original Pandora photos, which we think are more woman-positive than the ones in mainstream media.

### Kenya battles against pornography

Regina Nyamu on pornography

Regina Nyamu takes a special interest in pornography because she comes from Kenya where pornography has long been banned. However, as she points out in her report of the class discussion after her seminar, "We argued that censorship really does not do what it is meant to do. We gave an example of Kenya where pornography was banned several years ago, and, until this day, pornography still circulates around the country. The shocking thing is, there is so much pornography that one would not even notice it has been banned, although it is smuggled into the country and circulated through an underground movement. The most discouraging part is that the group that has total access to pornography is the younger generation."

Regina writes this in her conclusion:

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With the image and degradation that women are receiving through pornography, it is clear that there is a problem that has to be looked at. It would be wise to make an effort to balance the misogynistic message of pornography, although it would be naive to believe that women can make their messages heard as loudly as the pornographers can, if they are allowed to continue unrestricted. The pornographers have far more money. They have an audience made up of men who are already socialized to want and need pornography. Only the removal of the very worst pornography through legal means, together with ongoing action and education against the softer material, can attain the long-term goal of replacing images that deny the humanity of women with images that celebrate it.

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# Why do we first have to d

## “What about the men?”

Betty-Ann Lloyd

In the spring and summer of 1990, I visited four Canadian communities to talk with women about their experience in literacy programs. I went to Duncan on Vancouver Island, to Arviat on the Hudson Bay in the Northwest Territories, to downtown Toronto and to St. John's, Newfoundland. As a contract researcher with the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW), I spent 60 days exploring how women's experience as women affects their access to and participation in adult literacy programs.

Following this exploration, I developed a two year national action research project that would be carried out in partnership with a variety of adult literacy, basic education and academic upgrading programs.

CCLOW has published the report from the first phase — *Discovering the strength of our voices* — and we have received over \$200,000 funding for the first 18 months of the two-year second phase research. Twelve programs across Canada have agreed to participate in this second phase and we held our first national workshop for 24 women from these programs in Winnipeg in November. It is all very exciting. It is also somewhat daunting.

We are asking women to commit themselves to developing, implementing and documenting a woman-positive activity within their programs. We are asking them to be “up-front” about the woman-positive nature of this activity, discussing it with administration, staff and students during the entire process.

As women said during the first phase, this level of clarity about being woman-positive involves a certain amount of risk. One woman said:

We feel increasingly vul-

nerable because we are concentrating on ourselves as women and others [are] talking about us as women, and that becomes quite — I don't know what the word would be, we don't have a word — “Nerviness” — like a heightened awareness that has a bit of fear in it and that talks about the violence that's out there. As soon as you're singled out as “woman,” there's a spectre of violence out there. (Lloyd, 1991a, p. 42)

This focus on woman-positive also leaves women open to an often surprising intensity of feeling. During our conversation, another woman literacy worker said:

Thank god that we can't go on all day thinking in these terms. That we just get on with making lunch. Because I ... feel paralyzed with what we're talking about. The intensity of fear, rage, all that stuff, I couldn't live with feeling this every minute of my day. I wouldn't function. (Lloyd, 1991a, p. 42)

This “nerviness”, this intensity, is echoed by many of the women who are now going ahead with the research. It is mixed with a tremendous sense of excitement — and relief — and awkwardness — that we are going to be women together, talking about our work as women in literacy — with a complex understanding of community with other women.

### Approaching the concept of “woman-positive”

Going into this phase of the research, I understand a “woman-positive activity” to be an activity that, in its particular context, arises out of the expressed needs and desires of particular women working in that context and an activity that is open to change when the women undergo a process of reflection and analysis, vision and strategizing. This means the activity is not fixed. It also means that the activity does not have to meet ALL the needs and desires of ALL the women in the program, although it must meet SOME of the expressed needs and desires of SOME of the women in the program.

It also means that during the process of planning, implementing and documenting the activity, the women involved come to understand which women in the program have benefited

from the activity and, potentially, which women have been disadvantaged by the activity. We want women to better understand where and why they have gained support for the activity and where and why they have met resistance. We want them to be able to envision and strategize around future activities that may more effectively gain support, meet resistance and benefit more women within their context.

Clearly, women from these programs are going to have very different understandings of what it means to be woman-positive. As well they should. While I may not believe that there is one “correct” concept of what it means to be woman-positive, I do believe that there is an “incorrect” way to approach the concept — one that puts itself forward as universal, as crossing boundaries of race, class, abilities, formal education, immigration status, employment status, relationship to children, histories of emotional, physical, sexual, spiritual abuse.

For example, Caribbean-Canadian women who have been forced by circumstance to leave their children with others thousands of miles away in order to earn wages looking after the children of white, rich women in Canada are going to have different understandings of “mothering” than white working poor non-immigrant women who face violence from their male partners because they want to leave their children in childcare to attend community college classes.

They might see “woman-positive” responses to the experience of “mothering” in very different lights. They will experience different resonance to language that talks about the rights of mothers, the needs of children, and the sexy subject of “family literacy.”

We are also going into this research with the understanding that, although CCLOW is a feminist organization, we do not expect the programs or the women who represent the programs to identify as feminist. Perhaps our bottom-line is that the contact women believe women in literacy programs may benefit from taking part in activities designed specifically for women. They will benefit NOT because women are somehow deficient, but because the programs and the government policies that structure the programs are somehow deficient.

The contact women will presumably agree with the conclusion of the first phase — that learner-centred or community-based programs are not necessarily woman-positive — and they will also have agreed to

explore how we might change, or at least make apparent, that seeming contradiction.

I came to make this distinction between learner-centred and woman-positive from the first phase of this research. During my individual interviews and group discussions, I had a persistent feeling that I was missing something in my understanding. It was as if I was hearing something backwards, as if I was looking at a photographic negative where the white is black and the black is white. It was the feeling that all I could sense was the background even though I was aware that what I wanted was somewhere in the foreground.

I finally isolated two threads of responses to my talk about women's experience.

These threads seemed to be entwined with two recurring phrases: “What about the men?” and “But this program is learner-centred/ This program is community-based.” It was only when I started to put these phrases into context that I was able to begin the

process of putting together the different pieces of what was happening. What I would like to do in this article for Pandora is focus on the phrase “What about the men?” Women who are interested in more details about the research or about the tension between learner-centred/community-based and woman-positive are welcome to contact me through Pandora.

### Should women be allowed to talk about women before they have taken care of the men?

A male worker asks about the men who don't fit into the way things are moving, toward more woman-positive education. “They don't agree with the way we are treating women [positively],” he says. “What happens to them? Do we just let them drop out? Do they cause trouble in the classroom?... What do we do for them?” (Lloyd, 1991, p. 41)

What do we do for these sexist men. Not with them. He is not talking about letting the men go, or changing them. He is talking about what safe places are we going to create for the men who continue being sexist.

It wasn't only men asking these questions. Many, many of the women I talked with asked the question “What about the men?” We can't ignore the men, they said. The men are going to lose out if we start focussing on women. We can't take it away from the men. That isn't fair! Finally, I began asking the women, what will the men lose? What can't we take away from the men? What isn't fair?

It turns out, of course, that what we can't take away from the men is the privilege they now experience in the programs. As male learners, they have been the centre of the programs, the centre of critical literacy theory and practice. In most cases, the work — and

the play — of the programs has been defined on the basis of what the men suggest or what they will agree to participate in.

The women's needs have been backgrounded — either because the women compromise, the women do not speak or because staff decide that “women's issues” are a “feminist agenda” and ought not to be imposed on the programs simply because a few of the women (usually workers) have that particular hobby horse.

They decide that because the program is “learner-centred,” it does not have to single out differences in sex — although many programs are beginning to recognize that, in an equivalent situation, singling out differences in race, source of income or abilities is acceptable. In theory, however, learner-centred programs respond to the needs of the generic, non-gendered student.

This generic, non-gendered student, however, rarely speaks out of her women's experience or puts forward a feminist agenda since she is not even recognized as “woman”. In a similar way, most of the women workers are not willing or able to articulate a women's perspective or a feminist agenda because of the conditions of their work.

Before looking at why this might be, I think it is essential that we recognize the very real concern women have of being ignored, censored or attacked for behaviour that threatens male privilege. We cannot trivialize the decisions women make not to raise women's issues or feminist agendas within program settings that have no practical — as compared to theoretical — commitment to anti-sexist education. Similarly, women who seem unaware of the ways in which they orient themselves to the actions of the men in a program cannot simply be labelled as having “false consciousness” or being “male-identified.” Throughout their lives, they have been taught and they have learned very complex survival skills.

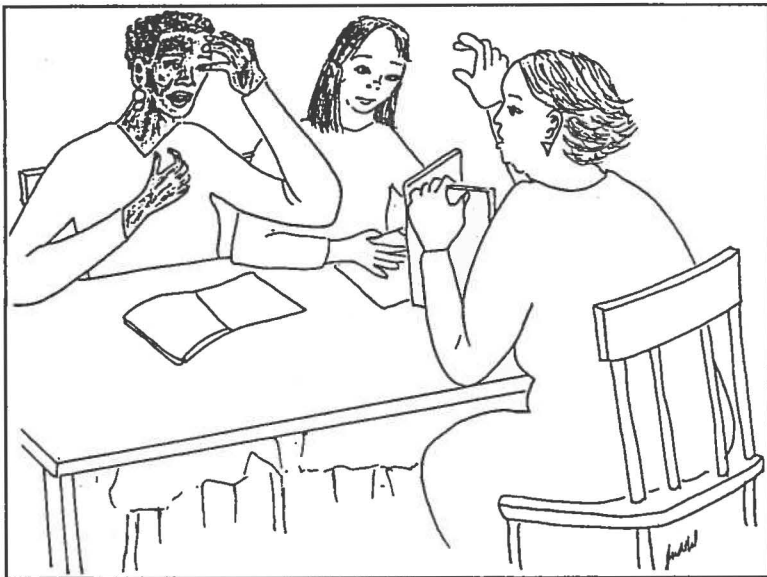
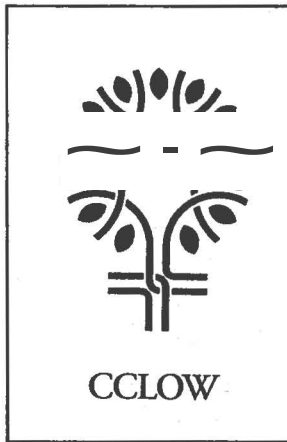
At the same time, however, women with privilege, who maintain that privilege by aligning themselves with privileged men, need to take responsibility for their strategic positions.

### What about the men?

It is these understandings and distinctions that led me to think further about my response during the research to the question: “What about the men?” My first response was frustration that, even for an hour, we couldn't focus on women's experience, on women's learning needs. We had to keep coming back to the men. Finally, by paying attention to the context, I realized there were at least two different questions being asked.

The first question was: What are we going to do for men who don't want, or who are unable, to change — who continue being sexist? How can we guarantee these men a safe place in a program that has decided to include woman-positive activities? This question seemed to want the woman-positive women to supply sexist men with a safe place before they proceed with activities that are “up-front” designed for women.

The second question was: What are we going to do for the women who are



# Deal with this question:

in contact with the men who don't want, or are unable, to change? How can we guarantee these women a safe place in a program that has decided to include woman-positive activities? This question seemed to want the woman-positive women to ensure other women have support and protection before they proceed with activities that are "up-front" designed for women.

These are two very different questions. They are not looking for the same kind of answer. And I needed to put them into context, before I could respond in a way that might be useful for this research. They are questions that we need to consider seriously both as we begin this second phase and as we reflect on and document what happens in each location. To take just one example, we may want to ask: Is it our responsibility to work with the men, or even to try to interest men in taking some responsibility for working with other men?

We seem to have little ambivalence in terms of our responsibility to continue working with the women in a way that provides them with necessary support. Yet, if we do take on the responsibility of working with the men, that will leave us very little time, energy or resources to continue our work with women. And I can already hear the response for more time and resources to work with women being countered with the claim that, since we are working with the men, that is helping the women and so there will be no more allocated to the women.

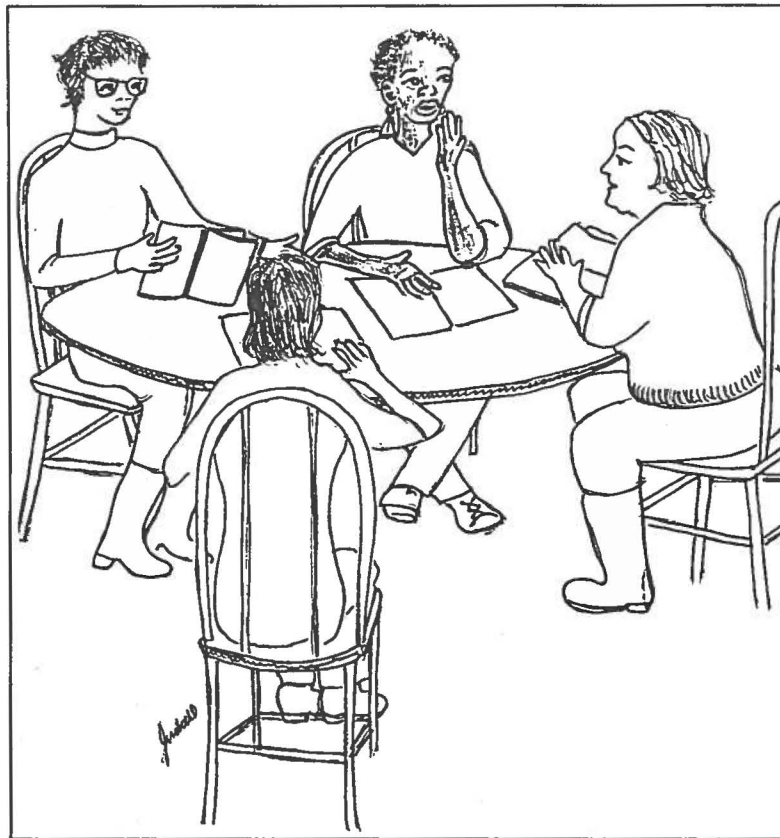
Why would we, why do we, have that fight — the fight to do something positive for women without having to do something equally for the men? Why, when we want to do something positive for women, are we told that we can't because the program is learner-

centred, not woman-centred, community-based not woman-based. We can't do something woman-positive because then we would no longer be working with "learners" or with the "community." We would be working with "women." As I continued my discussions, I began to recognize two suspicions lurking behind these responses.

First, women who want to work with women are practically suspect. They are feminist and will, therefore, have an agenda that will not only be biased in favour of women but against men and against community. Their practice will discriminate and bring about division within the program and within the community. (As if that division did not already exist.)

Second, women who want to work with women are theoretically suspect. "Feminist" theory may break solidarity with "critical" theory along sex lines and often points out differences rather than emphasizing commonality. Since emancipatory literacy theory has been built on a community and individual empowerment model that does not distinguish between student and student, community member and community member, making these distinctions based on sex is disempowering. (As if not making distinctions based on sex is not disempowering.)

I have explored some of these themes in other work (Lloyd, 1991b) and hope this year to continue exploring the implications of what I consider an important difference between modern and postmodern, male-centred and woman-inclusive perspectives. Basically, I believe we need to continue seriously questioning the assumption that community members and students are generic people. Just as generic "man" does not include the gendered



woman, generic "student" and generic "community member" does not include the gendered student or community member. Thus, programs that respond to the needs of "students" or the needs of "communities", the needs of "families" or the needs of "the workplace" may not be meeting the needs of women whose experience is different from men's experience because of the realities of their everyday lives.

Similarly, members of communities and students are differently located in terms of race, ability, immigration status, relation to children, employment status, sexuality, source of income and so on. To erase difference on any level is surely to restrict our ability to meet the needs of students, community members, family members and workers who live the experience of these locations in all facets of their lives, including in literacy programs.

Yet our arguments that demonstrate the current difficulties women face in programs and the contradictions embodied in the programs continue to be met by passive resistance and active negation — both of which are named by some women students and staff as aggression. This aggression can be perceived as a form of violence, as a method of marginalization, of reinforcing women's powerlessness, of refusing recognition of women's cultural difference, and of continued exploitation of women workers — what Iris Marion Young calls the five faces of oppression.

Already, some of the programs that want to participate have raised serious concerns about the repercussions of new activities that have been implemented for women. And they have expressed particular interest in the personal and program support that may come from having their activities "researched" as part of a national project. Simply by participating in this research, they are gaining some measure of protection against the seemingly innocuous question: What about the men?

Other programs are interested in participating because they have experienced difficulty in involving women literacy workers and students in "women's issues." They think some of this difficulty stems from concern over possible responses from others involved in the program or from members of the community. They hope that by being part of a national research project they may somehow gain a legitimacy that provides advance protection.

Still others — and this may prove to be the most complex issue of the research — do not anticipate difficulty in engaging in and documenting woman-positive activities. To some extent, this is because they have chosen activities that are congruent with their program philosophy and that they think will not challenge that philosophy. It is also possible that they will experience unanticipated resistance — something that they may not want to confront or something that will shift their understanding of how the program philosophy is not entirely inclusive.

At this point in the research, I feel that our major challenge may be the reluctance that many of us feel when we are asked to look at the difficult questions that surface when we decide to deal with "difference" rather than "commonality." The western tradition of liberal humanism has insisted that there is "common ground" and all reasonable men (generic men, that is) will be able to reach agreement on this common ground. Any one who says differently — particularly any Black woman, Micmac woman, woman with a disability, Jewish woman, lesbian, woman who is a single mother receiving social assistance, woman with limited literacy skills, refugee woman... — any other (generic "other", that is) who thinks differently is simply stuck with some obsession about being a victim, not understanding that we are all equal persons in this Canadian democracy. We confront the wall that tells us we should be able to enter into respectful dialogue

about our differences and resolve them amicably. If not, we who raise the questions, and then refuse to accept answers that erase the questions rather than deal with them, have a problem.

In this research, we do not so much need to ask these difficult questions of other women, although we do hope that women in programs that have similar philosophies will be able to challenge each other. Instead, we need to be able to ask the difficult questions of ourselves. Why, I might ask, do I feel as if the needs of the privileged group (in this case the men) are being addressed with all seriousness while the needs of the oppressed group (in this case the women) are being set aside until those with privilege are satisfied? What happens to me in my program when I witness the oppressed group being challenged to account for their desires while the desires of the privileged group are being taken care of?


Why, when we, as women, decide that we will ensure the comfort and safety of the oppressed group for perhaps 10 hours a month out of the 160 hours that the program is open — why do we first and constantly have to spend eight, nine, 10 times that amount of time guaranteeing the comfort and safety of the privileged group? How much of our time, energy and resources do we want to spend making sure that those who have privilege will be able to feel that they are not losing anything, that they are able to hold on to that privilege? How much of our time, energy and resources do we want to spend giving our attention to those with privilege in the hopes that they might "learn" to let the oppressed take even a small amount of space for themselves? If we are not able to even ask these questions of ourselves, what does it mean about the work we are doing in the name of "liberation" and "rights" and "freedoms"?

These are difficult questions. They are not going to go away even if we decide we cannot ask them. In this research, we are asking women to at least consider the questions within the network of women who are involved in the project and then consider why they are deciding to ask the questions, to not ask the questions, to decide that the questions are not an issue in their programs.

This article is part of a presentation twice as long that was given November 20, 1991, as part of the Dalhousie University Women's Studies Seminar Series. Betty-Ann Lloyd is a founding mother of Pandora. She is, among other things, coordinating this research on women and literacy for CLOW and working on her Ph.D. in Education at Dalhousie University. She also participated as an expert witness in Pandora's recent Human Rights hearing.

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# Let's take back childbirth!

**Bobbi Harris Jennex**

At this point in my life many of my friends are either having a baby or have had a baby. They enjoy very much talking about their experiences of childbirth and if they had to do it again, what they would change.

Many of them are from all types of backgrounds and have come to the same conclusion. They say that childbirth is no longer natural. Others have said that too many people have become involved.

After I spoke with them, many let me know that the experience left them vulnerable, fearful and some, even isolated. Why did this happen? Isn't childbirth supposed to be natural and a wonderful event?

It seemed their vulnerability occurred once the women went to the delivery room. There, at that point, the women in labour lost their say, and things happened according to some other schedule. They became "patients" who needed help.

During their nine month preparation for the baby, they had decided on things they wanted and things they did not want. In one case the woman involved did not want a fetal heart monitor. This was decided beforehand, but once she was placed in the delivery room, she was given the monitor. She objected for a period of time, but to no avail.

Another example of feeling vulnerable or fearful was during the time a woman went into labour; she pro-

ceeded, a doctor might be called in to assist. This would be the only time in which the doctor was seen. A normal pregnancy needed only the Mother and a midwife.

The typical birth would occur in the home. The house would be filled with female friends. The birth became an event in the community, a time of support.

Many of these women knew very little about prenatal care or special diets. The focal point at this period of time was the supernatural world. Such things as the Mother not cursing during her pregnancy was important. If she did, her child would be a monster.

During the 1800s there were many fables and myths surrounding childbirth. The women of these times believed in them strongly.

During the actual birth many came to offer support. Some would rub her, massage her, walk around with her or keep the home heated.

Men were not present during the birth. Sometimes they would be in another room playing cards or visiting a local tavern. Children were also not present. They would be in another room playing or outside with another family.

Once the actual birth was beginning the woman would choose her position. It could be standing or squatting. Then later came the birthing stool or the position of kneeling. The option of delivery position was left up to the Mother. Whatever made her feel best would be the answer.

During these times childbirth was naturally very risky. Complications could arise at any time. At one point in history both the midwife and the doctor worked side by side. But this lasted only a short period of time.

By the early 1900s, hospital births were available but deaths were higher in them than at home. By 1920 the hospital had improved its standards and was considered equal to home births.

It is around this time in history where we can notice a change. Midwives became history and doctors became the future. By the year 1930, doctors felt they were the only people who should deliver the child.

The idea of women delivering babies was not good. Women had now become unsafe practitioners, and, it was said, women were unable to remain cool during an emergency. They were too sympathetic to make rational decisions and too delicate to be taught anatomy.

Around the early 1930s we see the beginning of routine childbirths. Doctors began to increase their own interventions because they began to realize that the "natural" process may damage the baby.

It was from this time forward that men began imposing their own medical judgements upon women in labour. Men gained their control over childbirth at a historical point in time. This was a period of modesty and prudery about sex. Women were shy of their bodies and of childbirth.

Women were now being deprived of a meaningful birth. Now they were



being pushed into the realm of procedures and technology. Unfortunately this type of routine continues today. The attitude of pregnancy is that you are ill until proven otherwise.

Why did millions of women abandon their folkloric ways of childbirth? Why did they choose the hospital? Did they really have a choice?

The reason for women changing from homebirth to hospital birth came about partly with the help of the media. Doctors had to portray the hospitals as the best choice for an expecting Mother. So they, (the doctors) chose to express their opinion through the media. Advertisements, flyers and art

cles soon came out discussing childbirth and the proper place for it: the hospital. A campaign against midwives, which

continues today, was begun.

The picture presented for all women to see was something like this: The hospitals were well-aired and disinfected. The sun was visible through large windows and lights were available due to electricity. There were facilities for having baths, there were clean sheets and

clothes. Finally, there was a staff who responded to women's every need.

By the late 1930s, doctors aimed at delivering all babies in hospitals. With help from the media this was quickly accomplished.

What was unfortunate for these women who believed what they saw, is the fact that the hospital was very different than they thought. There was no information given to the general public about procedures, devices or instruments. Many women felt lost and alone among strangers; they had no say with about their babies' births.

Women have been the givers of life since time began. Yet even today "natural" childbirth hardly seems natural. Beginning in the 1940s, childbirth has changed from natural to an area of mass technology. Drugs and instruments besiege the delivery room. The emphasis has begun to shift from Mother to fetus, which serves the idea that the woman is simply a baby producer.

Media continues to show an interest in childbirth technology, but it's only to introduce a new machine. They seem to go no further; they do not investigate it from a woman's point of view. They

should wonder and question the accuracy of the machine. Is it necessary to flood the process of childbirth with machinery? Does it benefit the Mother or the doctor?

Technology is supposed to be good, but as previously seen through history, technology serves an end as well as a means. The world today looks for a technological solution instead of a non-technological one.

An example of this would be the electronic fetal monitor — a device to measure the fetal heartbeat and display it on a screen. In order for it to work, the Mother must lie still while electrodes are strapped to her abdomen. This entire procedure is difficult for the woman because she must lie still while having contractions — something not easily done.

When this machine was introduced, it was seen as a major step forward for childbirth. The doctors could now get closer to the fetus. What the doctors and the media failed to report was that the readings of this machine could be inaccurate.

Of course this was later rectified by creating another machine. Better technology was the answer to the problem. So they brought forward the internal monitor. This device was inserted internally and attached to the baby's scalp. This, too, had inaccurate readings, and the search continues.

Many times technology ends up controlling people and enslaves them. The negative aspects of any new and hopeful machines are seldom mentioned. This is so because technology is seen to be intrinsically good.

The times when technology is criticized by the media is when a person steps forward and begins to yell! It is this time when objections are heard and the realization of machinery invading the natural childbirth scene becomes true. But it ends there. Once the noise is finished, so is the media.

The media is present to inform, to investigate and analyze. But it does not always happen. It is easy to understand why the media fails on some of its

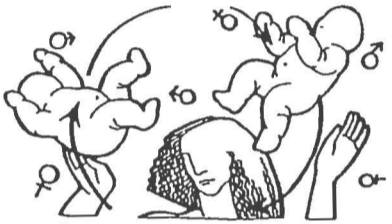
duties. The medical profession is very powerful. It is able to dominate and control by means of finances and profits.

The competition between doctors, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies demonstrates just how much control can be obtained. It is our capitalistic society which enables the fortunate to gain control over the less fortunate. It continues to this very day.

Why is it that the media never prints an article directed towards women discussing alternatives of births? Why isn't there an article telling people about disadvantages and advantages of prenatal testing? After all, it is the future generation which we are testing.

Perhaps if there were more women entering the field of journalism we would see more issues written from a female perspective. Until then, childbirth will continue to be spoken of in technical terms rather than in terms of naturalness.

Women must be informed at all times or men will continue to dominate the childbirth process. Childbirth



should be a natural experience of the body, the spirit, and the mind. It is the experience of bringing forth new life, and this process must be taken back by its rightful owners. They are women.

If we do not accomplish this, women will remain passive participants in childbirth. Complaints will continue to be heard, and experiences will continue to be described as fearful and vulnerable.

I hope some day the media will be influenced by a female point of view. Once this occurs on a regular basis, women will benefit greatly, as will society!



ceeded to the delivery room and there she was immediately placed upon the table. She did not want this right away because she found that as soon as she lay down her contractions slowed down. Her desire was to walk around the room until it was time to deliver. This was not allowed, and she lay down. In the meantime her contractions slowed greatly, and her labour seemed longer than it should have been.

Both women felt that if things were done as they were expecting, things would have been better. They also felt that there was no consideration for the labouring woman. They became a "procedure," something to be dealt with in a certain manner and at a certain time.

If they had to do it all over again, they would desperately try to have the child at home. If that was not an option, they would choose a smaller hospital where they would hope things are run differently.

Let's go back a few hundred years ago and look at what childbirth was once considered. The Mother-to-be was taken care of by the community and by a midwife. The main concern was the Mother: She was the prime focus.

If the birth appeared to be compli-

**...women  
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too delicate to be  
taught anatomy**

## Pornography: Hate literature which keeps women subordinate

**Mary Jardine on pornography**

Mary Jardine wrote about pornography and the powerful effect it has had on women throughout history and to the present day. Here is part of what Mary wrote:

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The violent representations of pornography may be considered an extension of patriarchal women-killing rituals. Those rituals include bride-burning, suttee, foot-binding, and witch-burning, to name a few. (Daly.) Although the female victims of pornography (in most cases) do not suffer physical death, their treatment represents a symbolic and spiritual death... the female participants are portrayed as masochists while the male voyeur assumes the role of the sadist who delights in her humiliation and degradation...

The view that pornography represents a form of hate literature against women has been supported by the Fraser Commission Report on Prostitution and Pornography (1985). The report states that pornography functions as a form of hate literature by inculcating the view that women are subordinate members of society. Because of the negative representations of women which pornography promotes, women's social equality is undermined. The Commission report specifically recommends that the existing Criminal Code statutes on hate literature be expanded to include women as a designated "identifiable group." Under existing criteria, identifiable groups are characterized by religion, skin-colour or ethnicity. The protection extended to groups from the discrimination of racism is not extended to protect women from sexism...

The present Criminal Code statutes do nothing to protect women from the harmful effects of violent pornography...

# Lesbian issues: from invisible to sensational

by Lynn Day

For many years, I have been disturbed by the way women have been portrayed in "manstream" media such as television, magazines, newspapers, etc. One of the reasons I have been disturbed is that the images I have seen did not reflect me — me, a white, middle class, heterosexual female. This consciousness that I, a member of the "privileged" society, felt misrepresented and invisible from the media slowly developed into an awareness for others who were less privileged.

Much has been done by the women's movement to challenge the media stereotypes of women to project positive images, but I don't think we have significantly addressed the very real differences that exist among women.

We are not a homogeneous group. We must recognize that as women we are all oppressed, but some of us face an additional oppression.

Accurate and positive representation in the media belongs to all women, and the struggle of poor women, black women, native women, feminists, Lesbians and even privileged women, is united by our shared experiences as women. Discrimination against one group must be viewed as a part of the universal oppression of all women.

This article is my attempt to understand why manstream media have little to say, good or bad, about one such oppressed group, Lesbians, whose very existence is seen as a marginal

one. As well, I hope to challenge my own attitudes, assumptions and ideas and develop a better understanding about the connection between the oppression of Lesbians and our common oppression as women.

Our society divides sexual preference into "normal" (heterosexual) and "abnormal" (homosexual) and whatever identity you are given has political and social consequences.

Heterosexuality (male domination over women) in our society is the "institution" of marriage, family, division of work and power, and not merely a sexual preference. It is the "natural" way of life. This natural way of life is reinforced by the structures and systems within our capitalistic and patriarchal society — the very structures and systems that ensure women's unequal position in society by forcing women to be dependent on men for economic, emotional, sexual and political support.

A sexist, misogynist and male-dominated society views homosexuality as a rejection of and a threat to the male (dominant)/female(subordinate) social role. Those women who do not fit or conform to the concept of heterosexism (i.e., women single by choice, feminists, and all Lesbians) are victimized and silenced because they deviate from the defined male "norm".

Lesbians are viewed as the ultimate threat to male domination by virtue of their love for women and disinterest in or even dislike of men. Lesbians do not



Typical of the once-a-year coverage lesbian issues receive in mainstream media is the token photo of gay pride marches. (Photo by Anita Martinez)

fulfil the traditional female role (to nurture and serve men). What must be even more threatening for men is the idea that a woman could prefer another woman sexually.

Within society, women as a group are in a dependent and subordinate relationship to all men. Men control governments, business, media, money and power.

Once a woman challenges and rejects patriarchy, she is placed in direct opposition and, therefore, in conflict with our male-dominated society. She no longer conforms to the accepted standards of female behaviour and appearance. This makes her vulnerable to marginalization and victimization.

I believe that feminists, Lesbians, and feminist Lesbians have provided the greatest challenge to the notion that there is only one "right" way — that of patriarchy. Maybe that is why many people seem to perceive them as always being one and the same. Too often I have heard feminists described as "dykes" and "lezzies" and Lesbians as a "bunch of feminists who hate men."

What has all of this got to do with the media? Keep in mind that the mass media is controlled and designed by men and, for the most part, for men. If Lesbians are a direct threat to male domination, it is not surprising that they would be, for the most part, ignored by the mass media and, at the very least, portrayed as unusual, not women, obsessively sexual. Their issues are trivialized and sensationalized.

Examples from our local press that carried stories concerning Lesbians appeared to be newsworthy for the sensationalism rather than the "real" story. In April 1991, a Lesbian art exhibition in Halifax was given considerable media coverage. Its intent was not to convey the message of the artist, "to encourage awareness and tolerance toward the gay community." The "real" story was the threatening calls and bomb threats that ensued. Ironically, without the threats the exhibition probably would have received little if any coverage. The critical issue for me was not the media coverage it generated but, more important, the hate that was directed towards women.

Another perfect example of sensationalism and lesbianism was the story carried in the February 16, 1991 issue of the Mail Star, Two convicted in "lesbian vampire trial", or the headlines back in February, 1985 in the Chronicle Herald, Hard-core lesbians fired from CFS Shelburne. Rather than the real issues of discrimination, victimization, and ostracism of these military women, the idea of a "homosexual clique" was apparently considered more newsworthy.

One member of the Gay and Lesbian community in Halifax commented that in the fall and spring of 1988, they were the "darlings" of the media. At that time, they were lobbying the provincial government to have sexual orientation included in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Was the media interested because of the seriousness of the issue? No. In her opin-

ion, they were able to receive media attention because of the conflict that arose with then Premier John Buchanan over the issue. Again, it appears the issue of protecting the human rights of Gays and Lesbians from discrimination in housing, employment, child custody, etc., was not worthy of coverage; rather it was the confrontation that stimulated media interest.

There is one specific area of the mass media where "Lesbians" receive considerable coverage, and that is pornography. If men cannot get what they want in the "real world," they create their own fantasy world. They produce their own images of Lesbians, and these images are for their pleasure and access. In one way or another, they will get what they want — domination over all women, even those indifferent to them.

Television has, on the rare occasion, recognized Lesbians as genuine members of society. Segments of Kate & Allie, The Golden Girls, and most recently L.A. Law, portrayed Lesbians in a fairly positive image — an image that did not stereotype Lesbians as man-haters, sick, ugly, child molesters.

The mass media is instrumental in defining and maintaining stereotypical images of women and our place in society and reinforcing negative attitudes towards those who do not fit the traditional female role. I conclude that stereotypical images and negative attitudes towards any one particular group of women play a specific and significant role in the oppression of ALL women.

## Selective reporting devalues feminist challenge to status quo

Margaret Ferguson on media portrayal of women's issues

Margaret Ferguson presented her seminar on the way the media covers issues such as feminism and violence against women. She points out that since more women work in the media, there is increased reporting about women's issues but finds it is still woefully inadequate. She cites a MediaWatch study of daily newspapers that was done in 1990 to show that fewer than 30 per cent of the bylines in the sample were women's, and women were referred to only 18 per cent of the time.

She went on:

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... However, it is not only the visibility of women and their issues in the media that should concern us, but the manner in which these issues are portrayed and for what purpose.

Such concerns address the matter of the "objectivity" of the media... I will establish that the media, rather than being objective, works in the interests of our capitalist, patriarchal state which supports male dominance and the control of women...

In her critical assessment of the media's coverage of both feminists and REAL Women, "a right-wing anti-feminist coalition," Donna Gill notes four alternative reporting strategies which the media could employ: 1) completely ignore them; 2) discredit them through detraction; 3) provide complete accurate coverage of their ideologies; or 4) co-opt through selective reporting.

To elaborate in relation to women's issues, the first alternative...denies women the opportunity of a media platform from which to challenge the male-dominated status quo. The second alternative...devalues women's voices. The third alternative... would have presented a formidable challenge to male domination, and thus was most likely to be undertaken only by the feminist press. Finally, the fourth alternative, that of co-optation through selective reporting has been the one usually employed by the male-oriented media when women's issues become too prominent to be ignored and too credible to be devalued...

## How to portray lesbians in the media

The Media Committee of Lesbian Feminist Liberation, Inc., New York, has prepared guidelines for the portrayal of lesbians in the media. The following are some of their recommendations:

- Portray lesbians as women in all sorts of lifestyles
- Don't show derogatory or negative images of single women of any age or lifestyle
- Show women as fully developed human beings, not as the adjuncts of men, sex objects, etc.
- Show lesbians whose physical types differ in many ways and with no sex-role stereotyping of masculine or super-feminine types

- Portray lesbians as active members of the community
- Show women characters as warm, sensitive and physically affectionate with each other
- Show anti-lesbian bigots in a negative light
- Portray lesbians as strong, independent women
- Lesbianism should not be presented as titillating
- Lesbian feminists should participate in discussions of women's rights or struggles
- Do not assign anti-feminist or anti-lesbian reporters to cover lesbian or women's movement related news
- Frequently include lesbians and/or material about lesbians in all kinds of programming.

# Pandora's hearing



## Pandora Benefit

The women of Halifax and area responded enthusiastically to Pandora's benefit dance held last fall at the Church. Slightly more than \$1700 was raised through door ticket sales, raffles, and beer sales. Mae Edwards, one of the many performers, is shown here entertaining the audience. Other performers included the ubiquitous Mandoras (the women on the cover of the last

issue of Pandora), Lisa Campbell, Judy Friddes, Fran Isaacs, The Rose Vaughan Trio, and Earthwitch. The benefit was organized by Andrea Ward. Many thanks to her, the performers and all the many women who supported our cause. Another benefit is planned for March 7 starting at 9:30 pm at the Church. (See ad in this issue.) (Photo by Tonë Meeg)

### RECENT RELEASES FROM CRIAW

**ON WOMEN AND POLITICS** - CRIAW Paper No. 28-*Politics and the Hidden Injuries of Gender: Feminism and the Making of the Welfare State* by one of Canada's most prominent feminist sociologists, Thelma McCormack. This essay examines the development of Political Woman in Canada over the last century, from Suffrage to the Welfare State. 75p. 1991

**ON EFFECTING CHANGE IN PUBLIC POLICY** - A Handbook written by the CAAWS Policy Collective. Concerned with the "How to" of the process. Not specific to sport. 47p. 1991

**ON STEREOTYPING OF FEMINISTS** - *Feminist Perspectives No. 21 - Role Muddles* by noted Queen's philosopher, Christine Overall. A largely autobiographical account of her confusions about her identity as a feminist academic. Situated in the context of the current debate on "political correctness." 24p. 1992

All publications available for \$5.00 (includes postage) from CRIAW/ICREF, 151 Slater Street, Suite 408, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3 Tel: (613) 563-0681 TDD: (613) 563-1921 Fax: (613) 563-0682.

## To our readers

Pandora wishes to extend our deepest apologies to the workers of Kentville Publishing. The last issue of Pandora was printed there under the mistaken impression that a settlement had been reached between the union and the company. We screwed up. We support the union in their fight. We will be using other printing services until the dispute is settled.

Pandora's address has changed. We have fallen victim to a post office cut. Needless to say, we are angry and distressed by the closing of our postal station. Our new address is Pandora Publishing, P.O. Box 8414, Station A, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3K 5M1.

We got a legal bill today. It came to more than many of us had ever earned in a year. It blew our socks off. We need help. We have received much support from women, and your cheques are appreciated, but this is a big effort. We need fund raising help. If you can hold an event or a raffle, pass the hat, or do anything to generate financial support, please do. We fought a good case, with expert legal help. That costs. Please help us meet our financial obligations.

(Continued from page 4)

Nonetheless, it was difficult for me. I found it hard to watch women, mostly friends, be harried on the stand and asked questions that appeared to show the questioners did not understand what Pandora was all about. As we said to each other, they just didn't "get it."

Some good things came out of the hearings, though. We found we have a lot of support out there. We heard from many of you when you sent in donations (please see our letters pages) or gave us verbal support. Many of you attended, and it was very gratifying to see you all. It made me feel not so alone.

We have more new subscriptions: Every person who donated money to our legal fund was given a one-year subscription. We hope you will continue to subscribe when your subscription runs out.

But after it was over, I found I needed more than two weeks to vegetate, to do nothing — most especially to not think of Pandora — in order to heal from the deep emotions the hearings created. The most creative thing I was able to do for weeks was to knit mitts for a friend.

This is one of the reasons we are so late with this issue. With the time it took to prepare for the hearing and the time it took to recover from it, we found we had lost more than a month. Before that was the holidays. Then... snow-storm time, and more delays. But please don't worry, you'll still get four issues of your subscription. They'll just be late.

—Debbie

After the Public Inquiry had been appointed for this alleged "sex discrimination case", I concluded that I "didn't want to play". I realized that if we "didn't play," it would most certainly mean the inquiry would proceed in our absence and without our submissions of evidence and arguments about equality.

We would most likely, and quite quickly, be found guilty of — gasp — "sex discrimination". Result... "we lose". But I asked myself what it meant to win or lose, who are the decision-makers in this process and on what basis are decisions made.

I "didn't want to play" because I did not want to participate in legitimizing a legal system that does not equally represent all people in this society, nor spend my energy responding to the state and begging for their approval, their "ok" stamp on activities that I know are right. We *are* promoting equality for women. Could the same

'state' that pursued a complaint from a member of privileged class against an equality-promoting organization be expected to make a decision that would approve of our activities? If they do, bonus; if they don't, let's remember that we are right, because as women we know the positive role that *Pandora* and publications and groups like *Pandora* play in our lives and in our struggle for equality. Let us recognize our expertise in judgment about what is good for us as women.

So now we've gone through the "proper" procedures and presented all the evidence, top notch I might add, and worked with a very competent, principled and supportive lawyer, top notch as well. The adjudicator will weigh the evidence and present us with a decision. This is one approach to dealing with the situation we were put in.

Another approach might have been to make a kangaroo court of it all, or simply send a statement explaining why we did not want to legitimize this process by participating. Yes, we would have "lost" in the eyes of the Commission, but perhaps we would have won in our own eyes.

We decided, as a collective, to opt for the first approach. That was what we needed to do. The case has "legal precedent setting" importance to women-only groups across the country. By going through with the legal proceedings perhaps we will contribute to protecting the rights of women's groups in the future.

Pandora operates using consensus decision-making process, and if it were my individual decision I would have politely responded that regretfully I would be unable to attend the Inquiry held in my honour, and to please accept my sincere apologies if I offended anyone (because you know we're so polite!) but, "we have a paper to produce, you know".

Although I've made it clear where I stand politically on this issue, I fully support the decision of the collective in following through in the legal process. I believe there are other women out there who also question Pandora's decision to proceed, especially given the incredible financial burden it has caused.

However, we made a decision as a collective because it we judged that this is an important case that must be pursued, and it was the approach that most felt comfortable with. I hope that those of you who, like me, have had cause to question this decision, will, like me, support the collective in its actions.

—Beverley

## Gynogames: The answer, the winner

ORDER	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	SCORE
1ST	ALLIE	BALL	2
2ND	LANA	LANE	8
3RD	BERNICE	PIN	6
4TH	PATSY	STRING	10
5TH	SANDY	ALLEY	4

Because there was more than one response with the correct answer, we held a draw to determine the winner. The lucky woman is Paula Chegwidden of the Sociology Department at Acadia University in Wolfville. Congratulations, Paula. We will continue to have Gynogames in future issues.

# "Objective" response used to negate feminism

by Mary Jardine

"Sexism is the only form of bigotry still treated as good clean fun by the American press." This observation by journalist Ellen Cohn is no less applicable to methods adopted by Canadian media which serve to undermine and trivialize issues of concern to women.

A recent example which strongly illustrates this point was provided by CBC Newsworld. I am referring to a segment of "On the Line", a national panel discussion, with a phone-in format. On the evening in question, the panel was addressing the issue of police response and patterns of laying charges with regard to complaints received from battered women. The panel participants included the moderator, a lawyer with considerable experience and expertise in the area, an advocate from a battered women's shelter, and Ross Virgin, an outspoken, anti-feminist and "men's rights" activist.

My reaction upon seeing Ross Virgin's inclusion on this panel was one of shock and disbelief. Any thinking individual would certainly question the logic and rationale of those

behind-the-scenes individuals who apparently considered it appropriate that a dissenting view be given a public platform. In many media presentations where issues of concern to women are addressed, the careful observer may anticipate and expect the token presence of an anti-feminist viewpoint. However, Mr. Virgin's participation on the CBC Newsworld panel comes as a surprise to even the most seasoned observers.

Virgin's inclusion on the talk show implies to viewers that the plight of battered women is open to question and debate. Predictably, Ross Virgin's rancorous promotion of invalid grievances and stereotypes served to ignite similar responses from a few sympathizers. A presentation which could otherwise have been an opportunity to enhance and enlighten public perception, became distorted by the sexist views of a rabid anti-feminist. I am sure that those individuals who had the opportunity to view this program would agree that the moderator was clearly uncomfortable and impatient with the attitude and beliefs expressed by Virgin.

With this in mind, we may consider the significant question of what motives and underlying biases are behind Mr. Virgin's symbolic presence on the CBC Newsworld panel? The participation of an anti-feminist propagandist would signal to uninformed viewers that discussions which are of concern to women require an "opposing" view in order to maintain "objectivity" and "balance". Such rationale would require the inclusion of David Duke for the sake of objectivity and balance in discussions of racial and civil rights concerns. The contempt and ridicule of women's concerns, as expressed by Ross Virgin, may be characterized as the psychic counterpart of violence against blacks.

The public platform and implied credibility extended by CBC Newsworld to Ross Virgin is but one example of how, on many levels, the media defines and shapes the parameters of public dialogue. If readers have difficulty conceptualizing this, pay close attention when issues of concern to women are presented on television. Almost invariably, when a spokesperson or issue relating to women is pre-

sented, a token anti-feminist is available to present an opposing view. The idea which is projected to the viewing audience is that feminist viewpoints must be balanced by more "objective", and "rational" response.

As is the case with other established, powerful social institutions, the mass media is controlled and regulated by men. It is a dominantly male perspective which the media reflects. The mainstream news media, therefore, functions to project a male-defined perception and mode of analysis as the valid and legitimate presentation.

The widespread assertion that media reporting is "objective" and "unbiased" is nothing more than an ideological smoke screen which disguises those underlying biases and inequities. It is abundantly clear that in media presentations, insofar as women's issues are concerned, sexism is not acknowledged as a form of systemic discrimination which prevails on many levels in our society. The social scientist and race relations experts acknowledge that sexism and racial discrimination function as correlates in the oppression of minority groups in society.

It is clear that the mass media is unprepared to recognize those distinctions.

The next time a Jewish spokesperson or ethnic minority advocate appears on television, ask yourself what the response would be if a neo-Nazi or Ku Klux Klan member were present for the stated purpose of "objective, balanced reporting". Then ask yourself why no similar indignation is forthcoming when an opponent of women's rights is granted a public platform in a discussion which addresses a serious social problem where the very lives of women are at stake. To borrow an expression from journalist Ellen Cohn, "women are beginning to look at what lies behind the ridicule, the mocking bigotry, and the endless derisive stereotypes".

## Women "fair game" for anti-feminist columnists

by Mary Jardine

Recently, I have followed news reports in *The Ottawa Citizen* in the aftermath of the horrific killing of lawyer Patricia Allen. Ms. Allen was ambushed and attacked like a hunted animal by an assailant wielding a crossbow. Her estranged husband has been charged with first-degree murder.

The tragic death of Ms. Allen underscores the danger implicit for many women who have separated from their husband or partner. In the days following this shocking incident, several outdoor vigils were held in Ottawa to commemorate Patricia Allen and the widespread problem of violence against women.

In the context of *The Ottawa Citizen* reports, I have encountered no attempts to dis-engage the Allen killing from the overall spectrum of violence against women. The editorial columns in the Halifax Herald - Mail Star have (predictably) taken a different approach. One columnist, while expressing abhorrence over the incident, refuses to recognize that it is symptomatic of violence against women in the larger society. In a similar way, he bends over backward to characterize the Montreal Massacre as the isolated act of a depraved madman.

The reader must question what set of circumstances would be necessary for those individuals to make the connection between social realities and the incidence of violence. It is no accident that those columnists who so vigorously insist that acts of violence such as the Montreal Massacre and the Allen tragedy are isolated, unrelated cases also go to considerable lengths to discredit and trivialize other women's issues presented in the media. It speaks volumes of the philosophy of the newspaper that anti-feminist columnists are featured as regular contributors.

For those individuals concerned about the availability and restrictions regarding crossbows, letters should be addressed to:

Justice Minister Kim Campbell  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

(No postage necessary.)

## Strawberry Shortcake doesn't cut it:

# Give me a female turtle

by Sherry White

Sugar and spice and everything nice, make-up and pretty dresses, tears and fears, breasts and blonde hair, is that what little girls are made of? People inclined to watch television programs aimed at children might think so. Smurfette, Strawberry Shortcake, Barbie and the Rockers, and

the very few others, do nothing but whine in their sweet little voices and boo hoo about everything that does not please them.

This is not the picture that I think today's children should be seeing. If this is the image that the children are getting of females then what hope do we have for our future? This is unfair.

There is a superman, batman, spiderman, Robin Hood, just to name a few, and it saddens me that nowhere to be found is there a female hero or even an "admired by all" female character. Why?

Well, it is no coincidence. In an article in *The Globe and Mail* on May 2, 1991, ABC television had the nerve to admit that they are purposely keeping females out of the cartoons. It was said, "After having tried to create a female character that boys could watch, one of the few concessions the networks are now making in response to the absence of leading female characters is to give the male characters attributes considered to be female."

But we all know what their idea of "female" is. Passive, submissive, whiny and naggy is what I have seen. In a world gone crazy over violence and action, how would that ever work?

Now I am not one to consent to violent children's shows, don't get me wrong, but we do need role models, both female and male, that both boys and girls can enjoy.

We have enough flying men, and walking spiders. Give us back Pippy Longstocking, the strongest person in the world — or wait! I will beg if I must — Give me a female turtle.

We must show our children... anything boys can do, girls can do... better.

I am sad to say, even dear old Sesame Street has failed us. There is a monster with a cookie fetish, a frog in a trench coat reporting the news, two five-year-old boys sharing an apartment without parental guidance.

Yes, even Ernie and Bert are independent male stars, but nowhere on Sesame Street will you find a female character interesting enough to be made into a stuffed figure, or have her pictures on lampshades and baby bottles. If any such female character was ever on Sesame Street, she was soon forgotten. This disturbs me.

On the Smurfs, there are 99 male smurfs and one female smurfette. She

was initially invented to destroy the smurfs but Papa Smurf cast a spell on her which turned her hair from brown to blonde, took away her spine and made her cry. The smurfs loved her then.

On Winnie the Pooh, there is a rabbit, an owl, a bear, a pig, all male, and there is one female, Kanga, who appears for very brief moments only to rescue her mischievous son, Roo. So is it fair? The only female on the show is playing women's only "important" role — the mother.

The ever-so-famous Ninja Turtles have a female on the show. She is a reporter. But her very obvious role is to be rescued by four heroic turtles. Every day.

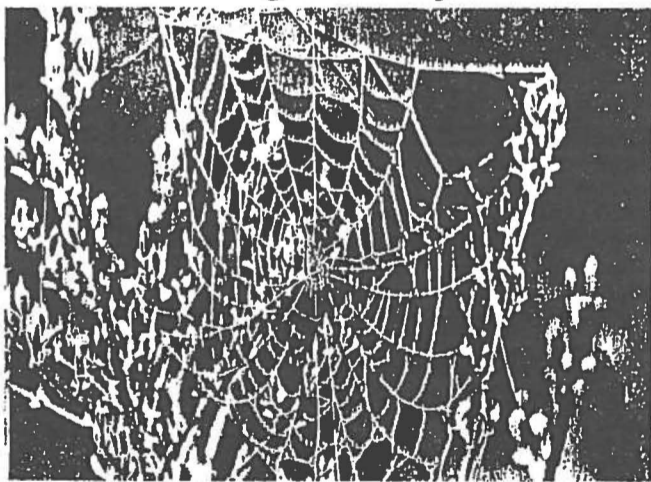
Why can't somebody come up with an admirable character who is funny, brave, a leader with a great imagination and a female. If television is going to continue to play an important role in society, we must even out the sexes or boys will continue to think they have to be brave heroes while girls think they have to play damsel-in-distress.

And if kids are finding "girl shows" boring, well, let's congratulate them; they are smarter than we thought. We need to get some girls with a little bit of excitement in them and Strawberry Shortcake just ain't gonna cut it.

But I can't help wonder why it is this way.

Are the cartoons trying to imitate our patriarchal society? Are they trying to reinforce the fact that women are believed to be the passive, domestic, nearly non-existent sex, while men are the brave heroes of our society? If so, we are doing a great disservice to the children by letting this continue. We need to show them that women are heroes, that they can be magical and can be overweight but not be evil; we can be funny without being stupid. Women are admirable and lovable. Let's show our women of the future that we are equal to any man and can outsmart a turtle anytime.

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# Women in Development: Who will take care of the children?

by Regina Dambe

Botswana, in southern Africa, is a country with a population of a little over one million. About 54 per cent of the citizenry are women, predominantly single parents and heads of households. A good number of the rural male population has migrated to the South African mines, and in recent years, to urban centres within Botswana, in search of better standards of living. These males/husbands come home occasionally to visit their families. The net effect of the male migration is women taking over multiple responsibilities in the community as mothers, homemakers and producers.

Some of the problems they encounter are largely associated with coping with the daily running of their families, and securing a reliable income to maintain their households, which include: the young, the elderly, the sick and the disabled. In securing income, they engage projects such as poultry-keeping, brick moulding, vegetable production and handicrafts.

In a traditional patriarchal society like Botswana, these women, especially the married ones, have no rights to own properties, as they are considered "minors". As a result, they are economically vulnerable and dependent. They are most hard hit when there is drought or general crop failure.

To improve their plight, CUSO, a Canadian development agency, in collaboration with the Institute of Adult Education of the University of Botswana, formulated a rural development support program for them, called "Women In Development" (WID).

To facilitate the program, a feasibility study was conducted to assess its benefits to the women. The program then moved into implementation phase, and it was at this stage that I joined the WID, to help implement its objectives.

In implementing the objectives, training programs were organized to sharpen their business management skills in the areas of finance, management and organization, areas highlighted by the feasibility study.

Another area of operation was to change policies detrimental to the women. To make life more bearable for the women, the government was approached to change such policies that denied women a full participation in the socio-economic development of the country.

The WID program had only two officers. As such, it was not easy to travel all over the country to meet the needs of the projects. We therefore became facilitators rather than implementers. We liaised with various governmental departments and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in providing the skills training, as well as advocating for change of policies.

In the process of implementing the program, the women encountered various problems, which are both macro and micro in nature. Some of the problems were: increased women's work load, problems of marketing their products, increased dependency on South Africa for farm inputs, and the unreliability of rainfall.

Of all these problems, the increased women's workload was of greatest concern. The women found it difficult to combine project work, domestic work and child care duties. No member earned enough to hire someone to help in the home. The feasibility study re-

port had revealed the need to have widespread provision of day care services for infants and young children, both at the project/work site and in communities, and that these services should be subsidized by the government according to the economic status of each community. This, therefore, led to advising the government of Botswana to revise its Day Care Centre Policy of 1981.

Before it was revised, the day care policy did not commit the government to the full role of child care. It left the running of such centres to NGOs, Voluntary Organizations and private entities. Very few day care centres were run by the government through the town councils. It was hoped, therefore, that after the review, the policy would commit the government of Botswana to provide much needed support, such as food for each day care centre child and basic salaries for teachers. As a result of co-ordinated efforts, a committee was appointed to review the

policy. By the time I left Botswana for Canada, the revised policy was not yet out.

CUSO played a significant role in enhancing the participation of Botswana women in development. Having realized the fruits of its efforts, CUSO phased out of Botswana in March, 1989 after the evaluation of the WID program.

The program was of tremendous help to the women. The skills acquired enabled them to be better producers and better managers of their economic activities. This also led to the government's showing greater recognition and awareness of the problems and needs of the women by relaxing some of the harsh policies.

As the program wrapped up and the major objectives were accomplished, the WID program officers moved on for further studies. One is pursuing a B.Ed. program at the University of Botswana, and I am pursuing a B.A. program in Women Studies.



Some of the members of women's groups doing participatory research meet at the University of Botswana in 1989 to discuss their findings. (Photo by Regina Dambe)

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# Weighted beauty

Colleen McKee on women in the homemaker magazines

Colleen McKee's seminar presentation was called Beauty=Youth=Thin. She concentrated on such magazines as Canadian Living and Chatelaine (instead of the more "aggressive" fashion magazines) to examine the ways women are subtly manipulated by these publications which present themselves as giving aid and comfort to women in their daily lives.

Here's part of Colleen's presentation:

\*\*\*

Women are manipulated by the advertising, the articles and the editorials in these publications, to strive for largely unattainable goals, specifically the goals of beauty, thinness and youth. At the same time, these publications keep the attainment of these goals out of reach by constantly changing and stretching the limits so as to make the ideal virtually unattainable.

The objective of this manipulation is profit — the billions of dollars which are spent by women in the pursuit of these elusive goals...But women who buy into this myth are not only paying a great deal of money, they are also sapped of their health and self-esteem, and are robbed of their energy for the pursuit of more worthwhile and possibly attainable goals.

...We have been persuaded that thin is beautiful, and the thinner the better...It seems the voluptuous woman of the 1950s is out of favour and a much thinner version is the ideal today. Although women who came to maturity after the '60s are larger and taller than those who came before, they are expected to weigh even less...

Even when others perceive that a woman is "wonderfully thin" and embodies the ideal, she will most likely not be able to see this herself and will say, if asked, "I may be close to the right weight but I am a bit heavy in the thighs/waist/bust/hips..."

What scares me...is the fact that I see my women friends with daughters fussing about every pound their daughters gain and sending them to doctors, etc., so that these beautiful young women get on the same treadmill trying to fit this unreasonable and unrealistic image.

...Ageism is part and parcel of the advertising used in the beauty industry. To be beautiful, you must not only be thin, you must be youthful. (Keep in mind that the only way to remain eternally youthful is to die young.) We see the cosmetic industry is promising eternal youth with makeup and wrinkle-erasing creams, haircolour to cover grey... We are rarely shown images of what older women really look like. Therefore, when the older woman looks in a mirror, she has no realistic model. She obviously hasn't done something right, and she feels guilty because she is visibly aging...

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# Who is minding the children?

by Margaret Ferguson

Three years ago when my grandson needed child care while his mother furthered her education, the one and only space available at the centre which she chose was a full-time space. Since I was concerned for his welfare, I was happy to be asked to accompany him for his three half-days of orientation. I had no idea of what to expect. I knew no one with young children in day care; and when I stopped to consider what I had learned from the media, I realized that, other than vague references to worker stress and low wages, I was ignorant of not only the day-to-day running of a day care, but the issues involved as well.

I spent those three half-days amazed at the variety of activities, the opportunities for self-expression, and the experiences offered to the children. I was also amazed at the children's cooperation and sharing and, failing that, the seemingly-infinite patience of the child care workers. Staff told me that the ratio of children to care giver is seven to one and that there is usually a waiting list, particularly for subsidized spaces. I was surprised to find that their salaries for such important yet stressful work were then in the \$13,000 to \$14,000 range, despite the fact that many had a certificate or degree in child studies. However, I took for granted my "personal" lack of knowledge on the subject.

It was not until six months later that I was shocked by a doctor's comment about day care workers. When I expressed disappointment that Child Studies students at Mount Saint Vincent, having invested four years in their degree, could expect only low salaries should they choose to become day care workers, I was told that their job was just "custodial" and I was questioned as to why I would expect that they be paid well. It was a job that women did "naturally" anyway. I then broached the subject with many other people, only to find that the majority of people that I spoke to shared the doctor's attitude. Many were unaware that child care workers had any formal

training. What I had considered my private ignorance of day care issues was, in fact, a public ignorance of day care issues involving not only salaries, but also quality of care and availability.

How can this happen when we live in an information society bombarded by the media at every turn? I would argue that it is precisely the media, (television, radio, books, magazines, and newspapers) which are responsible. They not only perpetuate the myth of the "ideal" family, father, mother, and children, but also the stereotype of women's naturally subordinate nurturing place in that family. Single parents are portrayed as the exception to the rule. However, economic necessity now requires that many mothers, whether married or single, must work outside the home. In *Families in Canada Today* (1988), Margrit Eichler observed "We have witnessed in the last decade...a new pattern of mothering. The mother can no longer be assumed to be the full time care giver even when her children are very small." Yet media images fail to reflect the fact that even by 1985 more than half, 54.2 per cent, of Canadian mothers with children under six years of age were employed (Status of Day Care, 1986). This same report indicated that, although at least half of parents requiring child care would prefer to use a licensed day care, facilities existed for only 12.05 per cent of their children. For these families, the limited space available in licensed centres simply means that they must place their children in private unsupervised care. As Johnson and Dineen note in *The Kin Trade*, "...a shortage of adequate day care will not keep mothers from working.... It will only force them to place their children in inferior care." Yet, rarely do I see this dilemma reflected in the media.

Instead, as Susan Prentice observed in her article "The 'mainstreaming' of day care", the lack of licensed care is perceived as the private problem of individual families whose mother can no longer fulfil her role. As such, a private rather than a social problem, it



Cathy Fearon shares a story with children in a Halifax daycare centre. (Photo by Kathleen Flanagan)

receives little media attention. To illustrate, Valerie Blaauw, the president of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia, told me that despite a press release announcing a meeting of concerned parents this fall with three Nova Scotia government ministers regarding issues in day care, there was virtually no coverage in the media. The press was apparently uninterested in the "personal" problems of individual parents.

However, lest I give the impression that there are no media portrayals of mothers working outside the home, I do want to acknowledge the presence in some media (such as magazines, television, and movies) of a more prevalent image of the "working" mother. This image consists of mother leaving for work in her suit, briefcase in hand. These middle class images in the mainstream media, however, fail to portray the child care problems faced by the many families who, despite the fact that their mothers are employed, live at or below the poverty line.

The attitude "Why should I pay for someone else's child?" reflects this false middle class image of mothers which is portrayed by the media; and this false image is reinforced by reporting comments such as those of the current Community Services Minister, Marie Dechman, who was quoted in the media as saying "As far as the taxpayer paying to subsidize people who are earning adequate income to pay for the day care — I don't think that's the right track. If somebody's earning \$60,000 a year, should the taxpayer pay for the day care?"

If many media images portray mothers as full time care givers or

present a middle class view of the "working mother", child care workers fail to find themselves represented at all in the media, according to a study by DeGoyer and Borah. Given this invisibility of day care workers and their curriculum in the media, is it any wonder that the public remains unaware of the extent of their involvement in the care and socialization of our society's children?

Another issue that fails to receive media attention is the plight of care givers in the private home. As well as the problem of unsupervised care for as many as six children in one home and the potential for stress in such situations, these women lack a support system. They are isolated in the home without the protection of unemployment insurance or pension benefits; but apparently, these "individual" problems, related to their "natural" function as child care givers, are not perceived as newsworthy public concerns.

To recognize that our personal ignorance of day care and its issues is socially constructed by the mainstream media is to recognize the political benefits to those in power of maintaining the subordination and control of women either in their homes or in low paying jobs due to a lack of adequate child care arrangements. It is the challenge to that control, the challenge to the status quo, that becomes newsworthy when it can no longer be ignored.

And this is what happened here in Nova Scotia. Before a sympathetic walkout by provincial child care workers in support of the strike by North End Day Care workers in March of 1990, the financial plight of day care centres and their workers received little media

attention. However, Margie Vigneault, the director of North End Day Care, said that all changed when there was the threat of a strike, which provided a focus for media attention. Now the question became, "What was the Minister of Community Services going to do [about the challenge of day care workers]?"

Also, the sensational nature and photogenic quality of children in the legislature made the issue a "good story". According to Vigneault, day care workers found themselves "the darlings of the media". In fact, both Vigneault and Blaauw agreed that the reporting of the 1990 strike was very positive and informative. "I continue to be surprised" said Vigneault commenting on the wide extent of the media coverage of a conference for day care workers on how to organize, held in the summer of 1990, and a kite flying on the citadel last September protesting the lack of a federal child care strategy and plans to freeze day care workers wages. Yet she holds no illusions that such issues will not be displaced by items which the press considers more newsworthy. The report of the Round Table on Day Care appointed by, and reporting to, the Minister of Community Services seems to have suffered such a fate.

However, as we have seen, an organized challenge to the status quo, like the 1990 strike or the organizational information conference, is news, a "public" problem. An unorganized challenge, like the meeting of concerned parents and government ministers this fall, poses no threat or news interest in "private" problems.

Yet the media has a vital role to play in educating the public about day care and has demonstrated its ability during the events surrounding the strike at North End Day Care. Thus, I would argue that challenging the mainstream media stereotype of child care, provided by mother in the "ideal" family, can begin with a challenge to that image in the local press. By presenting organized challenges to the status quo, whether through advocacy associations, unions, or professional associations, there is the potential to attract media attention and to work with the media to educate the general public.

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# Womb-like pavilion symbolizes shelter, support from homophobic reality

Paige Prichard Kennedy

Blowing Up a Storm for Lesbian Liberation is a multi-sensory, outdoor architectural art installation by Pictou County (northern Nova Scotia) artist Catherine Hughes. This pavilion of bent saplings covered in thick handmade wool felt has many aspects. Primarily it's a shelter, "a symbolic safe house from the rigid and intolerant values of the outside heterosexist world."

One first encounters the textural richness of its outer felt surfaces. In Pictou, the most public street-facing view was wool so right-off-the-sheep-natural as to imply camouflage. That impression continues with the swirling, summery greens and columbines suggesting the half-truths of survival.

Until, behold! The main arched opening appears to be encircled by tongues of flames. In fact, upon entering and hearing the audio cassette which begins "Cre-e-e-ak... Open the door," we feel we have just entered a subculture, a whole nether world, an underground.

Inside one is impressed by the inverted, basket-like structure of flexible hardwood saplings interwoven and knotted together in a way which emphasizes the uniqueness of each wood. The shiny, deep-red-brown striated pin-cherry in counterpoint to the pale gray opacity of maple and the dull browns of ash and beech function as metaphor for the building of an egalitarian society.

The skillful interleaving of branches, echoed by images of roots in the rich colours of the dyed felt interior (wherein underground nutrients "nurture the seeds of change") also describe aspects of the lesbian subculture.

From this grounded base of earthly support, the interplay of ever-brightening colours and images, as the eye travels upward (like the large exotic bird in the design, struggling toward the freedom of the sky) enfolds us in intriguing speculation. A lower branch of a large shade tree beside which this refuge rested had grown into the space as if to affirm its appeal as an all natural, back to the land beckoning, rural refuge.

Although once shown in Halifax and most recently in Pictou, to this reviewer, this installation is intrinsically part of Catherine's chosen setting (on which grew both wool and wood.) Comfortably seated inside this many-hued womb (the thick felt almost absorbing the brisk winds off the Pictou waterfront), one settles into the warmth of acceptance, where individual differences are valued and affirmed.

In such an atmosphere are shared the songs and stories of lesbian and bisexual women about the pleasures and hardships of their lives. From a cross-section of the community, sec-

tions of recorded interviews have been chosen. These relate to the women's experience of homophobia and heterosexism to racism, classism, ablism, "and other forms of prejudice and domination of one kind of person over another."

The triumphs of these women as they overcome various personal, social, and cultural obstacles to womanifest their strengths and visions, is moving. Besides enhancing the visual vitality of the work, the tapes lend greater credibility to its claim to be an inclusive commentary on lesbian liberation in solidarity with other liberation struggles.

Equally significant to the work's celebratory dimension is the challenge it extends to those whose attitudes run counter to their professed values. While a majority of those who came to experience the show came either in sympathy toward, or friendly curiosity about, its theme, inevitably the show attracted some who would challenge or openly condemn.

During this viewer's visit, one such "gentleman" entered to lecture about Sin: "Isn't what you're doing against the will of God!" and to hold forth his views of living according to God's purpose (which included sex only for procreation and serving on the front lines in war.)

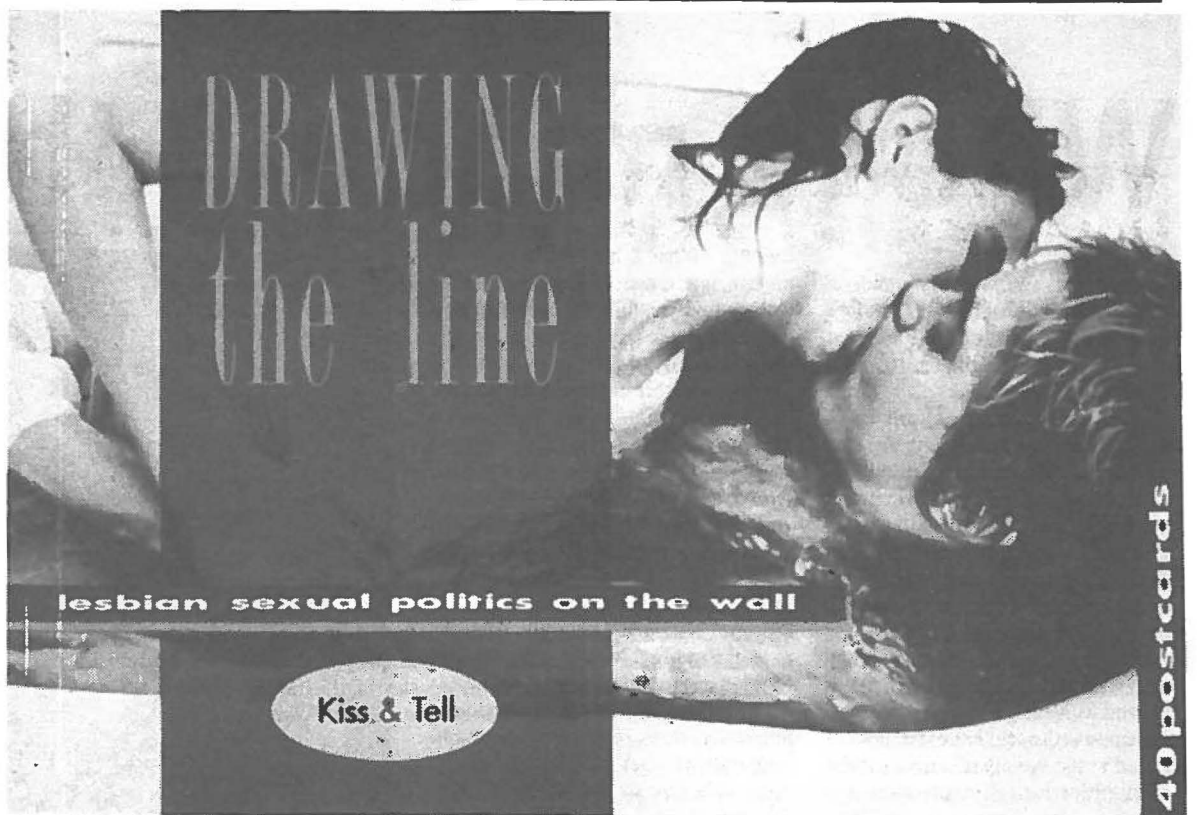
While the tone of the discussion remained civil on the part of the artist and her supporters as they attempted friendly rebuttal of some of his opinions and assumptions, he became more animated in his condemnation and less willing to let others speak. This "safe haven" became temporarily sullied by a dismaying gamut of repressive myth, phobia and intolerance which lesbians and sympathizers would love to relegate to history's dustbins.

The strength of that wish, if we are not careful, might blind us to the daily realities of our lesbian and gay sisters and brothers who still lose friends, jobs, shelter and much else they value, where such values go unchallenged.

While no conversion occurred in this case, it seemed probable that certain viewers whose prejudices are less entrenched or unexamined could have experienced some opening of awareness toward greater understanding.

Catherine's pavilion may stand as a symbolic Safe House, but it shows there is no inviolate sanctuary from repressive attitudes. It is a tribute to the vulnerability necessary to celebrate bravely who we are in making such accessible, inclusive art works.

(Phrases in quotations are from the Artist's Statement. Quoted with permission. Paige Prichard Kennedy is an artist who also lives in West Pictou County, Nova Scotia.)



## Provocative lesbian images challenge censorship issues

Tonë Meeg

One of the most exciting lesbian books recently released in Canada has got to be *Drawing the Line, Lesbian Sexual Politics on the Wall*.

Everyone I know either owns a copy or had it on their holiday wish list. The "book" is a collection of 40 postcards. As the title implies, the images challenge issues of censorship within a lesbian framework. It doesn't please everyone all the time, but there is a guaranteed favourite to be found for most (mine is the picture with shadows of branches falling over the naked figure being kissed by her partner.) By now I hope I've aroused your curiosity at least!

The black and white images are arranged from less to more debatable. The same two models are used in all the pictures with only three guest appearances.

These images were originally produced for an art show of the same title. In the galleries the full body of work, 100 prints, is displayed in a similar fashion. Markers are provided for

women to write their comments on the walls (and a book in the room for men to write in.) Essentially, this postcard book is a pared-down version of the art show, with the added benefit of having your own copy or sending these little gems to your friends and loved ones far away.

The photographer, Susan Stewart, and the two models, Persimmon Blackbridge and Lizard Jones, are known collectively as Kiss and Tell.

At first, the idea of looking at 40 photos of the same two women making love (or not) seemed weird or perhaps boring, but as in any good book, I was sad to reach the end. I could easily have looked at 60 more! The variety of places, moods and gestures allows you to forget just who is posing, and lets your mind drift to other more interesting places.

Kiss and Tell claim their main priority is to encourage the audience to make judgement about sexual representation, stating it is not a documentary on all lesbians or all lesbian sexual practice. They feel using the same two

models will limit judgements to what the models are doing and how it is depicted, instead of concentrating on the physical appearance of the subjects.

Personally, I think it's impossible to look at a photograph of two naked bodies without considering their size, shape or colour.

I know the intent of Kiss and Tell is to explore issues of censorship on lesbian sexuality, but I can't ignore the exclusive nature of the work when only two models are used to describe "lesbian sexuality". However these three women "have built trust over an extended period of time," so understandably they felt comfortable to explore an issue very few would undertake.

This book is about lesbians' need to represent and spark debate about sex and sexual imagery within the feminist, lesbian and art communities. In this sense, *Drawing the Line* is very successful. It's not safe, nor is it dull. Besides, it makes for a most provocative coffee table book.

*Drawing the Line* is published by Press Gang, ISBN 0-88974-030-5

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# Images of women in sport improving, but too slowly

by M. Jocelyn MacLean

It finally happened this year in the New York Marathon. The women caught up to the men. Women's running performances have improved astonishingly in the last ten years. They now run close to 90 per cent the speed of men—proof that it is not physiology that determines how well one performs, but is itself a product of the performing.

But no, women did not catch up at the finish line. They caught up on the television screen and in the newspapers and magazines of America. More than 50 per cent of the visual coverage of the drama and battle of the event was given to women.

There has always been an ambivalent attitude toward women's participation in sport. They are expected to maintain an appropriate feminine morality, demeanor and sexuality. They have developed a sporting tradition distinct from that of male athletes, fearful of looking too "masculine". Women played in the "women's gym." However, women began to resent their lack of facilities, equipment and scholarships. They wanted equal opportunity.

In the early '70s, U.S. federal legislation (Title IX) which forbade sex discrimination in schools receiving federal funds was passed. This, plus the rise of the fitness movement of the '80s, has brought about tremendous change in women's sport.

But with gains come losses. Colleges and organizations began to com-

bine athletic departments. According to Dr. Susan Nattrass, Athletic Director of St. Mary's University in Halifax, Title IX actually backfired. "As universities put more money into women's sport, men decided they would get into coaching women's teams and thus we lost a lot of women coaches." Some women's programs have developed so rapidly that they have outgrown those female coaches who do not have the modern and aggressive media and marketing skills.

By 1990, over 80 per cent of women's programs were headed by men. A recent survey done in the U.S. found that only 5 per cent of positions in the sports media, Olympic movement, and intercollegiate and major professional sports in the United States are held by women.

Carolyn Savoy, coach of the Dalhousie University women's basketball team, points out that the number of women's teams and the amount of money that has gone to women's teams at the intercollegiate level has increased, but the number of women administrators has not.

Olympic track star, Jackie Joyner-Kersey, is quoted as saying: "The key to hurdles is being able to sprint through them." What sort of sprint is needed to conquer the barriers to women in sport? Is it the sight on television of a woman bellowing instructions to a team of male athletes?

How does television view women and sport? Colleen Jones, a sports journalist with the CBC, feels that it is a

Catch-22 situation. "If the media doesn't write about it (a woman's event), then maybe people don't even know it's happening; and yet if nobody is going out to the event, how do you justify doing articles or columns on it?"

A recent column in *The Globe and Mail* noted that nowhere is the lack of employment equity so apparent as in the media. Most information about women's sport is currently filtered through male writers, photographers, and broadcasters. And when women do get to play in the "men's gym", they do it under male rules.

Media coverage is still emphasizing appearance at the expense of performance. Obviously, sponsors prefer the unofficial beauty contest to sweat.

This is not helped by the perception—also held by some feminists—that sports are inherently masculine, overly competitive and harmful. Many do not believe that reform is worth feminist time and effort.

The act of sport, however, is unrelated to gender. It requires, in fact, many characteristics traditionally thought of as feminine—flexibility, grace, intuition, trust, receptivity.

There is definitely a new model of sport emerging. In a new book entitled *Are We Winning Yet?*, author Mariah Burton Nelson outlines what she calls the "partnership" model emphasizing that "teammates, coaches, and even opposing players view each other as comrades rather than enemies."

This is in opposition to the old "military" model characterized by



Women in sports are gradually becoming more visible, but the changes are slow in coming. (Photo courtesy of MSVU)

ranking according to statistics and earnings, authoritarian relationships, and antagonism between opponents. She maintains that sport should be in balance with other aspects of life, "co-operative and social in spirit."

Dr. Susan Nattrass does not agree with this new "partnership" principle. "I don't think you can get rid of it (the present model of sport). That's like throwing the baby out with the bath water. And I don't think that's the answer. I like to compete and if you're empowered to do it, then it's fun."

Women have been encouraged to join and beat the system. They have elevated their expectations in the field

of sport. They are taking risks. Participation has given them new self-confidence and has taken them where they've never been before.

But according to Carolyn Savoy, there are not enough women taking these risks. "The guys will go out there and make a mess of things but they've stepped forward and taken the initiative. People applaud them for it."

Evolution is taking place. But today's women demand a quicker pace. A cooperative and supportive media is essential to the effort. As Dr. Susan Nattrass says, "the media must educate and be educated" in order to broadcast the value of women's sport.



Roseway Publishing presents

## Two of Me

by Kim Atwood

"Two of Me, is rich and full in its detailed description of the imaginative and real world of a young girl-child growing up in a fishing village on the seacoast; it is unflinching in its portrayal of the violence and chaos which reign in the home of an alcoholic parent. Atwood's characters reveal themselves in page after page of simple, everyday, yet powerfully evocative dialogue." —Toni Ann Laidlaw, Ph.D.

Roseway Publishing  
RR1 Lockeport, N.S.,  
B0T 1L0, 902-656-2223

## The New Democrats

- A Party with a history of help for women candidates
  - A Party committed to assisting Affirmative Action Candidates
- You can help too!

- The Agnes MacPhail Fund for Federal NDP Women Candidates  
310 Somerset West  
Ottawa, Ont., K2P 0J9
- The WIL Fund for Provincial NDP Women Candidates,  
NDP Suite 533, 1657 Barrington St.  
Halifax, N.S., B3J 2A1

- Contributions to these funds are eligible for political tax credit receipts

For information on Federal NDP Affirmative Action programmes call 423-9217



## Pornographic language weapon of oppression

Regina Dambe on pornography

Regina Dambe showed the class the film *Not A Love Story* and then led a discussion on Pornography: its Development, Effects on Women, and How it Can Be Eliminated. Among others, Regina used the works of feminist writers Susan Cole and Andrea Dworkin in her research.

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...Pornography is depicted in various media such as magazines, books and films, as well as videotapes. In magazines such as *Penthouse* and *Playboy*, women are made to appear extremely beautiful. They are also depicted either in parts or nude, revealing their sexual parts as being ready to be used by men. The appearance is so much exaggerated that no woman really looks like these women in those pornographic magazines and unfortunately, some women have been punished by their spouses for failing to look like the women in the magazines. (Cole, 1989).

In books or print, the language used to describe sexual intercourse is very degrading to women. They are either reduced to animal images of "beavers" or "pussy" which, of course, is a subordinating factor. Women's genitals are called "gashes", "slits", or "cunts. The man's penis is "lance" or "prick," which makes it sound more like a "weapon of oppression and subordination." (Cole, 1989)... Cole asserts that the way pornography is depicted in relation to violence has the effect of convincing consumers that rape isn't violence but "good sex preceded by the woman's sexiest protest." (Cole, 1989).

...Andrea Dworkin sums it up by saying that what goes on in pornography is that "women are tied up, stretched, hanged, fucked, gang-banged, whipped, beaten, and begging for more."

In her book *Pornography and the Sex Crisis*, Susan Cole reveals how heavy metal constitutes the top-selling rock genre in both Canada and the United States. Young girls are prepared to be roughed up by men in order to keep the men, and the whole game is done in the name of rock and roll. There was a study undertaken in a Toronto suburb in 1989 which confirms the worst scenario: "Eighty per cent of the girls reported they were already involved in violent relationships." Reason given for not protesting the violent situations was that they feared to lose the relationship. The boys, interviewed too, reported having already forced girls into sex.

# 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 or write to us at P.O. Box 8418 Stn A, Halifax, B3K 5M1.

## CLASSIFIED

•We are in the process of indexing what will be the first Canadian Lesbian Periodicals Index. Because some of the periodicals are no longer being published, we would like to ask the lesbian community across Canada to help us to locate the following periodicals:  
Web of Crones, Vancouver, 1986  
Diversity, Vancouver, 1988  
Lesbians/lesbiennes, Toronto, 79-81  
Lesbian Newsletter, Regina, 1985  
London Lesbian Collective Newsletter, London, 1977-78  
Flagrant, Vancouver, 1981-84  
The Sisters' Lightship, Halifax, 1978  
Three of Cups Newsletter, Toronto, 1976-78  
Waves, Victoria, 1978-79  
Womospace, Edmonton, 1984  
If anyone has any of these periodicals, please contact us as soon as possible. We will accept collect calls at (204) 475-5489. Thanks for your support.

## EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

**Women's Employment Outreach** offers free employment counselling services to women, including workshops on resume writing, interview skills, 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

•*Jobstories*, a book with over 50 interviews with BC women in growth occupations in trades, technologies, professions and management, is available from Learning Resources, #102-2511 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V5K 1Z2 (604) 251-7476. \$19.95 plus \$2 each for shipping and handling.  
•DisAbleD Women's Network of Canada (DAWN Canada) has produced a manual, *Meeting Our Needs, Access Manual for Transition Houses*, which provides information on the victimization of women with disabilities as well as practical advice on how transition houses and sexual assault centres can better meet the needs of women with physical and mental disabilities.  
•Halifax City Regional Library has produced a series of resource lists on *Literacy, Family Violence, Incest and Sexual Abuse*, and *Resource Lists in Print*. Copies are available at any outlet of the Halifax City Regional Library.  
•*Women, Sport and Physical Activity: Research and Bibliography*, a study by De. Helen Lenskyj reviews research on women in sport and physical activity with a critical feminist perspective. \$24.95. Available from Canada Communication Group - Publishing, Ottawa, K1A 0S9.  
•*Telling Our Stories Our Way: A guide to good Canadian materials for women*

learning to read, published by CLOW. \$10 for CLOW members and community-based literacy programs; \$20 for non-members and institutions. Write CLOW, 47 Main St., Toronto M4E 2V6 (Add 10% postage, 7% GST)

•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. B3J1H1

## EVENTS & GROUPS

•Women's Centres CONNECT is coordinating a national Conference of Women's Centres, a 2-3 day event in Nova Scotia for up to 200 women. If you want information or wish to become involved, call Phyllis Price (902) 543-2932 or 677-2794 or write CONNECT!, 99 York St, Bridgewater, NS B4V 1R2.

•Support Groups at SSAV Centre: **Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse; Self-Help Support Group; Parents of Sexually Abused Children.**

•A Support Group for HIV+ Women meets the fourth Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at #206-5224 Blowers St., Halifax. Call Johnneen at 425-4882  
•The Health Action Coalition has received a grant from Health & Welfare Canada to support the "Health Action Project" which is committed to helping Nova Scotians take control over their own health and the health of their community. Contact Fiona Chin-Yee at 466-6095 or Marjorie Willison 477-6102 for more info.

•The Feminist Therapists' Support Group meets regularly. 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.

•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.

•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.

•Listen to **Stereohype** women's music hosted by Cathy Porter on CKDU 97.5 FM from 10:30 am to noon.

•Listen to **Fill Her Cup** (news and interviews about women's issues) on CKDU 97.5 FM, 10:30 am to noon on Wednesdays. Hosted by Brenda Barnes.

•Kickin' Afrolistics broadcasts Thursdays from 9:00-10:30 am on CKDU

97.5 FM. Hosted by Deb O.

•**Cross Legged She Sits** broadcasts Friday 7:00-8:00 pm on CKDU 95.6 FM. Music by women.

## 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.)

•**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

•**Life and Time in the Maritimes:** What's it like to live and make art in the Atlantic Region? Submissions should include - a maximum of 10 slides or prints, - CV or biographical info, - S.A.S.E. Exhibition to take place in fall of 92. Artists fees will be paid. Deadline is April 30, 1992. Send proposals to Janice Leonard/Life and Times, Eye Level Gallery, 2182 Gottingen St., 2nd Floor, Halifax, NS B3K 1G9. or info, call 425-6412.

•Workshop proposals for Conference: Diversity in the Women's Movement, October 23-24, 1992. Keynote speaker bell hooks. Proposals for didactic and experiential workshops, panel discussions, media presentations and other creative formats (2 hours in length) on one of the following themes: Celebrating Identity: the concerns of women organizing around their common identity; Moving Toward Alliance: how we can work together across diversities to meet common goals; Creating Community: how to continue the work of the conference within our own communities. Contact Calgary Status of Women Actio Committee, #319, 223 - 12 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta, T2R 0G9 (403) 262-1873.

## PUBLICATIONS

•Single Mothers' Survival Guide is now available from Dal PIRG,

Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S. Cost is \$3 (or what you can afford.)

•Cassette/CD will be soon available of Loreena McKennitt's music for *The Goddess Remembered, The Burning Times and Full Circle*. Write Quinlan Road Prods., Box 933, RR #5, Stratford, Ont. N5A 7M3 to be put on mailing list. She also has three other cassettes/CD's available which can be ordered through same address.

•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 pre-occupation and how women deal with expressing anger and other emotions. Write the clinic at 3rd Floor, 419 Graham Ave., Winnipeg R3C 0M3

•The Directory of Action Research Projects 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.

## CALENDAR

**Wednesdays at 10 am Women's Group.** North Branch Library. 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.

**March 2: In Response** an exhibition by 11 students of Feminist Criticism of Art & Culture course at NSCAD. Gallery 1, Anna Leonowens Gallery, Granville St, Halifax.

**March 2-6:** Information tables on women's activities and interests at Dalhousie Student Union Building.

**March 6:** Final oral arguments in Pandora's sex-discrimination case. 9:30 am Admiralty Room, Lord Nelson Hotel, Halifax.

•*Wise Cracks*, a 90-minute National Film Board presentation, will premiere at Queen Elizabeth High School Auditorium at 7:30 pm. Free admission. Please bring donations to the Metro Food Bank. Reception to follow — cash bar.

**March 6-April 19: No Laughing Matter**, an exhibition of 13 artists who use humour and irony to get their point across. The artists cover issues such as racism, sexism, imperialism, AIDS, poverty and the environment. Guerrilla Girls is one of the exhibitors.

## GUERRILLA GIRLS' DEFINITION OF A HYPOCRITE.

(hip' o-crit) An art collector who buys white male art at benefits for liberal causes, but never buys art by women or artists of color.

**March 7: 7:30 pm.** — International Women's Day celebrates the varied talents of working women at a talent show at Bloomfield School. Doors open at 7 pm to allow time to see the displays, show starts at 7:30. \$3/\$5. Child care at North End Day Care (pre-register by March 5 by calling Jane Nolen, 455-0433.) For more info, call Paulette 455-2965 or 453-6301.

•9:30 pm: Dance at The Church, corner of Fuller Terrace and North Street. Benefit for Pandora. All women welcome. Cash bar. Entry \$5/\$3. Special appearance by Earthwitch.

**March 8: International Women's Day**, 2 pm IWD rally and march. See posters for more details.

•Film series 12:30-6:00 pm. at International Education Centre, Burke Education Centre, Saint Mary's University. Free admission.

•CKDU, 97.5FM will be playing women's music all day long in celebration of International Women's Day.

**March 10: Sweets and Meats** an exhibition by Rachel Major at Gallery 3, Anna Leonowens Gallery, Granville St., Halifax.

**March 11:** Panel discussion on sexual harassment with Barb Harris, Dawna Ring, and Debi Forsythe-Smith. 7:30 pm, Halifax Main Library, 5381 Spring Garden Rd.

•Sue Sherwin will talk about Feminism and Bioethics, 3:30 pm, Multi-disciplinary Centre, 1444 Seymour St., Halifax.

**March 13-14: Gender & Development Workshop;** a two-day workshop for anyone interested in gender and development. For information and/or registration contact Colette Poirier at 422-6430 or 423-6922 ext 54.

**March 17: Political Textiles**, an exhibition by Tamara Serreo and Bronwin Cunningham at Gallery 2, Anna Leonowens Gallery, Granville St., Halifax.

**March 24: Body Politics**, an exhibition by Buseje Bailey at Gallery 2, Anna Leonowens Gallery, Granville St., Halifax.

**March 25:** Anne Louise Brooks will talk about Teaching Literacy: The Sylvia Ashton-Warner Way, 3:30 pm, Multidisciplinary Centre, 1444 Seymour St., Halifax.

**March 28:** Debut of the Rose Vaughan Trio's new album *Sweet Tarragon*, at The Church, corner of North and Fuller Terrace. 8 PM \$5/\$7 admission. Cassettes and CDs will be available for sale.

**March 31:** Service for Sexual Assault Victims presents a workshop on Multiple Personality: An Outcome of Child Abuse at the Holiday Inn, Robie Street, Halifax from 9 am to 4 pm. Pre-register at SSAV by March 20.

**April 1:** Service for Sexual Assault Victims presents a workshop on Treating Survivors of Ritual Abuse at the Holiday Inn, Robie Street, Halifax from 9 am to 4 pm. Pre-register at SSAV by March 20.

**April 8:** Karina Davidson will talk about Studying Gender and Health Research Problems: Assuming it's Biological, 3:30 pm, Multidisciplinary Centre, 1444 Seymour St., Halifax.

**April 12-13:** Annual General Meeting of Women's Action Coalition in Halifax.

**May 1-3:** Women's Health Education Network (WHEN) annual conference at Evangeline Middle School in New Minas. Themes Healing and Laughter. The National Film Board will feature their new film *Wisecracks*, a film about women's humour.