

# HORIZONS

WOMEN'S NEWS AND FEMINIST VIEWS

Plagued By The Right

# WOMEN, POLITICS AND AIDS

- ▶ **Feminist Trade: Do We Pocket  
Our Politics When Money Changes Hands?**
- ▶ **Greta Hofmann Nemiroff:  
Ruminations Of A Reluctant Candidate**



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SEPTEMBER 1986

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Flora Tristan

Feminist,  
Socialist,  
and Free Spirit

Joyce Anne Schneider

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# Merchants for Social Change

PENNIE MITCHELL



Many of you responded to the *Herizons* questionnaires we sent out recently to a random sampling of our readers. We asked a multitude of questions: what kind of job do you think we're doing; how do

you rate the quality of the writing; are we radical enough; what issues should we be giving more coverage to. Then we asked you about your consumer spending intentions, in order to give our advertising department some ideas about how you spend your time and your money.

The fact that over half of you responded confirms our statistical suspicions about feminists; we've proven once again that feminists are willing to share their thoughts and energies in order to support something they believe in.

And what do those surveyed think of *Herizons*? Well, 64 per cent think *Herizons* is just about right in its degree of radicalism; the rest are evenly split with 15 per cent saying *Herizons* is too radical and 14 per cent saying it's not radical enough.

Among the hottest topics of interest you listed were equal pay, women's history, pornography, spirituality, the Charter of Rights, women in non-traditional occupations and other workplace issues. More than 80 per cent rated the general quality of the magazine, including design of the cover, as either good or excellent, while more specific questions on writing style and depth of information rated marginally lower; they were rated either excellent or good by 75 per cent and 69 per cent of respondents respectively.

Two thirds of respondents indicated that they eagerly await the arrival of *Herizons* in the mail and read *Herizons* cover to cover or at the

very least go through most of the magazine article by article.

When we divided *Herizons* into sections and asked what you read most frequently, feature articles ranked highest, with 71 per cent checking off the "frequently" category. Letters are listed as frequently read by 63 per cent of readers; news, editorials, bulletins, reviews and columns all followed, in that order. Lyn Cockburn's *Satirically Yours* wins as the most favoured of our regular columns, seconded by *Enterprising Women*, and *Going Places*.

We also found out some interesting reader demographics. For example, two thirds of those surveyed share living space with a live-in partner and 52 per cent are parents. Ten per cent of those with dependent children under 18 had 3 or more children. Eight per cent of *Herizons* readers are homemakers and 74 per cent work outside the home, full or part-time.

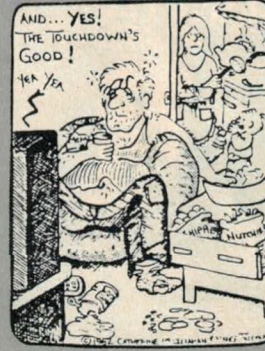
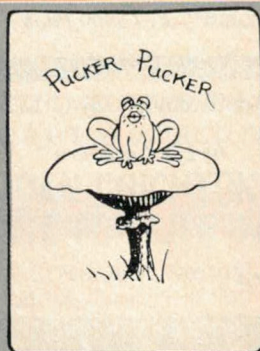
Overall, the survey reflects a strong readership; one that responds to *Herizons* and still challenges us to come up with original, well-presented articles. And because we're in the business of selling our medium as well as our message, the consumer information on buying intentions and financial information is invaluable. Being both merchant and feminist can be a challenge in and of itself, but knowing who our readers are, as consumers, will help us increase our financial stability over the next, vitally important few years. You can actively contribute to our success by extending your continued support whenever possible to those who advertise their products and services in *Herizons*. It is important that we ultimately attain self-reliance by continuing to grow as an advertising vehicle as well as relying on our subscriber base.

In this issue of *Herizons* Emma Kivisild, a Vancouver writer and activist, describes many of the apparent contradictions we live with as feminists and businesspeople (see page 24), as

we attempt to humanise the business of doing business. Offering a low-income rate to readers who can't afford the regular rate is one way we feel we can get a fair price for our product and still allow accessibility to women who aren't as financially privileged as others. Raising money by offering our readers feminist treats such as our tremendously successful Feminist Library Contest will continue to be one way we work towards economic stability. Another project we've just launched is a joint fundraising/subscription drive with feminist groups across the country. The way it works is simple: the organisations sell subscriptions to *Herizons* through their office and half the \$20 subscription fee stays with the sponsoring organisation. (If you're interested in participating write to Debbie Holmberg-Schwartz at *Herizons* 200-478 River Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R3L 0C8).

As we head into our fifth year of full-time publishing (our second as a national magazine) it seems strange to feel that we're still so young. Somehow we've managed to survive on a dream; at times our inexperience has allowed us to try things more experienced publishers might not have attempted; other times our vision has blinded us to normal publishing industry expectations, but we've bounced back. When we've made mistakes, we've been quick to correct them. We've built on the trust we have with our readers and not been hesitant to seek the advice of more experienced publishing or marketing professionals.

In the upcoming year, we hope to explore further the many dynamics of feminism, to challenge readers and be challenged by you. We're going to try to keep readers stimulated with forward-thinking commentary and continue to be an activating force. We continue to be sustained by the determination and strength of a readership who are part of an unstoppable movement with clear foresight and the courage to dream. ▼





# HERIZONS

WOMEN'S NEWS AND FEMINIST VIEWS

MEMO TO: HERIZONS READERS  
FROM: HERIZONS STAFF

RE: PRECIOUS MOMENTS

We're planning a spiritual celebration with our readers, for our December issue.

We'd like you to send us photos of memorable moments you have experienced around Winter Solstice and the Holiday Season. A selection of the photographs will appear in our December issue.

Send us one picture (either colour or black and white), along with a 25-word narrative about the picture. A self-addressed, stamped envelope must accompany your submission and we'll make sure your photo is returned. Photos can be of anything, from a walk in the woods, to more traditional Holiday events.

If we select your photo for publication, you'll receive a Herizons Sweatshirt. DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 30, 1986, and please be sure and tell us whether you want a large or extra-large sweatshirt if your photo is chosen.

SEND TO:

Herizons Spiritual Celebration,  
200-478 River Avenue,  
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## All mothers need support

This is in response to the article in the April/May Issue "Arbitrating Adolescence".

An issue on mothering, specifically one a lesbian mother is often faced with is the issue of "mothers and sons". As a lesbian mother, I am often confronted with comments from some feminists and lesbians such as, "you have sons, too bad!", or "do you find it a conflict being a lesbian with boy-children?" I find mothering difficult at the best of times, it is always a challenge but can be rewarding. However, the fact that I have male children doesn't limit my choices as a lesbian, nor does it place restrictions on my relationship with my children. I feel my sons are receiving a valuable education on roles, images of womyn, and alternative values which their peers unfortunately may never be aware of. On the other hand, I am learning about their values, roles inflicted upon them by peers

and society, and appreciating my life style much more.

Adolescence is a particularly difficult time as they learn about themselves, their bodies, and their independence. But it always opens the way for discussion, as they make decisions about their lifestyles and values (either conflicting with their peers or with me).

I am happy I have sons. They are a part of me from which I can never separate. They have broadened my perspectives throughout my life. I just wish I didn't have to defend that to other womyn.

In sisterhood,  
Sue

## Stop the fundamentalists, buy Herizons

Please find enclosed a cheque for \$17 for a subscription to *Herizons* magazine.

I am a man, but I consider that I hold feminist views and as such feel that I should support women in their struggle to get a fair break in society. I think equality for women is good for women and men, and I'd like to see it encouraged.

I do not like the trend in society today towards fundamentalism and all that that entails. If subscribing to your magazine can stop or reverse this trend then I consider it a worthwhile investment.

Adrian Gec  
Masset, B.C.

## Feminism a support for survivor

I would like to congratulate Heidi Muench for her article on "What Survivors Can Tell Therapists", in the April/May issue of *Herizons*.

As an incest survivor I can readily identify with the author about some of the frustrations of professional counselling. I'm amazed at how "professionals" keep their clients feeling like victims. Identifying oneself as a survivor and believing it is a daily challenge, one I must face.

A recent Incest Survivors Action Group was established in my community by The Northern Women's Action Group. A professional sex therapist in our area, wanting more information, responded to our ad on the group. Our consultant, facilitator, and myself attended the appointment. I've been working on becoming a survivor for three years. In the one hour I was there I never felt more like a victim than I did in a long time. Again I had to struggle to overcome the hurdle.

I've never felt such support, comfort and caring as when I became involved more directly with feminism. A few months ago I couldn't hug individuals. I still struggle to do this at times. However, I can now offer it to certain other women and can readily accept it at most times, and now I feel I can't get enough of it. To accept oneself unconditionally is easily said and not so easy to do.

Sure, we can wear masks and say everything is O.K., but that's just a word. We fear the introduction, yet ever long for an understanding. How can understanding be present when we block ourselves — a silent struggle. Honesty with oneself needs to be attained before we can be that way with other women.

Presently, I struggle with sharing of feelings. It's difficult, scary, and makes me feel insecure. However, I always feel better whenever I share them with another feminist. There's an understanding, an acceptance that exists.

By participating in the Incest Survivors Action Group, a process of learning, coping, accepting and unconditional support is found. I still get nervous before a meeting, where I can't eat and it thoroughly overtakes my days' thoughts. However, at the end of the meeting a feeling of "dislocation" is present.

Feminism is at the root of our group — and it's been effective. Another group for CAS wards for teens 13 to 16 years old has been formed, and they've begun to incorporate our "feminist" roots.

These survivors will no longer let themselves be victims and will not let incest be "a life sentence".

Joanne

## Spit in your sweatshirt

Please rush one extra-large *Herizons* sweatshirt to me at the above address. I am enclosing my personal cheque for \$20.

I can hardly wait to receive my sweatshirt as in addition to all the "ates" listed in your ad, I intend to learn to expectorate as a means of deterring sexual harassment.

Publishing is an exhausting business with few rewards so I would like to compliment *Herizons* staff on the high quality of this fine feminist magazine. Eat your heart out, *Chatelaine*!

Mary Magill  
West River Station,  
Nova Scotia



## HERIZONS

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Charlynn Toews	Norma Cameron
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Emma Kivisild	C. DeMarco
Mary Louise Adams	Tsigane
Debra Pilon	Jeanne Perreault
Greta Hofmann	Heidi Muench
Nemiroff	Debra Rooney
Cy-Thea Sand	Douglas Curran
Elizabeth Shefrin	Shannon Robson

The aim of this magazine is to provide an alternative means of communication with a feminist perspective in order to stimulate, to inform, to effect change, and to unify women's strengths, serving as a forum for women.

Herizons magazine is located at 200 - 478 River Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3L 0C8. Phone (204) 477-1730. Herizons is published 8 times per year. Subscriptions \$20 per year; outside Canada add \$6. Low income: \$9 per year. Stripping by Litho-strip, Winnipeg, Man. Printing by Michalski Printing Service Ltd., Winnipeg, Man. Herizons is a member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers' Association and is listed in the Alternative Press Index. Submissions are welcome. Editing rights reserved and submission does not guarantee publication. A self-addressed, stamped envelope will ensure submissions are returned to author. Views expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect Herizons policy. Second Class Mail Registration No. 5899. ISSN 0711-7485

September 1986

Canadian  
Periodical  
Publishers'  
Association

CCAB INC.

## Wife abuse linked to free speech

On a recent trip to Waskesiu, I was browsing with a friend through the souvenir section of the General Store when we were appalled to come across several wooden mallets with the words "wife tamer" printed on them. We indicated vehemently to the person in the store that we were outraged that these articles that blatantly promoted violence against women would be on display in a store frequented by tourists of all ages. He defended his right to sell these mallets and told me that I was trying to censor the type of items he could sell to the public. He also suggested that the Soviet Union might be a more appropriate place for me to live.

This incident clearly shows how this society condones and promotes the degradation of women.

And now, you can purchase a small, wooden mallet to tame your wife with if she gets out of line; a souvenir to remind you of your weekend together in beautiful Waskesiu. The brutalization of another human being is not a laughing matter and I shudder to think of the message we give to the young, impressionable minds of children as they pass through that store looking for a trinket to take home with them. We should be teaching our children that the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of women and children is not acceptable nor will it be tolerated. Only then can we build a more just

society based on loving, respectful and equal relationships.

I will not be shopping in the General Store in Waskesiu this summer and I would encourage others to do the same until the store owners remove these offensive mallets from their store. It might be a good idea to stop in and tell them why you won't be shopping there or write them a letter care of the Waskesiu Chamber of Commerce.

Colleen Watson  
Prince Albert, Sask.

*The editors regret that the above article was edited for length.*

## Herizons helps to radicalise

Let me take this opportunity to thank you for your insightful articles, relevant short news items, and constant encouragement that I am not alone in my interests and beliefs. At the age of 25, and with two degrees, I sometimes feel adrift with my contemporaries — somewhat aware and "liberal", they still view me as a rather radical feminist. It is difficult to explain that I fall quite comfortably into the mainstream of feminist belief and practice, and hold quite "unradical" opinions. It is my hope that by passing on my issues of *Herizons*, that I can quietly demonstrate that we have common needs, values and goals — and perhaps gently "radicalize" them into the world of Canadian and international women's issues.

Please, please continue sending me *Herizons* — I need the confirmation and my friends need the gentle persuasion!!

Lorna L. Kaufman  
Kingston, Ontario



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## Genital mutilation abhorred

In Africa today women's voices are being raised against genital mutilation still practiced on babies, little girls and women. These voices belong to a few women who are prepared to call it in question when traditional practices endanger their lives and health. The total number of women affected is in any case unknown, but without doubt involves tens of millions of women.

### What it is

Female genital mutilation varies and in Africa there has been a tendency to group all kinds of mutilations under the misleading term "female circumcision." Circumcision as we know it is the cutting of the female prepuce or hood of the clitoris. This is the mildest, affects only a small proportion of women concerned. Besides this, is 'excision', which is the cutting of the clitoris and of all or part of the labia minora. The worst of these kinds of mutilation is 'infibulation', which is the cutting of the clitoris, labia minora and at least the anterior or two thirds and often the whole of the medial part of the labia minora. These last two mutilations (excision and infibulation) are the worst of all. These operations are done with special knives, razor blades or pieces of glass.

Most frequently the operations are prepared by an old woman of the village known as "Gedda" in Somalia or traditional birth attendant known as "Daya" in Egypt and Sudan, and in some parts of Nigeria and Mali by village barbers or women of the blacksmith's caste with knowledge of the occult. More recently, however, mutilations are also being carried out in hospitals in urban areas like in Mali. Except in hospitals, anaesthetics are never used. The age at which the mutilations are carried out varies from region to region. It varies from a few days old by the Jewish Falashas in Ethiopia to about seven years old in Egypt and many countries of Central Africa, to adolescence among the Ibo and Ibibio tribes of Nigeria.

### How it is done

The little girl, entirely nude, is immobilized in a sitting position on a low stool by at least three women. One of them has her arms tightly around the little girl's chest, two others hold the child's thighs apart by force, in order to open wide the vulva. Men are rarely present at operations. The child's arms are held tight behind her back by two other women guests. The operator cuts with her razor from top to bottom of the small lip and then scrapes the flesh from the inside of the large lip. This nymphectomy and scraping are repeated on the other side of the vulva. The little girl

howls and writhes in pain, although she is strongly held down. The operator wipes the blood from the wound and the mother, as well as the guests verify her work, sometimes by putting their fingers in. The amount of scraping of the large lips depends upon the technical ability of the operator. Herb mixtures, earth or ashes are rubbed on the wound to stop bleeding. Exhausted, the little girl is dressed and put on a bed. The operation lasts from fifteen to twenty minutes according to the ability of the old women and the resistance put up by the child.

Health risks and complications depend upon the gravity of the mutilation, hygienic conditions, the skill and eyesight of the operator and the struggles of the child. Whether immediate or long term, the consequences are grave. Hemorrhaging from the section of the internal pudendal artery may result in death. Bad eyesight of the operator or the resistance of the child cause cuts in other organs and may cause infection. Since the instruments used have rarely been sterilized, tetanus often results. In all types of mutilations, a part of woman's body containing nerves of vital importance to sexual enjoyment is amputated. There are psychological consequences as well; anxiety prior to the operation, terror at the moment of being seized by the village matron, unbearable pain, a sense of humiliation and betrayal by parents, especially the mother. Long term complications include infections of the uterus. Sometimes, a large foreign body forms in the interior of the vagina as a result of the accumulation of mucous secretions. The vagina may also be ruptured and painful menstruation is certain.

### Why it takes place

The forces which motivates a mother to subject her daughters to such drastic operations are different and bewildering. The reasons given are often sexual, religious and sociological. Some African societies believe that the operations may diminish a woman's desire for sex and thus erase prostitution. Some religions like Christianity are of the opinion that circumcision was one of the commands delivered when the Lord made trial of Abraham and that there was no clear indication in the case of female circumcision. Muslim theologians also advocate mild clitoridectomy. In some parts of Nigeria, it is a mark of honour and distinction for both the girl and her family. In Egypt, for instance, the uncircumcised girl is called "Nigsa" (unclean). Western efforts, on the part of missionaries or Colonial masters to eliminate the practice, have sinfully served to confirm in peoples'

minds that colonial destruction of traditional customs weakens their societies and exposes them to the ill effects of western influence.

### What we can do

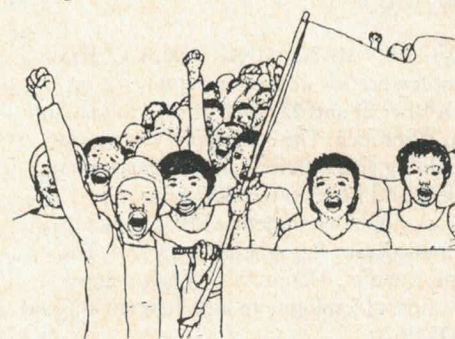
We of this Women's Centre strongly condemn this outrageous act, and have frequently been appealing to many African Governments to legislate against this dehumanizing tradition. Only one country has legislation against female genital mutilation, and that is Sudan. But legislation alone is not the only weapon, for it may simply drive the operation underground and have little effect in achieving any measure of eradication. We are therefore planning a massive education campaign by radio, television, film shows, a well equipped team of field workers, literatures, seminars, workshops and conferences against these mutilations. Only a broad and sustained campaign of education will show traditionalists the undesirable consequences of the practices which they are tempted to follow. But our greatest handicap is the fund for launching the campaign as we have no sufficient fund or financial assistance. We therefore appeal to all our women folk, women's groups, networks and organizations to come to our aid. We need your support, for the project needs funding. Support our women's cause, donate to our worthy cause. For together we shall succeed.

For sending of funds, donations, gifts or inquiries, write to: Mrs. Hannah Edemikpong, Women's Centre, Box 185, Eket, Cross River State, Nigeria, West Africa.

In Sisterhood,  
Hannah Edemikpong  
Women's Centre  
Cross River State, Nigeria  
West Africa

For more information on this topic, contact The Hosken Report, on Genital and Sexual Mutilation of Females by Fran P. Hosken.

Third revised and enlarged edition published by Win News: \$17.00 U.S. / Copy Prepaid. Please send your order to WIN NEWS/Fran P. Hosken, 187 Grant Street, Lexington, Mass. 02173 USA.





## WESTERN REGION

WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN OF COLOUR are being planned by the Calgary Status of Women Action Committee (SWAC) from **September to December 1986** with keynote speakers in attendance on topics such as immigrant women; racism in Canada; racism within the white women's movement; research and writing by women of colour. Following the workshops will be a panel conference with a view to start a network of women of colour. For information contact: SWAC, #124, 320 - 5 Ave., S.E. Calgary, Alta. (403) 262-1873.

LIFE AND LITERATURE is the topic of this year's Manitoba Writers' Guild's annual general meeting at the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature from **September 18 - 20, 1986**. This year's keynote speaker will be author Audrey Thomas. For information: MWG, 3rd Floor, 374 Donald Street, Winnipeg, MB. R3B 2J2.

WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN WRITERS with celebrated poet Anne Szumigalski in Winnipeg on **September 23** at 7 PM. Participants are invited to submit 3 page manuscripts (poems, short story, drama) in English, French or German before Sept. 8 to 32 Lipton St., Winnipeg, R3G 2G5. Fee for this 3 hour workshop is \$12. Register with Janick at (204) 774-7960 by September 18.

NATIVE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE in Brandon, Manitoba on **October 9 and 10, 1986** to present the information paper "Concerns of Native Women," share information and participation to address these concerns. For information: Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, 100-133 10th St., Brandon, MB., R7A 4E7 (204) 725-2955.

CANADIAN IMAGES CANADIENNES is a conference celebrating Canadian children's and young adult literature to be held at the Holiday Inn Downtown, Winnipeg on **October 16 - 18, 1986**. For list of speakers and registration information: Joan Macdonald, Registration CIC, #535-42 Roslyn Road, Winnipeg R3L 0G1 (204) 284-9353.

WOMEN MANAGING FOR SUCCESS is a conference for women entrepreneurs on **October 21 and 22, 1986** at the Holiday Inn in Winnipeg. The conference will provide training and information on management skills and business development in a workshop environment with 50 topics to choose from. Registration fee is \$95. For information: Manitoba's Department of Business Development and Tourism at (204) 945-7620.

## EASTERN REGION

FEMINISM AND DISABILITY is the topic of monthly meetings starting on **September 21, 1986** at 25 Elm St. (Yonge & Dundas) in Toronto from 1 - 4 PM. The meetings are organised by the DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) and are wheelchair accessible; other special needs can be requested from Pat at 694-8888, DAWN Toronto, 14 Boem Ave., Scarborough, Ont. M1R 3S8.

STRENGTHENING THE VOICE OF WOMEN and working together for action and strategy is the theme of the national conference and general meeting of the Voice of Women on **September 26 - 28, 1986** in Montreal. Conference fee is \$50. Write for information on billets, reasonable accommodation and registration information to: Sheila Sullivan Brown, 4836 Westmore Ave., Montreal, Que. H4V 1Z3

FIGHTING THE AMAZON IMAGE: Disability, Chronic Illness, Body Image and Lesbian Sexuality is a special forum sponsored by the DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) scheduled for **October 11, 1986** from 9 AM - 5 PM at 25 Elm St. in Toronto. For information call Pat at (416) 694-8888 or contact DAWN at address above.

COMING TOGETHER AGAIN: A WOMEN'S SEXUALITY CONFERENCE on **November 6 - 9, 1986**, Toronto, Ontario. This national weekend conference for women features: three dynamic keynote speakers; 35 stimulating workshops and an eclectic evening theatre performance. The conference is aimed at affirming and strengthening our sexuality in a feminist context, exploring the commonalities and differences of our sexual / affectional preferences and moving us towards a sexual expression consistent with our feminism. For registration information write to: Side By Side: Canadian Feminist Resources, Box 85, 275 King Street E., Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1K2, (416) 626-5465.

## INTERNATIONAL

WOMEN IN PHOTOGRAPHY: MAKING CONNECTIONS is a conference scheduled at Syracuse University on **October 10 - 12, 1986** with keynote speaker Marion Post Wolcott (a photographer known for her heart-warming portrayal of American life during the Depression). For info: Amy Doherty at (315) 423-3335 or Syracuse U. News Services, 820 Comstock Ave., Syracuse, NY 13244-5040 (315) 423-3784. EQUITY BY 2000: Meeting the Nairobi Challenge is the theme of conference to be held on **October 12 - 18, 1986** in Washington, DC. For information: Equity by 2000, AAUW Convention Office, 2401

Virginia Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

## VOICES OF WOMAN:

COMMUNICATING FEMINISM is set for **October 18 - 19, 1986** to address communicating between generations; male/female; cross-cultural; language of feminist politics; gay/straight; interracial/interclass and deaf/hearing feminist interaction. Sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Assoc. of the National Women's Studies Association please contact: Adele B. McCollum, Dept. of Philosophy, Montclair State College, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043 (201) 893-7416/893-5144.

LESBENWOCHE BERLIN Lesbians of all colour and all differences are asked to come and discuss with each other during the week of **October 25 - November 1, 1986** in Berlin, West Germany. Contact: Frauenzentrum, Lesbenwoche, Stresemannstr. 40, D-1000 Berlin 61, BRD.

## SUBMISSIONS

FEMINIST CARTOONISTS In order to establish a talent bank of feminist cartoonists across Canada, women who would like to be included are invited to submit their names, addresses and a sample of their work to Susan De Rosa c/o Communiquer'Elles, 3585 St. Urbain St., Montréal, QC H2X 2N6. The bank will be accessible to feminist magazines and associations across Canada.

BREAKING THE SILENCE An anthology of psychiatric inmates' experiences is being co-edited by Dr. Bonnie Burstow and Don Weitz, members of ON OUR OWN. Please submit your material typed and double-spaced with a self-addressed stamped envelope as soon as possible to Dr. Bonnie Burstow, 17 Yarmouth Road, Toronto, Ont., M4K 1E8 (416) 536-4120. A Canadian publisher is being sought for a publication date sometime in 1987.

MADNESS NETWORK NEWS WOMEN'S ISSUE is seeking submissions (articles, graphics, poetry, fiction and survival experiences) for their anti-psychiatric movement publication. Deadline is **October 15, 1986**. Sample copy \$1.00. Send to: *Madness Network News*, P.O. Box 884, Berkeley, CA 94701.

WOMEN'S AUDIO BOOKS will be making written materials available to the visually impaired. The June issue of *Horizons* has been put on tape to introduce this service. Please contact us if you want a promo copy. We will be announcing the details for regular audio subscriptions to *Horizons* in upcoming issues. To volunteer to do reading or for more information on Women's Audio Books contact Sue Williams at (204) 947-2742 or 924-294 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg R3C 0B9.



## Women's voices key to planet's survival

(OTTAWA) — Asked for his impressions of the Conference on the Fate of the Earth, a middle-aged male delegate summed up its essence in a few sentences:

"That woman from Norway. She had me in tears. She really touched me...her sensitivity to the plight of women in society and the abuse they have suffered being victims of male-dominated society, especially the trauma they experience around war and their sons being victims of war."

'That woman' was Berit As, a Norwegian professor and peace activist who galvanised the opening plenary with a speech lamenting the absence of visible feminism at this June conference. The conference, the third of its kind, brought 1000 peace, environment and development activists together from around the world, to network on common objectives.

As described feminism as the global uproar of women against suppressive forces.

While women are in the forefront of the fight against war and for health and justice, she said, "a load of caretaking and poverty" had kept grassroots women from the conference.

Moreover, she emphasised, the real power for world change lies in the misunderstood perspective and values of these women who are undoing historical patterns of subjugation: "If we gently integrate them into our plans for the future, we may have the most vivid motivational force available on our side. If, however, only the women who represent economic power, the media, knowledge and the old patriarchal way are listened to, then...peace and environmental work and development theory



Photo: Philip Hannan

**Berit As, of Norway, told delegates that the global uproar of women will emerge to challenge the world's fate.**

will continue to rest on a fragmented basis of knowledge."

The vibrant Norwegian received a spontaneous and prolonged standing ovation from male and female delegates.

No one who sat in the massive new Congress Centre in the downtown Westin Hotel three days later ever will forget the moment when Tandi Nkiwane, a Black peace activist from Montreal, stood at the closing plenary podium and asked everyone to join hands as she spoke about the young in Soweto who lost their lives protesting against poor education in South Africa.

An African man who followed Tandi to the podium was so affected by her speech that he stood at the lectern composing himself for many seconds, then called the animated and concerned young woman back to the stage. "She said everything," explained a visibly-moved Mtshana Ncube,

who is with the United Nations Institute for Namibia in Zambia.

It was not just the substantive content that distinguished the conference, but the high level of personal interaction which was readily apparent. Embraces were frequent, and obviously heartfelt. An absence of rigidity was manifested even in people's clothes, with suits and ties being exceptions to the comfortable rule.

"Things are happening here. There's a groundswell I can connect with," reported a delegate from the Caribbean island of Dominica to one of the conference organisers.

An underlying theme in the five days of meetings, workshops and panel discussions was the need for people to change the way in which we look at each other, and at the world in which we live.

Reiterating Berit As' strong statements, University of

Toronto physicist and peace activist Ursula Franklin told delegates that women's voices *must* be heard in order for society to make the structural changes necessary for planetary survival. For it is hierarchical structures created by men and for men which are at the root of the world's major problems today.

Friendship, unity of principles, faith and belief are needed for the world to advance, she said, emphasising that the general population must refuse the falsely-constructed reality portrayed by the mass media — a false reality built on enemies, violence, gaining, winning, and being a big shot.

Speaking through a Spanish interpreter at one of the workshops, Vilma Nunez de Escorcia, vice-president of the Supreme Court of Nicaragua, told delegates attending the latter session that 40 per cent of her impoverished country's earnings go to defence because of U.S. military activities in Central America.

In a world where private gain ranks supreme, Franklin reminded delegates, a large emotional barrier exists in trying to get people to push for the indivisible benefits for all that come from peace, environmental, and social justice work.

— Carroll Holland

Audio and video records of all conference proceedings are available. About 10 per cent of the workshops were on feminist themes. For details, write:

Conference on the Fate of the Earth  
P.O. Box 539, Station B  
Ottawa, K1P 5P6



# Women's work valued only when men can't get it

The best of recent efforts of women to create more equitable laws can be easily foiled by the still-sexist interpretations of the final decision-makers, the judges. The "Socialization of Judges to Equality Issues," a national conference on judicial neutrality held in Calgary recently, was organised to deal with just this issue. Although a number of judges were present at the proceedings, the problem of preaching to the converted was in evidence.

I was sponsored to attend this conference by the Consulting Committee on the Status of Women with Disabilities (CCSWD), whose members were hoping, as usual, that the addition of gender and of disability issues would lead us to our own blended analysis. However, I was surprised when a speech entitled "Measure of Damage for Loss of Homemaking Services" focussed largely on legal attitudes toward women who become disabled after marriage.

This loss compensation is historically awarded primarily to husbands who are suing for the loss of the services of their wives. Although estimates of actually paying someone to do this work have been awarded at \$18,000 per year and more in the U.S., and has been estimated by a Quebec economist to be over \$50,000 a year for a normal work week and reaches \$60,000 when stand-by and on call hours are considered, Canadian decisions are usually awarded on a basis of 40 hours a week at minimum wage. [Examples include: A 60-year-old woman with 11 children was valued at the minimum wage for a 40 hour week. A 46-year-old was valued at more, but only because they allowed the assumption that she would have otherwise returned to the paid work-force.]

In addition to the sexist interpretation of valuing a woman's work only when men are deprived of it, the



assumption that disability makes continued productivity and contribution impossible was prevalent. The courts of Canada, however, have not been known to remedy this unnecessary state when challenged by people with disabilities. (At a workshop sponsored by the CCSWD this spring, Suzanne Constans Franklins also revealed the values that underlie such court cases and many studies of women who become disabled: they are valued as "normal" people who have "suffered a terrible tragedy", while women who have had disabilities from birth or early childhood are "expected to be used to it".)

In such court cases, the women themselves are rarely considered to have suffered a loss of their own services to themselves. Judges often lump the amount of money needed for the women's rehabilitation, attendant care, etc. along with the loss of her services to the family unit. This lessens or obliterates her needs as an individual, as a worker, and doesn't separate them from her family, those she was deemed responsible to serve as mother and wife.

Professor Bartha Knoppers who presented this session suggests several alternatives, including encouraging such a woman to be a plaintiff in her

own loss compensation, and that judges should base the amounts awarded on a combination of opportunity cost, replacement cost, and market value based on male salary levels, not female (ie, custodian, not chamber maid, etc.) She concluded that although such cases can be complicated in nature, the solution is simple: If poverty is the problem (the effect of the judgement), then money is the answer.

The usefulness of the conference on a whole may be evident only years from now, when a few of the law students or lawyers in attendance become judges, or when our lobbying efforts result in the topic of sexism entering the mainstream curriculum for both lawyers and judges, or perhaps when judges themselves take the responsibility to socialise themselves to equality issues.

— Charlynn Toews

## Smoking linked to job status

More and more public and private spaces are banning smoking; health statistics continue to cite smoking as one of the prime causes of death and governments try to recover the demands put upon the health system by smokers by increasing the taxation on tobacco. Yet the total number of smokers, roughly one third of the adult population, remains constant. More alarming is that young women are now smoking substantially more than young men.

In a recent research paper, Simon Fraser University graduate student Patricia Hadaway discovered that of the 2,000 high school students studied, 48 per cent of the females smoked, as opposed to 34 per cent of their male counterparts. The study was most concerned with why they smoked and concluded that it was a coping rather than a modelling behaviour. Smoking has definite short term advantages, allowing teens to cope with adolescent stress, for example. For girls in particular Hadaway found that smoking also represented rebellion and defiance. Since smoking has generally been more acceptable for men, boys reported using drugs or alcohol for the same reasons.

Hadaway ascertained that smokers have significantly less involvement in hobbies, intellectual or artistic pursuits, after school jobs, extracurricular activities, community

organisations and athletics. They also tend to have lower grades and fewer social skills. She concluded that smoking was a way of compensating for many teens, and that laws which ban smoking may in fact be counterproductive since they represent the establishment against which teens rebel.

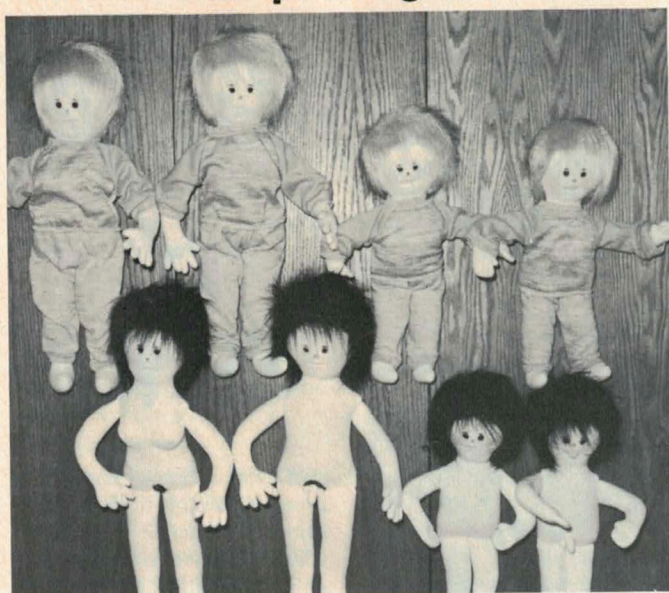
While the daughters of smokers were more likely to smoke than the daughters of non smokers, Hadaway rejected the modelling theory, contending that smokers generally share characteristics that are different from non smokers. They have more difficulty in coping with life's hurdles, big and little. Class and economic differences are even more pronounced than the gender gap. Fewer upper and middle class people are smoking, while more people from lower classes smoke. The unemployed have the highest smoking rates of all. Smoking, far from being a passive response, seems to be a way to try and exert some personal control over one's environment, a conclusion that is startlingly parallel to the suggested cause of anorexia nervosa.

Hadaway observes that while teenage boys are seemingly receptive to education and advertising about the adverse effects of cigarettes, the girls continue to express their rebellion and longings for adulthood, glamour and independence by lighting up.

— C. Heather Allen



## Dolls let kids speak against abuse



Couture's anatomically accurate dolls allow abuse victims to be better understood by police, courts and social workers.

Child abuse and sexual abuse affects and concerns many people. Most of us though, do not know what we can do to help. Nor do we think about it until we have to deal with it on a personal level.

One woman has developed an idea to help these victims. Jennie Couture is a divorced mother of two daughters, living in Winnipeg. Working in a law enforcement office, as a secretary, for the last four years, has opened her eyes to the amount of sexual abuse cases involving children.

Couture also became aware of anatomically accurate dolls being used to interview the victims of sexual abuse. She realised that there was a lack of a readily available source of supply for these dolls. Those that were available were inconsistent in size, quality and characteristics. After consulting with social workers, investigators, and the Crown Attorney, Couture decided to design her own dolls. She named her company "Natural Dolls."

She consulted a craftsperson who produced a pattern for her. Another craftsperson made the proto-types for the set of dolls. Couture wanted the dolls to be unobtrusive so young children would not be intimidated by their features.

The dolls include a mother, father, brother, and sister and are made of a soft, durable fabric. They are dressed in similar grey fleece jogging suits, which can be easily removed. The dolls are of a uni-sex style for one purpose. "The dolls can be used in a court room," Couture says. "They can be used to interview the victims. If a child is able to distinguish the dolls on the basis of sexual organs, rather than their external physical features, it is an indication that this child has knowledge of the human anatomy. This adds to their credibility."

The dolls can be used to question mentally handicapped adults who cannot express themselves, as well as children.

Couture has sent out brochures, complete with order forms and photos. The response has been good. The dolls have been purchased by the RCMP, hospitals, the Children's Aid Society, the Crown Attorney's Department and police departments as far away as the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

— Sherry Rasmussen

*For more information on Natural Dolls, write to P.O. Box 32, St. Vital Postal Station, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2M 4A5*

## Nelliegram

**U.S. TARGETS PACIFIC** — In case Cory Aquino and the Philippines' people power fail to renew the leases for Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base in 1991, the United States government has intensified its political and financial pressure on the people of Belau (a tiny group of islands in the North Pacific) to overthrow the world's first nuclear-free constitution.

Because the U.S. already exerts considerable influence over Belau as it is part of a U.N. trusteeship set up after World War II, the Belauans have been forced to vote for the sixth time on whether to overturn their constitution, originally passed in July of 1979 by 92 per cent of the 15,000 population. The U.S. wants to replace it with a Compact of Free Association which would

allow it to use Belau for military bases.

"The U.S. spent \$200,000 on campaigning to change our constitution this year — and we couldn't even afford to get to all the islands," said Lorenza Pedro who is speaking throughout Europe to publicise her country's situation. Under the Compact the U.S. wants, Belau is promised freedom from the yoke of domination and control which has existed for the past 78 years. That freedom includes the U.S. using a third of Belauan land for military bases — a forward base for Trident submarines, a jungle training ground, two airfields for anti-submarine planes and 2,000 acres for storage of nuclear and chemical weapons.

Outwrite

## Nelliegram

**WORK-AT-HOME PERILS** — Eight "telecommuters," work-at-home claims processors for California Western States Life Insurance Co. are suing their firm, charging that the company is cheating them out of benefits received by other employees. The eight jumped at the opportunity to telecommute two years ago, trading off full-time benefits such as health insurance, vacation, and sick leave for the convenience of working at home as an independent contractor. What they did not bargain on, however, was a new contract that required them to change their operating procedures, prohibited them from coming into the office to ask questions, and subjected them to frequent company audits, according to their attorney, all of which has led to twice as much work as usual at the same pay.

This first lawsuit in the newly-emerging field of telecommuting may be very important. The plaintiffs seek \$1 million in punitive damages and reimbursement for lost

benefits in this suit filed in California Superior Court.

Meanwhile, the attorney for California Western, Steve Belikoff, states, "The women made an informed decision and they were given every opportunity to review the contracts."

The workers have since quit and are getting unemployment benefits.

Computer Currents  
and Union Women

## P.O.W.E.R. (Prostitutes & Other Women for Equal Rights) BENEFIT SOCIAL

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## Founding mothers move into housing co-op

When 40 Vancouver women and their children moved into the Sitka Housing Co-op six of the 26 suites were special. The six "environmental suites" are constructed of non-allergenic materials with above standard ventilation and hot water radiators for heat.

The idea grew from a need of one of the founding mothers of this all-women's housing project: Penny Thompson. When she first called a meeting of those interested in building a

women's co-op in August, 1981, it was at a time when she was constantly ill from allergies herself. She had a nagging concern that her allergies would disable her to the extent that she would require secure permanent housing.

Twenty women showed up to that first meeting; they formed a co-op board, and committed themselves to the uphill struggle synonymous with developing your own housing project. That meant

finding suitable land for new construction, making application to CMHC, lobbying their M.P.'s at a time when all co-op housing was under attack, (fortunately Vancouver East M.P. Margaret Mitchell was supportive), and working with a project developer in the design and construction of their future home.

"At first allergy-free suites just meant someplace without rugs to me," said Thompson. New carpets can give off 40 different chemical fumes and effectively trap irritating dust particles. "But as we found that more and more women had similar allergy problems, we looked into the many things you could do to make the place less toxic."

For example, Sitka will avoid formaldehydes and phenols present in insulation and chip-board; will have air circulation ducted to the outside in each suite (instead of throughout the entire building as is usually the case); and will not use forced air heat that recirculates fumes through baseboard heaters with fins that trap dust. Instead the six suites will have old-fashioned cast iron radiators.

Raising the money for a project of this type was difficult, regardless of the need for housing or for the special suites. CMHC allocated the six suites only 5 per cent (over the maximum unit price) more money for their construction — a departure from the 10 per



# SITKA

cent over maximum unit price usually allowable to disabled suites. Whether, in this case, allergy sufferers are regarded as only half disabled has not diminished the enthusiasm the co-op members all feel for their project.

Resident Alex Maas has also worked on the co-op since its inception. "From a political perspective housing is always a big concern to women," she says. "From a personal perspective I wanted to live and work with other women."

The core group's original intention was to work with an all-women development team although that proved not entirely possible. Their architect, Linda Baker, spent time with the group discussing ideas about kitchen design and private yard space and incorporating them into her plan. "We tried to make it so you can see into other parts of the suite from the kitchen and check on what the kids are doing," said Maas.

Sitka has a large play area, a common room with kitchen for parties, roof decks, and, intangibly, a concern for issues like security and child care.

Like the Sitka spruce which flourishes in a rugged ecological niche between the forest and salt water, Sitka Co-op has become a women-inspired, women-organised success in a tough environment.

— Jan DeGrass

## Winner of Herizons Feminist Library Contest



Laura Turnbull  
Saskatoon, Sask

Laura writes: "I am so excited to have been chosen to receive the Feminist Library. This year will be one of great reading!"

Thank you for offering such an innovative fundraising program. Also, many thanks for enabling me to grow as a feminist through reading your informative magazine. *Herizons* is great!"

## It was a great success

We did a short survey of what books you requested most and found that your interests were almost equally divided between fiction and non-fiction. The most often requested books were:

1. **The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets** by Barbara Walker
2. **Beyond Power: On Women, Men & Morals** by Marilyn French
3. **On Lies, Secrets and Silence** by Adrienne Rich
4. **By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept** by Elizabeth Smart
5. **Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them** by Dale Spender

The books for this contest were donated by Herizons and the following Winnipeg book people: **The Book Womb, Bold Print Inc., Mary Scorer Books, McNally Robinson Booksellers, Prairie Sky Books.**

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## Women illuminate Vancouver Film Festival

Five exhausting and somewhat delicious weeks later, the final curtain has fallen on the last screen in the last theatre of the Fifth Annual Vancouver International Film Festival.

Notable about this year's Festival was the strong presence of women directors and their films. Of the 220 odd films screened throughout the Festival, approximately 40 per cent were directed by women. Even more encouraging was the increase in representation by Canadian women.

Much of the credit for this increased visibility can be attributed to the work of Vancouver Women In Focus, which was invited by former Festival Director Leonard Schein to design a portion of the 1986 Festival. The result was a program of 31 feature length and short films by Canadian and international women.

Highlights of the program included the long awaited *Desert Hearts*, based on Jane Rule's novel *Desert of the Heart*, with Rule and director Donna Deitch in attendance. Audiences demonstrated their approval of this story of two women falling in love against the backdrop of gambling casinos, by packing the house for both screenings. Applause and laughter greeted Rule's comment that "Now you don't have to choose between the book or the movie" since both were available at the theatre.

Women In Focus was also fortunate in being able to secure the North American premiere of *Loyalties*, a powerful feature film from director Anne Wheeler and writer Sharon Riis, both of whom live in Alberta. Centring around the unlikely friendship between a Metis woman and an English housewife, *Loyalties* delivers a riveting portrayal of the consequences of child abuse. Watch for Wheeler, Riis and their cast at next year's Genie awards.

Rounding out the Canadian component of the Women in Focus program were *A Question of Loving* by Louise

Carré and *Richard Cardinal: Cry from the Diary of a Metis Child* by Alanis Obomsawin. Carré's film is a study in subtle humour and offers a wry commentary on mother-daughter relations. Quebec actress Monique Mercure turns in a luminous performance as a determined non-conformist in a blue-suit world.

*Richard Cardinal* carries on

to a number of screen legends, among them the celebrated German director Margarethe von Trotta who brought her latest work, *The Patience of Rosa L.*, as well as Lillian Gish and actress/director Jeanne Moreau with her documentary of that great lady of the cinema.

Hopefully this year's highly visible representation by



Canadian director Anne Wheeler received a standing ovation for her film *Loyalties* which focusses on a relationship between two women portrayed by Tantoo Cardinal (sitting) and Susan Wooldridge (standing).

Alanis Obomsawin's commitment to expose the fundamental injustice of white society's treatment of Native people. This new film affirms her position as this country's most articulate political documentary filmmaker.

The Festival also played host

women will be the start of a long tradition. This year's Festival director Hannah Fisher is hopeful, but also feels government grant support needs to reflect the growth of this festival over the past five years.

— Julie Warren

## Human rights replace women's

(FRANCE) The same week of the death of French feminist Simone de Beauvoir, the French government dissolved the Ministry for the Rights of Women, firing Yvette Roudy, the head of the ministry.

The Conservative government, headed by Premier Jacques Chirac, then replaced the ministry with a committee on the *human* condition.

## Finnish moms say no more babies

More than 3,000 Finnish women have proclaimed that they will not give birth until the Finnish government changes its current policy of advocating the use of nuclear power. Their signed message, declaring an indefinite childbearing strike and demanding that Finland renounce nuclear power by 1990, has been issued to Minister of Trade and Commerce Seppo Lindblom.

It's here!

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A computerized database of C.V.'s of feminist researchers working in various fields and committed to the advancement of women in Canada.

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## Cutbacks create determination for Ecological Friends

"By the time I quit, we were basically silenced, I couldn't make a phone call or write a letter." Lynne Milnes resigned her position with the Ecological Reserves branch of the British Columbia government three years ago. The pressure had started nine months previously. A new minister had been appointed and at the same time the issues were becoming more and more confrontative, more and more political.

Lynne had joined the Ecological Reserves in 1980. The concept had begun some 15 years previously when scientists from all over the world met to discuss the protection of threatened areas. In Canada, the program was given to the provinces to administer and B.C. led the way. Ecological Reserves had its own board with appointed representatives from industry, forestry and wildlife to consider unique and representative area. However, progress being what it is, especially in a heavily resource based province, as time went by unique and representative become merely unique — unique and highly political. There are currently 150 outstanding proposals, and no board. It was disbanded in 1984.

"The decisions were left too long," recalls Milnes. "None of these issues will be raised in the next election, not even South Moresby, because there are no



Lynne Milnes discovered a political connection between the lives of wild animals and SoCreds in B.C. and joined the Friends of Ecological Reserves in B.C.

obvious or easy answers. There is no compromise to clear cut logging, you can't half log a watershed."

As a result of her work and enthusiasm, and far from relinquishing her commitment to the ecological reserves concept, 'Friends of Ecological Reserves' was incorporated in 1983. Set up to do what it was felt the government was failing to do, the organisation's current project is to protect the Kutzey-mateen Valley north of Rivers Inlet as a grizzly bear sanctuary. 'Friends' is proposing a grizzly bear viewing area, a platform such as those in Nepal and Kenya. Logging is always presented as an economic argu-

ment but Lynne sees the tourist potential as a greater and certainly more long term money maker for the province. Wildlife lovers could be off loaded from cruise boats onto inflatable Zodiacs and then guided up a trail to the viewing stage.

After a recent stint in Africa where she helped film giraffes on the Serengeti Plain, and took a vertical side trip to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Milnes helped to organise the South Moresby caravan which toured Canada to raise public awareness. She feels that future action is critical and she is anxious to help protect B.C.'s unique natural heritage before it is too late.

— C. Heather Allen

## Discrimination feeds on famine

A newly published United Nations report has brought the crux of property ownership in developing countries to the forefront. *The State of the World's Women 1985* asserts that discrimination against women is one of the underlying causes of famine in Africa. "It is now becoming clear," the UN report says, "that a factor contributing to Africa's acute food shortages is the way women have been systematically excluded from access to land and from control of modern agriculture in that region."

Per capita food production in Africa has been steadily decreasing over the past 10 years. The situation is particularly bad in the drought-stricken sub-Sahara region where women are being pushed off productive land by male farmers who grow cash crops for export.

Although it is difficult to generalise about women's rights to land under customary law on a continent the size of Africa, the most common system is one in which women do not own land but have usufruct or "user" rights to the land.

Traditionally, land in Africa was thought of as a communal good — not as a piece of personal property. However, its control was the responsibility of the head of the clan, who in turn divided it up and allocated parcels out to men in the group. The number of wives each man had dictated how much land he would receive. Thus women were able to gain access to land only through their husbands. Each wife was entitled to enough land to grow food for herself and her children, as well as to feed her husband and any male

members of his family.

Modern agricultural development schemes in Africa, especially internationally financed ones, have done little to aid women farmers. In fact, they have tended to reinforce the idea of land rights and control as a male prerogative.

In its section dealing with agriculture, the UN's most recent status report on women points out that although three-quarters of Africa's agricultural work is done by women, assistance is primarily directed at men.

—Women and Environments



## Women's studies pared down

The Women's Studies Program at the University of Manitoba is being slashed by the University administration in its 1986 budget. This action comes just as the Universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba have jointly received an endowment from the Secretary of State Women's Program for a Chair in Women's Studies designed to encourage the development of Women's Studies as a discipline. To receive this endowment, the University of Manitoba had committed itself to maintain the existing Women's Studies Program.

Falling victim to this strategy, the women's studies program has lost its co-ordinator, untenured instructor, Michele Pujol. Pujol says that about seven of 18 women's studies courses taught by various departments are being eliminated, affecting 250 to 300 students. To top it off, women's studies, a minor discipline, has had its planned 1986-87 budget cut in half to \$10,000.

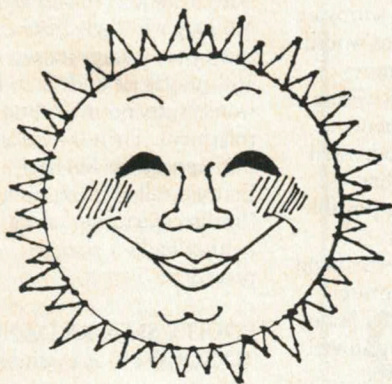
The Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women has protested the impact of budget cuts on the Women's Studies Program and on the status of women at the university:

"It is the view of the Council that the budget cuts to the Women's Studies program and the cancellation of women's studies classes will not only adversely affect students particularly interested in women's studies but will almost certainly have an affect on the capacity of graduating professionals to respond to the needs of Manitoba women."

The Council also points out that the lay-off of non-tenured teaching staff at the university will disproportionately affect women who are still overwhelmingly concentrated in these insecure positions.



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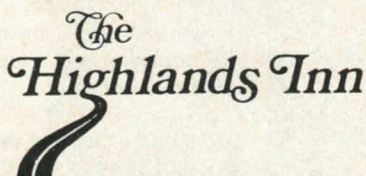


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# Judgements

## GIRL SCORES AGAINST ONTARIO HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

A recent decision by the Supreme Court of Canada has aided Justine Blainey in her quest to play hockey on a boy's amateur team. The Supreme Court refused an appeal by the Ontario Hockey Association which was based on a section of the Ontario Human Rights Code permitting sexual discrimination in athletics. Already the Ontario Attorney-General's department has proposed Bill 7 which will eliminate the discriminatory section in the rights code.

Once again, Blainey must initiate a complaint against the hockey association with the Ontario Human Rights Association to claim her sport as a first-string defence player with the Toronto Olympics. The Supreme Court also ordered the Ontario Hockey Association to

pay all court costs. "I'm pretty sure my mom enjoyed that part", stated Justine Blainey.

**TACKLING SURROGATE MOTHERHOOD** Although more infertile couples in Canada are turning to surrogate motherhood, politicians would rather the issue went away. Lawyers have been specialising in private legal agreements between couples and potential surrogate mothers. Other countries are reviewing possible legislation. Britain has outlawed surrogate motherhood as a money making venture. Australia and the United States are considering court approved contracts which would be binding on all participants.

**INMATES WIN RIGHT TO REFUSE DRUGS** Two women have successfully challenged the right of the Ontario Ministry of Health to administer dangerous neuroleptic drugs to them

against their will. Both women, involuntarily committed to Ontario institutions, cited three sections of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Toronto District Court. In both instances, the Ontario Ministry withdrew from the court proceedings stating that an "unofficial understanding" would suspend their drug treatment. Their lawyer and inmates activist Michael Berman called these cases "indirect victories" since neither had set a legal precedent.

**EQUITY SEEN AS DANGER TO SOCIETY** A coalition of conservative organisations called Men and Women for a Fair Market Wage has threatened the Ontario government's proposed equal pay legislation with a challenge under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The National Citizens Coalition (NCC), a member organisation, has begun radio advertisements to attract financial support and warn of a "radical restructuring of our society as we know it." Only recently NCC has won a court decision challenging the right of labour unions to use dissident members' dues in politically partisan activities. Another member of the coalition REAL (Realistic, Equal, Active for Life) Women of Canada has expressed concern that equal pay laws "will benefit middle class women holding paper credentials" while jeopardising the employment of "unskilled, untrained women."

**HIGHEST COURT SAYS SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS DISCRIMINATION** Michelle Vinson, a former assistant bank manager, has won from the U.S. Supreme Court a unanimous decision that recognises sexual harassment as a form of discrimination prohibited under existing civil rights law. Ms. Vinson had filed a lawsuit against her supervisor, charging him with sexual harassment which included

rape on several occasions, over a two year period. An earlier federal appeals court ruling had upheld the law suit stating that the alleged sexual harassment had "illegally poisoned the psychological and emotional work environment."

**COURT DECISION HAS ATTENDANTS FLYING HIGH** After nearly 20 years of federal court proceedings and two rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court, United Airlines will pay \$33 million (U.S.) in backpay and reinstate 475 female flight attendants, pressured into resigning by the company's illegal no-marriage rule. Like many airlines of the 60s, United executives had used the rule to lure male business travellers to being waited on by single women while flying on their airline.

In 1968 class action suits were filed when 48 single male attendants were hired and allowed to remain on the job if married. The women who resisted the no-marriage rule did so alone, having been quickly abandoned by the Association of Flight Attendants. The Association had always depicted them as "husband hunters" who never intended to make the job a career.

**COMPENSATION FOR BATTERED WOMEN**, a 28-page booklet, clearly outlines for abused women the legal methods for suing their batterers or seeking compensation from government boards. Professor Connie Backhouse supervised the research and writing of the publication by 17 law students at the University of Western Ontario. Through civil courts or compensation boards, Backhouse details the process of obtaining financial payments for suffering physical or mental abuse. Booklet available free of charge from: Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario N6A 3K7.

Information from Globe and Mail and Phoenix Rising.

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**EQUAL PAY WORKS —**  
Although the business community in Ontario has fiercely denounced the provincial government's plan to introduce pay equity in the private sector, the Employers' Federation in Sydney, Australia supports just such a pay system. Australia is perhaps the only jurisdiction in the world where employers are obliged to pay women the same as men when they are doing work considered to be of equal value. This legislation has been in effect since 1975 in both the private and public sectors.

Alan Grunseil, manager of industrial relations for the Employers Federation states: "It has worked well. Obviously there was some cost involved. But the cost needed to be incurred. There was no basis for

the discrimination."

The Australian business community was not always so supportive of equal pay legislation. Jenny Acton, industrial officer for the Australian Council of Trade Unions, recalls strong business resistance. "We had big fights in the late 60s and early 70s," she recalls.

Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate that while women's pay on average amounted to 66 per cent of men's in 1969, it is now about 85 per cent. According to Acton, the present wage difference is due to factors such as different education and experience levels among men and women, and women still receive fewer promotions.

Manitoba Pay Equity Newsletter

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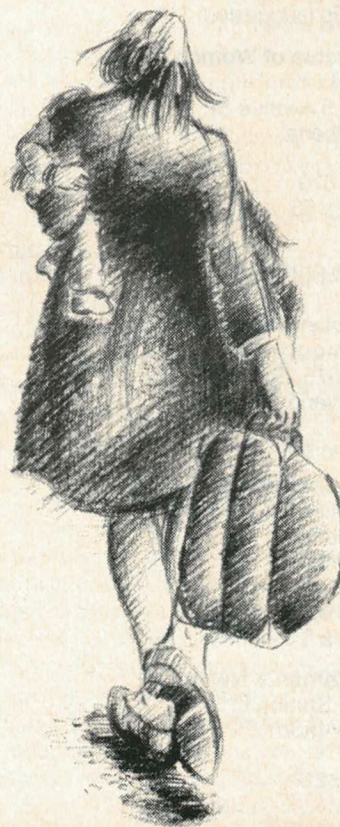
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Membership \$15 (income adjustable)

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### **Northern Options for Women Co-op Inc.**

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### **Women's Health Clinic**

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R3C 0L8  
(204) 947-1517

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## IN ALBERTA

### **Red Deer Status of Women Association**

#109 - 4818 Gaetz Avenue  
Red Deer, Alberta  
T4N 4A3  
(403) 347-2480  
Membership \$10

### **Alberta Status of Women Action Committee**

Box 1573  
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(403) 424-3073  
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### **Calgary Status of Women Action Committee**

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### **Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women**

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### **Ottawa Women's Network**

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K1P 5W3  
(613) 594-5219

### **MediaWatch**

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131 Colin Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5P 2C4  
(416) 482-0968

### **Centre for Women's Studies in Educa- tion, OISE**

252 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 1V6  
(416) 923-6641 ext. 2520

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## IN NEWFOUNDLAND

### **St. John's Status of Women Council**

83 Military Rd.  
P.O. Box 6072  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
A1C 5X8  
Membership \$10  
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## IN NOVA SCOTIA

### **MediaWatch**

Ms. Joan Semple  
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Nova Scotia  
(902) 469-3741

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## NATIONAL

### **National Action Committee on the Status of Women**

344 Bloor Street West  
Suite 505  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 1W9  
(416) 922-3246



# Le livre du mois!

N I C O L E M O R I N



Le livre du mois est sans contredit celui de Jacqueline Blay s'intitulant "L'Article 23" aux Editions du Blé, Collection Soleil.

Si vous voulez en savoir plus long sur les péripéties juridiques de

la langue française au Manitoba depuis sa naissance, soit 1870 à nos jours et aussi plusieurs détails non divulgués jusqu'ici, voilà, c'est fait! Au cours de ses études de maîtrise en histoire, Jacqueline Blay avait plus que le désir d'écrire un livre, disons de faire le point sur notre mémoire collective, aller puiser aux sources de la richesse de l'histoire canadienne, fascinante, si intéressante, avec l'écho du présent. Un Manitoba à se bâtir, une culture, une philosophie qui dans le temps changent peu à peu le tissu social de notre population, où démographiquement les canadiens-français étaient dans une position égalitaire avec le même statut juridique. Depuis ses recherches comme étudiante à l'Université de Winnipeg, Jacqueline Blay a su tirer de ses études sur le milieu minoritaire manitobain un historique de l'ensemble des droits du français depuis l'entrée du Manitoba dans la Confédération et nous donne toute la vérité sur la revendication continuelle qui bouleversera les attitudes, les valeurs du métabolisme social des francophones.

"L'exploit, plus encore que d'être parvenue à la fin de mes études, c'était, dans un milieu aussi loin que le nôtre du Québec, d'y être parvenue en français, de même qu'en anglais. Donc en dépit de la loi qui n'accordait qu'une heure par jour d'enseignement de français dans les écoles publiques en milieu majoritairement de langue française, voici que nous le parlions tout aussi bien, il me semble, qu'au Québec... Nous étions en quelque sorte anglaises dans l'algèbre, la géométrie, les sciences, dans l'histoire du Canada, mais françaises en histoire du Québec, en littérature de France et, encore plus, en histoire sainte. Cela nous faisait un curieux esprit, constamment occupé à rajuster notre vision. Nous étions un peu comme le jongleur avec toutes ses assiettes sur les bras."

La détresse et l'enchantement, Gabrielle Roy, p. 70-71, Boréal Express 1984<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

"Mommy, mommy I love you dearly Please tell me how in French my friends used to call me: Paule, Lise, Pierre, Jacques ou Louise..."



Jacqueline Blay, auteure de l'Article 23

How come it's not the same What happen to my name Tell me why it's too late...Something seems to be wrong Un jour ils partirent de France, bâtirent ici quelques villages, une ville, un pays...

Pauline Julien en scène, septembre 1975, Mommy de Richer/Gélinas, Deram, Les disques London.<sup>2</sup>

Pour présenter cette chanson en spectacle voici les quelques mots tirés de cet album futuriste: "la prochaine chanson au fond aurait pu être écrite par un jeune de La Louisiane y'a quinze ou vingt ou trente ans ou encore par un jeune Canadien-Français, un p'tit gars de Saskatchewan, Toronto, Winnipeg, Ottawa, y'a dix ou quinze ou vingt ans ou encore par un jeune québécois dans cinq ou dix ou quinze ans". Pauline Julien.

Le découpage hérité de l'histoire d'ici est très difficile à oublier. Il est certain qu'en ne pouvant utiliser sa langue maternelle sauf et avec difficulté, dans le secteur de l'éducation, les francophones ont dû rétablir leurs droits dans les faits. Ils voulaient vivre et transmettre leur culture dans un environnement stable pour son développement continu. Le rétablissement du fait français par la traduction des lois doit se traduire aussi dans les propos et débats de nos représentants au niveau législatif et politique.

Selon Gilberte Proteau de la SFM depuis le 2 mai dernier, avec l'article 23 "c'est aux

politiciens de jouer un rôle actif car il y a une certaine incertitude d'où l'échelle de compromis:" either/or may be used "ça veut dire dans une langue ou l'autre; cela redonne une fierté que d'exiger les services en français, c'est de rétablir les faits historiques, un acquis dans les écoles, et de maintenir ou d'amplifier le mouvement d'exiger les services en français".

Nous pouvons ainsi prétendre à la liberté d'expression et de choix du parti politique au pouvoir et pour notre futur pour une démocratie parlementaire s'exerçant au profit du français dans des conditions d'existence optimistes. Car le livre "L'Article 23" nous dévoile une amélioration possible par les changements fondamentaux des services en français accessibles. En y lisant l'évolution de l'histoire au Manitoba dans le contexte démographique depuis 1870, vous pourrez retrouver tout au long du récit l'influence des événements: qu'on se rapporte en 1916, année qui amènerait la fermeture des écoles françaises, jusqu'en 1976, l'affaire Forest renforcée par le cas de Roger Bilodeau. Au-delà du complexe de solitude, de la réaction d'auto-défense et du sens de la survie, la communauté franco-manitobaine tout en essayant de consolider les avantages acquis de son orientation d'ensemble, cohérente quand il s'agit de se regrouper pour la défense de ses droits et qui reconnaît aussi la richesse de la coexistence des mentalités. De promouvoir l'identité française de sa communauté par une coordination dans les activités scolaires, dans le monde du travail et les communications que nous jugeons essentielles, cette idéologie consistante pour le reste du Canada nous amènera à élargir nos compétences, notre représentation dans la francophonie internationale; dans le phénomène des écoles d'immersion il est absolument nécessaire de faciliter l'accueil des nouveaux étudiants/tes car cette transformation du système d'enseignement correspond sans aucun doute à l'ouverture d'une solidarité. Matérialiser l'image de la mosaïque canadienne dans cet effort collectif de compréhension et de complémentarité.

## Chronologie de dates historiques:

1870: Une partie des terres de Rupert deviennent partie intégrante de l'ensemble canadien en formant la cinquième province à joindre la Confédération grâce au gouvernement provisoire du chef Métis, Louis Riel.



1890 - 1916: Une crise scolaire éclate en 1896.; au 31 mars 1890 l'Article 23 de l'Acte du Manitoba relatifs aux textes législatifs est aboli mais des documents français continuent d'être déposés à la Cour, la législature provinciale ignore les demandes de citoyens francophones et continue d'utiliser comme langue de pouvoir la langue anglaise uniquement.

1916 - 1960: La résistance se place sur le plan de l'éducation avec l'association des Canadiens-Français du Manitoba mais on ne parle pas, pas encore, de constitutionnalité.

1960 - 1986: Aux frais des contribuables, l'opinion publique sur l'Article 23 ne peut que se sentir concernée et les francophones continuent dans leur volonté politique de vouloir se garantir la justice appliquée dans leur langue. Le sens collectif des Franco-manitobains dans un type de social démocratie s'organise dans l'affaire Forest et toutes les étapes qui suivront tenteront de remettre dans les mains de la SFM la poursuite de la lutte pour nos droits en français tout en préparant l'avenir.

Le livre du mois: "L'Article 23" de Jacqueline Blay, aux Editions du Blé, un livre que je vous suggère fortement d'acheter, qui nous éclaire sur l'Histoire du Manitoba, une rencontre dans le temps à ne pas manquer!

## Marie-Claire Blais.

Marie-Claire Blais est venu nous voir chez nous le 24 avril dernier! Organisée par le M.A.C.S.W. (Manitoba Action Committee for the Status of Women), le Conseil des Arts du Canada et le Club de Français du Collège de St-Boniface cette grande écrivaine a lu des extraits d'Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel, le roman le plus lu à travers le monde. Prix Médicis, Paris 1966. Des passages de Visions d'Anna "ce long jour sans sommeil qu'on appelle la vie", et un passage "Les Nuits de l'Underground", Marie-Claire Blais nous a révélé sa personnalité où le réalisme mord dans le monde actuel à la recherche d'une éclaircie: face à l'Apocalypse nucléaire, notre fragilité de génération, dans une grande beauté des textes, les blessures du doute, des silences, l'amour inachevé, la drogue; vieillir à l'époque où l'angoisse s'infiltre dans les esprits, sur nos amours, sur le temps qui passe on continue le jeu de la vie qu'on a choisi. Et Marie-Claire écrit nos états d'âme, nos espoirs aussi, comme intensifiant des univers d'amour et de séparation:

"La belle tendresse gauche appartient à ceux qui vont partir, comme à ceux qui vont mourir. Elle ne dure qu'un instant et pourtant elle est farouchement éternelle. C'est une tendresse qui n'est pas apprivoisée", extrait "Le jour est noir", édition du Jour.

Après ses lectures en français et en anglais, la question des auteurs canadiens de langue française hors-Québec a été soulevé. Marie-Claire Blais a répondu par "nous les auteurs" c'est-

à-dire nos existences à écrire, nous les écrivains canadiens-français, continuons à posséder les mots, décrire notre monde intérieur, ce contact vital des choses et des êtres.

Si vous désirez renouer avec cette écrivaine, le Collège a conservé sur vidéo cette rencontre chaleureuse et simple comme notre grand auteur et son héritage exceptionnel laissé par ses écrits.

## Vacances: Femmes Evasion

Si vous n'avez que l'automne comme temps de vacances, une organisation pour femmes seulement vous propose un séjour en octobre. Où? En France, plus particulièrement dans la région de Grenoble.

Nicole Alunni, pour Femmes Evasion est la responsable de l'Association; animatrice diplômée, elle connaît bien la montagne et sa flore, l'histoire et l'économie montagnarde, la découverte du Dauphiné et d'une partie des Alpes. Cette association créée par des femmes lesbiennes originaires de la région grenobloise vous fera partager un séjour de loisirs en montagne; ce programme est fixé sous toutes réserves et possibilités de modifications en fonction du désir exprimé par un certain nombre de participantes. Quant à l'Histoire elle sera revue sous un angle féministe! Les organisatrices, si le nombre des inscrites n'atteint pas 16 personnes, se réservent le droit d'annuler. Pour réservation il faut verser une somme de 150 Dollars can. ou 100 \$ U.S.A. ou 700 F.F. et 2 enveloppes à votre adresse. La somme versée d'avance ne sera pas remboursable si désistement. Dans le cas d'annulation, soit qu'il y a remboursement, soit avec l'accord de la participante, Femmes Evasion déplace votre séjour. L'association se propose d'organiser des séjours d'hiver, ski, séminaires dans un château. Pour des facilités de trésorerie, envoyer votre *mandat international de réservation* à:

Nicole Alunni  
22, Chemin de la Vierge Noire  
38700 LA TRONCHE, France.

## A L'Honneur!

Je tiens à remercier tout particulièrement Bernadette Hébert pour l'immense travail, jour après jour, de nous avoir créé une place pour la musique française à St-Boniface! Madame Hébert a ouvert son magasin "La Maison du Disque"; en décembre 1978 et a quitté son métier de disquaire en janvier dernier. C'est après avoir racheté "Musicana" de M. Bernier, propriétaire à l'époque, que Bernadette a commencé à ouvrir la voie aux fournisseurs québécois en plus des disques français d'outre-mer. "On a poussé les disques québécois pour rendre disponible aux franco-manitobains graduellement la musique en faisant connaître des genres comme Fabienne Thibault, la découverte de La Bottine souriante, le Rêve du Diable... Pour elle, la musique gaie a beaucoup d'importance; elle adore Yves Duteuil, Jean Lapointe, Frida Boccara et aussi Edith Butler!

Je te souhaite un bon retour au Nouveau-Brunswick, en terminant, Madame Hébert doit avoir l'honneur de ce changement, de belles années à mettre en oeuvre le goût de la musique, l'habitude de la causerie à son magasin en revenant avec un disque ou une cassette à la main!

\* \* \*

L'Histoire redevient en faveur et refléurit à la radio: c'est une émission intitulée "La Résistance des Métis" qui a valu à Louise Delisle ainsi que Bernard Pedneault, réalisateur, le prix Marcel Blouin! Cas exceptionnel, Louise Delisle a assuré les fonctions de la conception, recherches, interview et les textes. "La plupart des interviewés étaient de l'Ouest, et en tant que journaliste je voulais faire connaître les événements. Ce documentaire divisé en une série de dix épisodes a été réalisé en 1984 et produit en 1985. La préparation date de 1982; c'est en partant de Vancouver en traversant les Prairies en train, une amie m'avait laissé un livre sur "Poundmaker" qui veut dire "Faiseur de Parcs ou faiseurs d'enclos" pour le bison, une fiction historique, à la lecture sur ce "chaman" que j'ai pensé à la Résistance des Métis pour souligner le Centenaire du soulèvement du Nord-Ouest".

Félicitation à cette équipe et dans le cas de Madame Delisle cela couronne ses vingt années de radio, cette historienne à la recherche continue de l'Histoire indienne et métisse!

\* \* \*

La Société historique du Canada par le comité d'histoire régionale (section Ouest) a décerné un certificat de mérite à Diane Payment, historienne, pour son livre "Batoche 1870-1910" Editions du Blé, collection soleil, 1983. Ce livre contient d'admirables photos. Une deuxième version bilingue sera disponible début 1987, allant jusqu'à 1930 et complètera l'histoire économique par l'étude de l'aspect social, publié cette fois-ci par Parcs Canada. L'étude des métis c'est plus que leur goût pour la chasse, mais pour la liberté des grands espaces, leur mode de vie fascinant, nos racines d'hivernants. Bravo!

\* \* \*

Expositions au Centre culturel franco-manitobain: 340 Boul. Provencher 10.00 a.m. - 10.00 p.m.

3 - 28 sept. Artistes de chez-nous  
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# PLAGUED BY THE NEW RIGHT: POLITICS WOMEN & AIDS

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*In contrast to the sex positive  
education underway in the gay  
community, heterosexuals are  
being dealt reactionary moralism  
in the guise of health education*

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- A woman in a New York City hospital goes for several meals without eating because she hasn't the strength to unwrap her cutlery and hospital staff won't assist her.
  - A man in San Francisco tapes a pink triangle to his hospital room door to symbolise the connection he feels with the male homosexuals imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps.
  - A prostitute in Florida, put under house arrest, has been forced to wear an electric beeper which goes off if she strays more than 200 feet from her house.
  - A child is kept from attending school because her mother has died from a widely misunderstood and feared disease.
- cont'd on next page*

**BY MARY LOUISE ADAMS**



I had originally intended this article to be very much focused on women's health, a women-can-get-AIDS-too piece. But as I started my research I noticed a plethora of articles on the same topic in mainstream women's magazines: *Chatelaine*, *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Mademoiselle*, even *Canadian Living*. Typical fare for their formats, the articles spoke of AIDS as it threatened individuals and nuclear families. In only mildly homophobic terms they presented the basic medical information and outlined the precautions necessary for avoiding the disease. Something was missing.

None of them explained why I, as a lesbian at extremely low risk of contracting AIDS, still feel affected by the disease. None of the medical reports could adequately explain the situations noted above. Not one presented AIDS as anything more than a moderately contagious fatal disease slowly making its way from homosexual to heterosexual communities.

In the five years since the first North American cases of AIDS were reported, the acronym (which stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) has come to stand for more than just a medical condition. AIDS has become fuel for rightwing campaigns against lesbians and gay men, all people who engage in sex outside marriage, prostitutes, intravenous drug users and Haitians. As Phyllis Schlafly adds AIDS to her list of pressing concerns — abortion, lesbianism, the draft and the American Equal Rights Amendment — she gives the illness a political context well-understood by feminists in blame the "victim" type moralising. She makes it clear how much we have to offer the communities most affected by AIDS. Similarly we are well prepared to handle any backlash that may come as increasing numbers of women are diagnosed.

As of June, the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control in Ottawa received reports of 582 cases of AIDS in Canada. Twenty-seven (about seven per cent) of the individuals diagnosed were women. Twenty-two were children. Of these 285 have already died. In the U.S. there have been more than 20,000 cases.

Given the much larger figure for the States, it's not surprising that the American media has been largely responsible for generating the waves of AIDS panic that greet each newly found means of transmission, each new calculation of non-gay cases. But as the number of people with AIDS increases in Canada our own mainstream media has been quick to adopt the same reaction.

In North America, AIDS is still largely defined as a gay disease. In Canada, 77 per cent of the people with AIDS are gay or bisexual men. Yet in the 18 African countries where AIDS has been reported it is clearly a disease of the general population and cases are almost equally divided between men and women.

Last year in Georgia at a conference on AIDS, international researchers admonished their American counterparts for identifying AIDS only as a "gay" disease and for not recog-

nising that poverty is most often responsible for its occurrence in the Third World. In developing countries where medical resources are scarce, it is thought that AIDS has been transmitted in clinics and hospitals where disposable needles or other instruments (meant to be used only once) must often be used several times.



**Yvette Perreault of the AIDS Committee of Toronto says confronting misinformation around AIDS is one of the best ways of reducing the spread of panic.**

A correlation between AIDS and poverty is becoming evident in North America too. In New York City, areas that show a high incidence of tuberculosis (areas with poor sanitation and poor health care) are also beginning to show a high rate of AIDS. Another outbreak of AIDS has also been noted in a poor rural town in Florida, and the fact that 75 per cent of the children with AIDS in the States have been Black or hispanic is more than a coincidence.

In her book *Sex and Germs: The Politics of AIDS*, Cindy Patton groups AIDS with diseases which variously affect the urban poor, gay men, IV drug users, hemophiliacs and prostitutes and which remain inadequately addressed by the medical system. She claims that access to health care for illnesses linked to poverty or sexuality is limited by financial and cultural barriers. Also the fear of social stigma, or legal sanctions, serves to keep many from seeking information and care for such illnesses. As Patton has noted, our fears of sex and our fears of illness are both given ample play in the consideration of AIDS.

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) which now can be quickly identified and treated, remain a source of guilt and shame even today. Those with STD's are typically stigmatised as being at the naughty end of the "good sex — bad sex" continuum where good sex happens in heterosexual monogamous marriages and good sex doesn't lead to STDs. It's moral judgement intent on blaming victims instead of helping them. Hence, the rightwing procla-

mation that AIDS is God's punishment for homosexuals (who are particularly naughty). Or as an article in *New York* magazine stated, "For those who have not been scared off casual sex by herpes, AIDS is the ultimate deterrent."

For a media still bent on presenting AIDS as a gay plague or as a punitive sexual disease, the increasing number of cases among heterosexuals is the flaw in a carefully contrived analysis. Many of the straight people with AIDS in the U.S. are IV drug users who have shared dirty needles or they are the sexual partners of IV drug users. In Canada they have been the recipients of contaminated blood products or they are women who have had sex with bisexual or gay men. However, media reports downplay these confirmed modes of transmission, relying on the AIDS-as-sexual-punishment theory to sell their stories.

One of the results of the moral angle on the story has been the scapegoating of prostitutes as those responsible for bringing AIDS to the heterosexual community. But according to Valerie Scott of the Canadian Organisation for the Rights of Prostitutes (CORP), there is not a single prostitute in Canada with AIDS and only one prostitute has tested positive for the AIDS anti-body. Similarly in the U.S. the Centers for Disease Control have yet to publish any conclusive data on a link between prostitution and AIDS.

Scott says studies on syphilis and gonorrhea have shown that only five per cent of STDs are transmitted by prostitutes. "Whores have been practicing safe sex since condoms were invented," she points out. "You don't touch anything unless it's wrapped in plastic. That's just the way it is."

Last fall Scott distributed a pamphlet on safe sex, produced by the AIDS Committee of Toronto, to prostitutes working on Toronto's streets. At best many of the women found it amusing that people still thought they didn't use condoms. At worst, they were insulted by the insinuation that they don't know how to protect their health or their livelihood.

However Scott does feel the pamphlet was useful for the younger, less experienced woman who, she says, don't know much about sex, period, let alone sexually transmitted diseases. But now, since the introduction of Bill C-49, John Crosbie's new anti-soliciting law, women don't have access to each other on the street like they used to. It's difficult to get the pamphlet out; it's difficult for prostitutes to exchange information.

"The law puts us at risk," Scott says. And if prostitutes are at risk their johns are at risk. And if the johns are at risk then their wives and girlfriends, who probably don't know that their men pay for sex elsewhere, are at risk too.

Scott suggests that prostitutes are a valuable resource group for safe sex education, "We see five, maybe more, tricks each night and we give them information. They can take it home to their personal lives." Her sentiment is echoed

*cont'd on page 27*



# Frontline AIDS Workers: One Woman's Perspective

Elaine Smith's short brown hair frames a face striking in its fusion of strength and softness. She is middle-aged, a lesbian, and the first woman to be hired by AIDS Vancouver. I met Elaine at a dinner and dance event and she was willing to talk about her work despite the distraction of two hundred women mixing and mingling around us.

The death and drama inseparable from this decade's dreaded acronym are major features of Elaine's life. She was hired by AIDS Vancouver specifically to develop emotional support programs for the caregivers of persons with AIDS. During the first evening of our acquaintance Elaine commented that she needed social evenings like the one we were enjoying — during which she could admire the vibrance and energy of young, middle-aged and older women — in order to keep her job in perspective. Elaine emphasised the word healthy when she surveyed the women near us enjoying the spacious, elegant restaurant reserved just for them, their laughter echoing towards the high ceilings. I wondered how this pensive woman beside me got in the door of AIDS Vancouver and I wondered about women's involvement, generally, in the AIDS crisis.

Around the time that I met Elaine I watched a "60 Minutes" special on AIDS and was impressed with the number of women who were volunteering to ease the stress and strain for AIDS sufferers in San Francisco. I was equally affected by Elaine's generosity of spirit in bringing to my attention the numerous volunteers who make such a day to day difference in the lives of AIDS patients here in Vancouver. She referred to them as unsung heroes who work quietly behind the scenes to help ease the tragic dimensions of the illness. These are the men and women who offer domestic services or emotional support or who are primary, central caregivers. One of the programs for which Elaine is primarily responsible is an emotional support group for primary care-givers. These people assume responsibility to coordinate a friend or family circle for the overall care of the person with AIDS. Elaine says that they are generally very strong individuals who seldom reach out for help themselves, and when a loved one becomes ill, they automatically assume the central role of organising friends or family to do this or that on a systematic basis. Elaine's group provides a place for these people to relax and recharge: a haven for them to talk about their concerns and anxieties.

The other individuals who make up the AIDS support services are an intriguing mix of characters. Many lesbians volunteer out of a sense of solidarity with gay men. One volunteer is a West Vancouver mother of two who met an AIDS patient while dining out one evening. She was so impressed with the man that she ar-



Women like Elaine Smith are assuming key roles in dealing with the AIDS crisis.

rived at the AIDS Vancouver office the next morning to volunteer. Elaine says that this woman is an invaluable, dynamic and committed member of the team. Another woman — a single mother — is routinely asked to approach the most withdrawn and isolated AIDS patients because of a certain magic in her personality which makes contact with the most "difficult" patient possible. Elaine explained that these volunteers do not consider themselves Lady Bountifuls patting heads: the giving and taking is multi-dimensional in its exchange of needs, ideas and values. Elaine believes that all of the volunteers act out of a genuine impulse of concern. She says that they are loving people who want to share something of themselves.

Elaine became part of the gay community in Vancouver as an integral part of her coming out. She established a self-chosen family which is comprised mainly of gay men and women. She does not relate to her work as the thing to do or as something separate from her sense of self. She understands the political nature of her work but in fact does not respond to it in those terms: "I think that it is more of a point of view. I feel like a humanist. I am doing something that I want to do, that I have to do. The politics are for others to argue. I am where I am because it is where I belong. It is a feeling that comes from inside. I know I am in the right place."

Women like Elaine Smith are assuming key roles in dealing with the AIDS crisis. Elaine told me that Wendy Scott, a head nurse in St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, single-handedly transformed a resistant nursing staff into a caring group of health care givers. Some of her staff wanted to transfer out of the Intensive Care Unit when AIDS patients began to appear. Faced with their fears and concerns Scott organised educational workshops which helped to

turn the alarmist attitudes around. Female public officials in the Department of Health and the Ministry of Human Resources in Vancouver have cleared the bureaucratic paths for AIDS workers. If front line workers impede the delivery of services to clients with AIDS, a phone call to the top solves the problem in a day or two. Sylvia Russel, the Director of the Vancouver Food Bank, authorised AIDS Vancouver support workers to deal directly with their food warehouse in order to avoid persons with Aids having to stand in line. Elaine also told me that the St. Paul's Aids Care Team is comprised mainly of women doctors and specialists. They seem much less threatened by gay men than are their male colleagues.

In AIDS Atlanta, in the Los Angeles AIDS Project and in the San Francisco AIDS Project an increasing number of women are assuming key positions. Bob Tivey explained that in San Francisco, for example, many gay men are leaving the city, burnt-out, unable to deal with one more sickness or death of a loved one. As the crisis gets worse and more gay men are affected, more and more women are coming forth to take over key administrative roles. Bob Tivey is in the process of applying for funds to secure Elaine's position with AIDS Vancouver and also for a woman to work full time doing educational outreach for women in high risk groups for contacting the disease. This summer he hired a woman student with computer skills to work on a survey evaluation of his organisation's effectiveness in educating the gay male community about safe sex.

Positive changes are happening in the AIDS Vancouver since Elaine and other women have become involved. More women call now and many want to speak only with another woman. The men in the office are more self-censorious of sexist attitudes and remarks. Tivey mentioned that gay men must become more aware of women's issues if they want the continued support of women. As more women become involved with the organisation, women's issues are articulated more often and kept visible. Elaine says that she prefers to be an example of a woman rather than assuming the position of challenger of sexist behavior. If the friendly, relaxed atmosphere in the AIDS Vancouver office is a measure of the validity of her approach, she's right. As a St. Paul's ICU nurse told Elaine when we dropped by to leave a book for Wendy Scott, "You make an incalculable difference."

Responses to this article and/or letters of support for Elaine may be helpful in securing funding for women's jobs with AIDS Vancouver. Letters can be mailed directly to Elaine Smith AIDS Vancouver #509-1033 Davie Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6E 1M7.

*Cy-Thea Sand is a writer living in Vancouver.*

C Y - T H E A S A N D





# FEMINIST COMMERC

## Talking about Price, Poverty and Privilege

You're in your local women's bookstore. Browsing, inevitably: \$325 a month on welfare pays for rent, a tight food budget, and select \$1 bus trips, but not for books.

Out of the corner of your eye you see a woman, a feminist (you've seen her around) slip a book off the shelf and into her bag. She browses for a while, and leaves the store.

What do you do? Run down the street yelling 'stop thief!?' Tell the staff? Confront her at the next event you both attend? Spread rumours about her? Let it slide? Maybe you're too surprised to think of any course of action. A feminist stealing from a women's bookstore? Unthinkable.

In fact, in the past few weeks as I have agonised with friends and acquaintances over this article, the latter has always been their first reaction. The next, inevitably, is some story of their own — from a woman stealing juice from the food co-op, to the signs at a women's music festival threatening thieves.

Kim Irving, a collective member at the Vancouver Women's Bookstore admits that shoplifting does occur. "We do have shoplifting," she says. "Funnily enough one of the things that disappears the quickest is *Lesbian Ethics*! And we lose about 10 to 20 copies of *Kinesis* (the local feminist monthly) an issue. But it's not as high as at other bookstores. The

majority of our customers seem to have respect for the fact that we're all volunteers, that the store is non-profit."

Irving says women new to the bookstore collective are invariably surprised that women would shoplift from the store. "But it's like any business," she says. "It happens."

The Women's Bookstore policy on shoplifting is not very hard line. They operate on an honour system, though they have moved the sections from which most books seem to disappear nearer to the till to discourage would-be thieves. No volunteer at the store has actually seen anything being taken, says Irving, though she has experienced putting a book out in the

by Emma Kivisild





her to rip off women's bookstores! Pretty low self-esteem, is all I can say. I guess for some people it's a sport."

As this particular wave of feminism — the second white middle class wave — comes of age, women are establishing a financial as well as a political community. We have bookstores, restaurants, galleries, jewellers, carpenters, mechanics, cleaning ladies, childcare workers, and printing houses. We also have festivals, concerts, conferences, and poetry readings. We have feminist therapists, lawyers, doctors, and even landlords and real estate agents.

These are women who know they have a right to be paid for the work they do, and most are also interested in working with women, for women. They don't believe in price gouging. By supporting them we are supporting women in real economic terms. So why do they have to deal with shoplifting, and with constant requests for free and/or cut-rate services?

What is at issue here is not so much trust, morals, or ethics, as poverty. Poverty and its impact on a community of women, over half of whom can expect to be poor at some point in their lives, of whom one in six have full time jobs that pay them less than \$6,000 annually. And we are talking about the impact of poverty on a movement that has largely not been accessible to poor and working class women.

Any sociological analysis of 'crime' — and I hesitate to use that word — rests on the premise that there are causes behind any infringement of the rules. It is on those causes that we have to focus. We do not presume, for instance, that anyone who shoplifts or robs a bank is evil, immoral, unethical, or untrustworthy. Rather, we assume that factors in the society around them have put them in a position where these are the only viable avenues open to them. What is immoral about it is that a capitalist system draws lines between legalised and illegal theft. As Anatole France so succinctly put it, "The law in its majestic equality forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, beg in the streets, and to steal bread."

"The shoplifter, in my mind, is at the very bottom of a whole list of people who rip off other people in our culture. From the multinational executive, down through the bureaucrat, the employer who sends people home to do piece work... And who is the one at the bottom? Who gets caught? The shoplifter. The woman."

Brenda is a feminist activist in Vancouver who shoplifted for a long time (she has stopped now) as an expression of her politics. She started as a deliberate exorcism of her cultural conditioning as a woman. "I made myself do it to get rid of the idea of myself as a nice girl. And I found out that I did not feel guilty. Not remotely guilty. I do not buy the argument that prices go up because of shoplifting. That's like buying the myth that small business is at the

core of our economy. We all know that it's multinational corporations that are running things. Prices go up because of what people will pay."

In Canada, in 1986, business is capitalism. Setting up a business requires an outlay of money (capital) for materials, for education, or for inventory. No matter how positive or progressive the aims of the owners may be. No matter what will be done with any money that is made. No matter how needed the service is. The priority of making money, of breaking even, of not being plunged into debt, puts the needs of the business at best on a par with the needs of its patrons.

Furthermore, any business is inevitably part of the larger system. It is governed by the laws of the marketplace, compelled to charge prices governed by expenses, by supply and demand, by things like advertising. Feminist-owned businesses support women — a good thing. But they will not be feminist until society is.

Ultimately, this puts the feminist businesswoman in a business relationship with other feminists. A relationship that has advantages and disadvantages for her. The advantages are that both sides are more open with each other than most business people are; the business has a readily accessible market; and, most importantly, women can control their own employment and finances. The disadvantages are that the openness between buyer and seller often takes the form of political pressure on the seller to sell cheaper; the market is by and large low salaried, and therefore not very lucrative. And the usual pitfalls of any business, including theft, outstanding accounts, and the added pressures of the sliding scale, may be difficult for her to accept.

For poor women, feminist-owned businesses and services are often their only option, either to afford what they want, or to find a particular item, (i.e. a book, a tape, feminist assistance).

Brenda never took anything from a women's or otherwise progressive establishment. "I always knew the prices were fair there," she says. But she does understand, she adds, how it comes about that women do. "Ideally a lot of us probably have a similar vision that all of us will have enough of what we need, but the implications of that have permeated to different depths in different areas of our lives. And none of us is consistent. Sometimes it just breaks down and the personal need takes over."

To think that a common realisation of the oppression of women is sufficient to create a utopian community where differences are erased is hopelessly naive. This attitude ignores very real class and income differences in the movement. It also trivialises the potent power differential set up between buyer and seller, professional and client, conference organiser and conference participant. Especially in a com-

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morning and finding it gone a couple of hours later. "It can be upsetting and maddening," she says. "But I don't want to go around being suspicious."

"One time a volunteer went into the back room for a minute. She left a woman in the store, and when she came back the cash was gone from the till. Women in the collective knew the woman, she was on welfare and a mother. She obviously took the money because she needed it. What were we going to do? Report her to the police? We just let it go. Not that we approve of it,...

"But one woman told us of another woman bragging at a party about how easy it was for



munity like the North America women's movement, where the power structure is largely white and middle class, and has much ground to cover before it can really be called anti-classist and anti-poverty.

We often seem to think that the fact that we are feminists makes it different. That because we don't believe in this economic system, our businesses aren't part of it. That because we make certain alterations in the traditional structure of the business, it is no longer capitalist, and won't be treated as a capitalist institution. That we are feminists, and hence have worked through our social conditioning. Unfortunately, we're not that different, except in the fact that we are willing to make at least a token effort attempting to do things in other ways.

I do not want to trivialise the very real financial difficulties of women who choose to go into business to offer a service to the community. But clearly the business (and it is that) of balancing an essentially capitalist budget in a capitalist system with feminist and anti-capitalist values is hard.

So what are the solutions? This is not an issue that feminists as a community have examined closely enough. But in combination with the accelerating downward spiral of poverty, it is an issue that has led to much strife among us, both in political forums and individual interactions. And it comes to a visible head where women ask other women for money, and those women refuse to, or cannot, or don't pay.

I would divide these places — loosely — into two categories: conferences, concerts, readings, festivals, etc. and feminist owned services and business. These divisions are useful, because though many of the issues are the same, the specific power differences and obligations in each situation are different.

The question around conferences, festivals and so on usually boils down to the sliding scale, and any regular reader of the feminist press probably knows about the controversies. But the problems persist.

Basically, the principle behind sliding scale is that women with more money pay more to get in than unemployed or underemployed women. This way the organisers still get income from the door, and all women can attend. It sounds simple enough, but there are many permutations, most of which end up discriminating against poor women. It is worth going into these specifically, since by missing out on conferences and cultural events, poor women are effectively excluded from the intellectual and cultural development of feminism.

The most frequent problem is no sliding scale at all or a sliding scale the low end of which is completely out of the realistic range of most poor and working class women. These women then have a choice: they can choose not to attend the event, or they can try to negotiate something with the women at the door.

Neither is desirable. I witnessed the humiliation of a woman who could not afford the un-

employed fee at a recent Vancouver conference, and hence asked for a reduced rate. "You people always want something for nothing," said the ticket taker. "We've already reduced the price, and if this was a university conference you'd be paying five times this amount."

In this case the woman in question held out, and finally managed to get in at a rate she could afford. But I'm sure she will not risk future negotiations unless she is feeling particularly assertive. How many women avoid the conference in the first place?

Other organisers, probably under an illusion of progressiveness, build such negotiations into an unadvertised door policy. The key here is *un*-advertised. For example, a recent Toronto conference would let anyone in for free who asked, but this policy was not mentioned in any of the conference materials. The organisers later said they were worried that too many women would take advantage of it.

Unless they could read the minds of the organisers, poor women were expected to risk the sort of humiliation outlined above if they wanted to attend. And they were put in this position because otherwise too many of them might come!

Another form of the sliding scale is the volunteer-for-free-entry scheme: put in some time at the event, usually a set number of hours, and you can get in 'free.' The principle is that you are working, and getting paid in the form of conference/festival admission.

If this is the case — and it's the best justification for this policy I can find — then the wages for your work usually end up at about \$2 to \$3 per hour. Women who, for reasons of class, race, or whatever privilege, get money from the system for their work, have the luxury of being able to buy their way out of this wage bracket. In effect, they can choose to enjoy the event in a relaxed way while poor and working class women do their work for them.

The clearest illustration of just how classist this policy is was given me by a woman who frequently attends the women's music festivals in the U.S. The women who are sitting back and enjoying the music are mostly white, she says, and the women picking up after them, doing their security, serving their food, are almost all women of colour.

It is true that conferences and cultural events can cost a lot of money. Organisers often have difficulty meeting their expenses. The answer, however, is not to exclude poor women from these events, or make them pay for them with their labour. And neither should poor women be called unethical when they are forced to try to get in for free. There have to be better solutions.

The most obvious is to budget for some women to come in free, and advertise free entry on the poster. If there is a shortage of womanpower at the event, everyone can be required to volunteer, or at least everyone can be asked — not just poor women. Until poor and working class women can participate in this

movement on an equal footing without feeling like they are breaking rules or are exceptions, it isn't really a movement at all.

And most troubling, ethically, are women who refuse to acknowledge their financial privilege. We have all grumbled, probably, as we watched a woman we know is employed take advantage of the low end of the variable rates at the door of a feminist event. Women who can afford to, but don't, support the top end of the sliding scale, jeopardise the existence of a scale at all.

"Maybe I'm just a cranky person, but I have confronted people about shoplifting. It makes me irate, because the women I know who rip us off are not poor," says Kate van Dusen, a staffperson at Ariel, another women's bookstore in Vancouver. Alice Macpherson, a self-employed mechanic and self-defense instructor, has found the same pattern. "When I advertise reduced rates, I find that the women who need them don't ask, and the people who don't do," she says. As a consequence, Macpherson has stopped advertising a set scale, and instead tries to make it as clear as possible that she is open to negotiation.

Why would someone, a feminist, who could afford not to rip off a women's organisation, do so? Giving these women the benefit of the doubt, in all likelihood they see themselves as poor. Probably they are paid just over half what their male counterparts make, and they are, probably, underemployed, as most women are. But perceptions of poverty are conveniently relative. To someone who grew up in a comfortable middle class environment, \$1000 a month may be barely liveable. But it is three times the welfare rate for a single person in many provinces.

Our conditioning around money is also very powerful. As women we are taught not to demand too much, but as consumers we have learned to get the best deal possible. In a culture where what you have is who you are, the strength of this mentality cannot be underestimated. It reinforces the worst of competition and individualism. The media tells us that getting ripped off (i.e. paying too much) is cause for embarrassment. Getting something for less than it's worth, or getting something for nothing, is cause for self-congratulation.

The sliding scale principle goes completely against the grain, which may be why maintaining it is sometimes such an uphill battle. Feminists are talking about exchanging money on a completely different basis, while operating within capitalist constraints. Our ideals cannot always erase the economic and societal factors affecting women exchanging money. The upshot is that 30 years of going for the lowest prices easily overcomes a momentary pang of conscience.

What this highlights more than anything is the need to discuss money and economic privilege. We could start with the basic realisation that though all women are underpaid,

*cont'd on page 29*



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in a statement prepared by the American prostitutes' rights group, COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics): "We believe that prostitutes, because of their varied sexual experience, would make excellent educators in programs to help people reorient their sexual practices to conform to the safe sex guidelines."

This isn't likely to happen soon, however, as history often repeats itself. AIDS isn't the first time prostitutes have been scapegoated for the spread of a venereal disease. In 1918 and 1920, 18,000 American prostitutes were rounded up and committed to prison hospitals to protect the health of American troops (who presumably were incapable of protecting themselves).

In this case, and in current discussion on prostitutes, there has been no serious concern expressed that prostitutes themselves may be at risk of contracting AIDS; they are more often seen as receptacles for and transmitters of the virus. Priscilla Alexander of COYOTE advises prostitutes to refuse to participate in studies on prostitutes and AIDS, which reinforce such negligent disregard for prostitutes' health. Instead she advocates for more general projects on women and AIDS, because they focus on safe sex practices and prevention of the spread of the AIDS virus.

In March 1986, doctors in California and Massachusetts announced that they had been able to find the virus in female genital secretions. However they cautioned that "only small amounts of the virus were present...and that it is still not easily passed from women to men" or, one could extrapolate, from women to women.

#### What is the AIDS virus?

AIDS is a condition in which a virus attacks the cells that stimulate the immune system, leaving the body open to a variety of infections and cancer. To cause infection, the HTLV-III virus, as it is known, must enter the bloodstream. It is found in blood, semen, urine, vaginal secretions and feces. The four known modes of transmission are through: sexual practices in which these bodily fluids are exchanged between partners; sharing contaminated needles; transfusion of infected blood or blood products; and in utero transmission from an infected mother to the infant in her womb. *Self Care* reports that up to 65 per cent of children born to anti-body positive mothers are infected at birth. It is also thought that some people may carry the virus and be capable of passing it on even though they show no signs or symptoms of AIDS themselves.

The medical definition of AIDS assumes an individual was in good health before contracting the disease. But some doctors and alternative health care practitioners claim that those individuals who have the fully developed syndrome were already suffering from compromised immune systems, perhaps due to alcohol or drug use, repeated rounds of prescribed antibiotics or a poor diet.

In gay communities educational campaigns about safe sex are thought to be effective in slowing the spread of AIDS. A study from the University of Michigan shows that the most important factors influencing men's decision to change their sexual practices are: positive feelings about being gay; a sense that the changes made will be effective; and a relationship with, or knowledge of, someone who has AIDS.

In short, many of these important measures increase acceptance of safe sex but because of the general invisibility of gays and lesbians, because of our isolation from each other and because the larger society identifies us only by the sex we have, many gays fear on some level that in changing their sexual behaviour they will be less gay. To counter this, safe sex campaigns have been infused with gay values. They stress the responsibility of individuals to protect their own health and the health of their community. They are also sex-positive. Best of all, they seem to be working.

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**P**overty is more  
often a  
cause of AIDS  
than  
"promiscuity".

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A case in point is an STD clinic in New York, frequented primarily by gay men, where the incidence of gonorrhea in single men dropped from 485 to 201 per 100,000 between 1980 and 1983. Surprisingly, at the same clinic the figure for gonorrhea in women climbed during the same period.

In contrast to the sex positive education underway in the gay community, heterosexuals are being dealt reactionary moralism in the guise of health information. A conservative morality is touting monogamy as the only protection against AIDS. In the article from *New York* magazine referred to earlier, women say that they are staying in bad marriages because they're afraid of dating and the risk of getting AIDS. But monogamy, without safe sex, isn't protection against sexually transmitted AIDS, either unless a couple has been together, and faithful, since before 1979.

Practicing safe sex means eliminating or changing sexual activities which could permit transmission of the AIDS virus. Heterosexual women, for example should insist their partners wear condoms during vaginal, and or oral sex. Both lesbians and heterosexual women should avoid manual penetration when their partner has open cuts or sores. The basic idea is to avoid exchanging bodily fluids. But the most important part of safe sex is communication.

If one can assume that people in relationships are more likely to discuss their sexual histories and practices than people who have casual encounters, then one could assume that makes them more likely to practice safe sex. But of course in even the most committed relationships such discussions don't always occur. We are conditioned to avoid discussions of sex, even with the people we share it with. According to Yvette Perreault at the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT), it is not uncommon for women to learn of their partners' bisexuality only when the men are diagnosed with AIDS. If they'd known earlier they would have been able to practice safe sex.

A symptom of our cultural inability to really talk about sex — what we want and whether we're getting it — is the fact that many heterosexual women feel pressured to pursue intimacy in the often unsatisfying bar scene. For many women this has meant that along with the disappointing sex, they've also had to deal with the economic and physical costs of birth control. And AIDS is one more area where they are feeling an unequal burden of responsibility.

Perreault says some of the women who are calling ACT "feel ripped off." Some are actually using AIDS as a way of saying "no" to sex and to the social pressure that exists to sleep around. Already dissatisfied with the imbalance of responsibility, they claim the sex they are having is just not worth the risk of getting sick.

Cindy Patton suggests that the art of making responsible choices "must be highlighted as a part of sexual identity." And it must be "eroticised within sexual practice if sensible sex decisions are to become consistently applied life changes." Gay men have been creating safe ways of having sex that allow them to defy the bigoted charge that their homosexuality is a plague in and of itself. Heterosexuals would be well advised to follow their lead.

The good news is that the number of AIDS cases is stabilising in Canada, doubling now every seven to nine months. Early reports that the disease would escalate out of control were grossly exaggerated and not based on epidemiological fact. The spread of misinformation is intensified by the federal government's response. The little money that has been assigned to AIDS research, goes to government task forces which typically produce one or two flyers a year. Meanwhile, community based AIDS committees do all the support, educational and research work at the grassroots level on little or no money.

Yvette Perreault, sums up the government's response to the grassroots groups: "We identify the issue, set up our own committees on it, do the grotty day to day work and (the government) sucks the guts out of it." She warns that in the struggle to acquire more broad-based support around AIDS, "we can't forget it's a gay issue."

Perreault feels that feminists have much to  
cont'd on page 32



# Q U I L T I N G F O R P E A C E



"National Security Blanket"  
by Wendy Lewington.



"Sheltered Lives" (detail)  
by Wendy Lewington.

photo: Wendy Lewington

**R**ibbons around the Pentagon; pillowcases draped on the fence at the base at Seneca, New York; a four and a half mile fabric serpent around the base at Greenham Common; in project after imaginative project women are using thread and needle to weave and patch and sew, not just as in ages past, for their families, but for the world. Stitchery has always been an art through which women have raised their voices, spoken of their homes, their marriages, their children, matters close to their hearts. It is in keeping with a long tradition that quilts and other fabric art forms now speak women's anger and fear about war.

In August 1985, on the 40th anniversary of the American bombing of Hiroshima, a ribbon made up of tens of thousands of beautiful handmade fabric banners wound its way around the Pentagon. The theme of the banners was the question, "What can't you bear to think of losing in a nuclear war?" Countless women, children and men, groups and individuals stitched their answers.

In September 1985, to celebrate four years of women's protest at Greenham Common, banners surrounded the base. Messages of peace faced outward, while on the reverse side embroidered eyes peered in through the fence.

All over North America right now groups of women are quilting "to cover the Soviet Union with warmth." In June 1986 the Women's Journey for Peace travelled to the Soviet Union with quilts as gifts of goodwill for the women of Russia. Among the others are 15 quilts from across Canada.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Pat Ajello speaks for peace through her quilts. Having lived through the bombing of Britain in the Second World War, Pat has been involved in the Peace Movement for as long as she can remember. She was especially disturbed when she heard about the base at Greenham Common because the area had once been her home.

"I'm from England, and I lived near Greenham Common long ago when I was

young. *Watership Down* is Greenham Common; when I read the story to my kids years ago I realised they were talking about the area. Where I happened to live was a very beautiful old house which had been turned into a school. The garden was built and designed by one of the great English landscape gardeners of the 18th century. There's an ancient fosseway on the hills that was used by the Romans thousands of years ago. The area has so much tradition.

They've taken away the common land which was meant for everyone's use and enjoyment. In the middle ages it was the place where you had permission to gather nuts and put your pigs to root and chop firewood and things like that. You know, there were privileges which went with common land. And now they've cut off ancient footpaths. People have been arrested in England for trespassing on their own land. Now it's just a great chunk of concrete with bunkers on it. There's not the beauty of it all, the green grass and the birch trees. I find it very emotional

**BY SIMA ELIZABETH SHEFRIN**



to think about those women there."

Inspired by the women in the Peace Camp and as a gesture of support, Pat made them a quilted jacket which she sent along with a supporting letter from over fifty groups belonging to End the Arms Race. The Greenham women felt the jacket was too special to stay with one person, and passed it from woman to woman. One woman was arrested wearing it, and when the policewoman admired it she was able to remember and speak of the international support which existed for her action.

Pat is continuing to quilt for peace. One quilt she donated to a raffle held by the Physicians for Nuclear Responsibility. Another she made as a gift and a tribute to Helen Caldicott and is embroidered with her call to action: "If everyone of you did what I have done, we could save the world."

For Wendy Lewington of Clearbrook, British Columbia, it was the birth of her daughter Anna which brought the issues of nuclear danger and world peace into sharp focus. Her concern about the kind of world into which she was bringing a child led to the making of

"National Security Blanket," at first glance a very traditional looking quilt. But nestled in among the tiny flowered prints and fine quilting stitches are patchwork images representing the forces of racism, sexism, violence and nuclear power, alternating with even more subtly presented symbols of the groups working to overcome these oppressions.

Another of Wendy's quilts, "Sheltered Lives," speaks of people refusing to face the threat of nuclear war. The quilt was inspired by two Canadian government publications, *How to Build a Basement Bomb Shelter*, and *Eleven Steps to Survival* which offer step by step instructions on how to let a nuclear war create as little disruption as possible of your regular family life. Confined in each of 16 private little bomb shelters people alone and together pray and comfort, argue and make love, nurture and give birth. Surrounding them and forming the lattice of the quilt are concrete blocks of fabric, silkscreened with passages from the survival booklets.

"I was reacting to the whole idea that nuclear war is survivable. It's so frightening. You used to hear rhetoric about these weapons being

deterrents which would never be used. But now it's 'first strike capabilities' and you can fight a 'brushfire' nuclear war and win, and the idea is just completely shocking. Even if people never actually build themselves a bomb shelter, the idea that nuclear bombs are protecting them is a shelter from what is true. They don't want to deal with the reality so they just believe the lies. It's bizarre. Hopefully the quilt makes people think about the whole idea that nuclear war is survivable."

For modern stitchers the sewing machine has become a tool of protest. But recently the Singer Company announced that it is dropping out of the sewing machine business in order to concentrate on expanding its more profitable aerospace and military product lines. How ironic it is that at a time when so much of the imagery of the peace movement is being expressed through stitchery, North America's original sewing machine company should be taking such a step. How symptomatic it is of the whole struggle between those of us who want to nurture and clothe and shelter, and those people who seek financial profit at any price, even at that of total destruction.

### *Feminist Commerce*

*cont'd from page 26*

some suffer the added economic exploitation of class, race, age, and/or physical ability. Fighting classism, racism, ageism, disableism means giving up some of our privilege as white middle class feminists. No matter how puny we think that privilege is.

While it is undoubtedly the case that some women take unfair advantage of the sliding scale, it is also important to examine our criteria for believing that a woman is poor when she says she is. Do we assume that all poor women dress alike? Will we only give the woman a reduced rate if she is willing to conform to a stereotype of poverty? Are we making judgements on how she chooses to spend her money?

Like conference organisers, most feminist businesswomen believe they have a certain onus on them to try to make their businesses as accessible to poor women as they are to wealthier women. An unofficial survey of a few feminist businesses in Vancouver's Lower Mainland reveals many creative solutions. Alice Macpherson will help you learn how to fix your own motorcycle so that eventually you can do it yourself. She will also exchange services. Press Gang, the printing collective, see themselves as a political organisation. They set aside a certain dollar amount of free printing per month, and also make their layout and bindery facilities available to groups. They offer skillsharing workshops and volunteer training as well.

The Women's Bookstore provides a reading room and a lending library, and, says Irving, "We'll do anything to help a woman get a copy of a book. She can pay in installments. She can exchange services. Sometimes I'll call up a friend who I know has it to see if she'll lend it to her."

Melanie Conn is a former member of a women's carpentry collective, Plane Jane. She now conducts workshops encouraging women to take part in community economic development. "Most of the women I know who are starting businesses are coming out of women's groups and women's centres. They are going into business to deal with their own poverty and unemployment, and they really know about being poor. They deal with that," she says. "They're not going for higher priced items, and if they have medium priced ones they always include other kinds of things. Maybe they'll have a used clothing section or something. Kids Cupboard, for example, lets kids exchange their toys for ones in the store."

This lets us conduct our business and at the same time minimises our participation in the current capitalist system. It's what I'd call good business, if there is such a thing.

The key here, too, is the sliding scale. "I always tell any woman setting up a business that they have to have more than women as their market," says Conn. "Plane Jane, for instance, charged reasonable rates outside the women's community, so that when some women wanted something we could do it for less. The answer is to have a bigger market."

While we make demands on business women to acknowledge that they have an obligation to poor women, we should also be putting pressure on women and men who have money to patronise these businesses and pay the top end of the scale. Because the more money these businesses have, the better they can plan for and include poor women in their budgets.

"I get mad when I see (shoplifting)," says Kate van Dusen. "Because there may be ways to negotiate something, and they haven't been checked out." She raises what is probably the

key issue here. It is from the standpoint of openness and directness, not financial loss, that shoplifting, sneaking in and the like do damage to the fabric of our community. Every feminist business woman I spoke with said she was open to working something out with anyone who asked.

The question is, why don't they ask? In van Dusen's experience no one has come up to her to say they cannot afford a book. At the Women's Bookstore this happens. The Women's Bookstore is well known as a non-profit political group, and is hence more overtly accessible to poor women. This accessibility is vital. Since it is not enough to be open to negotiation; people have to know you are.

So what about you, standing in the bookstore, watching that woman walk towards the bus stop with that book in her bag? What are your options, really? You could go after her and talk about it — maybe you can get together and ask for the book for half-price. Or free. Maybe she has a service she could exchange for books. You could talk to the staff at the bookstore and see if they have thought about setting up a reading room, or a subsidy fund for poor customers. Perhaps there is a lobby group to get women's books in libraries.

But we must realise there is also deep-seated reasons for not wanting to talk about one's own poverty. For one thing, we've been raised to be embarrassed by it, to feel it is our own fault. There is also the fact that, yes even in the women's movement, you are likely to be publicly humiliated or at best patronised in a well-meaning manner. Again, we need to talk about class, poverty, and privilege, so that poor women feel safe among feminists to raise their concerns and to ensure that privileged women are more aware of their obligations to listen. ▼



# Ruminations of a Reluctant Candidate

I am packing to go to Newfoundland where I will address a conference on Women and Health. I am looking forward to meeting new women, confident that we will learn from one another, although we live very different lives. I receive a telephone call from the New Democratic Party association in my constituency; they would like me to be their candidate in the forthcoming provincial election. Having been inactive in the party for the past 20 years, I am surprised they even know that I vote NDP. I agree to drop over to talk to them at someone's house down the street; this will become the NDP headquarters for the election.

They are all strangers to me....genteel academics. Niceness prevails, although there is a sharky looking young man who is a professional organiser for the party. He smiles ceaselessly; I am not convinced by their assurances that my candidature will be nominal, even though the NDP cannot, after all, win in Westmount.

I tell them I will think about it, must speak to my family and colleagues in the CEGEP (college) where I direct a program. I am not enthusiastic, though, and as plane after plane carries me east to Gander, the election is reduced to a pinpoint on the horizon.

I explain to my family that I destroyed my ballot in the last provincial election because there was no candidate for an honest socialist. "If I run, at least I'll have someone to vote for," I tell them. "Go for it," my children say; my husband regrets that he has pressing issues at work and will be able to give very little help.

Most of my colleagues are men...aging jocks who like to replay their weekly basketball game at faculty meetings. I explain to them that I am only to be a nominal candidate; little will be expected of me. It should not interfere with my work. My voice is flat, my gestures restrained. The jocks are incensed: "Go for the jugular," they bellow in one body, "you can't be nominal! You've got to put up a fight!"

And I do fight: with them! I do not wish to become an aging jock, I tell them, thinking unkindly about their gristle and tufts. I slam into my office. Later on, J-the-philosopher comes to talk. "How can you expect people to contribute money and time if you're not willing to fight the good fight?" he asks. Since he has taken on a dialect I understand,



photo by: Chuck Samuels

I listen and realise he is right.

I sit in my office, trying to decide what to do. Words run on a tape through my head: "If not me, who? If not now, when?" I call the Party and say I'll do it, knowing I am sacrificing the luxury of political virginity, of feminist self-exclusion, of "A Plague On All Their Houses!"

It is the first time since 1970 that I find myself politically involved in a cause which is not exclusively feminist. That might account for my feeling of detachment; I am reacting from the distance like a person with a severe head-cold. This is not characteristic: I am usually impassioned by causes I undertake. Perhaps, I reflect looking out the window at a bleak November Montréal, this is because I have not trusted male institutions since I learned to value my position as an outsider to them. I am comforted by the thought that this is not a lifetime commitment; it is only for a little more than a month.

• • • •

This is not the first time public office has been suggested to me. I would dismiss these suggestions, saying I'd fear getting into office and having to tolerate the boring and stiff conventions of the "men's world." Besides, no one I have ever voted for has gotten into office. Sometimes, though, I'd allow myself to envision a campaign run entirely by feminists: it would be great fun.

Since I am a "new girl," it is the constituency organisation which provides the campaign personnel: an agent, a manager, a poll captain. These turn out to be men from the same department at a university, well informed and well meaning, but without allure.

We discuss money, budget, brochures and tactics. I provide a list of putative donors, and will be surprised at who does and does not come through. (My heart still sizzles at G., obese with wealth, who refuses to contribute; her father died organising unions in the 30s and 40s.) This will be a theme of the campaign for me: on whom can you count for what, and how well do you really know who you think you know? Dangerous and painful realisations that help me understand the brittle carapaces of politicians. I will not do violence to my value of feelings above "facts;" I choose the pain.

I am to be deprived of the sense of sharing I have found in feminist groups as there is only one rather silent woman in the core group. The

by Greta Hofmann Nemiroff



men appear to be perennially exhausted and depressed, almost addicted to failure. I will be more intimidated by their flat effect than I'd be by the crassest political opportunism of our adversaries. I will feel called upon to be solicitous to their complaints about the demands of their jobs (which I know to be less demanding than mine). I will overlook their intimations that their wives are displeased with their involvement away from the family; I am privately enraged that they use these excuses to appeal to the feminist in me. Although we agree to weekly meetings to monitor our process through the campaign, these do not come to pass. I will come to regret not having overridden their withholding which has fragmented and de-energised the campaign. There is to be no "fun" campaign with this lot; eventually I will come to think uncharitably of them as "capons."

...  
**M.** is my manager. I will grow to appreciate him through the campaign although he is a shy worrier. He is also kindly, informed, and well organised. Everything is noted meticulously in his loose-leaf binder. I myself rely on shreds of paper stuffed into my agenda. As we drive from place to place, we discover tastes in common. During the campaign, I become closer to him than anyone else in my day-to-day life; we will lose touch abruptly after election day.

Our first sortie is to the NDP headquarters on rue St-Denis. Their print shop is supposed to have my brochure prepared but, as I predicted, they have misplaced all the material M. left there the preceding week. I create a pre-orchestrated scene with P. the chief organiser, a thin lipped "Old Hand" at the business. I want him to know I expect service from headquarters. We wrangle and fight; M. looks askance. I manoeuvre P. into sexist behaviour which I then protest, emerging triumphant with promises for efficiency and some grumbling which I ignore. (On election night, though, he will unbend sufficiently to give me a congratulatory kiss.)

At the NDP headquarters, I become viscerally aware for the first time of the existence of the larger organisation beyond my constituency. I can smell alliances, formal and informal hierarchies, dues exacted and paid, non-verbal and spoken agreements. The place is uncompromisingly male even though the NDP has the best platform for women.

Throughout the campaign I will feel as if I am trapped in this male arcade, ineptly trying to handle the levers of machines I do not know in order to make moves which repel me in games I do not really value. Many of the women I meet in the party are not well informed on women's issues at the outset. Feminism has only made a superficial mark. I feel remote from the games in the arcade, although I try to bridge the distance between me and the infrastructure of the party. This is not the time for reflection; it is the time to get

out there and hustle for votes. I work at manufacturing the necessary enthusiasm; at the very least I must counterfeit my usual passion for causes.

I begin to study relevant statistics to argue the case for the NDP. I am appalled and angered that there is more poverty, unemployment and overt exploitation of the public purse by the few in power than I had imagined. These realisations bring me somewhat closer to my consociers and confrères at the party's rallies and meetings. One needs to feel the press of other committed bodies to sustain hope and energy. I even find myself proud of the oratorical skills of the party leader and the president.

...  
**I** no longer live in a neighbourhood; I live in a constituency. As I drive through it, I watch people rapaciously and possessively. Will they vote for me?

To my surprise I find that I enjoy "mainstreaming" in front of the three Steinberg Stores in the constituency. One day my daughter accompanies me with a videopack. People flock to meet me, thinking they will appear on T.V. People I barely know embrace me; people I think would rather die than vote NDP thank me for giving them a choice. PQistes in the public service are grateful to have a viable choice after the 1983 strike. I visit old people's homes and witness their fear of losing their benefits. One evening I visit a convent where the aging sisters welcome me with polite and inscrutable rustles. I cannot imagine how they'll vote.

One night I am on a T.V. commercial with the party leader and another candidate. We are taped late in the evening on CBC's free time for the "marginal" candidates. I have been on T.V. and the radio often over the years so I am not nervous. I try to tell myself that this is IT, the moment to do my ALL for the party. All I can manage, though, is benign detachment and novelistic interest as I watch the Conservative and Union Nationale candidate being laminated with basic pancake in the bowels of Radio Canada. I do not have the passion to override my complete boredom with the many retakes, the endless waiting; I contribute a competent but uninspired presence. I do not fully recognise myself on the screen although it is a true portrait of my state of being.

I devote more energy to writing my weekly pre-election column for the *Westmount Examiner*. I work hard on that although I correctly suspect that despite the paper's posture of even-handedness, they will eventually tip their hats in the direction of the incumbent.

I meet the incumbent at a public candidates' forum. He turns out to be a florid somewhat apoplectic type...all jaw. Full of fiscal chit-chat as well as coy allusions to his possible cabinet appointment, he has been forced by life in the

political arena to swallow his lower lip and tilt his carapace out towards his audience. I find myself coalescing with the PQ candidate, a charming nurse who has set up an association for Haitian women. I would like to ask her more about it, but this is not the place. Instead I try to help her understand the English questions directed to her, totally forgetting that we are adversaries. After 15 years in the women's movement, I have been poorly prepared for overtly adversarial relationships with other women.

My closest friend tells our fund-raiser that she does not wish to contribute to my campaign; this will lie heavily on my gut for the whole month. Only the day before voting day do we talk the matter out, as women are able to, and are reconciled. She contributes with a free heart and I feel much better. Another friend makes a banner for our headquarters. Nonetheless, there are times when I feel totally alone "out there," with only my smile as fragile protection.

There are telephone calls: Madame P., a chronic candidate for office, calls me at work, hurling anti-semitic epithets into my ear. The violence of her words, not encountered since my childhood, weighs on me for days. An active tobacco lobby is displeased by my response to their pressures, as are the people who call for my position on abortion.

"This too will end," I console myself some nights when I feel overwhelmed by the combination of the election and my work. I fear that my public persona will overtake my personal self...that I will lose my authenticity. That I will become THEM.

I keep myself going by the good stuff: I have kept up to date in my work at the New School; one of my public speaking students has felt sufficiently confident to run for the NDP in this election; an eminent economist whose work I have admired, although I did not know her, has contributed generously to my campaign...and she doesn't even live in the constituency. Despite his provisos, my husband has distributed hundreds of pamphlets alone and with our children.

...  
**T**o my surprise, I have found the "feeling" of campaigning most like being on strike: the anxiety about outcome, the obsession with the media reflecting back our reality. The newspapers seem determined to ignore the NDP, pretending that the two big parties present a choice despite Johnson's assurances that their differences are mere "nuances." Time between appearances, meetings and political work (as the time between picketing and meetings during strikes) seems utterly void. I don't much like this feeling of living "on hold," and I lack passion inspired by the rage of suffering direct injustice as one of a militant group. A constituency is an unknown quantity; I comprehend all the sub-texts of my place of work.

Election day is anti-climactic: I go to work in



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the morning, vote in the afternoon. My son, who is a poll clerk half way up Westmount mountain, will describe how his heart sank all day as he watched the voters coming in. He was right: I got only seven votes in his poll.

At night we watch T.V. at our headquarters. I am disappointed to have come third with only 8.2 per cent, almost 2,000 votes. It is only when I arrive at the NDP's post-election celebration that I realise I've done comparatively well: the party's provincial average is 3.2 per cent and I have come second in Montréal, third in the province.

That night I speak to people who have toiled with poor results in working class constituencies. One man, pale with fatigue and disillusionment, asks me: "How could people vote against their own interests?" I wonder if some Westmount voters would have supported me if they thought I had a chance of getting in. It might have been against *their* self-interest too.

Too wound up to fall asleep that night, I lie there thinking of the embraces and the congratulations through which I found my way out of the celebration at the Ste-Marie headquarters. Already I am apprehensive about how far these warm feelings will carry us once the dust has settled. What will be the rate of attrition? Where will we all stand at the next party congress? Can the Québec NDP come to a widely acceptable position on "la question nationale?"

...

I have been congratulated by friends and strangers, in letters, on the telephone and in person, for my "respectable showing." I too feel I have "fought the good fight." I tried to break through my skepticism and leap for the jugular; if I was unable to reach beyond the knee, it was not for lack of trying to try.

At the next constituency core group meeting, there are some mutual congratulations, some regrets, some recriminations, and some vague plans for the future. People seem to look to me for leadership and tell me they are burned out, or at best willing to mete out a small steady measure of participation. I am asked if I would run again.

I look around the room, wondering what I have learned from this exercise. I have seen, with relatively sparse emotional investment, that I can manage in the political arena...but at the cost to my integrity of letting things get by that I would never tolerate in 'real life.' In order to keep the campaign edging forward, I have avoided the kind of confrontation that can release visceral feelings of violence in the arena of sexual politics. I'm not willing to invest that passion and pain in this group of people, so I quip: "I'd rather be writing novels."

"Wouldn't we all?" piously retorts J., the poll captain, sneaking a look at his watch.

Through my irritation at his posturing, I nonetheless have to deafen myself to the siren song of "If not me, who?" The next election is a long way off. Fancifully, I can hope that by then the feminist revolution will have infiltrated the *modus operandi* of politics. I can't count on that, but just in case it does, I will superstitiously start to compile my future list of firm conditions and demands for the dear old boys.

My books are balanced; I have paid my dues, but it will take promises of fire to move me the next time. ▼

*Writer of fiction and non-fiction and Director of The New School of Dawson College in Montreal, Greta Hofmann Nemiroff has edited two books which will be released this year: Women and Men: Interdisciplinary Readings on Gender; and Celebrating Canadian Women: Poetry and Short Stories By and About Canadian Women (Fitzhenry and Whiteside).*

### Women, Politics and Aids Cont'd from page 27

lend that broad base. As women we have a fundamental understanding of the relationship between sex and health. As health care consumers we have developed a critical analysis of a medical system that fails to address our needs. Our experiences working with survivors of violence have taught us how to situate an individual in crisis in a larger political context. "We don't leave people isolated," she says. Feminists have also adopted the self-help and empowering techniques of radical therapy. All of these skills can "help people with AIDS fight back. If they don't they're just delivering themselves into the hands of institutions. They have to have a sense of power."

Women have been doing AIDS-related work since the beginning. As Theresa Dobko of ACT noted in a recent public address, "It is telling that it often was women specialists — doctors, nurses, counsellors, heterosexual and lesbian — who joined with gay male health workers to assist people with AIDS. Many of these women became involved in keeping with the feminine role of caretaker, but many others became involved out of a sense of justice and solidarity with gay men. Where many heterosexual men found AIDS personally threatening, women rose to the challenge."

Feminists also have a stake in the outcome of political struggles around AIDS. Lesbians and prostitutes are already experiencing the right-wing backlash as moral majority types propose such "progressive" measures as quarantining homosexuals and hookers because of AIDS. We must continue to challenge them, because for the political right, AIDS is one more reason to promote a return to something they call traditional values. We know there is no place for feminists there. ▼



# CAITLIN MACART

## A Coastal Profile

If raising children is the most important job in the world, then teaching nursery and working in a day care must rank a close second.

Caitlin Macart teaches those who teach. As co-ordinator of a pre-school education program in Powell River, B.C., she has a unique opportunity to put her feminist principles into action. Macart believes that "teachers of very young children should be eclectic, informed and politically aware."

Her fervent belief in equality naturally spills over into her teaching. She teaches non-sexist values to the would-be teachers by asking the students to get in touch with their own early childhood. "This enables them to relate to the kids they are teaching and brings home the fact that we all want to live in an egalitarian world. I want it to be an organic process, not something I impose. I don't overtly propagandise, just present the facts. I have no doubt that they will arrive at more or less the same place."

In the coastal town of 10,000, some 100 kilometres north of Vancouver, Macart does her best to see that this happens. Powell River is far from New York where she was born, far from Berkeley, California, where she was educated in the politically active 1960s, and far from the Nova Scotia farm where she learned how to survive in a very physical and elemental way.

Referring to the unique opportunity of teaching children, Macart observes, "a time of transition is always a time of high energy." She is very qualified to know since her transitions have been profound. On a spring day in 1973 a copy of *Life* magazine was delivered to her home in California. She leafed through the pages and pages of pictures of young men who had lost their lives in Viet Nam, looked at her three year old son and decided to come north.

British Columbia was the preferred location for American 'back to the landers' and its very inevitability pushed Caitlin to the right of the map. After an exploratory trip in the summer of 1973, she and four other women and their combined four children bought an abandoned 105 acre farm in Nova Scotia.

"We all had young children and we wanted to be actively involved in raising them as well as making a living." All city girls with no skills applicable to the tasks at hand beyond a faith in book learning and the necessary humility to ask advice from neighbours, the women worked from dawn to long after dark to make their venture self-sufficient. With no capital to buy machinery, a Percheron horse provided the necessary muscle to till the land, a two acre

garden fed them all — milk and beef cows, bees, pigs, chickens, and breeding German Shepherd dogs all combined to bring in necessary cash. She also found time to take a year long carpentry course in Truro. "We were a long way from home," says Caitlin, remembering. "The nearest bagel was in Montreal or Boston."

She came away from the experience with heightened self-confidence. "I felt I could do literally anything; nothing could defeat me." But as well as the pluses, there were disadvantages. "Survival takes virtually all your time and energy. We had to cut 10 cords of wood each year. We were all well educated, and we wanted to do something different now that the children were older and in school."

Missing the West Coast, but unwilling to return to California, Caitlin and her partner Cindy Hale drove out to Vancouver and worked for a year doing renovations. Still imbued with 60s idealism, they talked about land and a collective until their dream resulted in nine women buying 20 acres at Coombs on Vancouver Island. The nine are now reduced to two, Caitlin and Cindy.

It took five years to build their house and a shop for their cabinet making business, The Splinter Group. As well, Caitlin set up the Trades for Women program at Malaspina College in Powell River. Now that she has moved into Early Childhood Education, Cindy has taken over the Trades program.

Also, with the assistance of a federal Canada Works program, they taught four women carpentry in their own shop. With four other women, Caitlin and Cindy had formed Emily's Place Society, a women's retreat and gathering place. The carpentry class built a cabin with a sleeping loft, where Caitlin intends to build a bunkhouse and bath house some day.

Caitlin is enthusiastic about the future. The relatively small population means that the community needs will be met by this year's class and she is looking forward to returning to The Splinter Group. "I love wood. It satisfies some contemplative part of me. We do custom work using hardwoods such as cherry and oak to make buffets and sideboards, coffee tables and kitchen cupboards." Federal funding of \$70,000 has been approved and ensures that Caitlin's next project will come to fruition. Four female students will estimate a job and then actually build the building. Macart says this will give them more credibility. "Many women now have the technical skills, but until they can do proper estimates they can't run a profitable business." ▼



photo: C. Heather Allen

*Macart's vision  
for an  
egalitarian world  
is crafted into  
her teaching methods.*

by  
**C. Heather  
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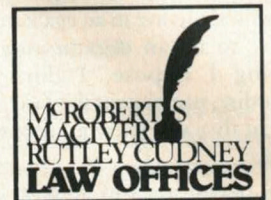
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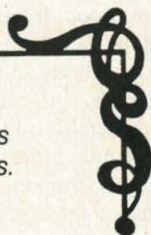
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# Poetry

## Fresco

indignant social worker sputters  
they are filthy  
not even dry bannock in the house  
clear case of flagrant neglect

smouldering-eyes elders mutter  
she too would smell  
if her running water  
was meandering creek  
to her dried strips of venison  
hanging from smoky rafters  
is not food

wide-eyed pawned children  
hushed into foster home  
bubblebath clean belly replete  
with any edible but meat  
hanging from elusive rafters  
of their dreams

© Eileen Burnett  
Milner Ridge, Manitoba

## the power of the summer rapist

a group of us were walking down the alley  
behind the crisis unit the other night  
on our way to the St. Louis for a beer  
I used to walk that way in my street/crisis working days  
but now I know I'll never walk that way alone again  
I used to step around the drunks or visit them for a while  
but now its somehow different  
I've been thinking of taking the knives off the  
kitchen wall  
They make me feel vulnerable lined up neatly all in a row.  
And even though our dog growls at the postman  
I wouldn't want to depend on him in a crunch.  
I finished an Atwood book this morning.  
I'm suffering from short clipped sentences.  
I'm out of breath.  
I feel the victim of some operation —  
The knife slices cruelly into the lung  
the layers of skin fold back  
to reveal the blackened grease of a seventeen year smoker.  
Embarrassing.

(Atwood's cancer victim has begun to live again  
but it looks like I'm heading for the closet.  
For example: this morning I hung my red bedspread  
on the white picket fence out front to dry  
there is no clothes line here  
As I spread it neatly across the top of the fence  
I wondered briefly if some passerby would assume  
some kind of red flag invitation.  
I resume my other household chores but before  
I'd started vacuuming I moved it to the back yard  
and propped it up on lawn chairs  
so it would look like some small child was attempting  
to build a fort.)

Calgary has changed a lot.  
My friend Marcy got an extension for her extension cord  
for her phone  
so she could take it anywhere in her home.  
It was the power of the summer rapist.  
A man on the radio this morning said  
violent crime only happens to one person  
in ten thousand  
and we shouldn't worry so much that it changes  
our lifestyles.

Whatever happened to small town Alberta?  
That's what I used to call Calgary before I left Toronto  
years ago for greener pastures  
I used to preach Alberta's virtues.  
Maybe I just told too many people.  
I'm trying to keep calm about this  
Like the man said to on the radio  
but this morning when I was walking my dog  
on the hill above Sunnyside  
I knew I was listening for footsteps  
in the grass behind me.

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# In Defense of Girl Guides

NANCY WORSFOLD



I was a Girl Guide. I confess, it's true, Guide's honour. I used to Be Prepared. I was a Brownie before I was a Guide and a Ranger afterwards; and I loved it. Until recently, I was embarrassed about my Guiding history, as an

older teenager Guides seemed uncool, drab, and silly; later as a young feminist it seemed horribly pro-establishment, almost paramilitary.

My poor mother must have spent a great deal of time chauffeuring me around, helping me sell cookies, and sewing on badges. I'm sure she never complained — and I probably wouldn't have understood if she had. For me, my time in guiding was a very happy time.

So many women have told me how much they hated Guides, they dropped out after a year in Brownies, they only had tyrannical leaders. It was wonderful for me; the leaders were nice, the games fun and the rituals magical. I can still remember my Brownie initiation when our neighbour spun me around chanting, "Twist me and turn me and show me the elf, I looked in the water and there saw..." And I, with great glee, looked into the tinfoil pond and saw myself.

I even loved the uniforms, as unattractive as they are. My first Brownie uniform was huge, bought too big so that I would grow into it. At seven or eight the uniform seemed like an elaborate dress-up game which I played with 20 other girls. By the time I was old enough for Guides the thrill had worn off, but luckily our leaders were very relaxed about uniforms. We only had to wear the shirts, and even that was excusable.

Perhaps the discipline of attending weekly meetings prepared me for my future involvement in the women's movement. If only feminist meetings were as fun as those at Guides! We started out with some kind of active sport, to calm us down I suppose, then had a little opening ceremony. Then came the serious activity of the evening; be it crafts, learning first aid or knots or animal tracks, or playing some elaborate game. Brownie meetings ended with "pow-wows" and Guide meetings ended with "campfires." Either way we sat around and told stories, sang songs and held a closing ritual.

Maybe it was my atheist parents and secular

schooling that left me with a craving for rituals. I'm not really sure, but I know how much I loved it. The Brownie rituals were, of course, the most fun. We danced around toadstools, called each other elves and gnomes, howled like owls, and were all-round pagans. I think little girls make good pagans. What could be more fun than magic and secrets and pretending to be Little People?



**Destined to become a feminist, Nancy Worsfold developed a thirst for all-girl meetings and pagan rituals.**

Girl Guides were much more serious and formal. We belonged to patrols in companies and saluted a lot more. How many times must I have pledged allegiance to "God, the Queen, and my Country"? I was such an earnest child. I remember one Sunday morning during my only visit to Doe Lake, a large provincial camp, I became physically ill at the prospect of having to choose what church I would attend. At our little local camp everything was much more secular and my ardent atheism respected.

Camp Woolsey is quite near to where I grew up in Ottawa. We spent happy weekends there during rainy springs and enjoyed exhausting weeks in the blazing, humid summertime. It was the greatest summer camp, and we all knew it. So did our parents who only had to pay a quarter of what private camps cost. We slept in tents that we pitched, ate food we cooked, planned menus with our leaders, and we played and played and learned to take responsibility for ourselves. Because we camped with our very

own Guide companies, who were all girls in our neighbourhood, there was no painful, competitive getting to know each other.

The heart and soul of Guiding is camping, but its *raison d'être* is the rather condescending philosophy of community service and character development of Lord and Lady Baden-Powell. Our Brownie pack entertained old folks and our Guide company made toys for the hospital but that was about as far as it went. Maybe we should have done more, but we wouldn't have had as much fun.

Central to the Baden-Powell notion of character development was the idea of young people setting goals and completing them. In other words, earning badges. I liked working on badges; it gave me a sense of purpose and accomplishment, but it made me very competitive — no matter how much the leaders discouraged it. I still don't think there's anything wrong with competition except what it does to those who feel they're losing. In theory, no one fails in Guides, but in practice, some tasks were harder for some to master than for others.

The very best thing about Guides is girls. It's one of the few times in the painful, pressured years of pre-adolescence when girls can just be friends. There are no boys! I'm sure that Girl Guides helped to make me a feminist. Through weekly get-togethers and lots of camping I learned to value the company of other girls, to see them as allies in a task, not competitors for male attention. Sisterhood is a valuable lesson, and so is "Be Prepared." ▼



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# Tele-lift Fueled by Conservationist

BY DEBRA PILON

Fueled by personal concerns about energy conservation, Peggy Olsthoorn decided 18 months ago that matching Ottawa car-owners travelling to places like Toronto and Montreal with paying passengers was a good idea. Tele-lift, the small business she now operates out of a storefront cubbyhole on Bank Street in downtown Ottawa, is that idea brought to life.

Tele-lift's goal is ridesharing, a practice that's new to Canada but common in Western Europe where, Peggy explains, people have been ridesharing for years to compensate for the lack of inter-city bus systems.

A few years ago, while travelling regularly by bus between Quebec City and Ottawa, Olsthoorn saw with her own eyes how Canadian drivers were wasting gasoline.

"I just looked at all the cars going by me on the highway with only one person sitting in them...and I decided to do something about it," she recalls.

What she did, without much hoopla, was rent an office, install a business telephone and publicise her brainchild in local magazines and newspapers — especially on Ottawa's three college campuses.

The way the service works is simple. A file of index cards and the telephone are Olsthoorn's mainstays. Everyone who uses Tele-lift pays an annual membership fee. Drivers pay \$8, passengers pay \$3. In addition, each time a passenger uses Tele-lift, Olsthoorn gets a finder's fee and a sum (based on the distance travelled) goes to the driver. Here's an example of how it works: a trip from Ottawa to Toronto costs a Tele-lift passenger \$7 (the finder's fee) plus \$11 (for gas). Total cost, not including the \$3 membership charge if it's your first trip, is \$18, about half the cost of a one-way bus ticket between the two cities.

"The whole idea is to provide an alternative to paying a lot of money for passengers and to conserve energy on the driver's part," says Olsthoorn. And the idea has caught on. Tele-lift boasts more than 2,000 members. Before long weekends, business has often been booming.

Students have gravitated to Tele-lift because it's cheap and well-advertised on campus. But during the summer when students are not a prominent clientele, the phone hardly stops ringing with requests from, as Olsthoorn describes them, "working, established people".

Part of Tele-lift's appeal is Olsthoorn's commitment to giving her customers what they

want. For women, that often means matching women passengers with women drivers or, if that's not possible, ensuring that for every man in a car, there are two women.

"Women are very cautious," says Olsthoorn. "And another really important preference is non-smoking, which, being a non-smoker myself, I can really appreciate."

Since she opened Tele-lift's doors a year ago January, Olsthoorn has had no cases of attempted assault or complaints from women using the service. The only crises have occurred when unexpected circumstances prevented drivers from picking up passengers at an arranged time or passengers were nowhere to be seen when a driver arrived.



Photo by Debra Pilon

**Peggy Olsthoorn's business saves passengers money while saving the environment from pollution.**

Last spring, just as Tele-lift recorded its first profits, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton boosted Olsthoorn's morale further by asking her to design a ridesharing project for Ottawa commuters.

The problem they wanted Olsthoorn to help them solve is summed up in two words: The Queensway. This heavily travelled freeway that links downtown Ottawa with its suburbs is undergoing a five-year facelift. Construction crews working long hours, were expected to reduce Queensway traffic to one lane throughout the summer.

"The region was really worried about what was going on," says Olsthoorn. "What they wanted (during the summer) was 800 cars off the road per hour."

Olsthoorn signed a four-month contract to match drivers and passengers in the east end of Ottawa — an area expected to be hard-hit by Queensway construction.

"I'm excited about this," she said as the project began. "It's high time we had car pooling and ridesharing for urban commuters. I really hope it can keep going."

As a businesswoman with a social conscience, Olsthoorn is about to realize another of her dreams: the donation of one per cent of Tele-lift's profits to peace and international development organisations.

"I have a personal affiliation with and support for these kinds of groups and I sort of hoped that it might serve as a stimulus to other businesses to do the same," she explains.

But this altruistic gesture has not been received warmly by all her clients. "It had some people thinking I was a front for peace, which they equate with Communist organisations," she laughs. Nevertheless, she continues to advertise her intentions and plans to decide to whom the one per cent will be donated this fall.

Reflecting on her first 18 months as Tele-lift's chief executive officer, Olsthoorn says she's satisfied.

"At this point, I've made all the decisions myself...it hasn't been easy and there's been a lot of hard work involved but I've learned an awful lot."

And what about the future?

With a degree in biomedical sciences and nutrition, Olsthoorn hopes eventually to work in the field of environmentally-caused health problems. Already, she has written an article about the environmentally-induced causes of cancer for an Ottawa magazine. She reads as much as she can in that field and is preparing for the day when she can devote herself full-time to research and writing.

Based on her success with Tele-lift, it's safe to assume that when the time is right, she will apply as much intelligence and initiative to other socially progressive ventures.





# The Natural Alternative

NORMA CAMERON

For over 30 years medical technology has offered women many new forms of contraception. With each new development come claims of "ideal" — followed by new drawbacks and the same old disappointments.

For example, various studies and reports over the last ten years have highlighted the dangerous and sometimes fatal side-effects of both the Pill and the intra-uterine device (IUD) — two methods touted as "the answer".

Understandably, a growing number of women are looking for alternatives. In addition to an increase in the use of barrier methods (diaphragms, cervical caps and condoms), methods of birth control based on knowledge of a woman's reproductive cycle are becoming more and more popular. The most common are usually referred to as Natural Family Planning (NFP) or Fertility Awareness.

NFP involves determining when ovulation occurs during the menstrual cycle. Using this information, a woman will know her fertile and infertile days.

The principles behind NFP methods have been known for at least a hundred years in medical literature. But there is evidence that ovulation awareness, its signs and symptoms, may have been part of female knowledge, traditionally handed down, midwives to women, mothers to daughters, long before this.

It is thought that as the male-dominated medical profession replaced and discredited midwives this knowledge was lost. Mary Swanandron in her book, *Natural Sex*, claims evidence of this tradition existing in Indian, African and American societies.

Using the first day of menstrual bleeding as day one, a monthly cycle occurs as follows: A portion of the brain called the hypothalamus, transmits impulses to the pituitary gland, which in turn starts to secrete Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH) into the bloodstream. The FSH stimulates the egg follicles in the ovary and they, in turn, release estrogen into the bloodstream. When the estrogen reaches a certain level, the pituitary is stimulated to produce Luteinizing Hormone (LH). The LH causes the ripe egg to burst out of the follicle into the fallopian tube, where it awaits fertilization.

It is estimated that the egg will survive between 12-24 hours, and if not fertilized, the remnants of the follicle produce progesterone, which eventually causes the menstrual period.

The production of progesterone also causes the basal body temperature to rise at least 0.4°F (0.2°C).

The length of the second part of the cycle (after ovulation) is fairly consistent for each individual woman. In irregular or long cycles it is the first part (before ovulation) that is variable, not the second part. Therefore, after ovulation a woman should start her menstrual period in about two weeks.

## The Calendar or Rhythm Method

This method requires that you record the duration of each menstrual cycle for 12 months, with day one being the first day of menstrual bleeding. Then you calculate the number of days in your shortest cycle, minus 18, will give you the first day of your fertile period.

The number of days in your longest cycle, minus 11, equals the last day of your fertile period.

This method would be suitable for those women who have extremely regular cycles, but even then it severely restricts the number of days when intercourse is possible. On its own, this method is considered unreliable.

## The Sympto-Thermal Method

This method is a combination of fertility-indicating methods:

1. Cervical Mucus
2. BBT
3. Other fertility indicators like spotting, abdominal pain, breast sensitivity and changes in the cervix.

With this method, you would chart your temperature and mucus changes, together with other changes such as increased sensitivity in the breasts, spot-bleeding between periods and abdominal pain.

Every woman's body will react differently and it may take a few months of charting and keeping track of other symptoms for her to become aware of her personal fertility cycle.

Using NFP methods is a way of life. It demands discipline, cooperation between a woman and her partner involved, and being comfortable about touching and paying close attention to one's body. It also takes time to learn, and most of all it requires motivation.

## The Basal Body Temperature or BBT Method

This method requires that you maintain a daily graph-paper record of your body temperature. It is recommended that you take your temperature, using a basal body thermometer, within an hour of the same time each day. It can be taken vaginally, rectally or orally — but it must be consistent, and it is also recommended that it be taken first thing in the morning

before talking, smoking or getting out of bed. The length of thermometer readings must be between four and eight minutes.

This method is based on the fact that when you are about to ovulate, your temperature drops suddenly. After ovulation your temperature then climbs rapidly for three or four days, and will not return to pre-ovulation levels until the beginning of your next menstrual period. The only infertile period or "safe period" occurs from the third day of elevated temperature (after the drop) until the beginning of the menstrual period.

Before relying on this method it is necessary to chart your cycles for at least six months. Again, combining this method with other NFP methods greatly increases its reliability.

## The Mucus or Billings Method

With this method you are required to chart the changes in your cervical mucus on a daily basis. To examine the mucus, place your finger at the opening of the vagina. First look at its colour and then place the mucus between your forefinger and your thumb to check its consistency and record the results on a calendar.

After your menstrual period you may have several days with no mucus secretions, then several days with a yellow or white thick, "sticky" discharge. Following this, the mucus usually becomes clear, very slippery and has the appearance of egg white. Then mucus will become very scant and in some cases disappear. However, its appearance at this stage is usually cloudy and "sticky" again. Some women may also have a couple of days of watery, clear mucus prior to the menstrual period.

Ovulation occurs soon after the day of most lubrication, when the mucus is similar to egg white. Most women may experience a "wet" feeling but may only have a small amount of this clear mucus. Mucus at the time of ovulation is also at its most "stretchy" stage, and when pulled between the thumb and forefinger can leave threads up to five inches long.

It is recommended to avoid intercourse for four days prior to ovulation, and three days after. The dry days after the menstrual bleeding are the only safe days before ovulation, therefore if you have a short cycle there may be no safe days until after ovulation.

This method should be followed for at least one month while abstaining from intercourse. This is done in order to observe the mucus without the effects of semen or contraceptive creams.



# Testing the waters

BY DR. CAROLYN DEMARCO



Over the last decade, amniocentesis has proved a valuable tool for monitoring the progress of women whose pregnancies involve a high degree of risk to their babies. In addition, it is often used to detect inherited defects in babies ahead of time, thus giving women the opportunity to abort these fetuses if desired. Thus amniocentesis has ushered in a whole new era of reproductive choice and brought with it many unanswered questions about the ethics of that choice.

Amniocentesis is a procedure which removes a small amount of fluid (amniotic fluid) from the bag (amniotic sac) of waters surrounding the fetus. This fluid is removed through a needle placed through the mother's abdomen and into the uterus after the mother's abdomen has been frozen with a local anesthetic. Prior to an amniocentesis, an ultrasonic picture of the fetus and its bag of waters determines the best place for the needle to enter. Cells from the amniotic fluid are then grown for chromosomal studies and various chemical tests are performed as well. The results take three to four weeks to complete. The chromosomal studies will also tell you the sex of the fetus.

Since amniocentesis is usually performed at 16 weeks of pregnancy, to ensure that there is an adequate amount of fluid formed, the fetus is already 20 weeks old by the time its parents must decide its future.

## Who considers amniocentesis?

1. Women whose family history or those of their partner's includes a child with certain types of genetic problems or birth defects. These include a group of defects resulting from incomplete formation of the spinal cord or its bony covering that ranges from mild to life-threatening. This group of defects includes missing brain and exposed spinal column, and cause half of all still births. Children who survive with serious cases of exposed spinal cord are usually paralysed.

Other inherited problems include a range of chromosomal abnormalities. The most common of these is Down's Syndrome in which there are usually three instead of two number 21 chromosomes. Down's Syndrome is a major cause of mental retardation worldwide, and people with Down's syndrome are likely to

have weak cardiovascular systems, respiratory problems and run a greater risk of childhood leukemia.

2. Women and their partners who are from certain ethnic communities where there are specific types of inherited diseases — such as people of African descent or from certain parts of the Mediterranean or Jewish persons who have lived in Eastern Europe.

3. Women aged 35 or over. The incidence of all chromosomal abnormalities increases with age. However, 95 per cent of cases of Down's syndrome are age-related. At age 30, the incidence of Down's is 1 in 885 births; at age 35, it is 1 in 365 births; and at age 40 the chance of having a Down's child is 1 in 109.

In the past, amniocentesis used to be reserved for women 38 or over. At present, with increased demand, its use has been extended to the group that is 35 or over.

4. Women known to be carriers of diseases linked with the female or X chromosome such as one type of muscular dystrophy and hemophilia. These women then have a chance to abort male fetuses, 50 per cent of whom will have these serious conditions.

## Medical reasons

Amniocentesis for medical reasons is done much later in pregnancy.

1. Women with diabetes. In some cases amniocentesis is used in the last months of pregnancy to determine the maturity of the baby's lungs. This information is then used to decide the safest time to deliver the baby.

2. Women who are RH negative and have formed antibodies to their babies. This problem is uncommon now since it is preventable. But if for some reason antibodies have formed, then amniocentesis is used to tell how severely the baby is affected and whether the baby will require a transfusion while still in the womb.

Any woman who, for political or religious reasons, does not believe in therapeutic abortion for genetic reasons may opt for amniocentesis in order to prepare in advance for the birth of a handicapped child.

## What amniocentesis can't tell you

Amniocentesis can detect about 40 different types of inherited abnormalities — the rest are not detectable through amniocentesis. In a normal birth the overall risk of deformities is approximately 1 in 100.

## What are the risks?

One baby in 100 is miscarried as a result of

the procedure itself. If you have a tendency to miscarry, this fact must be weighed against the possible benefits of the procedure. Other side effects are uncommon — such as puncture of the placenta, the baby or the mother's bladder; and infection of the amniotic fluid.

In 1978, a British study of amniocentesis showed a possible increase in respiratory problems and hip displacement of newborns who had undergone amniocentesis as compared to those that did not. The British suggested that sometimes enough amniotic fluid was taken, especially in the case of two or more amniocenteses, to restrict the baby's movements.

## The decision to terminate

At 20 weeks of pregnancy — when movement may be detected — the news may come to you that your baby has a severe handicap. You and your partner then face the painful choice of whether or not to terminate. The shock of such a loss and the grieving that follows may come as a surprise to you and your partner who were planning a normal pregnancy. The knowledge that the choice is the right one for your family will not be any consolation. Family and support persons should be sensitive to the fact that you have experienced a loss and treat you accordingly.

## The ethics

Many unanswered questions remain about amniocentesis: Does the availability of amniocentesis conflict with our desire to build a better world for the handicapped? Should only perfect fetuses be saved? How can we make late abortions less traumatic for women who choose them? How can we educate women on the social as well as the medical facts of what it means to raise a child with Down's syndrome in this society?

## The future

A new technique is now being developed called *chorionic villi sampling*. This test can be performed at eight to 10 weeks of pregnancy and consists of taking a sample from the placental area which can then be analysed in one or two days. This test can detect most of the inherited and biochemical defects that amniocentesis can except the spinal chord defects.

This test may radically alter prenatal diagnosis of genetic defects by making it possible to abort at a much earlier time.

*Dr. De Marco is a general practitioner specialising in obstetrics in Nelson, B.C.*



# The Public Education Co. LYN COCKBURN



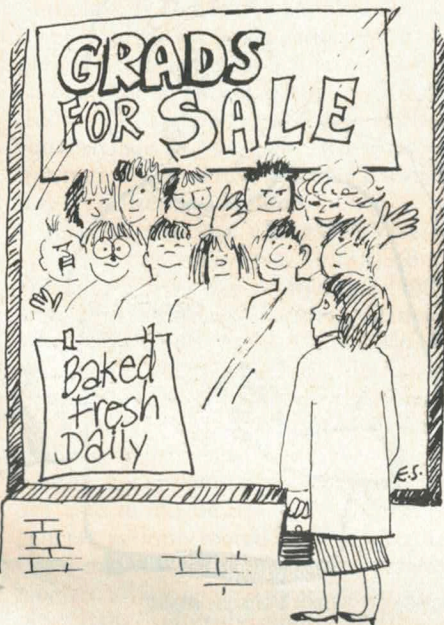
Politicians, taxpayers, students and teachers all agree that our public school system is in trouble. Cutbacks in programs and personnel are pervasive, resulting in large classes, low teacher morale

and parental dissatisfaction.

And these cutbacks have not stemmed rising costs; nor will they. Our education system is a non profit organization which does nothing to earn its keep. We are a free enterprise society, yet we support an institution which continually requires more money and earns none.

Public education in its present form is parasitical; it feeds off the innocent tax payer.

Therefore, I propose we form The Canadian Public Education Company — a sort of Petro Can of pedagogy.



At the moment, our schools have a product which they are not selling. For example, each year, thousands of high school graduates come off a twelve year assembly line. It is obviously high time they were advertised, marketed and sold. Only then will the public school system become a profitable business.

There are innumerable markets for every student from the highly intelligent to the hard-working plodder; there are even markets for

losers.

Brilliant grads will be sold to corporations all over the world. These companies will buy students and put them through university, thereby further alleviating the taxpayers' burden. In return, big business will no longer have to waste time worrying about industrial espionage or unreasonable demands for salary increases. They will own their employees.

Political parties will offer good prices for a variety of students because they need both leaders and followers. They also need loyalty and ought to pay for it. After all, bought politicians cannot change their minds, espouse unpopular philosophies, rock the party boat or cross the floor.

Many churches are in desperate need of members and personnel. They will leap at the chance to buy them instead of wasting time putting up recruiting posters, sending people out to proselytize on street corners or investing truckloads of bucks in TV campaigns.

Professional sports obviously has an excess of money which it likes to spend by dispensing million dollar contracts to youths proficient in sporty skills. Such transactions are outrageous. For example, who taught that young hockey player how to sign his name on the contract? The public schools of course and it is the schools which will reap the benefits in future.

Governments contemplating war are a ready market. Maggie risked Prince Andrew's life in the Falklands; Mikhail keeps dispatching his own citizens to Afghanistan and Ron sends his own boys into Libya. What an unnecessary squandering of human resources. Maggie, Mikhail, Ron and anyone else who wants to get in on the war game can, in future, buy soldiers on the open market.

The list of prospective buyers is endless.

And the new Canadian Public Education Company will not tolerate waste. Students who choose to fail year after year will be sold as food to underprivileged countries. Students will soon develop good study habits in an effort to maintain passing grades lest they be removed from say, the Religious Studies Sales Class to a Fodder Class.

Upon the incorporation of CPEC, I guarantee that school board deficits will disappear overnight, unemployment will cease to exist, welfare lines will diminish, teacher morale will soar, taxes will decrease and above all, Canadians will feel good about participating in the free enterprise system. ▼

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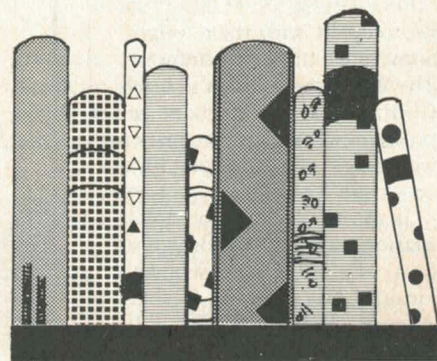
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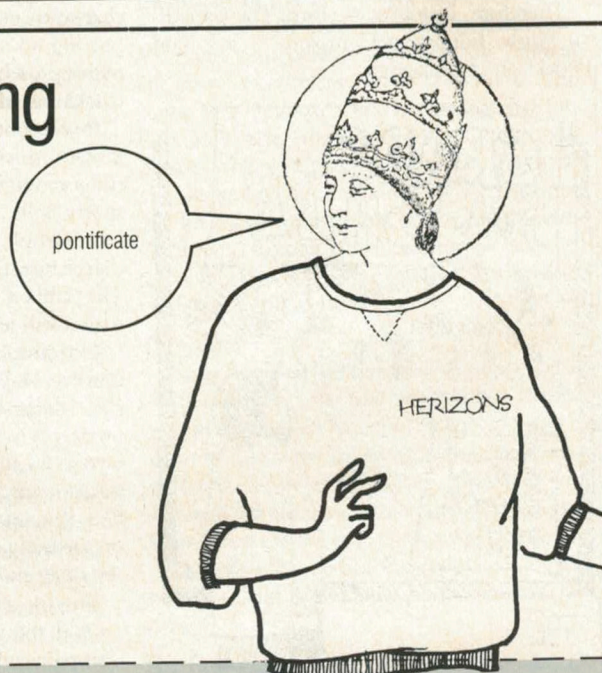
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# Simone de Beauvoir 1908-1986

by CY-THEA SAND

Simone de Beauvoir's significance to feminist intellectual history on the subjugation of women is central and profound. Whether or not you revere her as the Mary Wollstonecraft of the twentieth century, or feel uneasy about her lifelong admiration for Jean-Paul Sartre's ideas, her contribution to feminist thought is not debatable. Her novels, plays and autobiographies probe the existential realms of freedom, political engagement, human love and death. Her mammoth study of women in patriarchy, *The Second Sex* (1949) was written in complete isolation from other women in an attempt by de Beauvoir to understand herself as a woman in a man's world.

She dissected the realities of women's second class status with an analysis of biology, psychology, literature and history. Her development of an ideology of womanhood is now taken for granted, but was radical at the time: woman is made not born; she is an object in a man's world (the other), and her potential for wholeness is denied. de Beauvoir's work was met with venomous hostility by men like existentialist writer Albert Camus, but women from all classes in France wrote to thank her. In a recent interview she commented that psychiatrists encouraged working class women without formal education to read the book, a fact which must have pleased her socialist, egalitarian mind. Even author Dale Spender admits to difficulty reading *The Second Sex* which has yet to be equalled in its erudite, exhaustive scope. On that note we can all rush to read or reread the text, guilt-free and inspired.

*The Second Sex*, alongside Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938), Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (both 1970) and Mary Daly's *Beyond God The Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (1973), highlights Western woman's challenge to patriarchal values, at least in this century. It is important to discuss *The Second Sex*, and in fact de Beauvoir's thinking in general, as firmly rooted in the cerebral and linear tradition of the Western mind. She is reported to have ignored the politics and people of India because she simply could not understand them.

An essay entitled "Seeing *The Second Sex* Through the Second Wave" by Mary Lowenthal Felstiner (*Feminist Studies* Vol. 6 No. 2 1980) sums up the classic and states that "now that our movement has fully absorbed Simone de Beauvoir's argument — that the prevailing inequality between the sexes is a social form, not a natural one — we have the basis for stepping off once more, asking just what is natural about the very recognition of



photo: Dominique Duan

two genders, and about the natural pairing between them. So her unexplained assumptions become our questions. Later on the assumption *we* don't even know we're making can become questions too."

I like the way that this connects her work to our on-going struggles and would add that not the least of our assumptions concern race and class issues. Discussing Simone de Beauvoir in her study *Women of Ideas* (which should read white women of ideas) and *What Men Have Done To Them: From Aphra Behn to Adrienne Rich*, Dale Spender writes that "the fact remains that in some respects these women were not representative: some of them were wealthy when most of the population lived in poverty; they were literate at times when the majority of the population was not. And there is also the consideration of the extent to which access to education and literacy constructs its own world view."

I remember feeling excited about de Beauvoir's emphasis on the importance of work for women. Like Willa Cather she argued that work should be as important for women as love and relationships. She spoke from the perspective of an intellectual labourer and not from the point of view of women like members of my family who worked in dead end jobs in stores, offices and factories. I needed her validation about the importance of education but the middle class bias of 'higher education' produces agonising contradictions for working class women who manage to "steal and beg and mine" an education. But de Beauvoir was aware of the contradictions.

Anne Whitmarsh in her study *Simone de Beauvoir and the Limits of Commitment* describes her as "bitterly hating and rejecting the class from which she has come but of which she is still professionally a member. She cannot become one of the proletariat women she supports." It took the women's

movement to introduce me to her ideas — university courses in the late 60s celebrated the works of Sartre, Camus, Tillich, not hers. Her image as a giant among intellectuals was in the foreground for women of my generation who were pushing the imposed limit on their potential and demanding a better deal. And I would venture to guess that Simone de Beauvoir would encourage women of colour and white working class women to challenge the limitations of her theories in order to articulate their own.

In a 1984 interview with Simone de Beauvoir excerpted in *The Women's Review of Books*, (Vol. 3 No. 6 March 1986) Helen Wenzel asked her for an assessment of de Beauvoir's own feminist writing and those of French feminists who have followed her. She describes *The Second Sex* as an "objective, very detached study" which was used as a theoretical basis for the second wave of feminism in France in 1970, but which in fact was written as a serious study not as a feminist call to arms. In the past, de Beauvoir has been critical of women writers arguing that they cannot "contest the human situation because they have barely begun to be able to assume it fully..." In this interview, she expressed disappointment in the plethora of autobiographical writing by women, most of which she considers uninteresting. But I was most intrigued by her disagreement with the most *au courant* of feminist literary theory: the deconstruction of man's language as advocated by women like Hélène Cixous, Monique Wittig and in French Canada most notably by Nicole Brossard.

Anne Whitmarsh records de Beauvoir's belief that "language is admittedly a legacy from a male-dominated society, but it is universally used, and to adopt an esoteric, specifically feminine language is merely to cut ones' self off from most readers." I was quite surprised when I read this. Deconstruction seems like such a compelling intellectual exercise for those with both the desire and privilege to engage in it, that I thought de Beauvoir would be attracted by its theoretical essence. Perhaps a clue to her discontent with it lies in her appreciation of Monique Wittig's first book *L'Opoponax* which unlike her other works de Beauvoir says is "written in the ordinary language everyone speaks." And of course it is the ordinary everyday reality for women which must change: despite our disagreements about how to get there, that is the ultimate vision de Beauvoir left us to fight for. Using the analytical tools of Marxism and feminism she will be remembered as a dedicated radical thinker who despised social inequality and the specific denigration of her gender. ▼



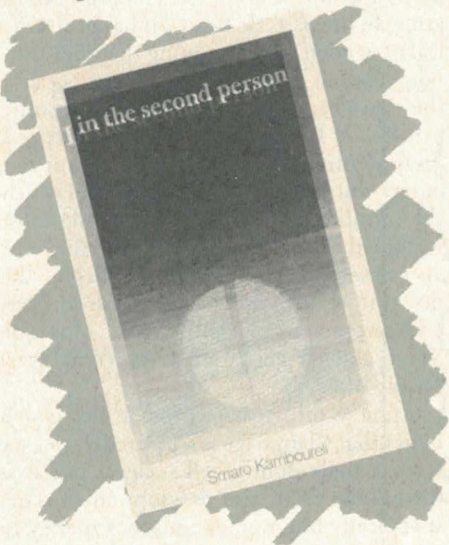
## Double Standards in the second person

*DOUBLE STANDARDS*: Lola Lemire Tostevin; Longspoon Press; Edmonton, Alberta; 1985.

*in the second person*: Smaro Kamboureli; Longspoon Press; Edmonton, Alberta; 1985.

Reviewed by HEIDI MUENCH

Both *in the second person* by Smaro Kamboureli and *DOUBLE STANDARDS* by Lola Lemire Tostevin are challenging works. Both use language and relate experience in ways that seem at first too foreign, too far removed from regular speech and perceptions to allow the reader a sense of quick identification or comfort with the text. But both works, if their initial strangeness is tolerated, lead the reader to places rich in uncommon meaning — places where the distinctions between different modes of being dissolve.



*in the second person* chronicles Smaro Kamboureli's experiences as an immigrant. The bridging of her double view, her "braided minds" takes the form of a dialogue between two parts of her self — a present I intent on embracing a new culture and an other, a repository of her Greek past. It is a dialogue characterised by "a plurality of voices". Diary entries describing events, dreams and preoccupations; poems; poetic prose; Greek and French quotations combine to express the long and complex integration of a divided self. The other is at first perceived as threatening, as a spy, a resented intruder, and battled with. Ritual burnings of past writings and a Greek alphabet and two trips back to Greece mark turning points in the struggle to achieve wholeness. Near the end of this chronicle, the antagonism is resolved. An erotic dream connects the two selves in an act



of love. The last entry allows both selves to exist without tension and asserts that "The only danger lies in the act of translation." More than a sum of its parts, *in the second person* is an involving exploration of the ways in which we continually shape our sense of self.

A similar interest in a multiplicity of voices and views is present in Lola Lemire Tostevin's *DOUBLE STANDARDS*. Her poems (all but one untitled, most of them written in English, her second language) strive to break down the separations of experience and knowledge into past/present, truth/fiction, male/female, French/English, logical/intuitive. The subject matter of her poems varies widely: her old home town, male violence, the silencing of feared voices, love. The most narrative of her poems, "Not A Poem," is among the most gripping treatments of rape I have read. Other poems, less rooted in actual events, are hauntingly lyrical:

the landscape was never tender  
there were no hills  
no river cutting through  
no sea that stretched its flat muscular foot  
over warm sand.

Most of the poems confront the reader's expectations, denying her a story, a romance, offering instead an experience of language as sensual and erotic as it is unusual. In one poem, the cry of a cicada becomes the cry of the writer's own heart, whose soft parts spread her open. In all of them, "the other side/of almost everything" is revealed.

Neither *in a second voice* or *DOUBLE STANDARDS* is a quick, entertaining read. Both demand concentration and a willingness to redefine experience. Both offer a sense of reality more intricate, more elusive than what we at most times allow ourselves.

## The Life and Times of Flora Tristan (1803-1844)

Reviewed by TSIGANE

*Oh, Jesus, how trivial your sufferings must seem to you, compared with mine.*

Flora Tristan, *London Journal*

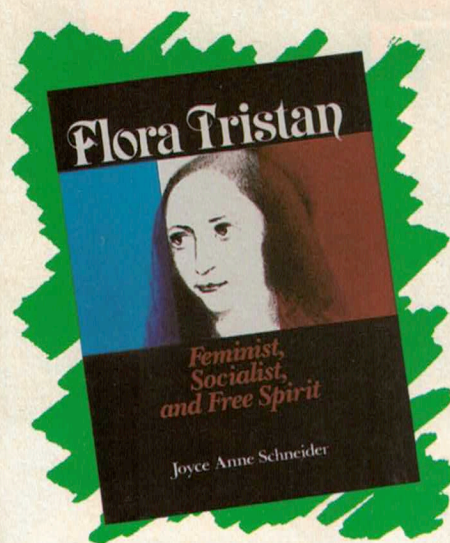
Flora Tristan is one of those unrecognised saviours, a woman whose life is a natural object lesson in the uses of adversity and perversity, a life spent fighting poverty, social convention and oppression, a life much like Mary Wollstonecraft's, about whose book, *Vindication of the Rights of Women* 1792, Flora said: "Her book was suppressed the moment it appeared, but this did not save the author from calumny. Only the first volume was published and now it is extremely rare. I could not buy a copy, and had not a friend been good enough to lend it to me, it would have been impossible to procure it. The reputation of this book inspires such fear that if you so much as mention its name, even so-called 'progressive' women will recoil in horror and exclaim: 'Oh, but that is an evil book.'" (*London Journal*).

Only money or social status would have saved Flora from the calumny that was her unwilling metier, as it was for many women who opened their mouths to speak their minds, to write evil books. But unlike most, Flora was a pariah from the age of four. Born into a French — Peruvian-Spanish aristocratic family, Flora led a life of luxury until France went to war with Spain, then the family's patrimony and possessions were confiscated by the French government, and since there was only a religious, not a civil record of the marriage, she was not only left penniless, but also a bastard. Her father died. She and her mother lived in extreme poverty until, at 18, Flora married André Chazal, an engraver, and moved from squalor to abuse. Four years and three children later, she fled back to mother long enough to leave her children and go into bondage as governess to aristocratic English ladies.

These five years of servitude were so abhorrent to Flora that she destroyed all evidence of them.

When she returned to France, Chazal began his 14 year legal persecution of her, since divorce had been abolished in 1816. He managed to get custody of one son. The other died. Daughter and mother, under assumed names, had to wander France for months hiding from his legal hounds and harassment. Leaving daughter Aline with her mother, desperate, penniless, Flora shipped out to South America, to seek favour with her Peruvian connections. All she got for her months'





long land and sea trek was a small legacy and the promise of an allowance, which under law her husband could claim for himself. Still unrecognised, still a bastard, Flora visited England on the way home to France and wrote *Peregrinations of a Pariah*: her life had given her claim to that title. Worse follows.

Chazel abducted Aline, then kept her hidden in homes and boarding schools for two years until she managed to get a letter to Flora telling of Dad's "unwanted attentions." A trial for incest follows in which the court awards the son, Ernst, to Chazal and apprentices Aline in trade. Other charges are dropped. During this time, Flora wrote a novel, *Mephis*, about Woman, the saviour of humanity, who, ignorant of her divine mission, betrays herself in servitude to man, deforming her body and mind to please her master.

Still smarting over the incest publicity, Chazal is refused custody of Ernst by Flora's mother who thinks him a maniac. He proved it by then shooting Flora in the back, for which he got 20 years hard labour. Flora's book sales soared and she recovered to become famous and infamous. By 1839, back in England, a practicing visionary, she is ready to save society through education and the organisation of the working poor.

Considering such a life, and this short treatment is only half the story, is it any wonder that when she wrote her *London Journal* (*Promenades dans Londres*) in 1839, that she identified with and dedicated it to the working class, the poor, the oppressed, especially women, the real slaves of the social evils she intended to expose in her book? "Do you know how it is that a handful...have the power to oppress, torture and starve a nation of 26 million people, beat them like animals, crowd them into workhouses...and deny them clothes, even bread? It is because 26 million human beings are brought up like slaves in ignorance and fear. It is because the Schools, the Church and the Press are in league with the oppressors...it is the social system, the base of the structure, which

must concern you, not political power...for politics, properly speaking, affects only special interests which differ from state to state, and concern none but the privileged classes."

Flora's tour of London was not a gay whirl in the rich West End, but a heart-wrenching descent into the squalid ghetto of the Jews, "treated everywhere as pariahs," where families live in cellar holes under mounds of second-hand clothes, into the Irish slum parish of St. Giles where naked children stand and stare, famished, from pools of human refuse, into prisons where the youngest offender is seven years old and all are under strict rules of silence, enforced idleness, women are cruelly separated from children and "melancholy is in the very air you breath."

Some of what she reports sounds so like today. "In London people never interfere with what happens in the street," she writes, and tells the story of a woman suffocated and beaten in the street while the daylight crowd went by. She reveals the large and lucrative business of kidnapping and selling young children into prostitution, finds that working-class women, undone virgins, the unemployed and impoverished governesses are all forced to swell prostitution's ranks for lack of alternatives in a society unwilling to recognise this skin trade, even though there is "an annual consumption of 8,000 to 10,000 children by the monied classes."

According to Flora, there was a lot to fix. Radical pacifist (emphasis on the first), pariah, author, infamously liberated woman, social visionary, it wasn't until her chance meeting with the mad Frenchman Chabrier in Bethlam Hospital that Flora realised she was "the prophet destined to free women from enslavement to man and the poor from the rich." Strange place to find one's vocation, perhaps, but Flora's life was made of odd twists of fate. Ten years before (1829), in another chance meeting with a Captain Chabrier, she discovered how to find her Peruvian connection. Four years later, when she shipped out, who was Captain? Chabrier. He rendered his undying devotion which Flora rejected, feeling guilty, but preferring to take care of herself, by herself. Exit Chabrier, lost at sea, until he shows up chained to a wall. "What befell me then was one of those bizarre and extraordinary encounters which I think happen only to me," she states, and then discovers it's the wrong Chabrier. But he knows Flora and clasps her, saying: "Oh, my Sister...it is God who has sent you here to this place of desolation, not for my sake, for I must perish here, but for the sake of the message I bring to the world...to make an end of every kind of servitude, to deliver woman from man, the poor from the rich, and the soul from sin."

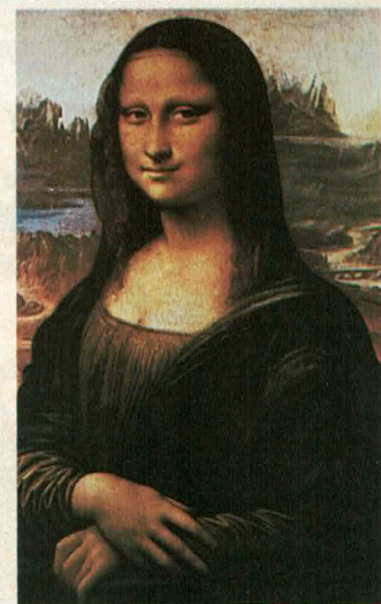
All Chabrier had done to earn his straitjacket was toss his landlady's bible into the fireplace, telling her she should sweep away the old, irrelevant law and welcome the new kingdom of peace. Flora wanted "to respect the established

order, while all the time working to demolish it" — this she called justice and perhaps because she didn't burn anyone's bible, they didn't put her away. Instead, she lived another five years, writing, organising French workers into unions, harassed by police, searched, followed, adored; she was doing the work that Marx and Engels would take the credit for later.

Just another unrecognised saviour leading an exemplary life, a natural object lesson to us in our continuing hour of need. Always willing to vent her spleen on a smug, scrofulous society, she still speaks out of every hungry face patriarchy refuses to feed. She died at 41: A cult figure in her lifetime, in four years forgotten. Her *London Journal*, so popular on the continent, was not translated into English until 1982. Because of her translator, Ms. Jean Hawkes (to whose superb introduction I am *entirely* grateful), Flora's concerns are back again in our monster cities where even poverty costs \$14,000 a year.

*Promenades dans Londres, The English Journal of Flora Tristan*, Translated and introduced by Ms. Jean Hawkes, Virago Press, London, Toronto, 1982, 306 pgs. (Distributed in Canada by Academic Press) All page references are to this, the 1842 Edition.

*Flora Tristan: Feminist, Socialist, and Free Spirit*, by Joyce Anne Schneider, William Morrow and Company.



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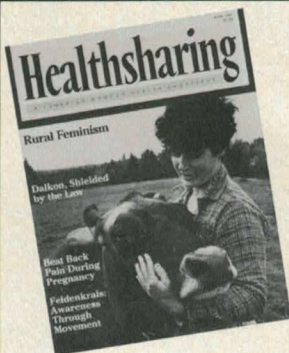


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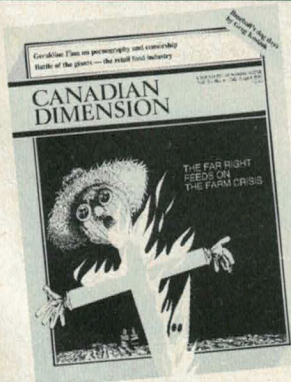
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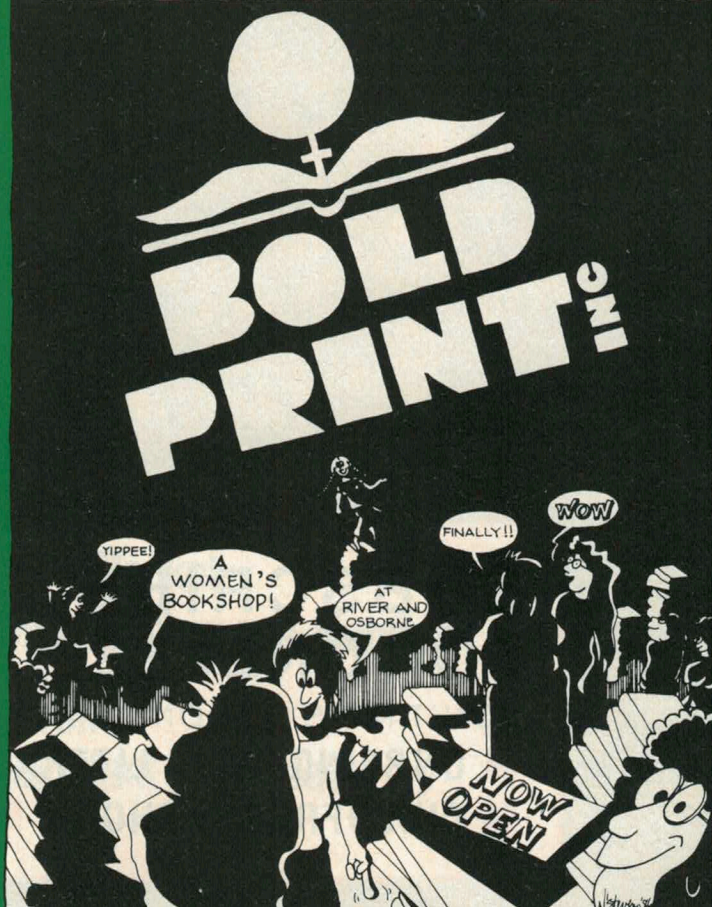
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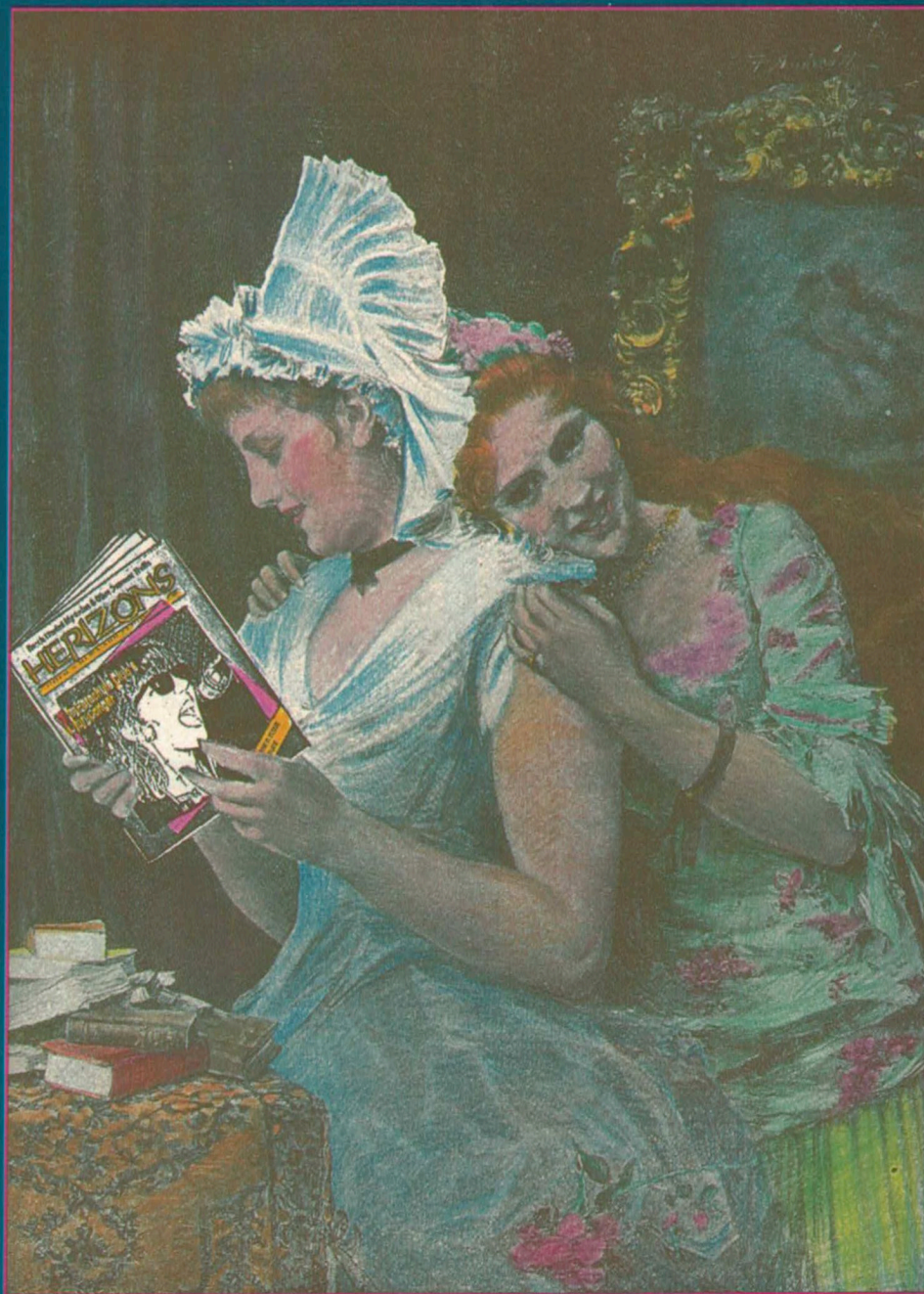
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