

# Pandora

Lifting the lid off...

Volume Seven, Number Three March, 1993 Halifax, Nova Scotia

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CELEBRATE



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

# Music of Moon Joyce — a powerful experience

**Carol Putnam**

The biggest treat for me at last summer's 10th annual camping retreat weekend known as "Wild Women Don't Get the Blues" was meeting Moon Joyce. She arrived on the scene quite unexpectedly, having taken a break from the Toronto summer swelter to get some much needed R and R in the Maritimes. Although an avid fan of her music, I knew little of her before that weekend. To be in the company of such a talented and powerful musician — Nola Erhardt (*the Newsmagazine*) recently described her as "a strong woman singing strong women's music" — was a treat in itself. But as it turned out, I was in for a much bigger treat than just that.

From the moment she shook my hand, I felt her warmth and openness, her exuberance, and love of life that spilled out and enveloped those around her like a magic spell. Her endless energy reached out to us and our spirits soared the entire weekend, despite the

cold and rain, and did it ever rain!

She had us singing Israeli folk songs before breakfast, learning sacred circle dances from around the world before lunch, telling stories of our lives in the afternoon, singing around the campfire in the evening and listening to bedtime stories before falling asleep. She taught a bunch of us to sing the harmony parts of her song "Love is Within" and later that evening we performed it with her — ooooh it felt so good. It was during this experience that I was struck with the idea of inviting Moon back to Halifax to do a singing workshop and concert. The idea was received enthusiastically by the community, and she will be in the Maritimes during the week of IWD doing a series of workshops in both P.E.I. and Halifax and a concert in Halifax on the night of March 13 at the North Street Church.

I have since learned that what I experienced that rainy weekend last summer — the power of singing — is something that Moon has been fostering in her own life's work for many years. During the early to mid-eighties she performed extensively across Canada, including such northern locations as Yellowknife and the several small communities in the Central and Western Arctic. In 1985 she recorded an album titled *The Infinite Edge*. The album was described by Hon. Judy Wasylycia-Leis, Minister of Culture, Manitoba, as one that "stands out as a true celebration of the spirit of women and the joy of our diversities."

Besides her career as a musician,

she has, over the last fifteen years, instructed Outward Bound courses. This is a wilderness adventure program, designed to lead people of various ages and abilities to experience their own

scribing this experience, she comments, "It is in working with these women that I have discovered the vast possibilities for singing as a way of touching memory, accessing inner strength and grounding in it, and reaching out and being able to connect with other women. The use of voice in this context is a profound experience for all involved. And given the fact that abuse of women is the norm in a woman-hating world, I have discovered that the work of finding and using our voices has even broader implications and applications. Singing is a safe and very accessible way for women to open up to their own power and possibilities. It is also a very effective way to hear the voices and the stories of other women and survivors. It relieves the sense of loneliness and confusion that so often accompanies periods of change and growth in our lives. And best of all, it's fun, it's deep, and it gives us energy and lightens the load of often painful work."

Moon is currently doing her MA at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, studying the use of music to affect social change in communities where oppression and systemic injustice exists. As she explains "It has

been my experience as a singer/songwriter and facilitator that music serves as a powerful tool to ground participants in their power, to provide access to the inner voice, to release emotion, to instill confidence, self-esteem, solidarity, and celebrate community." Through her work as an academic, community activist and workshop facilitator, she is seeking to integrate music into the whole practice of adult education, to make it a part of the mainstream movement and not merely an adjunct or auxiliary process. She hopes to finish her thesis this summer, and record her second album in the fall.

Reviewers of Moon Joyce concerts express feelings of coming away with a sense of pride and elation, recharged and full of a zest for life. Mona Frederickson writes, "Moon's songs of experience and celebration empower all of us to learn from the memories of childhood, the wisdom of age, the beauty of autumn and the healing power of loving." Heather Bishop writes, "Moon Joyce's music brings us a welcome freshness; her voice has that superb richness that is a rare gift. Check Moon out!"



**Moon Joyce — "A strong woman singing strong women's music"**

capacities for taking risks, meeting and coping with difficult inner processes and learning a cooperative way of living together and building community.

Over the last four years her work in Outward Bound has been with groups of women who are survivors of chronic abuse and in the process of transitioning out of violent home environments. Many of these women are survivors of child abuse as well. De-



## Wilderness Challenge helps abuse survivors

**Judy Crump**

Women who have experienced the trauma of abuse carry with them the experience of being victims and carry the memory of their abuse not only psychologically but also in limitations of physical skills, body movement and attitudes toward challenges.

Wilderness Challenge provides an opportunity for women who have known abuse to challenge their own limitations and experience the success of knowing their own strength and power/

Wilderness Challenge is a project sponsored by the Eastern Shore Safe House Association and funded by the Nova Scotia Department of The Attorney General to develop therapeutic wilderness events for adult female survivors of sexual, physical or psychological trauma. The activities build progressively, requiring more and more physical contact and individual risk, always with freedom regarding participation. The experience provides a way of getting to the feelings that have been locked in the body for years, and a powerful opportunity for the expression of those feelings. Inclusion of wilderness events as an adjunct to their therapy has enabled women to move through the therapeutic process much more quickly.

Therapy for survivors in the wilderness is a relatively new idea, although highly successful programs are operating across North America. Wilderness Challenge recently sponsored a workshop for the therapeutic and outdoor adventure communities in Nova Scotia, co-led by a therapist from Ending Violence Effectively, Inc., Denver, Colorado and a staff person from the Colorado Outward Bound School. The response to this event from this group was highly positive and there is a great interest in the further development of this program.

For more information about Wilderness Challenge, contact: Judy Crump, R.R.#2, Musquodoboit Harbour, NS, B0J 2L0, Ph. 889-2975

## Moon Joyce accompanied by Pam Mason with Silver Frith starting Concert and Dance

Concert starts at 8 pm

Dance starts at 10 pm

**March 13, 1993**

at  
**the Church**

corner of North Street and Fuller Terrace

Tickets: In advance: \$9 waged/\$5 unwaged  
At the door: \$10 waged/\$6 unwaged  
Dance only: \$6 (available at door only)  
Tickets available from Red Herring Bookstore

### Accessibility:

Sign interpretation for the hearing impaired

No smoking in building

Obstacles: 3 steps to front door

2 steps to main floor

2 steps to dance floor

bathroom down one flight of stairs

**Cash Bar**

**All Women Welcome**

**Benefit for Pandora**

## WOMEN'S FILM + VIDEO FEMMES



**Calling  
all  
Women**

**On March 8th, 9th, and 10th there will be wonderful women's films showing twice a night (7:15 and 9:00) at the T.U.N.S building on Spring Garden Road. Each night before the films at 6:00 there will be coffee & dessert at the N.F.B. offices across the street. Keep your eyes open for the film schedule!!!**

**Call Kim at 453-3638 if you have questions about films and/or locations.**



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of Canada

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du Canada



NFB  
Women's  
Forum



# Living and the use of that living are inseparable

December 15, 1986  
New York City

To acknowledge privilege is the first step in making it available for wider use. Each of us is blessed in some particular way, whether we recognize our blessings or not. And each one of us, somewhere in our lives, must clear a space within that blessing where she can call upon

whatever resources are available to her in the name of something that must be done.

I have been very blessed in my life. I have been blessed to believe passionately, to love deeply, and to be able to work out of those loves and beliefs. Accidents of privilege allowed me to gain information about holistic/biological medicine and their

approach to cancers, and that information has helped keep me alive, along with my original gut feeling that said, *Stay out of my body*. For me, living and the use of that living are inseparable, and I have a responsibility to put that privilege and that life to use.

For me, living fully means living with maximum access to my

experience and power, loving, and doing work in which I believe. It means writing my poems, telling my stories, and speaking out of my most urgent concerns and against the many forms of anti-life surrounding us.

I wish to live whatever life I have as fully and as sweetly as possible, rather than refocus that life solely upon extending it for some unspecified time. I consider this a political decision as well as a life-saving one, and it is a decision that I am fortunate to be able to make.

If one Black woman I do not know gains hope and strength from my story, then it has been worth the difficulty of telling. (*Burst of light: Living with cancer*, p. 130)

## Audre Lorde 1934 - 1992

### *Survival is not an academic skill*

As women, we have been taught either to ignore our differences, or to view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change. Without community there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist.

Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference — those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older — know that *survival is not an academic skill*. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. *For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house*. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game,

but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master's house as their only source of support.

Poor women and women of Color know there is a difference between the daily manifestations of marital slavery and prostitution because it is our daughters who line 42nd Street. If white American feminist theory need not deal with the differences between us, and the resulting difference in our oppressions, then how do you deal with the fact that the women who clean your houses and tend your children while you attend conferences on feminist theory are, for the most part, poor women and women of Color? What is the theory behind racist feminism?

In a world of possibility for us all, our personal visions help lay the groundwork for political action. The failure of academic feminists to recognize difference as a crucial strength is a failure to reach beyond the first patriarchal lesson. In our world, divide and conquer must become define and empower. ("The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house", *Sister Outsider*, p. 112)

### My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you.

In becoming forcibly and essentially aware of my mortality, and of what I wished and wanted for my life, however short it might be, priorities and omissions became strongly etched in a merciless light, and what I most regretted were my silences. Of what had I ever been afraid? To question or to speak as I believed could have meant pain, or death. But we all hurt in so many ways, all the time, and pain will either

change or end. Death, on the other hand, is the final silence. And that might be coming quickly, now, without regard for whether I had ever spoken what needed to be said, or had only betrayed myself into small silences, while I planned someday to speak, or waited for someone else's words. And I began to recognize a source of power within myself that comes from the knowledge that while it is most desirable not to be afraid,

learning to put fear into a perspective gave me great strength.

I was going to die, if not sooner than later, whether or not I had ever spoken myself. My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you. For every real word spoken, for every attempt I had ever made to speak those truths for which I am still seeking, I had made contact with other women while we examined the words to fit a world in which we all believed, bridging our differences. And it was the concern and caring of all those women which gave me strength and enabled me to scrutinize the essentials of my living.

The women who sustained me through that period were Black and white, old and young, lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual, and we all shared a war against the tyrannies of silence. They all gave me a strength and concern without which I could not have survived intact. Within those weeks of acute fear came the knowledge — within the war we are all waging with the force of death, subtle and otherwise, conscious or not — I am not only a casualty, I am also a warrior. ("The transformation of silence into language and action", *Sister Outsider*, p. 41)

### Our sons must become men

The strongest lesson I can teach my son is the same lesson I teach my daughter: how to be who he wishes to be for himself. And the best way I can do this is to be who I am and hope that we will learn from this not how to be me, which is not possible, but how to be himself. And

this means how to move to that voice from within himself, rather than to those raucous, persuasive, or threatening voices from outside, pressuring him to be what the world wants him to be. ("Man child: A Black lesbian feminist's response", *Sister Outsider*, p. 77)

### Hanging fire

I am fourteen  
and my skin has betrayed me  
the boy I cannot live without  
still sucks his thumb  
in secret  
how come my knees are  
always so ashy  
what if I die  
before morning  
and momma's in the bedroom  
with the door closed.

I have to learn how to dance  
in time for the next party  
my room is too small for me  
suppose I die before graduation  
they will sing sad melodies  
but finally  
tell the truth about me  
There is nothing I was to do  
and too much  
that has to be done  
and momma's in the bedroom  
with the door closed.

Nobody even stops to think  
about my side of it  
I should have been on Math Team  
my marks were better than his  
why do I have to be  
the one  
wearing braces  
I have nothing to wear tomorrow  
will I live long enough  
to grow up  
and momma's in the bedroom  
with the door closed.  
(*Black Unicorn*, pp. 96-97)

### When focused with precision, anger can become a powerful source of energy

Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being. Focused with precision it can become a powerful source of energy serving progress and change. And when I speak of change, I do not mean a simple switch of positions or a temporary lessening of tensions, nor the ability to smile or feel good. I am speaking of a basic and radical alteration in those assumptions underlining our lives.

I have seen situations where white women hear a racist remark, resent what has been said, become filled

with fury, and remain silent because they are afraid. That unexpressed anger lies within them like an undetonated device, usually to be hurled at the first woman of Color who talks about racism.

But anger expressed and translated into action in the service of our vision and our future is a liberating and strengthening act of clarification, for it is in the painful process of this translation that we identify who are our allies with whom we have grave differences, and who are our genuine enemies. ("The uses of anger: Women responding to racism", *Sister Outsider*, p. 127)



### On a night of the full moon

I  
Out of my flesh that hungers  
and my mouth that knows  
comes the shape I am seeking  
for reason.

The curve of your waiting body  
fits my waiting hand  
your breasts warm as sunlight  
your lips quick as young birds  
between your thighs the sweet  
sharp taste of limes.

Thus I hold you  
frank in my heart's eye  
in my skin's knowing  
as my fingers conceive your flesh  
I feel your stomach  
moving against me.

Before the moon wanes again  
we shall come together.

II  
And I would be the moon  
spoken over your beckoning flesh  
breaking against reservations  
beaching thought  
my hands at your high tide  
over and under inside you  
and the passing of hungers  
attended, forgotten.

Darkly risen  
the moon speaks  
my eyes  
judging your roundness  
delightful.  
(*Chosen Poems, Old and New*, pp. 20-21)

In January, some women met to celebrate Audre Lorde's life and mourn her death. Brenda Beagan, Silver Fröh, Betty-Ann Lloyd, Lois Loewen, Lana MacLean and Carol Putnam read some of these excerpts, and others, and talked about the ways in which Audre Lorde's work touched our lives and transformed them. Betty-Ann put together this page.

# 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 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.

Pandora has no single voice. Each article reflects the views of the woman or women who wrote it. Articles in Pandora do not necessarily reflect the views of the advertisers.

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**Thank you, one and all!**

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

**Cover graphic:** Tamara Thibeaux

**Presswork by** Webb Atlantic

**Pandora, March 1993, page 4**

# Trying to break down barriers

Pandora has been doing some navel-gazing. Over a year ago, the collective came together for one day to begin to examine the issue of racism and how Pandora plays its role in perpetuating racism in the white women's movement. This day-long internal workshop was intended to begin a long process of discussing issues of racism and classism in a focused way.

During this workshop we shared personal experiences, feelings, fears, and frustrations. Some of us were familiar with various critical writings by women of colour who have critiqued white feminism on the same grounds that white feminists have critiqued systemic male dominance. We examined back issues of Pandora which demonstrated just how homogeneous the paper has been. We left with a strong feeling that these issues needed to be addressed. The solutions, unfortunately, are far more difficult to find.

Over the months following that first gathering, issues around exclusion, race, class and power, combined with a growing concern among collective members about how we work, have been raised again and again. We have finally decided to set aside time to deal with these issues on an on-going basis. The process has been challenging and difficult.

Last fall Pandora was invited to participate in a feminism and racism conference. We were asked to be part of a panel on racism and feminist publishing. At that time, we chose not to attend (for a number of reasons), but the conference provided us with another kick to get back to our dialogue.

During the process of our discussion, it has become clear that our internal problems of dissatisfaction with the way we have been working have a direct relationship to the exclusionary nature of Pandora as it exists today.

We have looked at the number of women who, over time, have expressed interest in participating in Pandora but only attended one, maybe two, meetings and then disappeared. We deduce from this experience that those women who do not fit into the small section of the spectrum of women and women's experience which the current collective represents are the ones who disappear.

It is certainly possible that women may express interest in Pandora, and after attending a few meetings decide, for any number of reasons, that it is not a collective they wish to participate in. And that is entirely okay. What concerns us is that the structure and policies which organize Pandora maintain exclusion on the basis of class and race. It is quite possible that the policies and structures which govern Pandora are no

different than most other white, middle-class women's groups who are interested in having women of colour, poor women and working class women participate, but maintain their exclusion. The problem stems from the desire to have women of colour and poor women participate in a structure which is created by women who are not part of these populations. Inadvertently, women of colour and poor women are asked to participate as middle class, white women, just as women are welcome to participate in male-defined institutions as long as they can participate as men.

We are far from having any answers to these problems. We invite anyone who has them to let us know. It may be said that "Here goes Pandora on the anti-racism bandwagon because it's a sexy issue these days." We certainly hope that is not the case. As Barbara Smith so clearly said in 1970: "Feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women: women of colour, working-class women, poor women, disabled, lesbians, old women — as well as white, economically-privileged, heterosexual women. Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement."—Smith, 1982, p. 48.

We are not necessarily looking for women of colour to be part of the collective per se, although we would welcome them, but are concerned with embracing the underlying structure of Pandora to make it less exclusionary. Once we have addressed and dealt with these issues of process, class, race, and power, numbers won't matter. The goal is not to have a certain number of women of colour, or a certain number of poor women involved, but rather to have an underlying structure which would allow for and encourage their participation if they wish.

Over the past few years, we have spent a substantial amount of time and money arguing for our right to be women-only. Now we need to look at why we have been primarily white-only and representing a small range of social and economic status. There have been, and are, women of colour involved with the paper. We are of different sexual orientations, different class backgrounds, different life experiences, and have different dreams. Yet there is homogeneity among us which organizes how we "do Pandora."

Our experience at Pandora is making it clear that all these issues cannot be separated from each other. Our intention is not to be apologetic for our practices, nor self-congratulatory that we are beginning to wake up. Rather we are trying to share with you where we, as a collective, are trying to go in breaking down the barrier.



Doctor Sue Atkinson models her winning costume at the October 31, 1992 Pandora benefit. In case you can't figure out what it represents, think internal. (Photo by Silver Frith)



## Pandora readers very supportive— both financially and emotionally

### Pandora:

I just recently read of your victory against the Human Rights Inquiry. I want to thank you for publishing such a thorough account of this event.

I was born in rural Nova Scotia and spent 27 years before deciding I could not tolerate the oppression of either myself or other women. Consequently, I moved to a city, Vancouver, naively hoping it would provide me with better opportunities. I have no regrets with my decision, as urban living has provided me with the resources for my feminism. This, I now realize, was greatly lacking in my native home town of Yarmouth County. I also did not have the courage to initiate any such resources but instead needed information and support.

Periodically I write for a women's newspaper, Kinesis, and my first article was covering a workshop discussing the silences (barriers) of women writers and the importance of breaking these silences. I cannot stress enough the absolute necessity in having a safe and supportive forum for women's experiences and our lives.

I am writing this letter in response

to the women who are uncomfortable with the exclusion of men, as I absolutely disagree with their arguments. We live in a male dominated society, and there is no safe place unless we take the space and create a safe and nurturing environment. I am sending you some financial support for your organization so that you may continue to offer this support to women.

Best of luck!

Charmaine Saulnier, Vancouver

### Pandora:

Sorry I couldn't give more. However, as a young Black woman and a feminist, I find Pandora a valuable resource which connects me to a larger woman's community.

Thanks for keeping up with the fight for all women's rights.

Lana MacLean, Halifax

### Pandora:

I feel motivated finally to send in long overdue subscriptions. Two go to dear woman friends who have left the province, and I want to help keep them

in touch with this side of the coast. I want to send one to my mother, who in her own right tried to be an independent woman in the 1950s. I want one, too, as I recently moved out of the city, and I know you need the subscription....

I am impressed and support the format of the paper because it goes beyond the critique; it creates, and discusses our woman reality. I hope that more of your readers (me included) begin to take small roles in helping you get the paper out. We are the revolution, and we can make it happen.

Thank you for being there.

Paula Arsenault, Tantallon, NS

### Pandora:

Thank you for answering my letter in your last issue. I have read your September issue from cover to cover. Keep 'em coming....

Marg Milan, Ottawa

### Pandora:

Enclosed is a small token of my support for your recent legal battles. Congratulations on the outcome — surely a landmark victory for women's groups! I enjoy your publication and hope to continue to do so for years to come.

In sisterhood,  
Joanne King, Cameron, Ontario

### Pandora:

Hurrah! You've survived another year. Congratulations and thanks to all who make Pandora possible.

Louise Ardenne, Tantallon, NS

### Pandora:

Thank you. Good luck and long live sisterhood.

Sarah Eaton, Halifax

### Pandora:

Congratulations! An example (Pandora) of my favourite saying: "Women have to attempt the absurd to achieve the impossible." Thanks for all that.

Helen Levine, Ottawa

### Pandora:

This \$\$ to go toward your legal costs. I'm glad you won. Your September issue was great — informative, interesting, & funny in parts, also intense and emotional. I loved it. Thanks.

Fran McDonald, Dartmouth

### Pandora:

Congratulations on your recent court victory. It was unbelievable to see an agency such as the Human Rights Commission entertain such a frivolous and discriminatory case. We are outraged that it has fallen to you to pay the legal costs associated with

defending the rights of all women in this country to exercise our constitutional rights.

Please accept the enclosed donation to help you with your court costs. We passed the hat at our last meeting, after we discussed your victory. We are glad that you will be able to get back to publishing your worthwhile magazine.

In sisterhood,  
Louise Flemming for PEI Standing Committee on Women, Island New Democrats

### Pandora:

Congratulations for winning a landmark human rights case against Mr. K.

Suzanne Lepine, Vanier, Ont

### Pandora:

A contribution toward your legal fees in your wonderful recent decision at the Human Rights Tribunal. It was worth it; I am one (I suspect among others) across the country who confronts similar incidents and situations in which threatened males are unable to tolerate the very idea of being excluded (and hence from controlling) something women want and need. Ontario may spell money and power, but it does not spell enlightenment and reality in matters of equality — the backlash is virulent. I shake my head in wonderment that, in 1992, I return from sabbatical to my little conservative malestream university to find that a Wen-Do class had been canceled because it represented "reverse discrimination"! I was actually surprised to find the Women's Centre (albeit located two blocks off the main campus — well marginalized) still in operation — it had been such a battle to get it established two years ago in the wake of the public campus gender wars of the fall of '89. I half expected it to be quietly buried while I was gone. But it has survived, and the decision in your case adds to the armament and argument for keeping the voices of women afloat and their spaces defended and preserved. I am always looking for more ammunition for the little "explanation" pieces I write for the boys who control things like funding and space. So I thank you!

Anne Derrick: I have watched her career from afar and with utter admiration for years!!

Marty Laurence, Waterloo, Ont

### Pandora:

While still on a high from the wonderful birthday Celebration of Ourselves, I continue to learn more about who made it work behind the scenes! Thanks so much to you all who served in the (your) untraditional role, slaving away in the kitchen!!

Now to the LOOT, and I wish it were more; after expenses, there was \$495 left. Split among Pandora, Earth Festival and the Peace centre, it came to

\$165 each.

Things are still coming in, but not enough to rescue you three wonderful groups from perpetual impoverishment. We'll have to see what else we can do.

Bless you all, and let's continue in joy to be Fools for Social Change!

Betty Peterson, Halifax

### Pandora:

Here is a donation for use in whatever area of your work that is screaming the loudest.

Thank you for fighting for our right to women-only publications. I read the issue about it and was greatly inspired.

Trudy Watts, Scotsburn, NS

## Harassment in workplace big problem for women in media

### Pandora:

I am writing in reference to the "Women in Media" article that appeared in the September 92 issue of Pandora.

I am a young journalist living in Cape Breton and I am very interested in WIN. I feel the 800 line is a super idea.

Why not try to have a conference in Sydney? There are several interested women's groups here that would love to be introduced to Pandora.

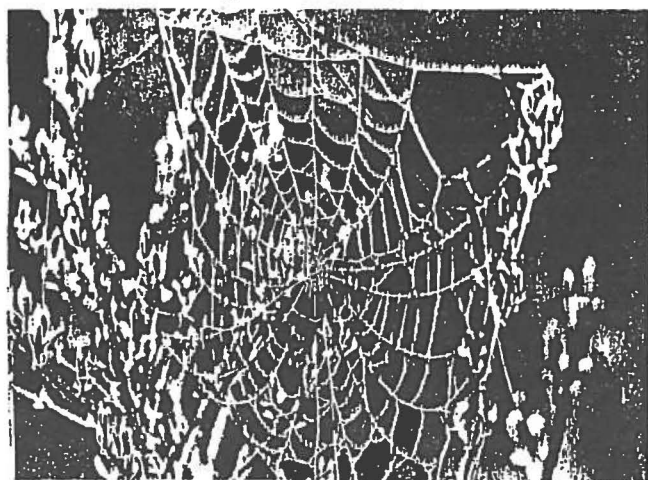
Harassment does happen in the media, that's for sure, especially when you are young and have little experience. I also feel men who are editors tend to reject stories about women. I have experienced it!

I feel women should learn better how to confront the harasser without feeling her job is threatened. I would like to attend a workshop, if there is such a thing, regarding women's rights in the workplace.

Hopefully yours,  
Cheryl Tatjana Nicol, Glace Bay, NS

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# Collective's concerns ignored

## Pandora Note:

The government of Nova Scotia asked a collective of current and past street workers for their input into the necessity of a "safe house" for street workers. Their knowledge and suggestions were ignored. The proposed safe house quickly became reality in spite of their recommendations to the contrary. The collective wanted to express their disgust with the process and submitted the following article to a number of media outlets to expose the hypocrisy of the situation.

December 9, 1992

## To Whom It May Concern — Especially the Tax Payers:

You've run out of sugar and decide to pop over to see your Grocer. Obviously, he doesn't know the state your cupboard is in or what you need to restock it and keep it complete. So, you tell him that you need some sugar. He nods and smiles agreeably at you while placing a bag of cornmeal on the counter in front of you.

"This is what you need," he says, "I know better than you what your needs are, and sugar is not necessary for you. This here cornmeal, this is what you really need."

You argue with him that cornmeal is not what you need. You need sugar for your coffee, cereal, etc... He sticks to his own opinion that you only need cornmeal and explains that he knows this because he ran out of cornmeal himself the other day and was absolutely miserable because his wife was unable to make corn bread for him.

"You're crazy," you say, "I only wanted to buy some sugar and you're refusing to give it to me! On top of that, you're even trying to force me to buy something I've never used in my life and probably never will. What the heck is cornmeal anyway? It certainly doesn't sound like something I can put in my coffee. I'm taking my business elsewhere!"

You stomp out of the store, furious and insulted. How dare he try to tell you what you need in your cupboard. And, beside that, he's so far off the mark that it's utterly ridiculous.

Sigh. When will people, especially bureaucracy, ever realize that one person can never decide to choose what's right for another? When will people learn not to assess a situation until they've walked the proverbial mile in the appropriate person's shoes. And, barring that, when will those in power finally learn to ask... and truly listen... to the needs expressed by the appropriate people, namely those whom they are supposedly trying to serve.

Both independently and as a collective of former and current women who are or have "worked the streets," all of us coming from different backgrounds and angles, from different age groups and cultures, with varying reasons for getting into: "the business" in the first place, we know first hand what's out there, what's needed, what will work and what won't in terms of prostitution, be it juvenile, middle-aged or senior prostitution.

Some of us were apprehensive about going public with our knowledge and experience, exposing ourselves to judgement calls and possible future hostility towards ourselves and our

children. Especially those of us who have left that lifestyle — street culture — behind and are carrying on more socially-acceptable lives. Others in our group were just plain cynical about dealing with these representatives from the social and political community. "They'll only pay lip service to us (the gasp! prostitutes), for the sake of appearing genuinely concerned in the public eye. Regardless of what light we shed on this issue, their agenda is already set... probably in concrete. They'll never listen to what us "social delinquents" have to say."

However, we did it. We swallowed a collective gulp of humiliation, cynicism, distrust of the very system whose gaps we'd fallen through to land on the streets in the first place, pride and heart. We did it because, if we didn't, we just may have really blown an opportunity to make a difference. A difference in the quality of life for us, and for mainstream society. The other determining factor in our decision was the hope that after we put forth the real truth about the way it is (not the media hype, Hollywoodism,

myths and sensationalism that the public has been swallowing), we may have been able in some way to deter a terrible waste of tax payers dollars and an equally horrific and traumatizing future scene in the lives of young and possibly confused women who may at some time end up on the streets. Namely, the building of a so-called "safe house" in Metro.

So we took the opportunity and spoke up, wearing our hope like little white banners of trust. Just maybe once, they'd listen to us. The people who really know what's going on. The people who have lives and in some cases are currently living this lifestyle... and have been for years. We know about the issues: safe sex, shelters, violence, pimping, coercion. We also know about the other issues: ignorance, intolerance, poverty, coercion into prostitution by the system itself, unity and survival.

We spoke and explained, spoke and explained. We told them why a "safe house" would serve no productive purpose in metro. First of all, if it were set up to be open to women and younger women on a voluntary basis, it would probably never be used. What woman in a threatening situation is going to feel safe in a "safe house" downtown? When battered wives are found by their abusive spouses even when they've left the province, why would anyone even presume that a woman from streets downtown would be hard to find in a "safe" downtown location.

Secondly, if this house were to be used as a restrictive measure to keep

young girls off the streets... girls who had, for the most part, made a conscious decision to go out on the streets, then tax payers dollars will be wasted triple-fold paying for broken windows, extra security and search parties as these young women escape these restrictive premises any way they can... again and again.

Furthermore, we explained that the laws of supply and demand should play a role in this decision-making process. Where is the demand? From our own personal experience (and many of us started to work the street and are currently working the streets as 16 and 17 year olds) there are few young women out there that don't want to be there. There are even fewer women out there who are being forced. Regardless of what the media may want us to believe, and regardless of society's refusal to admit that some of our daughters actually choose to work on the street of their own free will, that's the way it is. Generally speaking, the choice to work the street is more than likely the best choice for the individual in her given situation. People, as a rule, make the best choices available to them in light of the alternatives.

We went on and on about how if a woman really wants off of the street, it's as simple as flagging down a taxi when she's standing on the corner or calling a cop or protection agency while she's in a hotel with a client, or even having a client drive her out of the area. "Pimps" are not God. They can't be everywhere.

And, we explained, from our experience, these instances of sick violence between a pimp and his woman are on a ratio no different than those deplorable instances of traditional sick domestic violence. In fact these instances are rather remote in pimp/ho history because why would the "pimp" jeopardize their/his source of income.

In the spirit of honesty, we continued to speak the truth. What about these people that the media has targetted and labelled pimps? It really appears to be a set case of stereotyping and racism. All we see are a group of Black men being lynched and ostracized by a segment of society who are so far removed from the reality of the street and its culture that they are actively searching for a scapegoat. What ever happened to "What's good for the goose is good for the gander"?

All these "pimps" that have been labelled as such are Black. Where are the White guys? Where are the husbands, boyfriends, partners, children, escort agencies, madams, other women who also live off the avails of prostitution? Where are the judges that fine prostitutes exorbitant amounts, fully knowing that prostitution is the only income the defendants have. Knowing fully well that the women in question will have to go back out to prostitute

herself to pay the fine. Either that or go to jail. If that's not coercion, then what is?

We touched on these and other points to the best of our abilities. We patiently explained the lifestyle as it had been for us and undoubtedly continues to be for others. We answered question after question and were assured that our input was invaluable in making the "safe house" decision.

We then made suggestions on how our needs could be more efficiently and economically met. Suggestions on how access and encouragement could be generated throughout the communities and community-based organizations. We talked about preventative steps like truthful presentations about street life to school kids. About how people should be able to make informed decisions.

We mentioned how, instead of wasting \$500,000 on a useless safe house service, the money would be better spent on organizations within the community that have been struggling to deal with these issues for years. Organizations like the local street outreach program and the various shelters and safe houses that are already established.

We suggested that monies be spent on training existing staff personnel at various social service and assist-

ance agencies so that necessary and helping organizations could have at least one staff member that would be aware of and able to deal effectively and sensitively with people from street culture. We emphasized that attitudes and judgement calls were/are the worst deterrents to women and men on the streets who are trying to reach out.

We hoped that perhaps we had in some significant or even insignificant way got into the heads and hearts of those who we presented this information to. We left the meeting feeling good about our participation. We felt that finally those in power listened to those who really knew.

We found out a few days ago that the bill to build this ridiculous "safe house" had already been pushed through. They didn't even consider the points we made. After all, what do we know anyway? Well, for me anyway, it's back to being jaded and cynical. The "haves" will never understand the "have nots" nor will they ever accept their reality. They will continue to make decisions for the "have nots" based on their (the have's) superior standing in life.

For others in our collective, it's back to the streets where our knowledge, experience, and worth is not only recognized, but also essential.

**...attitudes and judgement calls were/are the worst deterrents to women and men on the streets...**

## LEARNING FROM DIVERSITY: An Information Tool on, by, and for Racial Minority and Immigrant Women in Canada



This bilingual information tool seeks to circulate and validate an important body of knowledge which often goes unrecognized: community-based research. Over 100 community-based projects from across the country have been abstracted. These projects deal with a number of issues including violence, women organizing for change, employment and economic participation etc. Abstracts of videos are also included as well a listing of published material and theses.

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# Campbell amendment unacceptable

Brenda Barnes

On December 10th, 1992 (ironically the 44th anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights) then-federal Justice Minister Kim Campbell introduced legislation in the House of Commons to amend the Federal Human Rights Act.

The amendments would see the inclusion, for the first time, of sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination. However, the amendments include an exclusionary definition of "marital status" which refers to the traditional interpretation of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. This definition threatens the extension of rights and benefits to lesbian and gay relationships and families.

At risk is gay and lesbian access to pension spousal benefits, family health coverage, bereavement leave, income tax and the ability to sponsor the immigration of foreign partners. These are all systems and programs gays and lesbians are forced to pay into or support but from which they may never see the benefit.

Twenty-five angry lesbians and gays descended on the Halifax Department of Justice offices the same day the amendments were introduced to "request" an audience with Kim Campbell in order to tell her these amendments were entirely unacceptable.

We were shuffled (as Campbell herself later was — foreshadowing perhaps?) to one of her policy advisors in Ottawa, Mr. John Dixon, who told us the definition of marital status was a concessions to gays and lesbians because the Tory Family Caucus had wanted "family" and "spouse" defined.

Kim Campbell says that this definition of marital status leaves the question of protection for benefits for gay couples open to development. I say this definition gives Justice Department litigators more ammunition against benefit suits from gays and lesbians.

Mr. Dixon also said, rather insultingly, that "we had to admit gay and lesbian relationships were hard to define." It was suggested to Mr. Dixon that there seemed to be a plethora of ways to defined straight relationships that could just as easily be applied to

gays and lesbians — for instance, those definitions governing common law relationships. However, it appears to be easier for this government and its advisors to define what we aren't, than what we are.

Mr. Dixon's assertions stem from the discriminatory stereotype that gays and lesbians do not have long term relationships, but that if we do, they do not constitute the same commitment as a state and church sanctioned union. Never mind that two out of three marriages now end in divorce court.

**All want is my relationships to be recognized so that if I die my partner won't have to live in poverty...**

Personally I don't care whether or not I can ever marry. I want no part of that oppressive institution. All I want is my relationships to be recognized so that if I die my partner won't have to live in poverty — so that if I die my partner will legally be able to take time off work to attend my funeral — so that if I die, or if I ever become fatally ill, my partner cannot be kept from me or my estate by my biological family. And, the goddess willing, should I continue to live: I want myself, my partner and our family to have access to this country's system of "universal medicare." I want to be entitled to nothing more or less than to what the rest of the "general public" are guaranteed.

On the eve of her announcement Kim Campbell, interviewed in the "malestream" media said "we all know what traditional marriage has meant in the country." "We all know that" is a phrase that has always raised my suspicions.

I suspected that Kim Campbell's definition of marriage did not include the fact that women and children have been considered the property of men in marriage and that the institution is still held so beyond reproach that domestic violence remains prevalent in the Canadian societal fabric. Nor did it probably include the fact that the dissolution of this "tradition" in Canada has left over one million single woman-headed households living below the poverty line. This is the so-called foundation of this country that Kim Campbell, by capitulating to the demands of the Family Caucus, proposed to uphold.

In a December 22, 1992 personal

letter to me, Kim Campbell expressed the opinion that my concerns and the concerns of gays and lesbians across Canada stems from the "mistaken belief ... that the new amendments were designed to legally bar benefits for gay couples and their dependents." This assertion comes from the same justice minister whose government department continues to oppose equality litigation in Canadian courts concerning the extension of benefits to gay and lesbian couples. They have opposed the suit brought by Jim Egan and Jack Nebitt for equal access to pension spousal benefits and the suit of Brian Mossop and Ken Probert for the right of bereavement leave.

Kim Campbell also asserted in a Canadian Press story on December 10, 1992 the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal decision that extended benefits in the Leschner case "erred in law." When I asked John Dixon why Campbell had remained silent on the Leschner decision until this date (thus implying she consented) I was told that it was not within the Federal Justice Department's jurisdiction to appeal — that was up to the Ontario Attorney General's department — and that Campbell had never agreed with that decision.

The decision made by the Ontario Attorney General not to appeal the Leschner case means that the extension of benefits to same-sex spouses is already implicit in the Federal Human Rights Act, though it may not be enforceable anywhere but in Ontario. What Kim Campbell proposes is a removal of rights to gays and lesbians that has already been granted through the Ontario Court of Appeal's case of August 1992, in the Haig and Birch case, that the Canadian Human Rights Commission must act as if "sexual orientation" were already included in the Human Rights Act.

It has been more than six years since then-Justice Minister John Crosbie declared that the Federal Government would "take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that sexual orientation is a prohibited ground of discrimination in relation to all areas of federal jurisdiction."

Since that time the Justice Department and this government have been content to let the courts do their work for them, while fighting these decisions tooth and nail and championing them-

selves as defenders of human rights.

Even though Campbell asserts that the Canadian people are not ready for the recognition of gay and lesbian couples, it is up to this government and any government to provide leadership in the area of human rights legislation and not to let the bigotry of the people determine public policy. If they are unwilling to provide that leadership, then they have lost their mandate to govern.

With an impending federal election it is questionable as to whether these proposed amendments, introduced on the last day of the House of Commons' fall session, will ever be added to the Human Rights Act. The House of Commons does not reconvene until February.

Before the House reconvenes, I will be writing to my Member of Parliament, to the Prime Minister and to Pierre Blais, the new Federal Justice Minister, to tell them that I would rather see these amendments scuttled than have sexual orientation included as a prohibited ground of discrimination,

**...so that if I die my partner will be legally able to take time off work to attend my funeral...**

with the restriction of the marital status definition.

I urge you all to do the same.

P. S. Whenever a citizen of Canada writes to a member of parliament, the postage is free.

□ □ □

Brenda Barnes is a Halifax-based lesbian who has been known to express her views in the alternative media, and is on the advisory board of the Women and AIDS project at the Nova Scotia Persons with AIDS coalition.



**While instructing her smart teenage daughter, books on embankments she brought her. "There's nothing quite like a strong solid dike..." And the daughter just kept getting hotter!**

## WORTH group offers support

Social Action Committee of Bryony House

Leaving an abusive relationship can be one of the most difficult decisions a woman ever makes. Then, finding the ongoing support she will need to build a new life for herself (and possibly her children) is the next dilemma.

Bryony House, the Halifax transition house for battered women, now offers support groups for women who have been abused by their partners. Women can choose either a drop-in morning support group or a ten-week evening support group. Both of these options are currently available in Halifax and Dartmouth.

The name chosen for this service is the Bryony WORTH Group. Women's Ongoing Recovery Through Healing (WORTH) refers to the process by which women who have suffered abuse begin to move forward in their lives.

The Bryony WORTH Group came about as a result of the recognition

that battered women need ongoing support. The stay in a transition house can last up to six weeks, and is often a period of crisis. Women often experience a sense of shock during this initial stage.

The second transition is the move back into the community. There is often a high risk of harassment from her former partner. As well, she may be dealing with legal matters such as custody and maintenance, separation and divorce, peace bonds, assault charges, etc. She is likely to be experiencing financial difficulties as she sets up on her own, and she is almost certain to be feeling lonely, isolated and anxious. The Bryony House WORTH Group aims to provide support for women in this second transition, and thus create a greater chance for her to remain free of the violent relationship.

The ten-week WORTH Group is a project which was initiated by the Social Action Committee of Bryony

House. The Social Action Committee is a group of women who are committed to social change. Members of this committee wrote a proposal for Bryony House to receive funding from the Victims' Services Division of the Department of the Attorney General. The funding, which lasts one year, allows for the development of a model for the support groups, as well as the opportunity for women to evaluate the groups.

There are many blocks which prevent women from moving forward, and away from violence. WORTH acts as one small brick in the bridge toward personal healing, and ideally, toward social change, and societal healing.

Women who are interested in joining either the WORTH drop-in groups or the ten-week groups, can get more information by calling Donna or Myrna at Bryony House, 423-7183. Both groups provide participants with money for child care and transportation.



# German racism and xenophobia increase

*The Lesbian Studies Coalition of Concordia Women's Centre asked us to publish this letter by professors Gloria T. Joseph, PhD, and Audre Lorde, Hon. Lit. D.*

**To: Helmut Kohl, Chancellor  
Heads of Ministries, FRG  
Press**

We are two North American university professors and authors of international reputation, here in Berlin visiting, lecturing, and conducting interviews with Afro-German citizens for a forthcoming text. After witnessing the horrifying demonstrations of racial hatred and community compliance in the assault upon refugees in Rostock, and recalling similar occurrences, in Hoyerswerda during our visit last year, we are deeply troubled by dangerously fascist elements we see at work.

That many citizens of Rostock appear to support the bombing of women and children in their homes; that the Rostock police leave murder-

ous hooligans with firebombs surrounding a house where people are still living; that the BBC International News reports this bombing and burning of homes of political refugees is not merely an act of local madness, but one carefully organized and participated in by persons from other areas of the country; all seem strongly reminiscent of the atmosphere and conditions preceding the National Socialist rise to power in the 1930s. These occurrences suggest a repeat of that intersection between community compliance and silent assent which, once before, permitted the monstrosity of a Hitler to spread like a virus across Europe.

Over and over in the past eight years, as we have taught and lectured in Germany, we have been told that, depending upon age, the speakers either totally deplore and wish to disassociate themselves from the malevolent inaction of their elders during National Socialist times, or, if they are older, that they were themselves ignorant of what

was happening in their/our own backyards.

Now is the time for these voices to be heard in some meaningful protest against a repeat of this piece of German history. But where are the personal and official outcries against this racist victimization and xenophobia? We watch Rostock, and our hearts grow heavy with fear for our own safety, and for the safety of our Afro-German sisters and brothers, as well as for the safety of Jews and foreigners and all others whom white German reactionaries may decide are unacceptable because of who they are, and who are therefore suitable objects of social fury and destruction. Is this the new German version of "ethnic cleansing"? The problems of mass unemployment and social despair throughout East Germany that followed in the wake of re-unification will not be resolved by frying two little brown girls asleep on camp-cots in a refugee hostel.

Why has the dismantling of the

Berlin Wall meant that we now feel less and less safe as Black Women visitors to ride the U-Bahn in Berlin, lest we be insulted or attacked? Why must we become more and more afraid to walk the once-safe streets around Alexanderplatz in East Berlin after dusk?

If there is any official concern about Germany's image upon the current world stage, how can Federal and local governments sit by and allow this escalating savagery against foreigners to continue, without saying, loudly and tellingly, **THIS HAS GOT TO STOP!** Call out the Border Police, or the army, if necessary. Responding to this racial and ethnic violence is not about what position is taken on Federal laws concerning refugees. It is about taking an official position that the beating and burning and killing of other human beings because of the colour of our skins or the way we worship or who we are, is wrong, and must be stopped wherever, and under whatever nationalist excuse it occurs. Rostock and Hoyerswerda, and the beatings and murders of Afro-German, African, Turkish, and Asian people that have taken place throughout Germany in the last three years, do not merely raise the question of how many foreigners can be admitted or excluded from Germany. These acts raise fundamental questions of racism, anti-semitism, and xenophobia, issues within the German psyche that have not been publicly examined or addressed in the last 50 years, and which still permeate the current expressed consciousness of the larger German society through which we move.

Six years ago white Germans turned around to stare after us and comment as we walked through East Berlin. Three years ago West German children shot at us with water pistols as we parked near the Kurfurstendamm. This year we do not venture into an East Berlin cafe after dark.

Where are the good Germans who will not acquiesce this time in silence?

I am encouraged and heartened by the slowly-growing number of white German citizens beginning to organize and protest against the racial and ethnic hatred being acted out in their name. But this number must swell, and quickly.

The beating and killing and burning of other human beings because of who they are is wrong. It was wrong in

1932 and was not stopped, and it led to the murder of millions of people, to the laying waste of a continent, and to the defilement of an entire generation. Why are these obvious

historical connections not being made in the German media, in the German government, on the streets of countless German cities?

It is wrong now, and if each one of us does not lend whoever we are, whatever our relative power may be, to stopping this social cancer, how can Germany maintain any pretense of rectitude either as a nation of moral persons or as a nation of moral standing before the courts of the world? Is this not the perfect moment in the world's story for concrete actions that can counterbalance pieces of history about which so many Germans still whisper in shame? Otherwise, what do these recent racist occurrences say for Germany's leadership in the future European community?

What do they say about Germany to the two of us as African-Americans; what do they say about Germany to us as members of the 78 percent of the world's population who are people of colour?

Next month, next year, as we teach and lecture in New Zealand, in England, in Japan, in South Africa, and the question is asked, "How was your last trip to Germany, what is Berlin like now?" what will we be able to say?

□ □ □

(Pandora's note: One of the authors of this piece was Audre Lorde, who died after a long bout with cancer in November 1992. Please read the page in this issue which quotes some of her works.)

## Sexual abuse victims not diseased

**Rosemary Sullivan**

Why is it twice as many women as men receive shock treatments? Why is it women are labeled "depressed" far more often than men?

My experience and study have led me to conclude that men who have been in charge of the mental health field have misdiagnosed the symptoms of childhood sexual abuse and other trauma as disease.

When I was fifteen years old, I was caught stealing at school. My parents were called in, and they dutifully took me to a psychiatrist. I was labeled a "kleptomaniac." As I met with him week after week, I slowly shared my history with him, finally trusting him enough to share that my father had come into my bedroom at night for four years, until earlier that same year I had told him I wasn't really asleep but only pretending. My action had ended the sexual abuse, and I felt it also left me lost without anything once again, no father, no "lover," alone and abandoned.

The psychiatrist listened. Several weeks later he called my father and stepmother in for a consultation. The next week my stepmother gave me a lecture about adolescent girls and how natural it was to be sexually attracted to their fathers. My story had been interpreted by the psychiatrist as my fantasy. (My stepmother during this time was in fact undergoing hospitalization in which she was subjected to shock treatments)

I saw this psychiatrist for two years, until I went away to college. I don't know why I wasn't referred to someone at or near the school I was attending, hundreds of miles from my family home. I only know that the next three years of my life were heaven and hell. I was away from my father's house, I was sometimes able to enjoy studying and learning, but I was unable to make women friends, and I would swing between being sexually promiscuous to having no social contacts at all. I once again acted out by getting pregnant with an All-American football player, knowing my father would approve of his athletic prowess. I started trying to sort out my life, my identity, my sexuality with an abusive husband and three babies in four years.

When I ended my marriage after six years, I once again tried to get help

through the medical establishment, as well as alternative healing options. During this time I was sexually abused by a lawyer, a psychiatrist, medical doctors, a priest, a swami, a psychotherapist, a psychoanalyst, and a trainer (when I was studying to be a professional psychotherapist myself.) It wasn't until I began working on my deep healing, living in the country, having stopped all my professional activities 27 years after my first experience with the psychiatrists, that I began to put the pieces together.

I was never hospitalized because of my "mental health," because I was a good actress and had developed coping and survival skills. There are many others who could tell similar stories. My stepmother shared a recurring childhood dream with me of a man coming out of the wall next to her bed. As I worked on healing the wounds in my family of origin, one of my sisters revealed that during the same time my father was sexually abusing me, her grandfather, my stepmother's father,

sexual abuse. Christine Cortois is doing excellent work in this field. Doctors Richard Kluft (U.S.A.), Colin Rose (Winnipeg) and George Fraser (Ottawa) have led the field in looking at dissociation as an effect of abuse. Multiple Personality Disorder, personality-splitting, dissociation, and other coping behaviours and skills used by people to survive childhood abuse that have been seen and labeled as pathological are far more common than has been acknowledged, because doctors and mental health professionals didn't know what questions to ask—some say "don't want to know."

The bottom line as I now see it from the perspective of a survivor of childhood sexual abuse working on my own healing and working as a psychotherapist with other survivors, is that health and the process of healing needs to be looked at from our perspective, not from the perspective of the abuser. We know now that one in three women has been sexually abused before the age of 18. I feel the reality may be higher than this statistic. It is the men, the doctors, the psychiatrists, the medical establishment which has been a part of this abuse. This is what needs to

change for the abuse to stop.

Some books which speak the need to look at women's mental health: *Women and Madness* Phyllis Chesler. New York: Avon Books, 1972.

*Toward a New Psychology of Women* Jean Baker Miller, M.D. Boston: Beacon Press, 1976.

*Feminism as Therapy* Anne Kent Rush and Anica Vesel Mander. New York: Random House 1974.

*Psychology of Women* Judith Bardwick. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.

*Women, Sex and Addiction*. Charlotte Davis Kasl, PhD. New York: Harper and Row, 1989.

*The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory*. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson. Toronto: Collins 1984.

*Thou Shalt not be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child*. New York: New American Library, 1986.

*The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children*. Florence Rush Englewoods. N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1980.

*Conspiracy of Silence: the Trauma of Incest*. San Francisco: Volcano Press, 1985.

**...the process of healing needs to be  
looked at from our perspective...**


was abusing her.

For many women, the effects of childhood sexual abuse were never acknowledged and diagnosed as such. Many women have been labeled according to DSM III without an understanding of the long term effects of incest and childhood sexual abuse.

David Finkelhor was among the first to describe survivors of childhood sexual abuse as suffering from PTSS, Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, rather than psychotic or manic-depressive, etc. It was the work of E. Sue Blume that succinctly described the long term effects of childhood abuse from the perspective of the survivor rather than the medical establishment.

Survivors of childhood sexual abuse exhibit behaviours which could be labeled in this way. The field of mental health, women's mental health, is slowly acknowledging that the long term effects of childhood abuse have not been fully understood and are being mistreated when diagnosed without a larger understanding. This is also true of health in general. There is much physical damage to the body which is the result of the trauma of childhood

# Celebrate



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

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

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# Halifax transition house fires long-time staff member



Anita Martinez (Photo by Sara avMaat)

## Dear Readers,

Anita Martinez, an active member of the Halifax women's community for many years, was fired abruptly with no warning on January 25th of this year from her job at Bryony House, a transition house for abused women and their children. Anita had worked as a counsellor there for eight and a half years. You may remember Anita gracing the cover of Pandora. You've also seen her at women's gatherings in the pages of Pandora from time to time. She has taken many photos for the paper.

Anita is a survivor of childhood abuse and four abusive marriages. She has worked painstakingly hard to understand and move forward. She is 53 years old, the mother of 6 children and 19 grandchildren. Anita first arrived at Bryony House as a battered woman in need of its services. To many organizations and hundreds of ex-residents, Anita epitomizes what Bryony House is all about. It has often been said, "If she can do it, I can do it."

Anita has a firm belief in women's strength and a talent for communicating this belief. She does not see women who are abused as "those poor women," powerless victims; she radiates warmth, and unconditional acceptance, support and understanding, which enables women to like themselves and to tap into their own strength and abilities. Her philosophy as a counsellor is that of a good friend. What she often says to women is, "Today you are asking me to help you work through some problems. Tomorrow you may be helping someone. That's the way life works. All of us women have crises at one time or another, and we get through it with friends. I'm only giving back what people have given to me."

Anita has also worked hundreds of unpaid hours on behalf of residents and ex-residents. As examples, she has been the photographer of women's

bruises, has chronicled Bryony House's history in hundreds of photographs, has instructed women in the joys of card making, cake decorating, and cooking. The line ups were long at times as women and children gathered around while Anita cut and curled hair. Anita has done countless follow-up phone calls to ex-residents, offered direct help to them, encouraged them to get involved in groups. She has been invited to the homes of residents and ex-residents to join in their times of joy

## Anita has a firm belief in women's strength and a talent for communicating this belief.

and sorrow. She has kept in close contact with many of the residents over the years. Bryony House is Anita's life, and many would say that Bryony House at its best is Anita.

Anita goes that extra mile, and this has occasionally gotten her into trouble. Some people have taken advantage of her giving nature, but she never loses her faith in women and children. She has become friends with many ex-residents because, like many alternative practitioners, and as an ex-resident, she does not believe in a "them" and "us" mentality. She has never considered Bryony House a 9-5 job; women and their children are her life.

Anita is the last full-time staff member at Bryony House who is not a "professional," that is, she does not come from a social work background. What is frightening is the growing trend across the country towards hiring only "professionals" as transition house workers, which discounts grassroots participation. As well, we are concerned about services which are not user directed. That means there are currently no ex-residents on the Bryony House board, nor as full-time staff in the house.

Anita will be refuting the charges brought against her. At the time of going to press, the Public Service Alliance (the union that has an application pending before the Labour Relations Board to represent the staff at Bryony House) was attempting to invoke the appeal procedure outlined in Anita's employment contract, and to provide representation on Anita's grievance against her termination of employment. Anita has spent five years trying to bargain the collective agreement for staff at Bryony House. As well, she is the union president.

We are also concerned about proposed changes to unemployment insurance. Anita's situation is a good illustration of not only how bad our social safety net is, but how it will be worsened. Due to the fact that Anita was fired, she is probably not eligible for unemployment benefits for 12 to 14 weeks, and social assistance has stated that she may not be able to receive any help from them for 6 to 8 weeks, if at all. The new legislation, if passed, would result in someone in Anita's position not being eligible for unemployment benefits at all.

We have founded a support fund to assist Anita over these coming weeks. If you would like to contribute, please send your donation to:

The Anita Louise Martinez  
Support Fund  
c/o Public Service Alliance of  
Canada (P.S.A.C.)  
Park West Centre, Suite 301  
287 Lacewood Drive  
Halifax, NS B3M 3Y7  
Fax: 902-443-8291  
Phone: 902-443-3541

Letters of support can be sent to the same address.

□□□

From the Clear Anita Martinez collective with the support of the Pandora collective.

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## Do anti-perspirants and meat affect our health?

Yvonne Manzer

Just a couple of thoughts about our health. Could it be that the tremendous increase in breast cancer is in part due to our use of anti-perspirants? Anti-perspirants stop the sweat glands under our arm pits from doing what they are supposed to do — get rid of toxins. So where does the perspiration go if it's not allowed to get out? If it stays in the glands, I wonder what this results in. People used to use dress shields ("shoulder pads for the arm pit"), or deodorants (which don't stop perspiration, but instead cover up odour).

Another thing — why are people out West taller than we are? Could it be because they live in "ranch country," and eat more meat? As you may know, cows and pigs are fed or injected with growth hormones, to speed their development so they won't have to be tended as long as they would if they grew naturally. What happens to these growth hormones when people eat the carcasses?

If you have any thoughts on these musings, please write us at Pandora.

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Yvonne Manzer is the administration and volunteer co-ordinator for a provincial charity. She is a single parent and attends the Maritime School of Social Work on a part-time basis. She and her son are vegetarians.



This photo was taken on a mild Sunday in January. The photographer and friends shared a picnic and a walk on Crystal Crescent Beach, Nova Scotia. (Photo by Silver Frith)

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# Racism and Prostitution in Halifax

**Interview with Joyce Robart by Pandora**

**P. Where would you like to start?**

J. I think we should discuss the issue of white supremacy and at what level it puts Black people in a pecking order in this society when you look at the issue of prostitution and pimps. You know the image is that all the pimps are Black and the prostitutes are all white girls. Are there no Black prostitutes? Are white people the only people coerced into prostitution? And are all the pimps Black? And if they are, what establishes the market?

Where are the people who are buying these services? Are they invisible? Nobody knows them? Nobody can contact them? If it were the other way around, if the pimps were all white and these

johns were Black they would have been all charged by now. The courtroom would be full of them. And these issues would have been addressed. They're doing this major task force into prostitution and all the people being charged are Black males. They are making it look like all the girls are white and they are all being coerced into prostitution solely by the pimps.

The other thing I find amazing about this is that there has never been a john whose name was mentioned. None has ever been charged. They seem to be unable to find them. Another issue is that Black people in the province of Nova Scotia and across Canada have complained about the violence of racism. There has never been a task force to examine racism. This is not their political agenda. There has to be a political agenda in order for something to happen. Now they're ready for high tech lynching, Black males are on the agenda. We're going to make them pay for touching the little white roses. So this is the mechanism that they decided to use. It's to have this task force and probably most of the girls who are in prostitution, from what I understand, are not even in agreement with it. They're not even going with the agenda of the people on the street. It's their own agenda that they have set and that is another thing. If we had an agenda for combatting racism it would be the agenda of the Black community and they haven't even touched that because that's not important to them. But they use racism, their institutional racism to lynch these Black males.

**P. What do you think about the safehouse that the government is proposing?**

J. Well first of all, is the house really all that safe? And if these girls are running away from pimps, the fact that they're supposedly going to have a male executive director—is that very sensitive to the women? The other thing is that if the prostitutes are speaking out

against this proposed safehouse, why are they giving them something that they don't want? And why isn't that money spent on programs? Why don't they set up a fund or foundation to re-educate these girls and get those who want to, off the streets, and give them something positive to do. That would be putting the money into good works.

**P. Or ask the women what they want.**

J. Yeah, ask them to decide what they want. Don't give them what the task force thinks they need. That is what racism has always done. It dictates to me what I need. Ask them "what do you need?" How can the government, and how can this society make these girls' lives better? And the other issue that has never been addressed is that if some of these girls are running from

their home situations, what are they running from? If you don't know what you're running from you're not going to know what you are running to. And the idea of having a safehouse means that they can't go to their own families. Their own home is not safe. I feel that safety should be in their own household. But they can't go to their own homes and be safe then where can they go? Why do they need to develop a safehouse? Can't they go home? Therefore if the taskforce is doing research they need to address all the angles.

**P. What about the economic issues?**

J. Well that's another question. First of all when you're looking at girls who are prostitutes, their educational needs should be addressed. Also it would be quite obvious that self-esteem may be low and they would be easy prey. Most of them haven't completed high school. Since all the pimps are perceived to be black, we know they're not, however we know that living in Nova Scotia which is the experience I'm familiar with as a black woman, that most Blacks do not complete high school because of institutional racism. So if all these young black males do not have adequate education, the government has forced them to become innovative—to pick up a market of their own and now they're being penalized for the market they have chosen. You know, maybe they should treat

them like it's white collar crime. That would probably be the best thing to do. They have been forced to find a way to have an income within these circumstances, and is that not racism?

**P. It's interesting too to look at where the money is generated for prostitution.**

J. It mainly comes from white men. It is conceivable that people who are involved on the task force have bought these girls, really. And also people who are in government agencies. There does not appear to be black men who buy women. Do they? Can they afford to? Where do they get the money from? Are they normal everyday guys. I mean they should really look at that. Who has the money to pay for these types of services.

**P. What do you think the mainstream media has done in all of this?**

J. Well, the media maintains the status quo. Whatever it is, it maintains the system as it is and that's why they are there. It also has character assassinated the black males and the black community of Nova Scotia and really makes it look like that's all black men are

**... if these girls are running away from pimps, the fact that they're supposedly going to have a male executive director—is that very sensitive to the women?**

involved in—prostitution. If you ever look at the media all the stereotypes of blacks are pimps, drug dealers, or involved in any other kind of crime and that's what racism portrays. So they perpetuate that, and even CBC when looking for people to interview, they want people to say negative things. That's my personal opinion—that that's what they're looking for. They're looking for someone to say "oh these great big black guys, and those little white girls." What about the black prostitutes? What about them? Are they not a part of this world? Or do we have prostitutes like we have women—there are white women and then there's women, you know? Are we not all women? Are prostitutes not all girls/women? Do they not all have the same life? That's what the media has done. It has shown specifi-

cally white girls and they've shown specifically black males and that's where the witch-hunt has gone. It's just to the black males. And they've located them in just one area of the province.

**P. So what about the balance of power in this whole dilemma?**

J. Well it's just like there is no balance of power. The power is with the whites who have the power and the "have nots" have no power. And most of the people who are involved in this task force are privileged.

**P. So it always comes back to racism and white supremacy.**

J. I think that what you people really have to understand is that it starts with the first day in the system, the white system and how it begins to take away your self-esteem and just erodes your self worth. It doesn't matter how you feel about yourself when you leave your home, there are going to be people out there who are going to continue to de-mise you and cause you to devalue yourself. And that's what our society teaches us. It teaches us that if you're Black—you are nobody. And all the things that we come up against in life are always against us, against our self worth.

If people, if they are really doing research, like when I hear these people say "oh they're on a task force and they're doing research" what kind of research are they doing? How can they really do research unless they look at everything? Have they looked at racism? Have they looked at the effect of racism in Nova Scotia? Have they looked at the plight of Black people in Nova Scotia? Have they looked at their economic base? Have they looked at the fact that there are no Blacks in manage-

ment positions? How many Blacks are in management in government? And furthermore, how many Blacks are in government? How many Blacks are in management in the city? How many Blacks even work for the city? What are their positions? It's like this for the federal government and in the provincial government in Nova Scotia. How many Black people do they have?

Look at the criminal justice system. How does it treat Blacks? The law states that you are innocent until proven guilty but just the way this whole media portrays this prostitution issue, those guys are portrayed as guilty. They have to be proven innocent and if they don't get the proper legal counsel they might as well forget it. And what are the chances of them getting the proper legal counsel? Who do they know? Who can direct them? Who is going to be able to send them to the proper people who will take on their case, and who will be conscious of their own racism, and will be honest about how they feel towards them, and how they feel about themselves, and how society has taught them to feel about Black people. Can they really take on that kind of a case and do it properly? Who are they going to go to?

The whole system has set them up for failure. They are all set up for failure and when the system gets them they will do to them as they want to. I mean how I look at it it is the other side of the Marshall Inquiry. And this is what they call justice?

*Joyce Robart is a student in the Master of Social Work Program, Community Stream, at the Maritime School of Social Work. She is actively involved in the community and combatting the disease of racism.*

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# Time for feminists to praise the activists

Betty Peterson, at her recent 75th birthday party, recalled the numerous activities she has been involved with since she came to Nova Scotia. It's a wonderful listing of the quality and quantity of activism in our communities. Following is her list.

Coalition Against Nuclear War  
Nuclear Freeze  
Anti-Cruise Missiles  
Anti-Nuclear Submarines in Halifax Harbour  
Women's Petition for Peace  
UNSSOD II March in New York City  
Stop the Arms Race  
Greenham Common  
Women Singing for Our Lives  
Hiroshima and the Shadow Project  
Paper Cranes for Peace  
Non Violence training with K. Hancock  
Pentagon Party-Poopers & trial  
Against Military Industrialization in Maritimes (AMIE/Lytton/Thyssen)  
Citizens for Local Economic Development (CLED)  
Fate of the Earth  
If You Love this Planet  
Speaking our Peace  
Women and Militarism Conference at Wentworth  
Debunk Debert  
NAGS and Sperm Bank  
Mothers Day for Peace  
Honour Mother Earth Day (Tipi and Peggy Thayer)  
Remembrance Day Vigil at Stadacona  
Tattoo Protest  
Women's International Peace Conference  
Holly Near Concert  
Boycott War Toys/Take the Toys from the Boys  
Voice of Women Peace Quilt  
Spruce Budworm Spraying  
Against Point Lepreau I and Pt Aconi  
Against Uranium Mining  
Yellowcake Tea Party  
Donna Smyth's Trial  
Earth Day/Earth Festival  
Peace Brigades International  
Rallies for Nicaragua, El Salvador, Against Apartheid, Boycott South African wines, Against Low Flying Planes

Rallies for M.L.K., Mandela, Romero, the Innu, the Haida, the Lubicon, the Micmacs, Milton Born with a Tooth  
Army Out of Oka  
24 hour Vigil Against NATO  
Peace Petition Campaign & Caravan  
Labour marches  
Better Housing & Mothers United for Metro Shelter (MUMS)  
Raging Grannies & GSTE Party in Halifax Harbour  
Innu March from Halifax to Ottawa  
War Tax Resisters  
yearly IWD marches, talent shows, events  
Take Back the Night, Gay and Lesbian Rights marches  
the glorious victory of Pandora  
Memorials to Women of Montreal

There were lots of other activities that have happened as well. I'm sure we missed many, and didn't include groups that have a national umbrella organization. Some more are:  
Society for the Protection of Reproductive Materials (SPERM)  
Catch Fire Productions (Judy Small concert)  
Heather Bishop concert  
Gay and Lesbian Pride marches  
Lesbian Conferences  
Stepping Out of Line workshop  
ACCESS  
Lesbian Feminist Caucus  
Wild Women Don't Get the Blues  
camping weekends  
numerous women's dances  
Women's Information Network  
Secret Furies singing group  
United Spinsters  
Housing for People  
Women and Video Exploration  
Electra Productions  
Halifax Poster Project  
Another Women's Network  
WASP (Women's Alliance in Support of Prostitutes)  
Black Women's Congress  
Jezebel Productions  
Women Unlimited  
Coalition for Immigrant Women  
People's University of NS (PUNS) which presented Muriel Duckworth with an honorary degree

## Thanks

One of the first activities I attended as a coming-out feminist and lesbian was the Judy Small concert. Originally intended to be held at the James Dunn Theatre, it was moved to Neptune Theatre when the Dalhousie Law Library (across the street from the Dunn) burned down the day of the concert. (Ironically, the group that organized the concert was named Catch Fire Productions — I'm sure there was no connection.) Now that I have been involved in organizing other activities, I can imagine the scrambling that went on to find a new venue for the concert. The last days before an event are always fraught with concern, activity and tension. Will it go OK? Will enough women attend to cover our expenses? What if something goes wrong?

However the concert was incredible. My delight was complete when I heard Judy Small sing about lesbians. I especially appreciated a song about a lesbian teacher, since I was living with a teacher at the time. Since then, I have purchased every Judy Small album/tape made and play them more often than all my others put together.

Thanks to the women who put the concert together.

When I moved to Halifax in the early 80s, I didn't know anyone, and adjusting to this new chapter of my life was both exciting and scary. The Friday night lesbian drop-ins held at A Woman's Place made that adjustment much easier. I can't remember how often I actually attended the drop-ins or how long they even lasted, but they were a true goddess-send and a wonderful introduction to the lesbian community of Halifax.

Do you have any special memories of events in the Atlantic Provinces that you want to share? What have we missed? We would love to hear from you. Please write: Pandora, P.O. Box 8418 Station A, Halifax, N.S. B3K 5M1.



Students mourn the deaths of 14 Montreal women at last year's December 6 Vigil on campus. Katherine Hensell and Kristine Anderson were among the mourners. (Photo by Dana Cole)

## Students organize campus women's centre at Dalhousie

Lara Morris

There's going to be a Women's Centre at Dalhousie University soon!

The centre will exist in recognition of women's common social, cultural, cognitive and physiological needs. It will provide a meeting place for women to collaborate in groups, seek support for individual problems, share and find collective solutions, learn new skills, assert themselves and gain confidence and determination.

In January 1992, the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) established a Women's Centre Committee. Since then, women students, faculty and staff have been working on the establishment of the Centre. They have focussed on raising awareness about the need for a Women's Centre, securing space, and, of course, funding.

The committee met with faculty and staff members over the summer to get their support and ideas for the Centre. They found many women who were interested in having a Women's Centre at Dal and were overwhelmed by the positive response in the Dalhousie community.

Fundraising efforts have also met with success. The DSU granted \$2000 in start-up funding, and in October 1992 the Committee held a benefit at the Pub Flamingo. Local artists donated their time and talent, raising over \$1500. Community merchants gave generously for a raffle that was held in conjunction with the benefit. In November 1992, the DSU sponsored a second benefit which featured the women's comedy troupe "Sensible Footwear."

The Committee has secured support in principle from the Dalhousie University administration and hopes to complete negotiations soon for the use of a university house for the Centre, at 6143 South Street.

The house will be set up with a resource centre open to women and men and will offer a women's lounge.

As well as individuals using the Centre as a drop-in service, various groups on campus have expressed interest in using it to organize out of, including the Dalhousie Women's Faculty Organization and Dalhousie Women's Collective.

The Centre will be run by the Dalhousie Women's Centre Society. Membership is open to all women students, faculty and staff at Dalhousie. Women who volunteer eight hours per school term will be eligible to be members of the Society. Volunteer work consists of working in the Centre or attending Cen-

tre events, like skills workshops. As well as having volunteers run the Centre, the Committee hopes to raise funding to hire part-time staff.

The Committee looks forward to opening the Centre sometime in February and welcomes everyone to drop by and get involved.

Sound interesting? For more information contact Candida at 494-1281.

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Lara Morris is a feminist who is in her third year of Law School.

## We've moved!

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# Tamara Thiebaux — Woman/Artist is reclaiming women's forgotten

**T. Thiebaux**

About two years ago, I began to be enticed by the resurgence of interest in Goddess-worship/Woman-spirituality. I had been marginally aware of this topic before, but I had not felt it was relevant to my life. I have since then realized that the concepts of this topic are wide-ranging, that as a visual artist, looking for subject matter bearing sig-

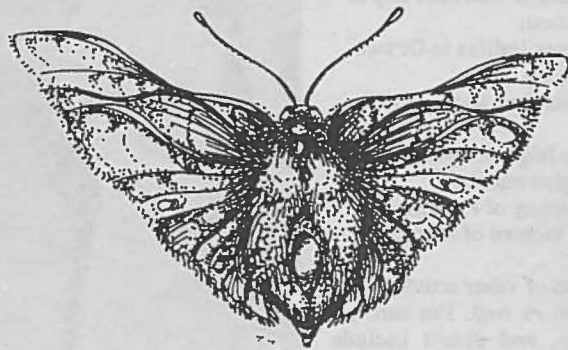
veniently, the closest I feel comfortable to religious ideas.

As I struggle to free myself from the current ethno-centric patriarchy that has a long history of condemning everything pertaining to women — menstruation, natural birth, midwifery, wise-women, lesbians, crones, witches, etc. — I am learning what it means in our society to be born female; that it's less than desirable is putting it mildly. I am drawn to the perception, as suggested by the concept of a Goddess-centred culture, that women are integral beings of the Universe and vital contributors to human progress. A pro-female culture holds forth that our value should never be questioned or neglected; the history we have been taught to believe, being distorted, selective, male-oriented and exclusive of women and our contributions, has left out the increasing evidential likelihood that women, at different times, in various cultures, unquestionably held positions of honour and leadership in societies that were not defined by sexism (a concept difficult for me to imagine fully, for all the years of culturally-ingrained subordination of women). I perceive a need to reclaim this forgotten history, to re-establish dignity and respect for all aspects of being female.

Researching the matriarchal hierarchies and matrifocal societies of the past is relevant to personal healing from the experience of living in a de-humanizing culture—de-humanizing in that it has denied me knowledge of a more complete history of human evolution, and the vast, almost unfathomable human potential realizable through having such knowledge. The relevance is that I identify myself as a person who is socially oppressed because of my gender, and I am investigating the roots of that oppression, using religion or spirituality as a point of entry.

I do not propose returning to an exclusively matriarchal hierarchy (for I pre-

fer an eclectic approach to social overhaul) but a re-integration of a female-focused spiritual perspective ensures balance. I believe this is a key to the



movement of women out of an oppressed position, as well as effecting liberation for all human beings in our immense diversity.

While I analyze this issue as a personal one, I am aware of a sense of responsibility towards society. I work to effect internal change as it pertains to my own life, and I am prompted to contribute to societal awareness and change. My role as an artist functions as a means to speak to and of, society. I am no longer willing to deny the impact of the conditioning under which I live because of my gender, and as such, I can no longer ignore the existence and impact of the pain and destruction of any kind of oppression. Through art I reach out to persuade, encourage, and entice awareness in others, for others to awaken to their inner powers to heal, and to explore and reclaim their roots to Earth, in addition to soliciting acknowledgment for what I need to do for myself. The ultimate effect is an end to abuse, violence and oppressions.

When something touches me as profoundly as does what I am learning about woman-spirituality, my process of assimilation often translates itself into visual response; I am creating woman-centred reverential art. My objectives are to challenge what I have come to understand as injurious attitudes about women, our bodies and our sexuality, offering initiatives for emotional and spiritual healing, and inspiring fresh perspectives. Through drawings, watercolour paintings and mixed-media soft sculpture, I speak of my experience as a woman in a culture created out of patriarchally-influenced principles and beliefs, and I strive to create for women a reality other than that which we are subject to, proposing a vision that elevates our status. Through art I provide an opportunity for women to rethink how we view ourselves, our bodies, and our place in society; I urge a questioning of everything we have been taught to believe,

and a reevaluation of how we have been conditioned to feel and to think about ourselves.

Body-image is a profuse topic: Addressing the issue of culturally-ingrained perceptions of "physical beauty" involves re-acustomizing with the concepts and visions that project women, menstrual cycles and sexuality in a significantly brighter and more reverential light than we are familiar with. I would like to

add that this also includes addressing the imposed limitations on people who have physical and mental challenges that frighten most of us, as well as banishment from the public eye people whose physical appearance is unfamiliar and considered sub-standard.

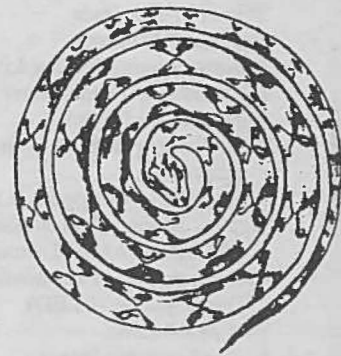
One's self-estimation develops out of what society has determined is acceptable and valuable. We are constantly bombarded with subtle and overt messages that are limiting and negative. It is beneficial and healing to see images projecting the positive; i.e., vulvas as flowers and centres of life, the menstrual realm as imperative or powerful; different body shapes, particularly of women, as unique and beautiful; and presenting woman as central, vital, and integral to the Universe. Such projections are healthy and liberating, and suggest unencumbrance by conformity strictures which have denied us a sense of honorary connection to Earth from which we sprang — our basic earthly harmony.

Reverence for Nature's creations and paths, whether one is born without legs, or one acquires silver-coloured stretch marks from child-bearing, is a standard of vision I pursue. My focus is partial to women, since the pressure of body-image is so pronounced for us. My chosen means of dealing with this issue is to create visual exaltations. **Make loud your body! Sing its praises! Raise the vision!**

Throughout my work I use symbols and images to convey messages. One idea I developed to communicate with is what I refer to as "talismen": soft sculpture, some forms of which are wearable. "Talismen" is a word I fabricated from the words "talisman" and "woman."

Although the word "talisman" does not refer to a male human, I want a definitive word for my creations con-

gruent with the growing awareness of gender word-usage. The word "talisman" itself apparently originates from "tilsam" or "talism" meaning "magic figure," and refers to an amulet, a thing worn on a person as protection against accident, evil, etc., a charm. The plural of talisman is "talismans;" the plural for my word is "talismen," thus enhanc-



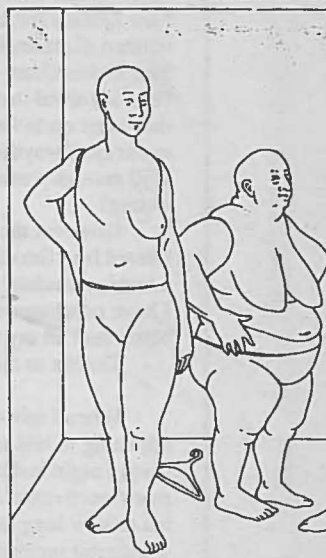
ing its distinctiveness.

It is not my intention to produce objects of superstition; rather I endeavor to create token reminders to women of our innate beauty and power, honouring our glorious female bodies, in all our varied shapes and colours, and our sexuality. From this arrives my artistic symbolization of the phrase: "the Goddess dwells within you."

In speaking on menstruation as a channel for reformation, whether we are menstruating now, or retaining our wise-blood after menopause, we can draw upon the power of our moon-blood to effect change, return to the balance of natural Earthly energy, and feel the spiritual significance of taking up our rightful, long overdue senses of dignity and honour, inherent in the meaning of being female.

As women, we are the owners of an obvious harmonious and rhythmic connection to Earth and Universe, the chamber and orifice of life, and the erotic centre of individual power. Drawing upon the energy force emanat-

*La Bou*



*Woman*



nificant personal, political and social meaning, here is a fascinating wealth of resource worth exploring. Outside of my work as an artist, if it can be separated, the ideas of woman-spirituality also provide a meaningful angle from which to approach a personal goal of reclaiming my womanhood, feeling socially bereft. Looking at beliefs that tie women and spirituality to Earth is, con-





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ing from this sacred place strengthens our self-identities and rehabilitates us out of subordination. Our vulvas and cyclic fluids belong to us; they are an intrinsic part of our Existence. Negative messages directed at that part of our Being is an external force that we have internalized. The attitude that vulvas are shameful, ugly, and only men can touch, and menstrual fluids are dirty, forms a basis to the notion that women are inferior. Presenting and displaying nature and natural forces in a light of reverence challenges and contradicts this internalized dissatisfaction and disgust.

The intent of my work is to "plant seeds" in people's minds, acquainting the viewer with these ideas in a way that breathes of self-honour, and promotes a new sense of beauty in what we are conditioned to view as undesirable and unclean. This vision is in contrast to that of the mainstream, where the public at large has yet to accept these concepts as normal and familiar.

Some women are entirely comfortable with these ideas, as far as that is possible within the confines of our society; other women are close to self-acceptance, or would like to achieve comfort; but not all women are ready. Of the varied reactions to my artwork, and so far it has been quite positive, I anticipate repulsion and rejection. I speculate this reaction comes from a feeling of threat: a woman might be afraid of accepting these ideas because they expose her most vulnerable areas — a vulnerability that exists as a result of systematic violation. The foundations of one's established approach to

life, all that one has been taught over the years, the daily rituals, the traditions of a particular socially-recognized faith, could be uncomfortably shaken. The conditioning from early childhood not

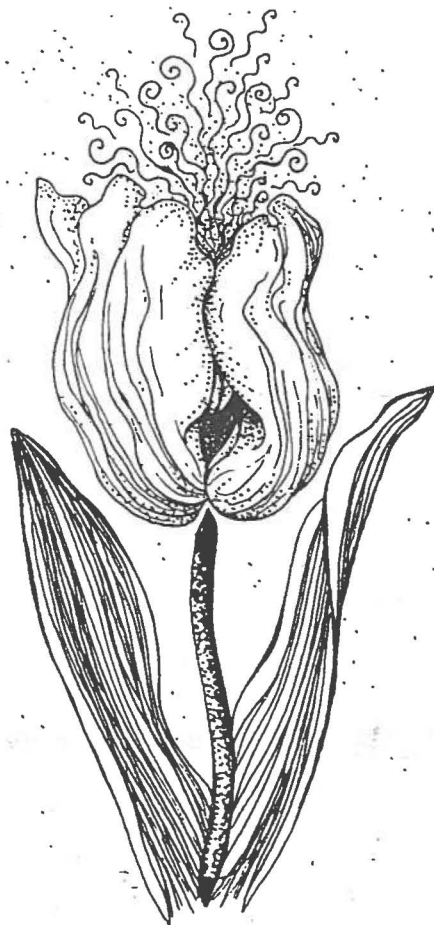
port, such as from society, this could be a monumental task.

We establish neat and convenient habits to help us function in life, so it's no simple matter to decide to reconsider the merit and worth of these comfortable patterns, especially as they are very tightly enforced by society. One opens oneself up not only to internal upheaval, but also to attack from outside by others who are still locked into the "norm" of conventional experience, particularly those who "benefit" from established perceptions; for example, if we freely and openly loved our bodies and all of our differences, media advertising, a multi-million dollar industry that thrives on our dissatisfaction, would suffer.

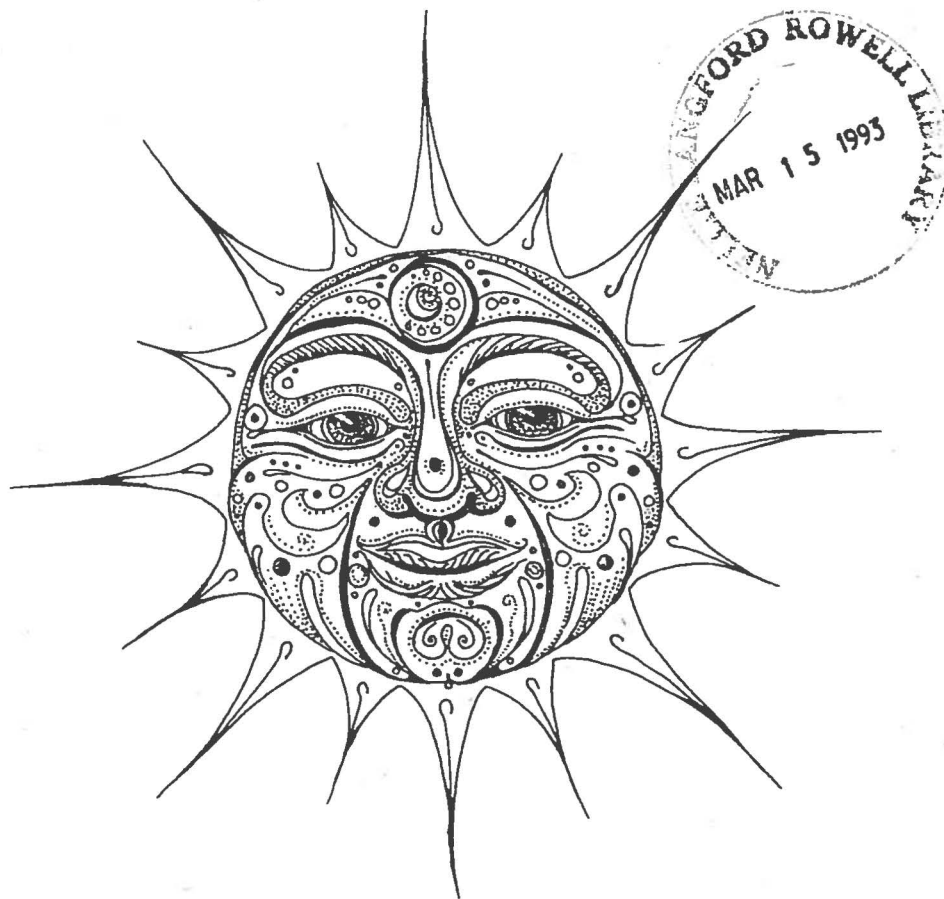
But out of upheaval comes change where change is necessary. I propose that as the earth is sacred, so must we see our bodies and our existence, and expand and cultivate such an affirmative perspective.

I believe it is important for people to be aware that I still retain much of the conditioning every woman experiences in our society. I actively battle against warped perceptions of women that breed discomfort in those very things that continue life.

My personal background is of surviving emotional and physical abuse, largely perpetrated by my mother, and early sexual abuse by various people inside and outside my family. A result of such experiences is feeling some disconnection with the imagery I ex-



to question authority, the fear instilled around being female — having female genitalia and distinctively female sexuality, menstruation, reproduction, aging, and the fear of rejection for having been born female — is stirred up. Although generally hidden from consciousness, the fear is always there. Once something gives it a poke, it could mean re-examining just about every corner of one's life, and without sup-



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plore, such as attempting to portray the gentle and benign power that can be found in all of us, tying us to Earth. I experience levels of conflict and confusion in the process of depicting positive images and symbols of Mother/Woman

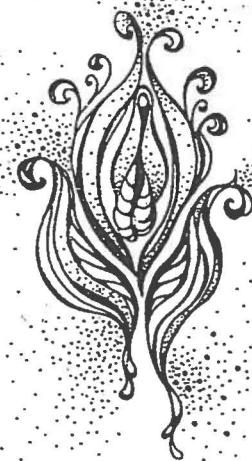
figures, and in identifying myself as a woman, because of how my mother was (although I recognize that she is also a product of a de-humanizing society). If, during one's formative years, one does not have substantial positive messages with which to try to counterbalance the negative, the result is internalized and pro-

jected hatred. I have to uproot myself out of that, and work diligently to replace it, recultivating inner peacefulness. It takes effort to regenerate internal balance and explore those precious areas that are locked inside, allowing them to unfold slowly but distinctly. My artwork is a useful tool for this, although it doesn't function alone for growth and repair. The vehicle of art helps turn negative experiences into something useful to contribute to society; I render Refuse harmless, transforming it into Humus, for a rich growing medium. To be able to do this is a reflection of the extent of accomplished healing and, I believe, a process of attaining wisdom.

While I am dedicated to creating

woman-affirmative art, referring to research and literature of Matriarchal theology, viewpoints of writers, other artists and visionaries on the same quest of Re-Presenting Woman, I also draw upon personal intuition. I suspect that we have inherent knowledge that we can tap into, which ties us to the past.

Sometimes when what I create feels particularly profound, I have this sense that I am an intermediary for a



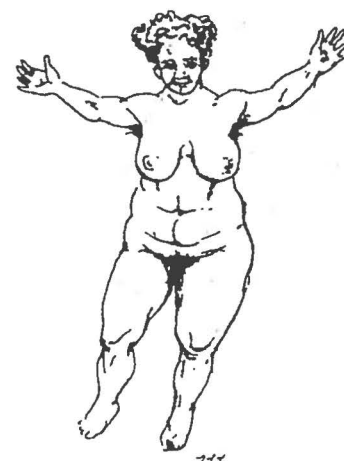
greater Universal Being, the Goddess, perhaps. She is conveying images and visions for us to learn from, to help us grow and see over the limitations created by our society.

A forum for publicity of my work has been to present it to interested groups of women, and to display it during events focusing on women's issues. This is pleasantly informal and warm for discussion.

I receive commissions to create pieces that are specific to the recipient, given details of strengths and visions of that woman. This is an inspiring challenge to fulfill.

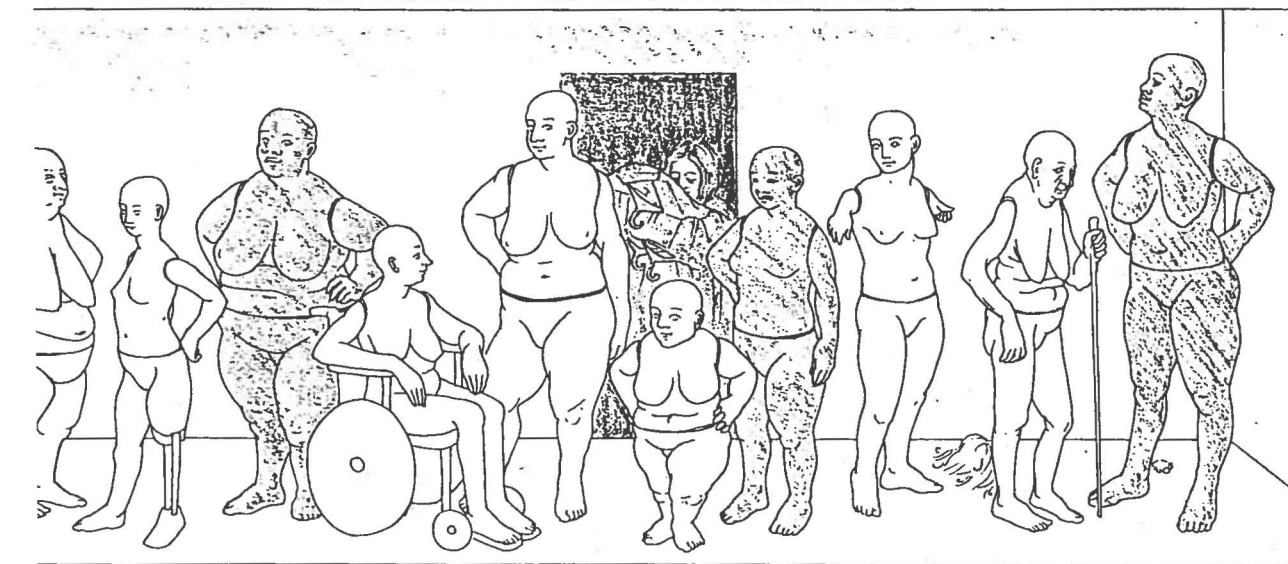
As well, my work is used for publications illustration.

I welcome correspondence with anyone wishing to communicate with me about my work.



Tamara Thiebaux,  
23 Armshore Dr.,  
Halifax, N.S. B3N1M4

boutique de la Femme Parfaite ♀



marquequins"

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# Partnership an exclusive idea at Crete conference

**Marion Kearns and Margaret Tusz**

Nearly six hundred peace activists, economists, academics, and other concerned women and men met on Crete, Oct. 4 to 10, 1992, to explore an alternative society — a society more tender, more humane, more just. A society where conflict is resolved without the use of force, and where we put a high premium on the preservation of our planet. The Minoan civilization of ancient Crete provides a model from the past — as do some other civilizations — where men and women lived in partnership with each other.

Archaeologists, led by Marija Gimbutas, are finding that pre-Judeo-Christian civilizations, like that at Knossos, Crete from 6000 to 1450 BC, were not the patriarchal, male-headed ones with which we are so familiar. Women played important roles in the largely agrarian societies, worldly goods seemed to be distributed fairly, weapons and aggressive behaviour were not present in their art, and the Goddess was supreme! It was a city of impressive art, architecture, roads, and even plumbing. If humans have lived in peace and social justice before, can we not do it again?

We all had high expectations of the conference, and there were some stimulating events, as well as profound disappointments. The opening plenary included a speech by Margarita Papandreou, (the chair of the international organization, Women for Mutual Security, which sponsored the conference) which was both moving and inspirational. As well, Riane Eisler, the author of *The Chalice and the Blade* (a book describing a partnership model for today's society), gave a charismatic presentation of her arguments. Desima Williams, an academic and former

Grenadian Ambassador to the U.S., electrified us with the strength of her presence and presentation.

The plenary on social change was a charged morning, full of accounts of experiences and facts from mostly third-world women. These women were bright, articulate, amusing, and deadly serious about the situations with which they were familiar. Nuclear testing in the South Pacific, apartheid in South Africa, how macro-economics affects women of the South, the international ostracism of Cuba, women's rights in the new Europe, corruption in the U.S. government... We were shocked and angered by most of these accounts. Peggy Antrobus, a Grenadian economist and global coordinator for an international women's development network, DAWN, told us that we are not overcoming when we talk of the exploitation and devaluing of women. Vanessa Griffen, a Fijian academic and activist, told us of the nuclear testing that is still going on near her home, and how the American government is not helping the victims of Bikini Atoll who continue to suffer the effects of American nuclear testing in the 1950s. A young Cuban woman informed us of the American law then being debated in the U.S. government (but since enacted), to make illegal any trading with Cuba, and to cut off supplies of food and medicine to that country. In the only action taken at any time during the conference, participants signed a petition, addressed to the U.S. government, to protest this law. And, to keep perspective, Dessima Williams reminded us that the third world, as a condition, exists in the North.

Not all of the conference was discussions and work. The trip to the ruins at Knossos, and visits to the Heraklion Museum to see the artifacts, were mar-

vellous. The art and wares discovered at the site, depict women in dance and play, with a reverence for the female form. The goddess, with snakes on her arms, or a cat on her head, is resplendent with voluptuous breasts and luxurious dress. It is a celebration of the feminine.

The greatest aspect of the conference, for us, was meeting so many interesting, wonderful women. Of note were Blanche Wiesen Cooke, the American author of the new biography of Eleanor Roosevelt: who chaired the final plenary session with great wit, poise and humour; Carol Lynn Pearson, a Mormon actress and playwright, who performed for us her moving play, *Mother Wove the Morning*; Carol Christ, the feminist theologian; Eleanor Gadon, American academic and author of *The Once and Future Goddess*, and Vera Martin, an Ojibway

elder, whose presence and spirituality moved and guided many at the conference. Regrettably absent were Green Party founder, Petra Kelly (she was found dead in her home in Germany,

murdered by her partner at about the same time that she was expected at the conference), and Marija Gimbutas, who was very ill and could not attend.

There was something essential missing from this conference. Looking around, we saw mostly white, middle-aged North Americans, gathered in an idyllic setting — a gorgeous sprawling hotel with flowering gardens on the shores of the Adriatic Sea. Very occasionally there was a woman of colour. Why were there so few delegates from countries referred to as "the South?" To talk about partnership, didn't we need more equal representation of the geographic, age, income, and racial groups?

As well during the workshops, although they represented approximately 10% of participants, men exercised their time-honoured habits of excluding women from the discussion by addressing one another and of dominating the floor. And women let them do this. An opportunity to examine this behaviour with respect to partnership was missed, as the discussion of what partnership means was not the mandate of the conference.

In fact, conference organizers must have assumed that everyone understood and approved of Eisler's notion of "partnership," because although we spent thirteen hours in workshops, we were never asked to say what partnership meant to us, or what social, political or economic changes would bring about partnership societies. One point of criticism, which was well-received when presented by a Halifax delegate at the final plenary, was that the language, both in the literature and at the conference, excluded homosexuals. The concept of "community" was felt to be more inclusive of people, cultures, and lifestyles, and many people strongly supported this change of terms.

Not unexpectedly, films crews were present at this conference. One in particular, though, was brought by Eisler, to create a promotional documentary for "partnership." It seems that "partnership" is a copyrighted social movement in the U.S., and that there are more than twenty Partnership Resource Centres nationwide. Conference-goers were informed, just a week before arriving, that the results of the conference would be compiled into a book, to be published by Eisler and her partner, David Loye. And everywhere at the conference, there were conference disciples (dozens, if not hundreds of them) with videotapes, speeches, and Partnership literature available for purchase. Not everyone approved of these marketing strategies, nor of the practice of these Americans trying to sell a social movement to other countries.

Partnership is a rich concept, despite its inadequate exploration at this conference. This was just the First International Minoan Celebration of Partnership. Perhaps, if there is to be a Second International Celebration, we should use our resources to reserve a spot for someone from the third-world in our place. International partnership would be better served if a few of us just stayed at home to do our own work on these problems.

Marion Kearns is a local peace activist who coordinated the International Women's Peace Conference at Mount St. Vincent in June 1985.

Margret Tusz was one of five mother and daughter pairs who attended this conference. Bette and Margaret were drawn by their desire to see how they might change attitudes on the domination of women and of nature.



The Snake Goddess of Crete (Photo compliments of the Herakleion Museum)

## A woman's place is in the House

**An interview with Innis MacDonald  
by Elizabeth McGibbon**

"Never apologize, never explain — just get the thing done and let them howl!"  
—Nellie McClung

**Q: Tell me a bit about yourself.**

A: I grew up in Glace Bay — I was the neighbourhood scrapper. Fortunately I've hung up my gloves, but I'm always ready for a round of negotiation.

I can be very tenacious when an issue touches my heart or when I'm confronted by institutional injustice. My dad, Willie "Curly" MacDonald was a coal miner. Both my parents and grandparents were staunch supporters of the CCF, the Commonwealth Co-operative Federation, the predecessor of the NDP. Labour and politics were the talk at every kitchen table. Feminism was not yet a household word, but in my family the expectation was that the girls would get out and take a stand.



Innis MacDonald

**Q: Why do you want to be an MLA?**

A: Oh! I see — the hard questions

first. I've pondered this one. I already have a business of my own and a satisfying career in health care management. Both these jobs offer a view of government policy that urges me to act. For example, current business policy does not work for the entrepreneur who has an interest in community development. This is obvious to people who struggle on while seeing big corporations like Curragh take millions in development money and make millions in profit while not paying one cent in taxes.

Government mismanagement of health dollars enrages me. We need community-based health care that focuses on prevention and health promotion. The people who use these services must be active at every level of planning.

**Q: McClung's words are strong and forceful. How does this philosophy fit in with your challenge to be the first woman to be elected from Halifax Needham to the Legislature?**

A: McClung won the fight to gain the vote for women. There are still many things that need to be done — across Canada and in North End Hal-

ifax. They are not being addressed. There is a complacency in our government representation that ignores the needs of constituents. For example, the foot-dragging and tongue wagging that goes on about child care issues... Child care is an integral part of our economy; accessible affordable child care cannot continue to be treated as a side issue without damaging families — many of whom have women as the sole parent. McClung's philosophy fits well with the tremendous challenges facing women in their private lives. It certainly speaks to my determination to forge my way in a political system that is composed almost solely of men.

**Q: Issues such as child care are still regarded by many as "women's issues." What do you think of this?**

A: Of course child care is a women's issue — as Audrey McLaughlin says, so is free trade, the economy, a fair tax system, employment and education. One of the main reasons issues such as child care is seen as "women's issues" is that women have had most of the responsibility for the complex task of raising our future generations. Women speak most loudly and most publicly about child care. In our current system, women experience the most direct losses when these services are not available — although it is becoming clear that denying women full access to education and jobs is having a serious effect on the Canadian economy. The New Democratic Party is the only party that translates this fact into policy.

In a healthy democracy, these concerns would be societal concerns that

are not gender specific — they would be a collective responsibility. We have a long way to go. According to Jill Vickers, feminist policy analyst at Carleton University, at our present rate it will take seven hundred years to achieve gender parity in our governing process — and we must be absolutely clear that this figure does not include the years of affirmative action needed to include proportionate representation of visible minorities, native and aboriginal women, immigrant women, women with disabilities, and lesbians. The NDP is the only party that has an affirmative action policy. Currently almost 50% of our nominated candidates are women. The other two parties say this will happen naturally. Sure! In seven hundred years.

**Q: What perspective will you bring to the Legislature?**

A: I will bring my feminist perspective. Women who are feminists are needed in the Legislature to ensure that government thinking, policy, and action reflect women's reality. Alexa McDonough, leader of the Nova Scotia NDP provides essential feminist analysis in the Legislature. "It's not good enough to have more women in the Legislature — they must have an understanding of feminism and be capable of applying it to all areas of their job."

Alexa says it all — it gives me renewed hope for Nova Scotians.

**Questions? Want to help elect Innis?**  
Phone her at 455-8875.



# Aiding NS women with HIV/AIDS

Jane Allen

The picture of women in relation to HIV/AIDS used to include a mother caring for her dying son or a nurse in a hospital. We were told that AIDS was a gay men's disease, that it had nothing to do with us; we were safe if we weren't a prostitute or a junkie, and of course women who work the streets and women who use drugs aren't really women. Today, the picture of HIV/AIDS includes HIV positive women, women as caregivers, women doing education, women working in health care systems, volunteering time and expertise. Approximately two years ago a group of women involved in HIV/AIDS work in the community met to respond to the changing face of women in relation to HIV/AIDS; these women were concerned about the lack of resources available to women. The group felt after discussions and meetings that the needs of women province wide may not be fully known, and that women's needs were not being met. These women formed a working group and applied for funding under the sponsorship of the Nova Scotia Persons with AIDS Coalition in Halifax from the federal Health and Welfare Department for Women and AIDS project. Funding for a province wide needs assessment was received and work on the needs assessment began in October.

I am excited to be part of this community response to women and AIDS work by coordinating the Women and AIDS project. Women have been excluded from the HIV/AIDS agency for too long; research, treatments, education and information strategies have been based on and shaped by men's experience with the disease. The absence of HIV/AIDS research that is woman-specific means that women are often mis-diagnosed; the Centre for Diseases Control in Atlanta has a definition for an AIDS diagnosis that was developed from observations of men and male symptoms. We know that women's symptoms are often different than men's and that the course

of infection manifests itself differently in women, often resulting in later diagnosis, (or no AIDS diagnosis) and less effective treatment.

It is by no means a new phenomena that women are testing positive for HIV. Women have been infected persons since the pandemic began over ten years ago. As the numbers of women testing positive continues to rise (women are the fastest growing group of persons testing positive) and more and more women's lives are becoming affected by HIV/AIDS, as we are caring for persons living with HIV/AIDS, the need for women's services and resources becomes urgent. Despite the increase in HIV infection among women in Canada, we continue to receive a message that if we do not identify with one of the so called "high risk groups" (gay men and injection drug users), then we need not be concerned with HIV infection. HIV/AIDS education needs to continue to move away from identifying high risk groups to identify high risk activities that we all need information about regardless of sexual orientation or cultural identity. Rates of transmission also need to be put into perspective as the rates of transmission from an infected male to his female partner are significantly higher than transmission from an infected woman to her partner. Many women who have received a positive test result were shocked to learn about their positive status because they and

their health care providers did not perceive them to be at risk for infection. Before we can put woman specific education and services in place, we need to have a picture of what resources currently exist for women in Nova Scotia and how accessible they are for women; this is the rationale for the needs assessment phase of the Women and AIDS project.

The needs assessment will gather this information by identifying and documenting the needs of HIV positive women, caregivers of HIV positive persons and persons living with AIDS and the need for HIV/AIDS information and education for women that is culturally specific. Awareness in our communities about the lack of coordinated services and information around women and HIV/AIDS is coming to the forefront of our agendas for women's health; some communities have responded.

The Pictou County Women's Centre were leaders in establishing a Women and AIDS Project in their community; workers held a series of kitchen talks where women would gather to talk and share information about AIDS and safer sex. In addition, panel presentations were held and resources were gathered. In Halifax, AIDS Nova Scotia produces a newsletter of information about women and AIDS, offers support services and has a resource library available with a lot of information about women's issues. At the Nova Scotia Persons with AIDS Coalition, we also have a resource library, and women can access peer support, one-on-one counselling and specific information around treatments.

The Coalition is also sponsoring the Black Outreach Project that offers culturally specific support and information to the Black community. Services in the community have integrated HIV/AIDS services into existing programs

## The absence of HIV/AIDS research means that women are often mis-diagnosed

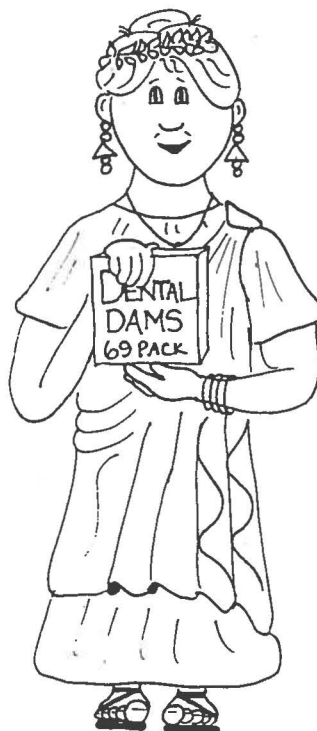
and have identified the need for culturally specific information; for example, women who work the streets and a needle exchange program are in place to respond to the needs of injection drug users.

All of these services are community based, and their success lies in remaining community based. We have a great deal to learn from these groups. Recently, the AIDS Coalition of Cape Breton has opened to respond to the HIV/AIDS related needs of the Cape Breton area and a similar group is set up in the Valley, called the Valley AIDS Concern Group. All of these groups, as well as many individual women concerned about women's health, are doing a great deal of work to ensure that all possible resources in our communities are utilized to remove the existing barriers to prevention, diagnoses and treatment for women. As women, our struggle for accurate information so that we can live knowledgeably in healthy bodies continues our hope that a community response to HIV/AIDS education and support for infected persons will continue as networks continue to grow.

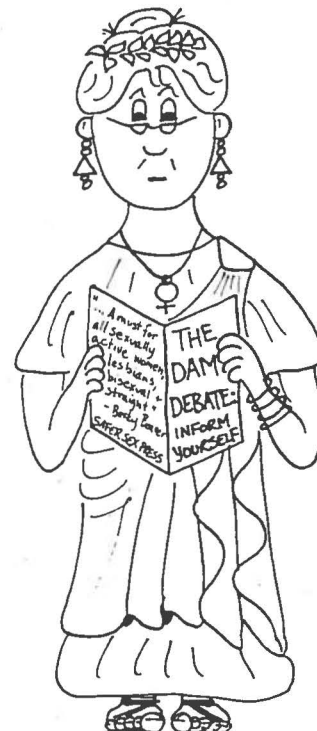
If you would like more information about women and HIV/AIDS, or are interested in the Women and AIDS Project, please contact me at: Nova Scotia Persons with AIDS Coalition, 2093 Gottingen Street, Halifax, N.S., B3K 3B2 (902) 429-7922

Jane Allen is a native Haligonian currently coordinating the Women and AIDS Project for the N.S.P.W.A.C. She has a Bachelors of Social Work degree.

## SAPPHO ON DENTAL DAMS



Consider my wise exhortation,  
especially during menstruation.  
A dental dam will  
not lessen the thrill,  
and will help us become a dam nation!



The dam debate's hotly discussed.  
They now say that dams aren't a must.  
it's still safe and fun  
when tastefully done  
This low risk activity lust!



# Media, women and AIDS

Carolyn Smith

On Wednesday, January 13th, Dr. Cindy Patton spoke at Saint Mary's University on the issues of women and HIV/AIDS. She focussed specifically on the media's representation of women's risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS and the methods used to (mis)represent those who have acquired HIV/AIDS by those who study AIDS as a disease or epidemic in society (epidemiology).

Having reviewed many articles in publications such as *People* and *Newsweek*, Patton noticed that women, when they were mentioned at all in the context of HIV/AIDS, were described as either sex-trade workers or as mothers of sero-positive babies. So, in the media, we tend to hear more about AIDS babies and men who contract HIV/AIDS from prostitutes than we do about the mothers of those babies and the sex-trade workers themselves who have contracted HIV/AIDS. These women have most likely contracted HIV/AIDS from men.

This trend in the media is the same as, and perhaps a result of, the trend in epidemiological studies where women are often referred to as "vessels and vectors." This means that in the attempts to understand who gets HIV/AIDS and why, women and their bodies have been divorced from their humanity and are instead seen "either as vaginas or uteruses," waiting to infect men or babies. Women, says Patton, are assumed to be "always, already infected."

Those considered at risk for HIV/AIDS, as identified in the media, have not traditionally been "ordinary heterosexuals." Patton described how the media has been engaging in "identity notions," describing the majority of the population as "normal" heterosexuals, and identifying those at risk for HIV/AIDS as the Other, or deviants. Thus we hear of gay men, intravenous drug users, sex-trade workers (usually in the context of their customer's risk), people in Africa, and those who engage in "dangerous sex practices," as being at risk for HIV/AIDS.

These tactics have the effect of

making women's risk of contracting HIV/AIDS much smaller than it really is ('It couldn't happen to me, I only have normal sex!'). As a result, much of the research on HIV/AIDS education, prevention, identification and treatment has focussed on gay men. However, Patton argues that gay men's risks have been overestimated, and women's risks underestimated. This is partly due to the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) initial classifications of those who had contracted HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s.

According to the CDC's early classification system, men could be either heterosexual or homosexual. Only one gay contact was enough to qualify a man as a 'homosexual' male. Like-



Cindy Patton  
(Photo by Claudine LaForce)

wise, if an IV drug using male had sex with a man even once, he would be classified as a gay man.

These classifications had the effect of eliminating the actual number of times these men engaged in heterosexual activity. That is, they covered up women's risk of coming into contact with these HIV+ men. Recent studies have shown that over half of these same men were also having sex with women.

Such evidence calls into question our traditional definitions of

sexualities. Indeed, the classification of bisexuality began to be more frequently used as a result of the discovery that many men who identify themselves with the gay community are in fact also having sex with women.

This evidence also points to the male-centred attitudes of the medical establishment. For although women have been at risk for HIV/AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic, women's symptoms have not been widely recognized by doctors, who have concentrated on men's symptoms both in research and practice.

Women most often find out they have been infected in the later stages of AIDS, when they are receiving medical attention before giving birth, or when their male partner tests positive for AIDS. Men usually find out much earlier than women and therefore receive medical attention that can prolong their lives.

Cindy Patton's lecture was informative, and opened my eyes to the reality of women's neglected position in the HIV/AIDS crisis. It allowed me to identify why, when I went to donate blood to the Red Cross, there were no questions or warnings for "normal" women with regard to HIV/AIDS. Unprotected heterosexual sex was not an issue; only "male-male" sex, use of needles, visiting Africa, or having sex with a sex-trade worker were mentioned as disqualifying one as a donor.

Because our doctors don't always recognize women's symptoms, we have to take the time to be aware ourselves. Yeast infections that won't go away, thrush, Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), changes in your period, pneumonia, swollen glands, cervical cancer, pain during sex, and weight loss are all indicators of possible HIV infection in women. It is time for women to demand equal attention on all levels with regard to HIV/AIDS.

Carolyn Smith is a third year undergraduate Psychology / Women's Studies student at Dalhousie University who wishes that she had more time to participate in Pandora.



# Author compelled by Elinor Black's life and times

Julie Vandervoort interviewed by  
Lois Schroeder Loewen

**Why did you write a biography of Elinor Black? What inspired you?**

I have to tell you that's my most dreaded question because after four and a half years, a huge amount of work, effort and money, I still don't really understand why. I felt compelled to do it. As difficult as it was and as miserable

some of what's she gone through in her life, but she's not able to change the patterns that are so ingrained in her. Her bitterness in old age is partly a result of living through 40 or 50 years of institutionalized sexism, discrimination and invisibility. Part of that title to me now means that we have something to tell the driver, the driver of this whole society. We have something to tell the driver about our lives and our reality, about changes and changing. The title works for me that way now, more than on the level of the actual dispatcher and cab driver.

**Whom did you write this book for?**

I wrote for my own audience. I wrote for women, for feminists, for women's health care activists, for women who experience passionate friendships with women. Medical people may find there's not enough medicine in it, but this is not only a medical biography. All biographies come from a political point of view. Nobody's truth is neutral.

**Describe the relationship you had with Elinor Black, whom you never met?**

It was all on paper, but it followed the same pattern that any intimate relationship follows. You have the initial attraction stage, the falling-in-love stage where you put so much of your own hopes onto that person. I really hoped that in Elinor Black we had this undiscovered Canadian feminist hero fighting the drug companies and fighting on behalf of women's health. Then you pass through the disillusionment stage when you discover all of the human flaws in that person. I went through a very difficult stage of rejecting her, asking myself why I was wasting my time on this upper middle class privileged woman who wasn't even a feminist and many times disassociated herself from women. Then, just like in a real intimate relationship, you come to a place of accepting the person as a whole human being, good and bad. And then, hopefully, you come to a place of compassion and love for this person. In my relationship to Elinor it's more compassion than love.

**Why do you think she avoided the gender question so much? I'm thinking specifically of the Charles Templeton interview where he asks her if being a woman is an advantage in her profession. Of course she completely sidestepped the question.**

It was the way she survived. For 27 years she had been the only woman in her professional group, or virtually the only woman with the very occasional exception. There was no way to be a woman in that group at that time. The only way for her to survive was to completely blend in, to become invisible in terms of gender, to become just a doctor. When you've done that for 27 years and then someone outside that environment asks the question, you've forgotten about that part of yourself, it's buried.

**What do you think she really meant by the line, "I don't get on with women."?**

It's very hard to read that. It's hard to explain, and it's hard to understand, especially since she had many wonderful women friends all her life. But look at the popular culture operating from the 30s to the 60s and its portrayal of women. I think she was so terrified of being identified with that "type" of woman that she tried to eliminate "women" as a entire category.

**In Elinor's relationship with Gertrude we see the passionate, emotional, loving woman that she was. It's unclear whether they were lovers or not, yet it's very clear that they had a primary, emotional relationship with**

**each other. She openly talks of her love for Gertrude, she never hides that.**

No, and lots of people knew about it. When I think about those sympathy cards she received when Gertrude died, those are the cards you write about a spouse. That relationship was well-known and well-respected and incredibly important to both of them. I have no idea what Elinor and Gertrude themselves thought about their relationship. I think if only we had the burned Gertrude letters we might know a lot more. I don't refer to Elinor as a lesbian in the book because she never referred to herself that way, so I didn't feel I should. There's no question that her relationship with Gertrude was the primary emotional relationship in her life. For all we know, they felt perfectly free to live their love for each other to the fullest extent throughout the entire 40s, 50s and 60s and they just didn't write about it, or maybe they did but that's what Elinor burned.

**About Elinor's relationship with the unnamed, married boyfriend whose letters she kept in her boyfriend file...What's curious to me is your description of him as her lover, but you never talked about Gertrude as her lover.**

**The only way for her to survive was to completely blend in...**

I've thought about that, and I think that's a valid point. When Elinor used the term "poachers' rights" she was talking about her position. Her use of that term makes the nature of their relationship fairly clear. Why would she write love letters to a married man if there wasn't a physical love relationship? I know it sounds like a heterosexist assumption. It's not that I was more willing to believe in a heterosexual love affair than a lesbian love affair, because that's truly not the case, but I felt that his letters to her were more explicit than Elinor's letters to Gertrude. I feel

that her relationship with Gertrude was clearly the lasting relationship of her life.

**Elinor kept copious notes and files about herself and much of her correspondence with friends and family, yet the most glaring omission—the burned Gertrude letters—must have been very frustrating to you.**

She documented everything about

her life, the ONLY thing that seems to be missing are the Gertrude letters (which is significant) and, yes, it's enormously frustrating.

**She yearned to be seen as a complete woman who loved and was loved.**

When I read the line, "destroyed all of Gertrude's letters", I was devastated.

**It's difficult for us to understand Elinor's responses and/or lack of them to the sexism, and discrimination she suffered. No matter how strong her denial or suppression, they clearly affected her. Perhaps she left her records for a biographer not just to have her numerous achievements rightfully recognized but to expose and explain some of the things she didn't or couldn't.**

Most of her archiving and recovering happened after she retired, probably as a result of the emptiness she felt once her work was gone, and possibly out of a real sense that she'd been ripped off. The other half of this archiving, especially the personal half, was her own yearning to be seen as a complete human being, as a complete woman, someone who loved and was loved, something she could never have in her work. I think she split herself so much into doctor or woman that it was hard to integrate those two selves, and she could only do it on paper near the end of her life.

**Julie Vandervoort fights writer's block by continually changing her hair. She lives in Halifax by choice and preference, two concepts she believes women will one day regain full ownership of.**

**Lois lives in Halifax and hopes to interview Christine Lahti, Alice Walker and K.D. Lang in the near future.**



Julie Vandervoort. Photo By Andrea Ward

at times as it made me, I honestly did not have the option of walking away from it.

**What were the obstacles in getting the book written and published?**

The obstacles were that almost no one will pay the writer to write. Research foundations will pay for research, and I received initial funding and support that took me about 18 months into the project, but it was a 4 1/2 year project. After the 18 months, I was funding it myself by working at a job, saving some money, then quitting the job and writing till I ran out of money. You have no choice, in a way, but to continue to fund it yourself. The other obstacle with doing women's history was interior — my own surprise that other people found this project worthwhile and important. Getting it accepted for publication was not difficult at all. I got a lot more support than

## Tell the Driver celebrates women's herstory

Sue Atkinson

On December 13, 1992 I had the pleasure of attending my first book launching! We gathered at the Eye Level Gallery to celebrate the publishing of Julie Vandervoort's book *Tell the Driver, a Biography of Elinor F.E. Black, M.D.*

The gathering itself was wonderful, with excellent food. Julie's readings from her book were interspersed with musical selections performed by two local groups: The Ad Hoc Feminist Choir and Adrian's Lunch. Much to Julie's surprise, the Ad Hoc Feminist Choir added a special verse to Arlene Mantle's "Women Have Always Been Workers" to pay tribute to Julie and the hard work she's done over the past four or five years bringing *Tell the Driver* to completion.

*Tell the Driver* recounts the life of Elinor Black, a Winnipeg physician who first opened her practice in the early 1930s. She was a strong, determined and sometimes obstinate woman who struggled against the prevailing attitudes, of both society, and her family that women were not suited to the rigours of medical practice. She not

only made it through medical school, but was the first woman to head a department at a Canadian medical school and the first Canadian woman to become a

member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in Britain. Elinor was well respected by her predominantly male colleagues, the students she taught and the community at large. During her career, which spanned four and a half decades, many changes in medicine and in the area of women's reproductive health care occurred. Elinor was far ahead of her time when it came to some of these changes, while others she stubbornly resisted, but

always she advocated the importance of listening to the patient.

*Tell the Driver* not only takes us through Elinor Black's professional



*Tell the Driver* launch, December 13, 1992, Halifax.  
Photo by Fran Isaacs, Andrea Ward

life, but also tells us of her personal life. She was a woman capable of intense devotion to those she cared for and included as friends. This is particu-

larly evident in her longtime passionate friendship with Gertrude Rutherford, a woman her equal in ambition and determination.

Julie Vandervoort has done an exceptional job in researching and writing *Tell the Driver*. Elinor was an avid letter and diary writer, and recorder of her life and the lives of those around her. Julie has used these materials, and others, to tell the story of an amazing woman and to give us glimpses of the times she lived in. Her feminist analysis of Elinor's struggles and achievements in a male-dominated profession is sensitively done, not overshadowing the reality of the context of Elinor's life.

I enjoyed *Tell the Driver* a great deal. It was a pleasure to read both for its entertainment and educational value — a wonderful contribution to women's herstory and to the history of medicine and women's healthcare!

PS. And yes... if you read right to the very end of the book, you find out why it's called *Tell the Driver*.

□□□

Vandervoort, Julie. *Tell the Driver, a Biography of Elinor F.E. Black, M.D.* University of Manitoba Press, 1992.

**Nobody's truth is neutral.**

I anticipated, but I certainly understand why it's hard for women writers to believe that before they start.

**The title comes from the extraordinary anecdote in the epilogue, in which the driver of a cab you took in Winnipeg remembered driving Elinor and her now famous line, "Tell the driver Dr. Black is a woman." Can you explain the significance of the title?**

The significance of it didn't really strike me at the time. Now when I think of the title, *Tell the Driver*, I think about change. There's a part in the book where Elinor is old and bitter about



# Making dreams fit

Nancy McKinnell

When, in 1990, I decided to move to rural Nova Scotia from urban Winnipeg, I had a dream of being a rural woman and a country massage therapist. Little did I know then that, though I had a dream, I also had a lot to learn—about myself, about rural life and work, and about the importance for me of being connected to a women's community.

My dream was that I would be the "total rural woman"—independent, self-sufficient, getting everything I needed from the local community. This would include having a massage therapy practice that I would run from my home, enjoying a huge vegetable garden, a dog, some cats, maybe a cow and perhaps some chickens, and eventually finding my way into a network of rural feminist women.

My good friends in Winnipeg completely supported the decision to move to Nova Scotia, and I drew much strength from them and from my strong connection with the women's community there. I left a fairly successful massage therapy practice in Winnipeg, but I was confident (though somewhat nervous) that I could re-establish myself here in rural Nova Scotia, both professionally and personally.

I arrived in Nova Scotia in late May of 1991, having already purchased some land and the services of a road builder to make the land accessible. Construction of my house commenced almost immediately, and I spent the

first weeks dealing with the business of wells, septic systems, power and plumbing.

I settled easily and quickly into life in the country and enjoyed each new day with eager anticipation. With the house still under construction, I made a decision to manage my massage therapy practice on a "have-table-will-travel" basis—my table is portable, I could pack my linen into a suitcase and simply provide a home service.

Within a short time, I had acquired a handful of clients who I saw on a weekly basis, and I was greatly encouraged by this response. Over the summer, I was content to keep my clientele to a minimum because I was incredibly busy with trying to get the house ready to occupy. By late September, I was in the house and things seemed to settle into a comfortable kind of ordinariness.

Now, I thought, I was ready to pursue my practice with fervor. However, it soon became clear that I was having some difficulty actually following that through. At the beginning of each week, I would attempt to muster new energy to do the footwork necessary to develop my practice. The end of each week saw no change. The winter passed, my motivation waned, and I felt isolated and desolate. I was baffled at my inability to do what I wanted to do.

Meanwhile, I had been making the occasional trip into Halifax to do errands I was unable to do locally. I was meeting some interesting people, occa-

sionally attending various women's events and enjoying immensely making new connections and developing relationships. Trouble was brewing though, because I found myself carrying guilt feelings around if I had actually *enjoyed* a visit to the city—remember, I had become a *rural* woman and didn't *need* the city. I wasn't particularly conscious of the discomfort, but one day when I was out for my run, I realized that I had begun to invent *excuses* that would provide me with reasons to go into Halifax. And then, on the return trip home, the guilt would set in. I couldn't understand what was happening to me.

Slowly I began to sort out the confusion. I realized that the reality of my life was somewhat different from the dream that had carried me through the past months. The fatal flaw was in my naive belief that I could live a fulfilled existence in isolation, separate from the stimulation of the people and the relationships that I've always relied on.

At about the same time, through a series of "coincidences" (all of them involving the new friends I had been making in the Halifax women's community) I learned about a new feminist-oriented therapy centre in the city. It occurred to me that perhaps this therapy centre would consider having a resident massage therapist. My practice in Winnipeg included referrals from a few therapists who appreciated a more "holistic" (in the truest sense of the word) approach to health and wellness. I saw the therapy centre as a place that could provide me with that opportunity. I was right.

Today, I am enjoying a part-time practice in Halifax, travelling two days a week to the city, while my "valley" practice remains fairly static. I am part of a therapeutic community in Halifax which shares a feminist philosophy and many of the values that I bring to my massage practice. Some of my work is collaborative with other members of the centre, and slowly I am building a core of regular clients. I am developing a network of peer support professionally, and am enjoying growing into the feminist/women's community.

On reflection, I've come to understand that this process of making a dream come true is an ongoing one. I realize now that it would have been useful to have had some checkpoints along the way to monitor how the dream was measuring up with the reality. Sometimes, I've learned, the dream changes, but that's okay. I have learned that what I need first and foremost is to establish myself as a woman who is connected in some strong way with a feminist/women's community. At the moment, for me, that community is primarily in Halifax, both professionally and personally.

Now, my dream for the future is to have stable practices both in Halifax and here in the Valley. I am confident that can work. I plan to continue to be a part of the Halifax women's community, and I suspect that there's also a women's community hidden in these hills that I will stumble upon once I get out making contacts. That will truly be the best of both worlds!

□ □ □

Nancy McKinnell moved to rural Nova Scotia from Winnipeg nearly two years ago. She is a certified massage therapist currently in private practice at Brunswick Street Centre in Halifax, and has a small rural practice as well.



## Links aren't made through silence

Confusion, love, connectedness, sisterhood and anger were some of the many feelings that I expressed at the 1992 CRIAW conference named, "Making the Links: Anti-Racism and Feminism," which was held in Toronto in November of 1992.

As I walked into the lobby of the Holiday Inn, I was in the presence of beauty and sisterhood with women from all over North America and from developing nations. Black, Asian, East Indian, African, First Nations women, lesbian, bisexual and straight women. My eyes and spirit were smiling. I felt good inside. After all the initial hugs, registration and elevator waiting, (ask any woman who was there, she'll have a good elevator story to tell) the conference was on its way.

As a black woman and a feminist, the most powerful session that I attended was "Reclaiming Our Power: Changing Our Lives and Reshaping the World" given by Pat Alake Rosezelle, a black woman with much presence and zest about her blackness and womanhood. Pat took a room full of women of colour through 2 1/2 hours of self love, respect and consciousness raising about our uniqueness as women of colour and our connectedness to all women.

As I processed the information that she presented I was once again reminded about how my identity as a black woman is ingrained and defined by the larger society, patriarchy. White women have the privilege of being white, and they do not have to grow up as a lot of young black women who do not love themselves because they have to struggle and fight against sexism and racism. Growing up in a society that does not value you as a woman is one dimension that all women can relate to, and while sisterhood and the struggle for social change is something we share, my reality and struggle as a woman who is BLACK is different. I have a daily struggle against racism that acts as another oppression over me. It is a reality that white women cannot always identify with, no matter what their sexual orientation, or their political agenda. My feminism is then rooted not only in social change but

in internal and external revolution. My feminism is also linked to supporting and working with black men and black communities through the systemic oppression of racism.

I cannot separate my woman self from my black self. To do so I would be denying myself the freedom to grow.

Audre Lorde writes that "any discussion among women about racism must include the recognition and the use of anger" (*Sister Outsider*, The Crossing Press Feminist Series, 1984). The anger that was expressed at this conference by black women when they spoke about white women addressing their own internalized racism left white liberal women silent or defensive. Any communication or discussion of racism in a feminist framework did not occur because of the silence. What were we all afraid of? How can we make "links" if we as women are unable to voice our concerns and fears? Must we always be politically correct? If so, when do we learn and grow from our mistakes and from each other? For me it is about taking risks and owning our fear. It is also about listening and sharing, not assuming.

I left the conference with a sense of sisterhood between the black women who I met, as well as many other women. For me the links between anti-racism and feminism were not always made in the large or small group discussion but between two women who could steal five or ten minutes between sessions and briefly go over what they had just heard and processed.

In closing, I would like to say thank-you to the Nova Scotia Congress of Black Women, The Black Cultural Centre and to CRIAW Nova Scotia for this learning opportunity.

In sisterhood, Lana MacLean.

□ □ □

Lana is a student at the Maritime School of Social Work, a member of the Association of Black Social Workers, and works at Women's Employment Outreach. She has no pets and is a resident of Black Street.

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# Liberty: Groups for Survivors of Woman Abuse

Barbara Cottrell

"Why do women stay with men who abuse them?" is a question asked not only by the general public, but also by the women themselves. Equally puzzling is why, once they have made the often frightening step and left, the majority of women return to these abusive men.

Denise Taylor wanted to understand more about why she, and many other women she knew, had been abused by the men they lived with, why it had been so difficult to leave, and why they had returned. "I wanted to find a way for women to get together and talk about their experiences, to work out how and why the abuse had happened. This way we might break through the isolation and guilt and discover a new sense of pride in ourselves," says Denise.

Denise, who works at the Single Parent Centre in Spryfield, took her suggestion for a program built around these issues to the Mainland South Committee Against Woman Abuse. Social worker Diane Kays was enthusiastic, and together the two women designed a series of workshops for small groups of women who had left abusive men. They called the program "Liberty."

By the fall of 1990, the first Liberty group was running. Six women from Spryfield who had lived with men who abused them, were meeting weekly to try to figure out how to increase their self-esteem, and how they could take control of their lives. Marlene, Alice, Heather, Catherine, Wendy, Yvonne and Betsy came together for eleven consecutive Wednesday nights to work through their experiences together.

There is little doubt that Liberty was a transforming experience for these women. Catherine told me: "Liberty was the dominant key to a different way of looking at my life. It can throw your life into major chaos, but it's worth it. Now I feel inside a lot more peace, contentment and acceptance. I feel more secure about where my future will go. I'm not certain, I have fears, but I've gone from being terrified of life to being just a little anxious about it. I don't feel totally helpless any more."

Alice agreed. "The group," she says, "changed my life for the better. It really makes you think about your life."

Because the groups are co-facilitated by a trained counsellor and a woman who has survived sexual abuse,

group members have the opportunity to be exposed not only to the perspective of their peers, but also to the perspective of women who have been trained in group process and are familiar with issues around abuse. Five topics are covered: family relationships, power and control, why women stay, setting boundaries and limits, and how women can be good to themselves.

Diane and Denise facilitated a second group in spring, 1991. Realizing that there were women all over Nova Scotia who would attend Liberty,

Diane and Denise decided that a manual for groups was needed. With a manual at hand many women could run groups. During that summer, Diane, Denise, Joyce Halpern, the Executive Director of Family Service Association, and Linda Roberts, the Multi-Service Coordinator of the Captain William Spry Centre, worked on finding the money needed to produce a manual for Liberty groups. By the fall they had received funding from the Attorney General's Office and I, Barbara Cottrell, was hired to coordinate the project.

I began with talking with the women who had attended the first two Liberty groups. The women told me repeatedly that the groups had helped them understand abuse and helped them take more control of their lives. One woman, Alice, said: "Before Liberty I couldn't cope with my kids. Now I deal better with all five of them myself, and we have a much closer relationship. The group changed my life for the better. I'd recommend it to any woman who's been abused."

Heather said that for her the Liberty group was just being with people who knew, who understood and validated her: "I needed to talk about me and what was happening to me, and that's what we did."

In order to find out if similar groups were being run in other places, and if manuals existed, we asked women who work with abused women

all across Canada, the United States, England and Germany. Most said they thought the groups were a great idea, but few had the time, energy or money to set them up.

By January 1992, the first draft of the manual was ready for testing. Three groups were held and improvements were made. Intense discussions took place about what to include in the manual and what to leave out, and what the slant or focus should be.

One debate concerned the best way to balance the social and the personal aspects of

woman abuse: The eleven sessions could be used to discuss the way women are treated in society, but most women feel the need to talk about how their own lives led to their situation and how they can take back control.

We wanted to understand why some women are abused and some are not, while in no way 'blaming the victims.' We made the assumption that women are abused be-

cause we live in a society that for centuries has permitted, sometimes encouraged, abuse against women, and that all forms of abuse towards women — emotional, physical, sexual, child abuse, prostitution, pornography, sexual harassment and poverty — are connected.

Men have more power than women: physical power, economic power and political power. Generally, men make more money than women; they hold jobs that are considered more important than the jobs we hold, and they are seen as decision makers. We are encouraged to be feminine, submis-

sive, and dependent, and are expected to find husbands who will take care of us. Most of us who live with men have limited resources, and all of us live with the threat of some form of abuse, most likely from men we know.

Society is beginning to understand more fully that it is often very difficult for women who are involved in the cycle of abuse to leave men who can be as kind as they are abusive and whom the women loved. Much energy is invested by women trying to avoid making the situation worse.

With their self-confidence eroded by abuse, women are often held hostage by fear. But we know some women do leave partners who hit them, control their lives, control their money — partners who, in other words, abuse them. By coming to understand what has happened, women can learn to have less damaging relationships.

Through Liberty groups, women try to support and empower each other while they come to understand better what is happening to us in our society, and to discuss their experiences in an effort to make sense of abuse.

Liberty affirms the fact that some women do survive the abuse they experience at the hands of men. Women who have been abused often want to know why it happened and how they can keep it from happening again. Providing a safe place for women to explore this is what Liberty is all about.

Slowly society is beginning to understand this complex issue. We know there are many reasons why women feel they can't leave, including economic and emotional dependence, shame, fear of threats and further abuse, and a belief in marriage. And we know that these reasons for staying do not disappear just by leaving. Women are at their most vulnerable, and their lives are most in danger, when they leave.

The Liberty manual is written by

women who have been abused by men. The authors recognize that because we live in a competitive society where people have power over one another, abuse occurs in all types of families. As a result, single mothers who have been abused by their children, lesbians who have been abused by their partners, extended families in which abuse has occurred, may find something in this manual which they can use to understand, grow, take control, and heal themselves.

The five major topics covered in the workshops are family relationships; power and control; why women stay; setting boundaries and limits; and how women can be good to themselves.

The manual includes:

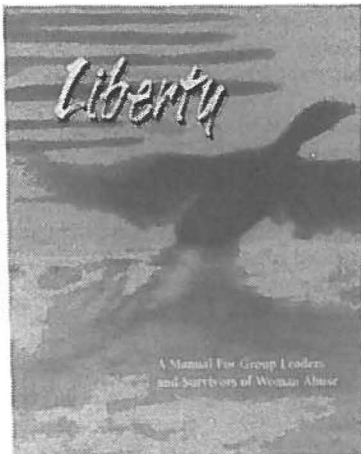
- information on setting up a Liberty group, including meeting with potential group members
- suggestions for group process
- detailed outlines of each group session

- an evaluation sheet
- articles on woman abuse
- a list of useful books
- a counselling services directory

*Liberty: A Manual for Group Facilitators and Survivors of Woman Abuse*, written by Barbara Cottrell in collaboration with the co-founders of the program, Dianne Kays and Denise Taylor, is available for \$15 (plus \$3.50 postage and handling) from Family Services Association, 5614 Fenwick Street, Suite 106, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 1P9. Phone (902) 420-1980. It was funded by Victims' Services Funding Program, Department of the Attorney General, Province of Nova Scotia.

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Barbara Cottrell is a freelance writer, researcher and adult educator, and a professional member of the Periodical Writers Association of Canada.



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# Our Dinner Dates

by Sarah Creagen, 6 years old  
with help from Mom and Caitlin, 4 years old

Every Wednesday me  
Mom and Caitlin went to  
a diner.

Every week we voted to see if Dad could come. All of us had to say "yes." Most of the time he couldn't come.

These are the diners we went to — Tasty Food, Spartan, Jimmy's, Coombe's, the Ardmore, Bluenose, Athens, Cousin's.

Some we went to more than one time.

Most of the time we had hamburgers and French fries, sometimes we had fish and chips. We always had milkshakes, usually chocolate, but once I tried strawberry... but I didn't like it very much.

We decided how much we liked the diner by the food and the milkshakes.

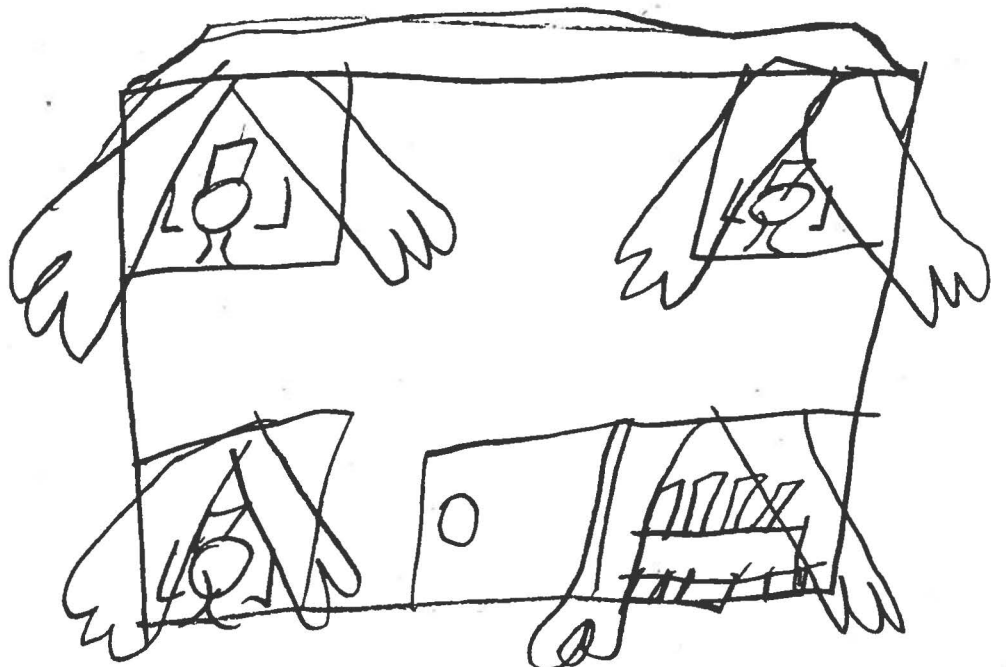
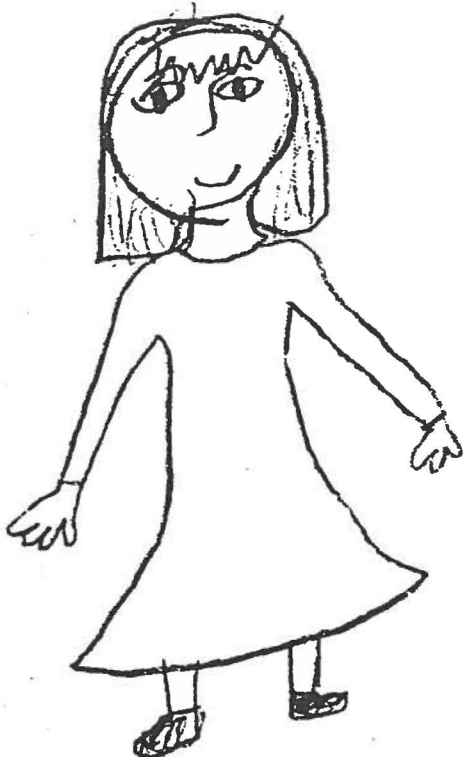
We always checked how long we waited for food, and we checked if they had something we could use to draw or colour. If they didn't have pencils or crayons we used Mom's pen.

The best hamburgers were at Jimmy's! The best milkshakes were at Coombe's and Jimmy's. Sometimes we got crayons at Jimmy's when we asked. The Ardmore loaned us pens. The lady at the Athens was really nice to us! We waited a long time at Cousin's to get our food and the ladies who came after us got their food first. Now do you think that's fair? NO!

There are lots more diners for us to try and we are making a list.

The End.

(Drawings by Sarah Creagen)





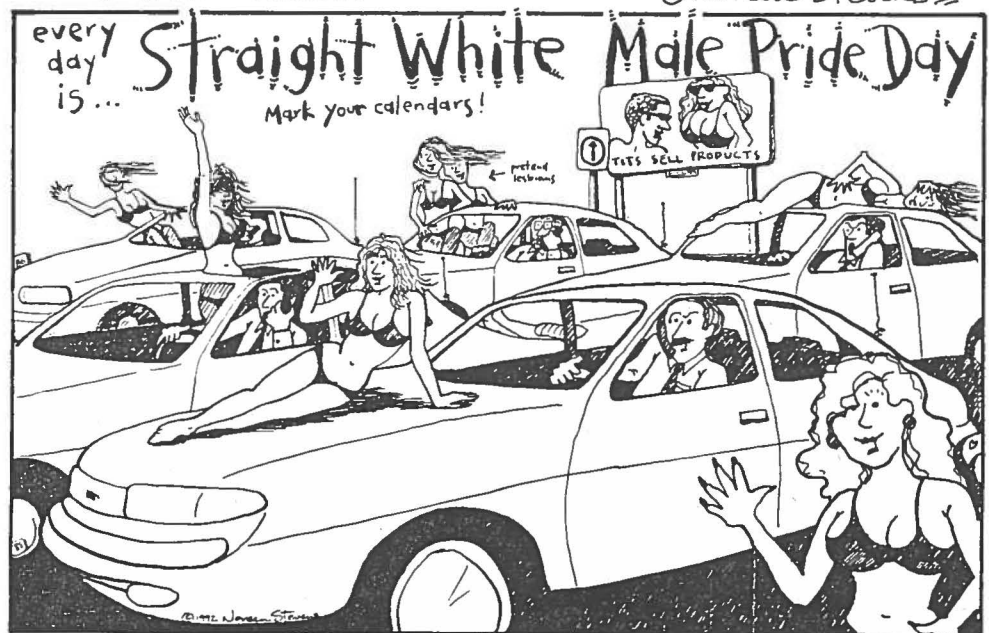
Noreen Stevens sends us more cartoons:

# Time to laugh and have some fun

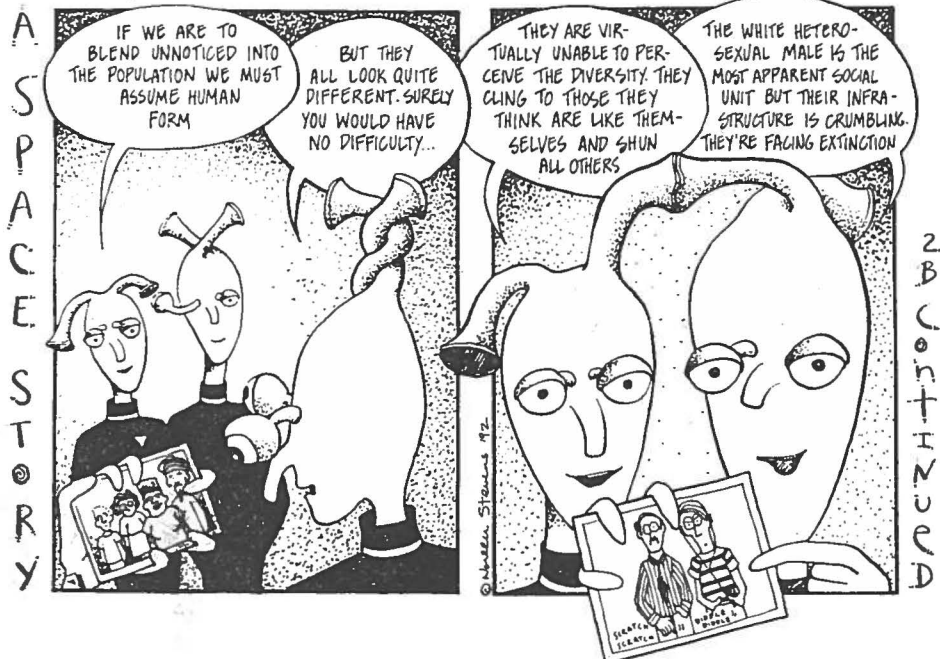
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## THE CH@SEN FAMILY



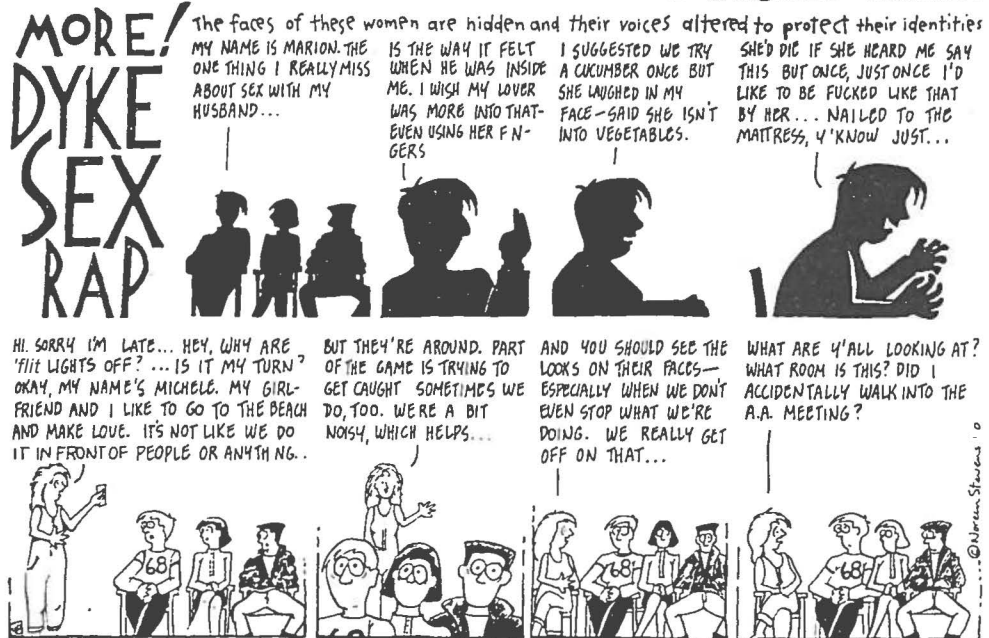
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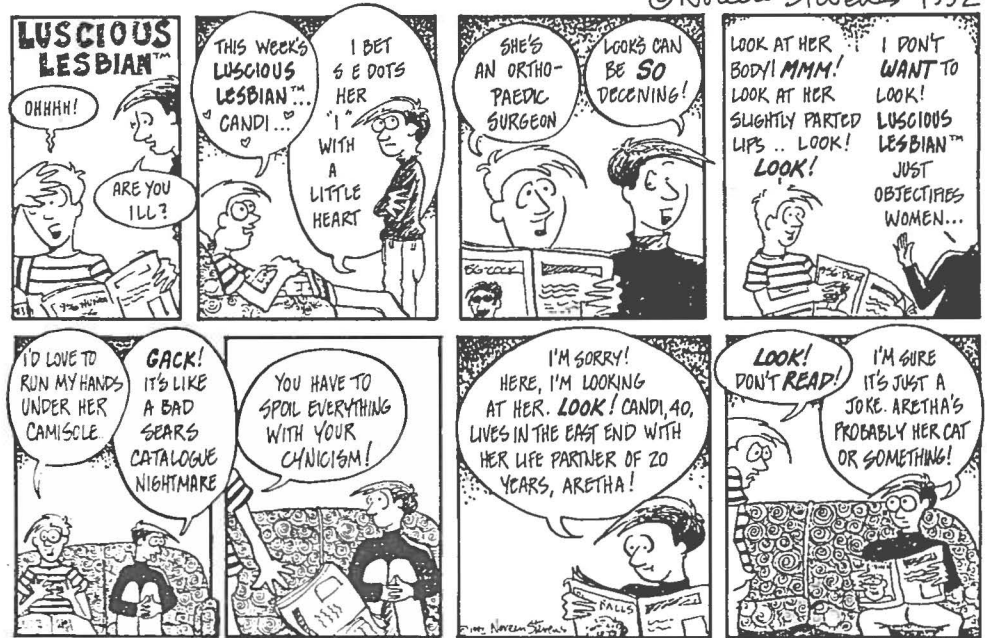
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# Maternal Instincts explores complex issues

Review Of *Maternal Instincts*  
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Andrea Ward

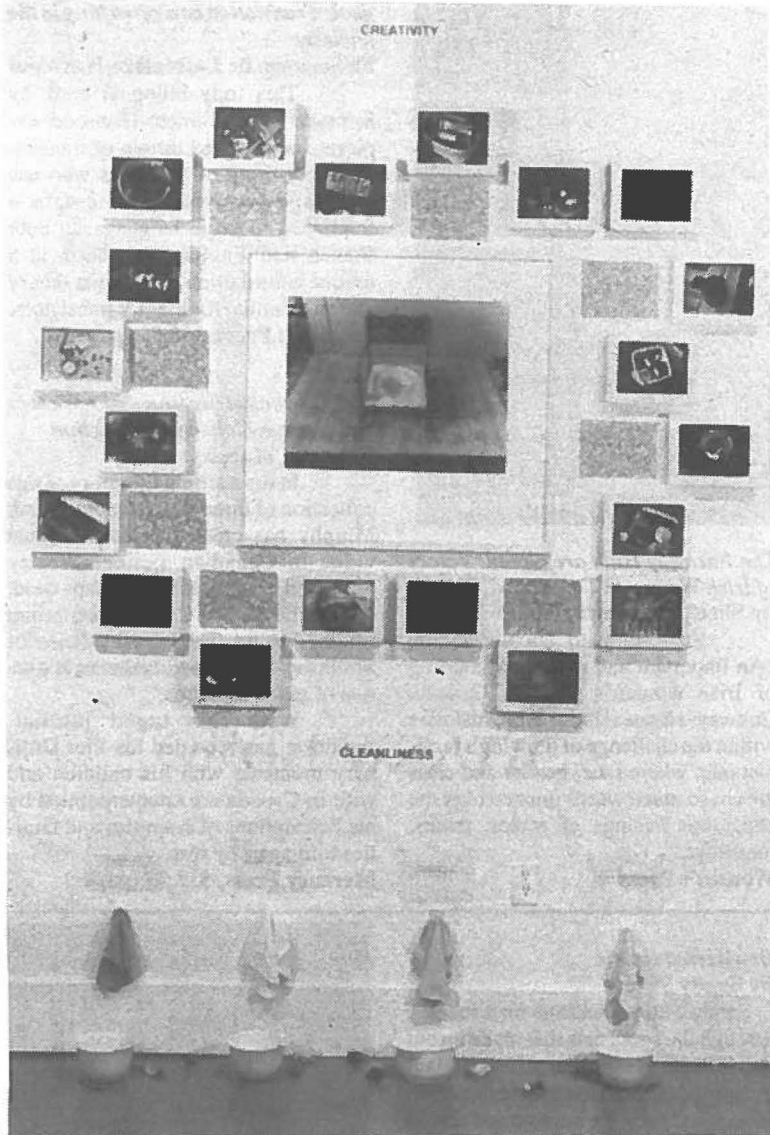
"First there is division, which precedes the pregnancy but is revealed by it, irrevocably imposed... Then another abyss opens between this body and the body that was inside it: the abyss that separated mother and child. What relationship is there between me or, more modestly, between my body and this internal graft, the crease inside, which with the cutting of the umbilical cord becomes another person, inaccessible?... Try to imagine this abyss: dizzying visions." — Julia Kristeva *Stabat Mater, The Female Body in Western Culture*, ed. S.R. Suleiman, 1985:99

As Kristeva suggests in *Stabat Mater*, the maternal experience is incredibly complicated. The *Maternal Instincts* exhibition, curated by Heather Smith and Jessica Kerrin, attempted to explore some complicated ideas; however, most of these did not have much to do with maternal instincts as the title would suggest. Heather Smith acknowledges in the exhibit catalogue that the title is "problematic." Jessica Kerrin, while describing in the catalogue the work that was excluded from the exhibit, does not mention maternal instincts at all but refers to the "institution of motherhood." The inclusion of men in this exhibit further problematizes the maternal instincts concept. Male expressions of concern surrounding issues of childcare are interesting, but is their work about maternal instincts? Paternal instincts? The contradiction of their presence in the exhibition is not acknowledged.

The exhibition catalogue did develop thoroughly the perspective of maternal instincts associated with oppressive ideological constructs. Jessica Kerrin's essay was well researched and Heather Smith's contribution was clear. However, the catalogue failed to attempt the more difficult feminist reading of the relationship between creativity or spirituality and the concept of maternal instincts. The reluctance to let maternal instincts exist outside the framework of oppression was disappointing, since aspects of creativity and spirituality are present in all the work in the exhibit.

Overall, the exhibition itself succeeds, but the gaps between the work and implications embedded in the title are disconcerting. Smith asks us to see in the work "a concern for how the notion of maternal instincts has been appropriated as a principal force in a dominant ideology which seeks to control the construction of women's lives." Kerrin organizes the excluded work into categories: "The Working Mother," "The Role of Obstetrics" and "Mother as Nature Goddess." One wonders what the category is for the work that was selected for *Maternal Instincts*. The closest I came up with is 'the politics of parenting'. But, after a while, I want to leave off puzzling over the title and look at the work itself.

The work in this exhibit is very clean and all the pieces have a similar formal aesthetic. At one end of the gallery space are Susan McEachern, Wilma Needham and Jessica Kerrin, who created mixed media installations. At the other end are Bob Bean and



Susan McEachern's installation for the exhibit *Maternal Instincts*. The words at the top of the installation are "Artistic/Creativity" and at the bottom are "Organization/Cleanliness."

Stuart Mueller, also using mixed media, with the contributions of Dawna Gallagher and Anne Verrall on video.

Dawna Gallagher's video focuses on her experience of pregnancy and birth. It explores the biological and creative aspects of this state in an intense and psychological way. She speaks of being pregnant in a spiritual sense, of having a perfect relationship with a being inside her. Her unborn child was like a little swimmer pressing his fin-like spine around the inside of her body. He was born dead but was revived.

pose the torture and murder he committed on pregnant women in the name of science.

Verrall's use of blonde dolls swinging from nooses erases their attractiveness as innocent and appropriate play toys. Her presentation of dolls, caged and hung, exposes them as programming instruments, propaganda to turn girls into mothers. The lyrics of nursery rhymes further this frightful atmosphere. This is the only work that clearly critiques the concept of maternal instincts as 'instinct.' This marginal

position which Verrall's work spoke to required a more supportive dialogue with other work having this commitment.

Jessica Kerrin's work

Gallagher's video work expresses how painful and traumatic experiences are kept within women's physical bodies. Birth becomes part of the stories within women's skin. The imagery is hypnotic. The camera pans the breathing center of the artist's body. It is simple and direct. The spoken text is poetic.

Anne Verrall's video makes inescapably clear the reality of women's sexual and social domination. Verrall's video images are drawn from her dreams. A Gothic horror aesthetic is alive in her images of a woman giving birth to a large insect. Spurting blood, bright medical lights, clips of writhing bodies from the film *Aliens* convey the artist's horror and revulsion at giving birth. Quotations from Dr. Marion Sims, "the father of Gynecology," ex-

partly critiques the notion of instinct, but from a different base. Her work deals with the politics of breast-feeding on both a personal and a world level. Kerrin's work is a triptych, the center image being lipstick prints of her breasts on the bottom of milk cartons arranged playfully in a pyramid like children's blocks. This imagery is underlined by statements about how many ounces of milk mothers make. The piece to the right is a mixed media print about the devastation caused by formula-feeding, mainly in the third world. To the left is another series of breast-prints and the time schedule by which she fed her child. Beneath this is a list of ingredients. This work refers loosely to Mary Kelly's *Postpartum Document*. It highlights the labour in-

involved in breastfeeding and it connects the idea of the breast feeding to the mechanical production of milk.

Wilma Needham's work addresses the adoption of her baby from Peru. It is composed of three parts. At its base is a delicate semicircle of garlic, a spiritual gesture of protection and good fortune. Above this is a weaving of soft pastel ribbon. The weaving technique is loosely based on Peruvian traditional plain basket weave. Typed on the ribbon are uncomfortable questions from Social Services in both English and Spanish inquiring about the artist's mental health and other personal information. The questions are painful and harsh, a vivid contrast to the satin ribbon they are inscribed on. Above this weaving are panoramic color photographs of Bougainvillea vines wound around the black spikes of a substantial iron fence. The photograph is taken in Lima; the fence stands in front of a consulate or an upperclass abode. Bougainvillea is a symbol of fertility and the artist takes this image from outside a 'fertile' property.

There is a dialogue, in terms of color and positioning, between Needham's work and that of Susan McEachern. McEachern's work references the reality of toilet-training her child. The work is a colorful, circular arrangement of texts and frames. It consists of fragments of her child's speech, her domestic interior in the washroom and a series of potties on the floor with wash cloths. This work stresses cleanliness and organization throughout its arrangement. Its rigorous form speaks of the parent's labour and her stress to do this activity correctly. McEachern links this training with the acquisition of language through the use of her daughter's descriptions of excrement. Her photographs, which focus on the tiles of the bathroom floor in a birds-eye view, invite viewers to recollect their own training in this regard.

While Robert Bean's work is about reexperiencing the acquisition of language through his daughter Una's entrance into visual and verbal language, Una's own entrance to these symbolic and imagistic structures is

seen in the photographs she has taken and in her watercolour applications to the moulds. The work includes an audio tape of domestic sounds and the text "you are holding me in my shadow."

In Stuart Mueller's work, two framed texts act as parentheses around the central image of his son's chubby hand outstretched towards a tower of blocks. The information in these frames is drawn from popular culture. The texts state that a father only participates in parenting when his spouse is absent or when he is unemployed. Mueller suggests that fathering is a challenging process. He is not giving something up; it is the most he has ever done.

With the comparison between this personal statement and the two didactic pop sociological quotations Mueller is exposing their insubstantial definition of fathering.

Both the title and the concept of maternal instincts are indeed problematic. The exhibition has two immediate needs. The ideas in the catalogue need to be expanded; the curators need to listen to the work, and to address with tolerance the reception that the title *Maternal Instincts* provokes. They also need to address the inclusion of men. And, unfortunately, the organization of this exhibition lacked a sensitivity to difference within the community — on both a local and national level. The curating duo, who made a cross-Canada call for submissions, selected only people from Nova Scotia. Moreover, there is little sense of a presence of different kinds of mothers, for example, those who are single, lesbian, disabled or mothers of color. When dealing with such a dense, charged and complicated subject, it is essential to consider different visions. Perhaps the organizational process for this exhibit will not halt but will continue and grow from the original selection of work, encouraging more voices from different social positions in relation to the maternal or to parenting.

□ □ □

Acknowledgements: Frances Ellen Star Isaacs, Julie Vandervoort, Noreen Battaglia

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# Pandora receives some new books

## BLESSINGS OF THE BLOOD



CELU AMBERSTON  
CORNWOMAN

**Blessings of the Blood: A Book of Menstrual Lore and Rituals for Women**  
by Celu Amberston (Cornwoman)

This book grew out of Cornwoman's own spiritual quest to find a deeper meaning to her bodily cycles. During this search, she could find no literature that offered her the positive image of womanhood she was looking for. In this book, women from a variety of races, ages, cultures, and life-styles tell their stories and pass on the knowledge of their womanhood.

Included are first Blood stories, herbal folk remedies for cramps and other health problems, Wiccan Blood rituals, and the wisdom of our grandmothers.

Cornwoman offers this collection to do away with the pain and fear that often accompany the topic of menstruation. Some of the stories are tragic, stories of unnecessary hysterectomies and unscrupulous doctors; some of the stories are full of warmth and support.

Ms. Amberston includes her own prayers and rituals in an attempt to share the sense of joy that she has discovered by examining the spiritual aspects of her menstrual cycle.

Porcopic Books, \$12.95

## NOTHING MAT(T)ERS:



**Nothing Mat(t)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism**  
By Somer Brodribb

Somer Brodribb believes that misogyny is inherent in postmodernism and that feminist criticism cannot ignore this fact any longer. "Post-modernism is the cultural capital of late patriarchy."

According to Brodribb, post-modernism is valueless in spite of the fact that it is very fashionable in the modern academic world. It is really just another form of patriarchal politics.

She says that feminist theory must start from scratch in order to recognize years of suppressed female social and political thought. Women's experience is more valid than masculine texts in creating feminist theory.  
James Lorimer, \$19.95 (paper)

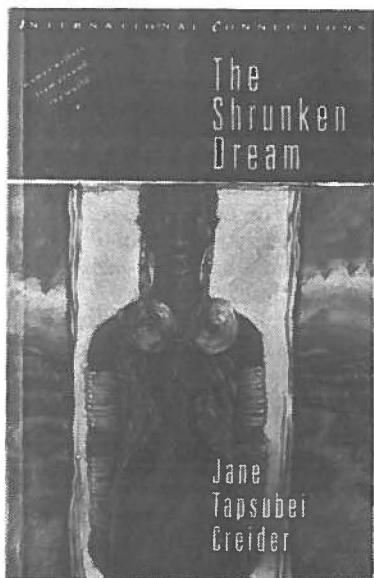
**Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women**

by Women's Book Committee, Chinese Canadian National Council

The value of history lies in the truth of experience. From the silence of exclusion, racism and sexism, *Jin Guo* responds strongly and clearly. Collected over a period of years, these voices are the first to chart the journeys of Chinese Canadian women.

More than twenty women, from all parts of Canada, tell the stories of their lives and in doing so create a rich and varied history.

Women's Press, 19.95 (paper)



**The Shrunken Dream**  
by Jane Tapsuei Creider

A captivating story of the Nandi people of East Africa, this book is the first novel published by any Nandi writer. An invaluable recording of a culture under seige in colonial and post-colonial Kenya, *The Shrunken Dream* is also a compelling tale of love and loss, community and independence.

Women's Press, 17.95 (paper)

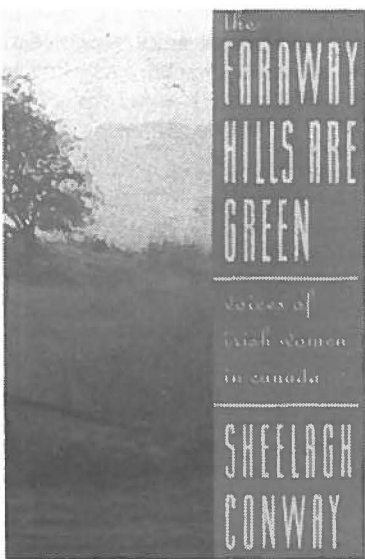


**Written on the Body**  
by Jeanette Winterson

Jeanette Winterson translates the passion and pitfalls of love into a new language. Romantic, funny and dangerous, this book dares to challenge the clichés we use to define our relationships.

Having fallen uncontrollably in love perhaps for the first time, and in a seemingly impossible situation, the astonished narrator examines past relationships with both women and men, revealing with raw honesty the details of love, betrayal and infidelity.

Knopf Canada, \$24.95 (hardcover)



**The Faraway Hills are Green: Voices of Irish Women in Canada**  
by Sheelagh Conway

According to Dionne Brand, "An important and necessary charting of Irish women's lives in Canada. Conway situates these oral histories within the challenge of drawing a feminist map where race, gender and class are not so much words intoned over the paper but tracings of routes, tracks, roadways."

Women's Press

**Bewildered rituals**  
by Sandy Shreve

Sandy Shreve leads us on a journey through the small acts that make up our daily lives. Her intimate use of language and clear vision help to reveal the beauty and pain, the humour and confusion in the familiar world around us. She considers the bewildering effects of war and nature, love and friendship, work and play.

Sandy connects us to our own lives, helping us to see through the confusion — through to the "end of despair."

Personal musings and keen social justice blend in verse. All of the poems convey the compassion and care of the author.

Raincoast Books, 12.95 (paper)

Dulse  
tastes just this side of bitter  
paper thin and purple, I savour  
its salt-air flavour  
much to my husband's disgust  
*how can you eat that stuff!*  
my fishy kisses  
greeted with suspicion  
so I exile myself  
to the opposite side of the room  
defiantly feast  
on an insignificant culture gap  
vast as a continent  
between us  
(from *Bewildered Rituals*)

I am looking  
for a woman  
who can transcribe  
interviews  
— Macintosh  
preferred.

I can provide  
a transcribing  
machine.

Please call  
Betty-Ann  
455-0185

**Re-Belle et Infidèle/The Body Bilingual: Translation as a re-writing in the feminine**

by Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood

This truly bilingual book by Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood explores the complex terrain of translating the writing of feminists who use language innovation to create a feminized space in language. In both French and English, this book is a unique contribution to feminist theory and an essential for literary translators.  
Women's Press, \$18.95 (paper)

**The Deconstruction of Wesley Smithson: A Collection of Fiction**  
by Sarah Murphy

In the startling title story of this collection of three short fictions, Sarah Murphy has created a truly original voice in Canadian fiction. Wesley Smithson is a journalist, perhaps dead, perhaps held by the CIA in a sanatorium for the insane. The only evidence of Smithson's continued existence is a series of audio cassettes.

With this taped journal, Smithson has recorded his life: Ordinary moments with his children and wife in Canada are counterpointed by his descriptions of countries and families torn apart by war.

Mercury Press, \$12.95 (paper)



**Miss Pamela's Mercy**  
Lynn Crosbie

Heaped with images from rock and roll, television, the tabloids and the confessional, Lynn Crosbie's first collection of poetry is a passionate journey to the underside of paradise. These are poems about cultural icons and anti-celebrities, each presented and transformed through Crosbie's sensual use of imagery and language.

Coach House Press, \$11.95 (paper)

## BEWILDERED RITUALS



Sandy Shreve

### Akala Point Events

March 26-28	Relaxation-Move towards Spring	\$135
April 2-4	Enjoy Playing the Fool	\$110
Apr. 30-May 2	Mothers and Daughters	\$110
May 14-16	Labour of Love, Spring Clean-up	\$20
June 4-6	Secrets of Organic Gardening	\$110
June 18-20	Pagans at Work and Play	\$75
June 25-26	School's Out, a sleep-over for Families	\$45 per family

Price is all-inclusive, scholarships are available.  
Call ahead to register - (902) 823-2160.



# In praise of lumber jackets

Paula Arsenault

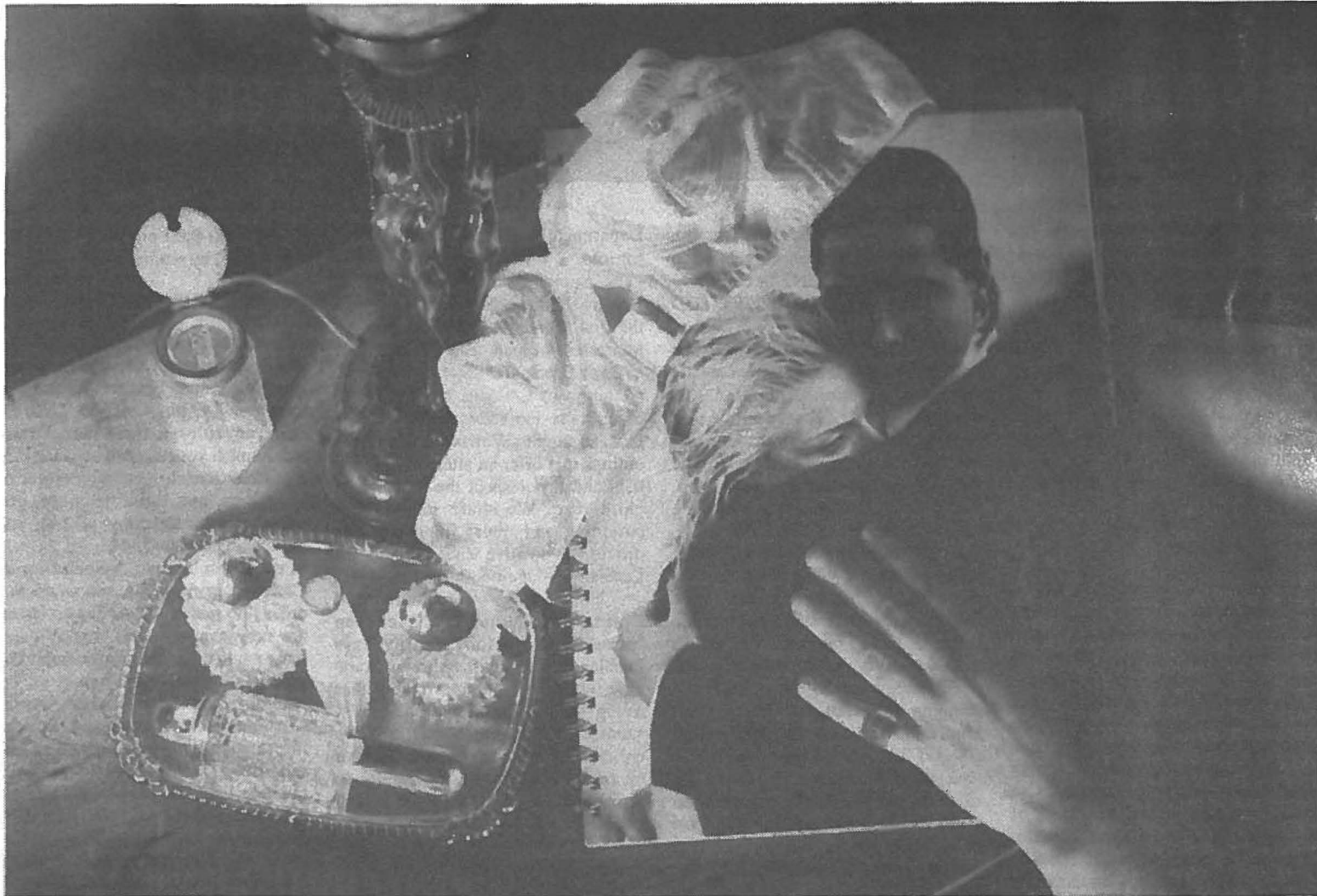
What is that thing you're wearing? A Jack shirt, lumberjack shirt, Farmer John/Joan shirt, Doe Skin...These are some of the names my favourite coat is called. This coat comes in checks of green and black, red and black, or my favourite blue and red. The sizes vary from very small to large enough to fit me! I do not remember my first one, but I think it must have been my grandfather's. I started wearing it when I was on my 4-H forestry team. It was loose and comfortable, so I was able to saw those logs in record time. The best part of the coat was how it trapped the smell of the woods.

When I wear my favourite blue and red coat in the city, it draws stares, pointing fingers and even verbal comments. I wear this coat partly to make others think about socially-acceptable norms. The other reason is that it feels like a soft coat of armour, and I have become champion of comfortable, soft clothes.

Sometimes I dress up the coat by putting on a soft, frilly scarf. Other times I wear an array of political buttons. It is versatile and comfortable. I will continue to wear one even when it becomes the new -fashion style.

My coat is cheap, on sale for about \$10.00, or a bit more or less. It is sized large enough to fit me, it washes really easily, is wearable in all seasons, and is an extremely soft cotton, and did I say it was comfortable? Maybe this year I will get the green and black checked one. I haven't had that style yet. It seems funny how simply wearing a piece of comfortable clothing can go from a personal comment to a wider social/political comment, then to a fashion fad, and back to the personal. I kind of hope that my favourite coat remains a personal choice, so that the price doesn't go up or the sizes go down, or designer labels get stuck on it.

So now you know why I wear that odd-looking coat, and you didn't even have to ask.



(Photo by Andrea Ward)

# In praise of Madonna

C.J. Marshall

Yes, I'm ready to stand up and be counted and admit that I got my copy of Madonna's *Sex* the day the first shipment arrived in Halifax (I guess that's a bit of an over-statement since I am writing this under a pseudonym). Little did I know what my act of breaking that sealed foil package would bring during the next few weeks.

**Masturbation doesn't hurt anyone. It is safe and it feels good.**

October 27, 1992, the headline of Sandra Porteous' column in the *Daily News* reads "WHAT'S WRONG WITH SOCIETY CAN BE SUMMED UP: MADONNA." Everywhere I turn I hear it. Voices filled with disgust and repulsion: "lecherous," "licentious" (I had to look that one up in the dictionary), "lewd." I began to wonder if I had gotten the same book they were talking about. Of course, I soon learned that some of the most harshest critics hadn't seen or read the book.

Perhaps the conversation that most startled me was a woman I know who said: "It is so disgusting, there is actually a picture of Madonna masturbating in a mirror." This is when I became really confused.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR

SOCIETY IS THAT TOO MANY PEOPLE THINK MASTURBATION IS WRONG, DIRTY, AND DISGUSTING.

I have another book in my library that was published one hundred years ago by Mary Wood-Allen, MD. It is called *What a Young Woman Ought to Know*. It offers advice to young women on a number of personal matters

including food, exercise, bathing, marriage, and so on. There is an entire chapter dedicated to the "Solitary Vice." Mary Wood-Allen warns us of the dangers of reading sensational love stories and touching ourselves:

*"The descriptions of passionate love scenes arouse in the reader a thrill through her own sexual organism that tends to increase its activity and derange its normal state...This stimulation sometimes leads to the formation of an evil habit, known as self-abuse."*

*The results of self-abuse are most disastrous. It destroys mental power and memory, it blotches the complexion, dulls the eye, takes away the strength and may even cause insanity. It is a habit most difficult to overcome, and may not only last for years, but in its*

tendency be transmitted to one's children."

The petition that circulated in Halifax-Dartmouth urges the Halifax and Dartmouth Public Libraries to remove *Sex* from their shelves. The book is "harmful to our youth and to our society in general" it says.

But I wonder which book, *Sex* or *What a Young Woman Ought to Know*, "with the best interests of our [and my own] children at heart" [as so eloquently stated by the petitioners] I would rather see removed from our public library. I wonder which book has the potential to cause harm?

I'm telling you that what's wrong with our society is that I didn't discover masturbation until I was 24 years old. Masturbation doesn't hurt anyone. It is safe and it feels good. It brings no risk of unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease. As a society, why aren't we promoting this activity among

our youth? I've often wondered if I had discovered what I could do myself a lot earlier in life, would it have made the idea of fooling around with boys a lot less appealing? After all, this far less satisfying and risky business is what is considered 'normal'.

If masturbation is, as Mary Wood-Allen suggests, addictive, I would hasten to suggest that there are a lot more harmful and destructive things in the world to be addicted to: alcohol, nicotine, and government sanctioned video gambling machines.

The petition says that Madonna's book "denigrates women and depicts them as submissive, coquettish sex-symbols who want to be violated and abused." Again, I wonder if we have looked at the same book. Not Madonna nor Isabella Rosellini, Naomi

Campbell, or any of the other women photographed in *Sex* appear submissive and coquettish to me.

I don't want to see any woman denigrated or exploited. But Madonna and the women in this book are not exploited. It would appear to me that Madonna is in control of just about everything she does. She's smart, independent, talented, active, healthy, wealthy [I suspect her business ventures have succeeded without too many government hand-outs], generous [she donates lots of money to HN/AIDS research], dedicated, beautiful, and she stands up for what she believes in. I can't think of too many other qualities I'd want in a role model.

Madonna writes:

"This book is about sex. Sex is not love. Love is not sex. But the best of both worlds is created when they come together. You can love God, you can love the planet, you can love the human

**"This book is about sex. Sex is not love. Love is not sex."**

race and you can love all things, but the best way for human beings to show love is to love one another."

While I must admit that *Sex* contains a few photographs of images that cause me some confusion, I must remember that they are Madonna's fantasy, not my own. All I can say is that it has "something for everyone."

And finally, no discussion of *Sex* would be complete without mention of its cost. And if anyone can show me an over-sized, 135 page, engraved-steel covered, photographic art book that comes with a compact disc for anything less than \$59.95, then I might be prepared to talk about this one.

♀ ♀ ♀

C. J. Marshall is the pseudonym of a Halifax feminist.



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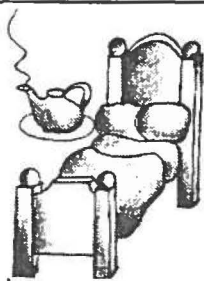
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# Notices/Calendar

**PLEASE NOTE:** We think the calendar and notices are important parts of Pandora. We like to think it helps keep women across the network informed about what is happening in the community. But it is a LOT OF WORK to try to keep tabs on everything that is going on, so . . . PLEASE won't you call and let us know the dates of important events? Call Pandora at 454-4977 or write to us at P.O. Box 8418 Stn A, Halifax, B3K 5M1.

## CLASSIFIED

•Interested in woman positive, cooperative run, living space? The **Halifax Women's Housing Coop** is currently accepting applications for upcoming vacancies. Call Irma at 423-4738, for more information.

•I am currently writing an undergraduate thesis in Sociology that examines the experience of children in lesbian families. My intention is to interview the grown children of lesbians, both male and female, between the ages of 17 and 25. Anyone who agrees to participate in the study will remain anonymous and all information given will be held in confidence. If you have grown up in a lesbian family and are willing to be interviewed, I would appreciate hearing from you. Please contact me at 443-7512.

•The Canadian Women's Movement Archives has moved! Its new address is: Canadian Women's Movement Archives, Archives and Special Collections, University of Ottawa Libraries, 65 University, Room 603, Ottawa, Ont. K1N 9A5. Phone (613) 564-8129. Inquiries about donation materials should be addressed to: Mr. Jean LeBlanc, Assistant Librarian (Collections and Public Services) University of Ottawa Libraries, 65 University, Ottawa, Ont., K1N 9A5. Phone (613) 564-5921.

## EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

•I am looking for a woman who can transcribe interviews — Macintosh preferred. I can provide a transcribing machine. Please call Betty-Ann, 455-0185.

**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. Workshops start the first Tues. of every month, 9:30-11:30. Call 422-8023.

## RESOURCES

•*Learning from Diversity: An Information Tool on, by, and for Racial Minority and Immigrant Women in Canada* is now available for \$15. Order from The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 151 Slater Street, Suite 408, Ottawa, K1P 5H3.

•*A Safer Place: Preventing Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault at Work*, a 25-minute video produced by the city of Toronto is now available. Video is closed captioned for the hearing impaired. Video and manual cost \$195. Manual only is \$25. Order from Department of the City Clerk, Information and Communication

Services Division, City of Toronto, City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ont M5H 2N2 or call (416) 392-7410. Fax: (416) 392-1553. TDD (416) 392-7354.

•*Inequity in the Classroom*, a video and training manual that explores sexual and racial discrimination from the perspectives of students and professors, is available. Contact Michelle Séguin, Assistant to the Advisor on the Status of Women, Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd West, Montreal, Que H3G 1M8. Phone (514) 848-4841.

•*Time to Heal*, a video about women survivors of childhood sexual abuse, has been produced by the Prince Edward Island Service for Adult Survivors. Available to non-profit organizations for \$49.95 + GST and shipping from Atlantic Independent Media, PO Box 1647, Halifax Central, NS B3J 2Z1. Phone (902) 422-5929. Fax: (902) 492-3424.

•*Sistering*, a women's organization offers practical and emotional support to women. Its newest project is a booklet called *Sisters Pick You Up: Sistering's Outreach Program*. This booklet can be used as a resource for developing programs for women who are isolated. Available from Sistering, 181 Bathurst St, Toronto, Ont, M5T 2R7. (416) 861-1954.

•*Lupus, the Disease With 1000 Faces*, is a booklet produced by Lupus Canada containing information on all aspects of Lupus. \$4 from Lupus Canada, Box 3302 Station B, Calgary, Alberta, T2M 4L8.

•Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre has produced three booklets on childhood sexual abuse: *A Booklet for Adult Survivors*, *A Booklet for First Nations Adult Survivors*, and *A Booklet for Partners and Friends*. Contact Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre, 306-620 View Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1J6 or call (604) 383-5370.

•DisAbled Women's Network of Canada (DAWN Canada) has produced a manual, *Meeting Our Needs, Access Manual for Transition Houses*. Information on the victimization of women with disabilities as well as advice on how transition houses and sexual assault centres can 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.

•*Making Changes*, a booklet for women in abusive relationships has been produced by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Professionals and organizations may obtain the booklet for \$1.50 from the NS Government Bookstore. Individual women may order a free copy from the Status of Women office.

•*Teen Voices*, a new magazine by, for and about teenage and young adult women is available from Women Express inc., P.O. Box 6009 JFK, Boston, MA 02114, or call (617) 227-4557. Sample issue \$2.00 (US)

•*Single Mothers' Survival Guide* is now available from Dal PIRG, Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S. Cost is \$3 (or what you can afford.)

## EVENTS & GROUPS

•Matrix, a six-week, day program for women dependent on alcohol and/or other drugs sponsored by the

Department of Health. Call 424-4270 for info.

•The Social Action Committee of Bryony House holds monthly meetings the first Monday of each month. All interested women, call Myrna 454-6728 or Brook 461-2604.

•A group of Lesbians has formed to bridge the isolation felt by many Lesbian parents. We have gatherings or outings that offer an alternative to the bars and that respect the logistics of child care. We share ideas about parenting and, most important, we provide a positive environment for Lesbians and their children.

The name, "Lesbians and Children Together," was chosen because it allows for the many ways Lesbians connect with children. Some have children from marriage either living with them or with their ex-spouse. Others have chosen to have children by artificial insemination or on their own. Still others have gone through single parent adoption, and of course there are women who are partners or friends.

Please join us sometime for laughter, support, insights and fun!

Call Lynn or Lena at (902) 469-5764.

•**Annapolis County Women's Coalition** is dedicated to improving the well-being and economic status of women in Annapolis County. They meet the last Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm at 7 Fay Road in Bridgetown. For more information, call 665-2731. Please join in the discussion.

•**Cumberland Co. Transition House** is seeking people to help with one or more of their fundraising efforts each year. Contact DeAnne or Susan at 667-1200.

•**Sexual Abuse Survivor's Therapy Group**. \$15/week. Tuesdays 6:30-9:30 pm. To register, call Pauline Vaughan at 454-2958 11 am - 7 pm.

•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 Feminist Therapists' Support Group** meets regularly. For more info contact Judy at 425-4514

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

•**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.

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

•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.

•**Kickin' Afroistics** 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

•Cumberland County Family Planning has started a **sex information phone line for teens**. Staffed Wednesday evenings 7 - 9 pm. Call 667-7500.

•**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 anonymous, confidential information and referral services about AIDS. Open Tues. to Fri. 5 pm to 8 pm. Call 1-902-425-AIDS (toll free 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 MATERIALS

•Press Gang Publishers is calling for unpublished writing and artwork for a Canadian/New Zealand lesbian anthology. Short stories, biographical writing, B&W artwork, and other creative submissions depicting aspects of lesbian experiences of colonialism — including colonization of indigenous cultures and of women's bodies — are sought. Aboriginal women and women of colour are particularly encouraged to submit work. Deadline March 31, 1993. Do not send original artwork. Send SASE with your submission to Press Gang Publishers, 603 Powell St., Vancouver, BC V6A 1H2 or call (604) 253-2537.

## CALENDAR

**March 6:** Metro Working Women (MWW) is planning the third annual IWD Celebration, Saturday, March 6th at the George Dixon Centre, Gottingen St. (between the North Branch Library and North St.) Doors open at 7 pm. Variety show 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Tickets are \$3.00 unwaged and \$5.00 waged. Any funds raised will be donated to a

women's organization (yet to be determined). The George Dixon Centre is wheelchair accessible (Brunswick St. entrance). Parking is available at Brunswick Street entrance. Child care will be provided by the North End Day Care staff.

If you have any questions or wish to participate in any way, please contact: Nancy Blair 454-6458, Jane MacMillan 424-7789 (w) or 455-4419 (h), Carole Woodhall 454-5812 (w) or 455-9038 (h).

**March 7:** Gloria Steinem at Rebecca Cohen Auditorium in Halifax. 7 pm. Tickets \$7 (If you haven't got yours already, you're probably out of luck!)

**March 7:** Reception for art exhibit by Tamara Thiebaut. Original illustrations from published children's books. Unitarian Church, 5500 Inglis St, Halifax. 1-5 pm. Showing Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays from 9 am - 2 pm; Sundays 10:30 am - 1 pm.

**March 8, 9 10:** Women's films twice a night sponsored by National Film Board (7:15 and 9:00) at TUNS on Spring Garden Road. At 6:00 pm there will be coffee and dessert at the NFB offices across the street. Call Kim at 453-3638 for information.

**March 13:** IWD concert and dance with Moon Joyce accompanied by Pam Mason. Silver Frith will also be playing. Concert starts at 8 pm, dance at 10 pm. Both at the Church, corner of Fuller Terrace and North Street. Tickets at the door: \$10/6 for both concert and dance; \$6 for dance only. Cash bar, all women welcome. Benefit for Pandora.

**March 17:** Daphne Patai, University of Massachusetts speaks on *The View From Elsewhere: Utopian Constructions of Difference* at Dalhousie Women's Studies Seminar Series. 3:30 pm Multidisciplinary Centre, 1444 Seymour Street.

**March 26:** *Making Babies, Making Perfect Babies*, a National Film Board production on reproductive and genetic technologies will be shown at 7:30 at the Tupper Medical Building on University Avenue. (Entrance off College Street.) \$4 donation, proceeds to Women's Health Education Network (WHEN) Margrit Eichler, the Nancy Rowell Jackman Chair at Mount St Vincent University will be guest speaker.

**March 26-28:** Relaxation: Move towards Spring. \$135. Akala Point. (902) 823-2160.

**March 31:** Sheva Medjuck, Mount St. Vincent University talks about Women and the Cost of Caring: The Effects of caregiving to the elderly on Labour Force Participation at Dalhousie Women's Studies Seminar Series. 3:30 pm Multidisciplinary Centre, 1444 Seymour Street.

**April 2-4:** Enjoy Playing the Fool. \$110. Akala Point. (902) 823-2160.

**April 30-May 2:** Plan to attend the WHEN (Women's Health Education Network) conference.

**April 30-May 2:** Mothers and Daughters. \$110. Akala Point. (902) 823-2160.

**May 14-16:** Labour of Love, Spring Clean Up. \$20. Akala Point. (902) 823-2160.

**June 4-6:** Secrets of Organic Gardening. \$110. Akala Point. (902) 823-2160.

**June 18-20:** Pagans at Work and Play. \$75. Akala Point. (902) 823-2160.

**June 25-26:** School's Out, a sleep-over for families. \$45/family. Akala Point. Call ahead to register. (902) 823-2160.