

WINNIPEG

April-May
1977

WOMEN'S

LIBERATION

NEWSLETTER

inside:

ORGANIZING UNORGANIZED

WORKING WOMEN

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

BADGELY REPORT

RAPE TAPES II



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Organizing Unorganized Women.....1
If...;.....2
Affirmative Action.....3
Talking with the Foreman.....7
Women and Unemployment.....8
Salary Rights of Farm Women.....9
Survival Skills.....10
Reviews - Hite Report.....11
On Becoming Herself.....14
Family Law Reform.....19
Badgely Report.....24
Electioneering.....26
NEWS.28
Mother.....29
Women Speak Out: Rape Tapes **II**.....30

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Please send any comments, announcements, articles, poems, graphics, etc. that you may wish to have published to the above address, c/o Newsletter Collective. We would like to hear from you.

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Many thanks.....

The Idea

I ran up three flights of stairs
To search for something,
I was greeted by
strange - familiar faces
Drawing me into the meeting.

I met with nostalgia
As I watched:
Women exhausted,
Searching for support,
Caring too much.

I remembered a spirit-
Born from supportive consciousness-
Born from an Idea.

Once upon a time...
There was a whisper
Agitating to a roar
Roaring to a form
Forming years of tears.

Tears of confusion
Confusing weakness for growth
Giving to a centre
Centring on an Idea.

I am...
You are...
We are...
Women.
We are the Women's Centre.

Bonnie Stanko
London, Ont.

The Co-ordinating Committee for A Woman's Place met on May 3rd to discuss, among other things, the future of our women's centre. As ever, finances are a major problem. Though our spring social was a significant success, we find ourselves facing, once again, a deficit for June. (See the box on this page.) For this reason we are making a strong appeal for funds.

A Woman's Place is busy! It is used regularly for the activities of such groups as the Socialist Women's Collective, Winnipeg Lesbian Society, CARAL (Canadian Association for Repeal of the Abortion Laws), the Newsletter collective and the Family Law Reform Coalition. It has a library and office space that serve as a resource to both individuals and groups.

Recently we have discussed moving into a new space that would more adequately meet the full range of our needs. However, we're having trouble paying for the space we have. Any space is impossible without strong support from all of us. Can you help? Our ideas are good - we must work together to bring them to fruition!

Balance	380.00
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Expenses:

Rent	211.00
Newsletter	400.00
Utilities	15.00
	<hr/>
	626.00

Income:

Rent	145.00
WLS *	varies
Donations *	varies

DOES YOUR ADDRESS LABEL HAVE A "✓"?

According to our records, many subscriptions to the Newsletter are in arrears or will expire in June, 1977. Check the address label on this newsletter. If it has a mark, yours is one of these. Our finances are forcing us to cut back on the number of newsletters we are publishing. Therefore your name will be removed from our lists at the end of June, unless:

- we've made a mistake,
- you can't afford a subscription,
- we receive \$5.00 from you for a new subscription.

CHECK YOUR LABEL. Sit down and write to us now! If you can afford it, a series of post-dated cheques to A WOMAN'S PLACE is very useful.

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ORGANIZING UNORGANIZED WOMEN

by Susan Robinson, SEIU.

Look - There are zillions of women working out there, right? And they don't belong to unions, right? Therefore women are difficult to organize, right? Well ...maybe.

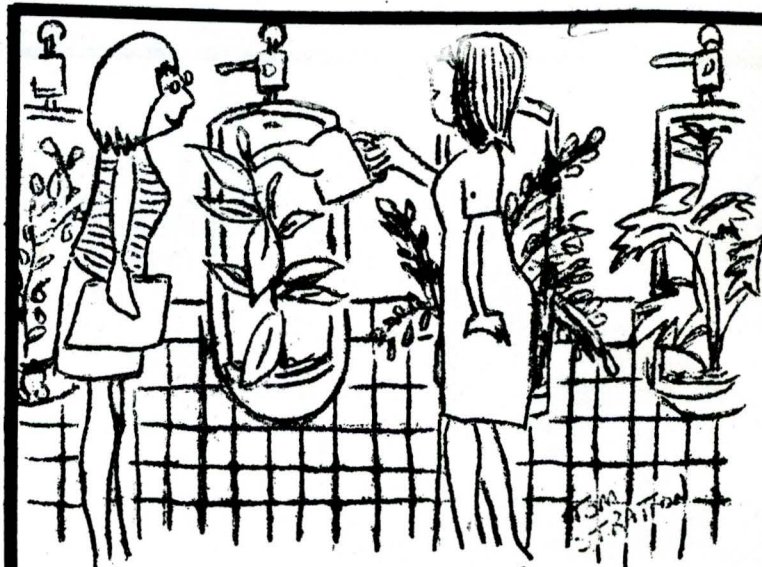
There are four factors that I can put my finger on that keep women from being unionized, and only one of them has to do with their being women. The first is the unfortunately uncontroversial fact that unions have not knocked themselves out organizing those occupations which are "traditionally" those of women. However, since unions reflect the "free enterprise" system around them and are in the same expand or die predicament as businesses, unions are now beginning to turn their attention to the remaining large pockets of unorganized worker. These just happen to be populated by women. It is my opinion that these efforts on the part of unions do not reflect a change of heart or increase of awareness, and women so organized have their work cut out for them.

The second factor involves attitudes common to both men and women. For instance, both women and men who work in offices find it difficult to see themselves as workers. Unions are for workers, not for them. There is the attitude particularly common to well paid employees of both sexes that management, because they pay the wages, get to call the tune, and who are we to rock the boat? Fortunately, badly paid employees know slavery when they feel the whip, and increasingly white collar workers are seeing more clearly what their work and working conditions really are.

The third factor involves attitudes common only to women (at least as far as I can see). You

who have devoted years of activity to the women's movement probably know better than I, a trade union hack. There are the old I'm-only-working-here-until-I-get-married or I'm-only-working-for-pin-money lines. If you think these and similar lines are disappearing, let me assure you that they are not going fast enough. The crux of the attitude lies in the word "only", and reflects a general self-deprecation that drives me around the bend. A woman who signs a union card is a woman who is finally saying to herself "I'm worth something and by damn they're going to recognize it". I don't think I have to go into a big deal about how major a problem this lack of self-esteem is. In many ways it is the problem.

There is a fourth factor. History tells me that some of the heroes of the trade union move-



From the
NEW WOMAN

"So when I took over the company I discovered we didn't need quite so many male executives."

ment were heroines. Women struck their bosses in the late 19th century (for example, the match-workers in London), and just after World War I (the needle-trades in New York). They were notorious organizers in the 30's. Whenever there has been industrial strife, women have been right in there getting shot up with the best of them. The hidden problem here is "good times" - economically stable periods when people are making a living and feeling confident. Nobody is much interested in unions then. In bad times the virtues of sisterhood and brotherhood become apparent again; the realization that in unity there is strength crystallizes anew and solidarity takes over.

I'm only pointing out the obvious when I point out that the basic pre-supposition of this article is that unions are good - that they give their members a handle by which they can influence if not control their working destinies. If you want to take a crack at organizing remember:

1. do yourself a favour and phone the Labour Board (under the Dept. of Labour) for a quick rundown on the current regulations.
2. Sign up a majority of the people who work for your company or do your kind of work (eg. everyone at Great West Life or all the people who work in the cafeteria or all the caretaking staff). A majority of clerks will not do, if the typists are ignored.
3. Make the new members pay you at least \$1.00 as a token of their free intention. Don't pay it yourself; that's fraud.
4. Get some help from a union and REMEMBER:

"There once was a union maid
 Who never was afraid
 Of goons or ginks or company finks,
 Or ? boys who made the raids.
 She went to the Union Hall
 When a meeting it was called.
 And when the sherrifs boys came round,
 She always stood her ground.
 OH, you can't scare me
 I'm sticking to the Union..."

Below is a poem taught to me as a little girl by my mother. Unfortunately I can't remember one line. However, something is to be said of its impact in that I've remembered the rest for over 25 years. I wonder if my mother recognized its implications!

If by L. Alma Tadema

If noone ever marries me,
 And I don't see why they should,
 'Cause mommy says I'm not pretty
 And seldom very good.

.....ROOTS

If noone ever marries me
 I shan't mind very much,
 I shall have a cottage in a wood
 And a little rabbit hutch.

I shall have a
 And a pony all my own
 And a little lamb quite clean and tame
 That I can take to town.

And when I'm getting really old
 At twenty-eight or nine
 I shall buy a little orphan girl
 And bring her up as mine.

AFFIRMATIVE

ACTION



The provincial Government Affirmative Action Program is limping along, through no fault of its hard-working staff, Lorna Leader-Elias, Helen Nolan, Nicole Ritchot, Alison La Fortune, Eva Laplante and Myrna Phillips.

These people make up the Career Planning Branch within the Civil

Service Commission. The program is to develop equal employment opportunities for women, native people and the handicapped in the civil service.

The policy directive for the program was given by Premier Schreyer in November, 1975. (I'm quoting his policy statement in order to assess how the program has developed over the past year and a half.)

"The Manitoba Government is committed to the concept of equal employment opportunities in the Civil Service for those groups of Manitobans who appear to have been barred from fair and meaningful participation in the labour force: women, Native People, older workers and the physically, mentally and economically handicapped.

.....

"All Ministers and Deputy Ministers will be responsible for the development and implementation of Affirmative Action Programs in their departments. The Career Planning Office of the Civil Service Commission will provide guidance and assistance in the development and monitoring of programs. All departments will be required to file their departmental Affirmative Action Programs with the Career Planning Office in the next fiscal year and provide for any necessary additional funding of approved programs in their 1977-78 departmental estimates. Our goal will be to ensure that the designated groups will be appropriately represented at all levels of employment in the Civil Service."

The program stemmed from recommendations of two reports: Women in the Manitoba Civil Service (1973) and Report of the Task Force on Equal Opportunities in the Civil Service (1974). These reports cited such statistics as seventy-five percent of the female employees (1972) earned less than \$7,000 a year.

The goal of the program is to create the kind of job environment that will bring the participation of native people and the handicapped in the Civil Service up to the level these groups exist in the labour force. For native people that's 15% and for handicapped, 5%. Present levels of participation in the government range from 1% to 5%.

In the case of women, as they are adequately represented in government, the goal is to provide them equal opportunity to move into higher paying jobs.

Two questions must be asked in examining the Affirmative Action Program. One is how seriously is the provincial government committed to the program, in terms of funds and ensuring that the departments submit effective plans? The second is what are the ultimate limitations in effectiveness of any affirmative action plan given the structures of the capitalist, racist and sexist institutions in our society?

With the deadline for program submissions past (March 31, 1977), only eight out of 17 government department plans have been approved. Three haven't been submitted at all and six are being renegotiated.

Comprehensive Guidelines..

The guidelines set up by the Career Planning Branch for implementing affirmative action are comprehensive. Briefly they include:

- assigning a staff person the tasks necessary to develop and implement the program.
- reviewing criteria with which people are hired, devising promotional bridges from currently dead-end jobs, developing more promotional training courses, career counselling, and devising alternative qualification standards to make jobs more accessible to the target groups.
- Altering the structure of the job to make it more accessible; ie. more part-time, more than one person handling the job, different hours to allow for different work patterns etc.
- Completing an analysis of human resources in the Department relating to each employee, his or her position classification, salary employee status, age, sex, number and age of dependents, physical disabilities, native ancestry, and education, skills training, and length of service.

This latter data was necessary to have in order to compare it with the breakdown in the workforce at large. The guidelines state:

"A comparative analysis of departmental data and the labour force data will provide the basis for numerical goals for hiring and promotion of designated group members."

Uruski Excuses Cutbacks...

Bill Uruski, Minister in charge of the Affirmative Action Program explained in an interview why only eight departments have had their plans approved after the deadline had passed. First of all, several departments applied for extra funds to implement their programs. The government cut back all funds asked for, using the excuse of its restraint policy.

Departments are being asked to use the staff they already have to devise and implement the guidelines for affirmative action. So these programs have had to be renegotiated. Other plans have not been accepted because they are too weak, while some departments have not yet filed programs.

What clout is Mr. Uru ski applying to ensure departments hand in good solid programs?

"I've tried several approaches in consultation with my staff. At first I was fairly hard-handed but I've had to pull back my horns. Some departments haven't taken the program seriously. It's easy to accept the policy in principle but when it comes to putting it into practice, it's two different things."

He saw the problem as one of attitudes. No matter how force-full the Affirmative Action Policy was on paper, it would be difficult to enforce if civil service staff were unwilling. "Your policy is only as good as the administration's support and willingness to carry it out."

So what approach is he taking? "In my mind a lot of educating and attitude changing has to take place in-house. We have to take a softer, more convincing approach. And the internal education process can start with the Civil Service Commission itself."

The government has not set up quotas for the departments to hire from the target groups. Cabinet was against that method of proceeding. Mr. Uruwski said quota systems in the U.S. have become difficult to enforce and monitor and have created backlogs. Right now the Career Planning staff are continuing follow up on all the departments and are doing the necessary hounding. Also the Manpower Committee of Cabinet is discussing steps to take to pressure the depar

ments further into developing effective programs.

Program Faces Resistance....

Helen Nolan and Nicole Ritchot have definitely run into negative attitudes and resistance while conducting information seminars to introduce the Affirmative Action Program into the departments.

A typical response was: "Of course I'm an equal employer. I bulletin my jobs and whoever wants them can come add apply."

"What we are doing," said Ms. Nolan, "is hard for administrative types to accept. The fact that we are going around and talking about change implies that they have been wrong. It's just that they have been following certain practices for years and in the name of affirmative action these practices have to be changed."

Other difficulties for the staff, primarily younger women, were the patronizing and blatantly sexist attitudes of some of their contacts.

"They would be careful about being racist in front of me, because I am Indian," said Ms. Nolan, "but thought nothing of being sexist, even though I am also a woman." For example, when departmental people opened up their kits in a seminar, the first thing the men zeroed in on was the material about women.

"The response was that these radical bra-burning types were coming into their office to put them in their place. The men would respond with 'What about discrimination against us guys.' However, often the sexism of the men would provide a good basis for discussion in a mixed group."

The struggle to change attitudes is monumental. The Career Planning Branch has had some encouraging responses. The women in the Civil Service are beginning to voice their

concerns and grievances in the affirmative action seminars. They are also beginning to understand that the Career Planning Branch can only give them support. It is up to them to really pressure for change, for they know all the barriers and problems better than everybody else. Also, employers are phoning the Branch for referrals.

This Program Has Limitations...

What are some of the larger and more general limitations of an Affirmative Action Program? For one thing, it doesn't question the underlying acceptance of hierarchies - that some jobs are seen as less important than others and therefore they bring in less money and less status for the employee, as well as less authority and less control over job conditions, hours of work etc.

If women do manage to get on skill upgrading courses and obtain promotions, who is going to fill the low-paying, less skilled jobs they leave? Women, of course! And then there are only so many managerial positions.

Ms. Nolan ran into this problem in her seminars. "It's important to say that people have a tendency to be threatened by affirmative action - some people read it as saying, for a clerk, for example, that her job isn't good enough, she should aspire to something higher up the ladder. I guess what we're trying to say is that women should at least have the choice, and the opportunity to explore other areas and other occupations."

The Affirmative Action Kit that was handed out by the Career Plan-

ning Branch has an excellent article by Laurie Richards called Affirmative Action, What Women Stand to Lose. She says that because Affirmative Action Programs have been evolved by corporations and governments to fit their goals, and not by the women's movement, it has taken on a dangerously narrow definition.

In fact, Affirmative Action has become a brand name for employer programs geared to co-opting upwardly mobile career women into corporate management. From the corporation point of view new phrases are being bandied about, like "Breaking the Sex Barrier: It's Good Business."

Firms realize that a woman, to prove herself will work twice as hard. If women get management jobs, it won't be because the corporations are non-sexist, but because women are good investments. Look at the article written in the March 1975 issue of the Canadian Personnel and Industrial Relations Journal:

"Management talent will be the major shortage during the 1975-1985 period. In addition, we are facing a productivity crisis which can be met only by effective management and maximum utilization of human resources. A program directed at the inclusion of women in the term "human resources" is not only socially responsible but makes economic sense. We need managers, and we need productivity. Why not use all our workpower to meet these needs."

Ritchie's article lists the following criticisms of Affirmative Action as it is usually implemented:

- It should benefit the majority of women, not the one in ten who get managerial jobs.
- The exploitation of women is deeply rooted in the structure of

our economy. Our economy literally depends on the use of women (and immigrants) as a reserve pool of cheap labour. But there is nothing in affirmative action that challenges this fundamental economic problem. Affirmative action in fact presents a non-antagonistic, attitudinal approach rather than a structural approach. It allows government and corporations to sell the public on the idea that women's emancipation is only a matter of attitude.

- Affirmative action will divide women into the promotables, the less than enthusiastic promotables and the unpromotables. A woman's movement embracing programs that create such divisions, chances losing allies and credibility among the lower income women, native women, and immigrant women, (who together probably form the majority of working women.)

Ritchie's conclusion is ^{that} affirmative action might be acceptable if it was clearly indicated as only one ingredient in an overall government program. Affirmative action must also include equal pay for work of equal value, adequate child care facilities, improved maternity leave, improved labour laws, and better wages for the lower paying jobs.

"The task facing the Canadian Woman's Movement now, as always, is to maintain the priority and primacy of issues which speak to the mass of Canadian women, not the few who are used as role models for the corporate world. We cannot go about telling women at their type-writers or sewing machines, "Forget your lousy working conditions and pay. Someday you, too, can be a supervisor."

♀ by Sara Berger

Talking With the Foreman

I told him I wanted to join the union,
 "What have they been telling you?" he asked.
 "Very little," I answered,
 "I asked the men if I could join."

"The men here in the shop make standard wages
 And I make a whole lot less," I said.
 "Who put these ideas into your head?"
 "I have my own ideas on wages."

"I know you're an independent woman,
 One of the smartest broads I ever met,
 But I know these guys too - Who was it -
 Al who loved you up about the union?"

I smiled and tittered, clenched and painfully.
 "The men and I have talked some, naturally --
 My brother's union. He's influenced me."
 He nodded comprehension. "Now I see."

a Baltimore sister

WOMEN and UNEMPLOYMENT

(This is an excerpt from an article in Socialist Woman, Spring '76, a British publication. While the larger article analyzes the British experience, we felt that the principles discussed below are important to our own situation.)

The present employment situation is inextricably linked up with the attacks under way against the welfare state. A fierce social struggle in which a whole range of questions - from 'for whose benefit do we work' to 'is woman's place in the home' - come up for answer. The outcome of the struggle is dependent upon the politics of the situation.

Already massive fights against redundancies are taking place. Already forces in the labour movement are organizing against the cuts. But two problems need to be confronted at once.

The first is the need to group the resistance around an overall programme that actually tackles the problems. Simple militancy is not enough. The rise of unemployment is the result of the continuing inability of capitalists to market their goods - they attempt to cut their losses through cuts in labour costs. The workers' movement must insist that the bosses bear the burden of their own crisis.

For this reason, demands must include work-sharing with no loss of pay, nationalisation of all bankrupt companies, a national minimum wage for employed and unemployed alike, a 35-hour week, and a sliding scale of social spending to match unemployment benefit, social security payments and other social service provisions to the cost of living. Socialists in the women's movement must be in the forefront of a specific fight to raise the demand for the right of women to work.

The second problem is that the present leadership of the working class is not only unable to lead such struggles - but is already lined up on the other side. It is a Labour Government that is implementing the cuts. and it was the General Council of the TUC that tried to sabotage the 26 November unemployment demonstration. Only if those forces now in struggle and those prepared to join them come together against present leadership of the working class, will there be any measure of success.

(Ed. note: It is clear that this analysis is equally applicable to the N.D.P. in Manitoba. Note in particular our "pro-labour" party's position on wage and price controls, compulsory overtime in the Griffin dispute, and the affirmative action program.)

There is one final point. The ruling class, along with Wilson and Healey will be only too happy to make use of the continued confusions in the workers' movement about the family and the position of women. So it is absolutely vital that the forms of struggle that we undertake - such as factory occupations - are based on a full consciousness of what is implied for women in them.

There must be creches, non-employed wives and husbands of strikers must be fully involved and there must be a consistent struggle against male chauvinism amongst workers. It is no accident that so many of the recent struggles have been led by women workers. It will be no accident if male chauvinism precipitates defeat.

FIGHTS FOR SALARY RIGHTS OF FARM WOMEN

OTTAWA: After hauling grain for 28 years on the family farm in Saskatchewan, Anna Boris is ready to fight for the right to a regular salary. Mrs. Boris came to Ottawa to voice her plight at the recent annual meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

"We can pay our children for any work that they do but we can't pay me," Mrs. Boris said.

Leaving their farm in Marengo, Sask., Mrs. Boris came to Ottawa to represent the Saskatchewan task force on rural women, fighting for wages for women "who do the work of hired men." She wants changes in legislation which prohibit a man or woman from paying tax-deductible salaries to a spouse.

Mrs. Boris, born in Marengo in 1925, said her husband agrees with her position and personally, it's the right more than the money she's fighting for.

"Most of it goes back into the farm anyway but it's a question of principle," she said. "A woman is independent. Other women go out and have what they call secondary jobs."

On the Boris family's grain farm, about 150 miles west of Saskatoon, she has missed only one fall of work in 28 years. That was to have a baby.

The girls all worked in the fields for their dad and got paid,"

she says of her four daughters. They have all grown up and moved away but one son remains at home.

The law allows parents to pay their children salaries and claim it as a deductible expense at tax time.

Mrs. Boris said she has never calculated her unpaid salary but the going rate for hired men is \$5 an hour. She works in the fields every-day in the spring from daylight until dark, hauls grain from August to October, drives a truck and tractor and uses a variety of farm machinery.

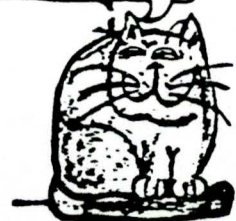
"We can't get competent help," she added. Because much of their machinery is old—including a 1955 model truck — only the family can be trusted to treat it with the care it needs for maintenance.

Until about three years ago the Boris family farm never generated enough money to warrant tax payments, Mrs. Boris said. Increases in the price of wheat and the amount they could sell have boosted their income.

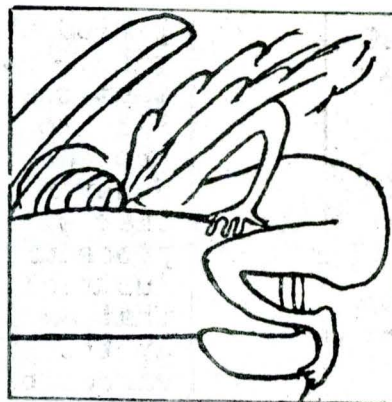
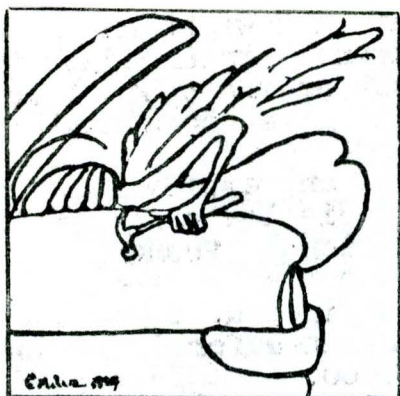
"In 1969 to 1970 we had to have pigs or we wouldn't have eaten," she said, recalling the low wheat sales farmers faced that year.

Other than handling grain, Mrs. Boris takes care of their house, a fruit orchard and a vegetable garden, "ordinary everyday tasks of a farmer's wife." (Reprinted from Free Press, April 6, 1977.)

What's wrong with her?



ANGELICA....ON BEING LIBERATED...



TODAY A PLUGGED FUEL PUMP.....



..... TOMORROW THE WORLD!

I was waiting in a car dealer's showroom a couple of weeks ago, leafing through the Canadian Automotive Trade Journal (CAT for short). On the cover, a blond woman with large breasts was featured. The caption explained that the special feature of the month was an article on front end work. Inside was a startling collection of technical information, sexist cartoons and advertisements. Although I have not led a particularly sheltered existence, I thought the magazine contained one of the most all encompassing collections of misogyny I'd seen lately, except for the odd skin magazine.

Since I had lots of time, I read most of the letters to the editor. One was a letter from a group of Vancouver women, protesting that a much larger subscription list might be obtained by eliminating the sexist tone from the magazine. The editor responded that there was very little that the writers could tell him about the circulation of the magazine, and that no changes would be made for the benefit of the less than 1% of readers who might be "neither male nor heterosexual".

On to the editorial page,

where the editor provided advice to garage entrepreneurs to the effect that the wave of self-serve gas stations, rather than drawing profit from full-service operators, represented instead an opportunity. So few car owners check their oil or do any other routine maintenance that vehicles are quickly falling apart and requiring major repairs. Enter the garage owner.

As a side comment, the editor noted that women in particular fail to bring their cars in for routine work. Small wonder. While few of the general population, male or female, are well-versed in auto mechanics and repair, women generally do not have the opportunity to learn even the basics. Customizing, that preoccupation of many adolescent (and older) males generally is not pursued by their female counterparts. Further, women are the frequent butt of jokes about cars or driving, ("women drivers"), or the subject of other stereotyped attitudes (such as the comment once so often heard among women of my mother's age, -"Oh, do you drive?").

Many of us are aware of these attitudes and the inevitable rip-off when "you have a definated rebestrond but if we bifurcate the electrical cronus, it'll be all fixed up in a week". Many of us have boycotted the mechanic as long as possible, confident that whatever happens, repairs will cost a bundle and best to put it off as long as possible.

There are two reasons why women may want to learn more about auto mechanics. The first is obvious-cost. Minor tune-ups and repairs can be done by most of us, the outlay in equipment

and time is relatively small, and decreases the more often you do it. The second reason has to do with attitudes - uneducated well they help perpetuate the notion that women don't and can't understand or undertake mechanical repairs. If you have some doubts of your own along this line, think of some of the people you know who fix their own cars. Aren't you at least as competent as some of them? and the experience of "fixing it yourself" is a heady one.

Self-education in auto mechanics and repair is relatively easy, especially for women in urban areas such as Winnipeg. Evening courses abound. Check that the courses "for ladies only" offer a non-threatening learning situation but not a watered down version of another course, "simplified" for women. My experience with regular evening courses has been that women by and large get fair treatment and equal instruction. Occasionally, however, a bit of "assertive" behaviour is required to beat the customizers to the scopes. A basic set of tools can be obtained for about the price of a tune-up, but while you are learning, most schools have enough tools for the use of an entire class. As you learn, you will be able to decide exactly what tools you will want for your car. If you are apprehensive, convince a friend to enroll with you for company and moral support.

If courses aren't for you, there are many self-help auto mechanic books. You can also look for an experienced mechanic to ask questions of and observe. When your brother/sister/son/daughter etc. and his/her friends are experimenting with cars, be there and keep listening. Don't settle for handing them the tools;

get in there and twist off a few bolt heads. (It seems to me that one of the prerequisites of effective car repair is to talk a good game; I hear that even the best mechanics drop the fuses into the engine sometimes).

It is important as well to find a service station, garage or dealer that will treat you fairly and intelligently. Conversations with the owners of cars similar to yours will save you time and eliminate some trial and error. Generally, mechanics who will explain what they are doing are a good starting point. If you don't get the service you want, take your business elsewhere.

Another option is to form a co-operative with friends and rent or buy a service station for weekends and evenings. Some co-ops pay a mechanic to supervise and advise their members.

The basic principal for all of us is self-reliance. While you may not want to learn how to do a major overhaul on your vehical, knowledge of its basic functioning will save you money and prevent that helpless feeling when the tire goes flat, the horn sticks, or your rebestrond is definated.

f Lorna Leader-Elias

REVIEWS ♀♀♀ REVIEWS

WOMEN, SEX, AND THE HITE REPORT

Which passage turns you on more?

"And so I took her with a cold calculation, the rhythms of my body corresponding to no more than a metronome in my mind. Tonight the driving mechanical beat would come from me and blind to nerve-raddlings in my body, and blood-pressures in my brain, I worked on her like a riveter, knowing her resistances were made of steel, I threw her a fuck the equivalent of a fifteen round fight. I wearied her, I brought her back, I drove my fingers into her shoulders and my knees into her hips. I went, and I went, I bore her high and thumped her hard, I sprinted, I paced, I lay low, eyes all closed, under sexual water, like a submarine listening for the distant sound of her ship's motors, hoping to steal up close and trick her rhythms away."

OR:

" If I want it to be very pleasurable I usually begin with some clothes on. Touching of the breasts and genitals through clothing is very exciting to me. As my body begins to respond, I go inside the clothing and touch my breasts gently, then move to a gentle carressing of the pubic area, moving slowly to the clitoris. I stroke it in a circular fashion, usually, and as the excitement increases, so does the tempo, so that as I approach climax, the stroking is almost a vibration, very rapid agitation until, like a starburst, I orgasm."

This last quotation is from the chapter on masturbation in the Hite Report: A Nationwide Study of Female Sexuality by Shere Hite. The former quote is from the novel The Time of Her Time by (that's right!) Norman Mailer.

My point is that we have all been brought up on the male concept of sexuality - in literature and in life - and much of our sexual expression as women is geared to fulfilling male expectations. Oh! We just LOVE to be riveted by sprinting penises, don't we girls?

The Hite Report is packed with more information on female sexuality than I have ever read or heard of anywhere. And what a delightfully obvious way to compile such a book. Hite sent out thousands of questionnaires to women all over the United States asking detailed questions on every aspect of their sexuality - masturbation, orgasm, intercourse, clitoral stimulation, lesbianism, sexual slavery, the sexual revolution and older women. She then put a representative sample of the three thousand replies in her book accompanied by her own perceptive analytical comments.

Women wrote and wrote and wrote. Because they did so anonomously, their answers were painfully honest, and emotionally full-sometimes with rage, sometimes embarassment and shame, sometimes with hilarity.

Hite's book is a labour of love. It had to be, for, believe it or not, she did not get any grants to do the preliminary work or write it. She used a free press in New York, Unity Press, to print the questionnaires. She then relied on the royalties from her initial book on the subject Sexual Honesty By Women for Women, which reprinted full answers to some of the questionnaires, and many personal loans.

The book, a massive pep rally for the sexuality of all women, whether they be celibate, lesbian, 18 or 74, tells, through women's own words, that female sexuality is not automatic, easy or simple. It is something

to be learned through extensive self-exploration.

The reasons women gave for filling out the questionnaires indicate their tremendous need for coming out of the closet - as sexual beings, period!

"I have a great deal of anger about my sexual hangups and a great deal of confusion. I am at a point of seeing how much of what I have learned of sexuality has really been slanted and sexist."

"I am trying to dump that garbage, and trying very hard to LISTEN to what is in me. I think it is high time we let those mucho macho guys know they're doing a lousy job of making women happy. And if they want us for themselves, they'd damned well better make it better for us."

"I cried when I first read through this. There is so much I've lied about for so long. I'd already come to understand that, but wanted to fill out the questionnaire to make myself write it all down. Undoubtedly, you will have helped many women in just this way, and publication of the results will reach many more who as I did, will read the truth they couldn't tell themselves."

I am finding, as I write this review, that it is difficult to be critical. Actually, I don't think there is any point. I'll just launch into a brief description of some of the chapters that impressed me.

The chapter on masturbation is perhaps the most facinating in the book. It served to liberate me from those last vestages of shame and awkwardness that still managed to taint the act.

It's a credit to Hite that the questionnaire requires details about how women masturbate. For those who have had drummed into

them (most of us) that the practice was taboo, the freedom, enthusiasm and sometimes pride with which women describe the act, might help loosen inhibitions.

Masturbation, maintains Hite, and many of the women who answered, is a very important way of learning about our sexuality. First, it nearly always leads to orgasm. So it teaches women how best they can be aroused to orgasm by a partner. It opens our feelings to eroticism. If we can freely play with and manipulate our bodies, it will be a lot easier to be sexual with another person.

Through masturbation to orgasm you find that your body "works" very nicely and that horrible word "frigidity" is a patriarchal word to keep women fearful about their own sexuality. And a fearful woman is a dependent woman, always needing a man to show her how to be sexual.

Here's how some women see it:

"Masturbation is one of the sacred rituals that women can enjoy amongst themselves. I say it is "sacred" because it is SELF-initiated, SELF-controlled and SELF-gratifying - coming from a position of strength. It is not only about a physical or emotional closeness to one's own body, but a conquest of all the fears that families and men have instilled in women about their bodies and sexual dependencies. Try it - you'll like it."

"Masturbation is sex on a solo level - that's like saying I can take care of myself. Get in touch with my body and self. I am here. I am sexy. I am okay. I LIKE myself."

- WHOEVER SAID ORGASM WASN'T IMPORTANT FOR A WOMAN WAS UNDOUBTABLY A MAN.

A lot of pain in the Hite Report comes through when women describe themselves as failures for not responding the way (or some men) think they should. The chapters on orgasm strongly reveal this. For example, not having orgasm during intercourse led women to answer the questionnaire with feelings of rage, inadequacy, self-hatred and frigidity. They felt something was wrong with them even though they had orgasms in other ways.

" I like intercourse in every way and that's why I feel like a sickie! At thirty, and having screwed for over fifteen years, and still not able to come! I'm fed up."

"Sex in the best of all possible worlds? My clitoris would be in my vagina, For Christ's Sake, so I could come when I fuck!"

Yet in her report, Hite says that 70% of women responding did not have orgasm during intercourse without some kind of manual manipulation of the clitoris.

She also spends several pages answering why it has become some kind of norm that women have to orgasm during intercourse. She deals with why, for so many centuries, intercourse, as opposed to oral sex, mutual masturbation, lesbianism etc., was the only acceptable way to have sex.

That women are hung up on this so-called norm is revealed in the eight pages of women's responses to the question: "Do You Ever Fake Orgasms?"

" I used to, to please men and get their approval, and make them believe I was a sexy chick, etc. etc. I remember faking them on acid trips, and even on my wedding night. It was grizzly and, at the time, I was sure I was the only woman who did this."

"I always did. (I'm sixty two, now) I was told to do it by male doctors to keep my husband happy (bless me). I was thinking there was something missing in my makeup for about thirty-five years - and that's a long time to imagine you had to fake it"

The myth has taught sexually healthy women that they were not....

As much anger and frustration surfaced in the chapter "How have most men had sex with you?"

"Very perfunctory. A little kiss, a little feel, a finger for arousal, a touch of breast and he's on top, wham it's over."

" Before my present lover, they would expect me to jump into the hay whenever they got horny, go through a perfunctory foreplay, enter me, thrust rapidly for fifteen to thirty seconds, shoot their wad, graciously condescend to finish me with their finger, roll away and let me sleep on the wet spot. It was monotonous, drilling and boring."

Hite quotes Ann Koedt from her book The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm: "Perhaps one of the most infuriating and damaging results of this whole charade has been that women who were perfectly healthy, sexually, were taught that they were not. So, in addition to being sexually deprived, these women were told to blame themselves when they deserved no blame. Looking for a cure to a problem that has none can lead a woman on an endless path of self-hatred and insecurity. For she is told by her analyst that not even in her one role

allowed in a male society - the role of a woman - is she successful. She is put on the defensive, with phoney data as evidence that she better try to be even more feminine, think more feminine, and reject her envy of men. That is: Shuffle even harder baby."

Ever mindful of our need to know, one of Hite's questions deals with how women can orgasm during intercourse. It is interesting that most of the responses talk about how the woman has to actively participate in her own orgasm and it rarely occurs if she passively waits for it.

The chapter on Lesbian sex is like a warm scented bath after the painful chapters on heterosexuality. Some words used by the women are : beautiful, massage, lightly, flicker, entwined, mutual, hugged, surging, sighing....

Enough said, before I requote the whole book. Buy it (at your nearest drug store) read it , enjoy it.

♀ Reviewed by Sara Berger



The Art School Episode by Sheri Lee

[Aside: I have put this off until the last minute at least twenty times. I'm lazy, this is difficult, and I don't want to write. But so many people have expressed interest in my continuing saga that I feel responsible to them.]

This second article will deal with my four years of art college. I've found it easiest to write this by giving a simple description of each year and concluding with an analysis of the whole.

One word aptly describes my character upon my entrance to art school. Naive. I was eighteen years old, my life had been remarkably easy, and I possessed a deep faith in Authority. I tended to regard teachers as authorities, People Who Knew Things. And I believed that they would simply pass that knowledge on to me and I would become an artist. Not surprisingly, it didn't happen that way. One of my main flaws is my facility in picking up unspoken messages and acting in accordance with these. For example, I soon saw what kinds of drawings were most praised and so I started drawing like that. There were silent messages that abstraction was preferable to realism, that drawing people was passé and that drawing was not done to tell stories. I spent my first year trying to adapt myself to that mold. By March I was horribly depressed and frustrated. I drew less and ate more. I ran home for a week, declaring that I could not go back. Was my mother disappointed? Did she see me following her route?

I never knew. She was sympathetic and supportive. It was my elder sister who stepped in and directed me to return. Relieved at having someone else make my decision, I did. I entered ceramics as my major for the next three years because it seemed that there was the one chance for success.

Success eluded me throughout my second year. There is little to say of this time. I lacked a sense of direction, which is to say discipline, which is to say I did little work. I was still trying to abstract my drawings. I felt guilty because I could see people in even my most non-objective drawings and secretly made up stories about them. And I was hopeless in ceramics. I saw things in one dimension and here I was struggling in three. I started directing my energy to personal relationships, and I saw these as distinct and separate from my art. (That old problem of people versus art.)

This same lack of direction characterized most of my third year. My drawings filled me with despair - they were little more than indifferent mechanical exercises. I was hopelessly uncoordinated at wheel-thrown pots, and in any event had nothing to say. I would arrive early at school (the teachers liked this) and then, after an hour of pounding and twisting clay in the vain hope that something would emerge, I would sneak up to the library and hide in the books. Maybe they could help me. I was too confused and depressed to help myself. And then I discovered Margaret Spicer and her paintings. She was in her fourth year and she made the most beautiful incredible joyous

paintings. They were of people and they were small. Aside: I know that these were occasionally cited as faults by her large-canvased colour fielded art teachers. I loved them. And then I realized that I could do this too. Especially if I kept quiet and stayed unnoticable. I could sneak right through. So people started appearing in my ceramics. (I was still too chicken to express my feelings in drawings and kept churning out some of the dearest stuff ever). I was surprised and thrilled by the response to these pieces. People liked them.

I continued with my new found style in ceramics in my fourth year. One day a teacher gave me an F in drawing. I was stunned, went home and cried for six hours. I realized there was nothing left but to draw how I felt about people. The reaction was tremendous. People I didn't even know would tell me they liked my drawings. And I had luckily obtained a small group of very supportive friends. I rediscovered a sense of direction and purpose (however tenuous) and even won a ceramic scholarship (I voted for myself).

The I left art college and went into hibernation.

Now for the analysis. Looking back from a feminist viewpoint, it is tempting to cry out "Society did it!" and fold this into a neat package. Alas, I cannot do that. A great deal of my misery was self induced and that responsibility lies with me. However, it would have been easier for me if I hadn't learned how to be the peaceful, accomodating good girl (student) and if I had possessed more self-confidence and courage. How much of this was culturally caused I don't know. Certainly there were lots of women in the college who

seemed to avoid these issues by not noticing them. But just as certainly there were others as suseptible to them as I; witness the large drop-out rate for women, or the congestion of women in traditionally feminine fields such as crafts. (In my first year the painting class was small-five men and one women.) witness the ratio of male to female teachers (In my first year there were almost equal numbers of male and female students, though we had nine men and two women as teachers).

These issues no longer interest me greatly. (I got through!) They are passed and what concerns me are the questions that are still present. In the next article I'll discuss how my feminism relates to my art, their interdependance, how I resolved the question of art versus people and much more besides.

I feel guilty for such a meagre analysis, but really, it's all been said before and it's time for my lunch.

One more thing - here's a recent drawing for you. →

Have YOU checked your ADDRESS LABEL?



On Sundays we used to read books

THE FAMILY LAW REFORM COMMISSION

ON MAINTAINANCE

19.

"The province should assume responsibility for collecting and paying out court ordered maintenance and in cases of default, the government should ensure payment of maintenance".

While the government may argue that this will be a very costly endeavor, the present costs in medical care, psychiatric care and the heavy welfare payments, could be greatly reduced from their present amounts, should the strong hand of the law reach out to those who refuse to contribute to the care of their own children. And while the Provincial Government may argue that where a spouse leaves the province, there are no adequate laws whereby action can be brought against them...what happens when a man steals a car in Winnipeg and moves to Regina with it. - Is the law blocked then? It is all the more reason that the government officials, both at the Provincial and Federal levels, stop making excuses to ignore their own responsibilities toward an ever-growing category of citizen - the sole support parent, who is carrying the load alone. Over 75% of all maintenance orders are uncollected and unenforced. But listening to the statistics leaves a person rather detached from the real point of what is being said. I have personally come in contact with so many women who have supported their children on their own and suffered from indescribable poverty. What it means when a maintenance payment is with-held, or is late in arriving, or inadequate (from actual examples I know of), is:

1. Watching your children see their friends and neighbours packing up for a weekend at the lake when its 90 above, knowing that you have \$2.00 to stretch for the whole weekend to provide their recreation.
2. Shopping in second-hand clothing stores - sewing and remodelling so that no-one will suspect. Children are also upset at the prospect that other children would find out their clothes are not brand-new. Husband shows up in new made-to-order suit - always very well dressed.
3. Exchanging old second hand curtains for newer second-hand curtains. Nothing in your decor of your house blends - it is a hodge-podge of the best bargains you can find, not your own personal choice.
4. Going to the bus-stop one morning and pretending you forgot your wallet

so that you can borrow bus-fare off the nice lady you usually run into at the same time (praying she will be there), because you unexpectedly had to give your child your last cent for a school excursion or he cannot go. You had not anticipated this and you must get to work.

- 5. Carrying a 1½ yr. old child through a blizzard in 38 below weather to the baby-sitter's house which is 6 streets away and cannot be reached by bus - all the while knowing your spouse has a nice warm car he is driving to work in. Even if taxis are available you cannot pay for one.
- 6. Paying bank charges on N.S.F. cheques - budget always strained to the breaking point, so post-dated cheques made out with the hope that maintenance cheques will be received on time. It is not, and you must pay the bank even more, and face the embarrassment of the person you owe the money to, informing you of this.
- 7. For the sole working parent everything costs more. Taking a child to the doctor during the working day means taking a taxi home from work, to the doctor, back to the home, and back to work... if there are two or three children with doctor or dental appointments, the costs can be astronomical. And of course there are the baby-sitter's costs which taken out of net salary leave little cash to work with, even though a woman may have a good salary.

If a person does not pay a parking fine - the City soon sends a Policeman to their very door to summon them into court. WOULD THAT THE CITY FATHERS WOULD CARE FOR THE CHILDREN OF SOLE SUPPORT PARENTS AS WELL AS THEY DO THEIR PARKING METERS



- 8. Going for three full months without any heat in the house, starting in May when the temperature dipped to 45 degrees at night, with 3 small children in the house. No hot water because the water tank is heated by gas, and the gas company will not turn on the gas. Your spouse stopped payment on the gas cheque when you initially separated and did not pay you maintenance for the first two months.

-
- _9. Carrying clothes to the laundromat because the wash machine broke down. Your precious little time at home is wasted for a few hours to do this. You don't dare call an electrician because you don't know the cost. No oven as the element on the bottom is worn out - again afraid to call the electrician with a guess as to what it will cost.
- _10. Your children are wondering why their parent can't laugh, looks worried, and gets mad if they ask why she won't take them to the movies, as she had promised to last week. (The maintenance cheque did not come).
- _11. You watch your son sit in front of a television as his only diversion while his friends attend Taikwando lessons, music lessons, belong to a hockey team with full equipment of their own... providing the basics (food, lodging, etc.) is the best you can do by him, and you wonder what his potential might be if there'd been an opportunity to find out.
- _12. Depriving yourself of all the semi-luxuries most working people take for granted (Hair-does, pretty clothing, lunch with co-workers) because guilt feelings for children would be over-whelming. Witness spouse showing up with lavish gifts for children (and sometimes including those from girl-friend of spouse) - though in court the man claimed he was "having a rough time of it" - and maintenance payments were set at rock bottom. Daughter is very impressed by presents, with father's new girl-friend, and (sub-consciously) resents the poverty she shares with you. Phones father when you try to insist on hours to arrive home, duties to be performed around the house. She admires the father. He encourages her disrespect of mother. Children learn to manipulate those who can give them the most and in the case of separation the gift is not so important as the indication of love which it provides - (very necessary to the young child). However, the parent looking after the child cannot provide the luxuries of life, much as they wish to. Buying the least expensive gift can over-tax the budget.
- _13. Never being able to accept many social invitations out, as you have children to stay home with - your evenings out are few and far between. Vacations occur very seldom (sometimes never) - and even so - at the least expensive place possible, usually surroundings inhabited by other very poor parents. You are the lower echelon of society - even though you are a hard-working and responsible person. You hear that your spouse has rented property at the lake, and just added an addition on to the cabana he has built on it...
-

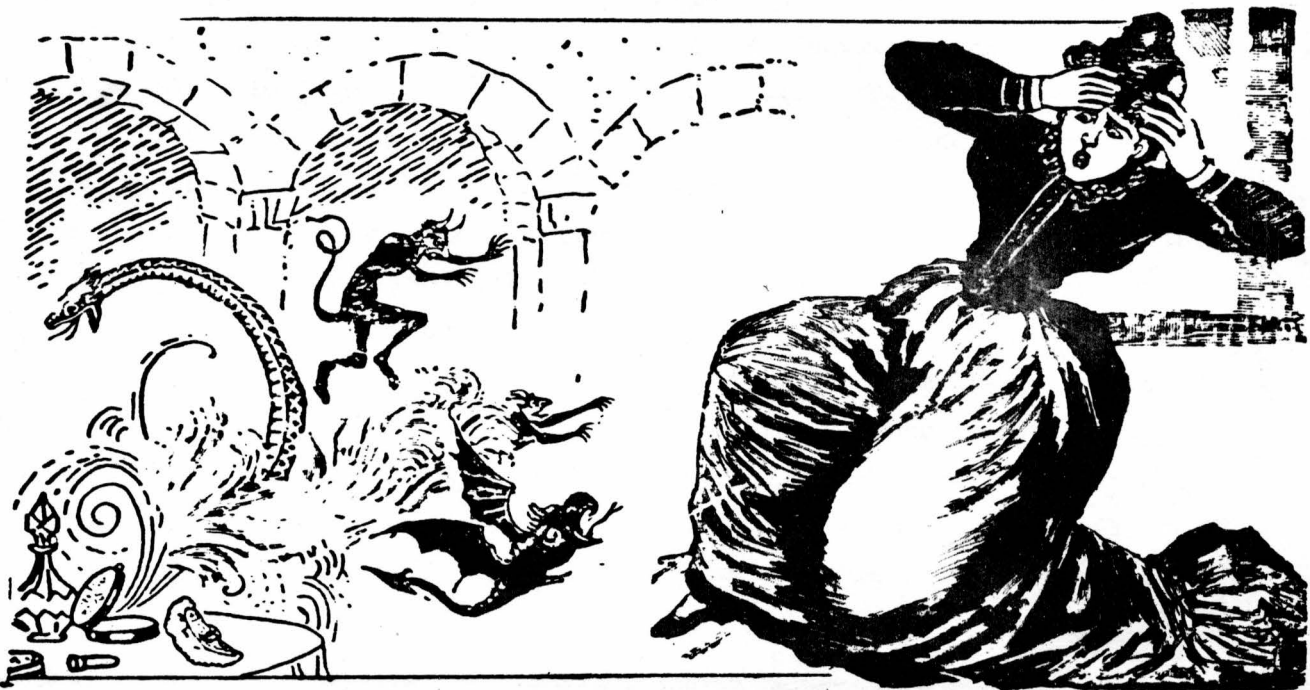
and visitation privileges definitely co-incide with what is convenient for him, as you have no social life. You gracefully oblige your spouse's wishes as it is important for children to see him.

If a person does not pay their parking fine - the city soon sends a policeman to their very door to summon them into court. (Would that the City Fathers would care for the children of the sole support parent as well as they do their parking meters!)

If a men robs a store of a \$25. item, there is no doubt that the law will swing into action to apprehend, fine and insure that person knows he cannot get away with breaking the law.

If a man does not pay income tax, whether he goes from one end of Canada to the other, he will surely be found and the money will be repaid.

But every day, men break the law with regard to maintenance payments. An order made by a judge in the court of the land is totally ignored and nothing is done in most cases. Every dodge is known, - quit their job, (until the court case is over with), move to another province. How can any government look the other way at this? It represents chronic laziness and incompetency on the part of government agencies - it represents pure hell for the sole support parent.



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MOLLY JACKSON, Songs and Stories

SARAH OGAN GUNNING, Girl of Constant Sorrow.



ABORTION TO REMAIN IN THE CRIMINAL CODE - OF COURSE!

Now we know why it will not be recommended that abortion be removed from the Criminal Code of Canada. It is not because the performance of this simple, medical procedure is or should be a crime. The Report of the Committee on the Operation of the Abortion Law reveals clearly that this inequitable and unworkable law generates criminal activity, along with racism, lies, distortion, fraud, profiteering, and the deliberate endangering of the lives of Canadian women.

The very worst aspects of our system and society are exemplified by the perpetuation of this law. First we have a very vague law that usurps freedom of choice from Canadian women. The Report reveals that 2/3 of Canadians don't even know that abortion is their legal right under defined circumstances. Because of the restrictions of the law, the Report reveals that accessibility to the procedure is nearly impossible for the poor, the young, rural women, and new immigrants. The wealthy, well-informed urban dwellers of course have always had access to this procedure.

Now that a lucrative situation has been created by the government, profiteers are allowed to establish business to prey off the ignorance and misfortunes of these women. To further ensure that business remains profitable, very little money is put into family planning, no programs are developed for family life education in our schools, and virtually no funds are put into birth control research. The Report's conclusions, although never stated as such in the report, appear to lay blame for all the inequities on the ignor-

ance and promiscuity of women and the lack of uniform standards by provincial governments and hospital boards.

Sarcasm aside, let's look at some of the facts contained in the report:

* "The Committee was instructed to make no recommendations on the policy underlying the Abortion Law." p. 27

* "The procedure provided in the Criminal Code for Obtaining therapeutic abortion is in practice, illusory for many Canadian women." p. 141

* "In terms of all civilian hospitals (1348) in Canada in 1976 20.1% had established a therapeutic abortion committee." p. 105

* "For every 5 women who obtained an abortion in Canada, at least one woman left the country for this purpose." p. 19

In 1975, 9,627 women were forced to go to the U.S. to obtain an abortion. In a small survey, 1 out of 4 women^w carried their pregnancy to term, did so because of the lack of accessible abortion services, or because of delays involving therapeutic abortion committees.

* Commercial abortion referral agencies have been established in several eastern centres. "At several of the commercial agencies, clients were routinely told that obtaining an abortion was illegal in Canada, misinformation was given about the actual costs involved, and alleged counsellors were paid

on a commission basis." p. 383
"These agencies existed opportunistically, at a stiff price for their clients." p.35

* "An average interval of 8 weeks between the initial medical consultation and the performance of the abortion procedure not only extended considerably the length of gestation, but increased the risk of associated health complications." p. 19

* "On a national average women were extra-billed (by physicians) more often than might be expected in 5 out of 8 provinces" p. 35
"The combined consequences of either the largest fee charges or the most extensive extra-billing involved abortion patients who were the most socially vulnerable: young women, newcomers to Canada, and the less well educated." p.405

* "The Family Planning Grants Program of the Dept. of National Health & Welfare... by Apr. '76 had an operating budget of \$668,000." p. 413 "In addition... \$3,824,727 was funded for 22 international projects between Sept. '71 & Mar. '76. "This endeavor stands in sharp contrast to the efforts which have been undertaken in this Country." p. 419

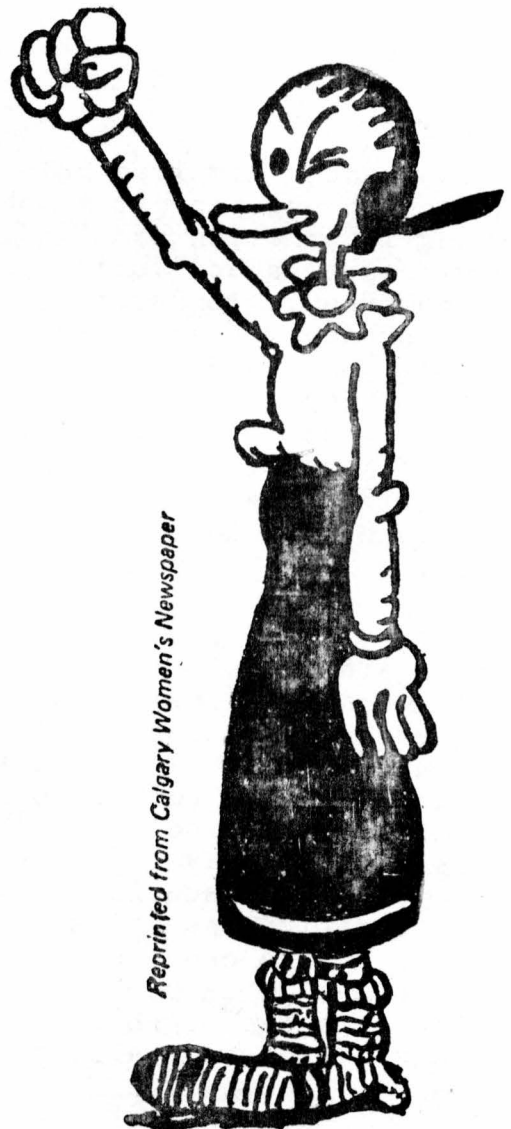
* In Manitoba, government family planning expenditures for 1975-76 totalled only \$15,000 in contrast with the Saskatchewan government's efforts at \$118,457.

* "The Manitoba College of Physicians and Surgeons established a Central Therapeutic Abortion Committee in 1972 to serve as a referral source to review applications from small regional hospitals. By 1976 it had met twice to review 2 applications. Eight general hospitals in Manitoba had thera-

peutic abortion committees." p. 95-96
In Manitoba, only 2 hospitals, Health Sciences Centre and the Victoria General performed more than 60 abortions in 1975, four performed 10 or less. (stats. from M.H.S.C.)

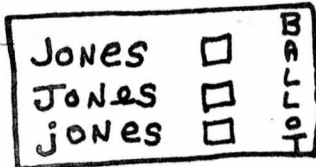
HOW LONG, SISTERS, WILL WE ACQUIESE TO ABUSE BECAUSE OF THIS LAW?

Write to the federal government demanding that the law be repealed, that monies be spent on family planning programs, family life programs in our schools, and pregnancy counselling centres.
Join CARAL, 251 Garfield St.



Reprinted from Calgary Women's Newspaper

IF ELECTIONS INTREST



you!

Within the next six months Manitoba will experience provincial municipal and school board elections. The purpose of this article is to provide information on what is involved in elections and what role individual women can play in affecting social policy.

I WHAT ELECTION WORK INVOLVES

The NDP originated the idea of door to door canvassing at a time when they were too poor to pay for media P.R. that the Conservatives and Liberals used in elections. Since then however, all parties have adopted a similar method of obtaining votes, although the NDP still relies most heavily on volunteer labour.

Canvassing involves going door to door in every constituency, giving information and finding out voter concerns and voting patterns. Its purpose is to determine before election day who is going to support your candidate. When election day arrives, the party machine goes into action trying to make sure everyone they have identified as a supporter of their candidate gets into a voting booth.

The various jobs of election-eering are as follows

1. Canvassing-alone or in pairs. One poll involves about 2 days a week. It is canvassed three times. Taking full responsibility for one poll involves usually 6-7 days, plus election day. Each household is defined as positive, negative or undecided by the canvasser, and this information is passed on to the campaign organizer.
2. Raising money-usually done by party organizers.

3. Putting up signs on lawns (Occasionally and illegally tearing down those of the other party).
4. Writing letters to inquiring voters.
5. Phoning potential workers and pressuring them to get out and work.
6. Scrutineering-this occurs only on election day. Inside scrutineers sit inside the voting stations and cross off the names of the supporters of their candidate who have voted. Outside scrutineers run around making sure the right voters vote and checking with the inside scrutineers to make sure this is happening.
7. Having parties-this involves inviting neighbours or friends in to meet the candidate.
8. Running a campaign-these are a few central people who make sure all the above, and a few things I've forgotten, are being done.

Everyone should evaluate whether they wish to work in an election. Often one's political views do not seem to be represented; sometimes the candidates all appear to be unintelligent and opportunistic. If your own political philosophy has not been considered in depth you may not know who to support.

However there are advantages. You will certainly have more effect on policy if you work for a candidate. You can argue that your support and those of others like you made the election win possible which gives you additional leverage in forming policy. You will learn something about electoral policy and get to know some people who may have an important impact on your life by the decisions they make.

It is possible to go to a candidates office (get phone no. through information, by name or party) and state how many hours you have available, ranging from 6 to 100. Generally, the election process is only 6 weeks in duration.



II MAKE YOUR POSITION CLEAR

If you decide to work I would suggest the following actions on your part,

1. Demand to meet the candidate first.
2. Impress on her (or him) what your views are.
3. Ask whether or not the candidate supports those views. If she (or he) doesn't, don't work on that campaign and tell the candidate why. If the candidate agrees with you, explain that you expect those views to be stated during the campaign and enacted into legislation after the election. Be willing to make some compromises; they will be necessary. But don't overcompromise your principals.
4. Make your presence known as often as possible, so that the candidate recognizes your importance in the campaign.
5. You may be able to make other bargains with the candidate.

III WHO SHOULD YOU WORK FOR

There are three choices. First, you could work for the best person in your own constituency. Second, you could go to any other constituency where you think there is a valuable and worthwhile person to elect. Muriel Smith, for example, is getting a lot of workers this way. Third, you could be an opportunist and work for whoever you think will hold a cabinet position in the next government in a portfolio you feel is important. I don't recommend this latter course, but many do. Big corporations often give to both the Liberals and the Conservatives and on occasion the NDP as well. Presumably they believe this will buy them favours in the future.

Womens movement supporters and contributors who are announced candidates in the upcoming elections include Ruth Pear (NDP-Fort Garry) and Muriel Smith (NDP-Crescentwood).

If you need extra money, try to get a job related to an election. Two basic kinds of jobs exist, neither paying very well and both short-term, but vaguely interesting.

1. Enumerating- involves going door-to-door and getting the names of voters on the voting list. (Two or three weeks.)
2. Returning officers - involves basically one long day of working in a polling station checking to make sure people coming to vote are entitled to vote.

For more information on provincial elections call: Andy Antett (Clerk of the House) 946-7203 or call a political party central office for other elections.

NEWS

WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

Just a brief note on the North American Wages for Housework Conference this past month.

Marlyn MacDonald, Brigette Sutherland and Sara Berger) accompanied the Winnipeg Wages for Housework Committee (Lisa Danner) to Chicago April 9, 10 and 11. We three went as observers only, not knowing a great deal about Wages for Housework.

About 70 women participated from New York, Cleveland, Toronto, Windsor, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Florida, and some even came from England. The purpose of the conference was primarily to report on actions the various committees had organized, the results and what the women had learned from them.

What impressed me about the conference was the tremendous solidarity, joy and enthusiasm among the women, not to mention rigorous intellectual analysis. It was refreshing to be with a group who had a solid analysis on which they could act without the agonizing self-doubt, fuzziness and vacillation that has been plaguing and paralyzing the woman's movement here.

Their theory managed to incorporate socialism and feminism in a totally unique pro-woman way. Particularly interesting battles being fought by the various committees were:

- Black women in New York, for welfare women and students on stipends at college.
- Toronto women, for Nellie's, a woman's crisis house, and for a tenant's rent freeze in subsidized housing.
- California women working with prostitutes.

Much of the discussion centred around how leadership can be developed among the various groups while still ensuring autonomy.

Watch for a fuller report of this exciting conference in the next newsletter issue (June - July).

LIT GROUP

A group of between 8 and 12 women have been meeting in Winnipeg over the past few months to read and explore various aspects of current literature especially fiction by women authors. The group is an offshoot of the 1975/76 Women's Socialist Collective study group which met and still meets at Women's Place. The new "lit Group" meets at the homes of its members. Margaret Atwood's latest novel Lady Oracle was the first book which the group decided to tackle. On a monthly basis this selection was followed by Doris Lessing, Iris Murdoch (A Fairly Honourable Defeat), the topic of women and mental illness (Women and Madness and The Butterfly Ward), Marie Clarie Blais (A Season in the Life of Emmanuel), and Margaret Drabble (The Needles Eye), The May meeting will feature a review and discussion of The Hite Report by Shere Hite. The program for the summer and fall meetings will also be set. For more information please feel free to contact Barb Clubb 475-2875 or Miriam Bloom 774-2177.

WOMEN'S DROP-IN

Because there are very few places where lesbian women can socialize as lesbians, we decided to create our own alternatives. Voilà - the Drop-In. On April 2nd the Winnipeg Lesbian Society held its first Drop-In evening at Woman's Place. We viewed a video tape of a fine film called War Widow - a sensitive portrayal of a lesbian relationship. After the video showing the room was cleared for dancing and music. However both activities were quite overshadowed by the conversations.

The first Drop-In was a great success and the second is planned for May 14.

Heather Bishop, singer and musician extraordinaire will be

entertaining in an evening of song and singing. Everyone is welcome on the condition that you sing along!

Take a look at the following "Fun in the Sun" activities we're planning for the summer.

See you there.

May 28th - WEINER ROAST

June 25th - SPORTS DAY

July 23th - BARBECUE AT LAKE

August 20th - CANOEING

Sept. 11&12 - CAMPING WEEKEND

For further information as to times and places, keep in contact with WLS, Wednesday 7-10 786-4581 or Thursdays 8:00 P.M. at 143 Walnut Street.

MOTHER

I FEEL YOUR SMALL BACK

WITH THE THIN BONE

PERCEPTIBLE

JUST BENEATH THE SKIN

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

I WANT TO HOLD YOU

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THAT HAVE BEEN YOUR

LIFE

-Sharon Stevenson

Women Speak Out

Three of us sat down recently to respond to the Rapes Tapes published in the previous newsletter. We found ourselves responding uncomfortably to some aspects of that discussion. We felt that perhaps the previous group was not permitting a level of give and take that seemed to us to be a necessary part of a relationship, or perhaps, that they had ruled out the possibility of relating to men on a positive level. The discussion of seduction particularly caught our interest and so it was there that we began. However, we quickly found ourselves moving beyond that point, having discovered that we didn't really disagree that strongly! We soon moved into an exploration of child-raising and the kind of social attitudes that encourage soft rape. In fact we found ourselves looking at the means to prevent it. We hope you will find our thoughts as provoking and amusing as we did! We are three women - one of whom has children; one is divorced and one is in a long-term relationship.

R A P E T A P E S I I

W.: The thing that really bothers me in the previous discussion is that it doesn't permit a situation in which you might not feel like it, but you're willing to give because you know there will be another nite in which he doesn't feel like it but you'll want him to give. This happens particularly in relationships of some length of time. It's like I'm thinking, "Oh fuck, why does it have to be tonight?" but I go along because I know that when he turns away from me, I'm really hurt.

S.: That can be worked out conversely, so that if I don't want it, he doesn't expect it, and when he doesn't feel like it, I don't expect it. It's just not as much fun to screw with somebody who does not have their heart in it. The problem is that the situation is usually so unequal, where a lot of women's experience is with men who aren't sensitive to that; men who have this ideal picture in their head of women who are just ready, willing and available to be screwed - all that's needed is flattery or charm and that's acceptable because they really need it.

R.: I often run into the myth that once men start, they can't stop whereas women don't have the same need.

W.: ...which is ludicrous.

S.: In fact it comes out in all kinds of irritability, tension and nervousness.

W.: for women

S.: Of course.

W.: But it's that need that I'm saying that one ought to be willing to respond to. There's a level of caring that goes beyond the physical arousal of that moment.

R.: Sometimes I get a kick out of just doing it because he wants it. It's a gift, but then you're not pushed at that moment. I don't feel that I'm being used at that moment because it's still my choice.

W.: It's at that level that seduction becomes really important. If I'm not feeling like sex, then it's necessary for him to put some effort into arousing me and that's seduction. It seems that in the former tape that would have been defined negatively: to try to arouse somebody who does not want to be aroused in that moment.

S.: I think that they were talking about that in terms of initial contacts. Most of their stories were not about long-term relationships where you have made some commitment to sticking it out with him, which changes the situation.

R.: I think that the situation in which one person is seducing another willing person is a positive one. There is still a shared desire to give to each other, even if it's not manifested in that moment by physical arousal.

W.: But there are times that I remember from my marriage that I didn't even feel like being seduced and no amount of caressing of my body was going to arouse me. I was going to participate without being aroused, but I was willing to do that and I don't feel negative about it. Among the most negative things that I remember about my sexual relationship with my husband were the times when he refused me; when I really wanted to make love and he turned away - it signified that he didn't care enough to respond to that need and it hurt all the way down to my soul. Because I know how much it hurt me, I didn't want to do the same thing to him.

S.: Women are good at that - putting themselves in other people's places.

W.: But I wasn't allowing myself to be exploited. I was relating on a level where I didn't want to hurt or get hurt in return.

S.: But that's how women get exploited. Women do that, but men are not conditioned to be that sensitive. And that's really the whole battle.

R.: That seems to be one of the ways in which men need to be more like women. In the process of their liberation men must become more sensitive to those things.

W.: It's one of the things we can teach men. It's not something we should give up. It becomes a problem of maintaining that sensitivity without being exploited.

R.: But it is used against us. Men threaten us with the possibility of our hurting their feelings.

S.: We're always worrying about their hurts, not our own hurts and therefore do things that will make them more comfortable.

R.: It's the mothering instinct - perhaps mothering is a bad word to use, nurturing is better.

W.: If this nurturing instinct is a positive aspect of womanness, something we don't want to give up, then how do we respond in a way that does not allow the other person to exploit us.

S.: I'm looking at how women in the women's movement have been nurturing each other - that is like 'manna from heaven' for me when women turn their nurturing on each other, getting their strength from each other, because I don't think we can get a lot of strength from men. You only get the kind of strength that comes from "I like your thighs or your breasts" - it's flattery. That strength is from sexual power over them when they really like you.

There is a wonderful quote in the Hite Report. In answer to the question - Why do you like intercourse? - very few women commented on the physical act itself. One woman said that she had been married to her husband for 21 years and the only time he compliments her is when they have sex. Those are the only little dribbles of reward you get from men.

R.: You actually get held, or close physical contact. It's the only time we get nurtured by the men in our lives.

W.: Does strength then mean the ability to reject these limited male responses altogether and turn to our women friends, or should we be thinking about teaching men?

S.: But how do you teach someone to nurture? If it's by example, men have had lots of opportunity. They've watched women nurture since time immemorial.

R.: But they've always thought of it as women's role. I think they can be taught; that men can be shown that it is their role too, by giving them lots of positive feedback.

S.: Like giving a dog a bone, if they take care of the kid for an afternoon. I resent even doing that. You could spend your time nurturing someone to teach them to nurture.

R.: But you both gain. I demanded such responses from my husband in the beginning and now he gives to me without the demand, and I really value it. They can learn. But my husband also learned it from his mother.

S.: I think that is a key to this. Relationships, or the potential of a relationship, don't just begin when 2 people meet. It stems from being children and is part of a whole complex history of personal relationships that begin when we were children. I think that women can teach men, but they can only do it by ignoring them in very important ways and at very important times. I think that if a man has to do childcare in a serious consistent way, not just in a "babysitting role", that teaches him a great deal.

I have just read about a corporation president who pointed out that there were ways he could avoid a meeting with his top executives, there were ways he could avoid taking some vice-president to lunch, but there was no way he could leave a 4 year old on the street during rush hour traffic. He knew that!

That's how nurturing skills grow, by caring for someone when they're really dependent on you, like children are.

R.: But where do women get this skill from?

W.: Not all women are able to nurture.

S.: No, but it is more consciously built into their conditioning. Most women expect to have children and this is an important motivator.

R.: And girl children have dolls. The doll is treated like a baby and mother encourages a tender, caring attitude. Perhaps we should be making sure that all our boys have dolls. Now the little boys that I know who have dolls do care for them and men today do look after children.

S.: It's almost like a cliché at this point, but girls are encouraged to cry and giggle and show their emotions, while boys are told its not manly to do such things.

R.: I shared a particularly sad experience with a male friend who said that he really wished he could cry. I told him that he should just go into the bathroom and cry if he didn't want anybody to see him. But he replied that he couldn't.

He had tried but he just couldn't. It had been totally conditioned out of him. Some men are now beginning to want this, realizing that they could cope better if they had the emotional outlets that women have.

The men who can't care seem to be all tied up in their sexuality. It's those men who are more likely to abuse women and be conducive to rape. They have to prove some macho role. The men I know who care, also like women as people.

W.: I'm wondering where this is getting us to in our discussion of soft rape. It seems that we agree that there are soft rape situations. We haven't dismissed the term. We agree that soft rape occurs where there is no overt tool of violence such as a knife or gun, but the man plays on the women's insecurities about herself. I'm not sure then, what we are disagreeing with.

R.: The situations that I have been in, that I describe as soft rape were not situations where I was afraid or unwilling to give something, but rather that I was afraid of losing something - perhaps the man. The situation where I'm willing to comply because I am conscious of it as a gift that I want to give, is not one in which I'm afraid of losing him. They are quite distinctly different things. Also one makes you feel good and the other makes you feel rotten.

S.: I think what's important in the previous tape is that they set the problem in a social perspective: What do men use against women - What vulnerabilities do they take advantage of? And when you apply that knowledge to your own experience it is no longer necessary to define those bad experiences we've all had in terms of our own hang-ups. I can now see this as a pattern that has affected many women.

I've had sexual partners tell me I was too sexy or I was too genital, I was moving my genitals around too much. Fuck that! If I had had the woman's strength I have now I would have damaged that guy permanently. At that time I was just totally confused. It made me want to fawn - "oh my God, he doesn't love me.

What can I do to make him love me." I didn't know anything about female sexual response. I didn't know that women had to move a particular way to get it off, I thought it had to be done to me and that there were certain rules to follow. We as women are just learning now, from each other. It's important to recognize those earlier feelings as being the result of confusion, not some lack in ourselves.

W.: This seems to be leading back to our earlier discussion of what one can do with one's children to prevent the kind of aggression that leads to soft rape.

S.: Let them fuck each other from age five onwards!!

W.: Teaching both boys and girls to nurture is obviously an important thing.

R.: I'm trying very hard to give my daughters a good attitude to sex, one which will permit them to enjoy it. But my big fear is who they will be enjoying it with. My fear is not their sexuality it is their partner's sexuality and I'm scared! I talk to teenage boys regularly and they're creeps when it comes to sexuality. Maybe one a month has some good attitudes.

W.: It seems to me that when one's daughters are strong enough inside of themselves to know what they like and what they don't like and to be able to say no to those things they don't like; when they are self-confident enough to recognize that when they are feeling uncomfortable there is a reason for it, that it is not necessarily their fault, then they will be able to resist soft rape situations.

S.: Giving the child a lot of support and self-confidence through your nurturing, but also through your own example.

R.: But how am I going to be sure she's strong and self-confident enough? I encourage her to be aggressive and open. I want her to be able to protect herself from the hurt. It's the hurt that I remember most clearly from bad relationships. I know I can't protect them from

the hurt but sometimes it's so vicious.

W.: No, you can't protect them from the hurt. But it must be possible to give children the tools with which to define more clearly which situations are going to hurt and which ones aren't. One of the things that we lacked was the knowledge of ourselves that would have given us the confidence to avoid situations that we may have even sensed would be hurtful.

R.: How do we teach children to be sensitive and yet hardened?

S.: What are we defining as being hardened? I'm not sure I want to call that hardened: having a sense of yourself; having a sense of what your needs are, That's not being hardened, that's being more human!

W.: When R. is talking about being hardened, I think she's still talking in terms of preventing the hurt, and I'm not sure it's wise to try to prevent it. One of the ways of developing the skills we described earlier is by learning from the experience of being hurt.

R.: If you haven't hurt, are hardened to it, then you don't learn.

W.: I don't think we should be encouraging the building of walls. We should be encouraging the strength to deal with the hurt when it comes and the self-confidence to be able to divine when its coming.

S.: I'm getting a little uncomfortable with the emphasis we seem to be making, that everybody is an island. I really want to re-emphasize that we all share in each other's hurts now. We can really give each other strength.

W.: We have talked about raising girl children to be sensitive and self-confident, but we haven't said very much about raising boy children.

S.: I think that male children start out being as sensitive as female children, but they get that sensitivity drummed out of them.

W.: We want to protect that sensitivity in boys as carefully as we protect it in

girls - we don't want to harden boys either. W.: Can we encourage aggressiveness and still encourage children to express their feelings. One of the bad things that is done to boy children is teaching them not to cry. It seems to me that, instead, we must preserve that ability in children of both sexes.

R.: I think parents protect and nurture their girl children a lot more. Perhaps boys need to be loved even more. Cuddling our boys more will make them more able to love in return.

S.: I've read a study recently that said that mothers talk to their boy children more.

R.: Oh no! they talk to their girls. I remember hours and hours with my sister and I and our mother telling us all the stories of her girlhood. I don't think mothers share that intimacy with boy children.

W.: It may be that there is more intellectual content to the conversations between mothers and sons. I was going to say that an important difference between raising boys and girls has to do with aggressiveness. Girls are taught to contain their aggression - don't argue, or fight, or mess up your clothes. In boy children that aggression is encouraged. Obviously one of the things we want to do is to encourage more aggressiveness in our girl children. So when we're talking about raising boys in a more loving way, we're not talking about containing aggressiveness.

Yet I have some problems with encouraging aggressiveness in children of either sex. It seems to me to be difficult to encourage aggression at the same time as encouraging a collective consciousness or a consciousness of that child's responsibility to other children and the family. Aggressiveness very easily becomes competitiveness.

R.: The difference is related to fighting. Instead of telling the child to hit back, I tell my children to tell that child that he can't do that. They should verbally stand up for themselves. I don't approve of hitting. Also, my daughter has two friends, one of whom calls the other racist names. I often tell my daughter that if she doesn't say something, she is approving. You can teach your children aggression without teaching violence. It is verbal aggression, and little girls are usually taught to be quiet.

R.: If we nurture both aggressiveness and sensitivity in children of both sexes, I think we will go a long way toward eliminating soft rape. Soft rape is mainly something that women allow to be done to themselves, unlike violent rape. If she is strong enough to be able to stand up for the integrity of her own feelings, and he is sensitive enough to be able to perceive that what she is saying she means, then soft rape will not be possible.

S.: I disagree with that. I don't think that it is that simple. X number of children raised by their mothers in that way aren't going to solve the problem because society isn't structured that way. We're forgetting what's out there; what schools and jobs and hierarchies do to people. The other article pointed out that rape isn't just sexual or between two people. War is rape (rape of the environment), I don't think that change will be significant if it starts just with the personal solution. As long as the present power relationship exists between men and women; as long as women need men primarily to survive, then soft rape will continue to occur.

W.: I'm not sure that the problem is the power relationship between men and women. I think the problem is the power relationship between the individual and society. As long as women have to go into marriage for economic security, as long as society does not provide women with children with the security they need to be able to nurture their children, as long as governments can control women's bodies, or lead the country into war and use people as the fodder for these wars, then it is true that soft rape will continue. You have made an important point.

I want to ask though, whether or not these twin qualities of self-confidence

and sensitivity will assist people in these other struggles as well.

S.: I want to respond to the question of whether the problem is with men or society. I see those as intermixed, because when you look at all the things you listed, they're all male dominated institutions. Perhaps it is the masculine ethos that motivates that exploitation - it is how masculinity is defined that is bad.

W.: Exactly, if men were raised to be both self-confident and sensitive it would surely have some effect on both - what they were willing to take from the powers that dominate them, and it would effect how they used the power they have.

S.: I guess what I'm always looking at is how we're going to accomplish all these changes. The way I see myself involved in this struggle is not by depending very much on men and not expecting much from men, but rather doing a lot with women. At this point in time women are much more prone to getting it all together than men are. I see the most potential being with women because we are oppressed. We must get our own power. I'm really into working with women to destroy soft rape. I think that maybe we can do it without men because when they realize that we aren't going to follow the old rules, men will stop resisting the change.

W.: I think there are men with whom we must continue to struggle on a personal level to eliminate soft rape. Our lives are not without men in them. There are men with whom we are lovers, and there are men with whom we work politically and I firmly believe that we must continue to struggle with them.

In terms of a revolutionary focus, where do we organize most effectively, I agree with you that our focus should be on women.

S.: You know there's a whole other topic that we haven't touched upon.

R. & W.: What?

S.: (whispered) I like soft rape...

R. & W.: What! Really, that's very important, Are you sure?

S.: Actually, what I like is the idea of thousands & thousands of men wanting to make love to me. I like to see them coming - over the hill! marching!! When I do my Fellini-type movie, I'm going to film that whole woman's fantasy.

It's a real turn-on for me to see a man working up to go to bed with me. I think it's because I've reached the point where I feel in control. I do not feel vulnerable or confused. I know that I like to have the choice of someone wanting me, that I can say yes or no to,

R.: I want to make the distinction between fantasy and fact. Men often say that women like to be raped; that they're always fantasizing about it. The difference is that in your fantasy you're always in control, so it is not rape. It's what you want, It's passion!

W.: Yes, it is aggressiveness on the part of somebody else in their approach to you. One of the things that we as feminists often get confused about is how we want men to perceive us, I went through a period in my political growth during which I stopped wearing make-up and dressed very plainly, consciously making myself unattractive. I see so many other feminist women who are very much into that now. But it saddens me to see it in them. Now I know that I like that response in men so I dress accordingly. One of the differences now compared to when I was younger, is, and you are right S., is that I now can control the situation. The other point I wanted to make is that being physically unattractive doesn't go hand in hand with feminism,

S.: I don't think I would go that far because when I dress attractively it's because I like the response of both men and women to me,

W.: Yes, of course.

S.: I used to act very differently with men than women. I had this incredible idea of what men wanted out of me, With women I would act more or less naturally,

but with men I would act some mythical way that I thought they wanted me to, and it never worked. I didn't like myself and I figured that men couldn't possibly like me the way I was. What the feminist movement did was to allow me to be ugly and a loud-mouth and to dress unattractively and not to feel shitty about it! I learned to like myself. And I learned that I could charm a man while being myself; it didn't matter how I looked.

But I recently went to a social, dressed attractively; I suppose sexily. I noticed men coming up to me with whom I had worked side by side for five years and they looked at me as if I was another person. All they saw was my boobs! It just threw me for a loop because they were relating to me as a sex object and I didn't want that. They were really nice, but before they were either nice, or not nice if we fought - it was a human relationship. I felt like the pincel on a flower with the bees buzzing about me!

W.: On the one hand we want that response. On the other hand we're embarrassed when we get it. It seems to me that another step in my growth is deciding whether or not I really do like it and then accepting and even enjoying it as one of the facets of male-female relationships. I know that I look at men the same way. If a man is physically attractive it takes me some time to get beyond responding to his physical attractiveness and to dealing with him as a person. And maybe that's not a bad thing!

R.: A difference between men looking at

women as sexual objects and women looking at men as sexual objects is that men are not afraid of women's objectification of them. Women do not rape men. The threat doesn't exist. Women in rape trials are asked how they were dressed, as evidence of their provoking the rape.

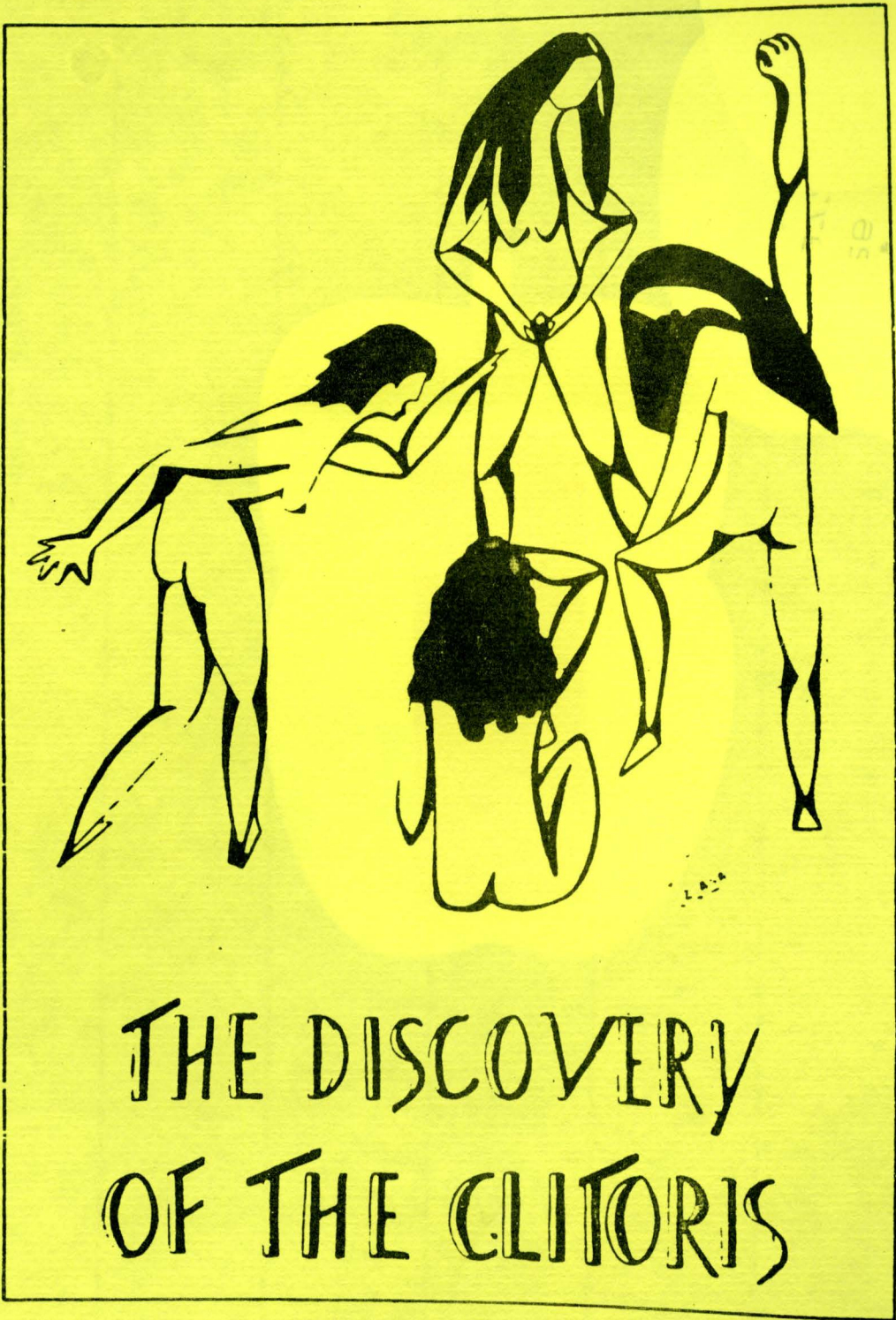
We women cannot just dress up and strut around. We still have to be, and are afraid of being attacked or of calling upon ourselves unwanted sexual advances.

S.: Yes, I only want to be noticed when I want to be noticed!

W.: I think this gets back to selfconfidence. One of the reasons why I can dress sexily is that I'm no longer really afraid of being attacked. I don't expose myself to potentially dangerous situations. One of the facets of my self-confidence is being quite certain of my ability to read men so that I feel fairly confident of my ability to predict when I might be getting myself into an unpleasant situation. The other part of my self-confidence is feeling that I can deal with it. I don't mean violent rape, I don't have the skill to protect myself from that. But I'm not going to be soft raped. I know what I want and what I don't want and so I can confidently present myself to men.

S.: We're older and have more experience. But as long as women are going to suffer these kinds of assaults by dressing sexily then there is a problem. We may as individuals offset it for ourselves, but a lot of women will not be able to because of the system we're part of.





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